"To See Together Without Claiming to be Another"[1]: Stories as Relations, Against One-Directional Move of Indigenous Stories Travelling

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Abstract Once communities' stories are taken up by researchers and shared within the ivory tower of academia, the stories circulate within the ivory tower. It is often the case that these archived stories from communities are used by researchers, without asking permission from the communities where the stories originate. In this article, we aim to critically review and reflect on underlying theories and practices in conventional Eurocentric academia that allows for a "one directional" move of storytelling dissemination, allowing researchers to take the "version" of community knowledge and/or stories without seeking the original approval from the communities themselves. We suggest "thoughtful" questions for both settler and Indigenous researchers to consider in hopes of promoting "travelling back to original sources" in their scholarly work.

KeyWords Primary sources, Indigenous stories, trans-systemic research, community engagement

We are two researchers in the field of social sciences who met in *Kahnawà:ke* (Kanien'kehá:ka territory) located along the *Kaniatarowanèn:ne* (big waterway; St. Lawrence River). Sandra-Lynn is a Kanien'kéha and Mi'kmaw graduate student in history whose work focuses on Indigenous oral history, languages, and historical memory. Amy is a settler researcher, originally from South Korea, in education focusing on the relationships between Indigenous knowledges and Western modern science. In our teaching and research, we strive to create space for stories from diverse sources (e.g., students' lived experience, local Indigenous communities).

Storytelling and using stories or narrative accounts have been widely utilized in academia. For example, Senehi (2002) explored the role of "constructive storytelling" in cultural production. She particularly focused on the difference between constructive storytelling and destructive discourse in social conflicts. Ronai (1992) used storytelling as a method (i.e., layered accounts) for her autoethnography work. Now, with the global circulation of discourses

1 Direct quote from Haraway, D. (1988). "Situated knowledge: The sciences question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective". *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575-599.

surrounding "decolonizing," "reconciliation" in, or "Indigenizing" academia, there is a surge of academic research involving storytelling and stories from various Indigenous communities around the world. Indigenous storytelling and stories are important elements of Indigenous research paradigms because through stories, Indigenous knowledges are shared (Wilson, 2008; Archibald, 2008). Working with Indigenous storytelling and stories requires a different type of understanding of protocols and the multi-layered processes of preparations (Kovach, 2016).

Despite decades of work from many Indigenous scholars in combating exploitation, misrepresentation, and appropriation (e.g., Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Grande, 2004; Simpson, 1999), we still witness a pan-Indigenous ideology and approach in the field of social sciences and humanities. In particular, we are concerned with the "one-directional" mode of people and Indigenous stories travelling into academia and then spreading to different disciplines, without concepts and people travelling back to the original sources of the stories. Such a one-directional mode of story travelling allows researchers to take the "version" of community knowledge and/or stories without seeking the original approval from the communities themselves.

In this article, we aim to critically review and reflect on underlying theories and practices in conventional Eurocentric academia that allows for a "one directional" mode of storytelling dissemination. We mainly focus on "Indigenous storytelling" and/or "stories," and the implication of academic practices of citing stories. Further, drawing from our own experience and ideas, we suggest a few ways for both settler and Indigenous researchers to respectfully and thoughtfully engage in stories and ideas with Indigenous communities.

We adopt "storytelling" as means to share our ideas for several reasons in this article. First, it is to make this academic paper accessible to everyone. We hope that our ideas are clearly conveyed and accessible to all readers. We invite the readers to continue to grapple with the issues we present in this article and to further reflect on their own research practices.

Second, we have different stances and backgrounds (Sandra-Lynn as an Indigenous woman and Amy as a settler) and thus, diverse experiences, challenges, and permissions to make use of Indigenous stories and storytelling as methodology. Using storytelling (story writing or sharing) as a format for disseminating our ideas allows for us to acknowledge and showcase the parallel yet synergetic settler-Indigenous collaboration in "seeing [phenomena] together without claiming to be one another" (Haraway, 1988). As such, when reading this article, the readers will hear from our collective voices (we) as well as our individual voices. When telling our personal stories from separate voices, you will see the name (Sandra-Lynn or Amy) written before the narrative account.

What Happens After the Extraction of Stories from Indigenous Communities? One-directional Move of Concepts Travelling Through Academia

> One day, Amy had received an invitation to review a manuscript. The manuscript was written by settler-academics, who had been collaborating with a community organization in *Kahnawà:ke*. The manuscript opened with the *Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen* (Thanksgiving address), citing a

written version from another scholar and referenced many community stories including the Creation story and the two-row wampum teachings.

A few days later, Amy and Sandra-Lynn went out for brunch. Over fluffy pancakes (with real maple syrup), Amy asked, "Sandra-Lynn, what do you think of outsiders using community stories in their academic works?" Instead of answering the question, Sandra-Lynn sighed.

There are many stories and ideas "extracted" from Indigenous communities circulating in academia. When researchers bring stories from communities into academia, the knowledges and meaning attached to the stories are often distilled to fit into the conventional cultures and research practices of academia. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar and writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (1999) critiques such movement of Indigenous knowledge into academia as the "distillation" and "packaging process" of Indigenous knowledges that allows research practices to continue to appropriate and misrepresent knowledges from various Indigenous communities.

