DECOLONIZING AUTOETHNOGRAPHY: WHERE'S THE WATER IN KINESIOLOGY?

by

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Graduate Department of Exercise Sciences
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Kinesiology is a multi-disciplinary field studying the human body in relation to movement, and, yet, water is largely taken-for-granted. This is astonishing, considering ~70% of the human body is comprised of water and access to (reliable, safe, clean) water fundamentally shapes human lives. Furthermore, identities, geographies, histories, societies, cultures, economics, and politics have been, and continue to be, shaped by water. Therefore, to enhance decolonial water education in kinesiology, this thesis is presented in three “braided streams”. First, I critically reflect on my settler colonial history and complicity in relation to water issues impacting First Nations. Next, I critique kinesiology’s research, teaching, and practices to establish “where’s the water in kinesiology?” Last, with consent and support from Grandmother Josephine Mandamin and Joanne Robertson, I am contributing to an archive and story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks (2003-2018), an Anishinabe ceremony that nourishes sacred relationships between peoples and waters.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As humans, we are continuously shaped, molded and (re)created by our relationships. We are a creation of the entanglement of our relations. And, so, we must acknowledge and give thanks to all our relations. Richard Wagamese (Anishinabe) (Wabaseemoong Independent Nations) (2016) writes:

“I’ve been considering the phrase “all my relations” for some time now. It’s hugely important. It’s our saving grace in the end. It points to the truth that we are all related, that we are all connected, that we all belong to each other. The most important word is “all.” Not just those who look like me, sing like me, dance like me, speak like me, pray like me or behave like me. ALL my relations. That means every person, just as it means every rock, mineral, blade of grass, and creature. We live because everything else does. If we were to choose collectively to live that teaching, the energy of our change of consciousness would heal each of us – and heal the planet” (p.36).

This journey has been guided by the knowledge and support from extraordinary peoples, lands, waters, plants, animals, birds, fish – all my relations. To acknowledge this relationality, I thank important peoples and places that have molded me into the person and researcher I am today.

Thank you to the waters and land that gift me life, love, gratitude, home, community, and identity. Niigaani-gichigami (Lake Ontario) is home to millions of peoples and living creatures. Tkaronto (Toronto) is the territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek, and, most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Tkaronto is subject to the Toronto Purchase Treaties and Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt. As a white settler and uninvited guest on this territory, I am subject to the Dish with One Spoon and Toronto Purchase Treaties. I am a treaty person. I acknowledge my rights, roles, and responsibilities for the treaties, and I respect and honour Anishinabek and Haudenosaunee knowledges and laws of the land.

Thank you to Grandmother Josephine Mandamin (Anishinabe) (Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations) and Joanne Robertson (Anishinabe) for the support to do this work. Thank you to all the Water Walkers who stand up and say, “Nga zhichige Nibi Onji (I will do it for the water).” Thank you to all water protectors. Thank you to Waterlution’s Youth Advisory Board, the Great Waters Challenge players, Olivia, Karen and Dona, Waterfront Regeneration Trust, the World Youth Parliament for Water

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a Tkaronto is the Haudenosaunee word for “where there are trees standing in the water”.
members, and Santuário dos Pajés. Thank you to everyone who dedicates their lives to protect the land and water.

Mom, Dad, and brothers, Josh and Jeremy, thank you for helping me achieve my dreams. Neo, Bodhi, Ari, and Comet, beautiful dogs, thank you for your unconditional love. Grandma, Grandpa, Oma, and Opa, thank you for your love and mentorship. Guin, Allen, Isla and Adeston, thank you for giving me a home away from home. Dixie Robinson, thank you for your teachings when I was a young girl feeling lost. All my family, named and unnamed, thank you for your gifts of love.

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Thank you to my childhood best friend, Wilma. You celebrate survival and resist colonial structures to restore your identity, community and culture as an Anishinabekwe. Thank you to all my other hometown friends from Dryden. You have been with me since the beginning.

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Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Caroline Fusco, and advisory committee, Dr. Bonnie McElhinny and Dr. Margaret MacNeill, for continually supporting and encouraging my ideas and goals. Thank you to Dr. Sharlene Mollett and Dr. Eve Tuck (Unangax) (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska) for your invaluable pedagogies during my graduate degree. Thank you to Nina Munteanu for meeting with me and flushing out my thoughts, visions, and ideas. Thank you to Dr. Chantelle Richmond (Anishinabe) (Pic River First Nation) for the significant and critical feedback on this final thesis. And, thank you to my future PhD supervisor, Dr. Sonia Wesche, for helping me through the next steps of this journey.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ iii

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................ v

List of Figures ................................................................................................................ vii

List of Appendices ....................................................................................................... viii

Before the Flood ............................................................................................................ ix

Chapter One: “The water is sick” ................................................................................ 1
  Some Important Words ............................................................................................ 6
  Co-existence of Knowledge .................................................................................... 11

Chapter Two: We are made of stories ....................................................................... 15
  Concepts, Passages, and Stories ........................................................................... 15
  “Braiding Sweetgrass” .......................................................................................... 17
  Decolonizing Methodologies ................................................................................. 21
  Decolonizing Autoethnography ............................................................................. 27

Chapter Three: Just a smalltown girl, Livin’ in a colonial world .............................. 32
  “Justice for Grassy Narrows” ............................................................................... 35
  Settler Schools ...................................................................................................... 40
  “Exercise is medicine” ......................................................................................... 41
  Crises and Concussions ......................................................................................... 43
  Colonial Methodologies ......................................................................................... 46
  Unsettling Settler Colonialism .............................................................................. 48

Chapter Four: The Inconvenient Truth .................................................................... 52
  Physical Cultural Studies and Social Theory ......................................................... 53
  Working in the “Death Star” ................................................................................ 55
  Pow Wow in the “Death Star” ............................................................................... 61
  Social and Environmental Justice ........................................................................ 64
  Finding the Water in Kinesiology ........................................................................ 66
Walking through Fields ........................................................................................................................................... 73

Chapter Five: Mother Earth Water Walks ......................................................................................................... 76

Water and Social Justice ........................................................................................................................................ 77

Nibi is Alive ...................................................................................................................................................... 80

Walking for Nibi ................................................................................................................................................. 87

Gathering Stories ............................................................................................................................................... 91

Harvesting Stories ............................................................................................................................................ 95

Mapping Stories ............................................................................................................................................... 102

Chapter Six: “Keep what’s true in front of you.” ............................................................................................... 107

After the Flood .................................................................................................................................................. 112

References ......................................................................................................................................................... 114

Spheres of Water in Kinesiology ....................................................................................................................... 123

Story Map: Mother Earth Water Walks ........................................................................................................... 124

Anishinabemowin Glossary ............................................................................................................................... 125

List of Water Walks ........................................................................................................................................ 126
Figure 1. “Spheres of Water in Kinesiology” is a Venn diagram that showcases the literature on water in kinesiology. By embedding this thesis in the field of kinesiology, this diagram demonstrates the sphere of knowledge that was missing and what can be added.

Figure 2. “Story Map: Mother Earth Water Walks” is an example of a digital story map that can be created for the Water Walks. Blue points represented nibi and identified the Annual Mother Earth Water Walks, led by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin (Anishinabe) (Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations). Green points represented land and identified the Water Walks that have been inspired by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin.
LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A. Anishinabemowin glossary of Anishinabemowin words and their translations in English.

Appendix B. List of Water Walks. This list showcases the Water Walks found during the process of “Gathering Stories”, and what Water Walks will be included in “Harvesting and Mapping Stories”.
BEFORE THE FLOOD

The forces of colonialism, capitalism, neoliberalism, and white supremacy relentlessly limited my confidence and capabilities throughout my beginnings in academia. It was difficult to break through the struggle and tension of wanting to write through stories and the weight of the incredulity, skepticism, and mistrust from powerful people and institutions. In this thesis journey, I am addressing my movement through those constraints.

