
Tripped up by Coloniality: Anthropologists as Instruments or Agents in Indigenous–Settler Political Relations?

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Abstract: This article addresses the persistent dilemma of settler–Indigenous coloniality in anthropologists’ research with Indigenous peoples, and proposes ways to modulate our actions to redress coloniality. The central case is planning for an environmental inventory project with Inuit of Nunavut. Two challenges emerge: one associated with the coloniality of inter-cultural collaboration, the other entailed by inter-political coloniality. I call for two moves to aid resolution. First, acknowledging our location in the colonial set up (as settler or Indigenous persons). Second, revising our actions around both inter-cultural and inter-political engagements, based on the principle and practice of honour in relations, in line with Canadian jurisprudence, Michael Asch’s political anthropology, and Indigenous peoples’ enduring call to fulfill treaty obligations.

Keywords: anthropological practice, Aboriginal peoples, colonialism, expertise, collaboration, treaty, political anthropology, Inuit, decolonial practice, relationality

Résumé : Cet article aborde le dilemme persistant de la colonialité entre Peuples autochtones et colonisateurs dans la recherche anthropologique, et offre une proposition modeste sur comment moduler nos actions pour redresser la situation. Le cas présenté est la planification d’un projet d’inventaire environnemental auprès des Inuits du Nunavut, où deux défis émergent : un associé à la colonialité de la collaboration inter-culturelle et l’autre à la colonialité inter-politique. Je propose deux résolutions : premièrement, celle de reconnaître notre position dans le contexte colonial (comme colonisateurs ou Autochtones) et, deuxièmement, de réviser les actions en lien aux engagements interculturels et inter-politiques, se basant sur le principe et la pratique de l’honneur, en accord avec la jurisprudence canadienne, l’anthropologie politique de Michael Asch et les demandes persistantes des Peuples autochtones pour l’observation des traités.

Mots-clés : pratique anthropologique, Peuples autochtones, colonialisme, expertise, collaboration, traités, anthropologie politique, Inuits, pratiques de décolonisation, relationnalité

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., First Vice-President, James Eetoook expressed his surprise at Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s statement, made at the G20 summit, that Canada “has no history of colonialism.” “The Prime Minister cannot make such an inaccurate statement that clearly contradicts history. The history of Inuit interaction with the Government of Canada is a study in colonialism. Our history includes relocations, residential schools, forced settlements, dog slaughter, no voting right until the 1960s, no recognition of our land rights, and many other forms of colonialism that are still very fresh in our minds,” said Eetoook. [Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) 2009]

Introduction: On Working Between

Not unlike many Canadian anthropologists whose research brings them into direct or indirect association with Indigenous peoples, I have constantly been challenged by how colonial processes still abound. Of course this understanding runs contrary to blanket claims made by political leaders, including former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who said in 2009 that Canada “has no history of colonialism.” Starkly countering the Harper claim are myriad others issuing from First Peoples, scholars, NGOs and an increasingly large proportion of the Canadian public, including that of Eetoook of the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) and captured again in very practical terms in the 2013 Idle No More (INM) manifesto: “First Nations have experienced a history of colonization which has resulted in outstanding land claims, lack of resources and unequal funding for services such as education and housing” (Idle No More n.d.).

I contend that for most Canadian anthropologists, in the face of the facts, Harper’s claim is a simple absurdity, while the INM and NTI statements are straightforward observations of our contemporary and historic situation, starting from at least the time of Confederation and the introduction of the Indian Act. In terms of its relations with Indigenous peoples, Canada’s history has been predominantly but not totally or inevitably, a history, story and practice of colonialism.

My own 30 years of engagements with Indigenous peoples began before my undertaking of formalized anthropological “research.” While volunteering to assist Piikani Blackfoot people in their repatriation of ceremonial materials from museums and private collections in the 1980s, I was also drawn into their land and ceremonial relations because the materials in question were vital to exercising Piikani law, as well as practices of belonging (Noble et al. 2008; Ross 2008). Other personal engagements over the years ranged from supporting Cree moose hide tanning and traditional medicine projects (Young 1989), to aiding Blackfoot political action in their relations with waterways, their kin and governments (Noble 2002; Crowshoe and Mannes Schmidt 1997), supporting Mi’kmaq students through university education—and all of this always coinciding with efforts to restore and reanimate so much that was either taken away, denied, demeaned or destroyed under successive regimes of oppressive statutory law, most notably the Indian Act (Warry 2008). I have come to the inescapable conclusion that First Peoples recognize this all-encompassing political milieu as the continuation of colonialism and, furthermore, that colonialism impinged over and over how we could relate to one another as Indigenous and settler-descendant persons and peoples.

While we do have a rich tradition of Canadian anthropologists who have sought just resolution of relations with First Peoples, have we, in Canadian anthropology—or in anthropology generally—developed a sufficient scholarly treatment and theorization of the everyday workings and contexts of the colonial?¹ I contend that we have not, and one of the aims of this article is to contribute to this development, alongside a second aim, which is to come up with pragmatic suggestions for securing and bringing to bear the agency of anthropologists working toward decolonial futures.

All through my personal and professional engagements with Indigenous peoples (Piikani, Cree, Kwakwaka’wakw, Secwepemc, Mi’kmaq) I have acted genuinely, seeking to respect and act upon their understood protocols, directives, laws, relations. Yet over and over we hit multiple obstacles that would trip up those knowledge and research relations, and prevent us from going further with them. The obstacles were often subtle and complicated, as I will show in the Nunavut case presented later, but invariably they were articulated through the ongoing asymmetries of colonial relations in Canada. As comprehensively described in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), we are confronted with arrangements where the Canadian state controls decision-making, sets the formal laws and demands Indigenous peoples accommodate to those laws, understand their

own “status” within the terms of those laws and adjust their lives to the structures of state bureaucratic, legal and policy frameworks that have been made, not by Indigenous peoples themselves, but by successive governments of non-Indigenous peoples who have come to settle on Indigenous lands. This has resulted in ongoing poverty and social suffering experienced by Indigenous peoples, in contrast to the prevalent wealth and privilege of the dominant non-native population (Anaya 2014). This mode of settler colonialism has been and remains the overarching milieu in which we, as anthropologists, attempt to find ways to enter into consenting, research collaboration with our Indigenous partners—acknowledging that most professional academics in this discipline occupy the position of settler, rather than Indigenous (Asch 2001; Paine 1999).