We share the same concerns on these issues around the extraction and distillation of the knowledges from Indigenous communities widely shared and discussed by many scholars (e.g., Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Grande, 2004; Smith, 1999). However, we would like to further engage with the questions of what happens after. *Once the stories and knowledges are already circulated through the works of researchers, in what ways are the stories being utilized or in what ways have the original source of knowledges and stories become forgotten?*

With his "travelling theory," Edward Said (1983), argued that theories, concepts, and ideas travel across time and space, and as they do so, they may be decontextualized and localized. For Said (1983) theories have no fixed political meanings; thus they can take on a different implication and meaning depending on how researchers and communities of researchers contextualize and further utilize the theories or concepts. Meanwhile some scholars, particularly those drawing on the post-colonial perspective, promote a free flow of knowledge and knowledge production without (or beyond) boundaries.

In turn, these "free flowing and travelling" ideas within academia can be used by anybody without reaching out to the primary source of the knowledge. Further, it allows for the one-directional mode of knowledge circulation while also "effectively silenc[ing] the original time and place" (Donald, 1987, p. 3) of the primary source. To elaborate this idea further, we present a scenario representing some practices in academia:

There was a research collaboration project between Indigenous Researcher A and Settler Researcher B in North America. Indigenous researcher A asked their community Elder, named Audrey, to share stories with A and B for their research purpose. Elder Audrey gladly shared stories from community. After listening to stories from the Elder, researchers A and B asked the Elder, if they could cite the stories in their academic works. Elder Audrey said, yes. Researcher A and Researcher B published an article in an International peer-reviewed journal.

Academic C in South America read the published article written by Indigenous Researcher A and Settler Researcher B. Impressed by their work, Academic C cited the stories from Elder

> Audrey in their own peer-reviewed articles. When citing the source of community stories from Elder Audrey, Academic C cited Researcher A and B as the source of information in their article.
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> Academic D in Oceania then read Academic C's work. Academic D was inspired by Elder Audrey's story presented in Academic C's work. D then puts forth a 'new' concept, using Elder Audrey's story as a main foundation. D coined a new term to refer to his/her new concept.
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> A graduate student of Academic D read the work of their supervisor. The graduate student utilized the new term coined by Academic D. In the midst of all of these concepts "freely travelling" across disciplines in the ivory tower, none of the researchers using the stories visit the original or primary source of the stories. The primary knowledge sources, Elder Audrey and his/her community, were forgotten in the process.

Indigenous stories are currently "freely" travelling in academia through conventional academic dissemination (e.g., written articles, books, peer-reviewed conference presentation or digital archives, etc.). The problem is that original sources and the keepers of these stories, including Elder Audrey and the community members from our scenario, might not have access to these produced works by researchers stuck within the ivory tower. Meanwhile, stories told by Elder Audrey are made accessible in academic settings for researchers to use the stories that were extracted from Elder Audrey, thereby skipping the process of building a relationship with Elder Audrey and gaining her approval to use her community stories. This knowledge dissemination process allows for the continual flow of Indigenous stories entering the ivory tower without flows of researchers travelling to the original primary source of these stories. This flow is something that we refer to as "one-directional move of Indigenous stories travelling."

As seen in our scenario, Elder Audrey's story is used by academics and became decontextualized, losing its ties to the original place and the people who hold these stories. Once decontextualized, these stories could become "hybridized" with some other concepts from Western theories or be presented in an essentialist pan-Indigenous manner. Furthermore, these hybridized ideas can continue to circulate and travel across different disciplines within the ivory tower. The original community has no control to give consent for such new hybrid concepts to be developed using their original stories and ideas, nor are they being informed about where and how their communities' stories and knowledges are being used outside of the community.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is a perfect example of a decontextualizing of Indigenous stories and knowledges. The term and concepts of TEK are coined and hybridized by researchers who are drawing from knowledges and stories originally stemming from Indigenous communities. The term was first coined and used by anthropologists who extracted communities' knowledges focusing on environmental aspects of Indigenous knowledges (Kim, 2018). Compartmentalized subsets of Indigenous knowledges then continued to be "packaged" in a way, only to meet the researchers' needs (Simpson, 1999). The concept and terminology of TEK are now global buzzwords across many academic and non-academic disciplines.

Continual development and promotion of hybridized and re-contextualized academic concepts are only possible because of a one directional move of Indigenous stories travelling, which silences the place and people where the stories originate. "One directional move of Indigenous stories travelling" is the epitome of un(der)-challenged academic practices deeply rooted in settler colonialism coupled with neoliberal capitalist values which ultimately works to dismiss the relationship building process.

Understanding our Limitations in Light of Settler Colonialism and Neoliberal Capitalist-Driven Academic Culture

Settler colonialism works to erase the original inhabitants of the land. Settler colonialism in academia continues to work to erase the original primary source of stories, specifically communities tied with histories and understandings of land.

As mentioned in our scenario of Elder Audrey, some stories from Indigenous communities are extracted from communities, then continue to be cited as an academic work. Throughout the "one-directional move of travelling," these stories become associated with other ideas of the extractor (i.e., researchers), while silencing Elder Audrey and her community. In turn, settler colonialism allows for researchers to view stories and storytelling as academic concepts, albeit some stories from the communities are "collective memories" of the people driven by thousands of lived experiences on Land (Archibald, 2008). The values of meritocracy and neoliberal-capitalism drive academic settler colonialism and researchers' work with stories from Indigenous communities are treated as a commodity that researchers can use as building blocks for their research.