As researchers, we must challenge structures of privilege and oppression to honour the voices, strengths, stories, and experiences of those restricted, exploited, and ostracized by colonialism, while always acknowledging our positionality and responsibilities for decolonizing. We must continually build reciprocal relationships based on trust, reliability, respect, responsibility, and accountability. And, while many treaties on Turtle Island have been broken, they still stand today and will continue to stand as long as the grass is still green and the sky is still blue. We are all treaty people, and, as treaty people, we must find ways to help restore the broken treaties of the land in which we live.

To be a treaty person, I must learn the history of the land and peoples, while acknowledging my settler identity and my roles, rights and responsibilities for the treaties. It is important for all people to acknowledge their responsibilities for the treaties as part of healing from the ongoing and historical traumas of colonialism, dispossession, and oppression of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

There is much to do, and much to learn and unlearn. It does not matter who you are, everyone has their own roles, rights, and responsibilities for decolonization. It is important to figure out where you are on your own journey, and how you will use your voice and privileges to move forwards for decolonizing, like a river, all day long, without stopping or ever turning back.

As a white settler woman, with German and English heritage, born and raised in a settler town (Dryden, Ontario) on the territory of Anishinabe people, I grew up ignorant, unaware, uneducated about, and naïve to my colonial complicity. Throughout my graduate degree in Tkaronto, I have learned how I have, and continue to, benefit from the colonial system that dispossesses, oppresses, marginalizes, and dehumanizes Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

I am responsible for my silence and complicity.

I will no longer be silent.
CHAPTER ONE: “THE WATER IS SICK”

“The water is sick... people need to really fight for that water, to speak for that water, to love that water” (Grandmother Josephine Mandamin as quoted in Kraus, 2015).

As an undergraduate and graduate student in kinesiology, I observed how water is continually taken for-granted in the field’s teaching, research, and practices. Considering kinesiology is a multi-disciplinary (biological, psychological, sociological) field analyzing the human body in relation to movement, water should be a central and focal point of study. Approximately ~70% of the human body is comprised of water, and access to (reliable, safe, clean) water fundamentally shapes human lives and movement (Anderson, 1998; Anderson, 2013). Furthermore, identities, geographies, histories, societies, cultures, economics, and politics have been, and continue to be, built and constructed around water (Anderson, 1998; Anderson, 2013; Galway, 2016; Patrick, 2011).

The lack of attention to water in kinesiology reflects how water is taken-for-granted in Western societies, particularly urban Canada. While reliable, safe, and clean water is commonplace for most people living in Canada (Galway, 2016; Schindler & Donahue, 2006), First Nations communities continue to face ongoing Drinking Water Advisories (DWAs) and water insecurities (Patrick, 2011; Sarkar, Hanrahan & Hudson, 2015; White, Murphy, & Spence, 2012).

Water insecurities can lead to a range of health, environmental, socio-economic, cultural, spiritual, and political issues (Baird, Plummer, Dupont & Carter, 2015; Hanrahan, Sarkar, & Hudson, 2016; Patrick, 2011; Sarkar, Hanrahan & Hudson, 2015), and are a result of the past and current colonial, capitalist and neoliberal power structures that govern, regulate and discriminate against Indigenous peoples (Castelden, Cunsoolo, Harper & Martin, 2017; Sarkar, Hanrahan & Hudson, 2015; Simpson, 2002; White, Murphy, & Spence, 2012). Water insecurities in First Nations communities are a major public health and social and environmental justice issue (Galway, 2016), as well as a complete paradox given how water has (historical) spiritual and cultural significance for many First Nations peoples (Baird et al., 2015; McGregor, 2009; Simpson, 2002). As Grandmother Josephine Mandamin (Anishinabe) (Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations) says, “the water is sick”, and, when “the water is sick”, the people become sick too (Kraus, 2015).

To heal and protect the waters, two Anishinabekwe Grandmothers, Josephine Mandamin and Melvina Flamand, walked in ceremony around Anishinaabewi-gichigami (Lake Superior) in the spring of 2003.
Their decision was inspired by Grand Chief Edward Benton Banai (Anishinabe) (Three Fires Midewiwin Society), who shared a prophecy that if human negligence continues in the future, an ounce of water will cost as much as an ounce of gold (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2003).

Since the 2003 Lake Superior Water Walk, Grandmother Josephine has nourished a Water Walking movement, called the Mother Earth Water Walks. She has led Water Walks around the five Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River, and elsewhere, encouraging innumerable people to walk for the water. Inspired by Grandmother Josephine, many individuals and communities around the world have committed themselves to water as Water Walkers, water carriers and water protectors (Danard, 2013). Following Grandmother Josephine’s footsteps, annual Water Walks are hosted in communities around the world to protect and heal waterbodies. Waterbodies refers to both human bodies of water and the physical bodies of water that gift us life (oceans, lakes, rivers, creeks, streams, rain, snow, ice, clouds).

The mission of the Mother Earth Water Walks is to build sacred relationships between peoples and nibi by walking around, through, with, and for, waterbodies. Water Walkers hope to wake up the consciousness of current generations to ensure that future generations know the waters are (healthy) living entities (Bédard, 2008; McGregor, 2013). Mother Earth Water Walks are an Anishinabe ceremony from start to finish, rooted in the importance of enacting Anishinabekwe (Ojibwe woman) responsibilities to carry, care for, and speak for nibi (water) (Bédard, 2008; McGregor, 2008a; 2009; 2013; Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017; Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

To show the connections between waterbodies and health, and to address the lack of attention to water in kinesiology, I ask: how do the Mother Earth Water Walks, as physical, emotional, spiritual and geographical walks, connect individuals and communities to water, and decolonize place and space around water and walking? To begin answering this question, I first critique: (1) How I, as a white settler woman and western researcher, decolonize my own methodologies, theories, and practices? And examine (2) Where the water is in kinesiology and how can we enhance decolonial water education in the field?

The purpose of this research was to work with the Water Walkers to gather, harvest, and map stories about the Water Walks, and share how the Water Walks build sacred relationships between peoples and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{b}}\text{ I will use both terms nibi and water interchangeably in this thesis depending on the context, people, and place.}\]
waters. This research also aims to build, support, and enhance decolonial water education in the field of kinesiology. In order to help the Water Walkers, I had to critically reflect on my own subjectivity and positionality in kinesiology, which required addressing, rethinking, and changing my methods and methodologies multiple times. In doing so, I increasingly saw a transformation in myself and the type of research I was doing. I realized I had something significant to share about what I did, how I did it, and why that realization is important for the field of kinesiology and my subdiscipline of physical cultural studies (PCS).

Grandmother Josephine Mandamin and Joanne Robertson (Anishinabe) (Organizer of 2011 Four Directions Water Walk and author and illustrator of The Water Walker) consented to and signed letters of support for this research, though Grandmother Josephine did not have time to participate. Importantly, I worked closely with Joanne during the ethics protocol submission and approval process, and in gathering, harvesting, and mapping stories. We will continue to work together to ensure the legacy of this work is achieved. When Joanne and I discussed and flushed out the project, the term “data collection” did not articulate our methodological process and relationship. Joanne and I describe the method(ology) as gathering, harvesting, and mapping stories, as we are helping bring together Water Walkers’ stories in one place.

Since 2011, Joanne envisioned a public archive and story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks, as there was no comprehensive list or map of the many Water Walks that have happened. To help Joanne create her vision, this research identified Water Walks inspired by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin (see Appendix B: List of Water Walks) by gathering publicly available online stories of the Water Walks from 2003 to 2018. Joanne’s vision and support was foundational to this project and this thesis is a result of our ever-growing relationship.

Joanne Robertson, Krista McCracken (archivist), Kelsey Leonard (PhD Candidate), and I are working with the Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig (Anishinabek Discovery Centre) on the public archive and digital story map. Joanne and Kelsey have emphasized that the Water Walkers want their prayers for their waterbodies to be recognized, acknowledged, and shared. The archive and map will be used as an educational tool for SKG’s Anishinabe Studies and Anishinabemowin undergraduate programs at the Anishinabek Discovery Centre.

