From the Roots Up: (Re)Making Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Peoples' Relationships with Land

A Dissertation Submitted to the College of

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In the Department of Educational Foundations

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon

By

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Abstract

Despite the interference caused by waves of colonialism, Indigenous peoples are actively pursuing and preserving relationships with Land and more-than-human-beings. As Indigenous land-based education is relatively new as an academic field of study, it is important to continue to assert clear understandings of the relationships and principles that inform it, and of those that distinguish it from other forms of land-based, environmental or place- based education. It is of primary importance within the field of Indigenous land-based education to fully investigate and analyze the ways in which notions of gender operate within the movement. This dissertation centers the experiences of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit Indigenous land-based educators and practitioners in relation to the research questions: *How does the gendering of land-based practices and land-based knowledges impact Indigenous peoples' relationships with Land*? and *How can gender inclusive land-based education restore and strengthen these relationships*?

Eight interviews with Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based educators and practitioners, were conducted and analyzed using the voice centered relational method. In addition to the interviews, a selection of publicly circulated posters and the creative writing work of the author, were analyzed and discussed to demonstrate how the themes presented in the research operate within communities. The analysis revealed that participant experiences engaging in Indigenous land-based practices have been impacted by colonialism resulting in the disconnection of Indigenous land-based knowledges from practices, and thereby negatively impacting Indigenous women and Two-Spirit relatives' relationships with Land and their ability to engage in land-based practices. Furthermore, in spite of gender based violences and inequities caused by colonial disruptions, Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based educators and practitioners resist and refuse colonialism and its manifestations as both a reaction to external forces but an important response in alignment with the ethics of relationality, relational accountability, and relational care.

KEY TERMS/ KEY WORDS: Indigenous land-based education, Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, gender, voice centered relational method, listening guide, relationality

Acknowledgements

watch them my girl
the ones who walk ahead
the ones who break trail

listen my girl
to the ones who speak up
to the ones who speak out

steep yourself in their power
root yourself in their love
douse yourself in their magic

your time will come my girl
and you will be ready

- Tasha Spillett June 25, 2022

I want to begin my honoring my daughter – who stepped forward to be born during such an uncertain time and lent me courage to carry on. The landscapes of my mind and spirit have been forever changed by her. Although writing a dissertation while caring for a baby might not be ideal, I don't feel like she made this journey harder, rather that she made it infinitely more meaningful. To my mother – the one who holds up the sky, I say ninanskomitin. The love that you've poured into me is the fuel that continuously reignites my internal flame. Thank you for teaching me that to be in service of our People is not only a responsibility but an honour.

My research was supported lovingly by the committed guidance from my relative and PhD advisor Dr. Alex Wilson. Under your gentle guidance, I have come to know myself and the world around us more deeply. You've not only taught me but generously invested in my intellectual and emotional development – which I commit to honouring by paying it forward. I

also thank Drs. Stan and Peggy Wilson for mentoring me through both my master's degree and my doctoral program and for helping me feel more deeply connected to our home territory.

I extend gratitude to my committee members. Drs. Michelle Johnson Jennings, Marcia McKenzie, Leanne Simpson and Verna St. Denis– I have borrowed from your wells of pure grit and passion on many occasions over the course of this journey. I have stood in admiration of how incredibly hard you've worked to ensure that there is a place for me and so many others and in awe of the tremendous love and hope it undoubtedly takes to keep pushing for better. Thank you for believing in me. I express gratitude and respect for my external examiner, Dr. Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark – thank you for helping me bring this work into the world. I also recognize and thank Dr. Judy Chu for spending time mentoring myself and other Indigenous graduate students to better understand voice centered relational method and coaching us on how to manage the data and maintain a connection to the purpose of our research. I also thank the Vanier Canada Award for selecting me as a scholar and supporting my studies and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the CIHR Institutes of Gender and Health, Indigenous Peoples' Health, and Population and Public Health, for supporting my research through the Indigenous Gender and Wellness Development Grants competition (application: 430743).

This work would not have been possible without the 8 research participants who stepped forward. They are the roots from which my research has emerged. I will carry their stories with me and I am forever changed by the generosity of mind and spirit.

I hold special thanks for Winnipeg, the place that I call home. To me, Winnipeg feels like a favorite family member who you love fiercely despite their multiple issues. At many times, I've felt like a fraud as an urban person working in the field of Indigenous land-based education. Winnipeg taught me that we are experts in our own experiences, and to never abandon the Land, our relation, even when covered in chaos.

Finally, I thank me and wrap myself in gentleness after a long and beautiful journey. I am not the woman I was when I started. Many different versions of myself have emerged throughout this process and I honour them all for the perseverance and the gifts they brought forward.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Indigenous peoples have existed in complex and reciprocal relationships with Land for millennia and those relationships have produced distinct, rich, and expansive knowledge systems and learning pedagogies (Cajete, 1999; Simpson, 2014, 2017; Styres, 2018; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015a; Tuck, McKenzie, & MCoy, 2014). As Styres (2018) asserts, "Land as an Indigenous philosophical construct is both space (abstract) and place/land (concrete); it is also conceptual, experiential, relational, and embodied" (Styres, 2018, p. 27). Indigenous land-based education represents, in addition to other factors, the theoretical, pedological, political and highly culturally contextualized, (re)making and (re)affirming of relationships between humans, more-than-human relations, and Land. Despite the interference caused by waves of colonialism, Indigenous peoples are actively pursuing and preserving relationships with Land and more-than-human-beings that uphold the ethics and knowledges embedded within Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. As Indigenous land-based education is relatively new as an academic field of study (Styres, 2011), it is important to continue to assert clear understandings of the relationships and principles that inform it, and which distinguish it from other forms of land-based education. Vigilance is required to preserve its unique features from being diminished under the weight of Eurocentrism within those colonial institutions. It is of primary importance within the field of Indigenous land-based education to fully investigate and analyze the ways in which notions of gender operate within Indigenous land-based education.

Considering gender within land-based learning and place-based learning is critical because constructions of gender are not exempt from the impacts of colonialism. The attempts to destroy Indigenous configurations of gender have fractured peoples' relationships with Land, especially with regard to the gendering of land-based practices (A. Wilson, 2018b; A. Wilson & Laing, 2018). Throughout the multitude of colonial eras and projects, gendered forms of violence have been consistently employed as tools of subjugation (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013), excluding Indigenous women (Greene, 2007) and Two-Spirit people from the places and positions of power, grinding up their senses of self, unravelling their social safety nets, and demoralizing

their spirits while leaving them raw and vulnerable (Driskill, 2004, 2010, 2015; Hall, 2017; Wesley, 2015).

Situating Myself

Tansi Kakinaw. Tasha Spillett nitisinīkāson, Winnipeg ochi nîna. Neyonawak Inniniwak nina. To help contextualize my individual ways of knowing, I will begin by placing myself within the communities I belong to, as well as within the research I've engaged with (Absolon, 2004; Collins, 2011; Collins et al., 2021; E. Steinhauer, 2002; P. Steinhauer, 2001; A. Wilson, 2008). I am an Afro-Indigenous woman and bring all those who live on in my bloodlines to this discussion. I also honour the lands and waters that have sustained and nurtured my Ancestors. This includes Opaskwayak traditional territory, Cumberland House traditional territory, the island of Trinidad and lands in West Africa that I can't more specifically identify because of the chaos caused by the enslavement and forced displacement of my Ancestors. I don't have a connection with my paternal family but as an adult am working to heal my connection with my own Blackness and to make relationships within the Black community.

I am born and raised in Treaty 1/Winnipeg, Manitoba, and have been held and shaped by the urban Indigenous community here. My mother and greatest teacher, Leslie Spillett, has spent decades reconnecting our family to our culture and ceremonies, and to actively building Indigenous political movements and cultural resurgence spaces. As a single mother, my mom brought us with her wherever she went. I was a child who grew up colouring under tables in boardrooms and community centres and shadowing her to what seemed like endless meetings with much annoyance. Even though at the time, I would have much rather been doing other things, I now see those times as the most formative education I have received.

In the summers, my mom would take us "home"; which is what she still calls northern Manitoba despite not living on her homelands for years. We would spend weeks at my granny's house picking berries and running care-free in the bush. My granny, Dorothy Carriere, was a devout Christian and in her lifetime was never able to free herself from self-hatred that she was forced to ingest as she and many generations ahead of her forcibly engaged colonialism. Although she likely spoke Cree and even held the memory of our family's ceremonial knowledge, she didn't

pass those things forward. My granny passed away when I was a small child so I will never be able to ask her about these things but knowing about the impacts of colonialism and the intense racism that existed in Northern Manitoba in her day, I imagine withholding any traces of Indigeneity that was possible from her children was an act of self-preservation and protection. As a result of the colonial violences my family endured, she didn't walk us into ceremony, as my mom does for her granddaughters today, but we did walk with her on rock-faced land of our peoples, and that was a precious kind of ceremony in and of itself.

As an adult, I've returned North with my mom on a few occasions. I remember once while driving up the number 6 highway she drew a heavy sigh of relief just outside Grand Rapids and told me that when she's up North, this is the only time she feels safe. She was nearing 70 years old at the time, and I was in the early days of my pregnancy. This moment offered me two insights, first, that it was unsettling to me that my mom, an Elder, has spent most of her life feeling unsafe. Second, that there is power in her relationship to the Land, that it offers that sense of security to her.

To me, it is clear that my draw to thinking about land knowledges and relationships is generationally influenced as I connect my granny, to my mom, to myself, and then to my daughter. My granny lived with deep shame of being a Cree woman, but she had intimate knowledge of and relationship with the Land. My mom left the North to escape what she felt was the "small mindedness" of Northern towns, at the sacrifice of the protection she felt from the Land. I was raised in an urban space where Indigenous presence on Land is carefully erased but I have worked to be in relationship with the Land beneath the concrete. My daughter, whose placenta is buried in the Land of her paternal family, will have her own relationship with the Land that is her own and at the same time is a part of this collective inheritance.

Within and outside of my academic work, I write creatively. My natural form is poetry, which I write to move hard and heavy things so that they don't make a home of my bones. Poetry helps me to make sense of the world around me and to connect more deeply to myself. It is a personal practice of healing, that sometimes makes its way into published works and public presentation; but always begins for/with self. The following piece was written in the time before I decided to

have a child, when I was grasping for strength, connection, and understanding. I share it here as part of establishing my positionality but also to demonstrate my personal attraction to a poetry-based method.

Dearest Ones,
i can only imagine your faces when i squeeze my eyes tightly and allow my thoughts to drift away...
drift away...
from waves of climates crashing
drift away...
from realities of continued extraction
drift away...
from images of public executions of black and brown bodies
documented daily in shaky phone videos, curated and fed to the insatiable feeds
my thoughts left to digest in the belly of this beast
Dearest Ones
on the day i began to write you this
the headlines read
remains of a young indigenous woman have been found just outside of Winnipeg,
more than nine months after she disappeared.
today, there is a mama who once sat and imagined her baby,
as i now sit and imagine you.
existing in her very own nightmare.
her daughter - buried in a ditch
Dearest Ones
it is one of my greatest trepidations that one day,
you may learn how trauma wakes up trauma.
her name echoes in my thoughts and is now attached to thousands of other
names of women who could have been your aunties.
names i carry with me like iron-casted flower petals
overflowing from a basket made of cracking willow ribs.

i hope you are born with my mother’s hands;
the only ones strong enough to hold such an inheritance.
Dearest Ones
The Thunderbirds came back yesterday after their long departure from our territory.
i wished for them.
My thoughts are silenced by their singing and dancing.
they bring medicine for the Land.
Water spilling from their eyes.
I often wonder if they hurt like us?
Do they ache?
Is this the composition of hailstorms and earthquakes?
If you were stolen,
i would become a never-ending hurricane.
Dearest Ones,
If you’re existing in physical form,
it’s because my heart won a long debate with my mind,
that pushed and pulled between being too fearful for your own safety to call you forward
but having so much faith in your goodness and strength it relinquished the fear.
i hope you know by now that you come from a lineage of strong People and belong to a very beautiful territory.
i hope you’ve experienced the magic of sipping water from over the side of a canoe at Clear Water Lake.
i hope the water at Clear Water Lake is still clear.
i hope you’ve felt tiny surrounded by miles of rock and birch trees and know the sweetness of wild blueberries.
i hope you've felt the tingle of your legs as you step into the warmth of your kookum's house after a day on a frozen lake
i hope you’ve been lost on the Land, but not scared.
Dearest Ones,
i wrote down all my fears
i needed them to be elsewhere than in my mind and this paper seemed like a safer place

i marked it with fear and turned those fears into questions.
i brought those questions to some of your aunties,
they told me
you come from a long line of women
reaching right back to the original life source that continues to manifest creation
in bodies that wars are waged upon.
if you are existing in physical form,

it's because the life force of these women,
lives in you,
because it lives in me.

- Tasha Spillett May 22, 2018

I became pregnant with my daughter Isabella Kiizhiigooweyabik shortly after her father's mother passed away. We were (and still are) swirling in the tides of grief when we found out she was on the way. Near the midway point of my pregnancy, my midwife asked if I wanted to know the sex of the baby. I remember her passing the ultrasound wand over my round belly looking at me with joy and proclaiming, "it's a girl!". In the moments that followed, I felt what I can only describe as fear. How was I going to keep this little brown skinned baby girl safe in a world that makes targets of flesh like ours? That feeling eventually gave way to imagining who she would be and who she would become, but the fear remerges from the cracks in my heart every time our communities experience another loss.

My daughter is a force. Her imagination is a kaleidoscope that I'm fortunate enough to glimpse through. She's said her first word at seven months old and her vocabulary has grown daily since then. There's no doubt in my mind that she came into this world with important things so say. Being her mother (re)shaped me as a researcher and informed the way I engaged the relationships held within this work. I want to make a world that is deserving of her, where she is safe, lives joyously and her relationship with Land is whole and free of interference.
Held within these pages are the stories and knowledges of many; spanning years greater than those of my PhD program and representing relationships far beyond just mine with the research.

As someone who descends from peoples who were stolen from Land, and peoples who had Land stolen from them, I chose my research focus as part of my commitment to contribute to liberatory work (re)making those relationships. As a woman, taking a gendered approach to this work has been of primary importance, one that was amplified when I became a mother to a daughter.

In saying this, my research objective was to examine how gender operates within both formal and informal Indigenous land-based education by specifically considering the narratives, experiences, and pedagogies of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit Indigenous land-based educators and practitioners. My approach to engaging this objective was by considering the roles of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people in formal and informal Indigenous land-based education; factors that strengthen or undermining relationships between Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people and Land, and impact their engagement in Indigenous land-based education, including how cultural context, place, social movements, and other organizations have and continue to influence their epistemologies and pedagogies; and, how Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people are specifically engaging gender in their practices and pedagogies.

The research questions that guided the work that comprised my dissertation are: *How does the gendering of land-based practices and land-based knowledges impact Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land*? and *How can gender inclusive land-based education restore and strengthen these relationships*? To engage these questions, I invited Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based educators and practioners to be interviewed and 8 participants responded. In addition to analyzing the 8 interviews using the voice centered relational method of analysis (Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003), I also collected and analyzed publicly circulated Indigenous land-based and cultural event/gathering posters.

The organization of my dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 presents a review of available literature on Indigenous land-based education, with a gender focus. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology that guided my research. Chapter 4 provides an introduction of the 8 research participants who stepped forward to be a part of this journey with me. Chapter 5 presents key

themes of the research, portions of the 8 Ipoems created from the interviews with the research participants, contrapuntal voices identified through the data analysis, and overall findings of the data and related discussions. And lastly, Chapter 6 highlights the every-day implications of this work through the presentation and discussion of publicly circulated posters and examples of my own creative writing, alongside final reflections and conclusions.

Chapter 2: What's Come Before: Literature Review

You've gone ahead
I see your tracks
My feet sink into your footsteps
showing me
where you've been
where we're going
You've gone ahead
I see your trail
showing me
where we're going

- Tasha Spillett August 10, 2022

In my work as a picture book author and graphic novelist I often get asked about my writing process. I always wish I could respond by sharing a sophisticated writing system or routine that I follow, but I can't. When I write creatively, it has to start with an idea that more often than not feels more like a download rather than something that comes organically from me. Only after the idea has been downloaded, can the writing flow. I understand that knowledges are deeply connected in ways that move beyond time and space. Knowledges rest and re-emerge cyclically, re-presenting themselves in times they are needed, in the minds and hearts of individuals and collectives who can move them forward. It's been honouring this process of waiting and trusting that the idea will come when it's intended to and being aware of the intricate webs that string knowledges together that that lead me to take up a relational methodology to engage my literature review. Within that web, there is the research that I've engaged with directly, and also what's come before and what is yet to come. In the review of the literature connected to the research I've taken up, I sat in relationship and conversation with the literature that came before my own contributions.

The question that I held in my mind while identifying and relating to the literature[1] was: How have researchers and practitioners theorized gender within Indigenous land-based and place-based learning? All reviewed sources were identified through searching the University of Saskatchewan's Indigenous Studies Portal and Indigenous peoples focused databases, using keywords/terms such as: Indigenous land-based, Two-Spirit, gender, land-based learning, place-based learning. I also gathered sources from the from classes that I took in both my M. Ed Indigenous land-based education and PhD program and by staying in active relationship with people and communities who are engaging gender and Land in their work and writings. Themes for the literature review were developed through the reading of sources multiple times, employing the listening guide method (Gilligan et al., 2003) – which will be fully discussed in Chapter 3, and identification of common content. To organize sources and document emerging themes, I used the EndNote program. I also kept a research journal to document my own thoughts, understandings, and shifts in awareness and to do the work of mapping out the knowledge presented in the literature.

Sources were selected and engaged with using a relational approach (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2003). Being in relation to the sources supports me to map out the genesis of the knowledges being shared and (re)created and to consider the whole of what is being offered rather than dissecting it and extracting segments of these offerings (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). This relational approach also requires me to be accountable to both the knowledges presented and the folks who have brought them forward. This has supported me to make deeper personal and intellectual connections with and between sources, and to be accountable to the peoples and places the knowledges flow from and how they are mobilized in the world both in my dissertation and in ways accessible to wider groups of people.

My literature review has been very much a process rooted in honouring relationships and mapping connectedness. For example, much of the literature presented in this chapter was first

[1] Portions of this literature review appear in the article I authored: Spillett, T. (2021). Gender, Land, and Place Considering Gender within Land-Based and Place-Based Learning. *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, *15*(1), pp.11-31

introduced to me while doing my Masters in Indigenous land-based education and/or re-introduced to me during my doctoral course work by the Indigenous scholars I've studied with including Drs. Alex Wilson, Karla Williamson, Raven Sinclair, Leanne Simpson, and Verna St. Denis. My relationship to many of these texts, began through my relationships with them as they taught and guided me. These are not linear relationships, each time I've come back to these texts, it's been as a new version of me, one shaped by the network of relationships I exist with and shaped by the experiences I've had. Additionally, through the knowing of the literature, I've been invited to engage with the network of relationships that the authors are tied to and the knowledges comprised in their texts. As I read, and related more deeply to the text, the web of relationality grew and grew, connecting me to not only the words on the pages but to the people and places that act as the root systems from which the knowledges emerge.

Based on this mapping, the following sections present my learning from the relationships I have built with these knowledges. The themes presented in these sections include: Indigenous notions of gender and the critique of colonial assumptions of gender including how these assumptions impacted by a disruption in how gender operated within Indigenous land-based education prior to colonial disruptions; internalized colonialism to evaluate the ways in which colonialism has become embedded within Indigenous land-based education; Indigenous feminisms to highlight the role of Indigenous feminist theory and unpack the impacts of colonization on Indigenous women and girls and by extension our relationships with Land; ecofeminism to consider the links between the oppression of women and the natural world; the gendering of Land and the more-than-human world to explore the impacts this has on Indigenous land-based education; and Indigenous languages to consider how understandings of gender are coded within these languages.

Indigenous Notions of Gender and Critiques of Colonial Assumptions of Gender

Many Indigenous cultures hold notions of gender and sexual identities that are fluid and exist on spectrums that are far more expansive than colonial gender binary (Sheppard & Mayo, 2013; A. Wilson, 1996, 2008). Two-Spirit identities are representative of the more expansive understandings of gender and sexualities that exist in many Indigenous cultures. Increasingly, Indigenous gender diversity is being assertively reclaimed (Wesley, 2015). The reclamation of

gender diversity and Two-Spirit identity within Indigenous communities represents a "critical refusal" (Tuck & Yang, 2012) of settler-colonial heteropatriarchy and the healing of sexualities in Indigenous communities (Kermoal & Altamirano-Jiménez, 2016). Specifically, considering gender within land-based learning and place-based learning is an example of critical refusal, as constructions of gender are not exempt from the impacts of colonialism. According to the literature, the attempts to destroy Indigenous configurations of gender have fractured people's relationships with Land, especially the gendering of land-based practices (A. Wilson, 2018a).

Throughout the multitude of colonial eras and projects, gendered forms of violence have been consistently employed as tools of subjugation (Arvin et al., 2013). Other suppression measures included excluding Indigenous women (Greene, 2007), transgender, and Two-Spirit people from the places and positions of power, grinding up their senses of self, unravelling their social safety nets, and demoralizing their spirits while leaving them raw and vulnerable (Hall, 2017; Wesley, 2015; A. Wilson, 2018c), Unsettling colonial configurations of gender as they are (re)produced in land-based and place-based learning is a critical aspect of decolonization. This includes the revitalization of Indigenous notions of gender, supporting the (re)making of relationships with Land (especially for those whose bodies have been violated), and (re)affirming the identities of people who are dangerously othered by colonial gendering (Kermoal & Altamirano-Jiménez, 2016; A. Wilson, 2018a, 2018c).

Impacts of Colonialism and the Colonial Gender Binary

Arvin and colleagues (2013) offer that:

> Settler colonialism is a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonizers/setters come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there. Within settler colonialism, it is exploitation of the land that yields supreme value. In order for settlers to usurp the land and extract its value, Indigenous peoples must be destroyed, removed, and made into ghosts. (p. 11)

Colonization works through the coercive cooptation and control of lands and "resources". Its prominent features are displacement, and the extinguishing of Indigenous cultures and often people (Baldy, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wildcat, 2014). Land relating is how Indigenous people make sense of our lives, so life without meaningful relationships with Land becomes

senseless. Exposing the gendered processes inherent in settler colonialism (Arvin et al., 2013; Goeman, 2013) is one way to examine how the gendering of labour and land-based practices currently operating in land-based and place-based education came to be configured.

Giving the example of Manifest Destiny, Arvin, and colleagues (2013) demonstrate why analyzing the points of convergence between colonialism and patriarchy, as an example of a gendered power process, is critical. They assert that:

> … when Manifest Destiny is re-examined at the intersection of colonization and patriarchy, it is evident that the strategy is not at all benign, but a convenient rationale that has permitted genocide. Manifest Destiny relied upon gendered and arrogant notions of the dominion of man over the earth… (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 26)

Furthermore, the gendered violence inherent in settler colonialism which impacted Indigenous women, girls, transgender, and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land, also interfered with their relationships with and within their Nations, undermining both their status and citizenship. Arvin and colleagues (2013) offer that:

> The imposition of heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism does much to interrupt Indigenous nations' very "sense of being a people" (Smith, 2005, p. 3), with serious material consequences for Indigenous nations' futures. It is important to note that in many cases the enforcement of "proper" gender roles is entangled in settler nations' attempts to limit and manage Indigenous peoples' claims to land. (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 15)

Arvin and colleagues provide an example of how blood quantum policies, which also regulate the lives of other Indigenous groups in both the United States and Canada, impact Native Hawaiians via the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. Only Native Hawaiians who could prove to have over 50 percent Hawaiian "blood" would be permitted to lease (never own) small allotments of land. Despite Native Hawaiians having genealogy that is inclusive of both matrilineal and patrilineal lines and never based solely on blood, the 50 percent of Hawaiian blood amount has become the recognized standard. Gender discrimination in this Act, and in other colonial policies that regulate how Indigenous nation citizenship is recognized, including rights, land-rights, and the ability to pass on their recognized status to children impact women more heavily. Refusing settler heteropatriarchy and rejecting its manifestations, including the blood-quantum policies in Canada and the United States, are effective strategies of

decolonization. The aim of these strategies is to (re)make relationships between humans and more-than-human relations.

Both land-based and place-based learning play a role in these efforts as they interrupt epistemic and gendered violence (Kermoal & Altamirano-Jiménez, 2016; A. Wilson, 2018a, 2018c). It is in the revival of Indigenous knowledge based on relational accountability and the (re)making of kinship relationships that both land-based and place-based learning interrupt these colonial agendas and their harmful legacies (McKenzie, 2008; Simpson, 2014; Tuck et al., 2014). This includes responding to the legacies of legislation in both America and Canada that criminalized the practice of Indigenous culture and spirituality. These legislations legitimized the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families and Land and placed them into residential, boarding, and day schools (TRC, 2015).

Internalized Colonialism

Substantial and vital critiques of colonialism exist. They call into account the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the assault on Indigenous languages, cultures, and knowledges (Cole, 2004; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2017). However, there remains critical reflective and reflexive work to be done to expose how deeply colonialism has interrupted Indigenous ways of knowing (Simpson, 2017; Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018; A. Wilson, 2018c). Doing so would expose the complex ways in which colonial attributes may be internalized unknowingly by Indigenous peoples, for instance, as survival mechanisms. More analysis would safeguard against our reproduction of colonial violence on the bodies, minds, and spirits of our relatives. For example, what is now understood as "traditional Indigenous teachings" are not without the marks of colonization and assimilation (Greene, 2007; A. Wilson, 1996, 2018a). If not critically analyzed and interrupted, colonial configurations – specifically those tied to gender and sexual identities, maybe falsely presented as "traditional teachings". A. Wilson (2018a) provides the example of the imposition of the Judeo-Christian framework on Cree spiritual teachings stating:

> … now, instead of ten commandments, we are directed to follow "teachings," which draw on the same ideas and generate the same outcomes you might find in a Christian church and impacts the bodies of Indigenous people in diverse and asymmetrical ways. It

> introduces a framework that is hierarchical and that benefits certain people and oppresses others, in particular, women and Two-Spirit people. (p. 134)

When colonial tendencies are perpetuated through "traditional teachings," it very dangerously pushes our relations, whose identities are more expansive than gender binary, outside the protection of our kinship systems. This situation can have very deadly consequences for relatives who are othered, as evidenced in the epidemic rates of violent deaths and suicides in Indigenous communities (A. Wilson, 2018a).

In the re-telling of a childhood experience dancing at a powwow, A. Wilson (1996) demonstrates how internalized colonialism results in the reproduction of oppression within Indigenous communities. She writes:

> I was really enjoying myself, dancing the way that I wanted to. I was picking up my feet and even taking spinning steps at times. The old people were watching from the chairs on the side in encouraging silences, clapping their knees, and smiling, inviting us to continue. Everything seemed so natural. I was learning new steps by watching what others were doing and learning the Cree songs in my head. Then a friend danced up alongside of me and told me to quit dancing like a boy. Confused, wondering how I could dance the steps wrong, I stopped. After that evening, I became self-conscious about the toys I wanted to play with. Knowing became not knowing, and the sureness of my experiences was replaced by a growing certainty that I could not be the girl that was wanted outside of my family. Being "different" was no longer a gift, and my self-consciousness led me to learn ways to present and ways to hide myself. (A. Wilson, 1996, p. 311)

From this note, it is apparent that both Wilson and the other child were deeply affected by the imposition of the colonial gender binary. This experience is demonstrative of how "traditional teachings," such as who can and cannot dance a certain powwow style, become weaponized, and unwittingly carry out the work of colonialism. It is critical to mount direct interventions that mitigate against the reproduction of oppression in land-based and place-based teaching and learning. Neglecting to do so only serves to reaffirm the colonial agenda, and to further marginalize Indigenous women, transgender, Two-Spirit people, and Land beyond the protective zones of Indigenous kinship systems and relational accountability.

Indigenous Feminisms

A brief but critical section on Indigenous feminisms is included. This inclusion acknowledges the imperative role of Indigenous feminist theory and critique in unpacking the impact of colonization on Indigenous women and girls – specifically, about gender-based violence. Indigenous feminist theories pursue two central and interwoven ideas. Firstly, Western countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are settler-colonial nation-states. Secondly, setter colonialism is inherently a gendered process (Arvin et al., 2013; Goeman, 2013; Hall, 2017) offers that **"**since European contact with the Americas, many of these Indigenous American traditions have been misrepresented and misinterpreted. Within an imposed construct based on eighteenth-century European values, difference became deviance." (A. Wilson, 1996, p. 306). This othering of non-conforming Indigenous peoples, and the erasure of Indigenous knowledge on the diversity of gender and sexualities, was accomplished through tactical colonial assaults that were strategically located at the intersection of both racialized and gendered violence.

