7 NEAR GALE

Whole trees in motion;

inconvenience felt when

walking against wind

7 NEAR GALE
Unsettling Practices

Tom Keefer and Adrienne Telford
in conversation with D.T. Cochrane

Although Canada's relationship with Indigenous people and nations is multifaceted, the broadest categorical distinction in the country is between those of Indigenous descent and those of settler descent. The relationship between settlers and Indigenous people has been predominantly, if not exclusively, one of violence, displacement, and dispossession. The violence of settlers and their institutions has always been met with resistance, through a diversity of tactics. Indigenous people have fought settlers outright, battled the Canadian government in numerous court cases, but also resisted through blockades, occupations, and grassroots mobilizations.

In 2012, the Idle No More movement united grassroots Indigenous voices across Canada. The mobilization brought greater prominence to many of the issues that Indigenous people struggle against under settler colonialism.[1] Recent history has also seen a formal apology from the federal government for the treatment of Indigenous people in residential schools across the country.[2] In the 2015 federal election campaign, the Liberal Party also promised improved treatment of Indigenous people under the watchword "reconciliation." Yet, there remain numerous processes of violence against Indigenous people. One recent example in Saskatchewan: the acquittal, by an all-white jury, of a white man for the murder of Colton Boushie, a young Indigenous man. Another recent example: the Canadian government's

1 For a useful distinction between colonialism and settler colonialism, see Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

2 The 2008 apology was delivered by the Conservative government; it included a settlement agreement with survivors of residential schools, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Importantly, this settlement agreement, the Commission, and the apology were the culmination of decades of struggle, including legal battles, and should not be understood as the goodwill of the Canadian government.

purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline, including a planned expansion, despite the widespread rejection of the project by Indigenous people whose lands the pipeline crosses. And, as an example at a structural level: Indigenous people make up a widely disproportionate share of both the prison population and the child welfare system.

However, white people in settler societies can support Indigenous struggles and work toward decolonization. In the conversation that follows, I speak with two participants involved in different types of Indigenous solidarity work. Tom Keefer is an activist who has spent over a decade making media for and with the Six Nations of the Grand River. Adrienne Telford is a lawyer who has worked with the Asubpeeschoseewagong (also known as Grassy Narrows) First Nation in their struggle for justice over mercury contamination of their watershed. They share their insights about how, as white settlers, they have worked to support Indigenous struggles. To fully appreciate these perspectives, it is necessary to first identify some of the different categories that bind and shape the relationship between Indigenous and settler societies.

Land is at the center of both the oppression and the liberation of Indigenous peoples in this country, as settler society dominates much of the land demarcated as "Canada." There also exist reserve lands that are set aside for the benefit of an "Indian band," which are managed by a Chief and Council structure specified under Canada's "Indian Act." Reserve lands comprise a mere 0.2 percent of Canada's landmass.[3] Reserve lands are small packets within much more extensive traditional territories. These territories can be further classified as treatied or untreatied lands.

The Chief and Council structure is distinct from an Indigenous nation's traditional leadership model, with contemporary nations having a wide variety of leadership structures that have greater and lesser continuity with pre-contact forms of organization. There is no standard relationship between the Indian Act Chief and Council and traditional forms of organization. Sometimes the two are distinct and operate at odds; at other times, the former takes guidance from the latter.

Currently, "Indigenous" is the commonly accepted term among settlers for the first peoples of the lands that comprise Canada, although many first peoples disagree with this designation; one also still encounters the terms "Native" and "Aboriginal." "Native American" is a term largely used in the United States context. "Aboriginal," as a noun, is used for the Indigenous people of Australia; its use in Canada is primarily as an adjective, as in Aboriginal Peoples. Within the category of Indigenous people, Canada officially recognizes three subcategories: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, often abbreviated FNMI. These distinct FNMI categories have practical implications, as relationships with the federal, provincial, and territorial governments of Canada are determined by the different status that each group has under Canadian law.

