

MAX LIBOIRON

Pollution

Is Colonialism



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Acknowledgements

The territory in which this text was written is the ancestral homeland of the Beothuk. The island of Newfoundland is the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. I would also like to recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and the Innu of Nitassinan, and their ancestors, as the original people of Labrador. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.¹

Taanishi. Max Liboiron dishinihkaashoon. Lac la Biche, Treaty siz, d'ooshchiin. Métis naasyoon, niiya ni: nutr faamii Woodman, Turner, pi Umperville awa. Ni papaa (kii ootinikaatew) Jerome Liboiron, pi ni maaaa (kii ootinikaatew) Lori Thompson. Ma paaraan et Richard Chavolla (Kumeyaay). I'm from Lac la Biche, Treaty 6 territory in northern Alberta, Canada. The parents who raised me are Jerome Liboiron and Lori Thompson. I am connecting with Métis family through a lineage of Woodman, Turner, and Umperville that leads back to Red River. Rick Chavolla of Kumeyaay Nation is my godfather. These are my guiding relations.²

- 1 This Land acknowledgement was created collectively with leaders of most of the province's Indigenous governing bodies. These are not my words: they are words chosen for guests of this land. They are not mine to change.
- 2 Dear Reader: thank you for being here. Introductions are important because they show where my knowledge comes from, to whom I am accountable, and how I was built. Some of these things are not for promiscuous, public consumption and some of them are. To young Indigenous thinkers in particular: one of my struggles has been how to introduce myself properly without also telling stories that aren't mine to share or that feature personal or

In his first year, PhD student Edward Allen came into my office, sat down in a small wooden chair that was certainly not built for him, and asked if his name had to be on his dissertation. He argued that because his dissertation would be a product of many people's knowledge, putting his name on the front page would be a misrepresentation of authorship. I am fortunate to keep such company. His point is a good one: no intellectual work is authored alone. Many people built this book. Many are acknowledged here and throughout the text in footnotes so readers can see whose shoulders I stand on. I see these footnotes enacting an ethic of gratitude, acknowledgement, and reciprocity for their work. They make it harder to imagine these words are just mine, an uninterrupted monologue. They are not stashed at the end, but physically interrupt the text to support it and show my relationships. Here, footnotes build a world full of thinkers whom I respect. By putting footnotes on the page, I aim to account for how citations are "*screening techniques*: how certain bodies take up spaces by screening out the existence of others," as well as "reproductive technolog[ies], a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies."³ Citing the knowledges of Black, Indigenous, POC, women, LGBTQAI+, two-spirit, and young thinkers is one small part of an anticolonial methodology that refuses to reproduce the myth that knowledge, and particularly science, is the domain of pale, male, and stale gatekeepers.

Building a book reminds me of what Alex Wilson (Cree) calls "coming in," or coming to better understand our "relationship to and place and value in [our] own family, community, culture, history, and present-day world."⁴ Wilson is talking about coming in as a two-spirit process of place-based relationality, in

familial trauma or scandal. I have tried to model the ways mentors have taught me to introduce myself that point up to structures of relation or oppression rather than pointing down to effects on family. Charismatic as the practice may be, I will never open a vein to bleed for my audience to make the case that colonial violence exists in our everyday lives. I have watched so many of you at conferences talk about your traumas and your pain, often to make the case that our intellectual labour has stakes, has roots, has validity, has teeth. Personally and professionally, I don't think academic spaces have earned that blood. I watch the (mostly white) academic audiences at these talks become rapt and feel the pleasure and the depth of blood-and-trauma talk, but I also think that these arguments are only heard in a way that allows many to continue to believe that Indigenous people are inherently traumatized, always already bleeding. Charisma, after all, is about resonance with existing values and ideas. It is your choice how you introduce yourself. One of my guideposts for introduction and the place of trauma is Tuck, "Suspending Damage."

3 S. Ahmed, "Making Feminist Points." For more on the politics of citation, see Mott and Cockayne, "Citation Matters"; and Tuck, Yang, and Gaztambide-Fernández, "Citation Practices."

4 A. Wilson, "N'tacinowin Inna Nah," 196.

juxtaposition to various LGBTQAI+ ways of coming out as a declaration of self. Writing a book queerly, two-spiritedly, is (I think and feel) an act of coming in, circling back to belonging, sharing-in, and the accountabilities that come with that, much of which is done in the footnotes.