So, taking up Asch, where do we stand and what can we do from this position? It is often taken for granted that anthropologists apply their knowledges and expertise at the intersection of practices *between* peoples. Many anthropologists move within a typically colonial middle ground between Indigenous polities and state polities. Michael Asch refers to this as one of our most common “political locations” in anthropology, the location where we must find “a place to stand” (Asch 2001; 2009), prompting us to reflect on the role we play and our moral-intellectual integrity as experts, persons and citizens from within our own polities. As Canadian citizens, for instance, we would ask how we are located in the currents of Indigenous–state relations, what moral position might arise in response to those currents and then take active steps to engage the currents as persons, as scholars and, consequently, as interveners in just political action. Asch (2009) points out, for example, that during field studies with the Aranda, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown was located politically in the currents of colonial attitudes in Australia. Radcliffe-Brown chose to write about and to dispel the mythos of those currents in the popular news media and, further, Asch argues, in aligning his work on descent in demonstrating Aboriginal legal and political society, thus providing a scholarly counter-narrative to dominant, racist scholarship that presented Indigenous peoples in Australia as politically inferior and undeserving of political status. Asch’s principle could extend to any kind of anthropological engagement. Whatever the specific issue one deals with, we can always detect the political currents or milieu in which we are located and, from there, begin to make choices about where we stand and what we might do as ethnographers in those currents, which engender certain relations while obscuring others.

Marilyn Strathern has remarked that “Anthropologists really have nothing to offer if they cannot demonstrate the difference it makes to understand relations through the relationships they are involved with” (Strathern n.d.). In that spirit, for method I work to turn the anthropological analytic back on anthropological praxis by telling auto-ethnographic stories of my own encounters in several settings, considering how coloniality trips us up in exercising our expert agency or in allowing the practices, outcomes and effects of that agency to be mobilized toward just resolution of relations. The discussion will unfold in two sections, followed by a conclusion. First, I set out the scholarly notion of “coloniality” as discursive formation and two dominant dimensions that I have come up against: *coloniality as oppositional encounter*, and *coloniality as apparatus or milieu*. Refining this further, I then offer a composite story, in the form of an auto-biographic sketch of my own research experiences, indicating two further registers of action, the interpersonal and the inter-political, both of which place different demands upon our practices as experts but which typically get separated in our thinking and practice in problematic ways.

In my second auto-ethnographic story, I recount the case of my involvements in a Nunavut-focused research project in which I was invited to contribute during the planning phases, though not beyond. This allows me to further delineate the two registers of action within coloniality—inter-personal or inter-cultural, and inter-political. It is at the intersection of these actions that the dilemma of practicing an anti-colonial anthropology becomes more evident, as do the problems of consent and collaboration. I frame this dilemma as a *double bind*, to adapt Gregory Bateson’s terms, in effect a no-win situation or what Isabelle Stengers refers to as the choice between “infernal alternatives” (Pignarre and Stengers 2011:24).

Finally, I close by proposing a double move to help us get out of this vexing situation, beyond unsituated collaboration or critique. The first is acknowledging the part we play in coloniality; the second is altering our individual and collective actions as researchers to both reveal and remediate colonial imposition. This modest antidote is part of what I call *the treaty turn* in social research praxis and gives us entry to the question of honour as the basis of that praxis. I arrive, by a different trajectory, at a similar juncture as that of Michael Asch, both in his earlier work on political location of anthropologists and anthropological theory, and in his recent work on treaties and the moral political obligations flowing from the shared premise of Indigenous

and settler peoples in Canada of “being here to stay” (Asch 2014).

Tripped Up

Intellectual, everyday and critical discourses on colonialism and anthropology’s complicity in its processes, are numerous, complex and move in many directions. To stake out a place in that discourse, I will start by laying out how I use the word “coloniality.” This use can be related, in part, to that which Latin American decolonial scholars have advanced using Quijano’s (2000) notion of the “coloniality of power”—the idea that the very disparities of modern power are structured by colonizing processes. Moraña et al. (2008) point to the ubiquity of the process, explaining coloniality as a “term that encompasses the trans-historic expansion of colonial domination and the perpetuation of its effects in contemporary times” (3). Writing from the stance of subaltern practices and echoing Quijano, Mignolo (2012) considers coloniality and modernity as intimately entwined, remarking “there is no modernity without coloniality ... coloniality is constitutive and not derivative, of modernity” (ix). Likewise, Escobar (2004) says that when we speak of coloniality, we are identifying “the domination of others outside the European core as a necessary dimension of modernity” (217). Thus, coloniality works as a complex, entailing several intersecting ideas and practices.

There are two key dimensions of coloniality-as-practice, in terms of the settler–Indigenous colonial relations that I am considering in this article. One is aligned with *colonial encounters* across cultural difference inscribed upon persons; the other is aligned with *colonialism as an apparatus* in itself.

Coloniality as Oppositional Encounter of Self and Other

Coloniality is premised on the modern opposition of the relation between a self and an other. In these terms, coloniality can be thought of as the tendency of a “self” in an encounter to impose boundary coordinates—such as those of territory, knowledges, categories, normative practices—on the domains of land, knowledge, ways of life of an other who have had prior, principal relations with those lands, etc. Importantly, coloniality as encounter makes an additional move to rationalize the dominant presence of this self within those coordinates and to make the presence of the other subordinate to it—often as a tactic for dispossession. As encounter, coloniality extends to many sub-forms of colonialism—that is, we can speak variously of settler colonialism, geopolitical colonialism, administrative colonialism, cul-

tural colonialism, colonial property, scientific colonialism, colonial law, the colonization of consciousness, etc. All are premised on the dominating–subordinating relation of self over other (cf. Fabian 1983; Thomas 1991; Pels and Salemink 2000).

Coloniality as Apparatus and Milieu

The second dimension of coloniality is how it operates as an apparatus of modernity, a workaday containment field for defining, constraining and incorporating persons, as well as delimited populations and polities. In this sense, coloniality can be thought of as a corollary of Foucaultian governmentality (the conduct of conduct), imposing an effective ontology of territory, ownership, knowledge, rule and much more. Crucial here, is the way that coloniality as apparatus is the embracing milieu for coloniality as encounter, where it appears to sustain the other and maintain a dialogue between the self and the other, while always ensuring, by whatever flexible means, that the other remains other, partially welcomed into the arrangement but necessarily in a subordinate position, subjugated, inscribed as other by self, thereby securing the power position of self. As Asch has noted, this accords with Foucault's observation (1977:73) that colonialism also has "a boomerang effect," performing a symmetrical internal colonialism on *both* the self and the other simultaneously, effectively naturalizing the relation.² As Asch says, "It is what we do to ourselves in making our lives" (Asch 2007:284). This Foucaultian understanding, I contend, is closer to the idea of coloniality offered by Quijano and the Latin American decolonial scholars, as it seats coloniality as a constitutive procedure of modernity and aligns with Foucault's ideas of modern *subjection*.

As noted, these two dimensions—coloniality as encounter and as apparatus or milieu—are of a piece, constitutive of each other. Actions we might take, as individuals and as researchers, can alternately become instruments deployed to sustain asymmetry or they can become modes of agency for interrupting or moving past it.

Within these core dimensions of coloniality, there are two further principle *registers of action* which I have already mentioned and I will bring to the fore in my discussions below. One is the register of the interpersonal or inter-cultural, where asymmetries of culture and difference between actors in encounter are the locus of action.³ The second is the register of the inter-political—foregrounding the asymmetries of relations between polities, entire political communities.