Indigenous feminist critique interrupts the false narrative which states that gendered violence is now, and has always been, absent from Indigenous cultures (Arvin et al., 2013; St. Denis, 2007). Greene (2007), for example, asserts:

> Rejecting the rhetoric and institutions of the colonizer by embracing the symbols of one's culture and traditions is a strategy for reclaiming the primacy of one's own context in the world, against the imposition of colonials. But, in the absence of an analysis of the power relations embedded in tradition, it is not necessarily a liberatory strategy. Each choice must be interrogated on its own merits, relative to the objective of a contemporary emancipatory formulation that will benefit Aboriginal men, women, and children. Feminist critique is an essential part of this process. (p. 27)

While interrogating what is internalized as a cultural understanding to determine if it reproduces oppression can be uncomfortable and even result in backlash (Wilson, 2018), it is an important intervention. A. Wilson (1996) provides an example of how this can be accomplished in a non-harmful way. She notes that Indigenous cultures extended specific roles and responsibilities to Two-Spirit peoples, including as "bridge makers between male and female, spiritual and material, between Indigenous American and non-Indigenous American" (p. 305). In this case, she also problematizes how academics have interpreted Two-Spirit identity as "special".

Wilson (1996) notes that within our (Swampy Cree traditional territory), "the act of declaring some peoples as special threatens to separate them from their community and creates an imbalance. Traditionally, Two-Spirit people were simply part of the entire community…" (p. 305). By situating Two-Spirit peoples as part of the community, rather than categorizing Two-Spirit people as "special," which operates as a kind of othering, they are held within, rather than pushed outside, the web of reciprocal relationships which forms the basis of Indigenous worldviews (S. Wilson, 2008). A. Wilson (1996) demonstrates how Indigenous knowledge can be centered in the work of ensuring that teachings bring people closer into the protection of kinship systems rather than push them further away.

Finally, it is imperative to recognize that Indigenous feminism makes possible the radical imagining and shaping of futurities in which Indigenous sovereignty can be asserted and heteropatriarchy can be defeated (Arvin et al., 2013). On the intentions and potentialities of Indigenous Feminism, Arvin and colleagues (2013) write:

> We affirm the usefulness of a Native Feminism's analysis and, indeed, declare that Native feminist analysis is crucial if we are determined to decolonize as Native peoples … [F]or Native women, there is no one definition of Native Feminism; rather, there are multiple definitions and layers of what it means to do Native feminist analysis. However, as Native feminists, our dreams and goals overlap; we desire to open up spaces where generations of colonialism have silenced Native peoples about the status of their women and about the intersections of power and domination that have also shaped Native nations and gender relations. We rely on still developing frameworks for Native feminisms to examine and reflect upon the reverberations in our Native homelands. (p. 13)

Decolonization is premised on the remaking of relationships with Land (Chilisa, 2012; Friedel, 2013; Simpson, 2014; Wildcat, 2014). But, incorporating Indigenous feminist theory and critique (Arvin et al., 2013; Denis, 2007; Greene, 2007) is necessary. It will engage people in land-based and place-based learning that does not reinforce settler-colonial heteropatriarchy and perpetuate gendered violence, in both the human and more-than-human realms (Kermoal & Altamirano-Jiménez, 2016; A. Wilson, 2018a).

Ecofeminism

Indigenous feminism and ecofeminism appear in separate sections in this chapter. This manifestation is because although they both centre the experiences of women and consider the links between the oppression of women and the natural world, they have dissimilar units of analysis (Arvin et al., 2013). For example, the relational epistemologies embedded in many Indigenous cultures produce distinct knowledge that inform Indigenous feminist theory – knowledge that may not be central within ecofeminist theory. Indigenous feminism involves an intersectional lens and considers relationships between the human and the more-than-human world (Arvin et al., 2013; Watts, 2013). On the other hand, ecofeminism draws on the insights of ecology, feminism, and socialism and is concerned with the connections between the subjugation of women, people of colour, children, and the poor and the domination of nature (Gaard, 1993; Goeman, 2013; Gough & Whitehouse, 2018; Plumwood, 1993; Warren, 2000). In, "Nature is a feminist issue", Warren (2000) states:

> According to ecofeminists, trees, water, food production, animals, toxins, and more, generally, naturism (i.e., the unjustified domination of nonhuman nature) are feminist issues because understanding them helps one understand the interconnections among the domination of women and other subordinated groups of humans ("other human Others"), on the one hand, and the domination of nonhuman nature, on the other hand. (p. 1)

Ecofeminism applies a feminist lens to investigate and interrupt how both women and nature are othered, exploited, and dominated (Gaard, 1993; Lloro-Bidart, 2018; Warren, 2000). It asserts that "no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature" (Gaard, 1993, p. 1). Therefore, it represents an important feature of both land-based and place-based learning that seeks to unsettle how gendered processes operate to (re)produce the subjugation of both women and the more-than-human world.

It is important to note that ecofeminism also contends with the oppressions that women and queer people face as educators and practitioners. This aspect occurs within models of education that engage the more-than-human world, including land-based, place-based, environmental, and outdoor education. The same forms of exploitation, domination, and oppression that impact women and nature, impact the treatment of women and queer peoples as educators and practitioners. This occurrence includes the minimizing and/or dismissal of their skills, knowledge, and contributions, and aggressive backlash for disrupting heteropatriarchy,

heteronormativity, and sexualized violence (Gough, 1999; Gough & Whitehouse, 2018; Lloro-Bidart, 2018; Mitten, Gray, Allan-Craig, Loeffler, & Carpenter; Russel, Gough, & Whitehouse, 2018). This particular form of gendered violence is compounded with racism in the experience of Indigenous women, and Two-Spirit people, who are practitioners and educators doing the work of unsettling heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity in "traditional teachings" and both formal and informal land-based and place-based learning environments (A. Wilson, 2018a).

"Mother Earth": Gendering Land and the More-than-Human World

The gendering of Land in texts written by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors offers an important invitation to analyse the impacts of applying gender configurations to the more-than-human world in the context of a patriarchal society. Roach (1991) discusses the conflation of female and nature (Gruen, 1993), that results in the gendering of the earth as female, and more so as maternal. It is important to problematize the positioning of nature as female within a patriarchal context in phrases such as "Love Your Mother," and "Mother Earth" (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Styres, 2008), and "Mother Nature," which are commonly used in texts written by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors on relationships between humans and Land (Roach, 1991). Roach (1991) offers that:

> Engendering the Earth as female mother, given the meaning and function traditionally assigned to "mother" and "motherhood" in patriarchal culture, will not achieve the desired aim of making our behaviour more environmentally sound, but will instead be held to maintain the mutually supportive, exploitative stances we take toward our mothers and toward our environment. (p. 47)

While Roach (1991) is not writing from an Indigenous perspective, this astute observation draws linkages between the violence experienced by Land and those experienced by women, girls, transgender, and Two-Spirit people. It advances the idea, however, that Indigenous peoples' positioning of Nature as female is fundamentally different.

Within the context of settler heteropatriarchal society, the gendering of Nature as female – and further, as a mother, compounds the violence that both Land and people gendered as women or "other," including transgender and Two-Spirit people endure. It also serves to essentialize women's bodies as sites of reproduction (Butler, 1993; A. Wilson, 1996), and (re)affirms the harmful positioning of the more-than-human world as "resources" without agency and needs

(Plumwood, 1993). Roach (1991) ties this analysis to one of the fundamental points of ecofeminism: "the way we think about and treat the environment is related to the way we think about and treat women" (p. 47).

By specifically considering the slogan "Love Your Mother," used in an environmental poster that shows an image of the globe, Roach (1991) problematizes the women-nature link. Roach (1991) suggests the imperative to "love" is meant to convey "the exhortation to care for and maintain the health of the Earth" (p. 47). She further suggests that the term, "mother" conveys that "we are all closely tied to the environment, as our existence once depended on a mother or mother-figures almost always female" (Roach, 1991, p. 47). These suggestions offer the foundation on which to analyse both the treatment of the Earth, women, and mothers. Furthermore, Roach (1991) poses an important question to environmentalists, "why do these environmentalists choose to pass through the metaphor of loving one's mother to express their message of environmental soundness?" (p. 47). She then offers that we are all closely tied to the environment that our very existence derives from, and depends on, a healthy environment.

Roach (1991) ties messages such as "Love Your Mother" to two general ideas: "we all should and can love our real-life mothers and that all can intuitively grasp how the Earth is, in a sense, our mother" (p. 48). According to her, the metaphor of motherhood lends itself to nature and its life-giving and life-sustaining abilities such as oxygen, food, and water. She believes that the Earth is like mothers in certain ways because of the problematic ways mothers and motherhood function within patriarchy. However, the link between mother and nature reinforces the subjugation of women, mothers, and the Earth (Roach, 1991). She writes:

> Instead of leading us to greater environmental soundness, the strategy of picturing the Earth as our mother could have the exact opposite effect. Mother in a patriarchal culture is she who provides all of our sustenance and who makes disappear all of our waste products, she who satisfies all of our wants and needs endlessly and without any cost to us. Mother is she who loves us and will take care of us no matter what. The last thing the environmental movement should do is encourage us to think of the environment in these terms. (Roach, 1991, p. 49)

This argument suggests more effective and less harmful ways in which to go about environmental education that "biodegrade" the dualism between nature and culture (Plumwood,

1993). It interrupts how patriarchy oppresses women and those othered by the colonial gender binary.

Anchored in the upholding of the link between woman and nature, is the nature-culture binary. Linking these two configurations positions men as closer to culture (Gruen, 1993; Roach, 1991). Roach (1991) states that "Much work has been done in feminist and ecofeminist theory to document how women have traditionally been perceived as closer to nature and men as closer to culture and how women in patriarchal culture have suffered from these perceptions" (p. 50). The woman-nature link serves to dehumanize women, and arguably, also those who do not conform to the colonial gender binary (Plumwood, 1993; Roach, 1991). Roach (1991) offers:

> Women are perceived to merge with nature, to be part of the nonhuman surround and only subhuman. Similarly, nature is perceived as female, as a virgin resource to be exploited or raped, as sharing in women's semi human quality. Women are perceived as a "natural resource". (p. 51)

However, Roach (1991) neglects to consider how race intersects with gender in relation to the woman-nature link and omits a discussion of the ways that colonialism has and continues to entrench the woman-culture binary. This is a critical omission as it is imperative to acknowledge the specific ways Black women (Collins, 2011; Crenshaw, 1991), Indigenous women, transgender, and Two-Spirit people are impacted within settler-colonial heteropatriarchal contexts.

In addition to interrogating the gendering of nature within patriarchal culture and environmentalism, it is also important to carefully consider how Indigenous peoples gender Land within what's now understood as "traditional teachings" and in academic literature, where terms such as "Mother Earth" and "Mother Nature" are commonly used. For example, on the position of Land within land-based learning, Manulani Meyer (2008) writes:

> Land is our mother. This is not a metaphor. For the Native Hawaiians speaking of knowledge, land was the central theme that drew forth all others. You came from a place. You grew in a place and you had a relationship with a place. This is an epistemological idea ... One does not simply learn about land, we learn best from land. (Meyer, 2008, p. 219)

While Roach (1991) critiques the metaphorical use of Earth and mother, Meyer (2008) asserts that Land as a mother transcends metaphor. This contrasting positioning of nature is based on

epistemological differences which either deny or extend agency and animacy to the more-than-human world. By extension, these approaches position the more-than-human world as separate and inferior, or as related and equal to humans. For this reason, the analytical argument tied to patriarchal culture and the conflation with women and nature should be very carefully employed in unpacking how Indigenous peoples gender the more-than-human world.

Not all Indigenous academics subscribe to the gendering of Land as female or mother. A. Wilson (2018) contributes another layer to the discussion by involving the examination of Indigenous languages in considering the gendering of the more-than-human world within Indigenous cultures and teachings. She states:

> In my conversations, I've learned that traditionally we did not have a concept for "Mother Earth." With that knowledge, I had to learn more about when and why that concept appeared. What is evident is that it is about the relationship and relationality between us and the land and waters. We come from the earth and we rely upon the earth to sustain us. When we refer to Mother Earth, we are saying that we have a deep and loving relationship with these lands and waters that we depend upon. Similarly, in our language, the moon is not referred to as "Grandmother Moon." It is just the moon. When we say Grandmother Moon, we are understanding and acknowledging that the moon impacts bodies of water, that we, as humans, are constituted of water, so of course, the moon impacts us. In Indigenous cultures, the moon might be a brother, a father, or a grandmother. We are all right because the terms we use are a way to acknowledge the relationship we have with the moon. In my family, I was taught that our language does not gender people, but of course, we have descriptive terms for "man" and "woman." The existence of those words does not mean that we only acknowledge two genders in general. Rather, they are terms that mark specific gender positions on a continuum. (A. Wilson, 2018a, p. 144)

A. Wilson (2018) demonstrates how tracing understandings through Indigenous languages helps to reveal what notions are rooted in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, and which may have been shaped by colonial influences. Although different, both Meyers (2008) and A. Wilson (2018) uphold the ethic of relationality in their positioning of the more-than-human world as a part of Indigenous kinship systems.

Indigenous Languages and the Impacts of Colonial Constructions of Gender

Considering Indigenous languages and the impact of English is also useful when examining how settler-colonial heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity have distorted Indigenous knowledges

within oral histories and storytelling pedagogies. A. Wilson (2018) provides the example of Weesageychak stories and offers that when they are retold in English, Weesageychak is often gendered as male and appears as male in illustrated versions of the stories. This representation results in people positioning Weesageychak in the colonial gender binary as male. As A. Wilson (2018a) asserts, however, "Weesageychak is not male or female. Weesageychak is energy" (p. 142). The reclamation of Weesageychak's neither male nor female identity in storytelling serves to reassert Indigenous knowledge and notions of gender. It represents an important paradigm shift that allows for land-based and place-based pedagogies that reflect and affirm the diverse identities of educators, practitioners, and learners.

Examining how patriarchy operates in the subjugation of women and nature is critical to Indigenous communities. This is especially the case owing to settler colonialism's attempted erasure of Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous knowledge has been a victim of erasure and in consequence, are not unburdened by the nature-culture dichotomy and by the oppression of women, transgender, and Two-Spirit people. It represents a continuation of the epistemic violence, however, to assume that this argument applies in the same ways in settler and Indigenous gendering schemes. Land as female and/or as a mother within what is now understood as teachings and in literature written by Indigenous authors represents the relational epistemologies of many Indigenous cultures. It serves to (re)make the kinship relationships that were so deeply impacted by the assaults of colonialism. From the standpoint of relational epistemologies, Meyer (2008) and other Indigenous academics (Cole, 2016; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Sheridan & Longboat, 2014; Styres, 2018) refer to Land and the Earth as a mother to reaffirm the kinship systems in which the more-than-human world is protected through ethics of relational accountability. This is in stark contrast with how the gendering of nature operates within patriarchal cultures.

It is important to note, however, that a direct consequence of the legacy of colonization is that Indigenous communities are deeply impacted by patriarchy (Greene, 2007). Additionally, Indigenous feminists suggest that while patriarchy is an imposed power structure via colonization, and Indigenous women, Two-Spirit people, and Indigenous homelands are all more heavily impacted by gendered colonial violence, it should not be assumed that Indigenous

women do not suffer marginalization within their communities (St. Denis, 2007). It should be considered in evaluating what is now understood as "traditional teachings" to reveal gendered violence that may have existed before colonization, and that which is engrained within colonization. Although, it is contemporarily common for Indigenous peoples to apply configurations of gender to the more-than-human world through the lens of relational epistemologies, "traditional teachings" should be critically analyzed – specifically concerning how they (re)affirm configurations of gender. If necessary, they must be interrupted to ensure that they do not act as vehicles for the perpetuation of gendered violence (Greene, 2007).

Within cultures based on relational epistemologies and ethics of relational accountability that extend agency and animacy to Land and the more-than-human world, gendering may not have the same negative consequences as those suggested by Roach (1991). For example, in referring to the Earth and "Mother Earth," Sheridan and Longboat (2014) position the natural world as sentient and as having language. They write:

> We advocate not to stop talking but to learn to listen and speak again, and not to forget everything we've learned but to enrich our understanding from the lessons and dialogue with Mother Earth in her many Indigenous linguistic ecosystems. (p. 319)

In suggesting a dialogue with the Land, they position Land as having the capacity to give or deny consent. In the era of the #MeToo movement, acknowledging the natural world's agency to extend consent or deny consent is critical. The liberation of women through movements such as #MeToo also serves to intervene in the violence waged on the more-than-human world. This encourages the ethic of consent in relation to Land and the more-than-human world. For example, one might consider climate disaster as Land's denial of consent to resource extraction projects, and the assaults of other harmful relationships it is forced into. This is also an interesting concept to pursue in terms of state-determined reconciliation. As reconciliation is fundamentally about the (re)making of relationships, we should consider what happens when Land refuses to reconcile with the human world.

Land-based and Place-based Learning

Considering gender within land-based and place-based learning is critical. It serves to interrupt the ways the colonial gender binary, heteropatriarchy, and heteronormativity have operated as

tools of colonial projects, fracturing relationships between humans and Land, and resulting in the erasure of land-based knowledge. The worldviews encompassed within colonial and Indigenous ways of knowing and being are drastically divergent. This includes notions of gender and the positioning of Land as something to dominate or be in relation with. Critically examining these differences in the context of land-based and place-based pedagogies allows for the (re)creating of learning with Land, and on Land, in ways that are not steeped in gender-based violence. In specific reference to Indigenous land-based education, A. Wilson (2018a) suggests that:

> It is really critical that, as we move forward as Indigenous people, we reclaim and nurture our relationship with the land and water because you cannot really protect something you do not know much about. The more you learn about the land and water, the more you realize that they determine everything. When you're on the land, all the socially constructed hierarchies around gender, around sexual orientation, around race, or around class disappear. The land engenders itself and we engender it. (p. 134)

Land-based learning, like the Indigenous land-based education Master's in Education program (A. Wilson, 2018a) at the University of Saskatchewan, represents a re(centering) of Indigenous land-based relationships and interruption of the nature-culture binary that operates to serve human and more-than-human relationships (Simpson, 2014). It resists the ways in which settler-colonial heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity (re)produce gender-based violence and regulate the bodies of women, transgender, and Two-Spirit people, inhibiting the relationships between self and Land (Newbery, 2003). As a graduate of the program, I had the opportunity to (re)make a relationship with my territory on the final land-based experience which was a canoe trip from Cumberland House First Nation to Opaskwayak First Nation. During the canoe trip, both my physical and emotional self were challenged to unlearn what I had been taught about the limitations and responsibilities of my body as a woman. This included the gendering of land-based practices such as portaging. This is a theme that Newberry (2003) considers in her own experience as an outdoor educator. She offers that:

> Carrying a canoe often becomes a symbolic display and assertion of masculinity, which then positions female bodies in complicated and contradictory ways when underneath a boat. It is my contention that when we carry a boat, we are also carrying the weight of liberal humanism, dis/ability, gender, class, and race; we carry the weight of Western culture. (p. 205)

In a similar experience as Newberry, along the waters of my traditional territory, it is under the weight of a canoe, that I began to question what I was taught about the limitations of my female

body and its capacity for strength. I realized then, carrying a canoe on the Land my family has been in a relationship with for generations, my agency to liberate myself from the confines of heteropatriarchy. Although this might seem like a simple individual experience, it represents a radical transformation in myself and in how I approach my own Indigenous land-based education pedagogy. It includes doing the precarious work of disrupting the proliferation of gender binaries by Elders and knowledge keepers, in what is upheld as "traditional teachings".

As settler colonialism has used a gendered process to separate bodies from Land (Arvin et al., 2013), centering Land in the (re)making of these relationships is integral. As Simpson (2014) suggests, knowledge comes up through the land, however, we have to be free to put our bodies back on the land to pick-up that knowledge. Within land-based and place-based learning, it is imperative to identify and interrupt how colonial configurations of gender impede the remaking of these relationships as certain bodies continue to be regulated and disciplined (Butler, 1993) to adhere to particular relations to Land (A. Wilson, 2018a).

Through the colonial gendering of specific land-based practices (Newbery, 2003), women, transgender, and Two-Spirit peoples' access to and relationships with Land have become highly policed (Hall, 2017; A. Wilson, 2018a). This is in direct contrast with the Ethic of Non-Interference that exists in many Indigenous cultures (Brant, 1990; A. Wilson, 1996). A. Wilson (1996) notes that the Ethic of Non-Interference, "refers to the expectation that Indigenous Americans should not interfere in any way with another person" (p. 307). This ethic, she says, has:

> … shaped culturally distinctive childrearing practices in Indigenous American communities. Generally, children are allowed to explore the world without the limitations of punishment and praise, or privileges withheld and rewards promised by members of the community. Children are taught through the patient practice of modeling, by stories, and by example. (A. Wilson, 1996, p. 307)

Before the assault of colonialism on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, this ethic would have been applied to gender and, in turn, would have influenced how people made their relationships with Land through land-based practices. A. Wilson (1996) uses a narrative to discuss how this ethic operated in her own experience as a child. She writes:

> I was allowed to hunt with a gun, and my moosom, my grandfather, taught me and my brothers how to make snares to trap ermines and rabbits on the frozen creek behind our house. In my family, I was taught what I wanted to learn. (p. 311)

Through the Ethic of Non-Interference, A. Wilson (1996) was shielded from the colonial gendering of land-based practices, and her identity was affirmed in being supported to engage in a relationship with Land that she intuitively self-directed. A.Wilson's moosom's resistance of the gender binary by refusing to separate her from her brothers and not telling her that hunting was a practice unacceptable for girls reflect the work that is necessary for land-based and place-based learning. It ensures that all peoples are supported to (re)make relationships with Land and more-than-human relations on their terms.

An example of how interference operates to reify the colonial gender binary is found in Blenkinsop and colleagues' (2017) discussion of how cisgender boys are limited in the ways they are allowed to engage with the more-than-human world. Blenkinsop and colleagues (2017) suggest that the possibilities deemed acceptable for cisgender boys in terms of the engagement with the more-than-human world have been "systematically subdued by a patriarchal culture that normalizes alienation... and a particular and reductive conception of masculinity – often enforced through violence or threats of violence" (Blenkinsop, Piersol, & Sitka-Sage, 2017, p. 350). It is important to also acknowledge the ways in which cisgender boys and men are impacted by the rigidity of the gender binary and patriarchy. This rigidity creates and encourages harmful and destructive relationships with both humans and more-than-human relations. If not interrupted, it can be replicated within both land-based and place-based learning through "traditional teachings," curriculum, theories, and pedagogies (Blenkinsop et al., 2017; A. Wilson, 2018a).

Finally, there is a pressing need for more learning environments (both formal and informal) that specifically unsettle settler-colonial heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity. For example, in discussing her class called "Queer Theories and Identities" at Ryerson University, Smith (2013) notes students' "… need to experience a course in which their lives are fully recognized" (p. 468). As A. Wilson (2018) and others (Bang, 2015; Simpson, 2014; Styres, 2008; Wildcat, 2014) suggest, the (re)making of relationships with Land through making real connections with Land, represents a concrete way to interrupt the colonial agenda and undo how it has harmed

humans, especially women, transgender, and Two-Spirit people, and the more-than-human world.

Conclusion

From spending time with the reviewed literature, it became evident that the attempted erasure of Indigenous notions of gender and the forceful imposition of the colonial gender binary via colonization have served to fracture Indigenous peoples' relationships with Land. This filled me with such an urgency to both go about this research and find ways to mobilize the knowledges that the research (re)produces. The reality is, that if left uninterrupted, heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity, which operate within land-based and place-based education, will further entrench the subjugation of women, transgender, Two-Spirit people, and the more-than-human world. It is imperative to both critically analyze and intervene in the (re)production of heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity and to unsettle notions of normative binary gender.

Critical focus through an Indigenous Feminist lens is needed on both Indigenous "traditional teachings" and colonial gender configurations. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the fundamentally different epistemologies and ontologies that inform each orientation. These aspects are practical steps toward ensuring that both the human and more-than-human world may be liberated from exploitation, domination, and other forms of degradation. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to increase the availability of land-based and place-based learning environments that are both representative and affirming of diverse identities and experiences. These learning environments would facilitate the (re)making of peoples' relationships with Land. Knowledge comes up though Land, by supporting people to (re)connect with Land they are more able to pick those knowledges up.

The understandings that I gained from reviewing the literature gathered informed how I connected with the research participants during interviews and was in relationship with what they contributed to the research during data analysis. It's by reviewing the literature that I came to understand the position of relational accountability that I occupy as a researcher and came to deeper awareness of the potential impact of the research in both affirming the lives of Indigenous

women, girls, transgender, and Two-Spirit relatives and protecting the Land and more-than human world.

In the following chapter, I will present the methodology I used to engage my research and briefly introduce the research participants. I will also share how I understand and relate to Indigenous research methodologies and how I analyzed the data I collected using voice centered relational method.

Chapter 3: The Current that Guided the Work Forward

It's just me in this canoe
But I am not alone
Water knows me, knows us
Water cradles the new ones, tipping them side to side
Creating ripples that grow and grow until they're beyond our sight
Water rocks the ancient ones, back and forth
They sing in voices that creak
Can you hear them?
Together, We are in motion
Swept up in this current that guides us forward,

- Tasha Spillett, July 20, 2022

I was deliberate and intentional in moving forward with my methodology. I knew early on that this journey would be both deeply personal and well-rooted in the knowledges and experiences of my community[2]. I felt pulled to pursue research that would affirm the lives, joys, and overall wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit relations and our connections to Land. I have always felt a tremendous responsibility to ensure that my PhD journey would not be extractive, but instead would offer something of value to my community; something that would move people forward towards our collective liberation.

My mother's constant reminder throughout all seasons of my life is that we are only able to accomplish great things because people and places have supported us to do so, and there is accountability in this. To ground me, she would say, "When you feel frustrated in the work you are doing, remember the people who sacrificed a great deal to bring us to where we are now, so that you have the privilege of working for your people" (L. Spillett, personal communication, 2014).

[2] I'm an Afro-Indigenous woman of both Trinidad and Ininewak bloodlines. I have an urban Afro-Indigenous experience and consider my community to be the Indigenous community in Winnipeg, with a strong connection to the Ininewak territory in Northern Manitoba.

This research feels like the most important work that I have undertaken, next to birthing and mothering my daughter. I am aware that this work is possible only because my family and community have given me the time and space to do the work that my mother reminded me is part of my journey. They have supported and invested their trust and energy in me so that I could immerse myself in their knowledges and learn about their relationships. What I have learned from this time is what I seek to respectfully share in the following pages.

To honour these responsibilities and accountabilities, I adopted an Indigenous research paradigm as a theoretical framework to organize what was important to know and outlined relational research methods as a means for analyzing and producing this knowledge (Absolon, 2011; Cole, 2004; Lavallée, 2009; Simpson, 2014; Smith, 1999; Styres, 2008; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008). My methodology is contextualized by being an urban Afro-Inninew woman, and by additional intersectional positioning factors that afford me a unique way of seeing and being in relation to the world.

I was first formally introduced to Indigenous research paradigms during my Master of Education in Indigenous land-based education concentration by Drs. Alex Wilson, Raven Sinclair, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. This was a time of deep (re)connection for me, as that first land-based instruction took place in my home territory in Northern Manitoba, near my mother's home community of Wekusko, Manitoba. In addition to this valuable education, this experience was also healing as I had not been back to visit this place after my nohkom, Dorothy Carriere, passed.

During this first land-based institute, I came to understand that I had in fact been socialized and prepared to pursue Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies informally throughout my life, beginning far before I have memory. My understandings and familiarity with Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies have continued to grow since that time, all nurtured though literature, relationships, and practice. Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies always appear as plural in my writing to honour that there is no singular Indigenous paradigm on which to base any singular Truth (Kovach, 2010; McAdam, 2015; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2008). Outside of some universal truths that maintain constants such as the sun rising in

the east and setting in the west, or the freezing point of water, for example, a plurality of truths exists based on multiple intersecting factors such as peoples' unique experiences, positionalities, social locations, and land-based contexts.

It is Indigenous peoples' unique epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies that are directly tied to our connections to our land bases and cosmologies. The ways these are configured provide the foundations for Indigenous paradigms and methodologies (Coulthard, 2014; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2008). Within Indigenous research paradigms epistemology refers to the understanding of knowledge (Meyer, 2008, 2013a, 2013b; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001), and knowledge is understood to be holistic and cyclical in nature, and to be relational (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2008). Knowledge is not held within the confines of the mental sphere but is seen as also being physical, spiritual, and emotional (Chilisa, 2012; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001). Dr. Manulani Meyer describes epistemology as "the idea of knowledge" (Meyer, 2018, p.37) and the processes through which we make the distinction between knowledge, knowing, and understanding. I had the privilege of studying with Dr. Meyer in Hawai'i as a teaching assistant in a M.Ed Indigenous land-based education course. During that time, Dr. Meyer taught us about epistemology through the practice of mihi [3] which she shared is the Maori discipline of orating an idea or standing to thank a person for what they said and its impact on you. It is this form of loved based mentoring, in which you offer an authentic summary of what you've learned from the person and how that knowledge moved or changed you. Dr. Meyer offered me mihi in Hawai'i after my very first delivery of a presentation on the initial form of what has become this research. It felt very humbling to have her stand before me and state with tender authority the ways in which my research intentions and the knowledges shared had impacted her.

Ontology refers to the understandings of reality/state of being (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001). Within an Indigenous research paradigm reality is seen as being relational and holistic. Tuck and McKenzie (2015) describe an element of Indigenous ontology within discussions of the "notion of the long view" (Cajete, 1994; S. Wilson, 2008), which refers to millennia-long knowing of time. This notion brings my mind to my childhood where I would

[3] For native Hawai'ian relatives the word mihi carries the meaning of forgiveness, repentance, remorse, to apologize

hear stories that started with terms like tapwe kiyas (a very long time ago), or in English with words like “in a time before we have memory”. Never once do I remember feeling or thinking that the happenings of the story were in any way untrue, fantastical, or fabricated just because it happened in a time before time had been marked. For example, one of the first times I remember hearing the Ansishinaabeg creation story, the Elder said with authority something along the lines of, “this is how the people came to be here, this creation story is true. All creation stories are different, and all of them are true”.