The public archive will be open and accessible to the public at no cost, both digitally online via the Mother Earth Water Walk webpage, as well as physically at the Anishinabek Discovery Centre, home to
Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, in Garden River, Ontario (Hopkin, 2018). Specifically, the story map will be a digital, interactive, crowdsourced, open, and accessible map of the histories, geographies, and stories of the Mother Earth Water Walks, using the ArcGIS online mapping tool via Algoma University. The archive and map will be owned, accessed, distributed, and protected by the Mother Earth Water Walk community through the Anishinabek Discovery Centre.

In this thesis, I purposely do not examine the Water Walkers’ stories through a typical Western scientific method of discourse or content analysis, to specifically ensure their narratives will not be owned by the University of Toronto. Moreover, I decided not to share the specific stories that I gathered online, as the Water Walkers must have full ownership, access, distribution, and protection of their stories. With institutional copyright, the University of Toronto has claim to all graduate theses, and, so, if the Water Walkers’ stories are shared here, the institution would have copyright of those stories. Since the beginning of this research, I set out to maintain the dignity and respect of the individuals and communities that I interacted and participated with (on- and offline). To honour this commitment, I knew I could not submit their stories in this final thesis document to avoid copyright and ownership issues.

Fortunately, throughout my Master’s degree, I had the privilege of participating in five Water Walks around Waawaase’Aagaming (Lake Simcoe) and Niigaani-Gichigami (Lake Ontario). By spending time on the Water Walks, I built close relationships with Water Walkers. As I listened to the Water Walkers’ stories, I learned about the deep connections between peoples and places, and the necessary work one must do for decolonizing. Water Walkers taught me about traditional, sacred medicines along our path, shared histories and prophecies, told personal stories about their connections with water and why they were walking, and showed me the power of nibi to connect us with all of life.

Accordingly, this thesis evolved from “braided streams” of critical self-reflection, scientific knowledge, and Indigenous Knowledges, and, is braided into three pathways for decolonizing (Fairbridge, 1968; McGregor, 2004a; 2004b; 2008; Monk, 2015; Simpson, 2002). Rhodes Fairbridge (1968) introduced the concept of “braided streams” in physical geography as lateral banks with no confining edges. The streams continually evolve with one another through each successive flood (Fairbridge, 1968). As the “braided streams” evolve with, through, and alongside each other, the shapes of these pathways are (re)created and entangled through their development and flooding. The “braided streams” are always connected and continually influence one another’s shape, volume, and distribution of water.
In Stuart Aitken and Gill Valentine’s (2015) “Approaches to Human Geography”, Janice Monk (2015) employs Fairbridge’s (1968) concept of “braided streams” to reflect on and illustrate her academic trajectory. Monk (2015) writes that “braided streams” are “spaces and flows” of fluid, divergent and convergent channels, intertwining together where there are no lateral banks. Monk’s (2015) application of “braided streams” helps structure and shape this thesis. Based in a river of story-based methodologies, I demonstrate how the “braided streams” of knowledge are entangled, shaping one another in their development and flooding, leading to woven pathways for decolonizing.

Before flowing into the three streams of research, I situate and describe the river of research methodologies that shaped this thesis. “We are made of stories”, explores how my research question developed and research methodologies changed throughout my Master’s degree, situating and contextualizing my methodological process of “decolonizing autoethnography” and storytelling.

As I learned through stories, I began to teach through stories, read through stories, live through stories, and, so, I must write through stories. However, I must be careful about which stories I share, as I do not have the right, role, or responsibility to share certain stories, teachings, and knowledges as a white settler woman and western researcher. Throughout this thesis, I had to find ways to balance the slippery tensions of being a researcher and participant of the Water Walks. To address these tensions, I highlight my rights, roles, and responsibilities as a white settler woman and western researcher doing this work to help the Mother Earth Water Walk community. This story-based methodology then drifts into the “braided streams” of the research.

In the first stream, “Just a small-town girl, Livin’ in a colonial world”, I demonstrate the validity of critically reflecting on one’s ontologies, epistemologies, theories, methodologies, and practices (decolonizing autoethnography/storytelling). By critically reflecting on my settler coloniality, through the teachings of scholars, Eve Tuck (Unangax) (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska) (2018), Robin Wall Kimmerer (Anishinabe) (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) (2013), Linda Tuhwai Smith (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi) (1999), and Norman Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln, and Linda Tuhwai Smith (2008), I aim to provide valuable insights about (white settler) researcher biases in doing decolonizing, critical, and indigenous research. Specifically, this stream connects and critiques my white settler identity and history to past and current water issues in First Nations communities by examining the mercury poisoning in Asusubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) and Wabaseemoong (Whitedog). I also critique discourses of “exercise is medicine” and “crisis”, and my (re)production of coloniality during this research process. This critique then flows into a discussion of unsettling settler colonialism.
In the next stream, “The Inconvenient Truth”, I show where the water (and walking) is in the field of kinesiology. By investigating and critiquing kinesiology-based research, teaching, and practices, guided through my experiences as an undergraduate and graduate student in the field, I aim to build, support, and enhance decolonial water education in kinesiology. Specifically, I analyze literature in the field related to physical cultural studies (PCS) and social theory, whiteness and postcolonial feminism, Indigenous peoples in sport and PCS, social and environmental justice in sport and PCS, water-based research, and concepts of walking.

In the last (and most important) stream, “Mother Earth Water Walks” I am helping develop a public archive and story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks to honour and celebrate the Water Walkers’ prayers and stories. In this chapter, I share the history of the Mother Earth Water Walks, as well as Anishinabek teachings of “nibi as alive”, and then examine social and environmental issues around water through the works of Indigenous scholars, such as Deborah McGregor (2004; 2005; 2008; 2013) and Debby Danard (2013). I also share how, when, and where I learned about the Mother Earth Water Walks, which led to an understanding of my rights, roles, and responsibilities to help the community in gathering, harvesting, and mapping stories.

The concluding chapter, “Keep what’s true in front of you”, braids these streams together again by returning to the research questions. I share reflections of my decolonizing journey, recommendations for the field of kinesiology to build decolonial water education, and key messages of the Water Walkers. Ultimately, I hope this thesis shows how we, as humans, can build sacred relationships with water.

As we begin walking to the river of research methodology, I define some important words to contextualize the sociocultural, political, historical, and geographical circumstances that form this research. These concepts will then flow into a discussion of how to bring science and Indigenous Knowledges together in co-existence (Simpson, 2002; McGregor, 2004a; 2004b; 2005; 2008).

**SOME IMPORTANT WORDS**

“Healing from historical trauma can occur through power, love and vision, and these concepts apply to waters as well as people” (McGregor, 2013, p.73).

While the Water Walkers walk first and foremost out of love and gratitude, they are also walking in the context of, and, in resistance to, colonial, capital, and neoliberal power structures, systems and
processes. To provide the sociocultural, geographical, and historical context of the Mother Earth Water Walks, and to situate this decolonial autoethnography, I will take time to define some important words: internal colonialism, external colonialism, settler colonialism, and decolonization. Defining terminology helps people communicate and translate ideas more efficiently, as the ways we use and understand language can differ among scholars, and across fields and ways of knowing.

To define colonization, one must scrutinize the colonial structures and forces that assemble and order the relationships between peoples, lands, waters, plants, birds, fish, animals—all living beings on Mother Earth—and value Humans as the epitome of existence (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Generally, colonialism is a structure, system, and process that violently works to dispossess, disconnect, strip and alienate Indigenous peoples from their land, places and waters, culture, identity and history, families and communities, economies and politics, knowledges, values, morals and ethics, spirituality and existence (Simpson, 2014; 2016; Sium, Desai & Ritskes, 2012; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Colonialism, as a structure, system, and process, attempts to assimilate, “civilize” and eliminate Indigenous peoples, knowledges and cultures (Sium, Desai & Ritskes, 2012). Colonialism, as a structure, system, and process, attempts to access, control, own, and sell land and water “resources” (Sium, Desai & Ritskes, 2012).