Starting with the early preparation of academics, we have been surrounded by discourses of "publish or perish" and notions of being successful based on meritocracy by the number of publications, research grants, or student supervisions. The more you have listed on your curriculum vitae, the more likely you will gain access to more funding. The richer get richer, and the poorer get poorer phenomenon is real in academia. This sort of environment encourages the fast production of knowledge and results. Jordan and Wood (2015) caution researchers of the danger of falling for the "intellectual blind drift" by ignoring that we all are influenced by global neoliberalism, which "amounts to a reconfiguration of the very foundations of the public sphere and everyday life, with these relying increasingly on principles derived from the market and business" (p. 5). As Gregory Younging (2018) mentions, the interests of Indigenous stories are increasing in the publishing business. Without proper protocols in place, storytellers and Elders have not been properly compensated while researchers and authors benefit from the royalties and credits.

Research involving stories or storytelling from Indigenous communities take a long time to complete properly. There are many different levels and types of stories and storytelling in Indigenous communities. Stories that researchers and academics want to utilize have different levels of permission required to access them. Haudenosaunee scholar Brian Rice (2013) uses oral history as the basis for his book *The Rotinonshonni*. Rice (2013), as a Haudenosaunee scholar, has a different level of permission to access Haudenosaunee oral history. However,

even he describes how he had to pursue a month-long journey to ensure he had "the right to write about…traditional knowledge" (p. 3). Every Indigenous person, community, and Nation has its own perspective on storytelling, stories, and permissions for sharing those stories. There is not one set ideology surrounding Indigenous storytelling and/or stories that encompasses this immense diversity. However, in current academic culture and practices, these diversities are "diluted and diffused" to be assimilated into "the dominant group's knowledge, experience, culture and knowledge as the universal norm" (Battiste, 2005, p. 124). Pan-Indigenous essentialist representation of stories and storytelling continue to surface across the disciplines.

> **Sandra-Lynn:** After a while I've started to feel like a broken record. I constantly have to talk to non-Indigenous and Indigenous academics and students about the importance of proper community engagement. I see many academics, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, doing projects, reports, and studies about Indigenous communities and they often rely on asking one person for a community opinion. Over the last year I have had to deal with a lot of negative feedback for expressing my concerns about how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people weren't thoroughly engaging with community consultation. There are conferences and entire books done about and often on behalf of Indigenous communities and Nations. But people in those communities often never hear about it until they see posters or the books at the bookstore. It's exhausting and I have so many stories and examples of this happening that I couldn't decide on what to include or exclude from this article. I could probably write a book on the entire phenomena.

Settler colonialism coupled with neoliberal capitalist values embedded in academia result in academic practice and cultures that reproduce the perpetuation of a one-directional move of Indigenous story travelling. Researchers can engage in and disseminate their findings without explicitly mentioning the "relationship" building, the sustenance of these relationships, and the collaboration process throughout the work. Essentialist pan-Indigenous representation of Indigenous knowledges and stories continue to perpetuate across different academic disciplines. A "trans-systemic" approach may help in re-directing such one-directional Indigenous stories travelling, with an aim to facilitate the building and sustaining of relationships between researchers and communities.

Engaging with Boundaries and Consequences beyond the Essentialist Pan-Indigenous Ideologies Surrounding Storytelling

In conceptualizing "trans-systemic" research, we mainly focus on two concepts: the notion of "beyond" as well as "boundary" between knowledge systems. In her explanation of a trans-systemic approach in the context of education, Battiste (2013) spoke of this notion of "beyond":

> Bridging two diverse knowledge systems together needs some consideration of the assumption underlying each foundation and where the points of inclusion or merging might seem advisable. The need then becomes one of developing "trans-systemic" analyses and methods — that is, reaching *beyond* the two distinct systems

> of knowledge to create fair and just educational systems and experiences so that all students can benefit from their education in multiple ways. *Beyond* suggests that neither Indigenous knowledge or Eurocentric knowledge systems can be the sole arbiter of the work involved, I am also suggesting that part of the ultimate struggle is a regeneration of new relationships among and between knowledge systems. (p. 123, emphasis added)

Similarly, Klein (2013) also focuses on the notion of "beyond" in her conceptualization of "trans": "'Inter' is conventionally taken to exist *between* existing approaches, while 'trans' moves *beyond* them" (p. 190, emphasis original). Cornell and his colleagues (2013) argue that *knowledge systems* "are made up of agents, practices and institutions that organize the production, transfer and use of knowledge…relationships within knowledge systems shape the flows of knowledge, credibility and power within those systems" (p. 61). As such, each knowledge system may have its protocol and culture of sharing knowledge outside of its design. Trans-systemic approaches, particularly involving Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledge systems, involve, as Battiste (2013) mentions, "some consideration of the assumption underlying each foundation [IK and EK] and where the points of inclusion or merging might seem advisable" (p. 123). Such consideration of a trans-systemic approach requires creativity and criticality.

Trans-systemic approaches require creativity. Here, creativity refers to one's ability to collaborate with others from different backgrounds and paradigms with a collective goal of moving *beyond* conventional concepts and methods. In order to be creative in trans-systemic approaches requires researchers to reflect on and examine the power dynamics and underlying assumptions already existing in *each* knowledge system as well as *in-between* and *beyond* the knowledge systems. Thinking about the goal and aim of the trans-systemic approach, we turn to the main teaching of Elder Charlie Patten from *Kahnawà:ke*.