Axiology refers to the understanding of ethics and values (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001). Within an Indigenous research paradigm knowledge and values are held as one and the same and are inseparable from each other (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001). When considering axiology in relation to research, my mind is drawn back the teaching from my mom that I shared earlier in this chapter, which is that “the work”, meaning the pursuit of our collective liberation, didn’t start with any one individual nor will it end with them. I understand now that a part of that teaching is paying respect and honouring those who have come before you, the one who broke trail so that your walk would be easier. This is an example of an important ethic held within an Indigenous axiology and why I’ve intentionally lifted up the works of Indigenous folks throughout this journey and done my best to honour the relationships that connect us.

A growing body of literature exists on Indigenous research methodological approach and many Indigenous scholars have brought both Indigenous research methodologies and Indigenous research paradigms forward in their writing and research (Bang, Curley, Kessel, Marin, & Suzokovich, 2014; Chilisa, 2012; Cole, 2002, 2012; Coulthard, 2014; Meyer, 2008; Simpson, 2014, 2017; S. Wilson, 2008). Foundational qualities of Indigenous research include acknowledging multiple truths, reciprocity, relationality, privileging the wellbeing of community, and the centering of community. A major assumption of an Indigenous research paradigm is that it is essential for research that involves Indigenous peoples to be unequivocally controlled, determined, and disseminated by and for the benefit of Indigenous peoples (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008). Additionally, an Indigenous research paradigm is based on the assumption that Indigenous peoples selected and/or consent to all methods employed in the

research and that those methods respond to and reflect their values, beliefs, and ways of knowing in order to produce research that is respectful, ethical, collaborative and relational (Chilisa, 2012; S. Wilson, 2001). It's also assumed that research produced should have a more expansive intention than solely knowledge production and that it should also incorporate processes of capacity development and/or community healing and (re)connection. It's important to note that these assumptions are in place to ensure that research is conducted in collaboration with rather than upon Indigenous peoples. This unsettles inequitable and exploitative research relationships that often marked previous eras of research involving Indigenous peoples (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008). Indigenous research paradigms serve as a form of protection and assert that Indigenous peoples are not to be exploited and that research must, on all levels, respect Indigenous peoples and communities.

Given the importance of the foudations of Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, axiologies, and methodologies identified above, the next section will outline how these understandings have been applied in this research. Within this framework knowledge is viewed as relational (Absolon, 2011; Chilisa, 2012; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008), which also guides how I am in relationship with the knowledges held in these pages. As a researcher I claim no personal ownership of knowledges that have been shared, re-membered, and/or co-produced in relation to this research. I care deeply for and take up the responsibility of actively caring for relationships with the relatives who have shared their energies to this work and also for the relationships that they are held in, including to Land and the more-than-human world. Furthermore, in accordance with relational accountability within an Indigenous research paradigm which facilitates respectful representation, reciprocity, and the rights of those with whom research is being conducted (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999), I have included measures within the research to ensure that participants feel appropriately represented. This included honoring their right to change and/or re-word their contribution and to withdraw (no participants elected to withdraw or alter their contribution) from the project entirely.

An underpinning of Indigenous methodologies is reciprocity (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008) and Indigenous knowledges emerge and exist within a framework that is both relational and responsive (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001). As explained by Kovach

(2010) reciprocity is an ethical foundation of Indigenous methodologies, "Because of the interconnection between all entities, seeking information ought not to be extractive but reciprocal, to ensure an ecological and cosmological balance" (p. 57). The inclusion of these cosmological considerations is an important feature distinguishing Indigenous research methodologies as it reflects the consideration of relationships beyond those that exist between humans to include also (and in an equitable way) the maintaining of balance within relationships held between all entities of the universe (Kovach, 2009; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008).

Indigenous research paradigms and more specifically the paradigm within which I've framed this research, incorporates feminist methodological considerations (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; St. Denis, 2007; A. Wilson, 2008), which supports the amplifying and centering of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit voices and experiences in this research. Working within this paradigm facilitated the investigation of contemporary Indigenous traditional teachings and practices to determine if and how they are affected by heteronormativity, and if and how they may either include or marginalize Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. When I learned that I was pregnant with a daughter, I felt a strong urgency to evaluate which "protocols" and "teachings" I wanted her to be exposed to. My mind is pulled to my own experiences as a little girl in ceremony. I recall a particular experience – my first memory of being in a sweat lodge (my mom says that I was probably about four years old) and being hit with a rattle on the legs by the male ceremony conductor who snapped at me to "sit like a woman". I remember feeling scared and ashamed. I remember being startled by my mom's sudden turn to rage. We left immediately. It was what my mom could do in the moment to protect us. But the memory remains and the feeling I had lives in my body. I want my daughter to live freely and with an abundance of joy as she moves through the world, and this will require the interrupting of forms of oppression that gets nestled into "traditions", "teachings", and "protocols".

Finally, it's important to note that Indigenous methodologies have always existed. Indigenous peoples have always employed ways of gathering and interpreting knowledge (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2001) that are woven within relationships with Land (Absolon, 2011; Smith, 1999; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b; S. Wilson, 2008). In the processes of

re(connection) like those described in the shared stories of many of the research participants, I want to amplify that all Indigenous peoples have a right to reach for and be in relationship with Indigenous knowledges and methodologies. Our ancestors left them for us to carry us through the times we are in, and in the long line of ancestors that we are all part of, we do the same for those to come.

Carrying all the above understanding forward, I began to create my research design. This was an important phase in the process as it called me to reflect upon how I would connect with the research participants, the Land, with myself and all the knowledges that flowed through and between us, during the data collection and analysis. The following sections will describe the research design used to collect and analyze data.

Connecting with Land (Site Selection)

Criteria for the site selection included a range of both urban and rural settings in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. By including both urban and rural settings in the research, I sought to represent data on Indigenous land-based knowledges and practices and pedagogies which have evolved in and are specific to each unique setting. In the initial recruitment phase of the project, I was successful in connecting with participants who identify as being either urban and/or rural from Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This intentional representation was critical considering the importance of relationship to land as described by Bang and colleagues (2014):

> Indigenous scholars have focused much attention on relationships between land, epistemology and importantly, ontology. Places produce and teach particular ways of thinking about and being in the world. They tell us the way things are, even when they operate pedagogically beneath a conscious level. (p.44)

Originally, I intended that the research participants would delineate the sites of the research, and that every effort would be made to conduct the interviews on the Lands with which interviewees had the closest relationships. Sites could include, for example, their ancestral territories and home communities, and/or to other areas they identified as important to their land-based knowledges, practices, and pedagogies. This was purposeful to both honour their relationships to Land and so that their connection to the Land would be physically made during the data collection. I had hoped that the immediate and physical connection would support their

contributions and elicit their memories. Throughout the process of centering Land, and in carefully considering the positioning of Land within the site selection process for each area, the more-than-human beings in relationship with that Land also become a part of the core network of relationships. This awareness shapes and deepens the responsibilities that I have as a researcher and as a relative to that Land and the more-than-human beings who live there (Cole, 2004; Simpson, 2014; Smith, 1999; Smith et al., 2018; S. Wilson, 2008).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, regrettably I was not able to travel during the data collection phase owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Research participants and I found different ways to bring their physical relationships with Land into the foreground of their thoughts during interviews. This included, for example, inviting them to smudge if they wanted to begin in that way and thinking deeply about land-based memories. Conducting the interviews online did not diminish my reciprocal relational accountability to the people and places who collaborated in this research. If anything, visiting online brought to the fore just how deeply fluid and expansive peoples' relationships with Land are and supported me to create online spaces that honoured relationships and enacted community (Brown & Crutchfield, 2017; Libster et al., 2010; Thomsen, 2021). Despite the physical distance, people used their words, silences, facial expressions, gestures, and sometimes photos and stories to communicate to me their memories, their sense of interdependence with Land, and their love for Land.

Connecting with People (Participant Selection)

I employed purposeful invitation (Kovach, 2009) and word of mouth to identify eight research participants through the informal network of land-based educators and practitioners of which I am a part. This network is founded on reciprocal relationships built over time doing community and education work and is reflective of the Indigenous research paradigm of the project. Furthermore, research participants were invited based on their formal and informal Indigenous land-based education work in Manitoba and/or Saskatchewan. I began to recruit research participants after receiving research ethics approval from the University of Saskatchewan's Research Ethics Board. I conducted a search to identify women and transgender and Two-Spirit Indigenous land-based educators and practitioners in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and invited collaboration via personal invitation and the recruitment poster (Appendix A). Once I established

a primary contact with potential participants, I invited them to review the research questions to discern if they wished to participate. Based on their wishes I scheduled eight online interviews which I conducted during the Fall of 2021. Research participants will be fully introduced in Chapter 4.

Data Collection Methods

I collected data through the gathering of eight semi-structured interviews with photo elicitation, and from my own field observations, which I recorded in fieldnotes and engaged in photo documentation. I engaged in data analysis from the beginning of the project design phase through to the writing of the dissertation. Analysis was a continuous and iterative process that occurred before, during, and after data collection (Saldaña & Omasta, 2015). In addition to preparing for and conducting interviews, I assessed the data contained within my field notes and photo elicitation and documentation which included both photos taken by myself, and photos provided by research participants. Together, these methods provided me with a deeper contextual understanding of each research participant's contributions. The photo elicitation was particularly helpful when COVID-19 made it impossible to travel to the Land the research participants referred to in their interviews.

I adapted the interview protocols from the Research Ethics Board templates to ensure that the protocol I employed adequately reflected Indigenous research methods and Indigenous research ethics. This includes careful consideration of how I made initial contact (S. Wilson, 2008), how I enacted reciprocity and relationality (Cole, 2004, 2016; Simpson, 2014; Smith, 1999; Styres, 2008), how I worded and asked questions, and in my consideration of the ways my choices may have affected the collaborative process (Chilisa, 2012).

With regard to the photos and posters that participants supplied and/or I collected, I employed a form of photo elicitation, whereby I asked participants to offer their interpretations and understandings of what they saw. My intention was that that the images would inspire vivid memories, feelings, insights, and thoughts. I had intended that this process might give rise to stories and further discussion which would deepen my understanding of participants'

perspectives and experiences. Photo elicitation is one means of discerning the contiguous and contextual dimensions of experience and understanding.

Negotiating and sustaining complex social relationships with participants required complex, critical and culturally-embedded analyses, which will be discussed more fully in the following chapter. Demonstrating respectful action and relationality is important and theoretically complicated as respectful and culturally competent discursive analysis of written and spoken texts. The analytical work involved in talking, selecting, and employing stories is amplified in light of the responsibility to uphold principles of ethical research with Indigenous peoples.

Conversational Method

I employed a conversational method (Kovach, 2009, 2010; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015b) in my one-on-one interviews with research participants and engaged the stories shared within through the relationships (re)made in the interviews as both meaning and method (Kovach, 2010). I selected this method to facilitate the transmission of knowledges through storytelling and oral traditions. As Kovach (2010) states:

> …the conversational method is a means of gathering knowledge found within Indigenous research. The conversational method is of significance to Indigenous methodologies because it is a method of gathering knowledge based on oral story telling tradition congruent with an Indigenous paradigm. (p. 40)

Employing the conversational method supported dialogic participation and the co-production of realities and knowledges with research participants. By using the conversational method within an Indigenous research framework, I understand that I was inviting interview participants to be in relationship with me as a researcher and as a relative. In these roles I have an ethical responsibility to carry their stories with care through every part of the research and beyond. It's by recognizing these relationships that the genesis of knowledges is remembered and that the deep connections tying us to one another become seen again. The relationships between story and knowing cannot be separated (Kovach, 2010).

Interviews

Prior to completing the 8 interviews, I made gift offerings to participants to honor their time, knowledges, and experiences, abiding both by the University of Saskatchewan's Ethics Board's standards and Indigenous research ethics. To adhere to the local public health orders in place at this phase of the data collection, I elected to send each participant an electronic gift card. Gifting the research participants reflected the principles of reciprocity, relationality, and relational accountability (Cole, 2002, 2012; Styres, 2018; Styres & Zinga, 2013; Wildcat, 2014; S. Wilson, 2008). Not only was this an act of gratitude to the participants, it also honored the land-bases, relations/teachers, and the more-than-human beings in their territories; all of which informed their contributions to the research and needed to be nurtured and remade within the research (Chilisa, 2012; Cole, 2002, 2004, 2012; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Styres, 2008; S. Wilson, 2008).

After sending gift certificates to participants in advance of the interviews, I took the time to establish my positionality as a co-researcher engaged with each person in a collaborative effort. For example, I began by sharing my ancestral name and identifying the land-bases that I'm connected to. I also placed myself as an urban Afro-Indigenous person and shared that my personal commitment to this research is my daughter and protecting her relationship to the Land. I welcomed participants to smudge if they felt called to do so. I then asked the participants to indicate if they were ready to proceed, attained informed consent, and asked each person to let me know if a break was in order. Before interviewing, I advised people that I would begin the recording and also advised them at the end when I stopped the recording.

The interview was segmented into two parts, in the first part I began the interview with a series of questions that were outlined in Appendix B. In the second part of the interview, I encouraged the participant to take the lead, asking fewer questions (depending on if the participant was more comfortable with question prompts or not), allowing more of a conversation to develop. This gave participants the opportunity to add information or details and clarify previous comments. They were invited to redirect the conversation towards areas they determined important. Additionally, I invited participants to speak to the photos they brought and/or to images I provided. I recorded observations in my field notes before and after the interview but

not during the interview so that I remained as present as possible and was able to listen attentively. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes.

Field Notes

I recorded all my field notes according to the Field Note template adapted from the Research Ethics Board (Appendix D). My notes allowed me to organize my own emotions, perceptions, dreams, and reflections in relation to the research. Taking notes before and after but not during interviews, helped me to fully engaged with the contributions of each research participant in our time together.

Photo Documentation

Originally, I had intended that photo documentation would include both photos taken by myself during time spent with the research participants and photos that research participants selected as significant visual representations of their Indigenous land-based education practice. I adapted this process owing to the impossibility of travel and used only photos supplied by the participants. The photo documentation protocol (Appendix E) I used for this research is adapted from the Research Ethics Board Photo Documentation protocol. I provided examples of potential photograph categories to research participants in advance of their interviews to help them determine which photos to share. The categories were: urban Indigenous land-based education and rural Indigenous land-based education sites, Indigenous land-based education practices and skills, traditional medicine identification, harvesting and uses, emotional/cultural/political affective messaging and others. It is important to note that I did not analyze the photographs themselves, but I did use them as supplementary materials in the presentation of findings as they align with the data analysis.

Poster Documentation

I analyzed archival documentation in the form of posters, that were publicly circulated on social media and/or were posted in public spaces (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). I collected, reviewed, and analyzed posters promoting initiatives, ceremonies, and learning opportunities tied to Indigenous land-based education. The posters I selected included language and imagery that I felt reinforced

gendered binaries and violences in relation to Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' participation in Indigenous land-based education, activities, and/or practices. The content of these posters reflects how notions of gender are enforced in public spaces and land-based initiatives. Some examples of language that I identified as significant to the research are: "women wear a long dress or skirt" and "women who are on their moon time must not participate".

Data Analysis

I analyzed participants' stories collected in conversations and interviews, as well as visual documentation using a voice-centered relational approach to data analysis (Byrne et al. 2009; Chilisa, 2012; Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan et al., 2003). Analyzing the data in this way is in alignment with the intentions of this study and an Indigenous research framework. I selected the voice-centered relational method of data analysis as it allows the stories and experiences of the Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people to be fully examined, understood, and amplified. Using the voice centered relational approach allowed for the centering of participants' voices, perspectives, and stories through the telling of their narratives (Gilligan, 2015; Lavallée, 2009; Montgomery et al., 2015; Riessman, 2007).

I was first introduced to The Listening Guide by my PhD advisor Dr. Alex Wilson whose own doctoral work was done under the guidance of Dr. Carol Gilligan, as a method of voice-centered relational method (Gilligan et al., 2003). The Listening Guide is Dr. Gilligan's intervention in the way other analysis method centers the researcher's voice rather than that of the research participants often resulting in the false determining of a singular truth stemming from the interpretations made by the researcher (Gilligan et al., 2003). The Listening Guide recognizes that each individual has a particular voice and method of communicating, that makes visible and audible an inner-world, that is at times made inaudible and invisible (Gilligan et al., 2003). Although this method is universal in application, it is particularly important and effective in making audible and visible the voices that are most often silenced and erased.

As a relational method, The Listening Guide fits naturally with the Indigenous research framework of this project. It recognizes that each person's voice is distinct, and is always

“embodied, in culture, and in relationship with oneself and with others,” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157), which within this research, supported the narratives of the research participants to be centered and amplified while recognizing and affirming the relational ties that inform their voices (Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan et al., 2003). Gilligan and colleagues (2003) assert that The Listening Guide method offers a systematic process of recognizing the multitude of voices that exists in an individual’s verbalized experience.

This approach and method allowed for an analysis of the different layers in the stories that participants told and supported me, as the researcher, to engage in a relationship with the transcribed text (Byrne, Canavan, & Millar, 2009; Gilligan et al., 2003). My use of a voice-centered relational approach and The Listening Guide required that I undertake a detailed analysis of each transcript, in which each story was considered from a number of perspectives through multiple listenings (Gilligan et al., 2003; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008), and that I identify the themes that came out. The analysis included a series of stages centered on a set of basic questions related to voice: Who is speaking, in what body and to whom, telling what stories about relationship, and in what societal and cultural framework (Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan et al., 2003; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008).

This analytical technique is meant to ensure that each participant’s story is heard as a whole within the analysis, as each stage of listening is designed to “bring the researcher into relationship with a person’s distinct and multilayered voice by tuning in or listening to distinct aspects of a person’s expression of her or his experience within a particular relational context” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159). Each stage, or “listening” (Gilligan et al., 2003), required the active participation of both the teller (research participant) and the listener (researcher). The listening process was not only an analysis of the text but also guided my listening so that I could more deeply tune into the story being told by the teller, and to “experience, note, and draw” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159) from their resonances to the narrative. In using The Listening Guide, the first two listenings are prescribed, followed by listenings that were informed by the interview questions. No single listening existed in isolation, and I visualized through the use of different coloured pencils to make on the transcript for each listening. Additionally, each listening was documented in my notes and my written summaries; the marked interview

transcripts, the notes, and summaries supported me as the researcher to stay close to the text and to identify "a trail of evidence" (Gilligan et al., 2003), on which I formulated interpretations.

Below are the steps within the Listening Guide (Gilligan et al., 2003) that I followed, presented alongside snapshots from my research notes to provide context for the reader. The Listening Guide involves several layers of underlining text in separate colours. I adapted this step to use underlining and highlighting on my Word document so that I could work more easily while my daughter slept or breastfed in my arms:

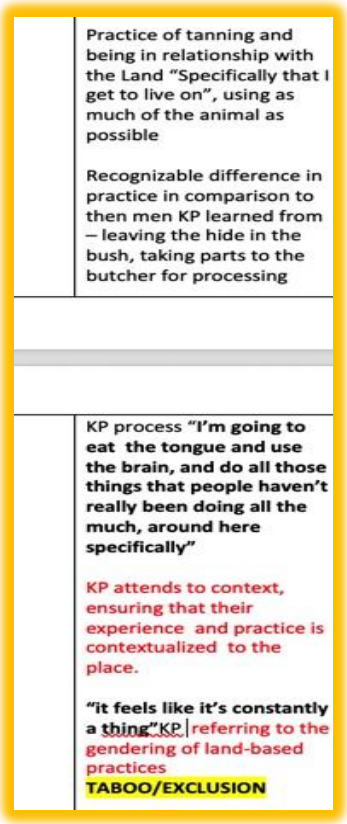
1. Listening for the Plot: Listening for the plot will involve two parts, (a) listening for the plot and (b) the listener's response to the interview. In this stage I read through the text and listened for the plot, specifically focusing on what was happening or what stories were being told. I also attended to the landscape, or multiple contexts, that were embedded in what was being told. In following the method, I first got a sense of where we were in what was being told, what was happening, when, where, with whom, and why. I noted repeated images, metaphors, prominent themes, contradictions, and absences.

   In this stage of listening, I also attended to my own responses to the narrative, specifically considering my own subjectivities into the process of interpretation by identifying, exploring, and making explicit my own thoughts and feelings about and tied to the narrative. I took note of my social location in relation to the teller and the nature of our relationship, including our emotional responses.

   Figure 1 is an example from my research notes where I attend to the plot, including notes on the context of the research participant's storytelling.

   Figure 2 is an example of an emotional response to something being shared by a research participant.

Figure 1



Practice of tanning and being in relationship with the Land "Specifically that I get to live on", using as much of the animal as possible

Recognizable difference in practice in comparison to then men KP learned from – leaving the hide in the bush, taking parts to the butcher for processing

KP process **"I'm going to eat the tongue and use the brain, and do all those things that people haven't really been doing all the much, around here specifically"**

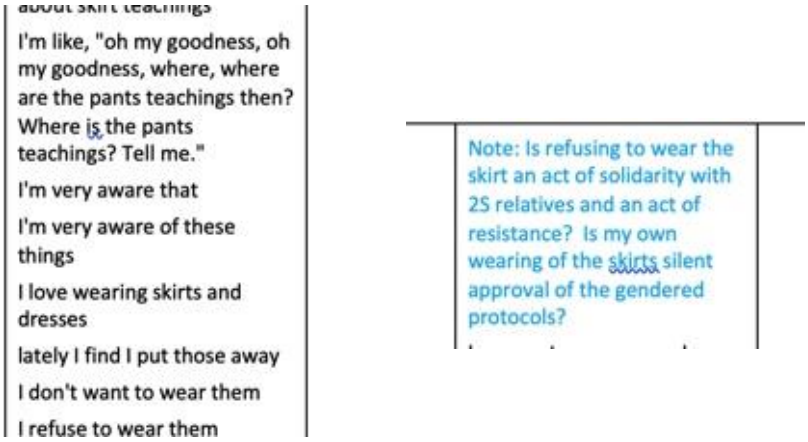
KP attends to context, ensuring that their experience and practice is contextualized to the place.

"it feels like it's constantly a thing" KP | referring to the gendering of land-based practices

TABOO/EXCLUSION

Listening for the plot example: Research notes snapshot

Figure 2



about skirt teachings

I'm like, "oh my goodness, oh my goodness, where, where are the pants teachings then? Where is the pants teachings? Tell me."

I'm very aware that

I'm very aware of these things

I love wearing skirts and dresses

lately I find I put those away

I don't want to wear them

I refuse to wear them

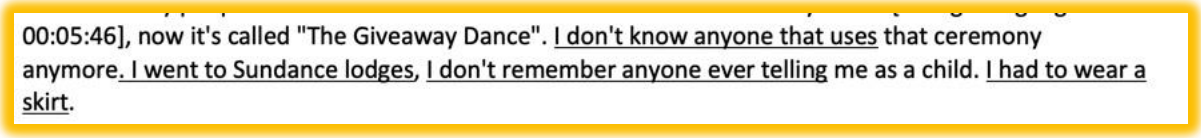
Note: Is refusing to wear the skirt an act of solidarity with 2S relatives and an act of resistance? Is my own wearing of the skirts silent approval of the gendered protocols?

Emotional response example

2. I poems: This stage focuses on the voice of the “I” who is doing the telling by tracking the use of this first-person pronoun and constructing “I poems”. The purpose here was to press me as the researcher to listening to the participant’s first-person voice, so that I could identify its distinctive cadences and rhythms, and to hear how the participant spoke about themselves. In the construction of the I poems I underlined every first-person “I” within the text along with the verb and any connected words and maintained the sequence in which these phrases appear in the text. After this, I pulled out the underlined “I” phrases on a separate line, forming poem stanzas.

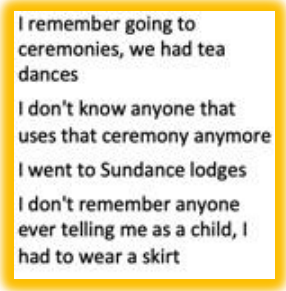
   It’s interesting to note that while there may be a generalization that Indigenous peoples speak using collective terms, employing the plural first-person pronoun “we” in storytelling, all research participants spoke in the singular first-person “I” during their interviews.

Figure 3


00:05:46], now it's called "The Giveaway Dance". I don't know anyone that uses that ceremony anymore. I went to Sundance lodges, I don't remember anyone ever telling me as a child. I had to wear a skirt.

Ipoem creation process example: Research notes snapshot

Figure 4


I remember going to ceremonies, we had tea dances

I don't know anyone that uses that ceremony anymore

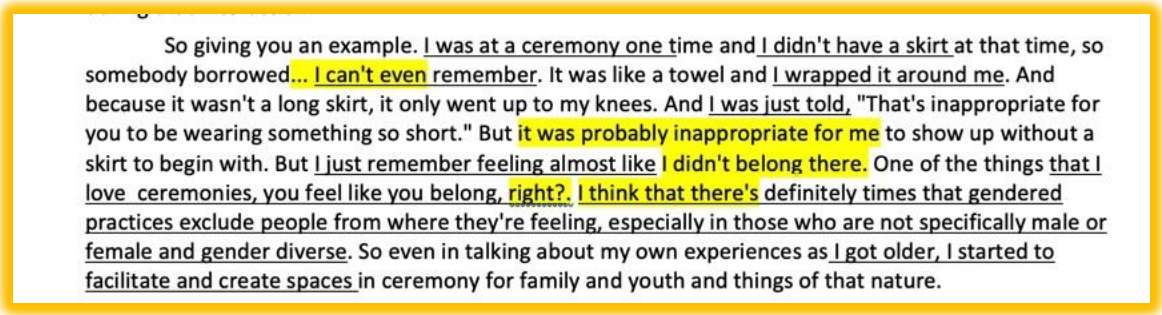
I went to Sundance lodges

I don't remember anyone ever telling me as a child, I had to wear a skirt

Ipoem example: Research notes snapshot

3. Listening for Contrapuntal Voices: This stage focuses on the relationship with the research question. It supported me to hear and develop an understanding of multiple layers of the participant's expressed experiences as they related to the question. This allowed me to listen for the counterpoint in the texts being analyzed, or for the multiple aspects of the stories being told. The contrapuntal listenings allowed me to identify, specify, and sort out the different aspects of the interview that related to my research question. In this stage, I read through the interview two or more times, each time turning into one specific aspect of the story or on one voice within the participant's expression of their experience. Contrapuntal voices were highlighted in a different colour than the I statements were underlined. Examples of contrapuntal voices include a voice of not knowing and a voice self-doubt.

Figure 5


So giving you an example. I was at a ceremony one time and I didn't have a skirt at that time, so somebody borrowed... I can't even remember. It was like a towel and I wrapped it around me. And because it wasn't a long skirt, it only went up to my knees. And I was just told, "That's inappropriate for you to be wearing something so short." But it was probably inappropriate for me to show up without a skirt to begin with. But I just remember feeling almost like I didn't belong there. One of the things that I love ceremonies, you feel like you belong, right?. I think that there's definitely times that gendered practices exclude people from where they're feeling, especially in those who are not specifically male or female and gender diverse. So even in talking about my own experiences as I got older, I started to facilitate and create spaces in ceremony for family and youth and things of that nature.

Contrapuntal voices example: Research notes snapshot

4. Composing an Analysis: In this final step, after going through the text a minimum of four times, doing underlining, taking notes, and doing summaries, I then compiled what I learned about the participant in relation to the research questions. An interpretation of the interview was developed that tied together and synthesized what I learned through the process and an analysis was subsequently

> written. Some questions that I considered in this stage were: What have I learned about this question through this process and how have I come to know this? And, what is the evidence on which I've based my interpretations?

In this chapter, I discussed the underpinnings of Indigenous research methodologies, The Listening Guide, and overlapping ethics of relationality, reciprocity, and care. Additionally, I outlined the steps presented within The Listening guide, with examples from the transcripts and my own research notes to provide clarity and deeper understanding for the reader. Overall, I based my analysis on the data collection of posters, transcriptions from interviews, and my observations and fieldnotes. In alignment with the focus of the research, I centered how research participants conceptualized, made meaning of, and engaged with gender in their Indigenous land-based education pedagogies and practices. In the following chapter, each research participant will be introduced alongside some initial insights from our time spent together, and from relating to them and their stories using The Listening Guide method of analysis.

Chapter 4: Restoring and Re(storying) Roots: Re(connecting) Bodies with Land

Relative
You came with your story
Seeded it in the landscape of my mind
Now its roots are wrapped around my bones
And its berries safely camouflaged against my heart.

I will carry you with me.

- Tasha Spillett July 9, 2022

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I'll present an introduction of the research participants and their stories in relation to the research question, along with a description of the context through which I connected with each of them. I will also share my insights on our time together and offer a summary and quotes that illustrate what I took from my time in the listenings. In this chapter I will also specifically consider the similarities, variations, and silences of the different research participants. The chapter will also include segments of the Ipoems created from their interviews that illustrate the factors that strengthen or undermining relationships between Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people and Land and impact their engagement in Indigenous land-based education.