There are two forms of colonialism described in postcolonial theories and theories of coloniality: external and internal (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). External colonialism refers to the expropriation of materials of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants and human beings, extracting to transport them to the colonial world, feeding the wealth, privilege and appetites of the colonizers (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). For example, opium, spices, tea, sugar, tobacco, diamonds, fish, mammals, oil, humans, and water. External colonialism requires military colonialism – creating war fronts to conquer enemies, land, animals, resources, and people (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Essentially, Indigenous land, cultures and identities become labelled as “natural resources” – property to be exploited by the colonial system (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

On the other hand, internal colonialism refers to the segregation, surveillance, control and management of people, land, flora and fauna within the borders of the imperial nation, which involves modes of control such as: prisons, ghettos, minoritizing, schooling, and policing (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014).
Neither external or internal colonialism captivate the objectives of decolonization or the current colonial conditions on Turtle Island, which is settler colonialism (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Settler colonialism is different than the other forms of colonialism because settlers arrive with the intentions of creating a new home on the land, which insists settler sovereignty over everything and everyone in “their” new domain (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Settler colonialism both shapes and is shaped by relations of “coloniality, racism, gender, class, sexuality and desire, capitalism and ableism” (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014, p.2). Settler colonialism simultaneously operates through internal and external colonialism (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014).

Within settler colonialism, the central concern is land and water (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). As settlers make Indigenous land and waters their new home, property and source of capital, they also disrupt of the relationships between Indigenous peoples and land and waters, resulting in profound, epistemic, ontological and cosmological violence (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Settler colonialism eliminates Indigenous bodies, cultures and territories to make room for a settler state (Young, 2015).

Through the dismissal and oppression of indigeneity, settler colonialism produces necropolitics – a relationship between sovereignty and power over life and death – that frames Indigenous peoples as marked for death (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Necropolitics is significantly harmful and violent as it strips self-determination and agency, and disrupts and interferes with Indigenous peoples rights for healing and justice, replacing it with a carceral logic premised on domination, isolation and criminalization (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014).

Kalaniopua Young (Kanaka Maoli) (2015) shares how necropolitics denies culturally appropriate healing practices that incorporate the lived wisdom of elders. Settler colonialism brutalizes and codifies Indigenous bodies as disposable, which becomes reasserted each day of occupation, not simply just upon arrival (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014; Young, 2015). “The historical and political ideologies of settler colonialism naturalize the abusive forces of the police through families, communities, public and private organizations” (Young, 2015, p. 88).

Settlers are not immigrants; immigrants are bound to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Settlers become the law, erasing Indigenous laws, values, cultures, beliefs, histories, ontologies and epistemologies, and enforcing
“civilized”, “superior”, “H”uman ways of knowing and being in the world (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014).

To justify settler colonialism, settlers emphasize the differences between the “civilized” “H”uman and the “savage” “h”uman – creating the socioculturally and spatially distinct “Other”, unimagined from and within the settler state (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Harris, 2004). “H”umans are people who are socially constructed as superior to the socially constructed (different) “Other” inferior “h”umans (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992).

Differences between peoples are (un)imaginatively, materially and symbolically imbued with natural resource policy and practice (governance) (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Harris, 2004; Nixon, 2011; Wainwright, 2005). This difference is constructed and intentional, as the formation of “Other” and “Otherness” arises through the creation of “here” and “there” spaces: distinct, particular, singular, and (un)imagined spaces that unite and separate social and cultural groups (Nixon, 2011; Rotz, 2017; Wainwright, 2005). Susan Hill (Haudenosaunee) (Wolf Clan, Mohawk Nation) (Ohswe:ken) (2017) demonstrates how “here” and “there” settler and Indigenous spaces/places arise through her historical analysis and critique of settler colonialism on the territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe peoples, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

Specifically, the imperial/corporate state creates and constructs the “Other” via here and there spaces (difference) using settler colonial, neoliberal and capital logics and processes (conflict) to control and own the land and water (natural resources) (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Hill, 2017; Rotz, 2017; Wainwright, 2005). The “Other” is dehumanized and concealed from settler society (i.e. in the form of the reservation system in Canada) (Marhia, 2013; Sundberg, 2014). The historical processes of colonialism, colonization and dispossession lay the violent foundations for modern land and water exploitation, building the socio-economic conditions of current colonized spaces (Rotz, 2017; Wainwright, 2005).

Decolonizing in the settler colonial context must bring about the reparation of Indigenous land, waters, and peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Decolonizing is not a metaphor, it does not have a synonym, it must be tangible, it is a process and a journey (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

“When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.3).
The too-easy absorption, adoption and transposing of decolonization is a form of settler appropriation, which disregards the hard, unsettling work of decolonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012). When I initiated this research, I used decolonization as a theoretical tool that could be applied to a context, event, or issue. While I had learned that decolonizing was not a metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012), I had not yet unlearned.

Decolonizing is both personal and emotional – there is a mental, emotional and spiritual toll that colonization takes – which demands valuing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in their complex, diverse, and distinct material, psychological, epistemological, and spiritual forms (Simpson, 2014; 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) (Alderville First Nation) (2002) emphasizes that decolonizing requires a significant amount of time and effort, while working actively to revitalize cultural knowledge, and supporting positive alternatives for the future rooted in diverse, contextual, place-based, traditional Indigenous values and connections to the land and waters. As many Indigenous connections to the land are spiritual, the land, mind and spirit must be viewed as connected, wrapped up, entangled, and enmeshed in one another (Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

The decolonizing journey is never over.

Decolonizing necessarily unsettles; it opposes colonial ways of thinking and acting, as well as colonial relations of power that threaten Indigenous ways of being (Simpson, 2002). Rather than centering ideologies of whiteness, decolonization centres Indigenous lives, communities, ontologies, and epistemologies, and demands an articulation of what decolonization means in different places for Indigenous peoples around the globe (Simpson, 2002). Decolonization is dependent on the context and place in which colonialism/colonization has and continues to operate (Simpson, 2002).

Decolonizing is not converting Indigenous politics to Eurocentric, Western ideologies; it is not a philanthropic process of “helping people at-risk” and “alleviating suffering”; it is not a generic term for struggle against oppressive conditions and outcomes; it is not a metonym for social justice (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Decolonization is not accountable to settlers, or settler futurities, but rather to Indigenous sovereignties and futurities (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Furthermore, decolonization does not reify colonization (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Tuck & Yang, 2012) and “Decolonization is a messy, dynamic, and a contradictory process” (Sium, Desai & Ritskes, 2012, p.3).
Decolonization requires reimagining and rearticulating power, change, and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies (Simpson, 2002). Decolonization, and the Indigenous Knowledges that sustain it, are diverse in nature due to the embedded knowledge in the peoples, land, waters, and Creation are unique to local contexts, histories, cultures, and geographies (Simpson, 2002). Accordingly, the desired outcomes of decolonization are diverse, as they are represented by and reflected in Indigenous sovereignty over land, waters, ideas and epistemologies (Simpson, 2002).

To cope with the messiness of contradictions in decolonization, researchers must acknowledge their own positionality and complicity within the colonial world, how they are implicated in settler colonialism, why their research matters to Indigenous peoples, and how their research supports Indigenous sovereignties and futurities (Simpson, 2002; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

As a white settler researching in a colonial institution, I am unquestionably embedded in the processes of colonialism, and so I must always acknowledge and critically reflect on my own entangled history, subjugations, privileges, contradictions, tensions, insecurities, rage, hope, optimism, and aspirations (Harding, 1987; Pink 2007; Simpson, 2002). I must find ways to respectfully integrate science and Indigenous Knowledges for co-existence between knowledge systems, while acknowledging, critiquing, opposing, deconstructing, and disrupting colonialism, colonization, and colonial ideologies (Simpson, 2002). I must acknowledge my rights, roles, and responsibilities for decolonizing, and work with Indigenous communities to help support their goals for self-determination, sovereignty, and futurity.