TL;DR: My goal is to do science differently. Part of that is happening in the footnotes.

I suspect that the first⁵ person I should acknowledge is the one I text in the middle of the day because I've come to an irreconcilable tension in the book's argument, and who gives up her time to talk me through it, not as charity or even friendship (though that, too), but as part of a lesson in good relations and familyhood. Emily Simmonds, I hope you see how your teaching by example is reflected in every aspect of the book. Thank you, and Constance, for the place you've given me in your—our—family. Maarsi.

Likewise, Rick Chavolla has been teaching me about relations, ethics, and bold statements for years. He was teaching me back when he was just a baby Elder. Thank you, Rick, for supporting me so I could choose not to drop out of my PhD and for adopting me into your family as a goddaughter. You've taught me about prayer and how important core muscles are for running away from the police. Same lesson. Part of me always lives on your couch. Thank you, Rick Chavolla and Anna Ortega-Chavolla. I hope you understand how this book is the way it is because of you, both in its detail and in the broad strokes. This is what your love can do.

This book is about relations, and no one has taught me more about good relations through everyday lessons than Grandmother and Kookum. Almost every word of this book has been written within ten feet of Grandmother, which is a blessing all on its own.

I cannot thank and acknowledge Michelle Murphy enough. Michelle, your intellectual, emotional, familial, and pedagogical labours have influenced my thinking and the way I relate to others as a scholar. You are part of my ability to flourish in academia. From the first time we met on a panel at 4S and you cau-

5 There are ways to do acknowledgements that refuse to order people. Andrea Ballesterio's *A Future History of Water* is a beautiful example, where acknowledgements are in a kaleidoscope of relations. It is cool, smart, and refuses structures that prioritize, rank, categorize. In my scientific work with CLEAR (whom you'll meet in a moment), we talk about the hierarchy of ordering a lot, and we choose to stay with the tensions of ordering for many reasons. Here, I order my thanks because the way I have been taught obligation does indeed prioritize some over others. For more on ordering ethically, or at least equitably and with humility, see M. Liboiron et al., "Equity in Author Order."

tioned me about fetishizing molecules (I totally was), to emergency Skype calls during my first year as a professor when I wanted to either burn academia down or quit for good, to reminding me to be more kind and less hard-edged, to your presence at the birth of this book, you are and have been my academic auntie.⁶ Thank you, so much. Love is an insufficient term to characterize your mentorship and friendship.

Reaching all the way back to the people who taught me early lessons about relations and who gave me (and continue to give me) support to go to that mythical place called university and do that stuff called academia (though we didn't know the term at the time), thank you, Lori, Jerome, Joel, Curtis, and Melissa, as well as Mila. I have been adopted into several families in the last decade, but you are my first and forever family. You are the ground I stand on. Without you, I could not take the risks I can because I know I can only fall so far.

Lessons in relations are done in place. Gratitude to Lac la Biche, Edmonton, New York City, and Newfoundland and Labrador for sharing lessons and correcting my ignorance and hubris regularly. Maarsi.

In different but overlapping ways, Alisa Craig⁷ and Nicole Power made it possible for me to stay on, work in, and learn from the island of Newfoundland. I can't imagine what it would be like to be an academic here without you. I would likely not be here, and certainly I would not be as smart, funny, content, or successful as I am (or think I am) without you. Thank you, both. Thank you especially to Nicole for blending our families and supporting the logistics of family that fills out my life to something fuller than I could have imagined before. Likewise, thank you to Neil Bose and the VPR team for enabling a way of working and doing good in the province and university that I could never have done alone, and certainly do not want to do alone. When someone has your back the way you have mine, things become possible that were unimaginable before. Thank you.

Readers, did you know there is this wonderful type of event where people who are invested in you and your work come together, on couches and over food, for a couple of days to give feedback on your book? I didn't, until Joe Masco told me about it. I think it has a real name, but I've called it a book doula party. It means peer review is based in love and generosity—one of the greatest academic gifts I have ever received. To the book doulas who took time out of their busy lives to hold the head of this book and guide it into the world—Michelle

6 For more on academic aunties, see E. Lee, "I'm Concerned for Your Academic Career."

7 Alisa Craig is the star department chair mentioned in Liboiron, "Care and Solidarity Are Conditions for Interventionist Research."