This chapter, where I will begin to share the stories that have been shared, represents a time in my research when this process really started to feel real, because the gathering of stories was grounded in active relationships and brought in more minds and hearts to the work. This time was also the most vulnerable stage of the research because I was very aware of the responsibility that comes with receiving the stories of the research participants. The vulnerability I felt, was met with a sense of comfortable familiarity that rushed over any insecurities I felt like warm rolling waves.

From April to June 2021, I engaged with 8 participants, all of whom are Indigenous land-based education practitioners who are cis-gender women, gender-diverse, and/or Two-Spirit. With the generosity of the research participants, all conversations were held while my then 1 year old daughter was sleeping. Their willingness to accommodate my baby was critical in my ability to do this work and to me, demonstrated the ethics of relational care (Gilligan, 1982; M McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006; Noddings, 2002, 2013) and centering children. In reflection, these 8 conversations were some of the only conversations that I engaged in during that time, as the pandemic was still at its height and as a family, we were still very much isolated.

Of the research participants 5 identify as cis-gender heterosexual women, and 3 identify as gender diverse and/or Two-Spirit. At the time of the research, 4 participants were living and working in urban settings and 4 were working and living in rural or First Nation communities. The research poster for this project extended an invitation to Indigenous transgender relatives but none responded to the call or were identified through the network of Indigenous land-based practitioners that I am in relation with. It's important to note that this in no ways means that there are not any transgender Indigenous land-based education practitioners living and working within the regions identified in the scope of the research, just that none were successfully recruited for this project.

I Sang out to Them, and They Sang Back: Introduction of Research Participants

In my Master's degree, I had the beautiful opportunity to visit the Kanaka Moali people in Hawai'i. Some of the most impactful experiences during that time was when we were chanted into their sacred places, which we were invited to respond to in song. In my understanding, this was an act of reciprocity and making of relationships (Hanohano, 2014, 2017; Meyer, 2014, 2017). Our relatives were calling out to us, and we met their voices with our own. It was a powerful and humbling thing to witness and be part of. I was reminded of those experiences when people started responding to my call for research participants and agreed to join me in conversation. I sang out to them, and they sang back.

All 8 research participants were assigned a pseudonym to respect their anonymity. Each participant is identified throughout, by the name of one of the 13 Ininew moons. As Ininew researcher and knowledge keeper Wilfred Buck from Opaskwayak notes, there are more than 13 names for the moon and the names themselves are dependent on the environment from which the moon is being viewed from (Buck, 2021). Elder Wilfred Buck (2021) states:

> the names given to the moons depend on the environment each moon was seen from. The 13 moons herein are how some Ininew communities in Northern and Central Manitoba saw events, weather patterns, animal behaviour, plant/medicines in relation to Wawipi Pisim (the full Moon). (Buck, 2021)

I chose this method of naming for research participants as a means of honoring land-based relationships and the fluidity that existed in the natural world. That being said, the pseudonyms of the 8 research participants are: Sakipakawi Pisim (Budding Moon), Opaskwawiowi Pisim (Hatching Moon), Paskowi Pisim (Moulting Moon), Opaowi Pisim (Flying Up Moon/), Ininiw Nipim Pisim (Mating/Rutting Moon), Kaskatinowi Pisim (Freezing Up Moon), Nikopiwi Pisim (Frosting Up Moon), and Pawacikwanasis Pisim (Blizzard Moon).

Sakipakawi Pisim

Sakipakawi Pisim is an urban Anishinaabe heterosexual cis-gender woman. She works with medicinal plants; both harvesting them and creating natural care products from the medicines. Sakipakawi Pisim instructs community members on how to harvest and process traditional medicines both in an urban and rural context. Sakipakawi Pisim was the first person to respond to my research poster after it circulated on social media.

I've known Sakipakawi Pisim for over a decade and although she doubted that her Indigenous land-based education practice qualified her to participate she was drawn to respond because of our relationship and the focus on gender. I was shocked that despite her extensive knowledge of plants and their medicinal properties, in addition to her active role in the community sharing these knowledges, she thought that she was not enough. After an initial conversation to talk through their self-doubts, including not identifying herself as a "practitioner" but as a learner, Sakipakawi Pisim agreed to enter into conversation and on a cold early-spring day in April 2021 we met. When I look back at my research journal, I can see that I also came to that first

conversation with some self-doubts and insecurities. On an entry that's dated the morning of my conversation with Sakipakawi Pisim, I write about not sleeping well the night before and feeling that 'first-day of school' type of feeling where you're full of nerves, equal part excitement and anxiety.

Sakipakawi Pisim is the parent of a non-binary child, and in the pre-interview conversation showed specific interest in contributing to the research because of the focus on gender within Indigenous land-based education. During our Zoom conversation in April, she shared more about this personal tie to the research focus:

> Having a child who identifies as non-binary has been challenging to find spaces that will honor their own autonomy to decide what they feel like wearing when they're in those ceremony spaces. And so I think it becomes challenging to have... Well, it's not even challenging. I think it's important to have conversations about people who are gender diverse in ways that we can make sure that we're including them in those ceremonies. (S. Pisim, 2021)

Like my own intention for engaging this research, Sakipakawi Pisim is committed to ensuring that her child have access to their own relationship with Land and land-based practices free of oppression.

Sakipakawi Pisim spoke in a multi-generational layered way, often referring to her kokum and to her child when unpacking gendered teachings and protocols within Indigenous land-based education. This approach to storytelling (Archibald, 2008, 2019) was very interesting and demonstrated relationality in action (Simpson, 2014; A. Wilson, 2018a). The capacity of relationality to loop timelines in order to evaluate knowledges and protocols and discern which to bring forward in order to best support the present and coming generations. When questioning the gendering of land-based practices she's encountered, she called to her memories of her kokum's life to establish which made sense to her and which did not. She shared:

> I often think about my kokum. So was my kokum worked with medicine people who knew about medicines and who took care of their families, oftentimes as single parents. And so that meant trapping, hunting, fishing, doing the things that they needed to do to solely provide for their families. I can't imagine my kokum being so concerned about wearing a long skirt in the bush when she's hunting and when she's snaring rabbits and harvesting medicines. (S. Pisim, 2021)

In her storytelling, Sakipakawi Pisim was careful not to fully reject any teachings as being false, even when calling them into question. While demonstrating a level of refusal of gendered teachings and protocols, she alluded to her discomfort in directly intervening in the enforcement of these protocols, stating that:

> … it's still very important to me, to follow protocol in the setting that I'm in. So however the folks who are leading the ceremony, what their expectation is, it's important to me to honor that and to respect that. But I've definitely seen times where people have been shamed, and even you can see how they're being harmed during that interaction. (S. Pisim, 2021)

Much of Sakipakawi Pisim's refusal of gendered teachings and protocols has led her to her own work as an Indigenous land-based practitioner and to create spaces unburned by the exclusions and harm they produce. This excerpt from Sakipakawi Pisim's Ipoem, which will be more fully engaged in the following chapter, reflects an experience in which she was publicly shamed for not having a long skirt at a ceremony:

> I was at a ceremony one time
>
> I didn't have a skirt at that time, so somebody borrowed
>
> I can't even remember
>
> I was just told, "That's inappropriate for you to be wearing something so short."

In this excerpt Sakipakawi Pisim demonstrates how a breakdown in their own level of safety within ceremony created momentum for her to create her own spaces:

> I think that there's definitely times that gendered practices exclude people from where they're feeling, especially in those who are not specifically male or female and gender diverse. So even in talking about my own experiences as I got older, I started to facilitate and create spaces in ceremony for family and youth and things of that nature. (S. Pisim, 2021)

She revisited the memory of her Kokum when sharing about her own pedagogy in creating Indigenous land-based education spaces:

> I think even things like picking medicines on your moon time, you're not supposed to touch medicines or pick medicines on your moon time. It's the same thing. I can't help

> but think about my grandma, who I know was a really strong, brilliant, amazing woman who was super independent just stopping everything that she had to do for a week out of the month to just take care of herself on her moon time. I don't think that is feasible. And so I think it's important for me, as someone who works now with people and has land-based work, to ensure that I'm creating spaces where I'm giving people autonomy and sharing information, and then asking them to make their own decisions on how they feel the most comfortable going forward, and just not judging that and supporting them however I can through that. (S. Pisim, 2021)

It was intriguing to listen to Sakipakawi Pisim's tone change from passive when explaining about respecting protocols even when they are contrary to her values, to confident when talking about the spaces that she's created in ceremony. This important act of refusal reminds me of a story shared to me by Dr. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in my home territory alongside Clearwater Lake, which also appears in her book *The Gift is in the Making* (2013). The story talks about the treaty between the Anishinaabe and the Hoof Nation, and the time in which the Anishinaabe began to break their treaty with the Hoof (Simpson, 2013). The story tells that the Hoof Nation, in an act of sovereignty and refusal turn their backs on the Anishinaabe as a response to the broken treaty relationship. To me an important element of this story is that they Hoof Nation doesn't beg the Anishinaabe to uphold their treaty or wait around and continue to be harmed. They leave the relationship in order to protect themselves. Sakipakawi Pisim's has been harmed and witnessed the harm of others because of gendered teachings and protocols and in an act of sovereignty and refusal has created spaces for herself, her child, and community that are unburdened by the same forms of gender violence.

When I look back at my journal to an entry written just after my conversation with Sakipakawi Pisim, I see how important it was that my direct engagement with research participants began with her. Her storytelling reminded me how important it is to think and act generationally and even more to caretake relationships in the same way.

Opaskwawiowi Pisim

Opaskwawiowi Pisim is a Two-Spirit Métis urban Indigenous person with ancestral ties in Saskatchewan. Opaskwawiowi Pisim uses their arts-based practice in connection with their

Indigenous land-based practice. Oaskwawiowi Pisim did not respond to the research poster when it was first circulated but I was encouraged to reach out to them by my advisor Dr. Alex Wilson. After that initial email sharing the poster, research focus, and invitation, Oaskwawiowi Pisim, agreed to participate and we met over Zoom in April 2021.

Opaskwawiowi Pisim was the only participant to begin with a smudge. I watched the calm come over them as they smudged themselves and although I didn't have smudge with me, I also felt calmer after. They began their storytelling by evoking memories from their childhood and spending time camping with their family. They recalled how held they felt by nature during these times and that even though their family was navigating multiple struggles, being together on land offered a sense of refuge. The following excerpt from her Ipoem speaks to the sentiment of Land being a mediator in complicated family dynamics:

> I don't have the best relationship with my family
> I think the land was able to hold us

The theme of feeling safe or protected by the land was first identified in my conversation with Opaskwawiowi Pisim, and would re-emerge strongly in conversation with research participant, Paskowi Pisim, Opaowi Pisim, Nikopiwi Pisim and Pawacikwanasis Pisim.

Opaskwawiowi Pisim shared that their Indigenous identity was revealed to them as a teen, only after the passing of their grandfather, and that they have been reconnecting to their Métis identity since. They also have been studying Nēhiyawēwin for over 8 years and was one of four research participants, alongside Opaowi Pisim, Nikopiwi Pisim and Pawacikwanasis Pisim, who based portions of their storytelling and analysis in an Indigenous language. Opaskwawiowi Pisim brought language into the conversation very early, sharing the Nēhiyawēwin translations of Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, Father Sky, Grandfather Sun that they've learned in the study of the language. Although they did describe their learning of Nēhiyawēwin as a process of "unwrapping and unwinding" (O. Pisim, 2021), they didn't problematize the gendering of the natural world in Nēhiyawēwin, as being reflective of the intrusion of colonial gender binaries. The impact of English on Indigenous languages, specifically the imposition of the gender binary

did come up with two other research participants, Nikopiwi Pisim and Pawacikwanasis Pisim, who are both Cree first-language speakers.

Opaskwawiowi Pisim did talk about the structures of dominance embedded within the English language but also placed Nēhiyawēwin as having a gender binary, stating:

> …in English, the dominance of gender and how much that kind of really plays a role. Yet the animating of life energies and life forces in the languages and in like a Cree-Métis perspective is so powerful and so big. But then to still have these kinds of gender constructs, it's kind of just a natural continuum of this dominance I feel, in binary. (O. Pisim, 2021)

They did share about the ways their understandings have been shifting in the work they've been doing to create Indigenous land-based education spaces, specifically unsettling the gendering of water as feminine and fire as masculine and the roles attached to the caretaking of water and fire being reserved for women or men. Like Sakipakawi Pisim, they've had to do re-educating work with Elders to ensure that Two-Spirit, transgender and gender non-binary peoples can participate without being harmed. They described that this has required "a lot of conversations with elders and with people who maybe don't have that same relationship to the kind of fluidity of gender," (O. Pisim, 2021).

Opaskwawiowi Pisim shared about being personally restricted by enforcement of skirts in ceremony, and like Sakipakawi Pisim, leaned on sarcasm to reveal the impracticalities of skirt protocols, saying:

> Oh my god, I'm collecting cottonwood saplings in the bush wearing this damn skirt is like awkward. And I am still able to carry life in pants. (O. Pisim, 2021)

I was particularly moved by an experience Opaskwawiowi Pisim recalled of being helping to organize an Indigenous land-based education gathering where folks were invited to attend a sweat and asked to separate themselves within the lodge, women on one side and men on the other. Some of the folks attending the gathering shared that being asked to identify as either a woman or a man was contrary to their identity and as an event organizer Opaskwawiowi Pisim worked with the Elders conducting the ceremony to remove the gender division within the lodge so that folks could participate. To repair some of the harm that had been done, they organized a

feast to honour Two-Spirit, non-binary, transgender, and questioning queer relatives. Their telling of this memory was so powerful and really outlines the real-life impacts of people being made to feel outside of our community circles, and the life-saving impact of ensuring all of our relatives have a place of love and dignity. Opaskwawiowi Pisim, shared:

> And I just remember, we opened up the space and we made offerings to the larger circle. And so we would move around and we would give the offerings. And there were different Elders there from Chippewa, the Thames, the Sun Dance Elder, I can't remember his name right now. And I just remember him in particular while we were feasting this area in the bigger circle, he came to us. And I remember him telling us like, "One of my granddaughters is gay and was really worried to tell me because she was worried that she wouldn't be invited to Sun Dance and there wouldn't be a place for her. And that was really scary." And he just said, "I love you for who you are. And I love you so much more for being honest and being able to tell me this, and there will always be a place for you in the circle."
>
> And I just remember how important it was for this Elder and someone who holds that role of being the guide, being the kind of a space holder for a really sacred ceremony. (O. Pisim, 2021)

This story made me think of my niblings and how they've taught me about how important it is to push back against gendered protocols within ceremony so that they feel safety and belonging within those spaces. I also wonder what the Elder that Opaskwawiowi Pisim spoke about would have done if their grandchild was forced to wear a type of clothing that made them feel uncomfortable in order to access the ceremony. I wonder if he would have used his position of influence to break the gendered protocols and if it would have resulted in an exception for his young relative or for all people who enter the lodge.

Opaskwawiowi Pisim's storytelling made me feel hopeful, that there are Elders and knowledge keepers in different territories who are open to unsettling the gendered violence in what are being held and circulated as traditional teachings and protocols. I was also moved by the sharing of their thunderous singing voice in their storytelling which reminded me of how multidimensional Indigenous storytelling pedagogies are.

Paskowi Pisim

I was so excited that Paskowi Pisim shared my research poster when it first circulated on social media, and I waited for them to respond but weeks went by, and I didn't hear from her. I decided

to send a personalized invitation to ask if she'd be open to participating and she responded expressing her doubt that she fit the description of Indigenous land-based educator and practitioner. Like Sakipakawi Pisim, she felt like her experience and expertise wasn't enough to qualify was a research participant, which again shocked me. Paskowi Pisim is a Two-Spirit Métis urban Indigenous person with ancestral ties in Manitoba. Her Indigenous land-based practice is intertwined with their mixed-media visual arts practice. On her social media, she frequently shares her process of working with different animal parts to create, and her connection with the Land.

Like many of the other research participants, Paskowi Pisim's storytelling was tied to intergenerational learning and memories of being on the Land with grandparents are filled with joy and a sense of freedom. The memory that they shared about their first awareness of being in relationship with Land, was of them fishing with her grandparents, and that connecting with fish (beyond the act of fishing), stretched throughout their storytelling.

Paskowi Pisim spoke a lot about homophobia and misogyny as being primary factors impact Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people's relationships with Land, saying:

> I mean, we desperately need to continue to address, patriarchy, sexual harassment, sexual violence in our communities, in any community really, and homophobia and transphobia. People aren't going to be on the land or the water, if they have to experience those forms of violence and the many different variations that they come in. As a person whose gender queer and really femme, it's pretty hard not to experience sexual harassment just existing in this world. So it makes it pretty scary to even just be out in the world sometimes. (P. Pisim, 2021)

Speaking from their own experiences of gendered violence, Paskowi Pisim clearly outlined the ways in which women and Two-Spirit people experience harm while participating in Indigenous land-based practices in environments where gender binaries and gendered violences are permitted. She described the methods that she's developed to try and avoid further harm while engaging in land-based practices, which a rooted in relationality through connected with trusted women. When discussing the ways in which she's tried to establish a level of safety she shared:

> … I think, that is also allowed some markers of safety as well. So, there's definitely been... It's nice to have that relationship with men begin with grandmothers or through women, because there's definitely some parts of a culture when it comes to fishing or

> hunting or harvesting that are definitely very patriarchal in nature. And so I felt most comfortable going out on the land or getting gifts from the land through established relationships with women or grandmothers. And so, one of the folks that I go net setting with entry six territory is through our relationship with our grandmother and her partner, and learning about setting nets and pulling nets.
>
> And I just already know that he's a safe man to be out on the land with, any often we'll take younger women. And I know that I'm not going to experience anything bad while I'm out on the land with him. And so, l think, that's been really important in my journey is, knowing that I'm out with somebody safe. That it's generally been men who I know that I can trust because of who their partners are, who their wives are, and the reputations that they have in community. (P. Pisim, 2021)

This made me think about the ways in which women and Two-Spirit people protect and caretake one another through networks of relationality deeply based in trust. The following is an excerpt from her Ipoem which speaks to the theme of safety held within networks:

> I think that's offered a lot of safety for me to learn with them, another
> queer person
>
> I just feel really safe
>
> I don't have to worry

I imagine the ways in which networks get activated when someone is identified as being unsafe, and grieve for the instances when women, transgender and Two-Spirit people are not believed, causing further harm.

Opaowi Pisim

Opaowi Pisim is an Anishinaabe Elder, environmental activist, land-based practitioner, and educator from Northern Treaty 5 territory/Manitoba. She is someone who I know peripherally through her son. I've been aware of her work for quite some time, particularly right work to legally protect her home territory from resource extraction. When I circulated my research poster, I knew there wasn't a big chance that it would reach her organically, so I sent it to her son and asked him to print it out for his mom.

Once I made contact with Opaowi Pisim, we set up a time to meet. On the day of our first intended meeting, Opaowi Pisim had a poor internet connection at home in northern Manitoba. We agreed to try again the next day when she could get to a house on the reserve that got better service and where someone could help her on to the Zoom link. We were able to connect the next day. It was a good reminder for me as a younger urban Indigenous person that internet service in remote communities can cause barriers in connecting and to be aware of people's varying comfortability using online platforms.

My conversation with Opaowi Pisim, was the first one with an Elder within the scope of this research. I found myself feeling very self-aware of the language I was using in introducing myself to her and establishing my positionality. I also felt very apologetic, even ashamed that I was not there in person to offer her tobacco and a gift before we started. I shared these insecurities with her, and she was very gracious. She laughed and mentioned that she always wanted a copy of my picture book I Sang You down from the Stars, so I agreed to send her a copy.

Opaowi Pisim spoke a lot about the teachings that were passed down to her by her grandfather and her life growing up in an isolated First Nation community. She described these teachings as being based in, "the respect for land, the respect for animals, and the respect for things that are there to help us through life," (O. Pisim, 2021). She spoke in ways that demonstrated how deeply she feels connected to the Land, understanding the dependency of peoples on the natural world to sustain life.

Opaowi Pisim was one of the only research participants to discuss Indigenous land-based education pedagogies specifically:

> You learned by watching, by observing how they did things. And at that time, it was just a day-to-day thing that they did. But as years go by, and as I'm getting older, it makes a lot of sense now. And that's what I tried to pass on to my children and grandchildren, those memories and stories. They continue to be passed on to the next generation, and the importance of it. And the relationship that our people have with the land, they have such intimate relationship, they have this knowledge about taking care of the land. (O. Pisim, 2021)

Many times she came back to the role of women as life-givers and being responsible for the rearing and educating of young children, saying “because we are the givers of life, it is our responsibility pass that knowledge on to our children and grandchildren” (O. Pisim, 2021). She spoke with the tone of loving authority that I recognize when my own mother is trying to teach me something. I felt like she was trying to teach me as a young mother, not in an overbearing way but in firm reminder way. I know that Opaowi Pisim knew my late mother-in-law well from their work to protect Indigenous languages and I wonder if in our conversation she felt a responsibility to share things with me that she felt I might have missed in the absence of my daughter’s Kookoo.

Opaowi Pisim spoke in gendered ways about the responsibilities of women and the role of women as “life givers”:

> For example, the water, we are the ones that carry the teaching of water, we are the ones that will teach the youth about the importance of water and how that story came about with the praying for the water because, our responsibility to take care of that life.
>
> The other thing that the teachings fall on women about to learn about respecting ourselves, respecting our bodies, respecting who we are, and to know that we are very... Like I say, because we give life. And from the time as a young girl, we need to be taught how to respect ourselves, how to care for ourselves, how to do things, and to be prepared to be a mother.
>
> So right from the beginning, this is a woman's responsibility. And the memories that I shared with my mother, those were the things... They loved doing that. It powers them to do that, and it was important for them. (O. Pisim, 2021)

I found it interesting that she said “they loved doing that. It powers them to do that, and it was important for them”, after outlining what she understands to be the gender roles of women. In my research journal I asked myself if she said that intentionally in an effort to separate what she was saying from critiques of patriarchy.

An interesting shift happened in Opaowi Pisim’s storytelling when she discussed her father’s influence on her understandings. She said:

> Here he was raising five daughters and he was saying, "You can go and do what you like to do." He knew that right to be able to do what we want. So he was supportive in a lot of ways. Things really changed. Growing up, I didn't see much women in roles where they would hold positions, but they would be part of decision making. But, as time went on, and that's when all the teachings that I've learned when we were working on our land protection, a lot of those teachings about keeping the land. (O. Pisim, 2021)

I was really intrigued that at the same time Opaowi Pisim could hold very entrenched gendered teachings, and also honour what she'd been taught about the autonomy of women. She didn't discuss her views on what happens when gendered teachings and protocols collide with women's autonomy.

There was a notable silence in Opaowi Pisim's storytelling when it came to talking about Two-Spirit and transgender people. Despite Two-Spirit and transgender people being included in every question, she didn't include Two-Spirit or transgender people in her responses until the very end saying:

> I've had friends, really dear friends and family who are Two-Spirited, and I love them. And, unfortunately, one of my cousins was murdered because she was different. Not in my eyes, but to society. But for myself, I loved her, and it was devastating for the family. I saw her as who she was. She was beautiful, she was kind, she was gentle. She wouldn't harm anyone. And she was young. (O. Pisim, 2021)

After my conversation with Opaowi Pisim, I thought it was concerning she seem to avoid speaking about Two-Spirit and transgender people, I questioned to myself if it could be rooted in homophobia and transphobia. It wasn't until I went through my multiple listenings to create her Ipoem that I realized her silence was hedged in a deep grief over the loss of her cousin which this small excerpt from her Ipoem demonstrates:

> I loved her, and it was devastating for the family
>
> I saw her as who she was
>
> I don't see them as different
>
> I see them as people, human beings

I am grateful that I didn’t end on the assumption that her silence meant she didn’t care or that she held deep prejudices. I was reminded how important it is to pay close attention to what people are saying, what they are not saying, and even what is being said in the silence.

Ininiw Nipim Pisim

There was only one research participant who I didn’t know either directly or peripherally and that was Ininiw Nipim Pisim, an Anishinaabe Indigenous land-based education educator living in Manitoba. Ininiw Nipim Pisim saw the research poster circulated on social media and sent me an email to express her interest in participating. After a brief email exchange, I asked Ininiw Nipim Pisim if she would be willing to have a pre-conversation call so I could tell her more about the focus of the research. In that first call, Ininiw Nipim Pisim was very excited to meet and shared their passion of connecting with the Land and sharing their land-based practices and we agreed to a Zoom meeting time the following week.

In our Zoom conversation, I took my time in introducing myself and my connection to the research and was grateful that Ininiw Nipim Pisim did the same. Ininiw Nipim Pisim is the only research participant who works in the K-12 public school system as a teacher and engages in land-based education as a part of her job. Like almost all the other research participants, Ininiw Nipim Pisim’s first memory of being in relationship with Land, was tied to her grandfather. In this excerpt from her Ipoem, the relationship she created with Land through her bond with her grandfather is expressed:

> I didn't get to see my grandparents a whole lot when I was a kid
>
> it was then when I really just felt super connected to trees
> I could feel it. I could feel the spirit of that tree

When I look back at my research journal, I read that I was starting to be aware of this trend and reflected that it was interesting to me as someone who didn’t know either of their grandfathers. It made me curious what my own grandfathers would have taught me about the Land we are related too, and I grieve those missed opportunities. I also noted that I appreciated this first land-

based memory, as it was one the only ones shared any of the participants that centered an urban land-based experience.

Despite 5 out of the 8 research participants currently living in urban spaces, very few made mention of urban Indigenous land-based practices and/or education. When talking about Land, most spoke about the act of leaving the city in a movement of returning to the Land; distinguishing the city as not a part of the Land they were returning to. I have to wonder about the particular ways in which gendered violences merge with other forms of oppression within urban spaces, and the unique barriers produced at these intersections, further undermining women, transgender and Two-Spirit people's relationship with Land.

Like Sakipakawi Pisim and Opaskwawiowi Pisim, Ininiw Nipim Pisim centered a lot of her sharing around ceremonies and cultural teachings. She recalled her first experiences in ceremonial lodges and described her discomfort within in them because of the patriarchal beliefs being espoused. Ininiw Nipim Pisim shared:

> I would say the main teacher that I had definitely bought into some of those really colonial patriarchal type of beliefs, which then just became embedded through some of those teachings that he was sharing. So on a real soul level, on a spiritual level, it didn't have a good flow for me. And so that made it difficult. And then I think just some of my own wounding that I've had, like as an indigenous woman, as an indigenous girl. That really just turned me off from some of that. And then there was a separation and I actually didn't go back to that lodge ever. (I. N. Pisim, 2021)

Like Sakipakawi Pisim, Ininiw Nipim Pisim chose refusal as their resistance and removed herself from that ceremony group because of the harm she experienced. She did share about one instance when she spoke against the actions of a male ceremonial leader and she was told not to come back, she reflected on this and shared, "… I remember thinking, thank goodness. I was relieved that I wouldn't have to go to an oppressive place." (I. N. Pisim, 2021). These words make me think of children and youth and how they might not have the power to determine where they go even if they have experienced harm.

Kaskatinowi Pisim

Kaskatinowi Pisim is an Anishinaabe land-based educator, practitioner, and artist. My research poster didn't reach her organically, but they are in the network of my advisor Dr. Alex Wilson, who asked her if it would be alright if I connected with her via email. Kaskatinowi Pisim and I made a time to meet via Zoom in May 2021. Kaskatinowi Pisim opened our conversation by recalling a memory of being on the Land with her father and him encouraging her to be aware of her surroundings and to tune into her senses in order to better know the Land. She shared that the particular experience she recalled wasn't just an earliest land-based memory but also one of the only memories she had of her father. It was interesting to hear that it was this experience and the relationship she developed with a particular animal relation under the guidance of her father that guides the land-based work she does now. Meeting this particular animal relation at that early age in a way that encouraged curiosity and relationality became foundational to her life's work. When looking back at my research journal I can see that I wondered how her life might be different if she was taught to fear this animal relation, as so many are taught to do; or even more, ignore them entirely. She shared:

> it's a memory that sticks with me because I didn't have that many memories with my dad growing up as a kid. But that one specifically was so powerful and meaningful and definitely is one of the reasons why I've chosen to do so much work around species at-risk in Ontario. And I've been able to be fortunate enough to do work with rattlesnakes and stuff. So it's had a long-term impact on me, just that specific memory. (K. Pisim, 2021)

Kaskatinowi Pisim shard a lot about yearning from a young age to do land-based activities that in her experience were reserved for males. A strong theme in Kaskatinowi Pisim's storytelling was creating the spaces she wished that she had when she was a young person. She shared:

> I've had to put a lot of work and effort into creating spaces for myself and pushing myself into those spaces. And constantly still being told that it's not a woman's role to be out hunting moose or deer. And I'm like, "Okay, but there's no man out there hunting moose or deer for me, so I'm going to go do it and I want to do it." (K. Pisim, 2021)

She emphasized the importance of safety when creating spaces for Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people to engage in land-based learning saying:

> Something that I've always wanted to do since starting to hunt, is just be able to create a space where women and non-binary people and queer Indigenous people can come learn

> how to hunt and do it in a safe environment. Because it doesn't feel safe when you're at a camp as a woman, surrounded by men. (K. Pisim, 2021)

In my research journal I appreciated that Kaskatinowi Pisim stressed how much work and care she's invested in learning land-based practices. It was a good reminder to me that knowledge often has to be earned, and also that it flows through people and their relationships. One thing that really stayed with me after my conversation Kaskatinowi Pisim was the power that comes from being self-assured, which is reflected in this exert from the Ipoem:

> I'm going to go do it
>
> I want to do it
>
> I want to be involved
>
> I'm going to eat the tongue and use the brain
>
> I've always wanted to do
>
> I'm not the kind of person
>
> I do the work
>
> I can create safe space

Like many of the other research participants, Kaskatinowi Pisim was among the first in their area to challenge patriarchy, misogyny, and heteronormativity in Indigenous land-based education spaces. I know from personal experience that interrupting the ways things have been done for quite some time can come a tremendous sacrifice, including being excluded from cultural ceremonies like in the case of Ininiw Nipim Pisim for example. Kaskatinowi Pisim reminded me to trust oneself, and keep pushing for something different when she said:

> … still even then, I'm constantly getting comments from people or Elders telling me that I shouldn't be doing that stuff, or it's not for women to do. And I just have to take that sometimes and respect people's opinions of things, but know that what I'm doing is the right thing. (K. Pisim, 2021).