I turn now to the series of auto-ethnographic stories—starting from before graduate studies—describing how coloniality *as encounter* and *apparatus* has reared itself in my anthropological involvements—that is, how, at virtually every turn, coloniality has tripped me up.

Back Story: Learning Coloniality in Practice

My first foray into graduate anthropology came after having given much of my time and energy in the 1980s and 1990s working closely with Piikani Blackfoot people in Southwestern Alberta, on matters of museums and cultural tourism development, much of this spurred by the repatriation of Piikani ceremonial materials from major museums. Since many of the museums which continued to hold and control significant collections of Piikani materials were either government organizations or predominantly funded from the public purse, they were, in certain key senses, extensions of the Canadian state apparatus. We understood, in fact, what we were witnessing in the new openness to repatriation requests from First Nations post "Spirit Sings" (Harrison 1993; 2005) was but one adjustment in the colonial contours of the state apparatus, moving toward but not a fully decolonial move. Repatriation itself was a redress process predicated on previous removal and dispossession of peoples' heritage and pursuant practices at that time, continued to operate by the privilege of the museums or state institutions approving the overarching terms and laws of return, including the retention of proprietary control over materials by the museums, even after return to communities (Ames 2000). The Piikani and I were often tripped up by the governmentally-driven bureaucratic machinations flowing from mandates, the primacy of notions of national or provincial patrimony and ongoing privileging of private property premises of control over heritage in museums and even epistemic concerns (Noble 2002; 2008). Raising concerns about this over-arching condition did little or nothing to change how things could unfold.

After several years of working with and supporting the Piikani, I realized that my contribution was increasingly less needed or appropriate. Although I was usually welcomed in, there were some who saw me as a "white" or settler interloper—indeed, some who identified me with the forces of colonization said so explicitly, even though my intent was to work against colonial imposition. These responses made me acutely aware of the ongoing paternalism that led me, a settler outsider from Edmonton, to show up in a reserve community in the 1980s and 1990s offering assistance with repatriation

matters. I was witnessing how the colonial milieu of dispossession had set up the issue in the first place, this then prompting my involvement and support, but how the milieu in turn also set the conditions by which others called my involvement into question.

In the course of things, and having been drawn into the social and economic lives of Piikani people, including their spiritual ceremonies which were so necessarily put into action in dealing with the handling and return of cultural material at the museum interface, I also became attentive to, and faced skepticism regarding, how anthropology, as expert knowledge practice, was implicated both in museological rationales for removal of Piikani material culture and in the telling of their cultural and social lives. Certain streams of anthropological thought had been crucial in the constitution of such categories as “tribe,” “band,” “sacred,” “secular” and how such distinctions conditioned whether museums officials could recognize Piikani law and ceremony as relevant. These terms underwrote the privileging of statist law and political process of these public heritage institutions.⁴ I was, as we all were, caught in coloniality.

Coincidentally, during this work, I couldn't help but note the potency of Piikani relations with animals in ceremony, in their stories, laws and histories, manifest in the very ceremonial materials the Piikani sought to repatriate. I wondered about the qualitative and socio-political difference between how the Piikani engaged these other co-habitants of the earth and how Euro-Canadians, like myself, engaged with animals in a domain we call “nature”. I noted that those Euro-Canadian relations were taken for granted in heritage-related encounters—coloniality again. So I asked myself if it might be possible to move out of this nagging colonial position that had tripped me up repeatedly, by turning my attention to *us*, modern North Americans, our engagement with the natural, with animals, to understand our own relations with the human and the non-human. Having had previous professional associations with natural science museums, I decided to pursue graduate studies in anthropology on public and scientific fetishism of animals, including primates and cetaceans and, especially, dinosaurs.

Working then between approaches of American anthropology of science and technology and those of “studying up” after Laura Nader, I soon encountered highly recurrent tropes and stories in public museum and scientific accounts of dinosaurian nature. Narratives of frontier discoveries, lost lands and myriad other procedures pointed to “taming” of the feared nature, mapping and conquest of territory, naming and claiming, a host of tropes that recapitulated colonial discourse, in the course of supposedly disinterested science

and public education. As Fredric Jameson suggested, here were master tropes and narratives “buried” within modern thought and practice in the way nature was described and encountered (Jameson 1984, xii–xviii). Coloniality was built into the subtle tissue of authorized, public and scientific knowledge, suffusing the way we learned to think about and apprehend the natural world and beings, both past and present (Noble forthcoming).

I became aware of the mutuality of the colonial and the modern, as Quijano noted, in the uninterrogated propensity to impose knowledge coordinates upon everything that the modern self encountered, and so rationalizing this self—Foucault's boomerang effect (Foucault 1997, 103). From dinosaur palaeontology, I learned how the milieu in which the work of fossil reconstruction took place would *colonize* the direction of such reconstructions. The two dimensions of coloniality, encounter and milieu, were fully entwined.

By the late 1990s, I was being asked to join scholarly groups in emergent post-colonial science studies, which was addressing how the sciences might divert from their tendency to re-enact the practices of knowledge domination (see Anderson 2002; McNeil and Castaneda 2005). Then, practical matters arose. Now that I had a doctorate in anthropology, I contemplated entering the academic job market in Canada, to find no posts existed in the anthropology of science, my area of graduate expertise. I learned that to be competitive in academic anthropology jobs being advertised in Canada then, I would have to demonstrate that I had a “people” or “area,” especially one other than “us,” my own society, one that made sense within Canadian anthropological circles, where the discipline was still dominated by the study of “others” and teaching anthropology's engagement across difference, albeit with a critical edge. The tissue of coloniality became evident to me once more.

For pragmatic reasons and with greater contextual sensitivity, I returned to my work on museums and Indigenous peoples, through a postdoctoral fellowship but specifically addressing the colonial imposition of Euro-centric property practices in institutional repatriation relations with Indigenous peoples. Western property law was the default for museum officials, with Indigenous peoples' laws of rights to materials typically being trivialized. This research—on the trumping of one legal order by another—lead me into the larger question of relations of settler polities and knowledges, with Indigenous polities and knowledges. Repatriation encounters were more than matters of inter-cultural redress and translation. They demanded, but never provided, redress of inter-legal, inter-political asymmetries.

I was now witnessing the interplay of these two registers of action within coloniality. Where I had at first been working with the Piikani in what I understood then to be problems of inter-cultural relations—in museums encounters (the first register of action)—I now moved to engage this second register of action in coloniality, the inter-political, that is, the relations between polities. Encounter and milieu coincided. From what I could discern, the registers were addressed separately in anthropology, rather than taken together and symptomatic of each other. The conclusion I arrived at is that we are still culturally, epistemically, personally and politically in the colonial moment. Coloniality is, indeed, “what we do to ourselves in making our lives”—coloniality, for all intents and purposes, stands as an ontological condition.