The label "Indian" continues to exist within Canadian discourse about Indigeneity. This term has a disquieting status because it is at once used as a racial slur but is also contained in the official name for the Canadian government's policies defining the relationship with Indigenous people: the Indian Act.[4] However, not all Indigenous people are governed by the Indian Act. Those governed by the Indian Act are known as "status Indians." Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which enshrines Indigenous rights, refers to the "aboriginal people of Canada" as the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Although the term "First Nations" has largely replaced "Indian," the substitution is incomplete. References are also made in the conversation that follows to "Indian Country," a term that continues to be used in a non-derogatory manner by both Native and non-Native people living on lands bearing this label. Although "Indian" is often used in white supremacist society as a slur, one should not

3 Arthur Manuel and Ronald M. Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015).

4 This relationship is also defined in the Canadian constitution—the country's founding document—which purports to assign jurisdiction over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" to the federal government. See the Constitution Act, 1867, s. 91(24).

conflate its connotative power with the N-word. I can recall being told by an Indigenous man in Saskatchewan that he preferred to retain the label "Indian" as a reminder that he was part of an occupied people. I suggest that non-Indigenous people should take terminological guidance from the Indigenous people they meet and work with, not least because there are at least 600 nations on the land referred to as Canada.

Increasingly, there are calls for recognition and acknowledgement of the particular national identities of Indigenous communities. Although the category of "Indigenous" is meaningful in terms of a general history, certain common experiences, and a particular set of rights under Canadian law, there are also important distinctions among the different Indigenous nations, such as the Innu and the Haudenosaunee, the Cree and the Secwépemc.

All of these layers of identity are further complicated by the largely European-derived concepts used to understand Indigenous life that often obscure or diminish the variations and nuances that exist within and among Indigenous nations. With all of this in mind, I want to stress that the oppression faced by Indigenous people is a problem for white settler society; Indigenous people should not be expected to solve these problems because they are fighting for the continued survival of their own societies.[5] This conversation with Tom and Adrienne is part of an effort to take responsibility, as white settlers, for some of the labor required to address colonialism, coloniality, and white supremacy in Canada.[6]

5 On combating racism and white supremacy (particularly in relation to anti-Black culture), see Robin Diangelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), Derald Wing Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2015); and Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (London: Verso, 2012).

6 On colonialism and coloniality, see Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

D.T. COCHRANE We were invited to have this conversation in relation to the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force, and I've been thinking about scale in two ways. First, the Beaufort Scale renders visible something that is mostly invisible. Similarly, I think that the settler-colonial mindset is mostly invisible to settlers; for those of us who, for whatever reason, become aware of settler colonialism, we start to look around and notice its structures and effects everywhere. How can this work of *making visible* be understood practically as a political project of decolonization? Second, we are talking about the "Near Gale" level of the scale, where it is "difficult, but not impossible, to walk into the wind." Those of us who are trying to support struggles for decolonization and act in solidarity —however we want to describe our relationships with Indigenous people, and we will come back to this question later—we're in a way walking into the continued force of settler colonialism. How did you come to walk into the wind?

ADRIENNE TELFORD First, I want to push back a bit against the second part of the metaphor. When we are talking about Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination, the fact that the "gale" is perhaps now only a "near gale" needs to be recognized as a product of that struggle. The history of resistance and resilient struggle has been ongoing for hundreds of years. Also, the history of Indigenous-settler relations is not simply one of an oppressed people suddenly rising up; a significant part of the historical relationship was a meeting of equals and indeed settler dependence on Indigenous peoples for survival.

TOM KEEFER Indeed, the origins of the treaties were as agreements between different "political" families as equals. In the case of the Onkwehon:we (Iroquoian people), when Indigenous "leaders" made treaty agreements, they did so as representatives of their confederacy of families, making an agreement with one particularly powerful family, the British Royal Family. In 2010, the

Queen herself gave a gift of silver bells to the Mohawks thanking them for their 300-year relationship! Fundamentally, it's a family-to-family relationship.