Nikopiwi Pisim

Nikopiwi Pisim is an Indigenous advocate, land-based practitioner, and educator living in Treaty 6 territory/Saskatchewan. She has had a huge impact on my life. Her work has guided mine and

she continues to be a source of inspiration and of mentorship to me. That being said, I think I was the most nervous to interview her. Even though I know that she cares for me and has only ever demonstrated support for my work, I felt keenly aware that I was in the presence of a great mind. I have to laugh as I write this because I know that she would probably say something like “oh settle down” if/when she reads this description.

Nikopiwi Pisim is the second research participant that is an Indigenous first-language speaker and spoke in Nehiyawewin during our time together. She was the only research participant to describe a time in her life when she was unaware of gender, saying:

> My dad never told me you have to start a fire and cook over there. He never said that, never. I was just telling my daughter the other day. I told her that was one thing that I really appreciated about my parents. They never said, "Hey, you have to- because you're a woman, you go there and you do this." It was never anything like that. (N. Pisim, 2021)

My interview with Nikopiwi Pisim was my second last, and to that point I had listened to six of the other research participants disclose the harms they had experienced as a result of gender-based violence. Imagining a world free from the confines associated to gender was such a beautiful gift. After my interview with Nikopiwi Pisim, I let myself daydream about raising my daughter in the Nehiyaw world Nikopiwi Pisim was born into, in which her natural movements were not interfered with or manipulated in order to adhere to gender categorizations. I imagine this is what it means to be liberated.

She did describe the shift she experienced between the world she existed in during her childhood, into her adult years, saying:

> I don't remember anyone ever telling me as a child. I had to wear a skirt. I only remember being told, I had to sit a certain location in order to be there.
>
> There was such a glow. It was a joy. It wasn't until about later in my life that I would say about, let's say what I was 35, 40 when I started to notice the rigidity of where women sat and where men sat and "you only do this", and I started to notice more and more that I was being told to wear a skirt. And yet I've never in my childhood do I ever remember having a skirt. (N. Pisim, 2021)

I’m happy that Nikopiwi Pisim and others still hold the memory of how it was before patriarchy tightened its grip on our minds but also worries me for younger generations might be led to think

that the way things are now are the way it's always been. That same concern is carried in this exert from her Ipoem:

> that I don't really see today
>
> I feel outraged about it
>
> I see my, my grandchildren exploring those things now
>
> I explain to them, we have no gender

Her words reminded me of how important it is to show how many "teachings" are steeped in entrenched gender binaries but that it's not the way it's always been done. That there was a before them and that there can also be an after them.

Pawacikwanasis Pisim

Pawacikwanasis Pisim is an Asiniskawiyn Indigenous land-based practitioner and educator from Treaty 6 territory/Saskatchewan and was my final interview. I don't know Pawacikwanasis Pisim personally, but I did speak to a class that she was in. She agreed to participate after receiving my research poster and we met on Zoom late in May. I wrote in my research journal that I thought it was fitting that I was wrapping up my data collection phase just as the Spring was coming to an end and summer was about to begin. It felt like a natural time to move into the next step of the research.

Pawacikwanasis Pisim lives and works in a First Nation community and is an Indigenous first-language speaker. She is the only research participant to work at a First Nation controlled school and where she serves as a land-based educator. Pawacikwanasis Pisim was the only research participant who was raised by her grandparents, and she described her childhood as having a lot of time on her own to be in relationship with the Land. She shared that once she was an adult, she asked her grandmother why she had been left alone so much as a child to go wherever she wanted in the bush. She told me that her grandmother told her in Cree that "they were looking after you" (P. Pisim, 2021); meaning the plants, the trees, the spirits and Creator. This realization

that she was never alone, reflected in the following exert from her Ipoem, was critical in what she identified as a process of personal decolonization:

> I always wondered what that meant
>
> I didn't have a clue
>
> I got older
>
> I realized, “Wow, I've always been in touch with the land”

Pawacikwanasis Pisim described her childhood as being heavily influenced by Catholicism and its teachings. She noted that in her younger years she observed that there were things that men did and things that women did and she didn’t really question it. Her grandfather would go hunting and she would stay home with her grandmother but when her grandfather passed on there was no one to hunt for her grandmother so she learned. Pawacikwanasis Pisim said:

> I had to start hunting for my grandmother. So I quickly took on hunting, fishing, to provide for my grandmother, I guess. And I didn't go to school, how to hunt. I didn't go to school. It was something that I learned growing up as a child, listening to my grandfather. And I just took it upon myself to become the hunter, the fisher woman that I am today. (P. Pisim, 2021)

She spoke clearly about the patriarchal environment she was raised in saying:

> Men were the dominant ones. Hunting was a male-dominated activity. That's how I grew up. I grew up seeing my grandmother. And my grandmother didn't know any better because she grew up in a residential school, right from the age of five years old up until she was in grade eight because that's the only grade they went up to. And then after she came back, at a young age, she married my grandfather who she served hand and foot when she was at the residential school. In terms of gender, they were totally divided in half. Half of the residential school was for girls, their jobs were to house keep, make clothing, knit, cook. And then the boys on the other hand, worked at the garden, they took care of the fields, they chop wood and whatever needed to be done. And at the end of the day, they were not even allowed to interact with each other. There was almost like a divide right there. (P. Pisim, 2021)

In her work at the school and in her family, Pawacikwanasis Pisim has done important work to push back against impacts of patriarchy that she experienced in her own upbringing. As a teacher in the community school, she’s very aware of youth suicide rates and the impacts that homophobia and gender-based violences has on young people. At

the school she works to ensure that all young people have access to Land and land-based practices in ways that are meaningful and affirming to them. She shared:

> I'm trying to find a way to help the young generation to be okay with their identity because I think that's where all this high suicide rate comes in is because they think their gender... Or not their gender, but their being Two-Spirited. They think they don't fit in. They think there's something wrong with them when they're not. So the big thing is role modeling. And also, educating. Educating is a big thing. And as for myself, when people used to call me... Just because I was so outdoorsy, not like my girlfriends that are very girly, I was the opposite. I'm still on the opposite but that really empowers me now. It doesn't hurt me. Go ahead, call me a lesbian. Go ahead, call me a tomboy. At least I have the best of both worlds. If anything, it should be valued. It should be valued. (P. Pisim, 2021)

From Pawacikwanasis Pisim's storytelling I got a strong sense that she felt responsible to sheltering the young people that she works from the same kinds of harms that she experienced as a woman Indigenous land-based practitioner. I identify a lot with this sentiment, and I think it's beautiful how we can step in front of one another when necessary. In our journey to (re)create a world free of the forms of oppression that harm so many of us, we are our own medicine.

Overall Reflections

The stories that were shared by the research participants are the root systems on which this research emerges. They are intertwined with one another in intricate ways. In the same way that trees are in relationship beneath the soil, the stories of the research participants intersect personally and collectively. My first observation after completing all 8 interviews was how all the first memories of being in relationship with Land, were tied to a research participant's older male relative, mostly their grandfathers. It struck me that within these family connections, how it important it was that as girl and gender non-binary children, they were not refused or left-out of land-based practices by their older male relatives.

There was also a noticeable change in the tender and fond stories that research participants shared as the timelines of their own lives grew. The inclusion they felt as children disappeared as they reached puberty and adulthood when they began to experience gendered violence and bias. I could hear the pain in their voices when they shared their experiences of encountering gendered

protocols tied to ceremony, teachings, and land-based practices. All 8 research participants turned the violences they've experienced into creating spaces, opportunities, and knowledges to protect other relatives from enduring the same types of harm. This transformation of hurt into healing, is a power of alchemy that flowed through all of their stories.

To take something heavy to carry and turn it into something good and useful is a theme from the interviews that I also felt very personally during the data collection phase. I had some much anxiety and fear around starting the data collection phase of this research. I realize now that I was experiencing an emotional block tied to feelings of not feeling good enough to ask the research participants to share their stories with me. This feeling was only intensified by the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic and not having opportunities to engage in adult conversations. When the winter of 2021 was coming to an end I felt and internal shift, I wanted to reach for others. I was intensely lonesome and knew that my mental health had deteriorated significantly. I pushed myself to connect with the research participants in spite of my own struggles and was rewarded with such beautiful relationships. I knew that I needed to move my PhD forward, but I didn't know how deeply I needed the time spent with the 8 people who stepped forward to be a part of this journey with me, from them and their stories, I am eternally grateful.

Chapter 5: The Stories We Tell About Ourselves

Like they did for us
We will do for you

Seed love into the soil
So life can continue to sprout

It's safe to step forward
On this trail made for you

You are never alone
On the Land
Where your People are resting

- Tasha Spillett July 24, 2022

Chapter Introduction

Chapter five presents key themes identified through the voice centred analysis process. Excerpts from a sampling of the Ipoems drawn from the participant interview transcripts with contrapuntal voices highlighted, along with overall findings are shared. The central focus of this chapter is to center and amplify the knowledges, experiences, and pedagogies of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people. Finally, this chapter presents discussions and conclusions

My time spent with the research participants was hugely transformational to me both personally and as a researcher. As Shawn Wilson (2008) writes in *Research is Ceremony*, "if research hasn't changed you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (S. Wilson, 2008 p. 135). In that spirit, I thank each person who stepped forward to be part of this research and who in turn left their unique mark on the landscape of my being. In previous chapters, my writings presented my understandings and reflections, centering my own voice. In this chapter I'm going to take a step to the side and make space for the research participants and their stories to move ahead. Here, the

voices of the participants will sound the loudest, their knowledges reverberating and rippling outwards, beyond our relationships with one another out to wider communities, relations, and even alternate dimensions of time and space.

Prominent Themes: What was Really Being Said

In the many listenings, using the voice centred method, of the research participants stories, seven prominent themes presented themselves. These themes represent more than categorizations of commonalities identified in the research participants' words; they are the veins of storylines that course deeply beneath the surfaces of the stories shared in the interviews. The prominent themes are: 1) gendering of Land and land-based teachings and practices; 2) protocols taboos and exclusions of women and Two-Spirit; 3) Indigenous languages; 4) systemic forms of oppression: patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia; 5) shifting experiences across lifespan feeling connected and disconnected with/from the natural world; 6) resistance and refusal; and 7) creating opportunities and safe spaces. As we move through the themes in the following sections, segments of the research participants' Ipoems demonstrate the depth of what was being shared through the layers of the research by listening to the participants' voices (Gilligan et al., 2003).

Gendering of Land and Land-based Teachings/Practices

Through the multiple listenings of the stories told by the research participants, it was evident that the overall gendering of Land and land-based teachings and practices, has shaped their land-based experiences and shaped relationships with Land, and emerged as a prominent theme. Gendering of Land was both reinforced and contested depending on the research participants and sometimes participants actually reinforced and contested within their own stories, presenting opposing or contrapuntal voices. In particular, participants shared that they had received teachings that gendered water – specifically gendering who is to take care of water. Others described that Earth itself is gendered as female. When speaking about a major land-based project she leads, Kaskatinowi Pisim shared:

> the fishing project, has women connecting to things, specifically water. And our teachings that us, as women, are caregivers for the water, and we carry a lot of stories around that too. So I think that that's a really big, impactful thing for especially the

> women who are part of this project who have never had the opportunity to be on a boat before or learn how to drive a boat, and just be empowered in that sense. (K. Pisim, 2021)

In this excerpt, the traditional role of women is described as being caretakers of water, while also drawing connections between women's lack of opportunities to be in relationship with water to lack of empowerment.

Contradictions became more evident in participants' narratives when they spoke about gendering Land and land-based teachings and practices. The shifts in their own understandings of, and comfortabilities with, could be heard as they shared, and more-so as I listened for the contrapuntal themes that emerged through analysis. Opaskwawiowi Pisim discusses this complexity in understanding her own connection to Land:

> I'm still shifting in a lot of ways. Like these ideas that water is feminine and fire is masculine and waterkeepers need to be women and firekeepers need to be men. And through this land-based work and workshops and gatherings that we've been hosting now through [institution] with [knowledge keeper] the lead of the project, and wanting to make those gatherings Two-Spirit, trans and gender non-binary inclusive has meant a lot of conversations with Elders and with people who maybe don't have that same relationship to the kind of fluidity of gender. (O. Pisim, 2021)

While later in the interview Opaskwawiowi Pisim, an Indigenous language-learner, employed gendered language to describe that natural world, using "kikawinaw askiy" (translation of Mother Earth) and "nohkom tipiskaw pisim" (translation of Grandmother moon) while describing their relationship to Land.

It's notable that these constructions were echoed by Opaowi Pisim, an Indigenous first-language speaker who said:

> For example, the water, we are the ones that carry the teaching of water, we are the ones that will teach the youth about the importance of water and how that story came about with the praying for the water and the life because it's both life, our responsibility to take care of that life. (O. Pisim, 2021)

A contradiction exists in Opaskwawiowi Pisim's storytelling in the use of gendered language and assigning gender to the natural world while also working to disrupt gendered protocols in land-based education. This point, about how gender operates within the Indigenous languages, will be more fully considered in a coming section.

When describing the ways that they've experienced the gendering of Indigenous land-based practices, participants often spoke in voices of disconnection, with some moving on to voices of refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2012, 2014), employing irreverence, or saying things rhetorically to express themselves. When discussing the protocol of skirt wearing in cultural spaces, Opaskwawiowi Pisim described being accepted into a particular ceremony, but not to a point that fully celebrated her identity:

> …being accepted into Sun Dance, but very much like, "You have to be woman and you have to wear a skirt. Where's your skirt? Where's your skirt?" (O. Pisim, 2021)

It's notable that Opaskwawiowi Pisim expresses voices of connection and joy when describing an instance where the gender binary was interrupted within a cultural space she was a part of. The following segment from her Ipoem illustrates this:

> I just remember we made the request that we needed to feast a part of that circle for Two-Spirit kin, for non-binary kin, for trans and questioning queer kin. And it was really, really beautiful
> I just remember that I was the singer
> I was like, "I'm always the singer."
> I just remember, we opened up the space and we made offerings to the larger circle
> I just remember him in particular while we were feasting this area in the bigger circle, he came to us
> I remember him telling us like, "One of my granddaughters is gay and was really worried to tell me because she was worried that she wouldn't be invited to Sun Dance and there wouldn't be a place for her. And that was really scary."
> "I love you for who you are. And I love you so much more for being honest and being able to tell me this, and there will always be a place for you in the circle."
> I just remember how important it was for this Elder and someone who holds that role of being the guide, being the kind of a space holder for a really sacred ceremony, and one that I've had difficulties with as a sundancer

It’s clear that this experience was very impactful for Opaskwawiowi Pisim, and the interruption of gender and homophobia, restored a level of connection for her. Opaskwawiowi Pisim makes a point of including the gender of the Elder and detailed how important it was for her that a male Elder had engaged in this ceremony for Two-Spirit folks. It is curious that she attributes the ability to have the ceremony to this male Elder being a “space holder”. Would it have been the same if a male Elder was not present to lead the space?

Gender roles within Indigenous land-based education was highlighted in the narratives of many of the research participants. Within these stories the importance of finding or existing in a balance for example, with the natural world and within families and communities, was spoken about and generally that balance was set within a gender binary. Opaowi Pisim described this balance in saying:

> … there is that equal responsibility from both parents, both male and female. This is when I was growing up. And the importance of that work and the balance within the family to teach the things that women needed to do. (O. Pisim, 2021)

She had very specific understandings of the expectations held on the women’s “side” of that balance:

> ...teachings fall on women to learn about respecting ourselves, respecting our bodies, respecting who we are, and to know that we are very... Like I say, because we give life. And from the time as a young girl, we need to be taught how to respect ourselves, how to care for ourselves, how to do things, and to be prepared to be a mother. So right from the beginning, this is a woman's responsibility. They loved doing that. It empowers them to do that, and it was important for them. (O. Pisim, 2021)

Like many other participants, Opaowi Pisim didn’t outline the source of these teachings, only saying things like “this was the way it was done”.

Pawacikwanasis Pisim also discussed gender roles. She described her upbringing as being heavily influenced by Catholicism and patriarchy. An intriguing interruption of what was held as traditional gender roles within her family occurred after the death of her grandfather. Her grandfather’s passing resulted in the expectation that she would take on some of his responsibilities within the family, overriding the gender roles she’s been assigned.

> I had to start hunting for my grandmother
> I quickly took on hunting, I guess
> I learned growing up, listening
> I just took it upon myself
> I grew up in a very patriarchal society

Not only was the gender binary unsettled within her family but also within her own mind. This Ipoem segment from Pawacikwanasis Pisim highlights the reconfiguration of gender roles that occurred in this time.

> I grew up seeing my grandmother, she didn't know any better I grew up seeing all that
> I've seen my grandmother serve my grandfather hand and foot
> I've seen my mother served my step dad hand and foot, all my aunties
> I grew up
> I was not having any of it
> I was not having any of it

Pawacikwanasis Pisim speaks in a contrapuntal voice of self-doubt while describing being thrust into taking up her grandfather's role of hunting, saying "I quickly took on hunting, I guess" (P. Pisim, 2021). It's intriguing that despite recognizing her natural abilities and quick learning, she ends with by casting doubt. This voice of self-doubt is met with a voice of self-assuredness and assertion of agency while discussing her refusal of the gendering of Indigenous land-based education practices, which is heard in her repetition of "I was not having any of it" (P. Pisim, 2021) . Pawacikwanasis Pisim's taking up hunting - a role and land-based practice that wasn't taught to her as a child because she was a girl, became intertwined in her relationship with her grandmother and inherited responsibility of caring for her grandmother. She unsettled the gendering of this land-based practice out of necessity. Would her abilities for hunting have been ignored or snuffed out had her grandfather, or another male family member, been able to hunt for grandmother?

The concept of necessity was heard frequently in the research participants' narratives, especially when they spoke about doing land-based practices that are often attributed to boys and men. In the following segment from Paskowi Pisim, the importance of interrupting the gendering of land-based activities and creating spaces where families can learn together.

> I think that, of course, not gendering any activities. Everybody should to learn how to sharpen a knife. Everybody should know how to sharpen an ax. Everybody should know how to start a fire. Those activities aren't limited to certain people. I think that's really important. I think that we also need to make spaces out on the land and the water where children and whole families are able to be there. If you're not making spaces where people are able to bring children, we're automatically going to see less women. So, if we're not building that naturally into the practices, we're not going to see as many people do set activity. So, I think that's really important. And I think that we're seeing that starting to develop more in certain spaces. (Paskowi Pisim, 2021)

The voice of disconnection was particularly strong when research participants spoke about their desire and interest in learning land-based activities but being excluded from the transmission of knowledge tied to them, saying things like "I wanted to do for a long time, but there was just never a space for me to be able to do it" (Kaskatinowi Pisim, 2021). Often the disconnection in this context was met by a strong assertiveness when she was sharing about their commitment to learning. For example, Kaskatinowi Pisim shared, "Okay, but there's no man out there hunting moose or deer for me, so I'm going to do it and I want to do it" (Kaskatinowi Pisim, 2021).

Here, it was evident that she was conscious that she was re(claiming) a practice that she might not have access to if she didn't actively seek to learn it but may not have been as aware of the connection being re(made) in the learning process.

Beyond being excluded from learning land-based practices that have been gendered, some research participants experienced backlash (Dotson, 2015; Faludi, 1991; May, 2014) when they engaged in those practices. As a prominent theory within feminism, backlash is described as a harmful reaction to something beneficial with the intention of protecting gender norms and hierarchies (Faludi, 1991). For example, Pawacikwanasis Pisim, who learned to hunt to provide

for her grandmother, experienced shaming within her community. The following piece from her Ipoem demonstrates the misogyny and homophobia that operates within the gendering of land-based practices.

> I was even almost shy, not shy, but embarrassed to tell people that I shot a moose
> I was made fun of
> I was called a lesbian
> I couldn't care less what anybody says because people still call me tomboy
> I'm proud of it
> I have the best of both worlds

Pawacikwanasis Pisim speaks in a voice of disconnectedness while describing the backlash she experienced, and also self-assuredness when asserting her own identity. She came to a powerful self-awareness about her identity and rejected any shame others attempted to place upon her.

Not all participants experienced the gendering of Land and Indigenous land-based practices in the same way. In the following piece from Nikopiwi Pisim's Ipoem we are transported to a time in her memory from before constructions of gender impacted her relationship with Land.

> I never felt like there was "gender"
> I was just telling my daughter the other day
> I told her that was one thing that I really appreciated about my parents
> I remember going and checking the beaver traps with my dad
> pulling the traps up and sliding the beaver onto the ice and then my brother and I
> my brother and I would grab it and haul it

The non-interference (Brant, 1990; Wark, Neckoway, & Brownlee, 2017; A. Wilson, 1996) in Nikopiwi Pisim's engagement in land-based practices was critical in the development of her relationship with Land. Later in the interview she reflected:

> Never in my life as a child and as a young woman, did I ever feel I had to behave a certain way as a woman. I'm so grateful to my parents. I grabbed whatever tools I could and jumped in there and helped him. (N. Pisim, 2021)

Her parents didn’t exclude her from participating or shame her for wanting to. She was simply part of what was going on, unburdened by constructions of gender that might limit her movement on the land.

Protocols, Taboos, and Exclusion of Women and Two-Spirit People

Many of the stories shared by the participants rotated around what they were told they couldn’t/shouldn’t or could/should do in relation to their gender or how others perceived their gender. Some of these regulations were based in what is held as cultural beliefs or taboos around women’s bodies, including how women’s bodies should be dressed and restricting people’s movements while menstruating. In the experiences of the research participants, the enforcement of these regulations, often by men (both younger and older) and older women resulted in them being excluded and/or participants disengaging or opting out of from cultural and land-based practices. Kaskatinowi Pisim, described this process in their experience in saying, “I’m constantly getting comments from people or Elders telling me that I shouldn’t be doing this stuff, or it’s not for women to do” (K. Pisim, 2021). This experience of being told what they couldn’t or shouldn’t do echoed through the stories of all participants, even moving to the opposite of being told what was seen as permissible and expected of them to do based on their gender or others perception of their gender.

The following segment from Sakipakawi Pisim’s Ipoem outlines how exclusions based on gendered protocols and taboos impacted her and offers insight into the wider impact that those experiences have on women and Two-Spirit people and on their relationships with Land.

> I didn't belong there
> I love ceremonies, you feel like you belong, right?
> I think that there's definitely times that gendered practices exclude people from where they're feeling, especially in those who are not specifically male or female and gender diverse

In their interviews it was interesting to hear how research participants attempted to reach some kind of personal resolution when experiencing exclusions or restrictions tied to gendered taboos. A precarious dance of wanting to be a part of Indigenous land-based practices, while also keeping themselves safe, and negotiating complex familial and community relationships seemed common in these instances. In this segment of Sakipakawi Pisim's Ipoem she makes what at first seems like a very strong statement rooted in self-assuredness saying, "there's definitely times that gendered practices exclude people from where they're feeling, especially in those who are not specifically male or female and gender diverse" but is careful to self-monitor and qualify the statement with "I think". Her self-regulating, illustrates a level of internalized patriarchy. Not only was her body regulated in the experience she described but it also shaped how she thought and spoke about herself.

The following quote from Sakipakawi Pisim's storytelling highlights how difficult it can be to move between feelings of connection and disconnection:

> I can't imagine my Kokum being so concerned about wearing a long skirt in the bush when she's hunting and when she's snaring rabbits and harvesting medicines. It was always important to me, it's still very important to me, to follow protocol in the setting that I'm in. So however the folks who are leading the ceremony, what their expectation is, it's important to me to honor that and to respect that. But I've definitely seen times where people have been shamed, and even you can see how they're being harmed during that interaction. (S. Pisim, 2021)

It's important to call attention to the swift change between self-assuredness, almost irreverence when commenting on skirt-enforcement to a sort of complacency, while Sakipakawi Pisim reflects on experiences where she's witnessed gendered taboos and protocols but not interrupted them.

Insight into why research participants might not interrupt gender-based violence becomes embedded in taboos and protocols and was revealed in their storytelling. Like in what Sakipakawi Pisim shared above, these taboos and exclusions are often blatant. While research participants are very aware of the taboos and exclusions, they spoke about it either not being safe to intervene or seeing intervening as possibly causing a breakdown in relationships that are important to them. The following piece from Ininiw Nipim Piswim's Ipoem offers a powerful understanding on what the impacts can be for a women or Two-Spirit person, how it might feel

in a situation where they are witnessing or experience gender-based violence within Indigenous land-based education, and the possible consequences of responding to them.

> I didn't feel like I could use my voice and say, "This doesn't feel good to me. This right now doesn't feel good to me"
>
> I felt I had to endure and in some respects suffer a bit
>
> I wouldn't say it was just one incident
>
> It was every single time that I was in that space with that particular teacher and with his family
>
> I was not invited to come back
>
> I remember thinking, thank goodness
>
> I was relieved that I wouldn't have to go to an oppressive place

It was interesting to me that while reflecting on an experience in which Ininiw Nipim Pisim felt unsafe, she employed a voice of uncertainty and powerlessness. For example, rather than saying that she refused to endure, she spoke about having to endure, even suffer, as if it was expected or normalized. She also spoke in a very passive tone in relation to her separation from this circle, and the male practitioner who lead the land-based practices, saying that she was, “not invited to come back” (I. N. Pisim, 2021), rather than identifying that she acted in her own sovereignty and chose not to return. Her rejection from this particular group offered her some freedom, but the voices of disconnection and powerlessness makes me wonder if she had not been rejected how much more harm she would have experienced? At what point, if ever, would or could she have removed herself from interactions with that group and practitioner?

Encountering these taboos and exclusions produced feelings of hurt, disconnection, anger, and confusion and cultivated feelings of resistance and refusal - which will be explored on its own. Sakipakawi Pisim talked specifically about taboos tied to menstruation within cultural and land-based practices.

> I think it's important to have conversations about people who are gender diverse
>
> I think even things like picking medicines on your moon time, you're not supposed to touch medicines or pick medicines on your moon time
>
> I think about my grandma

> I know was a really strong, brilliant, amazing woman who was super independent just stopping everything that she had to do for a week out of the month to just take care of herself on her moon time
> I don't think that is feasible

What was notably absent from the stories told by the research participants was a distinctive genesis of these taboos and protocols, including how and why they are enforced. This is illustrated in the following segment from Kaskatinowi Pisim's Ipoem:

> I'm constantly getting comments from people or Elders telling me that I shouldn't be doing that stuff, or it's not for women to do
> I'm doing is the right thing
> I don't know if that even answered your question
> I remember hearing are that that wasn't our role traditionally
> I don't know
> I just find it interesting to hear that difference
> I haven't been given any other reason other than it's our traditional roles

Kaskatinowi Pisim's swift shift from a voice of self-assuredness when stating that she knows she's doing the right thing for herself to a contrapuntal voice of self-doubt after recalling what she's been told are not women's roles, demonstrates the level of confusion that comes from the enforcement of gendered taboos, protocols, and exclusions especially with the absence of any kind of explanation.

Nikopiwi Pisim, an Indigenous first-language speaker who was raised in relationship with the Land from early childhood, shared stories that called in to question the authenticity of the understandings that produce these gender-based taboos and exclusions. Instead, she places them outside of Indigenous conceptions of gender:

> I rifle through the memories of my childhood
> I just don't really recall a time when my mom and dad said, "Here, you have to do this because you're a woman"
> I remember going to ceremonies, we had tea dances

I don't know anyone that uses that ceremony anymore
I went to Sundance lodges
I don't remember anyone ever telling me as a child, I had to wear a skirt

The absence of gendered taboos in Nikopiwi Pisim's memories is important to consider. It provides a reminder that even though this (gendered taboos, protocols, and exclusions) might be the way things are being done now, it doesn't mean that it is the way things have always been done and maybe even more critically, the way things need to be done as we move forward. The following piece of her Ipoem, begins to identify possible points of disruption that have created the gendering of Land and land-based practices that she didn't see in her childhood.