With that as my backdrop, I turn to the case of the Nunavut project, to illustrate details of the interplay of the two registers of action and the quotidian challenges in trying to work from an anti-colonial stance in anthropology.

Anthropologist: Instrument or Agent?

In a 2007 American Anthropological Association panel addressed to “multi-stakeholder” environmental governance, the two Canadian organizers, Shauna McGarvey and Tara Goetze, asked a provocative question about “compromise,” with regard to the participation of Indigenous peoples and anthropologists in environmental co-management work:

Is it possible that compromise may be practiced in a manner that enhances local actors’ capacity to exercise control? In what ways might local actors engage in relationship-building in a manner that allows for such an outcome to occur?⁵

This is a hopeful question, especially if we counterpose it against more pessimistic propositions discussed in anthropology, where the local players in such arrangements are thought to be compromising themselves in some fundamentally, intractable way, due to the overarching and subtle power of the state and its network of extensions to control co-management (see Nadasdy 2003). The political difference between these two positions is that one implies the Indigenous or local peoples and the anthropologists working with them, are exercising their agency through productive relation-making involving a passing form of “compromise”; in the other, Indigenous or local peoples and the anthropologists appear to lose their agency entirely, becoming no more than instruments of state projects of controlling lands, environments and the people within them.

If one adopts Mary Louise Pratt’s proposition that colonialism becomes visible in circumstances where interlocking arrangements of practices are played out, “within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt 1992:6–7), then it would be fair to say that the organizers were considering how to distinguish certain acts of compromise that might eventually come to diminish or eliminate asymmetrical power relations, from others that succumb to this relation or possibly intensify it (see Sahlins 1999). Here, the working together of the double register of coloniality becomes apparent. Where the promise of colonial action at the register of inter-personal–inter-cultural relations (compromise being acceptable if it creates the potential of non-colonial relation-making) lies is in its purchase of later affecting the register of the inter-political (the establishing of non-colonial relations between polities, undoing the effective asymmetries of power and control).

I responded to the compromise question through my story of the “Nunavut Community-based Coastal Inventory Project,” a story where these two registers of action did indeed come into play with one another. To tell this story effectively, it is important that I first situate the project as an initiative of the Government of Nunavut in cooperation with the Ottawa Department of Indian Northern Affairs Canada, INAC.⁶ This positions the project within the Canadian state’s political framework. Nunavut takes in the eastern partition of the former Northwest Territories and was fully established in 1999, under the terms of the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA), which saw the cession of inherent title by the Inuit to the Crown. The territory and the formation of a Government of Nunavut was formalized by a referendum conducted by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Inuit people’s representative organization in Northern Canada, and then by passage through federal parliament of the Nunavut Act (1993).⁷ The Nunavut territory and government fall under *Constitution Act, 1867* s.91, with the federal Crown having “legislative authority over and administration and control of, federal Crown lands, rights over waters, and control of non-renewable resources,” although the NLCA also anticipates negotiations toward devolution of certain powers from Ottawa to the Nunavut government.⁸

Tripped Up by Knowledge Encounters and Crown Political Relations with the Inuit

In early January of 2007, I was invited along with several other scholars (anthropologists, legal scholars, community planners, GIS researchers, marine ecologists) to meet and consider joining an existing three-person university team (one oceans biologist, two management researchers). The group was invited to respond to a

request for proposals (RFP) from the Nunavut government's Department of Economic Development and Transportation. The core team had been in touch with the Nunavut department over the previous six months and now presented the call for a three-year "Community-based Coastal Inventory Project." Those of us invited were asked to present our experience and offer advice on the drafting of a proposal that, if successful, could eventually include us as research contributors. The lion's share of the \$1.4 million for this project was to come from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in Ottawa, INAC, with a minor contribution from the Nunavut department. The RFP described this coastal resource inventory as:

a collection of information on coastal resources and activities, gained from community interviews, research, reports, maps, etc., which can be spatially mapped, to assist in management, development and conservation of coastal areas ... [that] will allow communities and governments to use the information to better understand and plan future economic activities in coastal areas.⁹

Matters of global warming, permafrost melt, shifts in migration patterns for fish and game were alluded to frequently but specifically, the RFP explained how the project was to focus on "IQ:"

Inuit Qauji-majatu-qangit (Inuit knowledge) [IQ] and experience is intrinsically linked to Inuit identity, health and well-being and is in danger of being lost. Community-based coastal inventories are a way to gather, record and map this information in a central database and link it with scientific research and knowledge.

It further noted that, "there is a growing urgency to record, protect and conserve Nunavut's traditional coastal biological, cultural and ecological knowledge before it disappears with the present generation."

In this, the project presented what appeared to be considerations—familiar in the TEK ethos of much contemporary anthropology—about mobilizing and sustaining of Indigenous knowledges, framed as a stay against acculturation forces (Sejersen 2003). It was abundantly evident that the integrity of knowledge-practices was considered to be at risk and we were dealing with the challenges of creating correspondence between two generalized forms of knowledge-practices. Implicitly, the practice of IQ had important social and political valences, that is, for identity, health and well-being, and there were apparent impediments to its future intergenerational transmission. It was also apparent this project was conceived such that it placed the research

and the researchers, who would both *collaborate on* and *contribute to* the research design, *in between* the governmental agencies and Inuit knowledge-holders, adding the credibility and technical expertise in these initial phases. In this sense, it was a conventional mediating project, setting up a place in the middle, as it were, where the experts could conduct their work generating accounts and translations that simultaneously supported local knowledge holders but also repackaged the terms, so they could be put to use by the Nunavut and federal governments to fulfill conservation and economic development mandates.

Sally Engle Merry (2006) has discussed how this model of expertise emerges in cosmopolitanizing circuits, in regard to the recognition and translation of local peoples' interests and issues, into international human rights discourse. Merry notes the power of those positioned in the middle, as "people who understand both the worlds of transnational human rights and local cultural practices and who can look both ways" (42). So, on the surface of it, at least, and returning to my story, we would be aiding both the Inuit people and the Nunavut and federal governments in this translation work, a conventional role for anthropology: in the middle.¹⁰ I have continued to learn how fundamentally problematic and how vulnerable our presence in this space can be.

The translation demands would be brought to bear even in this first meeting. One matter arising was how most of the presentation by the oceanographer focused on biological techniques, GIS mapping and databases, fish and sea mammal population studies, presumably because this is something of which he had a technical grasp, and also because there were invited specialists in such areas attending the meeting. However, it was clear that the points from the RFP being cited by the oceanographer were selective, seeking these forms of expertise. Little significant mention was given of the social, legal, economic, political, let alone the Inuit people's IQ dimensions of this project.