Elder Charlie Patton from *Kahnawà:ke* gave a prayer and shared a Creation story before the Sauvé lecture at McGill. In his prayer, he emphasized the notion of *balance* and *harmony*: "If we have understanding about each other, then it brings harmony, then the harmony brings the balance, balance then brings us to be in tune with cycle of life" (Sauvé Lecture, McGill University, March 12, 2017). We see this balance and harmony between diverse knowledge systems as the aim and goal of the trans-systemic approach. Multiple knowledge systems can allow "for new ideas and ways of looking at things to be incorporated constantly, without the need to search constantly for new theories" (Smith, 1999, p. 40). Indeed, the focus of the trans-systemic approach should not be on producing new ideas through hybridization of multiple knowledge systems. Rather, it is finding the "point of inclusion and merging point" (Battiste, 2013, p. 123) collectively and braiding diverse ideas together as a learning community. In this light, "beyond" in a trans-systemic approach does not refer to "hybridity" or "third space" but the creation of a "camping spot" (Vickers, 2007) where collective reflection, communication, learning, and thus an act of braiding ideas happens. The notion of "braiding" here then honours the origins of the stories and ideas of each braid as well as relationships formed through braiding diverse ideas and stories together.

Meanwhile, braiding as a metaphor for trans-systemic approaches remind each researcher to reflect on diverse boundaries that exist in-between knowledge systems, as well as their own limits and stances with each braid.

> **Sandra-Lynn:** As an Indigenous woman I have become aware of my own role within my community and even I have limitations on what I can and cannot share within academia. There are clearly defined and not so clearly defined boundaries engulfed within cultural notions of stories and storytelling. It is up to the researcher to properly learn about the boundaries surrounding the sharing of stories and storytelling. In order to move away from an essentialist pan-Indigenous perspective, it is imperative to analyze the consequences and impact a researcher's work could have on a specific Indigenous person, community, and/or Nation as a whole.
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> As a Kanien'kehá:ka and Mi'kmaw woman living and working in my own home community, my experiences in academia have been mixed, and I have often felt uncomfortable to share my historical or cultural knowledge in fear of how this knowledge would be disseminated amongst my peers and professors. I am not officially recognized by any Haudenosaunee longhouses as being a cultural knowledge keeper and I do not have an important political role such as a clan mother. I am a historian, student, consultant, community member, and an academic in training. I am aware of my own role within my community and I am aware of how the knowledge I share can impact the people I connect with in my own community.

Honouring *boundaries* existing in between knowledge systems, as well as your own limits and position in relation to these knowledge systems are important. In thinking about respecting boundaries in trans-systemic approach, we turn to teachings from the (Kasentha) two-row wampum belt. Kaswentha is an important aspect of Haudenosuanee culture and history.

> **Sandra-Lynn**: For those that are unfamiliar with the two-row wampum, it is a living treaty that symbolizes the historical agreement made between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch. It was created to ensure that both groups maintain friendship and peace by respecting each other's autonomy. Having listened to many Haudenosaunee cultural knowledge keepers describing the importance of this wampum and throughout my personal experiences, it is often appropriated and misinterpreted within academia. It has become a buzzword to describe Indigenous and European relations throughout history. It is often referenced as a contemporary way for all Indigenous peoples to interact with Canadian or American populations, and it fails to provide an understanding of the diversity of historical relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The dissemination of this immensely important aspect of Haudenosaunee culture and history is currently following the "one-directional move of concepts travelling through academia."
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> The ideology surrounding the two-row wampum is often described as "two boats travelling side by side down the river of life." Each boat does not and is not supposed to interfere with the other boat. The renowned Kanien'kehá:ka Bear Clan Elder Tom Porter (2008) explains in his book that, "We're trying to keep our identity. You do yours and everybody does theirs and all keep their identities going. And then together, we'll be like a bouquet of flowers, to be admired

> and to beautify the world" (p. 392). Here, Elder Tom Porter is not describing the two-row wampum explicitly but rather his ideas for the future. However, if you do know the historical and cultural contexts of the two-row wampum, you can see some overlapping ideology. He is describing how each person needs to respect each other's autonomy as well as boundary while also being able to come together peacefully. His perspective and my personal perspective about concerns around the dissemination of knowledge from communities to academia are important things to keep in mind when beginning research on Indigenous storytelling and stories.

Respecting boundaries as well as the co-existence of diverse knowledge systems must be the core foundation of a trans-systemic approach. A trans-systemic approach is therefore complicated. It asks for researchers to look "beyond" the existing Euro-centric academic paradigm while still remaining and understanding diverse boundaries that exist in-between. As such, it requires what Battiste (2013) calls a "two-prong process" of decolonizing education, which entails a "deconstruction of (neo-) colonial structure and strategies and reconstruction that centres and takes seriously Indigenous, diasporic, and other post-colonial ways of knowing and ways of being towards reshaping the place-based process and priorities of education" (Battiste 2013, as cited in Higgins, 2016, p. 13, emphasis original). In other words, class as a community can "re-wire and [then] come together in a different way" (Tanaka, 2016, p. 23). In the context of a trans-systemic approach, such two-prong process must honour relationships, and should thus be done with community members or the teller of the stories.

The Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar, Margaret Kovach (2016), emphasizes the importance and need for "specific multi-layered preparations" for researchers who want to begin engaging with community boundaries and the consequences research can have on communities:

> Indigenous inquiry involves *specific multi-layered preparations* particular to each researcher. Preparatory work means clarifying the inquiry purpose, which invariably gets to motivations. Preparation assumes self-awareness and an ability to situate self within the research. It requires attention to culture in an active, grounded way. (p. 95, emphasis added)

Kovach (2016) understands the need for moving away from an essentialist pan-Indigenous ideology and suggests that "specific multi-layered preparations" include locating yourself, understanding your purposes, and culturally grounding yourself. Such specific preparation processes grounded in a specific community are important as these sorts of engagements are key to working with and utilizing Indigenous storytelling and stories. To start the process of accessing and gaining permission to stories and storytelling, one needs to position oneself in a meaningful way for community members and communities. Some communities and even some Nations have research ethics protocols in place, but many communities have not established this yet. This can lead to both harm and appropriation when academics attempt to incorporate stories and storytelling into their research without proper consultation with community members. Despite good intentions, not respecting the boundary between

knowledge systems and their limits, researchers engage in a simple trans-system approach wherein it is still embedded in a colonial Eurocentric mindset. In this light, we suggest that there needs to be a radical reconceptualization of citation practices (or using others' intellectual properties) involved with Indigenous storytelling and stories. Particularly, we will focus on the notion of the "primary source" and argue that primary sources need to be conceptualized as relations, not an artefact.

Re-conceptualizing Primary Sources

Generally, citing primary sources is considered good practice in academic works for a variety of reasons. This practice gives credit to the original work and makes the original source of information accessible to the other readers. However, there is no universal definition of what a primary source is and it often varies across different academic disciplines. For instance, in the sciences, primary sources are considered the product of research that includes "original research, ideas, or findings published in academic journal" (Berea College Hutchis library, 2020, para 5). For the social sciences, primary sources generally refer to the original raw data such as researchers' field notes, manuscripts, or numerical data sets. Academics in the arts (art, dance, music, theater) have a broad definition of primary sources that includes paintings, audio recordings, and music scores (Berea College Hutchis library, 2020). Regardless of discipline, primary sources are considered stand-alone inanimate objects or artifacts that can exist without having relationships with others.

We argue that such conceptualization of primary sources as objects is deeply rooted in Cartesian dualism. Here, objects and concepts that are interconnected are often separated to individualize the meaning of concepts. As such, mind is separated from body, and nature is separated from culture, etc. (Barad, 2007; Cajete, 2006). Knowledge production and meaning-making processes are considered the work of the "mind." In this light, the works of the "body" in knowledge production (e.g., physically being in the community, meeting and building relationships with community members, being embodied in the process of knowledge sharing) are unnecessary in the Cartesian dualistic thinking.

Coupled with post-colonial theory, dualistic thinking promotes the idea that the work of the mind (i.e., knowledge and concepts) travels freely across borders. Due to globalization and migration, these travelling ideas can become new "hybrid" concepts in the "third space" (e.g., TEK). In this current era of technological advancement and globalization, it is inevitable for already-extracted Indigenous stories to circulate or travel freely beyond boundaries as post-colonialists as Said (1983) suggested. However, in the context of Indigenous stories and storytelling, researchers need to understand that gaining access to stories and concepts does not mean that they have gained an approval to use the stories and concepts. It is also important to remember that what is represented in published works only represents partial and/or distilled version of the stories.

Amy: When I opened the manuscript to review (before meeting Sandra-Lynn for pancakes), I first saw the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen (Thanksgiving address; the "words before all else"). It was written in both Kanien'kéha and English. It was a copy and pasted version from another published work. The manuscript[2] did not include any of the lessons they had learned particularly surrounding the Thanksgiving address or their position concerning utilizing the Thanksgiving address.

I felt my stomach churn. My experience with the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen as a visitor and settler within *Kahnawà:ke* was not a simple one. I have been presented with the Thanksgiving address through various written and oral versions. Some versions were introduced to me during the opening ceremonies of the school year. A designated person, given the role of opening the school year, said the Thanksgiving address with a tobacco burning while everyone remained in circle and listened to that person. Some versions were shared amongst the circle of teachers where everyone had a chance to add something. I never encountered the same version. Even though I gained access to some content of the elements within the Thanksgiving address, I have learned that the meaning goes beyond understanding the content elements of the Thanksgiving address.

When I was teaching a Bachelor's of Education course in the community (for teachers within the community), we opened a class with the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen. Everyone stood in a circle. Everyone was from Haudenosaunee Nations, except for myself. Following the counter-clockwise direction, everyone was invited to cite (or tell) an element from the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen. I was about to pass when it was my turn. Then a teacher who was standing next to me said, "I will help you…repeat after me" and they encouraged me to try. The version they guided me with was one sentence in Kanien'kéha.

I was familiar with the order and content as I had to study it many times due to my community's work position. However, saying that one sentence out loud in the language within the circle of community members became very complex. It wasn't just one sentence of thanking the "sun." It was so much more than just thanking the sun, which I could not comprehend fully and without community members, I wouldn't have remembered.

In order to truly understand the meaning and history behind the Thanksgiving address, one has to understand and have relationships with the Kanien'kehá:ka Creation story which comes from the lived experiences within the community. The ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen is not just a speech that can be copied and pasted. From my understanding, it is a way for the Kanien'kehá:ka to express their worldviews, history, and the relations they have with the land and with each other.