I saw in researching the clothing of women,
I feel really sad when I begin to think about it
I even came across research that talked about how women brought in the dirt to
create the space in which the Buffalo skull would sit
I tried to talk about that even with my dad and my brother
I could, see and research, the men had to go into the forest to do the ceremonies
and then it became traditional that only men did certain things
I don't want to say role, the work of women became forgotten

Nikopiwi Pisim talks about how the men had to go into the forest to do ceremony, referring to Canadian legislation that outlawed Indigenous ceremonies and forced Indigenous communities to practice our cultures and spiritualities in secrecy (McAdam, 2015; TRC, 2015). Although, she didn't talk about colonization in this particular section, in later parts of her interview she did expressly name the Indian Act and Christianity as a major disrupter in Indigenous land-based relationships and knowledges:

I am really struggling with the Indian Act system right now
I say that because I've been elected as Council
I'm registered in as an Indian
Am I ever, ever having problems with misogyny and the patriarchy

And later, referring to her own research saying:

I came across images of women with their noses cut off
I asked my dad about it
I was horrified
I did more research
I came across more documents
I realized that came from the Old Testament of the St. James Bible
I know people are talking about skirt teachings
I'm like, "oh my goodness, oh my goodness, where, where are the pants teachings then? Where is the pants teachings? Tell me."
I'm very aware that
I'm very aware of these things
I love wearing skirts and dresses
lately I find I put those away
I don't want to wear them
I refuse to wear them
because I see more and more women making skirts and saying, it's too traditional
I just got really, really sad about that

I felt a sense sorrow in the listenings of Nikopiwi Pisim's interview, but not powerlessness nor resignation. She clearly highlights the intentional breakdown of Indigenous peoples' relationships with Land, specifically women, but speaks with urgency and determination into looking pointedly at the source of the destruction while also working to repair the damages.

Indigenous Languages

Three of the research participants, Opaowi Pisim, Nikopiwi Pisim, and Pawacikwanasis Pisim are Indigenous first-language speakers and one research participant, Opaskwawiowi Pisim identified as an Indigenous language-learner. Languages spoken by the research participants include the y, n, and th dialect of the Cree language and Anishinaabemowin. In the multiple listenings of the stories being told, words and how they were used was at the forefront of my analysis. What emerged as a critical point of consideration, especially when speaking with the Indigenous first-language speakers and the self-identified language-learner, was the importance

of evaluating the ways in which Indigenous understandings related to gender is stored and the changes in the languages influenced by the colonial gender binary.

Two of the Indigenous first-language speakers spoke in their language during the interview, only one participant highlighted the structure of their language as not existing within a gender binary, clearly stating, “we have no gender. We have no he/she language” (N. Pisim, 2021). Nikopiwi Pisim, a Cree first-language speaker shared:

> There's another term ī-ikskwēw-iskāk. It was like going in and putting on the armor of a woman, then all my brothers knew how to do beadwork. They knew how to make bannock, just as much as I knew how to handle a gun to go and hunt prairie chicken and rabbit. (N. Pisim, 2021)

Additionally, the following segment of her Ipoem highlights voices of anger and concern when contrasting her childhood memories to her present-day experiences and observations.

> It was just this fluidity that I don't really see today
>
> I feel outraged about it
>
> I see my, my grandchildren exploring those things now
>
> I explain to them, we have no gender
>
> I really struggle with the English language, with the he and the she

While Nikopiwi Pisim, a fluent Cree speaker, who was raised immersed in the language, spoke in a voice of self-assuredness that the language has no gender, Opaskwawiowi Pisim, a Cree language-learner spoke in terms that reflect her understanding of the language as being held within a gender binary. Opaskwawiowi Pisim shared:

> I'm still kind of unwrapping and unwinding a little because obviously kikawinaw askiy, Mother Earth, nohkom tipiskaw pisim, Grandmother Moon, Father Sky, Grandfather Son, all of these pieces they're kind of so woven into prayer and language. Like I've been learning Nēhiyawēwin, Plains Cree for the last eight years now. And yeah, we're such a like, in English, the dominance of gender and how much that kind of really plays a role. Yet the animating of life energies and life forces in the languages and in like a Cree-Metis perspective is so powerful and so big. But then to still have these kinds of gender constructs, it's kind of just a natural continuum of this dominance I feel, in binary. (O. Pisim, 2021)

Although Opaskwawiowi Pisim spoke about being aware of the gender binary intrinsic to the English language and of the expansiveness of Indigenous language and worldviews, her learning of Nēhiyawēwin involved a gender binary. Being taught Nēhiyawēwin in a way that modeled the gender binary of English, led Opaskwawiowi Pisim to believe the language itself involved a structure of dominance, which is the antithesis of first-language speaker Nikopiwi Pisim's understanding, which places the language as being beyond constructions of gender. The two understandings are rooted in separate epistemologies and it's important to determine which of the two is serving as the foundation for current Indigenous land-based education pedagogies. The potential impact of altering Indigenous languages to include gender binaries or the interruption in the epistemologies within which those languages are rooted on Indigenous land-based education will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Systemic Forms of Oppression: Patriarchy, Misogyny, and Homophobia

In my initial listenings of the interviews, I struggled to identifying any connections research participants were making between the forms of oppressions, mainly patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia they experienced within "teachings" or "protocols" while engaging in Indigenous land-based practices or in "teachings" and "protocols" with the root of those forms of oppressions. As I sifted through the interviews, I asked myself repeatedly, "but where did that (the gendered teachings, protocols, practices) come from?", and early in the data analysis mistakenly thought that participants were not making the connections between their individual experiences and larger histories and structures of oppression. When I pressed myself deeper into the layers of storytelling, I found that the research participants were in fact making these connections, though in many cases not directly. These connections were nestled in rhetorical questions and statements and irreverent humour they used in their stories, they were mapping the trail between what they were experiencing and the structures of oppression that rooted those experiences.

In the following segment of Paskowi Pisim's Ipoem she spoke pointedly in a voice of self-assuredness, about the urgency to address gendered and sexualized violence:

> I mean, we desperately need to continue to address patriarchy, sexual harassment, sexual violence in our communities, in any community really, and homophobia and transphobia
> I think making a culture on the land where it's unacceptable for those things to occur
> I also like the idea of making spaces where homophobia and transphobia is threatened

It's important to note that Paskowi Pisim's directives drive Indigenous land-based practitioners and organizers to push beyond acknowledging and addressing gendered and sexualized violences to making them intrinsically intolerable, and even unsafe for those who may violate these community standards. She asserted, "We really make our spaces where sexual harassment and sexual violence are threatened, they're ensured as a standard." (P. Pisim, 2021). I have to wonder about the immediate and generational impacts of community standards, that recalibrate which community's members experience unsafety from those who are harmed by gendered and sexualized violences to the perpetrators of the that harm, would have. Would gendered teachings and protocols begin to fray at the seams, giving way to something new; or something ancient perhaps? In the case of Paskowi Pisim, and many of the other research participants, it would mean that their relationships with Land wouldn't be disrupted in the ways they have, and relational safeguards may have been/would be activated when they forcibly engage with gendered and sexualized violences. The ripple effect on just these 8 people alone would be huge. Including all Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender diverse people in the equation would create a tidal wave with immeasurable generational impact.

Nikopiwi Pisim was the other research participant to explicitly name patriarchy in storytelling about the gendering of Land and land-based practices. In this piece of her Ipoem, her storytelling weaves between the individual and collective impacts of patriarchy and misogyny:

> I am really struggling with the Indian Act system right now
> I say that because I've been elected as Council
> the reserve that I'm registered in as an Indian
> Boy, am I ever, ever having problems with misogyny and the patriarchy

> I'm this close to resigning
>
> I feel and I think is in the systems
>
> I tell the story
>
> I've made it public
>
> I've said how many times that I ran for Council, I ran for Chief
>
> I ran for Chief, an Elder went to the microphone and she said, “women don’t belong in positions of leadership, you need to go home and make bannock”

Nikopiwi Pisim noted, intentionally, that it was a woman who made this degrading comment to her. It was the retelling of this painful personal experience that prompted Nikopiwi Pisim to speak about her own research on cultural traditions and the impacts of colonialism and patriarchy. She shared:

> It was an elder woman, and that's all the influence of the Indian Act and now it's postured as if it's traditional knowledge. You see? I came across images of women with their noses cut off, and I asked my dad about it. And he said, "oh, that was our law back then. If women misbehaved, it was our law that they had their noses cut off". I was horrified, how could that be our law? Then I did more research and I came across more documents and then I realized that came from the Old Testament of the St. James Bible. It was Canon Law and it was brought here. Now even our own people think it's traditional, you see? But if you don't do the research and question, keep questioning these processes. (N. Pisim, 2021)

Hearing the words, “it was brought here” still echoes through my mind. While many of the other research participants indirectly identified patriarchy and colonialism as the sources of the gendered teachings, protocols, and violences they’ve experienced, it was Nikopiwi Pisim who plainly and confidently situated these things as being foreign, and not of these Lands. Research participants spoke about how encountering patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia impacted their personal relationships with Land and ability to engage in land-based practices safely and identity affirming ways. When telling about her return to her home territory to do land-based work Kaskatinowi Pisim shared:

> …when I first started traveling out here the amount of racism and homophobia I experienced for doing work out here and just existing in the small towns and stuff out here. That's a huge barrier, I think, to a lot of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit folks. Yeah. And even just by virtue of being a woman, living out here by myself it would be a whole different experience. So I can't help but to think about that as well. (K. Pisim, 2021)

Moving freely on the Lands that her ancestors are resting within, has been systematically made unsafe by the intersecting forms of oppression that she's been made to co-exist with. While a difficult reality to navigate, there was no voice of resignation in Kaskatinowi Pisim's storytelling of how she's (re)connected with the Land. Quite contrary, she spoke in a voice of defiance, pushing back against the forces that attempt to remove her from the Land or block her from being in relationship with the Land.

Sakipakawi Pisim, who in other parts of her storytelling would move back and forth between voices of self-assuredness to self-doubt when talking about not understanding gendered protocols but also feeling the need to respect people's teachings, settled firmly when her storytelling led her to reflecting on her child's experiences. She shared:

> Having a child who identifies as non-binary has been challenging to find spaces that will honour their own autonomy to decide what they feel like wearing when they're in those ceremony spaces. And so I think it becomes challenging to have... Well, it's not even challenging. I think it's important to have conversations about people who are gender diverse in ways that we can make sure that we're including them in those ceremonies. (S. Pisim, 2021)

An important shift in awareness can be heard in her voice when she moves from feeling how challenging it can be to interrupt gendered teachings and protocols, to how imperative it is to do so, in order to bring our relatives- specifically Two-Spirit, transgendered and gender-diverse relatives, (back) into our ceremonies.

In this extended piece of Opaowi Pisim's Ipoem, we hear how the consequences of our failure to ensure that all of our relatives' identities are celebrated and affirmed in our communities' circles can be life threatening. Please note that the following section includes mention of death and murder, please take care if you choose to read it.

> I've had friends, really dear friends and family who are Two-Spirited
>
> I love them and, unfortunately, one of my cousins was murdered because she was different. Not in my eyes, but to society
>
> I loved her, and it was devastating for the family
>
> I saw her as who she was

I don't see them as different
I see them as people, human beings
I think when women and people who see that, that strengthens them
I think to be accepted into the circle, they are very smart people, they're very intelligent people
I think we have to learn
I think, as women, we have to support them and their ways and recognize them
I acknowledge them, I acknowledged them who they are
I respect them and you have to give them that support, they are part of we are, of our Indigenous communities
I say, some communities are accepting, and some are not
I think that needs to change

These words from Opaowi Pisim, came near the end of her interview. She hadn't made mention of Two-Spirit people until that point in her interview. While she spoke in very gendered terms throughout her interview, describing her understanding of the roles of men and women, she spoke in a voice of self-assuredness, even authority on what needs to happen in order to (re)build communities in which Two-Spirit relatives' lives are protected. Her love for her taken relative, seemed to act as an agent of change in terms of the binaried beliefs she holds as traditional teachings.

Through shaming, body regulation enforced in gendered protocols, and teachings and gendered and sexualized violences, the research participants' stories reflected how intensely patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia packaged within colonialism has shaped, impacted, and severed the relationships of the research participants with the Land.

Shifting Experiences Across the Lifespan: Connections, Disconnections & the Natural World

When in deep listening of the research participants stories and in creating their Ipoems it was notable that there were specific times in which they felt connected with or disconnected from Land, and how those relationships tended to shift as they aged. All research participants began

their storytelling by recalling a memory in which they were first conscious of being in relationship with the Land. They spoke about their ages, where they were, who they were with, what they were doing, and even the senses that the memory evoked. These stories were all positive and filled with deep belonging and no interference by others enforcing gendered protocols. Examples of these memories of feeling connected with the Land are shared in the following selection of Ipoems.

Pawacikwanasis Pisim:

> I used to spend a lot of time when we were out on the land, when we were out at the trap line,
> I would always wander off to the shore and I would play by the rocks,
> I would just explore, and pick berries
> I got older, and then I used to ask my grandmother, “Grandma?” She said, “What?” "I was only like six, seven years old. Why did you let me wander off into the bush by myself?"
> I always wondered what that meant
> I didn't have a clue
> I got older, and went through my B. Ed and through my Masters
> I realized, “Wow, I've always been in touch with the land. I've always had a relationship with the land even as a very young child.”
> I think those were the first memories was me playing by the shore by myself, exploring, looking under the rocks, looking for little fish, and just looking for berries along the shore, going out and picking berries by myself, and just wandering around
> I think that was my first and that was a very young age
> I would explore by myself
> I know I was a little explorer
> I was always out by myself
> I was a grown up and I, like I said, and I asked my grandmother, “Why did you let me?”

I don't know how to describe it in English, but trying to interpret it in English it means that they were looking out for you

I was like, “Okay, that doesn't really make sense to me.”

Sakipakawi Pisim:

I thought about this a lot

I can think about a bunch of random times.

I spent a lot of time doing sports and things like that

I think that if I'm thinking about my relationship with the land

I am now and in my identity

I can think about a time

I was somewhere between five to six years old

I was on a trip

I was with my mom, my grandma, and my grandma's dad, so my great grandpa

I think it was a shade tent or something.

I was somewhere in between the ages of five to six.

I just remember him taking me to it, like, "Touch this. Feel this. Smell this. This grows here."

I thought about sharing that here because it definitely shaped who I am now

I thought it was really cool because that experience, being in relationship with the land, shaped my identity

Opaowi Pisim:

I grew up here in Poplar River First Nations

I was born and raised here

I moved away for a while

I have really fond memories of growing up here because we're isolated community

a lot of things I learned came from my grandfather

my grandfather passed away when I was nine, but I remember a lot

> I'd often say, "That this might be hard for you to understand because you haven't really experienced life. But as time goes on, you will remember those words that I'm telling you now and some things I show you. Those will come back to you."

The first land-based memories shared in these Ipoem segments and in the storytelling of other research participants were filled with voices of connection. Connections with Land, self, family, and community were central in these childhood memories. At these early life stages, research participants didn't recall being aware of or as impacted by the gendering of Land in land-based practices. In sharing their first land-based memories, no research participants highlighted an experience of having their relationship with land interfered with by gendered protocols of the perceptions and constructions of gender held by others. While listening for contrapuntal voices in their storytelling, I noted an interesting and painful shift. As research participants got older and entered puberty and beyond, they stories filled with voices of connection began to be replaced by voices of disconnection. As they got older, their relationships with Land began to be interfered with by the gendering of land-based practices and what's held as traditional teachings. Examples of this can be heard in the following Ipoems.

Sakipakawi Pisim:

> I don't remember a lot of times where people have encouraged me to experience the land in terms of touching it and with all of my senses
> I thought that was really cool
> I think that some of the things that, in my experiences, there are certain activities in terms of learning traditional knowledge, and different practices in terms of gathering medicines and harvesting and things like that.
> I can think of times where I've been with groups where the folks who are leading the activity have shared that there is a certain role for women and men in terms of gathering medicines, or even dressing. I can think of being told
> I got older
> I would say even in my 20s is where this became more relevant to me, where it was important for people who were creating space in ceremonies, that you were wearing a skirt as a woman

I've experienced and the way that it impacts, even in terms of my relationship with the land

Nikopiwi Pisim:

I would say about, let's say what I was 35, 40

I started to notice the rigidity of where women sat and where men sat and "you only do this"

I started to notice more and more that I was being told to wear a skirt

I've never in my childhood do I ever remember having a skirt

Ininiw Nipim Pisim:

I think in my young adulthood

I really started to learn more about the culture, became very aware that there was different lenses that people who I was being exposed to who were teaching me had

I would say they were very gendered

I never saw that as the kid

I wasn't aware

I began to learn from those people that, oh there is male, there is female

when people were breaking down the anatomy of medicine

I could picture it and I could make sense of it

I would remember stuff from science classes when they would be talking about pollination and all that stuff

I don't want to use the word right but it didn’t have a flow that I liked

I had definitely bought into some of those really colonial patriarchal type of beliefs

I think just some of my own wounding that I've had, like as an Indigenous woman, as an Indigenous girl

I actually didn't go back to that lodge ever

I realized that there were lots of different other people out there who had different understandings, different teachings that didn't necessarily have that gendered lens

The participants' Ipoems illustrate their movement from speaking in a voice of connection while recalling their earlier memories of being in relationship with Land to a voice of disconnection when reflecting on how the gendering of Land, land-based practices, and cultural protocols and taboos in later parts of their lives. This demonstrates an important opportunity to interrupt and prevent the harm and breakdown in connection between Indigenous girls and young Two-Spirit people when they move beyond childhood. In the case of many of the research participants, if gendered and sexual identities were honoured and not interfered with, their connection with self, Land, and communities would not have been disrupted and the harms experience by those disruptions would have been prevented.

Resistance and Refusal

At several points in each research participants' storytelling, they spoke in no uncertain terms about both their personal and collective resistance and refusal of the gendering of Land and land-based practices. Research participants spoke in voices of self-assuredness and determination when speaking about calling into question and/or interrupting patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia in Indigenous land-based education and the gendering of Land, land-based practices, teachings, and protocols. This determination supported their intentions of protecting their relationship with Land and the relationships of other Indigenous women and Two-Spirit relatives' relationships with Land. In the following excerpt from Nikopiwi Pisim's Ipoem we see an example of the resistance against and refusal of the gendering of land-based practices, where she specifically addresses the body regulation of women through the enforcement of skirt protocols:

> What is pedaled as traditional is not traditional.
> I'm like, "oh my goodness, oh my goodness, where, where are the pants teachings then? Where is the pants teachings? Tell me."
> I'm very aware that
> I'm very aware of these things
> I love wearing skirts and dresses
> I find I put those away
> I don't want to wear them

> I refuse to wear them
> I see more and more women making skirts and saying, it's too traditional
> I just got really, really sad about that

"What is pedaled as traditional is not traditional", is such an important statement to pause and consider. Nikopiwi Pisim's assertion that the body regulation experienced by many Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people while engaging in land-based and cultural gatherings, including all 8 of the research participants and myself, is not traditional at all is a critical access point to begin to dissolve the beliefs and knowledges that get upheld and propagated as traditional, and by extension become beyond reproach. Additionally, Nikopiwi Pisim embodies the ethic of relational care in refusing to wear the long skirt, not because it's in conflict with her own personal gender expression or comfort – in fact, she makes a point of saying that she enjoys long skirts, but because it reinforces the body regulation of others. In refusing to wear the long skirt, Nikopiwi Pisim mounts a silent but powerful protest against the patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia that has been intentionally seeded within what currently upheld as traditional teachings, protocols and practices. More than that, she shows solidarity with those for whom being forced or pressured to wear the long skirt in order to participate in land-based and cultural gatherings, is in conflict with their identity.

Upholding the ethic of relational care was foundational to the acts of resistance and refusal that many research participants spoke about. While resistance and refusal are often positioned as reacting against something, through the deep listening of the research participants' stories, it was clear that to them it was the intentional (re)centering of community and relationships with relatives, including to self, Land, and both human and more-than human beings, that was the catalyst of much of their actions. For example, they were not only reacting to gendered and sexualized violences within Indigenous land-based education, they were also responding to their relational responsibilities. In the following quote, Sakipakawi Pisim speaks about the relational accountability that's embedded in the resistance against the intrusions of patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia within Indigenous land-based education:

> I think it's important for me, as someone who works now with people and has land-based work, to ensure that I'm creating spaces where I'm giving people autonomy and sharing information, and then asking them to make their own

> decisions on how they feel the most comfortable going forward, and just not judging that and supporting them however I can through that.
>
> I think there's a role for education and conversations, even with knowledge keepers with folks who are gender diverse, just so that we're able to share information, then letting folks know how some of these protocols and these practices are harming or impacting people, or even discouraging them from participating in ceremony at all. Because I know that in terms of finding a pathway to understanding who I am as an Indigenous woman, for me, that was lifesaving, connecting to ceremonies and learning about who I was. And so it's important to try and share that as much as we can. (S. Pisim, 2021)

Sakipakawi Pisim draws on her transformative awareness that being connected to ceremony and her cultural identity, was lifesaving, to propel her resistance against and refusal of the factors that might prevent others from being held in that same safety net.

This theme of creating change within their families or communities based on their own negative experiences with the gendering of Land and land-based practices was a common thread through the stories. In the following two segments from Pawacikwanasis Pisim's Ipoem she speaks about how her shifts in understanding tied to gender moved from personal awareness to the reshaping of her teaching pedagogy.

> I remember I had to do an assignment that it had to do with gender
>
> I think it was my queering and land-based education course
>
> I started looking around with what we had in the garage
>
> I had pink garden gloves.
>
> I'm like, "Why do those have to be gendered? They could still do the job. I could still get the job done wearing blue gloves

While becoming aware of how constructions of gender get reified in colours may seem basic, Pawacikwanasis Pisim's questioning here represents the beginning of a huge consciousness shift. In the following Ipoem segments, she outlines how her newly formed thinking has impacted her teaching and relationships with students.

> I was so tired of the same thematic units
>
> I had taken the kids out on the land, other kids wanted to join because the word would get around and kids would see us leaving

> I thought to myself, “I wish there was a way that I could do the school wide where everybody would benefit.”
> I told my boss, I said, “Give me something else in the school because I'm tired of teaching the same units.”
> I was starting my land-based program, in 2008, that fall of that year
> I also started my position as a land-based teacher
> I remember when I had to really fight for that position
> I had to really sell myself in that position for that job interview because again, when you hear that title, land-based teacher, many times people expect it's a male
> I had that job interview, I had to really, really, really sell myself in that interview
> I got the job
> I shouldn't have had to...

Despite being a fluent Indigenous first-language speaker and her many years of experience hunting and being on the land, Pawacikwanasis Pisim still had to resist against the patriarchy embedded in the school hiring practice, to assert herself as the ideal candidate for the land-based position. Notably, she speaks in a voice of self-assuredness when recalling that experience. She did not doubt herself or her skills, she knew she had the capacity and passion to do the job, so she advocated for herself. Although she didn’t complete the sentence “I shouldn’t have had to,” (P. Pisim, 2021), it’s clear in her statements above that she’s aware she of the barriers mounted against her being in that position.

Her successful resistance against the doubts and hesitations that her school had about a woman taking on the role of teaching in the land-based program, and her impact in that role, specifically tied to resisting homophobia and the gendering of land-based practices is discussed in the following Ipoem segment:

> I was talking about being a female and a land-based teacher, and role models such as myself is a big thing
> I said, a lot of people, we're still a very colonized world,
> I was reading this book
> I think it was called *Becoming an Ally*

> I remember in that book, when she's talking about the European history, way back before even North America was colonized
> I've been thinking about the past couple of days because I have nieces and nephews that are Two-Spirited
> I'm trying to find a way to help the young generation to be okay with their identity
> I think that's where all this high suicide rate comes in

Pawacikwanasis Pisim's own shift in thinking and awareness, including her personal fortitude to advocate for herself to be in the land-based educator position, had potentially lifesaving ripple effects for the students and community she works with.

Although she's done a lot of work in the school she works in, she did speak openly about the continued struggles she faces as a female Indigenous land-based educator, which is reflected in the following Ipoem segment:

> I was trying to reflect back on this, what gender traditional teachings, so Pipe ceremonies, for example, when we do pipe ceremonies at the school, already that divide is there between gender
> I mentor these boys at school and they're in a drum group
> I remember one time, they left a bunch of drums in my classroom
> I was tidying up and I was about to grab that drum, and then one of the boys said, "Ms. [name redacted], you can't touch that drum."
> I was like, "Why not?" "It's only for males. Women are not supposed to touch this drum."
> I question it, nobody can ever really come up with a reason why
> I question, it's almost like I'm not allowed to question those type of things too, so I guess I got to almost respect that protocol too where I work anyway
> I guess my question is, I need to dig deeper and was it always like this?

I found it interesting that a young man would feel the need or that he had the right to correct his teacher. It seems like the gendering of protocols has amplified patriarchy to the point, where other common ethics such as respecting Elders, get set aside. The frustration that

Pawacikwanasis Pisim felt could be heard in her voice, and her voice of self-assuredness, gives way to a voice of self-doubt when she states, “I guess I got to almost respect that protocol” (P. Pisim, 2021). Even though it’s obvious that this protocol steeped in body regulation and gendered taboos is against her personal ethics, she feels forced to adhere to it to align with the expectation of the school. This is an important experience to evaluate closely because it reflects a reality in which schools are institutionalizing what’s currently understood as traditional and enforcing gender-based oppression under the guise of culture.

Her voice of self-assuredness returned when she reflected on her relationships with the students she works with and the larger impact of their lives and community.

> I get a lot of feedback from other parents that how their children have developed a very positive relationship with the land
> I think, myself as being their mentor also has a very positive impact because the parents, they'll tell me or even that one boy there
> I forgot what he was doing and then I forgot what comment I made
> I was expecting him to know what he was doing and he stopped
> “I have nobody to teach me this at home. I'm just learning. You can't expect me to be knowing this."
> I teach from K to grade 12, a lot of the kids yeah, there's a very positive impact with myself
> I had to wait to university to have that
> I'm not going to wait for these kids till they're in university because a lot of what's taught in our curriculum is it's westernized
> I don't want to wait for these kids get to university to like I did to learn and to find their spiritual being, to know what Two-Spirited it is
> I've used a lot of in the past two years is Two-Spirited people
> I come from, even the young generation, they really respect the Two-Spirited people

While the impact of the gendering of Land and land-based practices has been cataclysmic and long lasting, it’s quite remarkable how relatively quickly the harms can begin to be addressed.

Like in the example of Pawacikwanasis Pisim, who (re)built her own relationship with Land, and acted within her sovereignty to begin to question what didn't feel right to her and resist the forms of oppression that she was contending with, transforming her own thinking, her teaching pedagogy, and by extension the lives of her students and consciousness of the community she works in. The resistance and refusal of the gendering of Land and land-based practices by the research participants centers the ethics of relationality and relational care, in order bring into existence realities that affirm the diverse gender and sexual identities of our relatives.

Creating Opportunities and Safe Spaces

Many research participants responded to their own negative experiences tied to the gendering of Land and land-based practices by creating opportunities and safe spaces for Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender and gender diverse peoples to be in relationship with Land and learn land-based practices. They ensured to create spaces unburdened by gender and sexualized violence, again demonstrating an ethic of relational care and community building. Research participants spoke about how they create opportunities and safe spaces for themselves to engage in Indigenous land-based practices and the ways in which they create opportunities and safe spaces for other relatives. In this segment from Paskowi Pisim's Ipoem she discusses how she keeps herself safe while learning and engaging in land-based practices, highlighting the protection that is embedded in relationality:

> I mean, I think there's some different threads to this
> I think that gender has been in practice in terms of the people who have been my teachers in small ways and larger ways
> I'd say a lot of the people that have taught me about the land
> I think that the connections that I have to teachers, if they are men are still through women
> I've gone and set nets with have been through relationships with grandmothers
> I think, that has also allowed some markers of safety as well
> I felt most comfortable going out on the land or getting gifts from the land through established relationships with women or grandmothers
> I go net setting with treaty six territory is through our relationship with our grandmother and her partner, and learning about setting nets and pulling nets

> I just already know that he's a safe man to be out on the land with, and often we'll take younger women
> I know that I'm not going to experience anything bad while I'm out on the land with him
> l think, that's been really important in my journey is, knowing that I'm out with somebody safe
> I know that I can trust because of who their partners are, who their wives are, and the reputations that they have in community
> I think there's a lot of gender at play there
> I feel the most years, I've been really lucky that I've just chosen to be on the land or water majority with women and like gender diverse people

Through relationality, Paskowi Pisim is able to vet the people she learns from and engages in land-based practices with. It's these trusted relationships that offer her, and the younger people she shares with, a level protection from gendered and sexualized violences.