**CO-EXISTENCE OF KNOWLEDGE**

Throughout history, Western science has been closely linked to imperialism and colonialism and is used to maintain oppressive power relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state (Simpson, 2002; Smith, 1999). In Canadian universities, many of the science-based education programs focus on Western, Eurocentric theory, taught in a lecture or lab, with teaching styles and philosophies that contradict and wholly ignore Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies (Smith, 1999).

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) (Alderville First Nation) (2002) and Deborah McGregor (Anishinabe) (Whitefish River First Nation) (2004a; 2004b; 2008) suggest that it is important to use knowledge and skills from both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to deconstruct,
decolonize, and critique the scientific evidence used to justify colonial destruction of Indigenous peoples and lands. Navigating sustainability and sustainable development from solely a Western scientific perspective does not challenge power imbalances between Indigenous and Western nations (McGregor, 2004b). Importantly, many Indigenous Knowledges on sustainability and development are one of giving, not one of taking (McGregor, 2004b). While Indigenous Knowledges are diverse and dependent on the people, place, context, space, time, scales, and relationality, they are rooted in Indigenous peoples and places. Deborah McGregor (2004a) states:

“The ‘natural world,’ ‘environment,’ or ‘Creation’ is an essential part of the conception of Indigenous Knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge is not just “knowledge” per se. It is the lives lived by people and their particular relationship with Creation. In conventional Eurocentric definitions of Indigenous Knowledge, it is presented as a noun, a thing, knowledge; but to Indigenous people, is it is much more than knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge cannot be separated from the people who hold and practice it, nor can it be separated from the land /environment /Creation” (p. 390).

Unlike Eurocentric knowledges, Indigenous Knowledges cannot be separated into categories, such as arts, science, music, religion, or separated from the peoples, land and waters (McGregor, 2004a). Indigenous Knowledges come from the peoples, land, waters, and Creation, by learning and listening in a whole-body-mind-emotion-spirit pursuit of intelligence (Simpson, 2014). The land is both teacher and pedagogy (Simpson, 2014). Knowledge flows to, from and through the earth, the sky, the waters, and the peoples (Simpson, 2014). Indigenous Knowledges are action-oriented and are diverse and dependent on the land and context in which the peoples are from (McGregor, 2004a). Indigenous Knowledges are not a product or commodity, but rather integration of persons, places, products, and processes (McGregor, 2004a).

Western science and Indigenous Knowledges should not live in isolation to each other, but must co-exist with one another to ensure Indigenous cultural survival (McGregor, 2004b). Co-existence is not a new idea or concept, it is rooted in the way that many First Nations had intended and hoped to work with settlers when they arrived (McGregor, 2008b). Treaties were created to foster the relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers and to share the land and water equally.

While living in Tkaronto, I learned about the wampum belt “Dish with One Spoon” that governs this land. Wampum belts are stories and agreements recorded in strings and beads (Hill, 2017). As established by the Great Law, “Dish with One Spoon” signifies that nations treat each other with care and caution while sharing the land and water equally (Hill, 2017). “Dish with One Spoon” outlines
collective responsibilities for the land and relationships with the land; to share the gifts of Mother Earth collectively. Under this law, the land and waters’ gifts are to be enjoyed by everyone, and belong to no one (Hill, 2017).

As depicted in the “Dish with One Spoon”, both Indigenous peoples and settlers would retain integrity by undertaking the process in their own view, while sharing information and working in partnership on common issues of concern (McGregor, 2004b; 2008b). Connecting Indigenous Knowledges with aspects of Western Science could restore and maintain not only the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the land and water, but also the social, emotional, cultural and spiritual (McGregor, 2004b; 2008b).

The co-existence of knowledge between Western Science with Indigenous Knowledges is critical to move forward in decolonizing and for the reparation of Indigenous peoples, lands, and waters (Simpson, 2002; McGregor, 2004b; 2008b). Science teaches about the physical and material world, while Indigenous Knowledges teach about the emotional, cultural, and spiritual world (McGregor, 2004b; 2008b). However, while there is copious room for overlap and connection, it is important to distinguish science and Indigenous Knowledges as separate ways of knowing, and, Indigenous Knowledges as distinct, contextual, diverse from one another, and dependent on the peoples and places.

Michelle Lacombe (2016) discusses how there are many Indigenous scholars, intellectuals, and artists apprehensive of Western-based academic and educational structures. These colonial structures and institutions tend to reproduce neo-colonial agendas, rather than challenge them (Lacombe, 2016). Considering the embedded history of residential schools and violent settler state agendas linked to genocide in Canada, it is critical to challenge the reproduction of neo-colonial agendas in school systems (Lacombe, 2016). Furthermore, it can be harmful for settlers to impose their positionality into/onto Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies without the proper, respectful, and relational approach with community members (Lacombe, 2016).

Lacombe (2016) provides critical insights for settler-indigenous relations in western-based research:

“When addressing methods of building "relationships among scholars, artists, educational institutions, and Indigenous communities and nations based on reciprocity and respect," we need to consider the multiple kinds and locations of Indigenous communities and perspectives. Stressing nation-to-nation relationships is one way of "moving beyond academic lip-service" regarding "community consultation" that all too often replicates colonial power structures and agendas" (p.45).
With regards to my home discipline, kinesiology researchers and scholars must recognize how science has deep colonial roots, histories, and presence. When integrating these diverse knowledge systems, it is important to acknowledge, critique and reflect on this colonial past, present (and future), as these influences and power systems continue to shape the scientific paradigm. By connecting science and Anishinabeg knowledge through critical self-reflection and storytelling, I hope to help build, support, and enhance decolonial water education in the field of kinesiology. Focusing on nation-to-nation relationships with Anishinabe people will help move “beyond academic lip-service” (Lacombe, 2016, p.45).

Specifically, by critiquing how I am engaged with colonial geographies and colonial institutions, I aim to help decolonize institutions of colonial power in the field of kinesiology and help support pathways for decolonial futurities and Anishinabek self-determination, and sovereignty (McGregor, 2004a; 2004b; 2008b; Simpson, 2002; Sium, Desai & Ritskes, 2012). Sharing my stories as an undergraduate and graduate student in kinesiology, alongside a critical literature review, will shed light on the historic and contemporary conditions of the field, and the critical work that needs to be done for decolonizing.
CHAPTER TWO: WE ARE MADE OF STORIES

Stories weave through the fabric of our being and allow us to expand, grow, learn, and share our knowledges and experiences of the world. Stories live within, through and around us. Our stories entangle with others’, building a collective story of shared and lived experiences. Stories continually (re)create our realities. We assemble, construct and build ourselves around and through stories, and continue to build upon the stories of ourselves. We are made of stories.

This story-based research methodology is largely inspired by and rooted in the teachings of Eve Tuck (Unangax) (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska) (2018), Robin Wall Kimmerer (Anishinabe) (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) (2013), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi) (1999), and Norman Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008). Together, their teachings share how stories shape who we are and how we understand the world around us.

CONCEPTS, PASSAGES, AND STORIES

“Glimmer is part of our responsibility in taking this work up. Humanity and our planet depend on these words glimmering and not allowing these words to be a ‘flat earth’” (Tuck, 2018).

Eve Tuck (Unangax) (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska) has significantly shaped and evolved my understandings of decolonizing and education. Eve Tuck is an academic scholar, writer, educator, and researcher, who focuses on urban education and Indigenous studies, particularly how to engage Indigenous social thought to create more fair and just social policy, more meaningful social movements, and robust approaches to decolonization (Tuck, n.d.).

Through reading Eve Tuck’s writing and research, as well as learning in her graduate course Indigenous Land Education and Black Geographies in the winter-spring of 2018, my understandings of “education”, in the context of white settler society on Turtle Island, and in relationship to Indigenous and Black peoples, has been deconstructed, disrupted, and untangled. The teachings Eve Tuck (2018) has shared in

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her writing, research, and graduate course have profoundly changed the way I read, write, learn, and teach, and, thus, move forward for decolonizing.

