Possession, Dispossession, and Haunting

Epistemic Trauma in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*

Volume 2, Number 2
Fall 2019
DOI: 10.25335/PPJ.2.2-02

Sierra Billingslea

Abstract

Haisla writer Eden Robinson's acclaimed novel, *Monkey Beach*, demonstrates the lived-effects and consequences of colonial trauma. This ongoing trauma ripples throughout the community of Kitamaat Village, creating a cycle by which it repeats and magnifies. By contextualizing cycles of trauma within epistemic injustice and temporal sovereignty, this article elucidates both the harms inflicted upon the Haisla people by colonization and the modes of resistance developed by Robinson and her characters. I argue that Robinson uses the "double-landscape" of the spirit world to illustrate the tension between Indigenous temporal and epistemic realities and the colonized landscape of western Canada. Drawing upon and subverting the trope of haunting in post-colonial studies, this article showcases the presence and resilience of Indigenous modes of being and ways of knowing. I forward that this Indigenous survivance is not separate from the colonized world or reliant upon an inaccessible pre-colonial past, but rather represents a lattice of resistance entangled within the present. Further, I argue that *Monkey Beach* provides an example of this survivance through sensitizing its readers to a pluralistic and relational epistemic imagination.

If you are not Indigenous and you do not understand, it is because you came here and thought this was Canada, this baby country made of foreigners, who killed us and usurped whatever authority we had over our lives and lands, and so we could not teach you. You can learn through studying our story . . .. Remember when you study our story from your lens, you come to non-Indigenous conclusions about us . . . I have never been able to tolerate others telling me how we are, and I do not believe anyone but us knows who we are. I hope you are all okay with that.

—Lee Maracle[1]

1. Introduction

In Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*, Lisamarie (Lisa), a member of the Haisla community in Kitamaat village on the north-west coast of Turtle Island,[2] struggles as her journey through loss and trauma takes her between multiple temporal and epistemic landscapes. *Monkey Beach* begins with the disappearance of Lisa's brother while he is on a fishing trip with their uncle. In the days between her brother's disappearance and her journey to Monkey Beach, where she believes he has been stranded, the stories of Lisa's childhood unfold: her struggle to enact a Haisla identity in a colonized landscape, her relationships with family members coping with trauma from residential schools, and her own experience of sexual assault, which reveals to her a world of ghosts that mirrors her own. It seems that Lisa and everyone in her community is haunted and the landscape is filled with spirits who defy simple categorization. These entities are sometimes the embodiment of the trauma of colonial oppression but also offer a connection to lost history, cultural identity, and a chance to reconcile with the past. It is through these ghosts and Haisla sacred rituals that she is able to realize her Indigenous identity and heritage within a colonized society. This is necessary to resist the persisting hermeneutical violence and resonances of communal trauma, trauma which eventually takes the life of her brother and uncle.

While Lisa often has contact with spirits and other entities in the text, they do not necessarily represent or exist in the past. Rather, both spirits of colonial trauma and precolonial entities persist within the present, coming to possess, warn, comfort, or harm Lisa and oth-

1. Lee Maracle is a member of the Sto:Loh nation located in British Columbia.
2. "Turtle Island" is a term that, though not unanimously agreed upon by Indigenous people in North America, has been used in order to avoid the imposition of boundaries by settler-colonial nations.

er members of her community. These spirits represent a unique intersection of Indigenous temporal and epistemic sovereignty—that Haisla's time persists within colonial time and populates itself with entities that come to embody an Indigenous mode of knowing.

Colonial time is produced through frameworks and systems of settler colonialism in terms of maps, policies, and institutions and is often taken as the singular mode of temporality. This is opposed by "Indigenous temporal sovereignty," a concept Marc Rifkin explores in his book, *Beyond Settler Time*:

> Such orientations open up "different worlds" than those at play in dominant settler orderings, articulations, and reckonings of time. Developing such notions of temporal orientation and multiplicity opens the potential for conceptualizing Native continuity and change in ways that move beyond the modern/traditional binary; that do not take non-native frameworks as the self-evident basis for approaching Indigenous forms of persistence, adaptation, and innovation; and that enable consideration of temporal sovereignty, how sensations and articulations of time take part in Indigenous peoples' operation as polities and their pursuit of self-determination.[3]

As Rifkin notes here, the disruption and persistence of Indigenous time is entangled with Indigenous epistemologies which exist within and produce frameworks and ways of knowing that maintain and cultivate Indigenous time, opening up different worlds—in Lisa's case, very literally opening up a spirit world or "double landscape."