ADRIENNE TELFORD

Returning to your first question, one of the important moments in understanding my complicity, and therefore my responsibility, as a white settler living in a settler colonial state was hearing Thomas King's Massey lecture.[7] In this lecture, he calmly reviews the long and ugly history of colonialism, murder, cultural genocide, and residential schools. He explains things like the attempt to legislate *the Indian* out of existence by legally defining who is and who is not a *status Indian*. In essence, King tells the story of settler colonialism in Canada, and to a certain extent, the United States. At the end, he says something like, "Don't say that if you had heard this story, you would have lived differently. You've now heard this story." That has stuck with me. It is a question for all settlers living in Canada: now that we know the story of colonialism, the violent and ongoing subjugation of Indigenous people, and the theft of their lands, what will we do about it?

7 Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003). The lecture is also available online: cbc.ca/radio/ideas/the-2003-cbc-massey-lectures-the-truth-about-stories-a-native-narrative-1.2946870.

TOM KEEFER

My first exposure to the plight of Indigenous people in North America was through a section of my parents' bookshelves on Indigenous issues and spirituality. I remember reading Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* when I was quite young.[8] But I didn't start working with Indigenous people until 2006, when I was part of a union group offering solidarity support for a Six Nations occupation and blockade against colonial land development.

I had spent years doing anti-fascist resistance and I identified as an anarchist, and then as a Marxist. When I began working with the Onkwehon:we of Six Nations, I found myself talking to the people about not only what they were trying to achieve, but also about how they were living—and how their ancestors

8 Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2000).

lived—in a stateless, classless society without gender oppression. It was a communist society. They managed a way to figure out how to have that, and have it in harmony with the natural processes around them. And, at its height, it encompassed a landmass the size of the Roman Empire. If we're actually serious about having a stateless, classless society in Southern Ontario, then we need to understand how there was a stateless and classless society here just few hundred years ago, and what this society can teach us about achieving that again in our own time.

D.T. COCHRANE

Certainly, there must exist some contradictions for you, both regarding the work that you do and politics you espouse, and the communities that you serve; I'd like to discuss how you deal with these contradictions. For example, Tom, you noted your identification with the traditions of anarchism and Marxism, which have European origins. Yet, there is also an uneasy relationship between Indigenous cosmologies and European thought, even if the latter are often understood as emancipatory or liberatory. The ideals that ground some of the revolutionary ideas of settlers will often conflict with, if not explicitly contradict, some Indigenous perspectives. How has this manifest in your experience?

TOM KEEFER

Frances Widdowson is the perfect illustration of this point. She is a Marxist with a viciously anti-Indigenous perspective. In her hardline Marxist-Trotskyist analysis, Indigenous people need to go through a process of proletarianization so that they can then get union jobs and fight for socialism alongside the rest of us; for her, anything else is a neolithic valorization that prevents us from getting to the socialist future that will free us all.[9]

9 For more on Widdowson, see Tom Keefer's critical essay, "Marxism, Indigenous Struggles, and the Tragedy of 'Stagism'," *Upping the Anti* 10 (2010), uppingtheanti.org/journal/article/10-marxism-indigenous-struggles-and-the-tragedy-of-stagism.

D.T. COCHRANE

Has there been a process for you of moving between Marxist philosophy and Indigenous cosmologies, or a way that you have brought them together in your thinking or in practice?

TOM KEEFER

I went through a number of political organizations before coming to the conclusion that the Leninist-Trotskyist model of Marxism is not correct and does not work. I found an exit through C.L.R. James and Marty Glaberman. They were still Marxist revolutionaries, but they focused on what the people are actually doing. James would not say that he was innovating anything because he is a classically trained Marxist and Leninist. But, along with people like Grace Lee Boggs and Raya Dunayevskaya, he was developing a Marxist movement that had all kinds of echoes and connections and linkages with the European autonomist Marxist movement, while it also tried to work out a specifically American kind of social revolution. I spent a fair amount of time trying to figure out those connections through the intellectual project of *Upping the Anti*, which I was working on at the time.[10]

Another piece, for me, was doing support work for political prisoners in the United States, particularly in New York State. I mean Black Panther prisoners, or Black Liberation Army prisoners, as well as some Weather Underground prisoners. Working with them helped me become more open to revolutionary moments in other areas. So when I went to Caledonia, Ontario, when I passed by the columns of burning tire smoke in the blockade, I thought to myself: "I'm not in Canada anymore. I'm not sure where I am, but it's not Canada." I chose not to judge the situation by my standards. I'd read about this in books, but I decided to analyze it on its own terms and according to its own merits. And, I used the intellectual tools I had learned in the movements that I'd been a part of, which were not academic, but on-the-ground political organizations.