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The first blush of this book started in my dissertation, and its tracks are left in the first chapter. I thank my New York University PhD committee and advisors Robin Nagle, Lisa Gitelman, Erica Robles-Anderson, and especially Brett Gary. A rocky start and an attempt to flee turned into a home run with your guidance.

Many of the ideas in this book were worked out in conferences, panels, Q&As, and hallway chats within my various research communities, including the Geography Department at Memorial University, the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S), Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conferences, the Indigenous STS network, the Endocrine Disruptors Action Group (EDAction), the Gathering for Open Science Hardware (GOSH), the Chemical

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Thank you, all, for building this book.

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In 1956, Lloyd Stouffer, the editor of the US magazine *Modern Packaging*, addressed attendees at the Society of the Plastics Industry meeting in New York City: “The future of plastics is in the trash can. . . . It [is] time for the plastics industry to stop thinking about ‘reuse’ packages and concentrate on single use. For the package that is used once and thrown away, like a tin can or a paper carton, represents not a one-shot market for a few thousand units, but an everyday recurring market measured by the billions of units.”¹ Stouffer was speaking at a time when reuse, making do, and thrift were key practices reinforced by two US wars. Consumer markets were saturating. Disposability was one tactic within a suite of efforts to move goods *through*, rather than merely *into*, consumer households.² Today, packaging is the single largest category of plastic production, ac-

- 1 Hello, Reader! Thank you for being here. These footnotes are a place of nuance and politics, where the protocols of gratitude and recognition play out (sometimes also called citation), where warnings and care work are carried out (including calling certain readers aside for a chat or a joke), and where I contextualize, expand, and emplace work. The footnotes support the text above, representing the shoulders on which I stand and the relations I want to build. They are part of doing good relations within a text, through a text. Since a main goal of *Pollution Is Colonialism* is to show how methodology is a way of being in the world and that ways of being are tied up in obligation, these footnotes are one way to enact that argument. Thank you to Duke University Press for these footnotes.

For this first footnote of the introduction, we have a simple citation: Stouffer, “Plastics Packaging,” 1–3. Don’t worry. They’ll get better.

- 2 Packard, *Waste Makers*; Strasser, *Waste and Want*; M. Liboiron, “Modern Waste as Strategy.”

counting for nearly 40 percent of plastic production in Europe³ and 33 percent in Canada.⁴ The next largest categories are building and construction, at just over 20 percent, and automotive at 8 percent.⁵ Stouffer's desire looks like prophecy. (Spoiler: It isn't. It's colonialism, but more on that in a moment.)

Before Stouffer's call for disposability and before German and US military powers invested significant finances and research infrastructure into perfecting plastics as a wartime material in the 1940s, plastic was described as an environmental good.⁶ Mimicking first ivory and then other animal-based materials such as shellac and tortoiseshell, plastic was an artisan substance that showcased technological ingenuity and skill while providing "the elephant, the tortoise, and the coral insect a respite in their native haunts; it will no longer be necessary to ransack the earth in pursuit of substances which are constantly growing scarcer."⁷ The idea of disposability and mass production for plastics is relatively new, developing half a century after plastics were invented. Most plastic production graphs start their timelines after 1950, ignoring the nineteenth- and early

3 PlasticsEurope, "Plastics," 12. These numbers include thermoplastics and polyurethanes as well as thermosets, adhesives, coatings, and sealants, but they do not include PET, PA, PP, and polyacryl-fibers. Note that PET and PP are some of the most common plastics found in marine environments.

4 Deloitte and Cheminfo Services, "Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Markets, and Waste," 6.

5 PlasticsEurope, "Plastics," 12.

6 While historian Jeffrey Meikle (unmarked, see below) provides much archival evidence on how plastics were written about as a replacement for animal products, it is not clear whether there were "actual" material shortages or not, nor is it clear whether plastics played a role in alleviating that shortage (or not). Regardless, this idea was still core to the early reputation of plastics. Meikle, *American Plastic*. For an alternative, see Friedel, *Pioneer Plastic*, 60–64. Thank you, Rebecca Altman (settler), for not only sharing this insight but also consistently prioritizing the work of others in such a way that you reach out as a co-thinker when people (like me) reproduce an academic truism that needs some empirical work. Thank you for your collegiality, for the way you celebrate other people's work with genuine enthusiasm and care, and for your careful chemical storytelling. Folks, see Altman, "Time-Bombing the Future"; Altman, "American Petro-Topia"; and Altman, "Letter to America."