This disruption of Indigenous knowledge systems and temporality is an example of what Miranda Fricker calls "hermeneutic injustice." Hermeneutic injustice can be understood as a sort of social violence that debilitates specific people and communities as knowers, inhibiting their ability to describe and communicate their experiences. Hermeneutic injustice can be thought of as being subject to an experience that one does not (yet) have the words to describe. In terms of Indigenous communities, however, it is rather that the knowledge they hold is not deemed important or accurate by the surrounding colonial society. Colonization functions not simply to devalue Indigenous knowledge, but to deconstruct its knowledge systems. This is most evident in the role of residential schools and the legacy they perpetuate. Residential schools do not strive for assimilation, but the destruction of Indigenous thought and culture, aiming to render Indigenous practices, identity, and ownership impossible.[4]

This results in what I will refer to as "hermeneutic trauma." As stated by Emily Johnston in her essay, "Trauma Theory as Activist Pedagogy," "Trauma's story, then, is not a cohesive narrative of events, but its aftermath of perpetual conflict between denial and telling. . . . Trauma sets in motion a vicious cycle that never resolves—trauma erases the possibility of witnessing; yet validating the very occurrence of trauma requires witnessing."[5] For Johnston, trauma involves wounding the witness as a knower and disrupts their lived temporality. It seems then that when a culture is wounded in this manner, a form of hermeneutic and temporal trauma also occurs (often in tandem with other forms of trauma). However, while trauma is in some ways "unwitnessable," Robinson renders it visible to her readers: disrupting the cycle of trauma and colonial epistemologies and highlighting the persistent threads of Haisla culture and identity.

Through an analysis of *Monkey Beach*, I clarify the primacy of hermeneutic resistance and temporal sovereignty for Indigenous peoples. First, I elucidate the relationship between cyclical trauma and epistemic sovereignty. I analyze the trauma that has been inflicted upon the Haisla people by colonial rule, focusing on hermeneutic injustice and the ghostly and "demonic" forces this violence produces. These spirits are created at the moment of a traumatic event or circumstance but come to "possess" members of Lisa's community, resulting in the repetition of trauma. Then, I examine the

3. Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Duke UP, 2017), 3.

4. Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian Illustrated: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2017).

5. Emily R. Johnston, "Trauma Theory as Activist Pedagogy: Engaging Students as Reader-Witnesses of Colonial Trauma in Once Were Warriors," *Antipodes* 28, no. 1 (June 2014), https://doi.org/10.13110/antipodes.28.1.0005, 5.

potential of hermeneutic resistance, achieved through sacred Indigenous practices and imagination, to heal and "re-possess" identity.

As a white scholar of European heritage, I do not wish to prescribe a mode of resistance for Indigenous peoples or to repeat their stories back to them. Rather, I hope to further some of Eden Robinson's objectives: to create discomfort for white readers and reveal the consequences of epistemic injustice, particularly within academic institutions and communities in North America, whose universities are constructed on unceded Indigenous land and who continue to traumatize and fail Indigenous students.