10 Issues of *Upping the Anti* are available online: uppingtheanti.org/journal.

D.T. COCHRANE

Audre Lorde famously said that the master's tools will never be used to dismantle the master's house.[11] Canadian laws seem to exemplify the "master's tools," which has been expressed well by Art Manuel: "The Canadian courts are in conflict of interest with our sovereignty as Indigenous Nations."[12] Yet, Indigenous Nations have often leveraged Canadian law to secure and protect their rights. Adrienne, I want to ask you what role there is for lawyers and activists from settler backgrounds to help navigate Canadian law, perhaps at the boundaries of Canadian law, and how does your practice encounter these boundaries?

11 Originally published in Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1981). The full-text of Lorde's essay is available online: collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lorde_The_Masters_Tools.pdf.

12 Quoted in Shiri Pasternak, *Grounded Authority: The Algonquins of Barriere Lake Against the State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 247.

ADRIENNE TELFORD

Working with and through the law is fraught with challenges. It is an imperfect and inherently compromised tool that I think should be approached with deep skepticism and caution. If you were to ask yourself: "Has the law historically been the tool of the settler-colonial state to murder, subjugate, and assimilate Indigenous peoples?," the answer is emphatically yes. The law has been used to regulate almost every aspect of Indigenous lives, from the moment people are born until their death, in a way that white settlers in Canada do not experience. There is no Department of White People perpetually regulating through laws and policies the minutiae of our existence. But, for me, this makes it all the more important that the law be a site of active resistance and decolonization.

Val Napoleon is an Indigenous lawyer at the University of Victoria, B.C., where she heads the Indigenous Law Research Unit. She says that law is a human endeavor that is fundamentally collaborative, public, and evolving—in all societies. Some societies have more centralized, top-down legal institutions, while others are more decentralized and operate horizontally. In either case, the law is not static, and it does not exist separate or apart from the people and societies that create it, which means there are mechanisms for changing the law. Because of

this, there are opportunities to use settler-colonial laws to advance and support Indigenous struggles for sovereignty, repatriation of land, and compensation. I also think that what is fundamental for decolonization, and true reconciliation, is seeing Indigenous laws and legal orders on par with settler-colonial laws. So, just as we recognize the jurisdiction and authority of civil law in the province of Quebec—a legal tradition that is distinct from the common law traditions in other provinces—we ought to recognize the authority and legitimacy of the legal traditions of Indigenous peoples. I would go further and say that Indigenous laws are not simply on par, but in various circumstances they would necessarily displace settler laws and jurisdiction.

D.T. COCHRANE

The Yellowhead Institute is a recently formed think tank advancing Indigenous perspectives on Canadian laws and policies.[13] It is critical of the dominant laws of Canada, but also supports the construction of Indigenous law; to put it differently, they are defending the right of Indigenous Nations to live on their lands according to their own laws.

13 For more detail, visit yellowheadinstitute.org.

TOM KEEFER

That is what I felt at Six Nations, when I knew I was not in Canada anymore.

D.T. COCHRANE

What led to this experience? Can you tell us about the legal or political order of the Onkwehon:we communities you work with?

TOM KEEFER

The term “Onkwehon:we” means “original, real people,” and is the name that Iroquoian-speaking people of the Great Lakes use to define themselves. Their homeland is primarily within the watersheds of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. All around those lakes you have Onkwehon:we nations. They continue to have a matrilineal clan system; indeed, the political structure for the overwhelming majority of North American Indigenous Nations is the matrilineal clan family.