Intervening

Before long, I and two other anthropologists pointed out the statements on IQ and also the interesting matter that, of the projected \$1.4 million budget, approximately \$600,000 was allocated to community-based knowledge documentation, that is, to IQ.¹¹ We suggested, based on what we know of prior work with Indigenous groups, that one of the probable concerns for the Inuit to be addressed with care, was that Inuit knowledge had its own practices of transmission and that the techniques of research discussed by the core team seemed overly to emphasize scientific technical praxis, complemented

by interviews with some rather generally referred to group, “elders.” We pointed out the likelihood that crucial to such transmission was the formulation of relationships in and through which Inuit themselves felt most able to undertake such transmission and that this had to be grounded in mutual trust and respect in knowledge relations over the long run, which in post-contact times have instead tended to privilege “Western” scientific knowledges and practices (see ITK and NRI 2007).

The point here was not simply to state that IQ had to be given ample support as the key knowledge source but, rather, to highlight the potential of inter-cultural and inter-personal asymmetries of power. We were doing our level best to stay off the colonial move here, *at the level or register of intercultural knowledge practices, between persons*. The principal investigators noted this all down, indicating their gratitude, that this was very helpful in understanding how better to develop the proposal, not only to enhance winning the research contract but also to position our group and institution in other potential research ties to Nunavut, long into the future.

Then, taking up at least the rhetorical elements of our suggestions, the core team drafted their proposal for first stage feasibility and exploratory funding to emphasize Inuit knowledge relations, with ample use of such words as “respect,” “trust,” “long-term relationships,” understanding knowledge practices, etc. In Merry’s (2009:134–178) terms, they had attempted to vernacularize what for many local players, and for anthropologists who work with them, are highly nuanced and politically salient practices (see also Noble 2008). They submitted the proposal for phase one, and about one week later, reported that they had been selected to undertake this first \$85,000 phase of the project, which would entail developing a full research design proposal over the next four months.

There was and remains little doubt about the sincerity and goodwill of the core team members. That said, my initial concern revolved around whether the knowledge practices and land relations of the Inuit who live, hunt and attempt any kind of livelihood in coastal areas, registered enough in the thinking of the core team. Not only had there been limited cognizance of the Inuit knowledge-practices, there was an over-reaching for the techniques of regular biological and geographical sciences. I wondered about the possible risk that the Inuit and their knowledges would yet be compromised.

Then there were the larger political matters that were being overlooked and, arguably, were far more cause for concern. I began researching the recent political and administrative history of Nunavut and imme-

diately learned that several scathing reports had come down from the auditor general of Canada and from an independent conciliator, former BC Justice Thomas Berger on several serious breaches of Canada’s responsibilities since the 1993 signing of the NLCA (Berger 2006). These breaches were the source of decline in quality of economic and social life for Inuit peoples, and of the lands and waters where they hunt and fish, precisely the opposite of what was promised in the agreement. Indeed, just five weeks before the RFP being sent out, the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), the Inuit representative organization under the NLCA, had launched a \$1 billion litigation against Canada for non-implementation of its obligations in the NLCA.¹² The RFP, its timing and what appeared to be very limited political and technical understandings on the part of the core team, added further concerns. *Could it be the sudden fast action by the federal government on this project was aimed at demonstrating it was fulfilling its NLCA obligations, under threat of litigation? Or, was it a genuine step toward implementation with funding directed to Inuit IQ holders?*

Legal breaches claimed in the suit brought the second register of coloniality clearly into view, that of the encounter between polities, the Inuit as represented by NTI and the elected Government of Canada, including

- inadequate funding for surface rights;
- inadequate consultation processes with Inuit people across Nunavut;
- failure to monitor the health of ecosystem and socio-economic conditions;
- and, failure to consult on service contract procurement processes (where a great deal of contracts were going to southerners rather than Inuit).

A key issue was that the Government of Canada was, by now, to have produced a labour force analysis and already to have created economic opportunities and jobs which built upon, renewed and supported Inuit land-related knowledges and practices. I learned that the key organizations the government agreed to work with, to ensure Inuit peoples did benefit from these opportunities, were the regional hunter trappers organizations (HTOs) and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, which were linked to NTI. It has to be stressed that all of these unmet obligations were those expected by the Inuit for having ceded their Aboriginal title to lands and waters in the Nunavut settlement area, under the NLCA.¹³

The reasoning offered in the statement of claim amounts to an explanation of colonial political asymmetries between the parties, as stated in two clauses:

14. Various provisions in the Agreement require the Crown to take governmental initiatives to fulfil promises made to Inuit in the Agreement. The Crown's power to design, select and implement such initiatives affords it power to control the manner and degree to which the Crown's own obligations under the Agreement are performed.

15. As a consequence of the Crown's dominant power in this regard, the Inuit are placed in a correspondingly vulnerable position where obtaining the benefit of the Agreement is dependent on the exercise of discretionary power by the Crown. [see NTI 2006]

In brief, the Inuit entered into the NLCA on the basis of trust that the Crown would honour its obligations. In the absence of this trust, we have instead profound political and legal conflict tethered to how the Crown was exercising its discretionary powers.

Only settled in May 2015, after nearly nine years in court, the litigation demonstrates the persistent milieu of coloniality in structuring relations between the Crown and the Inuit. The inventory project had to be understood as an engagement within this milieu.¹⁴ The Inuit were clearly compromised by the Canadian state apparatus—an all the more brutal colonial irony given the NLCA was being used to brace up Canada's claim to sovereignty in the north, lending certainty to revenue returns on resource exploitation activity for Canada (Fenge 2013; Loukacheva 2009). From the perspective of the NTI, the Crown was violating the honour in relations that the Inuit lived by and that they had expected of the Crown in all its relations under the NLCA.

I relayed these findings to the PI, emphasizing the vital importance of relation-making throughout the project, of bringing these matters squarely into the proposal development, and underscoring the political necessity to privilege IQ practices centrally in the design. Though sceptical of the relevance, the PI noted the concern. Consequently, he and the core team added plans and requests to meet with NTI, the regional HTOs and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.

Upon their return from their first three-day meeting in Iqaluit, the core team changed its tack, reporting now the importance of building relationships, as echoed back to them by those Inuit and non-Inuit people with whom they met, that they did obtain a meeting with the Wildlife Management Board, now stating how crucial the involvement of this board would be now and into the future. Yet the report still contained problematic turns of phrase, including a particularly disquieting one describing the procedures they would use for "Mining TK." Several of us pointed out the colonial valences

such a phrasing carried. Although the phrase was removed, we remained concerned about a mindset that still did not automatically understand these valences.

Colonial or Anti-Colonial Effects?

What can be said of the effect of our repeated interventions in the proposal development process, where we strove to move matters in anti-colonial ways? Of course, by intervening, we aided the core team editing the research proposals such that they could articulate with the relational orientations and knowledge practices of the community-located Inuit and, as well, with highly sensitive political-legal processes then underway—even though the PI reported that the Nunavut government manager in charge had said such matters played no direct part in this project. The manager's position, however, runs counter to former Justice Berger's conciliator's report, as well as the NTI court filing, both of which pointed to crucial failures of the Crown to fund and implement participation of Inuit people (vs. southerners) in employment and procurement. The inventory project with its projected extensive participation of Inuit community members and IQ holders was precisely a procurement–employment project. From where I stood, it was impossible—and folly—to separate the issue of IQ encounters, from Inuit peoples' conflicted relations with Crown governments and their representative departments. The cautionary approach that I, and other social and legal researchers advanced, was founded in historically-informed understandings of the intricacies of colonial domination.