2. Hermeneutic Injustice and Temporal Displacement

In Lisa's world—the Borderland between the Haisla people and colonial power—there are two separate systems of knowledge which Lisa negotiates between: her Indigenous precolonial knowledge, and the European knowledge-system of the colonizers.[6] This is exemplified in the duality of the novel—the way in which Lisa is able to see the "overlaying" of two worlds (the Indigenous precolonial time and the present colonized time) or the double nature of the land of the dead. These two knowledge maps (as they manifest themselves) do not exist in balanced tension, however; the Indigenous ways of knowing and relating to the environment are being eradicated by the colonizers. A telling instance of this epistemic imbalance occurs between Lisa and her teacher: "She [Lisa's teacher] had forced us to read a book that said that the Indians on the northwest coast of British Columbia had killed and eaten people as religious sacrifices."[7] It is evident that while Lisa resists the attempt to "other" her culture through chanting "fuck the oppressors," this is ultimately futile, as Lisa's Indigenous knowledge continues to be subjugated within the academic system which continues the legacy of residential schools in a more insidious way.[8] Although the Indigenous knowledge maps still exist, they appear to "haunt" the landscape of Lisa's vision, never quite there and still belonging to an Indigenous past that slowly grows more obscure as the connections she has to it—her uncle and her grandmother—die off.

In many of the cases of Indigenous conflict with European colonizers, the words to describe Indigenous cultural experience (a traditional language) are destroyed and lost. In *Monkey Beach,* this takes on a number of forms, but is most evident in the tension Lisa feels between acting within a traditional Haisla community and the structures of colonized British Columbia. Lisa does not have access to the Haisla culture and language that she needs to participate in this traditional community in order to coherently explain her experience of the world. In regard to her frustrations about speaking Haisla, Lisa states, "But to really understand the old stories, she [Lisa's grandmother] said, you have to speak Haisla. She would tell me a new Haisla word a day, and I'd memorize it. But, I thought dejectedly, even at one word a day, that was only 365 words a year, so I'd be an old woman by the time I could put a sentence together."[9] The Haisla language is an aspect of cultural heritage that Lisa has been deprived of, and its importance is shown progressively in the narrative as the words she does learn become imperative to describing her experiences and completing the rituals of her people. Insofar as this hermeneutic injustice is inverted from its usual state—language has been destroyed rather than having yet to come into existence—colonial violence has killed something and left a ghost.

The trappings of colonizing institutions, including work and school, prevent Lisa and her community from participating in traditional Haisla society. As Lisa mentions frequently, she wishes that she didn't have to go to school so that she could go on long fishing trips with her extended family. It is also implied throughout the novel that the creation of Kitamaat village is the result of a transition from a nomadic state of being to a more sedentary lifestyle. This limitation of movement is necessitated by

6. I draw the term "Borderland" from Gloria Anzaldúa's book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Anzaldúa develops a Chicana border-theory, understanding the Borderland, or transient and liminal space, as space of permanent residence. Rather than emphasizing the duality of the border itself, Anzaldúa focuses on the blending and hybridity that takes place in the surrounding landscape.
7. Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001), 68.
8. Ibid., 69.
9. Ibid., 211.

the structures imposed by colonialism. In order to survive and achieve success in the colonized world, one must conform to the sedentary lifestyle demanded by these institutions. This regulation of movement reflects the imposition of new borders on the Haisla nation. The Indigenous society and culture of travel must be abandoned, alongside the knowledge that comes with it, and therefore Lisa is only able to passingly experience the nomadic society of the Haisla people.

The subjugation of particular epistemic systems appears once again in the treatment of Lisa's sacred or supernatural abilities. After her sexual assault, Lisa comes to find the spirit world and the human world indistinguishable, leading her parents and brother to believe she has had a psychotic break since they subscribe to a Western understanding of medicine and psychology. In contrast, Lisa's grandmother does not find Lisa's new way of seeing strange, but rather part of a Haisla tradition. This tension is exemplified in Lisa's trip to the psychologist. Upon arriving, she finds a creature whispering in the ear of her psychologist, "It had no flesh, just tight, thin skin over bones. Its fingers sank into her arms, its legs wrapped around her waist as it clung to her like a baby."[10] This creature appears to feed off of the psychologist, and later Lisa. It is the counterpart to the ghosts and creatures of Lisa's world, a byproduct of colonial knowledge maps. This moment in the novel functions to show that while European ways of knowing are thought to be "scientific" or "objective" (as in the case of psychology), these ways of knowing hide the same components of superstition for which the Haisla tradition is subjugated. As stated by Rebecca Tsosie:

> Western knowledge systems are typically built upon a rationalist, secular epistemology that elevates the importance of science, economics, and technology. These forms of knowledge are seen as principled, fair, and neutral. In comparison, Indigenous knowledge systems are often seen as deficient because they are perceived as faith-based "religious systems" and or as the more primitive forms of cultural knowledge associated with "tribal" groups.[11]

European epistemology is only a singular way of understanding the world that is not total and, in many ways, is far more disconnected from the land itself than traditional Haisla ways of knowing. This spirit of colonial ideology possesses and feeds off of Lisa, "numbing" her.[12] It also tells her what to say to the psychologist—effectively silencing her own cultural knowledge about the situation that she perceives and driving the Haisla ways of knowing further into hiding.

Lisa's experience with the psychologist demonstrates clearly the opposing knowledge systems that Lisa must navigate between and synthesize, but it also marks a defiance to a certain mode of reading the novel—it resists psychoanalytic criticism. Within both anthropology and literary criticism, psychoanalysis and pathologizing are commonly used to "write off" or reinterpret Indigenous spiritual practices. As stated by Victoria Freeman in *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence*, "imposing dead European authorities, such as Freud and Marx, into analyses of Native American ghosts serves to merely extend the dominant discourse of the dead, rather than explain it."[13] By including this scene, Robinson practices a form of epistemic resistance, defying the same systems of knowledge that Lisa does and revealing to her reader their own potential biases and the epistemic system they reside within.

The inherited trauma of colonial rule manifests itself through the presence of ghosts and spirits that come to possess not only the landscape itself but the people within it. The ghosts that come to haunt the Haisla community appear to replace the spirits of their own tradition—dispossessing them of an Indigenous identity. By doing so, colonial rule attempts to erase and perpetuates the erasure of Indigenous ways of being. The resulting trauma created by this

10. Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001), 272-73.

11. Rebecca Tsosie, "Indigenous Peoples, Anthropology, and the Legacy of Epistemic Injustice," in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 359.

12. Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001), 274.

13. Colleen E. Boyd and Coll-Peter Thrush, eds., *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2011), 286.

cultural violence further limits and restricts the movements and behaviors of the Indigenous body beyond that of the white colonizers. However, Lisa and other members of her community find modes of healing from these cycles of trauma and successfully reinstate a form of temporal sovereignty over themselves and the landscape.

3. Epistemic Resistance and Sacred Rites

While the haunting of the Haisla community by the ghosts of colonial trauma represents the cyclical pain suffered by Indigenous peoples, the "double landscape" of the spirit world also offers of mode of epistemic and temporal resistance. This "double landscape" and the ghosts that occupy it offer opportunities not to regain a precolonial Indigenous identity, but to engage with persisting Indigenous temporalities that exist within and beyond Lisa's world. By rendering this multiplicity of temporalities visible, Lisa is able to reconnect to and render visible and present the Indigenous history that has been disguised by colonialism. As stated by Julia Emberley:

> While European testimonial discourses reimagine traumatic residues in terms of the haunting of the past by ghostly figures such as those created by its Gothic traditions, and insist that the only authentic account of a traumatic history is one marked by the impossibility of its representational authenticity, Indigenous storytelling epistemologies shift the terrain of comprehension by introducing the sacred as a site of resistance to the enforced silencing that occurred with residential school violence.[14]

As Emberley argues, Indigenous knowledge maps and storytelling revolt against the continued attempts of European or colonizing forces to eradicate Indigenous peoples. Within *Monkey Beach,* this is exemplified by Lisa's participation in traditional Haisla society—going on fishing trips, gathering berries with her grandmother, and holding ceremonies for the dead.