In Eve Tuck’s (2018) graduate course, we were asked to think critically about the literatures on critical Indigenous studies and Black studies engaging place and land. Eve Tuck (2018) emphasized throughout the semester that we must actively avoid comparing literature in Indigenous and Black studies, or translating the literatures into each other, or trying to fit them into a universal view. Instead, the major ethical and intellectual imperative of the course was to resist trying to make the literatures exist on anything but their own terms (Tuck, 2018).


Over a short period of four months in Eve Tuck’s (2018) class, I observed how my reading, writing, and teaching practices transformed through the stories she and the students shared, as well as the scholars, books, and articles we studied. One specific pedagogy that Eve Tuck (2018) used, “concepts, passages, and stories”, altered my reading and writing practices significantly.

Eve Tuck (2018) began each class by having each student write on the board 1-2 concepts, passages, and stories from the assigned readings. The concepts, passages, and stories were used as diving points into discussions on Indigenous land education and Black geographies. By pulling these threads from the various readings, we, as students, began unravelling the relationships between the authors’ experiences, the field of study, and the historical and geographical context in which that research/writing took place.

By searching for concepts in a text, the reader can find “glimmering words” the author is trying to illuminate (Tuck, 2018). Quotes or passages can be highlighted to share key ideas and concepts, reflecting and expanding on the “glimmering words” (Tuck, 2018). The authors’ stories help guide the reader to understand the concepts and passages, and theories and methodologies (Tuck, 2018).
Quickly, after a few weeks in the course, I adapted this strategy for my own reading and writing practices. By braiding concepts, passages and stories, I can share knowledge systems and personal experiences that shape this work. I can highlight the “glimmering words” that transformed the way I think and act. I can share the passages and quotes that continue to guide my learning and unlearning. I can use my personal stories to illustrate the answers to my research questions. Overall, concepts, passages, and stories can help guide the “braided streams” of knowledge that shaped this research and the pathways for decolonizing that follow.

“BRAIDING SWEETGRASS”

Eve Tuck (2018) assigned Robin Wall Kimmerer’s (Anishinabe) (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) (2013) *Braiding Sweetgrass* for course reading, and, honestly, it is one of those books that I can point to and say, “this changed my life”. When I read it, it was like everything I was (un)learning was explained through Robin Wall Kimmerer’s (2013) stories. Without specifically writing about the Mother Earth Water Walks, her words reflected exactly what I experienced while walking for *nibi*.

Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) is an Anishinabekwe and plant botanist living and practicing in the “United States”. In “Braiding Sweetgrass”, she shares how a braid of *wiingashk* (sweetgrass) represents the ways stories, science, and indigenous teachings can weave with one another to show people how to heal relationships with Mother Earth (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Likewise, this thesis is meant to show how we, as humans, can connect with land, water, animals, plants and peoples. By braiding my stories, scientific knowledge, and Anishinabek teachings of the Mother Earth Water Walks, I hope to illustrate how to build reciprocal, responsible, respectful relationship with Mother Earth.
Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) shares that for Anishinabe people, *nibi* is symbolized within a braid of *wiingashk* (sweetgrass). The three strands weave together *nibi*, Mother Earth, and air (Lavalley, 2006; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). The three shining strands of *wiingashk* also represents the unity of mind, body, and spirit (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). *Wiingashk*, a sacred medicine for Anishinabe people, is a gift from Mother Earth (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

*Wiingashk* is always kept in motion because “that is the fundamental nature of gifts: they move, and their value increases with their passage” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.27). “The braids are given as gifts, to honor, to say thank you, to heal and to strengthen”, offer protection, and teach compassion, kindness and healing (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.27). During Water Walks, *Wiingashk* is burned in a smudging ceremony, alongside *mashkodewashk* (sage), *kiizhik* (cedar), and *semaa* (tobacco), before the Water Walkers begin their journey for the day. Smudging places the Water Walkers in healthy spirits before beginning their spiritual walk with, through, around, and for *nibi*.

For the *restoration* of Mother Earth, building reciprocal relationships between peoples and land and *nibi* is essential (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) says: “our relationship with land cannot heal until we hear its stories” (p.9). She further shares, “Restoring land without restoring relationship is
an empty exercise. It is relationship that will endure and relationship that will sustain the restored land” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.338). The land is not broken, but rather, our relationship to the land is, and, so, we must love the land, and the land will love us back (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Restoration depends on meanings of land – restoring land viewed as property and economy is different than renewal of land as cultural identity and spiritual home (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) advocates for “re-story-ation” rather than restoration: to listen to the land and nibi’s stories and build relationships of responsibility and reciprocity. The ultimate reciprocity is loving and being loved in return (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Mother Earth loves us, and we must show her that we love her too. This reciprocal love creates a circle of care for Mother Earth.

When I stayed at Joanne Robertson’s (Anishinabe) farm to begin harvesting Water Walkers’ stories, she shared many teachings and gifts that reflected Robin Wall Kimmerer’s (2013) “re-story-ation”. In the mornings before harvesting, birds would chirp daintily, and the house filled with an aroma of apples, sweet spices, and coffee. As we sat down with our coffees and oatmeal, Joanne placed a clear glass bottle of pure maple syrup from the farm. The syrup melted inside the oatmeal, bursting with flavours of apples, oats, syrup, and cinnamon.

Joanne and her husband inherited the farm from her husband’s great grandfather and have been maintaining it for many years. They harvest over 4000 syrup taps from maple trees in the forest, grow strawberries every season, as well as other seasonal vegetables. Joanne is very connected to maple trees and speaks of them as her relatives. Both Joanne and her husband share equal responsibilities with the maple trees to create syrup. They are in reciprocal relationships with the maples to share gifts of gratitude.

“The responsibility does not lie with the maples alone. The other half belongs to us; we participate in its transformation, it is our work, and our gratitude, that distills the sweetness” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 69).

Joanne and Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) share how the maple trees can teach us, as humans, to be good citizens. Maple Nation is built on reciprocity and responsibility; beings sharing their gifts of love and gratitude (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). To be a good citizen of Maple Nation, you must take care of the trees, then they will take care of you too (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Maple Nation is a great model of “sustainability”, as there is no waste, rather shared wealth between humans and trees, creating balance and reciprocity (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). “You make syrup. You enjoy it. You take what you’re given and you treat it right” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.172). Joanne and Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) also share how
“the plants are our oldest teachers” (p.213). It is not just maples that teach us how to create good communities, Ode’imin (strawberry) also teaches us how to live in good relationship with Mother Earth (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

“[…] our human relationship with strawberries is transformed by our choice of perspective. It is human perception that makes the world a gift. When we view the world this way, strawberries and humans alike are transformed. The relationship of gratitude and reciprocity thus developed can decrease the evolutionary fitness of both plant and animal. A species and culture that treat the natural world with respect and reciprocity will surely pass on genes to ensuing generations with a higher frequency than the people who destroy it. The stories we choose to shape our behaviours have adaptive consequences” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.30).

Ode’imin is considered the “heart berry” for Anishinabe people (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Ode’imin are red and shaped like hearts (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). They teach forgiveness and peace, and the connection between mind, body, spirit, and emotions (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Ode’imin are also considered to be a woman’s medicine, teaching Anishinabekwe about Creation, community, and zaagi’idiwin (love) (McGregor, 2013; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Ode’imin can only be harvested every two years, which remind us to be patient and grateful for Mother Earth’s gifts (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Every being has a gift, and, so, every being has a responsibility to share that gift (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Joanne and her husband have a gift of farming, and, so, they share the gifts of maples and strawberries with their community. They have created a relationship of reciprocity through responsibility and minaadendamowin (respect), zaagi’idiwin (love), and dabaadendiziwin (humility).