Research participants also shared about the ways in which they responded to their own experiences of gendered and sexualized violences, by creating opportunities for other Indigenous women, Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people to learn land-based practices in a space where they would not have to endure the same experiences. An example of this is the programming Kaskatinowi Pisim launched, where she takes 10 Indigenous women on the land over the course of a year to teach them fishing skills:

> Something that I've wanted to do since starting to hunt, is just be able to create a space where women and non-binary peoples and queer Indigenous people can come learn how to harvest and do it in a safe environment. Because it doesn't feel safe when you're at a camp as a woman, surrounded by men. (K. Pisim, 2021)

Sakipakawi Pisim underwent a similar process of building on her personal encounters to ensure that other relatives have a more positive experiences while learning and engaging in Indigenous land-based practices. In the following excerpt from her Ipoem she demonstrates how she centers the needs of participants over what might be considered traditional protocols:

> I got older, I started to facilitate and create spaces in ceremony for family and youth and things of that nature
> I think what becomes important is that Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people have voice to be able to share what they need, A, what supports they need to get what they need, B, spaces that can be creative for them
> I think we were looking at creating spaces that are inclusive for gender diverse folks, and then we started to look at ways we could do that at full moon ceremonies
> I think that that's all necessary for people to be able to share healing and learning and ideas and brilliance and all of those things
> I think that engaging folks is always the number one thing that I always lean to, is asking people what do they need and what steps can we take to ensuring that that happens in terms of protocols in ceremony

In Sakipakawi Pisim's sharing of her own process, she demonstrates an important transition from prioritising what's held as traditional protocols, to centering the needs and identities of the people who are in search of cultural and land-based connections.

Opaskwawiowi Pisim, reflected on a powerful experience in which the honouring of people's identities was prioritized over the protocols, demonstrating the impact of doing so on peoples' connection with Land and community. She shared:

> We had a sweat lodge during that time as well. And there was the moment of, "Everybody's getting ready to go in the sweat and who goes in and what order?" And the confusion and the worry. And we were able to go in and we just kind of told the person who was hosting the sweat lodge, "In relationship to who we are and to [name redacted] and [name redacted] and [name redacted], can we all just go in where it feels right for us to go in?" And the Elder was open to that. And that also felt really reaffirming. Yet the fact that we had to have that conversation, the fact that there's that concern, the fact that there's that worry, it's like, can we just go into a ceremony knowing that it's going to be okay, and that we're welcome there, and that we're safe and that no matter how we identify, that healing and that circle is also a place for us to exist.
>
> So all of those pieces are pieces that we take into the work that we're doing with Two-Spirit kin and land is our teacher. (O. Pisim, 2021)

In Opaskwawiowi Pisim's storytelling we hear how intensely important it is to have peoples' gender and sexual identities affirmed and respected, especially in cultural spaces, so that their connection to community and Land remains intact or is restored.

Research participants specifically highlighted the need to work with Elders and knowledge keepers to ensure that gendered protocols and practices are not harming people within the opportunities and spaces that they create. They spoke about walking alongside Elders and knowledge keepers as they unlearn and relearn knowledges based in honoring peoples' body sovereignty and identities. For example, Opaskwawiowi Pisim's shared:

> And talking with [name redacted], one of my Elders, who's a Cree Elder Nehiyawak man from Northern Saskatchewan and just, "Hey, [name redacted], How do you feel about someone who you might think is a boy wearing a skirt and someone who you might think is a girl not wearing a skirt?" And just talking about these things and him being really open and really receptive to also kind of shifting his views, which I think, that's a conversation piece too.
>
> And sort of accompanying our Elders and accompanying them as well in this learning process and doing so with love and humility and respect for all of the ways in which they've been reclaiming and trying to hold true to these practices. And it takes a community to do that. And I think that's what I learned at the Gathering of the Great Lakes was, we all needed each other and we all needed to hold a different part of that ceremony and that circle, and to be received by the community and to be supported by the community in that kind of coming in process.
>
> I mean, it doesn't just impact us who are physically there. I just feel those reverberations and doing so in relationship to water felt so healing as well because it's right, that's all of the emotional bodies within us and all of that memory and all of that ancestral kind of holding and carrying. (O. Pisim, 2021)

The importance of creating shifts in thinking and experiences that impact not only them as research participants but also their communities and generations to come was very prominently shared, demonstrating how strongly their responsibility to uphold relationality is carried by the research participants.

Overall Reflection

I am filled with gratitude to the 8 women and Two-Spirit Indigenous land-based educators and practitioners who stepped forward to be on this journey with me. The stories, experiences, and knowledges they've shared have not only made this research possible but have also deeply impacted me as an academic and as a relative. The work that they are doing in their communities and land-based practices have the potential to repair the harms caused by colonialism and (re)create a world worthy of us and future generations. To (re)create a world in which our relationship with Land and experiences engaging in land-based practices honour our identities, sovereignty, and bring us in closer connection with one another.

In the final chapter I will share specific findings and discussions based on the what the research participants brought forward alongside the findings based on posters that were analyzed as a part of the data collection. I will also reflect on the application of the gendering of Land and land-based practices in communities and on the impact that this process has had on me. To illustrate the former, I will present examples of publicly circulated posters highlighting Indigenous land-based and cultural opportunities as a platform for discussing how many of the barriers faced by the research participants operate within communities. To illustrate the latter, these posters will be shared alongside selections of my own personal creative writing work. This personal creative writing was generated in relation to and was written alongside my time spent with the research participants.

Chapter 6: Posters and Knowledge Mobilization

The drums sing to the people

The people dance to their songs.

Boom-boom

Shuffle-shuffle

When the round dancing starts, Raven slips his hand into Grandma's and off they go.

Raven and his rainbow ribbon skirt are first to hit the dance floor.

Hand in hand with Grandma, in a swirl of ribbons all beautiful and unique.

Round and round they go.

Round and round they go.

Raven and his rainbow ribbons leading the way.

(Spillett-Sumner, 2023)

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter I focus on how the gendering of Land and land-based practices operates beyond the scope of my research. I will present a selection of posters that have been publicly circulated on social media profiling Indigenous land-based and cultural learning opportunities, using the themes that emerged in Chapters 2 and 5 as discussion guides. This chapter will also share

examples and discussion of my own creative writing work that was heavily influenced by my doctoral work and acts as my effort of knowledge mobilization, specifically with children and young adults. In closing, I will offer my final reflections.

Discussions of Posters

The following is a discussion based on archival documentation in the form of posters[4], that were publicly circulated on social media and/or posted in public spaces (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). I chose to include a discussion of publicly circulated posters to begin to look beyond my own research and to reflect on how the gendering of Land and land-based practices is operationalized in communities on a daily basis.

In total 13 posters were collected, reviewed, and analyzed in relation to the major themes that emerged in Chapter 5. These posters promote initiatives, ceremonies, and learning opportunities tied to Indigenous land-based education and Indigenous cultures. I selected posters that included language and imagery that reinforce gendered binaries and violences in relation to Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' participation in Indigenous land-based education and cultural, activities, and/or practices. The content of these posters reflects how notions of gender are enforced in public spaces and land-based initiatives. Some examples of language that I identified as significant to the research are: "women wear a long dress or skirt" and "women who are on their moon time must not participate".

Similarly to *The Listening Guide* (Gilligan et al., 2003), I employed layers of viewings to better understand what was being said, or not being said on the posters. In my first viewing of the posters, I attended to the plot by reading the featured information carefully to establish the context: focusing on the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the text information. I then looked closely at the images shared on the poster and considered the level of storytelling held in

[4] Although the posters included were circulated in the public sphere and did not require permission to use, every attempt was made to contact the organizations listed.

those images. For example, thinking about how the images chose to accompany the text could be interpreted by the viewers. This was followed by noting my own personal reactions and reflections based on my viewing and review of the posters. Finally, I considered the posters in relation to the themes that emerged in Chapters 2 and 5 and composed the discussions presented in the following section.

Figure 6

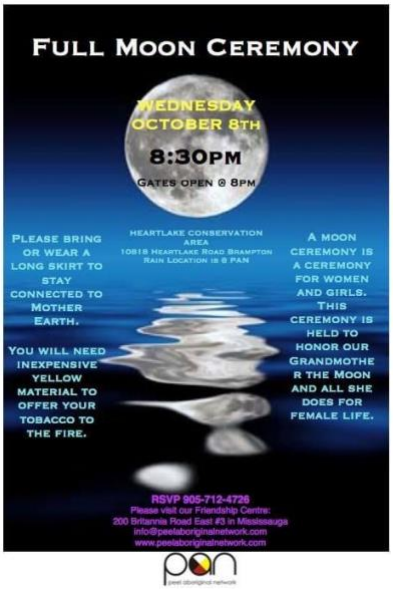
Wear a skirt day poster

Figure 6 is a poster calling on women to wear a skirt on Earth Day. The poster refers to the earth as "our first mother" and "Mother Earth". On the poster we see a photo of three ribbon skirts and quote that reads, "When you put your skirt on, you're showing Mother Earth who you are". Figure 6 provides an example of the gendering of Land and colonial constructions of gender and of body regulation. The gendering of Land and land-based teachings and practices was a major theme presented in Chapter 5. Nikopiwi Pisim, one of the Indigenous first-language speakers spoke about Indigenous languages not being coded to uphold constructions of gender, and yet it appeared in how other research participants spoke about Land, including the earth, water, moon, and sun and in the selection of posters. One of impacts of applying colonial gender configurations to the more-than-human world in the context of a patriarchal society, is that they become embedded within Indigenous cultures, in common-vernacular used and can even change

the way Indigenous languages are taught and used. Examples of this were highlighted in Chapter 5, and the use of Indigenous languages to speak of Land in gendered ways and to describe the roles prescribed to different peoples. A more in-depth discussion of the mothering of Land, can be found in Chapter 2.

The inclusion of the image of three ribbon skirts in connection with the quote, “When you put your skirt on, you’re showing Mother Earth who you are”, demonstrates how gendered protocols, body regulation, and even shaming and exclusion become institutionalized. Many of the research participants expressed being uncomfortable wearing ribbon skirts, some likening the enforcement of the ribbon skirts to their own feelings of exclusion, disconnection, and confusion. In particular, Sakipakawi Pisim spoke about having a non-binary child and her work to ensure that there are safe spaces and opportunities for her child and other non-binary relatives. As a widely circulated poster, the messaging and visuals could result in the further disconnection of women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people, resulting in the fracturing of their relationships with Land. The specific wording of the poster implies that if women do not wear ribbon skirts, they are not connected to their culture, effectively othering them from being part of community.

Figure 7



Full Moon Ceremony poster 1

The idea of needing to wear a long skirt in order to be connected to the Land or “mother earth”, is repeated in the text of Figure 7, which reads “Please bring or wear a long to stay connected with Mother Earth”. As if the skirt itself is what makes a woman’s relationship with Land tangible and valid. This poster promoted a full moon ceremony hosted by an Indigenous organization. It describes the ceremony to honor women and girls’ connection with “grandmother moon and all she does for female life”. The gendering of the moon as female is particularly intriguing to me because I found no gendering of the moon while researching Cree moon names to serve as pseudonyms for research participants (Buck, personal communication, 2021). In my understanding there is no single name for the moon, but rather many names that describe the moon (Buck, personal communication, 2021). Furthermore, I understand that no Cree word for “grandmother moon” exists, and that the relationship between an individual and the moon could be described using any kinship term, unbound by gender (A. Wilson & Laing, 2018).

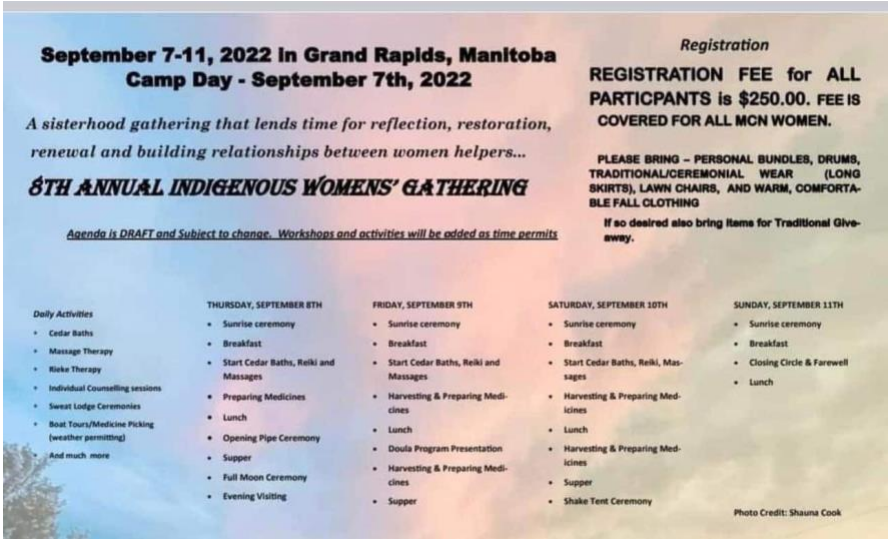
Figure 8

Ribbon skirt challenge poster

Similar to Figures 6 and 7, Figure 8 reaffirms gendered protocols and body regulation through the enforcement and promotion of ribbon skirt. This poster calls the attention of First Nation women and girls to participate in a challenge and wear ribbon skirt to the first day of school,

using similar messaging to Figure 5, calling on women and girls to “be proud of who you are”. I chose to include this poster because of its specific school-based context and to provide an example of how the gendering of Land and land-based protocols become engrained in not only community but also become institutionalized in schools (A. Wilson, 2018c). This process was discussed in Chapter 5 in the Resistance and Refusal section, when Pawacikwanasis Pisim reflected on her experience working within a school that enforced gendered taboos and her feeling the need to adhere to those taboos, despite them being in conflict with her personal ethics. It’s important to be vigilant of the ways in which schools are institutionalizing gender-based oppression within cultural learning.

Figure 9



Women’s gathering poster

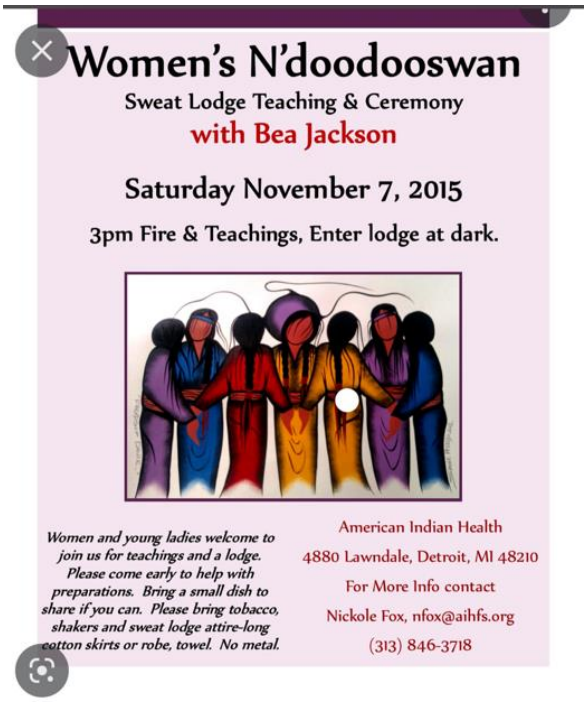
Figure 9 promotes an Indigenous women’s’ gathering held annually in Grand Rapids, Manitoba. The poster outlines the activities involved in the gathering including cedar baths, sweat lodge ceremonies, medicine picking, pipe ceremony, full moon ceremony, and sunrise ceremony. The wording of the poster instructs registrants to bring “personal bundles, drums, traditional/ceremonial wear (long skirts), lawn chairs, and warm, comfortable fall clothing”. By specifically indicating that participants need to bring long skirts, gathering organizers are signaling to poster viewers that gendered protocols, taboos, exclusions, and body regulation will be upheld within the context of the gathering. It’s interesting that the poster also makes mention

of “comfortable fall clothing”, which implies that participants’ agency in determining what is comfortable to them, will be respected – contrasting with the prescription of long skirts. In Chapter 5, many research participants called ribbon skirts into question. Reflecting on times when they were expected to wear long skirts in order to participate in Indigenous land-based practices and shamed or excluded if they did not. Research participants also spoke about the authenticity of the ribbon/long skirt protocol as a “traditional teaching”. Some reflected on the land-based activities engaged in by their grandmothers or themselves and the practicality of doing those activities in long skirts. Others, like Nikopiwi Pisim, clearly asserted that the ribbon skirts are not traditional at all, saying:

> I'm very aware of these things, and I love wearing skirts and dresses, but lately I find I put those away and I don't want to wear them. I refuse to wear them because I see more and more women making skirts and saying, it's too traditional and talking about skirt teachings and different things like that. Holy smokes, I just got really, really sad about that because now we have women that are, have become the gatekeepers of this patriarchal machine, and it totally affects how we move around on the land. Have you ever tried going on along with one of those skirts? No way, man. No. Those little thistles out there are poisonous. (N. Pisim, 2021)

The above quote from Nikopiwi Pisim’s interview is of particular importance in the discussion of Figure 9 because not only does this poster uphold the enforcement of skirt protocols but it is also a gathering lead by Indigenous women, perpetuating what Nikopiwi Pisim refers to as the “patriarchal machine” and impacting how Indigenous women are in relationship with the Land. Another example of Indigenous women regulating the bodies of other Indigenous women within land-based and cultural events is seen below.

Figure 10



Women's N'doodooswan poster

Figure 10 invites "women and young ladies" to participate in teachings and a sweat lodge ceremony. Written on the poster is "sweat lodge attire- long cotton skirts or robe" beneath imagery of the poster portrays women holding hands in a circle, all wearing long dresses. The perspective of the poster is looking at the circle from the outside, rather than from the inside looking out. This is an interesting vantage point, considering the exclusions and disconnection experienced by the research participants when they didn't have a long skirt at ceremony or when they pushed back against the gendered taboos and protocols and the gendering of Land and land-based practices.

Figure 11

Community sweat lodge ceremony poster

Figure 11 promotes a community sweat lodge ceremony and in addition to the specific event information it lists expected attire to participate in the ceremony. The section reads, "Modesty is important. Men wear shorts. Women wear a long dress or skirt and top (no bare shoulders)." The specific mention of modesty is an interesting feature and reflects the shaming experienced by the research participants which was discussed in Chapter 5. While the wording of the poster does prescribe the attire of both men and women, it is very intentional in expressing that women need to be fully covered to participate in the ceremony while men can be nude from the waist up. The different standards in terms of which bodies can be exposed and which cannot, alongside the mention of modesty reveal the influences of patriarchy within this cultural event.

Figure 12

Lakehead sweat lodge ceremony poster

Figure 13

First Nations University pipe ceremony poster

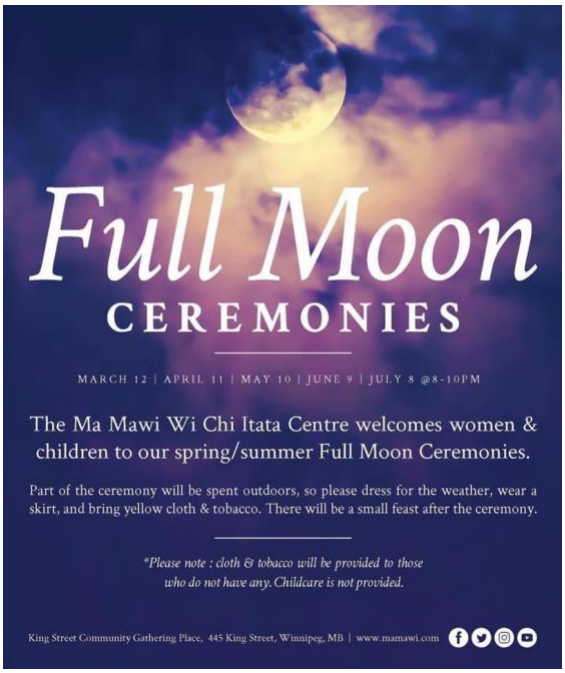
One of the reasons I included Figures 12 and 13 is because they were promoting events hosted by post-secondary institutions. Similar to Figure 6, Figures 12 and 13 demonstrate the institutionalization of what's commonly understood as Indigenous cultural teachings, by both a non-Indigenous (Figure 12) and Indigenous postsecondary institution (Figure 13). Like the posters shared earlier in the chapter, Figures 12 and 13 referred specifically to the attire expectation of women, in Figure 12, saying women "should" wear a long skirt in order to participate. While the wording "women should wear long skirts and a tshirt", and in Figure 14 shown below "please bring your skirt", is less pointed than the more prescriptive language used in Figures 8, 10, and 13 for example, it still perpetuates the body regulation and could impact the connection or disconnection experienced by Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people.

Figure 12 goes a step beyond and gives instructions that menstruating women are not permitted to enter the sweat lodge or hold ceremonial items. Like in the experience of the research participants, no reasoning, explications, or specific ties to traditional knowledges are offered. While the individual impacts of these types of exclusions were discussed in Chapter 5, a wider discussion on the legal implications of excluding people based on gender, from participating in publicly offered ceremonies and gatherings- especially by schools and post-secondary institutions needs to happen.

Figure 14

Full moon ceremony poster, example 2

Figure 15



Full moon ceremonies poster, example 3

In Figures 14 and 15, we also see a move away from the gendering of Land. In these posters, promoting full moon ceremonies, there is no gendering of the moon as female or as grandmother, as seen in Figure 6.

Figure 16

2Spirit sweat lodge ceremony poster

A major theme that emerged in Chapter 5 was the ways in which Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people create safe spaces and opportunities for themselves and others to engage in Indigenous land-based practices. Figure 16 is a poster promoting a Two-Spirit sweat lodge ceremony hosted by an Indigenous organization. The text on the poster describes the gathering as a “Two-Spirit sweat lodge for LGBTQ+ Two-Spirit Indigenous youth”. Like in other posters the hosts ask that participants wear “comfortable clothing” and to mention skirts but state they “will be provided but not required”. It’s intriguing to me that that the inclusion of the comment on skirts would be made at all, but in comparison with the other posters the note on skirts not being required is a distinguishing feature. Stating that skirts will not be required in order to participate

in the ceremony, signals to the reader that body regulation and gendered protocols may not be in enforced as strictly, or at all.

Figure 17

41st ANNUAL KAMLOOPA POWWOW

PRIZE PAYOUTS:
Dance Competitions
Drum Competitions

DANCE RULES

- All contestants must be registered before the start of 12:00 noon grand entry on Saturday, July 30, 2022, and must be wearing the number issued to them (there will be no late registration of dancers);
- All dance numbers must be visible to the judges and tabulators during the competitions and grand entries;
- All contestants must be in grand entry and enter with their category to receive points. The only exception is for dancers registered to the host drum(s), which those dancers must be dressed and are responsible for giving their numbers to the tabulators before grand entry;
- Each contestant will be judged on skill, dress, and dance ability. Judging will be strictly on a point system tracking the top 10 dancers and based on C&T Tabulating, beginning on Grand Entry Friday as follows:
  Grand Entry - 62 points
  1st place- 47 points
  2nd place- 40 points
  3rd place- 33 points
  4th place- 26 points
  5th place – 19 points
  6th place – 12 points
  7th place – 5 points
  Tie Breaker- 1 point
- All contestants must be at least (1/4) Native Blood, proof of tribal identification/status may be required;
- Each contestant must be in full regalia during competitions, grand entries, exhibitions/spot checks and to be of the correct gender for that category;
- If an eagle feather of a contestant's regalia falls or is dropped during competition then he/she must disqualify him/herself for that session and may be disqualified by the Arena Director or Whipman if the dancer does not disqualify themselves;
- Each contestant can only register in only one (1) dance category, with the exception being Specials; and
- There is a zero tolerance for drugs or alcohol, if dancers are in possession or suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol they will be disqualified from the contest.

DRUM RULES

- All lead singers must register their drum and all of the singers with that drum. Any changes made once the Drum registration form has been submitted to the tabulators will be considered

6

Kamloopa Powwow rules and regulations

While writing the early parts of this chapter, a list of Kamloopa Powwow rules and regulations was circulating on social media. The rules and regulations shown in Figure 17, sparked public

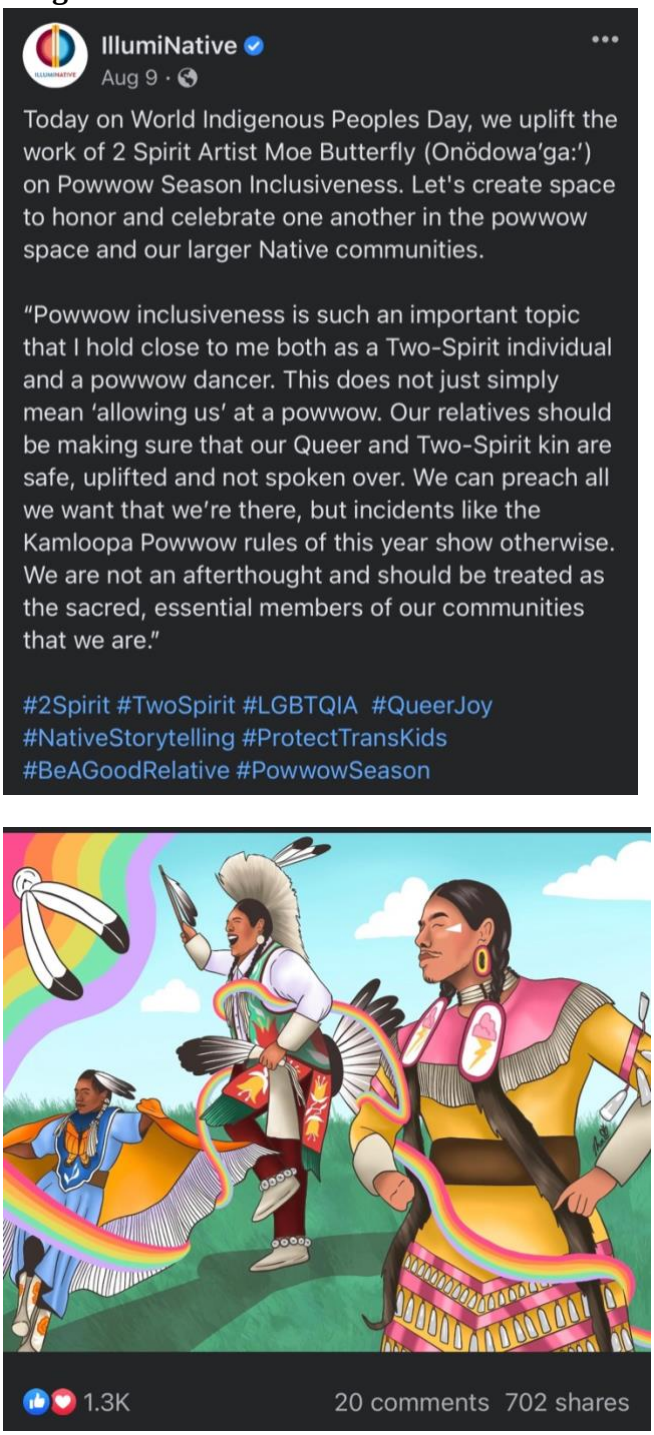
outcry demanding for the forms of discrimination coded within them, be removed. Although these are not technically a poster, I chose to include Figure 17 to provide an example of change in terms of the acceptance of gendered protocols, taboos, and exclusions of Two-Spirit peoples and transgendered peoples.

Some of the text on the original document shared by the Kamloopa Powwow committee that sparked online controversy reads: "Each contestant must be in full regalia during competition, grand entries, exhibitions/spot checks and to be of the correct gender for that category." Online, people also identified other problematic regulations as being Kamloopa's specifications of blood quantum and the disqualification of teen parents from participating in the pageant competition.

Many Indigenous peoples on social media were quick to respond to these regulations, citing them as homophobic, transphobic, and oppressive. Under the social pressure mounted by the community response, including a movement to boycott the powwow, the Kamloopa Powwow committee did make a public apology under the guidance of local Two-Spirit peoples and amended their rules and regulations. In addition, they included a Two-Spirit specific dance special.

In a relatively short period of time, the online discussions on gendered protocols within the powwow circuit created impactful change in the instance of the Kamloopa Powwow and created a precedence for future powwows. To provide an example of the community response to the original Kamloopa document, I've included Figure 18, a post from a prolific Indigenous social media page, IllumiNative, featuring a quote and art of Indigenous artist Moe Butterfly.

Figure 18



IllumiNative post featuring Moe Butterfly

Moe Butterfly's art illustrates powwow dancers, prominently featuring rainbow colors and people dancing freely, seemingly unrestricted by the types of gendered regulations that appeared in the original Kamloopa Powwow document. It's important to note that this post was liked over 1000 times and shared over 700 times, reflecting the shift towards rejecting gendered protocols, taboos, and exclusions of Two-Spirit and transgendered peoples in the powwow community.

The following section will share and discuss examples from my creative writing that amplify the themes presented in Chapter 5 and demonstrate the impact of the research beyond my dissertation.

Knowledge Mobilization through Creative Writing

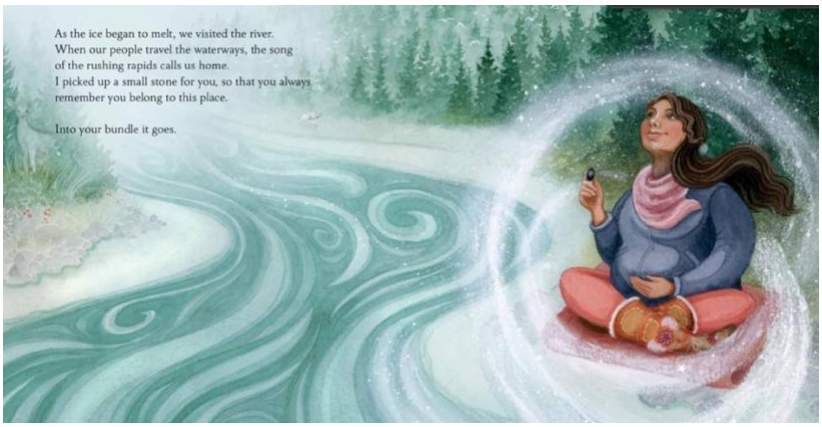
In this section I will provide examples and discussions of my own creative writing work that was heavily influenced by my doctoral work and acts as my effort of knowledge mobilization, specifically with children and young adults. As shared earlier in Chapter 5, this research has changed me as a person (S. Wilson, 2008), and not only shaped the way I engage my academic work but also the way I am in relation to my family and community and influenced the stories I write as an author. Within the span of my doctoral program, I've written and/or published *Surviving the City*, a graphic novel series comprising three volumes; *Surviving the City* (2018), *From the Roots Up* (2020) and *We are the Medicine* (2023) and three picture books, *I Sang You Down from the Stars* (2021), *Beautiful you, Beautiful Me* (2022) and *Raven's Ribbons* (2023).