So, where we brought sensitivities by crafting the proposal, it appeared that our interventions were put to work instrumentally by the core team, aiding them in winning the initial planning contract with the Nunavut government. Although the core team members often missed many of the colonial ramifications, our interventions helped alter the written proposals and so forestall concerns that would in all likelihood have arisen with NTI and the HTOs. Then, by relaying concerns expressed in the NTI's statement of claim against Canada, we underscored the political importance of supporting Inuit peoples' control by ensuring especially that genuine interchange with the HTOs would be followed.

As such, the anti-colonial sensitivities we brought to bear may have been sufficient at least to get the project off the ground. As it turned out, our institutional team's involvement would be short lived, limited to the planning and design undertaken by the core team in 2007. It is uncertain as to whether the core group quite grasped the inherent colonial processes at play or whether how

they (we) could be part of the problem as southern experts from the settler polity. It is also hard to say whether the project design was altered in a manner demonstrably good for the Inuit in advancing their knowledge autonomy and authority (as self-determination or territorial self-governance) or, whether indeed, the project might simply be held up as part of a legal-political defence for the Crown to argue they were facilitating Inuit employment.¹⁵

In a more nuanced sense, the interventions revealed crucial silences, helping foreground the imperatives of *relation-making* with IQ holders and the HTOs. While this also brought attention to concerns of *relation-breaking* on the Crown's part, our effect upon this political milieu was affirming of the Inuit but probably insignificant for the Crown. Even if we could claim a positive impact at the register of inter-cultural coloniality, when confronted by inter-political coloniality our effects were less certain; indeed, we seemed to put ourselves at risk of being seen as irritants by raising such matters, rather than taking the easier road of accommodating the supposedly disinterested scientific, knowledge-producing job at hand.¹⁶

Finally, from the standpoint of working as anthropologists, it should be clear that this is a perverse and vexing place to stand! We were caught in the messy middle ground as witnesses to colonial domination, facing doubt and denial from others about this very domination. From this location, we had to keep asking what choices we should make: *Should we walk away, sensing the instrumentalizing of our expertise by others? Or should we allow ourselves to continue working in this conflicted and uncertain arrangement, hoping to minimize the colonial compromise, where the core team on their own seemed to miss this issue?* Neither option is compelling. Indeed, both are fraught. The choice between helpful compromise and being compromised became, at best, a deeply problematic one. Thus, my final question: Is there another way through?

Conclusion: From Double Bind to Honour in all Relations

Talal Asad, long considered a leading figure in anthropological discourses of colonial encounter, remarked on "the complex conditions that colonialism created—[in] which those who dominated and those who were dominated were joint authors" (Scott 2006:254, quoting Asad 2003) Taking Asad's point seriously, one has to ask, is there a way to keep from re-authoring and re-inscribing the colonial over and over? Is there a way out of this mess? A defeatist would conclude that coloniality is inevitable or final. That is not the position I take. In con-

cluding, I reiterate an option proposed most forcefully by Michael Asch, an option that, surprisingly, we are only slowly engaging in anthropology. That is, the turn—or return—to honourable relations envisaged through treaty, which work at inter-cultural and inter-political registers simultaneously. I will present this after recapitulating the problem laid out to this point.

Thus far, I have proposed two registers of action for an anthropology that is attentive to coloniality. The first is the register of *inter-cultural* relations, between persons, expressed increasingly through collaborative engagement. While helpful in offering potential decolonial allies to Indigenous peoples, this remains a conflicted move for anthropologists, whether they are settler, Indigenous or otherwise. It is a location that, arguably, is entailed by the second register of the colonial arrangement, the *inter-political*, between polities, in which we are also located as anthropologists. Moreover, in conditions of coloniality, the state typically approaches Indigenous peoples not as autonomous peoples and polities but as populations, subject to state governance and law, subverting the relation between polities (Muehlebach 2003).

There have been two predominant approaches in American and Canadian anthropology to respond to these colonial conditions. While both are workable, I argue that they leave us quite hobbled.

One: We seek moral adequacy by entering respectfully into collaborative relations with Indigenous peoples, usually because they invite us do so, as consenting partners. We may work in support of their localized efforts to assert claims to territory or jurisdiction or decent lives economically and socially or, possibly, to assert their knowledges, practices, through their relations with the land and with others. We can even extend this effort to our institutional counterparts—as with my scientist colleagues in the Nunavut project—in coming to grips with the colonial arrangements, adjusting participation to support knowledge, land, legal and policy arrangements that do not impose our practices upon theirs but rather, advance theirs. Inter-cultural, inter-personal collaborations such as these are accommodated in the liberal apparatus of coloniality. They are relativizing and equalizing moves: we ought to respect each other, since both we, as experts (in our, as yet, predominantly settler communities) and they (as Indigenous peoples in their lands and communities) both have legitimate purchase on knowledge, on how to live in the world, plus the capacity to understand each other, so we ought to be able to live harmoniously together.

The problem, as noted throughout, is that we know the limits of this move. We understand how larger

powers—for example, the settler state apparatus in Canada—readily constrains and entails Indigenous peoples’ cultural and political autonomy and even entails their efforts in challenging the apparatus by any means, including by their collaborations with experts such as anthropologists, or by tying up grievances within increasingly protracted litigation processes, as has been the case with the Inuit and the NTI. Our Indigenous partners, on their own or in collaboration with us, are often conscripted into the circuits of the apparatus, including its legal system—we join with Indigenous collaborators as “unbidden partner[s] at the table of modernity” (Siddiqi 2002:175).

Two. The second common choice is to critique and analyze the liberal cosmopolitan powers themselves, applying whatever theoretical or critical techniques to unmask them, or to resist and intervene in them, speaking “truth to power,” as the Quakers put it. This could include an analysis of the complex actions by which the apparatuses of governmentality along with capital and their circuits are at play (see Li 2007). The problem is that we now set ourselves up as adversaries, awaiting ideological rejoinders and return criticisms, typically aimed at us for *not* being adequately disinterested. Critique helpfully exposes asymmetry but it does little to effect resolution, countered so readily by those who are aligned with the powers at which the critique is aimed, sequestering the critics to a minority position within the prevailing milieu.