To share your gifts and create relationships of reciprocity, the teachings of a circle have significant cultural, historical, geographical and spiritual meaning (Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013). We are linked in a co-evolutionary circle (of love) that grows larger and larger; as you care for land and water, that care expands through space and time (Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013). When considering time as a circle, all things that were will come again (Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

In circular time, time is considered as a sea, where tides appear and disappear, and fog rises to become rain in a river elsewhere (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) shares that in circular time, stories are history and prophecy, and, if there is any meaning in the past and in the imagined future, it can be captured in a single moment. Moments of time converge into one story, and the story captures time through moments (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

I believe that decolonizing journeys move through circular time. Time moves forward, but converges with past, present, and future, in every moment and experience. Our histories, lived realities, and
futurities exist and entangle in all moments of time (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Colonization and colonialism are also bound together in these moments. For decolonizing, one must actively work in the present to revitalize cultural knowledge and histories that were destroyed through colonialism/colonization, while providing pathways for decolonal futurities rooted in traditional Indigenous values and connections to the land and waters (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Importantly, the decolonizing journey is continuous, like a circle, without a beginning, middle, or end.

DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES


To be committed to decolonizing methodologies, researchers must ask themselves eight questions: (1) what research do we want done; (2) whom is it for; (3) what difference will it make; (4) who will carry it out; (5) how do we want the research done; (6) how will we know it’s worthwhile; (7) who will own the research; and (8) who will benefit? (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008). Specifically, Denzin, Lincoln and Smith’s (2008) objectives for conducting decolonizing, critical and indigenous research outline:

One must value the transformative power of Indigenous knowledges and the pedagogical practices that produce these knowledges.

One must seek forms of praxis and inquiry that are empowering and emancipatory, while embracing the commitment by Indigenous scholars to decolonize Western methodologies and criticize and demystify the ways in which Western science and the academy have been part of the colonial apparatus.
One must be ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing and participatory; committed to dialogue, community, self-determination, and cultural autonomy; meet peoples’ perceived and actual needs; resist efforts to confine inquiry to a single paradigm or interpretive strategy.

One must be unruly, disruptive, critical and dedicated to the goals of justice and equity.

One must begin with and center concerns of Indigenous peoples.

One must consider how research benefits and promotes self-determination for research participation.

One must ensure research participants should have first access to research findings and control over the distribution of knowledge.

One must represent Indigenous peoples with honesty, without stereotypes or misrepresentation, and honour Indigenous knowledges, practices, culture, customs, ceremonies, traditions, and rituals.

Denzin, Lincoln and Smith’s (2008) ethical considerations, practices, and behaviours for critical and Indigenous research are essential for me. I am committed to supporting self-determination, empowerment, and agency; building community, relationships, and friendships through love, honesty, trust and gratitude; and representing Indigenous knowledges, cultures, identities and histories with respect and honour.

This research is for the Water Walkers and Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island, and for Mother Earth and her waters. I hope to have a significant impact on the field of kinesiology and discipline of PCS by educating and bringing awareness to the ongoing water (in)(e)quality in First Nations communities, healing relationships between waters and peoples, and showing researchers how to begin decolonizing their logics, behaviours, and practices.

This commitment means that the public archive and story map will be owned only by the Water Walkers and their communities. To ensure full ownership of the stories that I gathered for this thesis, I turn to my own experiences doing this work and how gathering the stories continually provoked me to be
reflexive of my own story(telling), and why this research approach is important for kinesiology and physical cultural studies. By presenting the research in “braided streams”, I hope that this thesis will benefit the Mother Earth Water Walk community and the health and healing of the waters and peoples.

This research is also rooted in twelve of Linda Tuhwai Smith’s (1999) Decolonizing Methodologies – Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects. The projects will be braided in threes: (1) storytelling, envisioning, connecting; (2) celebrating survival, remembering, negotiating; (3) reading, representing, reframing; and (4) sharing, discovering, and creating (Smith, 1999). The braided projects are complimentary and adjacent to one another, and, thus, are best discussed together. These projects (re)imagine what can and cannot be done for “indigenous research” in the Western academy (Smith, 1999).

Storytelling allows us to envision a new future (Smith, 1999). Envisioning connects people with one another, rises above present day situations, dreams a new dream and sets a new vision for the world (Smith, 1999). Both the story and storyteller connect the past with the future, generations with one another, the land and water and the people, and the people with the story (Smith, 1999). I believe that decolonization begins with story-telling and recalling the histories of Indigenous peoples. Through storytelling, we can build a strong collective conscience around water to bring justice and sovereignty for the waters and Indigenous peoples.

“Story-telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every Indigenous person has a place” (Smith, 1999, p.144).

Personal, social, and cultural experiences are constructed through storytelling and sharing of stories (Kohler Riessman, 2000). Stories (narratives) can be oral or written; online or offline; elicited or naturally-occurring; short or long; share biographies (life stories); share events and the meaning of those events; and share everyday experiences (Kohler Riessman, 2000). Storytelling is relational and collaborative; it gathers others and invokes listening and empathy (Kohler Riessman, 2000). Storytelling does not assume objectivity, but, instead, privileges positionality and subjectivity (Kohler Riessman, 2000).

Connecting peoples with land and water positions individuals in sets of relationships with the environment and with other people (Smith, 1999). To be connected is to be whole; having good, strong, supporting, respectful and reciprocal relations with one another and with Mother Earth (Smith, 1999). Within many Indigenous Creation stories, peoples are inextricably connected with the birds, fish,
animals, stars, sky, sun, moon, trees, wind, water, insects, plants – all of Creation (Smith, 1999).

Connecting is related to identity and place, to spiritual relationships and community wellbeing (Smith, 1999).

Celebrating survival focuses on the successful preservation of Indigenous cultural and spiritual values and authenticity, not the demise and cultural assimilation of Indigenous peoples (Smith, 1999). This project is about celebrating resistance and affirming Indigeneity, while remembering the histories and knowledges that colonizers attempted to destroy (Smith, 1999).

Remembering is about recalling and restoring the traditional Indigenous Knowledges that colonists attempted to demolish and eradicate. Remembering is also meant to heal and transform Indigenous peoples’ pain and support self-determination (Smith, 1999). To support self-determination, researchers must negotiate their position in the colonial institution (Smith, 1999). Negotiating requires thinking and acting strategically; recognizing and working towards long-term goals; being patient; and showing leadership, respect for the opposition, self-respect and self-recognition (Smith, 1999).

(Re)reading requires critically (re)examining Western history and the Indigenous presence in the making of that history (Smith, 1999). Researchers must (re)read their own histories and geographies to understand how they are embedded in the colonial system (Smith, 1999). (Re)reading requires critical self-reflection, active listening, and aligning with the seven Grandfather teachings for Anishinabe people – nibwaakaawin (wisdom), zaagi’idiwin (love), minaadendamowin (respect), aakode’ewin (bravery), gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty), dabaadendiziwin (humility), and debwewin (truth) (McGregor, 2013).

While the seven Grandfather teachings are central to Anishinabeg knowledge and understandings of the world, as well as the Mother Earth Water Walk ceremonies, I do not feel that I can share or write about the meanings of these teachings. I have much more to learn before I can respectfully and responsibly write about the seven Grandfather teachings. It is dangerous to share these teachings without sufficient knowledge of the stories behind each of the seven teachings and the Creation story for Anishinabe people. Representation, and representation of knowledge, is critical for decolonizing and indigenous research (Smith, 1999). Part of my methodological journey was, and still is, learning about what stories I can and cannot share. Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) reminds me, “Ignorance makes it too easy to jump to conclusions about what we don’t understand” (p.356).

Representation is both a political concept and form of voice and expression (Smith, 1999). Politically, colonialism has excluded Indigenous peoples from any form of decision-making as paternalistic and
patriarchal governing bodies continue to have control over issues that impact Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999). Hence, it is critical that Indigenous peoples have agency, sovereignty and self-determination over water governance in their communities (Smith, 1999).