I was not comfortable with these authors re-citing a version of the Thanksgiving address that was copied and pasted from a published written work. Gaining access and having a learning opportunity from Indigenous communities is not equivalent to having an approval

2 The authors mentioned that the reason why they've included the Thanksgiving was because of a suggestion of an Elder they've worked with. Ironically, I happened to have a few opportunities to learn from the Elder. The Elder always used Kanien'kéha when s/he told the Thanksgiving address, even if all the audiences were settlers. The Elder, mentored young people to recite the thanksgiving address. The Elder would stand by the young people while they are telling their version of the Thanksgiving address. When young speakers would make a mistake, s/he would quietly remind them. I am not saying that the authors did not get an approval from an Elder to use the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen but perhaps that they may have misinterpreted his/her suggestion on 'how' to use it for academic purposes.

> to re-cite the stories or use the stories in other contexts. For me, albeit with good intentions, the manuscript misused Indigenous concepts and stories. They did not go back to the primary source to gain approval to make use of the story.

In the context of academic research involving Indigenous storytelling and stories, there needs to be a different type of conceptualization of what a primary source is regardless of the academic discipline. It should focus on the aspects of "stories and storytelling as relations."

Within many Indigenous storytelling practices, the meaning of the stories emerges through a holistic process involving "interrelationship between the story, storytelling and listener" (Archibald, 2008, p. 32). In this light, the primary source for Indigenous stories is not the "story" itself (e.g., the Creation story from the Kanien'kehá:ka), it is the *relations* between the story and the storytelling process which depends on the relationships between listener and the storytellers. Gregory Younging (2018) also emphasizes the notion of "relationships" in writing about/publishing Indigenous stories. Younging (2018) first cautioned that if "it's in a book- or especially if it's in an academic book from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s — [it] doesn't mean the content was appropriate to publish in the first place, or that it has been published with consent, or that it has been published accurately" (p. 30). Instead, he suggested that researchers and readers need to focus on "context of relationship and trust" and follow protocols from communities. In other words, explicit mentions of researchers' relations with storytellers and communities and how researchers engage in relationship building and sustenance with storytellers and community should be considered as "primary sources" for Indigenous stories.

As such, using storytelling or stories from Indigenous communities goes beyond giving proper credit and citation. Primary sources need to be conceptualized as "relation between story, storyteller and listener," rather than story itself, so citing primary sources should explain the context and researcher's relation with the story and the storyteller. Citing and using a written version or archived stories from Indigenous communities or using other scholars' interpretation of stories is not a proper practice of honouring the relationships between stories, tellers and listeners.

Here, we put forth some reflective questions to the readers: Do you remember the authors who used the Thanksgiving address in their works? The one Amy brought up over pancakes with Sandra-Lynn? Do you think that they have properly cited the primary source of the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen? We do not think so. Even though the authors mentioned that they have relationships with the storyteller and the actual source of the written version of the ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen, they did not follow our conceptualization of "primary source as relations." The author did not provide a proper explanation of their relations with the stories itself.

In the context of utilizing Indigenous stories in academic work, the proper explanation of primary sources should involve the listener's ability and position to participate in *remembering* the story with community members collectively (e.g., re-citing Thanksgiving in a circle with community members). To elaborate on this, we turn to another case using written versions of Indigenous stories from British Columbia.

Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) speaks about her position on the usage of archived and text versions of stories when she was involved with *The First Nations Journeys of Justice Curriculum Project* in 1994. In this project she was involved in creating an educational resource for the Law Courts of Education Society of British Columbia that included stories from Indigenous communities across British Columbia:

> Archival material, especially stories written by outsider professionals such as linguists and anthropologists, raises concerns of misrepresentation and appropriation. After careful consideration, we chose to include some archival-source stories in order to "tickle" people's memories... many stories have been 'put to sleep' in people's memories. Talking about stories and presenting text versions helped to reawaken some story memories. (p. 147)

Although the situations were different for Jo-Ann and Amy, both situations suggested that the archived version of stories cannot be the main sources of the meaning-making process for story work unless the listener/reader *remembers* the stories collectively with community members. *Remembering* "implies that one may, if given, the authority, tell the stories to others thereby practicing the principle of reciprocity" (Archibald, 2008, p. 27). In this regard, Sandra Styres (2017) spoke of "Storied (re)memberings of Land" (p. 51). As some stories from communities are meant to lead community members to connect "the voices of their ancestors" Styres, 2017 (p. 50).

It is through an act and ability to collectively remember stories that one gains the approval to use and tell the stories to others from the community the listener was from. Reading a written version and having access to stories does not mean researchers have primary source access to the stories. There needs to be physical embodiment of listening and learning with various storytellers from the community. That said, we are not arguing against the usage of archived stories. However, we suggest that archived stories can be used as a resource to *prepare* listeners before meeting storytellers rather than being used as the sole source for academic research.

Here, we are not arguing against using stories or storytelling from Indigenous communities for academic purposes. Our goal is to raise an awareness of deeply rooted unchallenged practices and driving assumptions that researcher may not pay attention to. Moving forward, in the next section we explore the questions of "to what extent can one draw from stories and storytelling from Indigenous communities?" In so doing, we do not seek to provide a guideline template but rather to promote thoughtfulness surrounding engagement.