So there’s the rub: to collaborate or to critique? In either of these prevalent approaches we find ourselves still caught in the colonial set up, posed with vexing choices, echoing what Pignarre and Stengers (2011) describe as a “set of situations that seem to leave no other choice than resignation or a slightly hollow sounding denunciation” (24). It is an effective *double bind*. Double bind is a term coined by Gregory Bateson (Bateson et al. 1956) in thinking about no-win situations as triggers for schizophrenia—a potent parallel in this circumstance. Bateson et al. (1963) refined the point on how to think about double binds, as “people caught up in an ongoing system which produces conflicting definitions of a relationship and consequent subjective distress” (157). A characteristic of a double bind is that we are not merely caught in a struggle over which of two possibilities to choose but in the fact that we seem to face them as the *only* two choices available, while we may very well be unconscious of alternatives to such a choice. We confront the dilemma, faltering at a solution that, when acted upon, seems only to intensify the dilemma.

In the vexing situation of coloniality, then, it seems impossible to know if we have agency in advancing just

Indigenous-settler state relations or, if we are mere tools in the expanding culture of the state apparatus. At times, it will be appropriate to simply refuse to engage in certain projects, declaring precisely how projects recapitulate the colonial. At other times, the situation will prompt us to seek creative alternatives or modulations, ones that lie beyond this pathological condition, freed from its bondage, an alternate epistemology, if you like (Bateson 1972:305–306).

One key modulation is to *conjoin* decolonial action in *both* the registers I have been discussing, where we tend to restrict ourselves to one or the other. In that regard, a potent alternative is contained in the idea of treaty operating on the crucial premise of continuous, honourable relations between peoples and between persons—what I call *the treaty turn*, where the very idea of treaty for Indigenous peoples has consistently had the ethic of honouring relations at its core. Honour itself can be understood, following Asch, from taking seriously our political location as peoples engaging peoples, articulating a moral position in relation to that and then making a choice to act deliberately upon this. Put another way, the decolonial ethic is first to name the milieu and the encounter, to acknowledge we are part of it and to know how we position ourselves in relation to others within it; second, to ensure consideration of the inter-political in conjunction with the inter-cultural; and, third, from that position, to act with conviction on what becomes evident in our encounter as just relations.

The decolonial ethic informs inter-personal–inter-cultural relation and collaboration. Trusting and binding treaty relationships are also those which First Peoples have long asked settler peoples and their descendants to recall and to enact. Six Nations historian Susan Hill offered this instructive comment during the 2004 Ipperwash inquiry:

We know we made agreements. And we’re willing to uphold them but you need to do that as well. And so when you’re looking at our issues, what you call our issues, I’m asking you to remember that they’re your issues too.

Similarly, the originating mission statement of Idle No More begins:

The Treaties are agreements that cannot be altered or broken by one side of the two Nations. The spirit and intent of the Treaty agreements meant that First Nations peoples would share the land but retain their inherent rights to lands and resources. [Idle No More n.d.]

Notwithstanding debates on whether comprehensive claims settlements, such as the NLCA, anticipated the same kind of land sharing that the 18th and 19th century treaties to which Hill refers—in many ways they do not¹⁷—it still remains that the Inuit understood they were promised the ongoing support of the Crown in exchange for access and control in their lands. Fulfilling these promises would help the Inuit to restore better lives and livelihoods in their lands over which they would maintain sufficient control (Expert Panel on the State of Knowledge of Food Security in Northern Canada 2014).

In the Nunavut project, the cue to the alternative of honouring relations came in the NTI statement of claim, when it was observed that the Crown needed to do far more toward honouring (i.e., fulfilling) its obligations under the NLCA. One task would be to look to the settler polity and to interrogate its own possibility for enacting positive, reciprocal relations. Asch's research on recovering such possibilities of relational responsibility from certain sidelined strains of anthropology and political thought is compelling in this regard (Asch 2005, 2009, 2014).

Thomas Berger hearkened to these strains of thought in his 2006 Conciliator's report, when he wrote about honouring implementation promises in reference to Article 23 of the NLCA, which underwrote an expectation of the Crown to fulfill a "promise to establish a government for Nunavut, a government which would be representative of the people of Nunavut":

My approach to implementation of the Agreement is premised on three underlying considerations: the status of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement as a constitutional document; the principle that the honour of the Crown must be observed in all its dealings with the Inuit, including through the implementation process; and the terms set out in the Agreement itself. It is also based on the observation (and indeed the consensus of all of those who participated in our discussions) that a new approach is needed because the old approach has certainly not worked to anyone's satisfaction. [Berger 2006:20]

Berger's new approach is to return to the original intent of the agreement—that is, to restore and act honourably in all relations between the Crown and the Inuit as a legal, moral and political duty. Specifically, it is to enact social and political arrangements where promises are kept and obligations fulfilled with others at every register of action, not merely as different folks with different cultures but as collectives of actors constituting two polities. It is a joining together, in the manner of treaty.

Berger's approach takes a further and stronger step beyond Chief Justice Lamer's modest call in the Delgamuuk'w decision, which was to underscore the moral and legal duty to negotiate in "good faith," rather than to tie up grievances in protracted court proceedings. In the decision, Lamer wrote:

Finally, this litigation has been both long and expensive, not only in economic but in human terms as well. By ordering a new trial, I do not necessarily encourage the parties to proceed to litigation and to settle their dispute through the courts. As was said in Sparrow, at p. 1105, s. 35(1) "provides a solid constitutional base upon which subsequent negotiations can take place." ... Moreover, the Crown is under a moral, if not a legal, duty to enter into and conduct those negotiations in good faith.¹⁸

Lamer's call is that of reckoning that we are two peoples capable of finding a good way to live together, as peoples.

The heart of the treaty turn is to act honourably, that is, through reciprocity and symmetry in relations, including redress of past harms and commitments and not to inflict further harms, as Asch has demonstrated forcefully in his most recent work (Asch 2014:14–51). Asch sums up this premise in relation to the political consent that Indigenous peoples offered in permitting the presence of settlers and settler governments in their lands:

To dwell on land we know already belongs to others requires their consent and our faithful keeping of the commitment we made in obtaining it. It also requires that, to the extent we fail to do so, we seek to do what is necessary to rectify any harms our actions have caused. [Asch 2014:166–167]

Within this is the fuller call to mirror relations of consent *both* between peoples *and* between persons, to dwell and belong—and indeed research—together in land that has been shared by those who have lived in them since before settler arrival (Paine 1999). It is an anti-colonial project for which anthropologists have both the capacity and the ethical motive. Knowing ourselves as parties to, and partners in, an inter-peoples' relationship, including treaties, allows us to position ourselves as members of our respective society in thinking of our obligations to the other, and then to use that as a guide for partnering well in encounters and working, and researching together. What we insert into the Indigenous-settler conversation, by way of our actions and by way of a more adequate retelling of inter-political relations both for the academy and for wider publics,

can aid in what Asch (2014) rightly acknowledges: “For better or worse, government will be persuaded to act only when it is pressured to do so, and the best way I know to bring government to change its mind on an issue is to gain public support” (163).