Pioneer and *plastic* appear together quite a bit in both historical and present-day texts. While I will talk about plastic production's assumption of terra nullius, I won't dwell on its relationships to pioneering frontierism, except to say that the use of *pioneer* to mean innovation simultaneously normalizes frontierism and the forms of erasure, dispossession, and death frontierism requires to make its terra nullius.

7 Meikle, *American Plastic*, 12.

twentieth-century histories of plastics since these materials did not exist as the mass-produced substances we know today.⁸ Plastics have been otherwise.

In 1960, only four years after Stouffer's address, a British ornithology journal published an account of the "confounding" discovery of a rubber band in a puffin's stomach.⁹ It would be among the first of hundreds of published reports of wildlife ingesting plastics, including the ones I publish as an environmental scientist. How did plastics become such a ubiquitous pollutant? There are questions that should precede that question: What do you mean by pollutant? How did pollutants come to make sense in the first place? It turns out that the concept of environmental pollution as we understand it today is also new.

Only twenty years before Stouffer launched the future of plastics into the trash can, the now-dominant and even standard understanding of modern environmental pollution was articulated on the Ohio River. Two engineers in the brand-new field of sanitation engineering named Earle B. Phelps and H. W. Streeter (both unmarked)¹⁰ created a scientific and mathematical model of the

8 See, e.g., PlasticsEurope, "Plastics," 12.

9 Bennett, "Rubber Bands in a Puffin's Stomach," 222.

10 It is common to introduce Indigenous authors with their nation/affiliation, while settler and white scholars almost always remain unmarked, like "Lloyd Stouffer." This unmarking is one act among many that re-centres settlers and whiteness as an unexceptional norm, while deviations have to be marked and named. Simone de Beauvoir (French) called this positionality both "positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general." Not cool. This led me to a methodological dilemma. Do I mark everyone? No one? I thought about just leaving it, because this is difficult and even uncomfortable to figure out, but since this is a methods text I figured I should shit or get off the pot. Feminist standpoint theory and even truth and reconciliation processes maintain that social location and the different collectives we are part of matter to relations, obligations, ethics, and knowledge. Settlers have a different place in reconciliation than Indigenous people, than Black people who were stolen from their Land. As la paperson (diasporic settler of colour) writes, "'Settler' is not an identity; it is the idealized juridical space of exceptional rights granted to normative settler citizens and the idealized exceptionalism by which the settler state exerts its sovereignty. The 'settler' is a site of exception from which whiteness emerges. . . . [T]he anthropocentric normal is written in its image." This assumed positive and neutral "normal" right is enacted in the lack of introduction of settlers as settlers, as if settler presence on Land, especially Indigenous Land, is the stable and unremarkable norm. What allows settlers to consistently and unthinkingly not introduce their relations to Land and colonial systems is settlerism. See paperson, *A Third University Is Possible*, 10; and Beauvoir, *Second Sex*.

In light of this complex terrain, my imperfect methodological decision has been to identify all authors the way they identify themselves (thank you to everyone who does this!) the first time they appear in a chapter. If an author does not introduce themselves

conditions and rates under which water (or at least that bit of the Ohio River) could purify itself of organic pollutants.¹¹ After running tests that accounted for different temperatures, velocities of water, concentrations of pollutants, and other variables, they wrote that self-purification is a “measurable phenomenon governed by definite laws and proceeding according to certain fundamental physical and biochemical reactions. Because of the fundamental character of these reactions and laws, it is fairly evident that the principles underlying the phenomenon [of self-purification] as a whole are applicable to virtually all polluted streams.”¹²

The Streeter-Phelps equation, as it came to be known, not only became a hallmark of water pollution science and regulation but also contained within it their theory of pollution: that a moment existed when water could not purify itself and that moment could be measured, predicted, and properly called pollution. Self-purification became known as *assimilative capacity*,¹³ a term of art

or their land relations, I mark them as “unmarked.” I do this rather than marking settlers as settlers because of the advice of Kim TallBear (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate), who encourages people to look at structures of the settler state rather than focusing on naming individual settlers, which reenacts the logics of eugenicist and racist impulses to properly and finally categorize people properly. TallBear, Callison, and Harp. “Ep. 198.”