In Lisa's childhood, this takes the form of the alternate world and space provided by her grandmother. This traditional world is placed in juxtaposition with Lisa's school life. School appears to be a constant place of contention for Lisa where she is teased, bullied, and repeatedly shown that the knowledge that she has is not valued within this system. Unlike her brother, a high-achieving student who swims competitively, Lisa knows how to collect berries, start and repair boats, and engage with other forms of traditional Haisla knowledge, but is unable to get good grades. These are skills she learns primarily from her grandmother. Lisa's grandmother's world is concerned with the natural movement of the environment steeped in Indigenous knowledge systems. It is with her grandmother that Lisa's spiritual abilities are recontextualized from an illness to a power. Together, Lisa and her grandmother "make peace" with the ghosts of colonial trauma—Lisa's Uncle, Mick, whose life was spent as a "warrior" fighting the injustice perpetrated against the Indigenous community, and her grandfather, who became severely abusive after returning from war. As Lisa's grandmother states, "You don't have to be afraid of things you don't understand. They're just ghosts."[15] Through Indigenous knowledge and tradition, Lisa and her grandmother are finally able to reconcile with the cyclical trauma of colonial violence.

The dead not only appear within this traditional context but are also reached through other rights that combine a plurality of esoteric tools to communicate with the dead. Throughout the novel, the narrative relapses into "lessons" for contacting dead spirits and reaching the spirit world, although as Lisa's grandmother states, "all the people who knew the old ways are gone."[16] Lisa, along with other characters, reconstruct and create their own rituals that are hybrids of Haisla tradition, Voodoo, and other esoteric arts that have entered the North American tradition. Pooch, one of Lisa's friends and briefly boyfriend, fills his room with voodoo dolls, deer skulls, black candles, and powders in

14. Julia Emberley, "The Accidental Witness: Indigenous Epistemologies and Spirituality as Resistance in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*" (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2014), 80.

15. Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001), 265.

16. Ibid., 154.

an attempt to reach the spirit of his father who passed away when he was young. Though it is unclear whether Pooch has gained any success, Lisa attempts a simple spell and it appears successful: she has a vision that hints at the death of her little brother, on which the novel hinges. The spell and vision, though found in a book entitled *Voodoo for Beginners*, contain within them powerful symbols from a Haisla tradition: the little man and a flock of crows. This suggest a blended, if slightly clumsy, beginning to a new spiritual tradition and access to the "other world" of spirits which parallels our own.

The story is also populated by a host of more material spirits that visit the residents of Kitamaat Village or bookend and populate the major acts of the novel, including the little man or leprechaun, Weegit the Raven, and *B'gwus* or Sasquatch. These spirits interweave themselves through the novel with a matter-of-factness that defies a sense of static folklore. Though some characters call their existence into doubt, others share stories of wild encounters with them; they live alongside Lisa, as "real" as any of the people in the novel. The little man, a common spirit in Haisla and Saalish folklore, frequents Lisa's childhood and often visits her in her sleep, giving her insight into the future and to comfort or annoy her on different occasions. Although Lisa comments that she had expected the little man to be her own childish fantasy, he continues to visit her well into adulthood. Weegit the Raven has also grown into adulthood it seems—the time of his creation of the world is long since passed; however, he has integrated himself into modern society and still maintains his trickster characteristics—he persists. Sightings of *B'gwus* occur throughout the narrative, and Lisa encounters one towards the end of the novel:

> Most sightings of this shy creature are of single males, but *B'gwus* are part of a larger social complex, complete with its own clans, stories and wars. There are rumours that they killed themselves off, fighting over some unfathomable cause. Other reports say they starved to death near the turn of the century, after a decade of horrific winters. A variation of this rumour says that they were infected with TB and smallpox . . . at night, in very remote parts of British Columbia, if you listen long enough, you sometimes hear him . . . your instincts are warning you that he is still around.[17]

Here, Robinson references myths of the total erasure of Indigenous peoples, drawing an implicit parallel between the Haisla and the *B'gwus*—both mythologized and relegated to the past by the white imagination. However, these spirits, like the Haisla, continue to persist and adapt into the present and future. The otherworld and temporal reality, and the creatures within it, though they resist mere metaphors, symbolize the persistence of Indigenous epistemology and temporality into the present and future.

The book ends at an ambiguous moment, as Lisa nearly drowns in the water of Monkey Beach, dragged under the water by some mysterious possessing entity, but pushed to the surface by her brother's spirit and other family members. In the final lines of the novel, Lisa hears a speedboat approaching and it is implied that she is rescued.[18] Despite the struggles that Lisa must endure, she is able to resist falling into cyclical trauma through aligning herself with an Indigenous spiritualism. And, in opposition to the beginning of the novel, in which the double-landscape of Indigeneity appears to haunt the world in which Lisa dwells, she is now able to travel between them, each as real and corporeal as the other.