Moving Forward: Academic Engagement with Indigenous Stories and Storytelling

Proper engagement with Indigenous stories, storytelling, and storytellers is not an easy process. There are no clear monolithic guidelines for proper engagement and dissemination. However, it is more of an interpersonal learning process to ensure the respect of the stories, the storytelling process, and the storytellers themselves. Therefore, we focus on questions that might help

researchers (Indigenous and settlers) with challenging the "one-directional move of Indigenous stories travelling through academia."

As explored in earlier sections, engaging primary sources for storytelling requires continuous sustainable relationships with community members. In the current environment, it may be wise not to produce academic works using stories from Indigenous communities unless you already have established ties with specific community and primary sources of particular stories.

> **Amy**: There is always the right time, place, and audience to share stories with. I've had fortunate opportunities to learn Haudenosaunee creation stories through a book club that took place in *Kahnawà:ke*. While I was attending the book club, it was coincidental that I got to visit my ancestors' burial site in Korea. It was in a village called Yeon-dong. I worked on a book chapter reflecting on my positionalities in relation to diverse stories told in *Kahnawà:ke* as well as Yeon-dong. In this book chapter, I distinguished the meanings of space, place, and Land in relation to storytelling which allowed me to better position myself in relation to stories told in *Kahnawà:ke*.

Below is an excerpt from the chapter:

> Understanding Yeon-dong stories in relation to the Land of which my ancestors are now part allows me to speak with Yeon-dong. Yeon-dong is 땅 (Land) to me. It is where the stories and the spirits of my halmonee live. It speaks to me through the stories from my halmonee. I may understand the notion of Turtle Island better now; I may even understand the stories, people, and events happening on Turtle Island, but I still don't know. It is a place (jang-so) to me. I do, though, remember the importance of stories and storytelling in forming relationships with land and the people of the land. It was through the relationship with my halmonee that I got to know my 땅 of Yeon-dong. It was through the relationship with Kanien'kehá:ka people that I got to better understand the meaning of Turtle Island. Stories and storytelling are core elements needed in forming relationships with land and the people of the land. As the stories from *Kahnawà:ke* are shared with me, I am forming a relationship (friendship, not kinship) with the people and the land, but I am not *of* it…
>
> It is through the stories from my halmonee (grandmother), I got to communicate and re-tell the stories from Korea to you. However, as a settler of Turtle Island, I can never retell the stories told by the peoples of Turtle Island. I am taking a stance as a learner and a listener to share the lessons I received from the stories — but never the place-stories themselves. Understanding our own positionality within these place-stories is the first step settlers need to take in engaging the process of becoming allies to Indigenous peoples. (as shared in Kim, 2020, p. 158- 159, emphasis original)

To understand the true essence of stories and storytelling in many Indigenous communities, one needs to have these *kinship-based* relations with the land where the stories are originated.

Brian Yazzie Burkhard (2019) is a Native American scholar who grew up in Tsalagi (Cherokee), Diné (Navajo) and Lakota communities. To Brian, the Sun is not only a source

of life. Instead of speaking of the Sun and himself as a separate entity, he explains that the Sun and his being are considered to be in "relation" from a particular land together that cannot be broken. His being "was in the sun (being-in-the-land) and the sun's being was in me [him] (being-from-the land)" (p. 8). As Haudenosuanee Environmental Task Force (1992) mentioned, Haudenosaunee creation stories tell us about "the great relationships within this world and our relationship, as human beings, with the rest of Creation… people are but a component of the vast Creation. Some say we [Haudenosaunee] are even the youngest child or Creation" (p. 2). In a similar vein a Cree scholar from Barren Lands Cree Nation, Hermann Michell (2018), stated that "We are the land and the land is part of us, We are the context" (p. 17). In this sense, some stories, including the Creation story, are not to be re-cited by outsiders. Further, utilizing communities' stories solely based on other academic works or archived versions of stories without visiting the community members means the work is furthering settler colonialism through a one-directional move of Indigenous stories travelling, whether researchers intended to or not.

Understanding the need to move away from pan-Indigenous ideologies and engaging with boundaries and consequences is essential to begin researching Indigenous stories and storytelling. Chelsea Vowel (2016) provides us with important questions to ask ourselves when looking at academic research surrounding Indigenous storytelling and stories:

> 1. Which specific Indigenous nation is this story from? 2. Which community is this story from? 3. Who from the community told this story? You see, our stories have a provenance; a source, an origin. (p. 89)

When planning on utilizing Indigenous storytelling and stories, researchers — Indigenous and settlers — should always think about who or what the primary source was relationally, ask questions and engage critically with what is presented to them. Most importantly, we suggest researchers provide primary source information stemming from their relations with the land, which includes contexts on how the stories were shared, and the relationships between the researchers, the storytellers and community protocols around sharing stories. Albeit small, this is one way to combat deeply embedded settler colonialism and neo-liberal capitalist modes of academic culture work.

When researchers plan to begin working in and with an Indigenous community, they should take the time to learn about the levels of permission that exist with sharing stories and storytelling procedures. Many researchers enter Indigenous communities with the assumption that the community will automatically be interested in their project proposals. However, due to inconsistencies surrounding the existence of research ethics protocols, there needs to be a deeper engagement with community boundaries and research consequences. How will the research work benefit this community? How can researchers ensure that the people sharing stories and storytelling are given the proper credit they deserve?