Many of the themes presented in Chapters 2 and 5 of my dissertation are woven into the creative texts I've written. My learning and the relationships made within my doctoral program have inspired and nourished these stories to come into being and I wrote them in part to uphold the ethic of relational care in the mobilization of knowledges to (re)affirm the relationships of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit relatives. The graphic novel series is written for a grade 7-12 audience and the picture books are written for young children and their families/caregivers. I write for young readers intentionally as an early intervention to the forces outlined in this dissertation that result in the fracturing of Indigenous women, girls' and Two-Spirit relatives' relationships with Land. It is also important for me to offer something to young

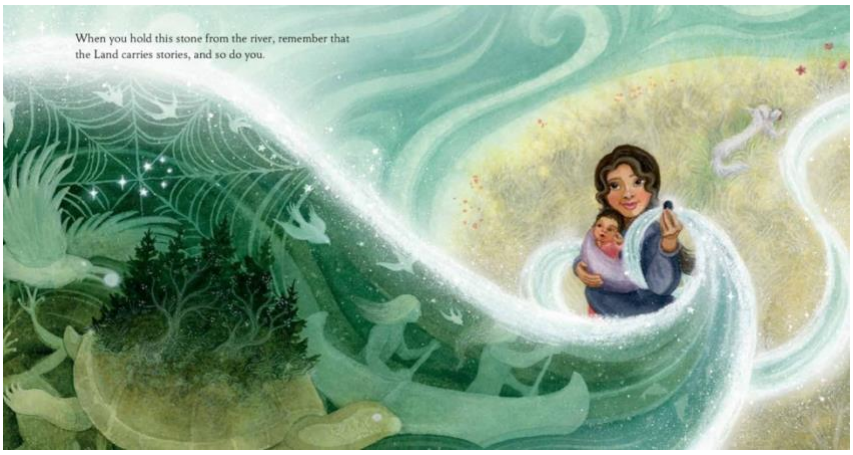
people to walk alongside them as they learn about themselves as individuals and in the context of the webs of relationships they live in and act in their agency to determine how they will be in relationship with Land and the more-than-human world. Akin to my motivation for writing as a mother, I write to bring into being worlds that are worthy of our children.

Presented below are examples from creative works[5] that have been published at the time I'm writing this. Additionally, a short excerpt from my picture book *Raven's Ribbons*, a story about a young boy who dreams of dancing in a ribbon skirt, is shared at the beginning of this chapter.

Figure 19 and 20



I Sang You Down from the Stars text example 1



I Sang You Down from the Stars text example 2

[5] Permission to present examples from I Sang You Down from the Stars and the Surviving the City was granted by their respective publishers.

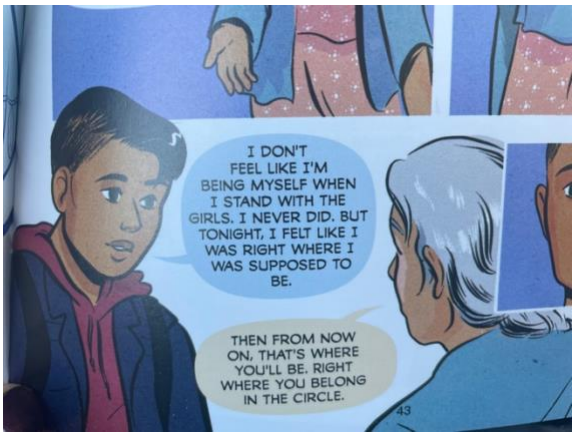
Figures 19 and 20 are from my picture book *I Sang You Down from the Star*s illustrated by Native-Alaskan Michaela Goade. I wrote the manuscript to this picture book after wrote and defended my research proposal. The story reflects my understanding of the Inininewak creation story that places my Nation as descending from the star-world. In the story a mother collects land-based items to be a part of a welcoming bundle for her child. In Figure 19, we see the pregnant mother seated by the river, the text reads:

> As the ice began to melt, we visited the river.
>
> When our people travel the waterways, the song of the rushing rapids calls us home.
>
> I picked up a small stone for you, so that you always remember you belong to this place (Spillett-Sumner, 2021)

In this section of the book, it was important to me to ensure that I was using the present tense, to ensure that it was clear that the relationships between Indigenous peoples and the water are active. I chose to write a scene about the water in an effort to reanimate the connection between people and water, which was influenced by my own positionality as an Indigenous woman whose family comes from a community devastated by Manitoba Hydro. In the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 5 the impacts of resource extraction are described as one of the factors that furthers the fracturing of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people's relationships with Land and participation in land-based practices.

In Figure 20 we see the mother and her newly born child sitting by the river again, and the text reads, "When you hold this stone from the river, remember that the Land carries stories and so do you" (Spillett-Sumner, 2021, pp. 19-20). Part of the inspiration from this scene came from deciding to work with the voice centered relational method (Gilligan et al., 2003) of analysis and conduct interviews with the research participants. I wanted to express the importance of stories and land-based relationships (Archibald, 2008) to the young readers and their families/caregivers, and offer a reminder that the Land carries knowledges and knowledges also flow through us (Cole, 2012; Simpson, 2014).

Figure 21

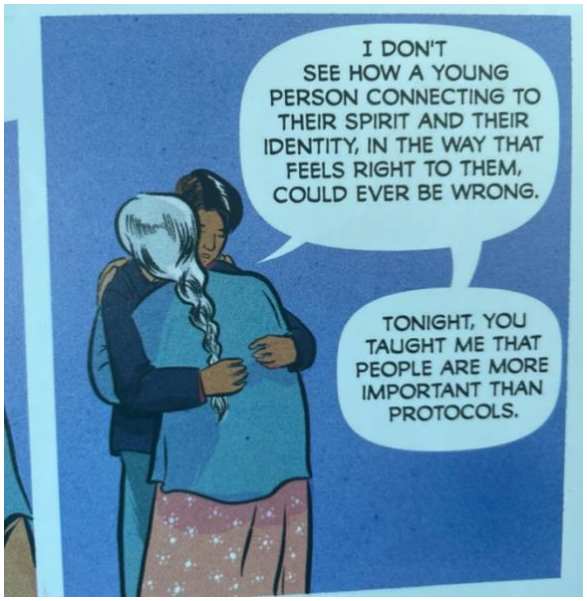


From the Roots Up text example 1

Figure 22

From the Roots Up text example 2

Figure 23



From the Roots Up text example 3

Figures 21- 23 are snapshots of a single page in *From the Roots Up* (T. Spillett, 2020), Surviving the City volume 3. In this volume of the graphic novel series the young characters begin to resist the gendered protocols, taboos, and exclusions being enforced in their school's cultural program. With the guidance of a supportive adult the young people work together to question the protocols, taboos, and exclusions and create a safe space and cultural opportunity for their peers. In the scenes shows in Figures 21-23, we see the gender non-binary character Dez express their discomfort in adhering to gendered protocols. Dez is met with resistance, but the young people insist on teaching the Elders involved in the program about the importance of protecting relationality and placing people – their identities and connectedness to community, over the protocols. These themes and this scene particularly were heavily influenced by my time spent with the research participants and the understandings generated from employing the voice centered relational method with the stories shared in their interviews.

In the graphic novel the characters are able to overcome the exclusions experienced by Dez and plan a powwow that welcomes dancers to dance in the style that best affirms their identities. From the stories shared with me by the research participants I was moved to write a text that imagined what it look like for the gender identities of young people to be respected and

celebrated by the communities they exist within, and also to show support to the young people who are doing the daunting work of interrupting the ways in which colonialism and other forms of oppression have impacted our abilities to remain connected to one another in ways that affirm our lives. From the themes presented in Chapter 5, it was also important to me to reflect on how schools can begin to interrupt gendered protocols while also supporting the cultural (re)connection of Indigenous students.

Overall Reflections

In this chapter I presented and discussed 13 publicly circulated posters promoting Indigenous land-based and cultural events to help illustrate the themes that emerged from the data analysis and discuss how the gendering of Land and land-based practices operates beyond the scope of my research. To demonstrate my commitment to knowledge mobilization, and acknowledge it as a form of activating the ethics of relationality and relational care, I also shared examples and discussions of my own creative writing work that was heavily influenced by my research, and acts as my effort of knowledge mobilization, specifically with children and young adults.

I offered a discussion on 13 collected publicly circulated posters promoting Indigenous land-based and cultural events, bring wider understandings of how the 7 themes presented in Chapter 5 operate beyond the experiences of the 8 research participants and the research that comprises my dissertation. In the next and final chapter, I'll present findings and discussions based on both the interviews with the research participants and a discussion on the implications of the posters.

Chapter 7: Findings, Discussions, and Implications on the Field of Indigenous Land-based Education

Chapter Introduction

In this final chapter, I'll present findings and final discussions based on what was brought forward by the research participants and on the posters collected and close the circle, by tying these things back to the literature and what's come before this work. I will also offer the limitations of this study and the implications of this study on the field of Indigenous land-based education.

Listening to what they brought forward: Findings, final discussions and implications of interviews

In listening deeply to the stories shared by the participants using the voice centered relational method of analysis, seven prominent themes emerged. Relationships of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples with Land, and their experiences engaging in Indigenous land-based practices are impacted by the following factors: gendering of Land and land-based teachings and practices, protocols taboos and exclusions of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples, Indigenous languages, shifting experiences across the lifespan: connections, disconnections & the natural world, systemic forms of oppression: patriarchy, misogyny and homophobia, resistance and refusal, and creating opportunities and safe spaces; amplifying the voices and work that was presented in the literature review chapter.. In spending time with the research participants and their Ipoems three critical understandings emerged which can serve as guides in our collective journey to ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit relatives have the ability to form relationships with Land and engage in land-based practices in ways unburdened by the forms of oppression that have shaped the experiences of the research participants.

Impacts of Colonialism

"What is pedaled as traditional is not traditional" (N. Pisim, 2021)

Through the literature presented in Chapter 1, it's understood that colonization operates via the often violent acquisition and control of Land and land-based resources and that one of the key features of colonization is the forced separated of Indigenous peoples from Land (Baldy, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wildcat, 2014). The fracturing of these relationships, impacts how Indigenous peoples relate to land and how we make sense of ourselves and our lives, which was expressed in the storytelling of the research participants.

Colonialism has severely fractured Indigenous land-based knowledges and practices, negatively impacting Indigenous women and Two-Spirit relatives' relationships with Land and their ability to engage in land-based practices unburdened by oppression. Colonialism and its assault on Indigenous knowledges have manufactured a level of collective confusion of what is and what is not authentic traditional Indigenous knowledges and practices and has allowed for the entrenchment of systemic forms of oppression such as patriarchy, misogyny, and homophobia within what is presently upheld as Indigenous land-based knowledges, practices, and protocols (Wilson, 2018a; Wilson, 2018b).

Examples of this found in the data analysis are the gendering of Land and land-based practices, the enforcement of gendered taboos and protocols, specifically body regulation and exclusions of women and Two-Spirit people, the interruption of Indigenous ethics of non-interference and the use of shame, the manipulation of Indigenous languages to reinforce the gendering of Land and land-based practices, and the institutionalization and amplification of gendered protocols and practices within schools (Wilson, 2008; Wilson, 2018a; Wilson, 2018b). This is directly linked to the literature presented in Chapter 1 and the discussion on colonial assumptions of gender. Through the literature it is understood that Indigenous gender spectrums more expansive than the colonial gender binary (Sheppard & Mayo, 2013; A. Wilson, 1996, 2008). Both in the literature and in the storytelling of the research participants, it's a key understanding that Two-Spirit identities are reflect understandings of gender and sexualities that exist currently and have existed historically in many Indigenous cultures and the reclamation of gender diversity and Two-Spirit identity within Indigenous communities demonstrates both a refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2012) of settler-colonial heteropatriarchy and the healing of sexualities in Indigenous communities (Kermoal & Altamirano-Jiménez, 2016).

Activation of Relationality as a Form of Protection

> A lot of folks have been women that I have learned from, or interestingly enough, I think that the connections that I have to teachers, if they are men are still through women. The folks that I get fish from or who I've gone and set nets with have been through relationships with grandmothers.
>
> I think that has also allowed some markers of safety as well.
>
> I felt most comfortable going out on the land or getting gifts from the land through established relationships with women or grandmothers. I just already know that he's a safe man to be out on the land with, any often we'll take younger women. I know that I'm not going to experience anything bad while I'm out on the land with him. l think, that's been really important in my journey is, knowing that I'm out with somebody safe. (P. Pisim, 2021)

Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based educators and practitioners have experienced and continue to experience harm while engaging in Indigenous land-based practices, including gendered and sexualized violences. The research participants expressed that the most successful way to protect themselves and others is by creating communities of care with other Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples.

The way in which Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based educators resist and refuse colonialism and its manifestations is not only a reaction to external forces but an important response to the ethics of relationality, relational accountability, and relational care. Their work to create opportunities and safe spaces for Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land and to engage in land-based practices represent critical centering of community and creates generational change. Indigenous women and Two-Spirit Indigenous land-based educators and practitioners are protecting one another and future generations, while also reviving ethics and ways of being that kept Indigenous Nations intact prior to the interruptions of colonialism.

Interrupting the Interferences in Relationships of Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Peoples with Land

> I think there's a role for education and conversations, even with knowledge keepers with folks who are gender diverse, just so that we're able to share information, then letting folks know how some of these protocols and these practices are harming or impacting people, or even discouraging them from

> participating in ceremony at all. Because I know that in terms of finding a pathway to understanding who I am as an Indigenous woman, for me, that was lifesaving, connecting to ceremonies and learning about who I was. And so it's important to try and share that as much as we can. (S. Pisim, 2021)

As presented in the literature highlighted in Chapter 1, the imposition of colonial gender binaries and gendered protocols and practices cause major interferences in Indigenous women, and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land resulting in fracturing of relationships and connection to community (Simpson, 2017; Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018; A. Wilson, 2018c). The impacts of this interferences are felt both on the individual level and as a collective. The consequences of the fracturing of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land ranges from feelings of confusion and isolation to the extreme with loss of life through violence and/or suicide.

The data reveals that while Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people are often in relationship with Land in ways that are unburdened by the colonial gender binary, gendered and sexualized violences, and gendered protocols and practices in their childhood, a major shift occurs as they enter puberty and beyond. This understanding offers a critical opportunity to interrupt the interferences in the early stages of life, and shelter Indigenous girls and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land as they age and restore the Indigenous ethic of non-interference (Greene, 2007; A. Wilson, 1996, 2018a). Doing so would involve evaluating current Indigenous land-based programs in schools and community-based youth-serving organizations, to ensure that Indigenous girls and teens and Two-Spirit children and teens have access to Indigenous cultural teachings and ceremonies, Indigenous language learning, and Indigenous land-based education practices that are led by people, including Elders and knowledge keepers, who are committed to working from an anti-oppressive framework.

Through the analysis of the data, it is evident that a level of internalized oppression is occurring and contributing to the fracturing of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' relationships with Land, which also represents a central theme from the literature reviewed in Chapter 1. While women and Two-Spirit peoples are experiencing gendered oppression on our bodies, that impacts our relationships with Land, the forms of oppression including homophobia, misogyny,

and patriarchy, become embedded within their psyches (Simpson, 2017; Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018; A. Wilson, 2018c). In knowing this, it's imperative to not only respond to the harms caused on a collective and wider cultural level but also to support the individual self-determined healing of our minds and spirits. This work reflects of level of knowledge to action, from the understandings presented in the literature review to the active interruption of the complex ways colonial attributes have and continue to be internalized consciously or unconsciously by Indigenous peoples.

Listening to what is circulating in community: Findings, final discussions and implications of posters

The primary features of the posters highlighted the themes that cycled through the stories and experiences shared by the research participants in their interviews. Through the imagery and chosen language, the posters that were collected and analyzed serve as tools to further entrench the gendering of Land and land-based practices and the exclusion, shaming, and body regulation of women and Two-Spirit people. Examples from the data include the language enforcing taboos and/or gender-based protocols and applying binaried terms to the more-than-human world. The posters present examples of how the internalizing of patriarchy, homophobia, and misogyny operates within Indigenous communities, resulting in Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous women becoming the enforcers of those forms of oppression. Additionally, they provide examples of how schools and universities are institutionalizing what's currently understood as traditional and enforcing gender-based oppression under the guise of culture.

Implications of these findings on the field of Indigenous land-based education include the critical responsibility to remain vigilant of the text and imagery on publicly circulated posters that are promoting Indigenous land-based and cultural gatherings, to ensure that promote Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples' relationship with Land. Doing so is a practical method to interrupt the fracturing of relationships between Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people like experienced by the 8 research participants. This would include vetting text and images to insure that they are not exclusionary or oppressive.

Additionally, it's important that Indigenous organizations and post-secondary institutions support the work that Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based practitioners are doing to create networks of relational care within the field of Indigenous land-based education. This includes vetting Elders and knowledge keepers to ensure that they are working from an anti-oppressive framework and when applicable sharing the information of who will be leading the ceremony or gathering so that folks can make informed decisions on if they will or will not participate. In the instance where organizers are working to ensure that folks are being supported to participate in events and gatherings in ways that affirm their identities, particular attention should be paid to the imagery used on posters, to ensure that the enforcement of taboos and gendered protocols are not implied in visual cues.

Social media plays a key role in the making of community and the bringing of people together. It's important that within the field of Indigenous land-based education this tool is being used to (re)make communities of care, where Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples can be in relationship with Land unburned by oppression.

Limitations

As a direct result of colonialism and epistemic violence, many Indigenous ways of knowing and being have been significantly eroded, consequently making it difficult to trace ways of thinking, knowing, and being back to its undistorted state. An example of this can be seen in the difficulty that research participants expressed in determining the origin of the teachings or understandings that they were taught and/or engaged with. The data analysis revealed that what is commonly understood as "traditional teachings" presently, may be rooted in beliefs or practices that are founded in settler heteropatriarchy enforced through colonialism. This presents a potential limitation to the research because certain land-based knowledges may have been withheld from the research participants based on their gender or how they are misgendered and impacted what they were able to share within their interviews. To address this limitation, research participants were asked to explore their thoughts and feelings around the gendering of land-based knowledges and practices both in their own experiences and in their practices.

Another limitation, discussed in a previous section was the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This made it unsafe to gather research participants together for land-based gathering. To ensure the safety of all, interviews were conducted over Zoom.

Final Reflection

In closing, I express my deepest gratitude to all the people and places who made this work possible and who continue to remind me the importance of being fiercely determined and working towards a world in which our relationships with Land thrive. I am both humbled and inspired by the labour, thought, and care that Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based practitioners are investing in the (re)making of land-based relationships. I understand that many of them do so at a personal sacrifice and continue to push beyond the forces that attempt to limit them because their love of Land and one another is so expansive.

I close this work with a grateful heart and a renewed intention to seek out and create spaces where Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people can be in relationship with the Land freely and with an abundance of joy.

Kinanaskomitinawaw.

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Department of Educational Foundations
University of Saskatchewan

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN GENDER AND INDIGENOUS LAND-BASED EDUCATION

We are looking for volunteers who identify as Indigenous women and/or Transgender and/or Two-Spirit people to take part in a study examining how gender operates within Indigenous land-based education.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to: participate in an interview and a focus group, and provide photographs that have significance to your relation with Land and/or your land-based practice.

Your participation would involve *2* sessions,
each of which is approximately *60 – 90* minutes.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive
a traditional offering and a gift.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:
Tasha Spillett, PhD Candidate
Educational Foundations
at 306-966-7679
Email: *tasha.spillett@usask.ca*

This study has been reviewed by, and received approval through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan.

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN | usask.ca

Appendix B: Interview Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: The Experiences of Indigenous Women, Transgender and Two-Spirit Land-Based Educators and Practitioners

Researcher(s): Tasha Spillett, Graduate Student, Educational Foundations, University of Saskatchewan, 306-966-7679, tasha.spillett@usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Alex Wilson, Educational Foundations, 306-966-7979, alex.wilson@usask.ca

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

The objective of this research is to examine how gender operates within both formal and informal Indigenous land-based education by specifically considering the narratives, experiences, and pedagogies of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit land-based educators and practitioners.

Procedures:

- This study will explore your experiences of how gender operates in Indigenous land-based education in your setting

- The interview will take place in a private space indicated by you. If you don't have a private space, one will be suggested by the researcher
- The interview can also take place over Skype or the phone, if you wish
- We will start by establishing our positionality and the making of an offering to honour your time and knowledge. Then I will ask you a series of questions about your connection to Land and how gender operates in your Indigenous land-based practice. We will then have a less structured conversation where you will be invited to add details and/or clarification to your comments and/or redirect the discussion to areas that you identify as significant and/or related to the focus of the research. Finally, you will have the opportunity to discuss any photos that you've identified as being significant visual representations of your practice.
- This interview should take approximately 60-90 minutes
- I will audio-recording and creating transcripts from the recordings. You have the right to ask for the audio-recorded to be turned off at any point during the interview. If you do ask for the audio-recorded to be turned off, it will be done immediately.
- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

Potential Risks:

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research**.** However, should you feel emotional duress during the interview a break will be offered, and you will have access to smudging materials (Indigenous healing practice). A list of supports (crisis lines,

Elders, knowledge holders) is able available to you, for example: The Hope for Wellness Help Line, which offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada (1-855-242-3310).

Potential Benefits:

- Interested participants will be provided with a summary of the research results
- Contributing to the research on both Indigenous land-based education and Indigenous notions of gender; bringing together Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people who are engaged in Indigenous land-based education; increasing the research participants' professional networks and

  possibly leading to new and innovative collaborations and initiatives; ultimately this research will support the wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people by exploring land-based knowledges and examples for pedological practice that facilitate reconnect their relationship with land.

Compensation:

Monetary compensation will not be offered but all research participants will receive a tobacco offering and a gift, in accordance to Indigenous research ethics of reciprocity and relationality. If you choose to withdraw from the study at any time, you will still receive a gift.

Confidentiality:

- Your identity and responses will be kept anonymous, if you choose

- If you chose to remain anonymous, you will be asked to self-select a pseudonym which will be used for any quotations I use from you when reporting results. A list of participants and their pseudonyms will be kept and only be accessible to the researcher
- Consent forms will be stored separately from data collected to ensure there will be no way to identify individual participants. If you chose to remain anonymous, any identifying information you put on paper will be removed when I enter the information into my database
- **Storage of Data:**

  The results of this study will remain confidential. The data will be entered into a database and stored until 2029 at which point it will be destroyed

Right to Withdraw:

- Your participation is voluntary and you are invited to answer only the questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort until I have disseminated the research results. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me directly at 306-966-7679 or tasha.spillett@usask.ca

Follow up:

To obtain results from the study, please contact me directly and I will ensure you have access to them.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Consent

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

☐ Yes, I would like to review and revise the transcript from my interview. I understand will have one month from the date I receive the transcript to review and revise.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive the results on this study

☐ Yes, I give my consent for my contributions in the interview to potentially be

used in a podcast produced to mobilize the knowledges associated to this research project.

If yes, please provide your email address: _____

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Question 1:

Can you tell me about a memory from your childhood where you were doing a land-based activity or your earliest memory of being consciously aware of your relationship with the Land?

- Can you tell me about where this memory takes you? Who was there?
- Was there a specific land-based practice or activity involved?
- Is this a land-base that you are still in active relationship with today?

Question 2:

In thinking about how your own relationship has developed with Land, and your land-based education practice, can you tell me about how you have experienced the gendering of land-based knowledges and/or practices?

- In your own experience, did the gendering of land-based knowledges and/or practices impact your relationship with land? Please provide examples.
- If so, who enforced the gendering of these knowledges and/or practices?
- Was there any intervention of how these knowledges and/or practices were gendered?
- Do you think experiences such as yours happen still today?
- If so, what do you think the impacts are?

- What should be done to intervene? What would have made a positive difference in the experiences you have had personally?

Question 3:

In thinking about your personal Indigenous land-based education practice and pedagogy, what do you identify as factors that strengthen and undermine Indigenous women's and Two-Spirit people's relationships with Land?

- Do you have any examples from your personal experiences of factors that strengthen and undermine Indigenous women's and Two-Spirit people's relationships with Land?
- What can be done to increase factors that strengthen Indigenous women's and Two-Spirit people's relationships with Land?
- What can be done to decrease factors that undermine Indigenous women's and Two-Spirit people's relationships with Land?
- How do you identify cultural context, place, social movements or other organizations (from community level to international levels), as acting as barriers or supports to their personal connection to Land and to your Indigenous land-based education practice and pedagogy?'
- How do notions of gender operate within Indigenous land-based education?

- What gendered “traditional teachings” and protocols exist within Indigenous land-based education?
- How does gender impact the practice and pedagogy of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people?

Question 4:

If you had an opportunity to talk with the version of yourself, from the earliest memory your shared of having a conscious relationship with Land, what would you tell yourself?

- Are there any words of guidance or affirmations, specifically related to how gender operates with Indigenous land-based education that you would give to yourself and why?
- In thinking about your younger self, youth today, and future relations, what ways do you think gender and notions of gender should be considered in Indigenous land-based education?
- In your option and from your experiences, how are relationships between Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples with Land, best affirmed and supported? How should this change and/or create Indigenous land-based practices?

Appendix D: Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 05/Dec/2019

Certificate of Approval

Application ID: Principal Investigator:

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted:

Student(s): Funder(s): Sponsor:

Title:

Approved On: Expiry Date: Approval Of:

1578

Alexandria Wilson Department: Department of Educational Foundations

Urban and rural Indigenous communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canada

Tasha Spillett

THE EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND TWO-SPIRIT LAND-BASED EDUCATORS AND PRACTITIONERS

05/Dec/2019

04/Dec/2020

Behavioural Research Ethics Application Appendix A: Field Notes Protocol

Appendix B: Photo Documentation Protocol Appendix C: Interview Consent Form Appendix D: Focus Group Consent Form Appendix E: Transcript Release Form Appendix F: Recruitment Poster

Appendix G: Interview Questions

Appendix H: Focus Group Questions

Delegated Review

Acknowledgment Of: Review Type:

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2018). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Patricia Simonson, Vice Chair **Behavioural Research Ethics Board University of Saskatchewan**

Appendix E: Ethics Re-Approval 2019

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)

Certificate of Re-Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	DEPARTMENT	Beh #
Alexandria Wilson	Educational Foundations	16-440

INSTITUTION (S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

Canada USA

STUDENT RESEARCHER(S)

Tasha Spillett

FUNDER(S)

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC)

TITLE

An Exploration of Models and Practices of Indigenous Land-Based Education

RE-APPROVED ON	EXPIRY DATE
03-Jan-2018	02-Jan-2019

Full Board Meeting

Delegated Review ✔

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted:

Student(s): Funder(s): Sponsor: Title:

Approval Effective Date: Expiry Date: Acknowledgment Of:

Review Type:

* This study, inclusive of all previously approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2014). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains

open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Diane Martz

Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board University of Saskatchewan

1578

Alexandria Wilson Department: Department of Educational Foundations

Urban and rural Indigenous communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canada

THE EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN, TRANSGENDER & TWO-SPIRIT LAND-BASED EDUCATORS AND PRACTITIONERS

04/12/2020 04/12/2021 N/A

Delegated Review

Appendix F: Ethics Re-Approval 2020

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 07-Feb-2020

Certificate of Approval Amendment

Application ID: Principal Investigator:

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted:

Student(s): Funder(s): Sponsor: Title:

Approved On: Expiry Date: Approval Of:

Acknowledgment Of: Review Type:

CERTIFICATION

1578

Alexandria Wilson Department: Department of Educational Foundations

Urban and rural Indigenous communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canada

THE EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN, TRANSGENDER & TWO-SPIRIT LAND-BASED EDUCATORS AND PRACTITIONERS

07/02/2020 04/12/2020

* Amended Recruitment poster * Amended Consent forms

* Title change

Delegated Review

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2018). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains

open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Stephanie Martin, Vice-Chair

Behavioural Research Ethics Board University of Saskatchewan

1/1

Appendix G: Ethics Re-Approval 2021

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)

Certificate of Re-Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	DEPARTMENT	Beh #
Alexandria Wilson	Educational Foundations	16-440

INSTITUTION (S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

Canada USA

STUDENT RESEARCHER(S)

Tasha Spillett

FUNDER(S)

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC)

TITLE:

An Exploration of Models and Practices of Indigenous Land-Based Education

RE-APPROVED ON	EXPIRY DATE
03-Jan-2018	02-Jan-2019

Full Board Meeting ☐

Delegated Review ☑

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/

Vivian Ramsden, Chair
University of Saskatchewan
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:

Research Ethics Office
University of Saskatchewan
Room 223 - Thorvaldson Building 110 Science Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 4J8
Phone: (306) 966-2975 Fax: (306) 966-2069

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