Of course, it is important to recognize that there are unique events and unique cosmologies that have shaped different nations and communities. Reading Dee Brown, I had learned a lot about the Oglala Sioux, but the situation in Caledonia has a cultural and historical specificity, which can only be understood by being there. If you start talking about Indigenous people *in general*, as a single thing, you obscure more than you clarify.

Among the practitioners of the matrilineal clan system, there is an extended family that traces its origins to a common, female ancestor—and everyone knows that. Resources belong, collectively, to that family. Within those matrilineal frameworks, you have a spokesperson, a peace chief, who is male. Within an extended family, there will also be a “military” leader, or “War Chief,” either formally or informally. There will be councils for the men or women or youth, but there is a political equality, and they, as a family, share a common clan. That is the basic unit.

Among the Onkwehon:we, interacting with a matrilineal clan unit—whether you know it or not—is completely different than interacting with Indigenous people that have been Christianized, left the traditional clan governance system, operate within the band council system under Indian Affairs, and get their status as “Indians” from the Canadian government. It is very important to understand the clan family aspect and this distinction; it was the representatives of those clan families who signed the treaties, hold their rights, and have generally continued their traditions to this day.

D.T. COCHRANE

On this point about the holders of the traditional rights, Adrienne, I’d like to return to the way you practice, which is, as you said, through the formal mechanisms of Canadian law, which you acknowledge are problematic.

ADRIENNE TELFORD

From a practical perspective, the law provides both a forum and a process to make “rational” legal arguments, and in some formal respects to meet on more equal footing the adversary of

the state. So, for example, the law provides mechanisms for forcing the state to answer questions, to produce documents in its possession, and abide by court orders requiring it to do something or refrain from doing something. One hopes that the arguments in favor of, for example, Indigenous rights and repatriation of land will, at the end of the day, succeed. But, obviously the logic of white supremacy and colonialism often trump the operations of the law. Indeed, substantively speaking, the law is itself a system of rationalization for the white supremacist colonialist state.

D.T. COCHRANE One of the arguments I have used, when people have tried to use Indigenous recourse to the law as legitimization of the law, is to suggest an analogy to being in prison. If you are in prison, you will make appeals to the warden in order to improve your lot within the prison. That does not change the fact that you are in the prison, and if the warden decides against you, that does not change the legitimacy of your position. As a strategic maneuver, it makes sense that Indigenous people would make recourse to the law. As Lorde also says, the master's tools can be used to win at the master's game, at least temporarily. In the Grassy Narrows case that you worked on, this recourse led to a substantial decision in their favor, which is better than if they'd completely eschewed a legal path.

ADRIENNE TELFORD Consider Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982, which enshrines Aboriginal rights and title in the Canadian constitution. While some Indigenous thinkers argue that its inclusion undermines Indigenous sovereignty by recognizing the supremacy of Canadian laws, John Borrows suggests that Section 35 provides Indigenous people with an important institutional means to resist the violation of their rights, which has been happening since the beginning of colonization.[14] Indeed, Indigenous peoples have a fairly long track record of Section 35 victories in the Canadian courts system, something which says a lot about the poor state of settler-Indigenous relations, given that courts are inherently conservative as they depend on precedent. With the enshrining of Section 35, there is, at least, an institutional means to resist the violation of these rights.

14 John Borrows, "Measuring a Work in Progress: Canada, Constitutionalism, Citizenship and Aboriginal Peoples," Walkem, Ardith, and Halie Bruce, eds., *Box of Treasures or Empty Box? Twenty Years of Section 35* (Vancouver: Theytus, 2003).

D.T. COCHRANE But, just as you stated at the beginning, it is important to recognize that Section 35 was not just handed to Indigenous people by a benevolent Canadian government; in fact, there was a mobilization, called the Constitutional Express, that brought Indigenous activists to Ottawa to assert their rights.[15] Indigenous people had also achieved earlier court victories that the government could no longer ignore.

15 See Manuel and Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada,* 65–75, for more on the Constitutional Express.

ADRIENNE TELFORD It is also necessary to mention that the manner in which Section 35 has been interpreted by the courts leaves much to be desired and is a good reminder of the tenacity of white settler colonialist logics. Unfortunately, the courts—being the institutions that they are—have read all kinds of limitations into the non-equivocal protection of Aboriginal rights and title. So, like all laws, Section 35 is an imperfect tool.