I take up this method so we, as users of texts, can understand where authors are speaking from, what ground they stand on, whom their obligations are to, what forms of sovereignty are being leveraged, what structures of privilege the settler state affords, and how we are related so that our obligations to one another as speaker and listener, writer and audience, can be *specific enough to enact obligations to one another*, a key goal of this text. How has colonialism affected us differently? Introducing yourself is part of ethics and obligation, not punishment. Following Marisa Duarte’s (Yaqui) example in *Network Sovereignty*, I simply introduce people in this way by using parentheses after the first time their name is mentioned. Duarte, *Network Sovereignty*.

- 11 Organic pollutants can also be industrial pollutants. Organic in this case does not mean naturally occurring—even arsenic, radon, and methylmercury, while “naturally occurring” compounds, do not occur in the tonnages and associated scales of toxicity without industrial infrastructure.
- 12 Streeter and Phelps, *Study of the Pollution and Natural Purification of the Ohio River*, 59.
- 13 Cognate terms that describe thresholds of harm used in different countries and contexts include *carrying capacity*, *critical load*, *allowable threshold*, and *maximum permissible dose*. Versions of the term in specific scientific disciplines include *reference dose* (RfD), *no observable adverse effect level* (NOAEL), *lowest observable adverse effect level* (LOAEL), *lethal dose 50 percent* (LD50), *median effective concentration* (EC50), *maximum acceptable concentration* (MAC), and *derived minimal effect level* (DMEL) (which is a truly tricky measure for a level of exposure for which the risk levels of a nonthreshold carcinogen become

in both environmental science and policy making that refers to “the amount of waste material that may be discharged into a receiving water without causing deleterious ecological effects.”¹⁴ State-based environmental regulations in most of the world since the 1930s are premised on the logic of assimilative capacity, in which a body—water, human, or otherwise—can handle a certain amount of contaminant before scientifically detectable harm occurs. I call this the threshold theory of pollution.

Plastics do not assimilate in the way that Streeter and Phelps’s organic pollution assimilated in the Ohio River. As I pull little pieces of burned plastic out of a dovekie¹⁵ gizzard in my marine science lab, the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR), the threshold theory of pollution and the future of plastics as waste look like bad relations. I don’t mean the individualized bad relations of littering (which does not produce much waste compared to other flows of plastic into the ocean, especially here in Newfoundland and Labrador, a land of fishing gear and untreated sewage) or the bad relations of capitalism where growth and profit are put before environmental costs (though those are certainly horrible relations). I mean the bad relations of a scientific theory that allows some amount of pollution to occur and its accompanying entitlement to Land to assimilate that pollution.¹⁶ I mean colonialism.

The structures that allow plastics’ global distribution and full integration into ecosystems and everyday human lives are based on colonial land relations, the assumed access by settler and colonial projects to Indigenous lands for settler and colonial goals. At the same time, the ways in which plastics pollute unevenly, do not follow threshold theories of harm, and act as both hosts for life and sources of harm have made plastics an ideal case to change dominant colonial concepts of pollution by teaching us about relations and obligations that

“tolerable,” thus creating a social threshold where there are no toxicological thresholds). Each has different specifics, but the same theory lies behind them. More on this in chapter 1.

14 Novotny and Krenkel, “Waste Assimilative Capacity Model,” 604.

15 A dovekie is also called a bully bird, little auk, or *Alle alle*, depending on who’s talking. They look like tiny puffins without the fancy beak, and you can see them flying over the water in lines. Some people in Newfoundland and Labrador eat them, but the bones are tiny, thin, and hard to pick out.

16 This argument also appears in CLEAR and EDAction, “Pollution Is Colonialism,” and is expanded beautifully in Shadaan and Murphy, “Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals as Industrial and Settler Colonial Structures.” Also see Ngata and Liboiron, “Māori Plastic Pollution Expertise.”

tend to be obfuscated from view by environmental rhetoric and industrial infrastructures. In *CLEAR*, we place land relations at the centre¹⁷ of our knowledge production as we monitor plastic pollution in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As members of a marine science lab, we are dedicated to doing science differently by foregrounding *anticolonial* land relations. This requires critique but mostly it requires action.¹⁸ We've stopped using toxic chemicals to process samples, which means there is a whole realm of analysis we can't do. We also use judgmental sampling rather than random sampling in our study design to foreground food sovereignty when we look at plastics in food webs. *CLEAR* does good with pollution, in practice, in place. But *CLEAR* is not unique: land relations always already play a central role in all sciences, anticolonial and otherwise.