This turn in research relations holds promise, for the very reason that it takes seriously that which we are positioned in, as settlers or as Indigenous persons, and makes it the fulcrum of our research engagements. From here, it is feasible not only to work *against* the re-authoring of colonial identities, roles and asymmetries that Asad and others have noted, but to model and enact just relations in our research partnerships (also see Biolsi and Zimmerman 1999 and Coulthard 2003). Faithfully engaging honourable relations between polities offers a strong assurance that honourable relations and collaborations between cultures will be less prone to re-capture by coloniality. Re-linking inter-cultural action with inter-political action, therefore, is a necessary aspect of moving beyond the double bind of coloniality, attenuating its more usual force. Thinking back to the Nunavut project, this move would call us to act in continual good faith with our Inuit partners, for their having consented, as a people, to our presence among them, in their lands—and, with that, to work together to articulate and embed such premises in designs, plans, methods, reports and publications.

There is a second front as well, which is evident in multiple ways in the other articles accompanying this one. Anthropologists can contribute to an even fuller anti-colonial move by finding the means of mobilizing within their own social-political formations and collectives, through their teaching, public engagements, re-setting research agendas and practices, intervening in ethics regimes to ensure inter-political considerations. We can also isolate and pursue research on those practices within settler or cosmopolitan circuits that demonstrate the means of acting honourably with others, while also calling attention to coloniality and other oppressions where they appear. Potent examples include the Free Knowledge Project, a public coffee house colloquium for common folk that has been running with great success in Victoria, BC. Another example is the lecture and public engagement series “Reconciliation: The Responsibility for Shared Futures,” which brought scholars of Indigenous-settler engagement into conversation with everyday folks beyond the academy. Still others could, by formal declarations and motions passed by organizations, capture the fact that our institutions and lifeways are situated on and conducted within treaty or unceded title territories, following the example of the students’ union at my own university, Dalhousie. We can and

should also legitimately apply treaty instruments to the resolution of massive scale resource exploitation, for example implementing Treaty 8 provisions and obligations in response to oil sands landscape destruction. In all of these, we witness a positive modulation on mere critique. We witness a responsiveness both inter-culturally and inter-politically.

On either and both fronts—and ideally on others to come—we can work to deepen and share practices of living and working well with Indigenous peoples and communities with whom we are privileged to enter into research relations on our own, or in collaboration, while interrupting oppressive political and economic formations. However much coloniality continues to challenge anthropologists involved in research with Indigenous peoples, triggering ambivalence and concern, it is a reasonable aim to avoid being captured by its procedures and, instead, to counteract its oppressions.

If anthropological research itself is part of the cultural-political milieu, then the pragmatic relations chosen, described and enacted by and through our involvements in that milieu will necessarily leave their effects. The ethical challenge before us is in recognizing our double binds and then choosing to act as agents of change rather than instruments of repetition, and so to reinvent our relations anew.

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Notes

- 1 Many Canadian anthropologists have engaged the situation of seeking to support resolution of relations, some of whom include: Wilson Duff, Sally Weaver, Marc-Adelard

- Tremblay, Harry Hawthorn, Harvey Feit, Joan Ryan, Richard Preston, Richard Slobodin, Adrian Tanner, Robert Paine and Richard Salisbury. This continues among recent generations of anthropologists, notably in the Crabgrass Collective (Noble 2010).
- 2 Emma Feltes (this issue) similarly writes of the interpersonal and the interpolitical, citing a related contrast in Charles Taylor's work and his germinal discussions of recognition.
 - 3 Arguably, in this proposition, coloniality can be thought of as embracing "culture" in itself, but it has to be noted that internal to the practice of coloniality, "culture" is that which both self and other "have" and live by and which differentiates them. Difference is part and parcel of the apparatus.
 - 4 See Pinkoski (2008) on Julian Steward and Cultural Ecology and the way that "levels of organization" were used as the means to determine whether an Indigenous people had political society and laws or not. Also see Noble 2007.
 - 5 Organizer's statement for the panel "Compromise or Compromised? Reconsidering Indigenous and Local Participation in Natural Resource Governance," organized by Shauna McGarvey and Tara Goetze (McMaster), Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, November 29, 2007, Washington, DC.
 - 6 This department has been renamed under the Harper government as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND).
 - 7 For summaries see Cultural Survival (n.d.). One can also search the Library and Archives Canada (n.d.) Nunavut collections.
 - 8 The Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tungavik Inc., and the Government of Canada are in the process of negotiating the devolution of this authority to the Nunavut government, the aim of which is to achieve something akin to the responsibilities held by provinces in Canada but without adding a separate jurisdiction or "head of power." See Government of Nunavut (2014).
 - 9 The text of the original RFP, including the noted quotes, is reproduced as Appendix 8, pp. 185–187, in the "Nunavut Coastal Inventory Project Pilot Report" (Government of Nunavut 2008).
 - 10 See Noble (2007), for examples of the sorts of complications that this space of encounter can pose.
 - 11 Searles (2006) discusses how IQ itself has been caught in an identity politics within the administrative development of Nunavut.
 - 12 NTI Statement of Claim, filed in the Nunavut Court of Justice, 2006-12-00.
 - 13 For a detailed review of the unfolding of the NLCA, the litigation, and the Berger report, and the relation to Crown–Inuit conflict, published several years after the encounters I offer here, see Campbell et al. (2011).
 - 14 A final out-of-court settlement in the amount of \$255.5 million was announced in May 2015 (NTI 2015a). A helpful aspect of the settlement was inclusion of a new dispute resolution process for future claims. This came after being mired for years in a host of case management and technical hearings from the naming of the Government of Nunavut as a third party in the suit along with the Government of Canada, to technical issues of Canada's responsibility for implementation monitoring. For a summary list of filings and decisions, see NTI (2015b).
 - 15 The Nunavut government has proceeded with IQ knowledge inventories beyond the preliminary phases, though without our team's involvement. Between 2007 and 2012, community-based activities were conducted in Igloodik, Kugluktuk, Chesterfield Inlet, Arctic Bay, Kimmirut, Qikiqtarjuaq, Sanikiluaq, Gjoa Haven, Iqaluit and Repulse Bay. Nunavut Legislative Assembly (2012).
 - 16 Donna Haraway (1988) offers a very helpful and enduring analysis of the politics and fallacy of disinterested science.
 - 17 See Asch (2014) for a thorough discussion of the spirit and intent of the "Confederation" treaties. Unlike those treaties, which could enable land sharing and partnering of Indigenous with Crown jurisdictions, "modern" comprehensive claims agreements and "treaty tables" usually place First Peoples and their lands within the ambit of Canadian sovereignty, while promising capacity-building supports toward forms of co-governance or co-administration related to surface rights in land, though ultimately within Crown jurisdiction. Peoples who have not surrendered title, nor entered into agreements with the Crown, as in the case of most BC First Nations, retain a stronger standing to assert self-determination as autonomous peoples in their lands, as envisaged in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous leaders are increasingly arguing, in exacting ways, that comprehensive claims foreclose this possibility. See Diabo (2012) and Manuel (n.d.).
 - 18 *Delgamuuk'w v. R* (SCC), para 186.

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