Be open to discussions about harm and appropriation. Some of the questions researchers could engage before their trans-systemic work include: Does the community want you to use

their Indigenous language and terminology? How are you, as researchers, ensuring that you get proper consultation on using certain language or terminology? Who or what will be cited as your author when you make use of these words in your research articles or books? Each individual, community, and Nation will differ, so in order to move forward, there has to be continual dialogue and relations with communities and community members.

Most importantly, researchers should ask themselves what sort of harm their research could cause this community. Sometimes harm can play out in the simplest ways. Once the researchers begin to critically challenge their own assumptions and preconceived notions, and start to engage with community boundaries, questions about harm may become easier to form. Is the method of recording the stories and storytelling one that could impact the storyteller? If a video of story tellers and community members is posted, as opposed to just an audio recording, could that impact the sorts of requests or harassment the story tellers may receive? Will a video or an audio recording be more accessible to the community?

As a researcher and/or an academic, the focus of your work may target an academic audience. However, it is important to be conscious of the impact settler colonialism within academia continues to impact Indigenous communities. When doing research and academic writing on Indigenous stories and Indigenous storytelling, remember that "the way those stories are presented belong to the oral reciter of the stories, and they deserve credit" (Rice, 2013, p. 18).

Final Dialogues: Readers' Responsibility and Pancakes

Amy: Sandra-Lynn, we reflected together on lots of stuff here (and ate lots of pancakes).

Sandra-Lynn: Yes, we did. I think you and I both were very concerned about the pan-Indigenous, essentialist approach and misrepresentation of Indigenous stories, especially around how Indigenous stories come into academia, and how researcher usage of stories do not benefit the communities.

Amy: Yes, "the one-directional move of Indigenous stories travelling," right? We reflected on Cartesian Dualism that separates the work of "mind" and "body" leading researchers to think that "physical embodiment" is not necessary for knowledge production.

Sandra-Lynn: For academic works involving storytelling and stories, primary sources should be seen as relationships. Relationships between story, storyteller and the listener. Relationships are never static. They evolve and change based on interaction, emotion, and previous experiences.

Amy: Yes, if researchers would like to cite "primary sources" for Indigenous communities' stories, they should focus on a holistic embodiment process. The notion that primary sources are "relations" rather than static, stand-alone artifacts.

When writing about primary sources that focus on "relations," one should provide an explicit mention of settings, storytellers' identities, and the listener's position with the stories and the communities.

Sandra-Lynn: We also talked about settler colonialism coupled with neoliberal capitalist values in academia, which encourages researchers to engage in knowledge production without visiting communities while also erasing/silencing the communities as knowledge holders.

Amy: Yes, so we talked about understanding one's position in relation to the story, storytellers,

and the Land. We said there needs to be a reflection on "kinship-based" and "friendship-based" understanding.

Sandra-Lynn: Exactly. The relationship and kinship surrounding stories and storytelling needs to be thought out on an individual basis. Discussions about stories and storytelling need to happen at both personal and community levels. It can be a very slow and timely process, but there must always be thorough engagement to ensure that the communities' boundaries are respected and understood.

Amy: Indeed. That's why we presented some questions for researchers to consider as a part of their multi-layered preparation (Kovach, 2016).

Sandra-Lynn: Yes, both research and questions should be considered with thoughtfulness. Indigenous stories and Indigenous storytelling are important to Indigenous cultures. They often guide beliefs of origin or historical timelines. They are in and of themselves living beings that carry the traditions of our ancestors. Indigenous stories and Indigenous storytelling techniques are vast and diverse and immensely important. There is no one set way to approach them.

Amy: I hope our ideas in this article help those who are thinking of approaching communities, especially for storytelling.

Sandra-Lynn: I hope it will.

Amy: When I met James Sákéj Youngblood Henderson in Toronto back in 2016 at a conference venue, I was very nervous about my positions within academia. I was simply fed up. I thought academia was a very toxic environment.

Sandra-Lynn: I understand. I feel that toxicity too.

Amy: Sákéj was encouraging me, and he shared his wisdom with me and said, "whatever meant to stick will stick." Then, Marie Battiste joined us. She said, "We are providing you tools to play. You will be the one to play in the ground with the tools" (personal communication, May 30, 2016). I guess what we are doing is similar. We are sharing our suggestions and tools for others to engage in. How they are interpreted and taken into practice are their own puzzles to solve.

Sandra-Lynn: Just like the processes of Indigenous storytelling…the process of primary stories as relations involves stories, storytellers, and listeners. The readers have the responsibility to engage in proper community engagement and relationship building. Our way of explaining here, this was just one form of storytelling and the way another pair of academics may pursue discussing storytelling varies. The same applies to Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities, and even Indigenous stories…there will be an immense amount of diversity, so every experience will come with a new opportunity to teach and learn.

Amy: Well, Sandra-Lynn, I appreciate our friendship together and your critical thoughts. I hope we continue to grow together as critical yet thoughtful researchers. And continue to see together without claiming to be another (Haraway, 1988).

Sandra-Lynn: Yup, just like two-row wampum we can collaborate and appreciate each other while also respecting boundaries and understanding our own diverse lived experiences.

Amy: So, when do you want to go for that fluffy pancakes with real maple syrup again?

Sandra-Lynn: Let's go now!

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