This Indigenous spiritualism and the diverse inhabitants of the double-landscape that Lisa, and therefore the reader, is able to witness, represent the enduring epistemic and temporal sovereignty of the Haisla. Lisa never "travels back" to a lost or dichotomized "pre-contact" or precolonial time but experiences a multiplicity of temporalities and epistemic landscapes within herself, her community, and the land they inhabit. This does not undo the ongoing damage of colonialism directly experienced by Lisa, her community, and the land, but it points to the continued resistance and flourishing of Indigenous culture, value, and lives within, and regardless of, colonial impositions.

Robinson is a member of the Haisla nation and has often been called the "first Haisla

17. Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001), 318.
18. Ibid., 365-66.

novelist." In her career she has produced four novels, a book of short stories, and a series of essays. Her novels and short stories primarily focus on Indigenous youths; however, in many of these stories, Indigeneity becomes an unspoken backdrop. In her book of short stories, *Trap Lines*, (from which her novels were later born), the Indigeneity of her characters is only addressed in the final story, "The Queen of the North," which became *Monkey Beach*. Lee Maracle, whose epigraph I chose for this essay, has mentioned in interviews that she questions whether *Monkey Beach* can be considered a Haisla novel, as "Robinson wrote like a mainstream writer."[19] Robinson, it seems, appears to offer the same resistance to her readership, Indigenous and colonial, that her books do. She repeatedly resists disclosing particular aspects of Haisla culture and life as to not upset the spirits or the elders.[20] Through this practice, Robinson also refuses to become the Indigenous informant—confessing the secrets or sacred knowledge of the Haisla to a colonial audience that often desires and fetishizes the "exotic" and othering aspects of these tales. Instead, she, like Lisa, becomes a "shapeshifter."[21] They move through separate worlds and separate knowledge-maps, some totally Native, others, colonial, but more often blended. Through this shapeshifting, Eden Robinson and Lisa offer a narrative of Indigenous existence that eludes the grasp of colonial knowledge-maps.

As a novel, *Monkey Beach* exemplifies resistance against epistemic settler-colonialism. Both in its structure—resisting the linearity of the novel's form and the singularity of both protagonists and conflict—and as a work of resistant imagination.[22] Robinson places Lisa's (and the Haisla's) epistemic map in a constant tension with that of the colonizers, reimagining an Indigenous history and present that resists the imagined narrative of settler-colonial Canadian history. *Monkey Beach* works to sensitize its readers to a pluralistic and relational epistemic imagination, where multiple truths have the potential to exist and the epistemically harmful myths of Canadian innocence and the authority of Western thought are dissolved.[23] Through the resistant imagination of *Monkey Beach,* the "unwitnessable" event of trauma, particularly that of hermeneutic trauma, is rendered visible. *Monkey Beach* becomes the frontier of revolt—a space in which the ghosts of colonial trauma are not exorcised, but witnessed and validated, the guilt and burden of its recovery redistributed, and the continued influence of colonial powers held accountable.

19. Kit Dobson, "Indigeneity and Diversity in Eden Robinson's Work," *Canadian Literature* 201 (2009): 57.
20. Ibid., 55.
21. Ibid., 55.
22. For more information on Indigenous story structure, see the work of Lee Maracle. As she states in an article for *The Walrus*, "Our death was always massive in the epidemics we endured. The flu still takes a number of us with it. Suicide is never singular. Divorce is massive, abuse even more massive, and trauma, too, comes in multiples, so the simple business of 'conflict' between protagonist and antagonist makes no sense to us," *n.p.*
23. This borrows from the work of José Medina.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Melissa Burchard for allowing me to present this paper at the Philosophical Engagements with Trauma Conference and for her continued support and kindness. I would not have been able to complete this project without the support and understanding of my Editor, Hannah Bacon, the coordinating editor, Kurt Milberger, and my copyeditor, Taylor Mills. I am indebted to my reviewers, Kyle Whyte and Mathew Arthur, whose comments directed both the trajectory of the project and of my own methodology. I wrote the original version of this paper for my professor, Jill Didur, who furnished me with her mentorship and guidance. I would also like to extend a special thanks to my friend and colleague, Morgan Gagnon, who has read and critiqued nearly every draft.