One of the earlier important cases was Calder v. British Columbia in 1973, which was seen as a victory by Indigenous people because the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged that Aboriginal title existed independently of Canadian statutory laws, and that it survived the assertion of sovereignty by the Imperial Crown, although it was described as a "burden" on Crown title. The primacy of the Crown at the core of the decision is a perpetuation of white supremacy. Why isn't it the reverse? Why is Crown title not a burden on Aboriginal title? Why do Indigenous people, when they come to court, have the burden of proving title? Why is the Crown spared the task of proving its title? There are all sorts of ways we are still struggling while working with the master's tools.

There are other examples of the fallacy of the legal doctrines that have been used to legitimize the state's existence, its continued occupation of stolen lands, and the subjugation of Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, the legal foundation upon which the state of Canada is founded is very sketchy, even within its own legal traditions. That is apparent, even to me as a lawyer steeped in Western, settler legal traditions. To me this means there are opportunities to undermine, resist, and chip away at these shaky legal foundations.

D.T. COCHRANE Indigenous nations are not homogeneous, either across or within nations. How do you navigate those divisions? How do you ensure you "stay in your lane" with respect to your work as an activist?

TOM KEEFER My media work involves me sitting down with an Indigenous person who has something of significance that they want to say and having them say it, but helping them make it as clear and coherent as possible. If we go to the people at the front line of the struggle, they are the leaders-in-practice. They aren't writing academic treatises, but they'll tell you about what they're doing and why it's important. I take what they're saying and then bring the final media product back to them, so they can help concentrate it, shorten it, or rearrange parts. Then, they can further clarify these remarks. I can ask, "Is this what you're saying?" And, they can say, "Okay, that's great, but this part is wrong." In the end, it is their words. I'm not saying what I think, or enforcing my framework, but I'm helping to focus and concentrate what they're actually saying about their work and then we publicize that material.

Lately, I have also been working with the Indigenous cannabis industry. When there was just one Indigenous cannabis dispensary, in Tyendinaga, Mohawk Territory, my critical thinking, political strategy, and media creation skills proved to be useful. The crucial issue around Indigenous cannabis is

communicating that they are not gangsters or criminals; instead, they are mindful Onkwehon:we people who are providing medicines to those who need them. It was early 2016 when I began working with the Indigenous cannabis industry, but I'd already spent ten years immersed in the Indigenous world and supporting these struggles.

ADRIENNE TELFORD As a lawyer, I can only have a limited role. In many respects, the relationship between lawyer and client—in this context, the client is the Indigenous community, and more specifically, the Chief and Council elected under the Indian Act—is formalized and well-defined. It has clear ethical rules that are published and well-known. Still, any community will have divisions; while my legal advice to Chief and Council may be to encourage broad-based consultation and discussion, at the end of the day, my role is clear. I take my instructions from the client.

I also try to be aware of the limits of my expertise. Yes, I have expertise in settler law and how to use it in various legal fora. But, I am not the expert in knowing what is best for my client or what is best for the Indigenous communities I work with: that is what self-determination is about. It is very easy, as a white-settler lawyer, to replicate the power dynamics of white supremacy, so it is important to remain aware of these limits.

D.T. COCHRANE In *Red Skin, White Mask*, Glen Coulthard argues that direct action is a necessity aspect of decolonization.[16] He notes that this will always make settlers uncomfortable and upset. Similarly, the title of Art Manuel's second book is *Unsettling Canada*.[17] "Unsettling" is a metaphor for discomfort. Do you think it is also a responsibility for settlers to make people uncomfortable? Do we have a responsibility to manage white settler's discomfort?

16 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.*

17 Manuel and Derrickson, *Unsetteling Canada.*

ADRIENNE TELFORD In their essay "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," authors Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue that decolonization is not a

simple metaphor for critically reflecting on oppressions.[18] They argue that decolonizing is necessarily *unsettling* because, unlike other anti-oppression or social justice work, it is fundamentally about repatriating land and people. There is nothing comfortable about it for the settler Canadian state and for white-settler Canadians. I think we have a responsibility—to be raising these issues and participating in the discomfort they provoke.