I find that many people understand colonialism as a monolithic structure with roots exclusively in historical bad action, rather than as a set of contemporary and evolving land relations that can be maintained by good intentions and even good deeds. The call for more recycling, for example, still assumes access to Indigenous Land for recycling centres and their pollution. Other people have nuanced understandings of colonialism and seek ways to deal with colonial structures in their everyday lives and research, often in spaces like the academy that reproduce colonialism in uneven ways. This book is for both groups, and others besides. Overall, this is a methodological text that begins with colonial land relations, so that we can recognize them in familiar and comfortable places (like reading, like counting), and then considers anticolonial methods that centre and change colonial land relations in thought and action.

I make three main arguments in this book. First, pollution is not a manifestation or side effect of colonialism but is rather an enactment of ongoing colonial relations to Land.¹⁹ That is, pollution is best understood as the violence of colo-

17 Perhaps you've noticed Canadian spellings in the text even though Duke University Press is based in the United States. This is a constant, possibly annoying, reminder that these words come from a place. Spelling is method.

18 Hale, "Activist Research v. Cultural Critique."

19 Throughout this book, you'll notice that sometimes *Land* is capitalized, and sometimes it isn't. I follow the lead of Styres and Zinga (Indigenous and settler, respectively), who "capitalize Land when we are referring to it as a proper name indicating a primary relationship rather than when used in a more general sense. For us, land (the more general term) refers to landscapes as a fixed geographical and physical space that includes earth, rocks, and waterways; whereas, 'Land' (the proper name) extends beyond a material fixed space. Land is a spiritually infused place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationships, cultural positioning, and is highly contextualized" (300–301). Likewise, when I capitalize

nial land relations rather than environmental damage, which is a symptom of violence. These colonial relations are reproduced through even well-intentioned environmental science and activism. Second, there are ways to do pollution action, particularly environmental science, through different Land relations, and they're already happening without waiting for the decolonial horizon to appear. These methods are specific, place-based, and attend to obligations. Third, I show how methodologies—whether scientific, writerly, readerly, or otherwise—are always already part of Land relations and thus are a key site in which to enact good relations (sometimes called ethics). This last point should carry to a variety of contexts that do not focus on either pollution or the natural sciences.

I use the case of plastics, increasingly understood as an environmental scourge and something to be annihilated, to refute and refuse the colonial in a good way. That is, I try to keep plastics and pollution from being conflated too readily, instead decoupling them so existing and potential relations can come to light that exceed the popular position of “plastics are bad!”—even though plastics are often bad. To start, let's dig into colonialism (spoiler: it is not synonymous with “bad” in general, though it is certainly bad).

Colonialism

Stouffer, Streeter, and Phelps all assumed access to Indigenous Land when they made their proclamations. Stouffer's declaration about the future of plastics as disposables assumed that household waste would be picked up and taken

Land I am referring to the unique entity that is the combined living spirit of plants, animals, air, water, humans, histories, and events recognized by many Indigenous communities. When *land* is not capitalized, I am referring to the concept from a colonial worldview whereby landscapes are common, universal, and everywhere, even with great variation. For the same reason, I also capitalize *Nature* and *Resource* and, occasionally, *Science*. Rather than use a small *N* or *R* or *S* that might indicate that these words are common or universal, the capitalization signals that they are proper nouns that are highly specific to one place, time, and culture. That is, *Nature* is not universal or common, but unique to a specific worldview that came about at a particular time for specific reasons. Calling out proper nouns so they are also proper names is part of a tradition where using someone/thing's name is to bring it out of the shadows and engage it—in power, in challenge, in recognition, in kinship. That's why I don't mind looking like an academic elitist or naive literary wannabe when I capitalize. There's more on compromise in chapter 3. Styres and Zinga, “Community-First Land-Centred Theoretical Framework,” 300–301. For other politics of capitalization in feminist sciences, see Subramaniam and Willey, “Introduction”; and Harding, *Science and Social Inequality*.