Bibliography

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987.

Boyd, Colleen E., et al. *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2011.

Castriciano, Jodey. "Learning to Talk with Ghosts: Canadian Gothic and the Poetics of Haunting in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2006): 801-13. https://doi.org/10.1353/utq.2006.0246.

Dobson, Kit. "Indigeneity and Diversity in Eden Robinson's Work." *Canadian Literature* 201 (2009): 54-67.

Emberley, Julia. "The Accidental Witness: Indigenous Epistemologies and Spirituality as Resistance in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." In *Critical Collaborations: Indigeneity, Diaspora, and Ecology in Canadian Literary Studies*, eds. Smaro Kamboureli and Christl Verduyn, 69-81. Waterloo (Ontario): Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2014.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 2007.

Goldman, Marlene, and Joanne Saul. "Talking with Ghosts: Haunting in Canadian Cultural Production." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2006): 645-55. https://doi.org/10.3138.

Iseke-Barnes, Judy M. "Politics and Power of Languages: Indigenous Resistance to Colonizing Experiences of Language Dominance." *Journal of Thought*, 1st ser., 39 (2004): 45-81. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42589774.

Johnston, Emily R. "Trauma Theory as Activist Pedagogy: Engaging Students as Reader-Witnesses of Colonial Trauma in Once Were Warriors." *Antipodes* 28, no. 1 (June 2014): 5-17. https://doi.org/10.13110/antipodes.28.1.0005.

King, Thomas. *The Inconvenient Indian Illustrated: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2017.

"Kitamaat Village." *Haisla Nation*. Accessed December 11, 2018. http://haisla.ca/community-2/kitamaat-village/.

Koggel, Christine M. "Epistemic Injustice in a Settler Nation: Canada's History of Erasing, Silencing, Marginalizing." *Journal of Global Ethics* 14, no. 2 (2018): 240-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449626.2018.1506996.

Maracle, Lee. *My Conversations with Canadians*. 4th ed. Toronto, ON: Bookthug, 2017.

———. "Scent of Burning Cedar." *The Walrus*, June 21, 2018. https://thewalrus.ca/scent-of-burning-cedar/.

Medina, José. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013.

———. "Varieties of Hermeneutical Injustice." In *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, edited by Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr., 41-52. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

Rifkin, Mark. *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*. Duke UP, 2017.

Robinson, Eden. *Monkey Beach*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001.

———. "The Sasquatch at Home." *Manoa* 25, no. 1 (2013): 80–86. https://doi.org/10.1353/man.2013.0006.

Soper-Jones, Ella. "The Fate of the Oolichan: Prospects of Eco-Cultural Restoration in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 44, no. 2 (June 2009): 15–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989409105116.

Stef Craps. "Learning to Live With Ghosts: Postcolonial Haunting and Mid-Mourning in David Dabydeen's 'Turner' and Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts*." *Callaloo* 33, no. 2 (2010): 467–75. https://doi.org/10.1353/cal.0.0651.

Tsosie, Rebecca. "Indigenous Peoples, Anthropology, and the Legacy of Epistemic Injustice." In *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, edited by Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr., 356-69. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

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

Contributor Information

Sierra Billingslea is a MA student at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in English Literature and Philosophy at Towson University. Sierra takes an interdisciplinary approach that spans across phenomenology, literary theory, critical race theory, and

critical legal studies. Her current work establishes a critical phenomenology of irregular child migrants in the United States immigration system and the American imagination.

Current Publication, 4 September 2019: https://publicphilosophyjournal.org/full-record/?amplificationid=2066

Journal Publication, 24 August 2020: https://publications.publicphilosophyjournal.org/record/?issue=6-18-224914&kid=6-15-224939