18 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.

TOM KEEFER

We also have a responsibility to go through the doorway, into Indian Country, and make meaningful relationships. If we don't go into Indian Country, then it is just a matter of making other settlers feel comfortable. I would add two important points: first, Indian Country is not just found in remote areas. There are Indigenous communities in Toronto, and in any other city in Canada. Second, the residents of Indian Country are not just Indigenous people.

When everything was happening in Caledonia, there were very distinct divisions among the people in the town. You had landowners, bankers, realtors, lawyers, and developers, who share an interest in getting Native land, which was cheaper than other land because there was a risk premium, that is, because it wasn't free and clear land. They just wanted to grab it and make their money from it. They were the ones leading with the racist rhetoric and providing cover for the shitty people stoking the fire of racism and resentment. Then, within the category of the working-class people, you could see a division between those who had just arrived in the last ten years and the other residents. Their first knowledge of Native people in the area was: "What, they've got barricades? What the fuck is going on? I thought I was in Canada and it turns out I'm in Indian Country." But there were also the farmers and others who had lived in the area for generations. Many had intermarried, had close friendships, played hockey or lacrosse, and were embedded in the community. They said, "Come on guys, this is the Native land.

We know this. We know we stole it from them and they're not letting us steal this. Come on. Smarten up." Those people generally got it. I think the place for those people interested in decolonial or anticolonial activity is in the areas around the reserve communities, where you find these white people—the ones who get it.

ADRIENNE TELFORD

Also, some Indigenous communities have solidarity groups that are already established, which can be a good way for white settlers in Canada to connect with this type of work.[19] They have established mechanisms for taking direction from the community and being accountable to the community. This is important because solidarity work really needs to take its direction from Indigenous people.

19 Visit idlenomore.ca for information about events and actions defending, promoting, and advancing Indigenous sovereignty.

D.T. COCHRANE

A last question: do you have ideas about what an *unsettled* Canada might look like?

ADRIENNE TELFORD

I think most fundamentally it has to be about the land. An unsettled Canada has to be about repatriating stolen land. To use a legal term, it is about jurisdiction over lands and Indigenous people; it is the repatriation of lands and the self-determination of Indigenous peoples. I cannot imagine anything less for achieving decolonization, the unsettling of Canada.

TOM KEEFER

Genocide is still going on. Children are still being apprehended, and Indigenous ways of life are still being crushed. From this perspective, I think justice would require dissolving Canada.

D.T. COCHRANE is of settler descent and grew up in a small town on the Canadian prairies, where he encountered modes of Indigeneity alongside the racist mythologizing of settler society. He is thankful to the Winnipeg punk band Propagandhi, and a Mother who espoused support for Indigenous self-determination, for helping ensure that he did not succumb to the ideology of white supremacy. Through his work with INET, he is providing political economic analysis to support opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion by Secwépemc land defenders. He considers Indigenous knowledge and leadership indispensable if humans are going to survive the climate calamity.

TOM KEEFER is a media creator and consultant in the field of First Nations economic development and governance.

ADRIENNE TELFORD is a white settler lawyer based in Toronto, Canada, a meeting place that is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. She practices with the law firm Cavalluzzo LLP in the areas of Aboriginal, constitutional, labor, and human rights law. Among other things, she is legal counsel to Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nation). For decades, Grassy Narrows has fought to stop the poisoning of their people from mercury discharged into their river by a pulp and paper mill in the 1960s. As a result of Grassy Narrows' decades long grassroots organizing, the province of Ontario finally committed in 2017 to remediate the contaminated river system. Grassy Narrows has also maintained one of the longest running blockades in Canada, through which the Nation has actively resisted the clear cut logging of their traditional lands.The people of Grassy Narrows continue to seek fair compensation for the detrimental effects of mercury on their health, livelihood, and culture. For more information, see freegrassy.net.