Furthermore, representation requires countering and reframing stereotypes and dominant ideologies of Indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems (Smith, 1999). Reframing is deeply connected to representation (and envisioning). It is critical to reframe “Indigenous issues” not as psychological or individualized failure, but as issues of colonialism and lack of self-determination that impact Indigenous peoples and communities (Smith, 1999). To emphasize, water (e)quality issues in First Nations communities should not only be regarded as “Indigenous issues” – water (e)quality issues are rooted in the colonialist, capitalist and neoliberal power structures that govern Canada and that negatively impact Indigenous peoples and communities. Reframing requires imaging a new future – one that does not discriminate and misrepresent Indigenous peoples.

By (re)reading “Canadian history”, I critically (re)examine my own settler history on Turtle Island and the Indigenous presence in the making of that history. I represent Anishinabek cultural beliefs, values, meanings, knowledges, history, and culture respectfully and responsibly, with honour, trust, love, and gratitude. And, I reframe “Canada’s First Nations’ water issues” as issues that stem from historical colonalist, capitalist, and neoliberal power structures and systems that continue to govern and control Turtle Island. This research supports Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, and interrogates how Indigenous cultures are misrepresented and appropriated to be sold for mainstream, mass consumption (Joseph, 2008).

Discovering involves collaborating and connecting Western science and Indigenous Knowledges, and ensuring these two co-exist peacefully (McGregor, 2008b; Smith, 1999). Smith (1999) writes: “Science has been traditionally hostile to indigenous ways of knowing. Science teaching in schools has also been fraught with hostile attitudes towards indigenous cultures, and the way indigenous students learn” (p.160).

As Smith (1999) alludes, scientists have historically dismissed indigenous ways of knowing. As a student in kinesiology, physical education and exercise science, I have a responsibility and duty to connect Western science and Indigenous Knowledges with thoughtful ontological and epistemological consideration and respect. I must also share reflections on my upbringing in Western academic
institutions, specifically how I learned through colonial education systems and now must unlearn through indigenous teachings and ways of understanding the world.

A key Indigenous research principle in Canada entails that researchers must engage meaningfully with Indigenous peoples and ensure Indigenous Knowledges are shared in respectful ways (Ninomiya et al., 2017). Researchers must be committed to decolonizing policies and practices, and to conduct research that improves Indigenous health and wellbeing, or services, programs and policies that improve Indigenous health and wellbeing (Ninomiya et al., 2017). Another responsibility of the researcher is to create ways to discover and share knowledge (Smith, 1999). Sharing is of utmost importance for this research. Sharing knowledge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and around networks across the world is the responsibility of the researcher (Smith, 1999). Collective benefit and knowledge come from sharing research (Smith, 1999). Creating requires channeling collective creativity to help solve the problems that are predominately impacting Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999).

Overall, storytelling, envisioning, and connecting create the vision for this project and how it will be shared (Smith, 1999). Celebrating survival, remembering, and negotiating force the breakdown of colonial institutions, epistemologies, and ontologies, while centralizing and foregrounding indigenous knowledges and indigeneity (Smith, 1999). Reading, representing, and reframing allow for the critical (re)examining of my own settler history on Turtle Island and the Indigenous presence in the making of that history (Smith, 1999). The entanglement of these projects deconstructs the (mis)representations of Indigenous peoples, knowledges, histories, cultures, and languages (Smith, 1999). Sharing, discovering, and creating bundle all the projects by imagining a new medium for the translation of knowledge for both academic and non-academic communities (Smith, 1999).

By helping to create a public archive of the Mother Earth Water Walks, this project will share knowledge and teachings for all peoples. Through the (re)imagination of the thesis structure, this decolonizing project can be shared with both academic and non-academic audiences to (re)imagine relationships with Mother Earth.
When I first started conducting this research, I was employing colonial methods while attempting to be grounded in Indigenous methodologies. I was not attentive to who I was, how I was learning, or who I was learning from. Sandra Harding (1987) explains the difference between method and methodology: method is a way of gathering evidence, whereas a methodology is a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed. Indeed, “Methodology frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed, and shapes the analyses” (Smith, 1999, p.143).

I only began to understand the possible answers to the questions I proposed by critically reflecting on my academic journey. For this research to be rooted in decolonizing, critical, and indigenous methodologies, I had to break out of the colonial system that continues to oppress and dismiss Indigenous Knowledges. I had to, and continue to, unlearn the colonized language of the academy to decolonize my own methodologies, theories, epistemologies, and ontologies.

Research involves being reflexive and self-conscious of the learning process, and establishing connections between experience, morals, values, power relations, and political processes (Pink 2001; 2007). Researchers must constantly acknowledge and reflect on their embodied roles, statuses and identities, and how these may influence the research process (at all stages) (Pink, 2007). Whatever type of research we are doing, we must always be attentional and intentional to our own logic, behaviours, practices, actions, values, meanings, beliefs, theories, methodologies, ontologies, and epistemologies. Without this careful consideration and reflection, our actions as researchers may not align with our perceptions, goals, and objectives, which can result in problematic, culturally appropriative, extractive, and inconsiderate research. As researchers, our methods must be aligned with our methodologies.

Therefore, through storytelling and a decolonizing autoethnography, this thesis is presented as a critical self-reflection of my journey through the Master’s thesis at the University of Toronto in the Department of Exercise Sciences and through my undergraduate degree in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, while presenting, and embedded in, an archival story of the Mother Earth Water Walks, to build and support decolonial water education in kinesiology.

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have used storytelling to share knowledge, teachings, history, and culture (Smith, 1999). Storytelling as a research method is conventionally viewed in Western science and kinesiology as an autoethnography. Autoethnography is the written self-reflection of a researcher on their subjective experiences and positionality, and how their story connects to larger
social meanings and discourses (Hayano, 1979). This thesis can be framed as storytelling, or as a decolonial/decolonizing autoethnography.

Decolonizing autoethnography interrogates how coloniality is inscribed in the production of knowledge by moving through a critical self-reflection of one’s positionality in the colonial system (Dutta, 2018). Decolonizing autoethnography challenges White/Western/Eurocentric imperialism as the naturalized site of knowledge production (Dutta, 2018). This method also offers a critically reflexive tool for decolonizing the academy (Dutta, 2018). By doing decolonial autoethnographic work, scholars can challenge how colonial violence is deeply woven through academic institutions, and explore how colonial violence is engrained in our everyday experiences inside and outside academia (Dutta, 2018).

“Decolonizing autoethnography troubles the concepts and categories we breathe in, think through, and live in” (Dutta, 2018, p.95). Through stories, researchers can theorize and explain the everyday strategies of colonialism to erase and devalue the “Other” (Dutta, 2018). Colonial ideologies, perspectives, and knowledges create and comprise the practices of knowledge production in White, Western, and Eurocentric institutions. Decolonizing autoethnography critiques knowledge claims, through story, from the place and position of the researcher (Dutta, 2018). As a method, storytelling illuminates the interconnections between the personal, the political, and the professional, allowing readers to critically reflect on and examine the entanglements between colonial, capital, and neoliberal power systems (Dutta, 2018). Many pathways of resistance open through storytelling (Dutta, 2018).

Kinesiology researchers must consider the benefits of employing decolonizing autoethnography. There are only a few scholars within physical cultural studies (PCS) who have employed autoethnography as a method to understand and situate their positionalities and subjectivities in a context and place. For instance, Holly Thorpe, Karen Barbour, and Toni Bruce (2011) examined intersectionality and sport by reflecting on their experiences and positionalities. Specifically, Thorpe, Barbour and Bruce (2011) used an auto-ethnographic feminist narrative approach to examine how aspects of their identities were highlighted during waka ama, snowboarding and basketball experiences.

Thorpe, Barbour, and Bruce (2011) recognized how many aspects of their understandings of the social and physical world remained unquestioned or uninterrupted, and that sharing narratives of their experiences through a theoretical lens could push PCS research in new directions. They suggest that collaborative conversations and reflections of one’s positionality can facilitate efforts of feminist scholars working within neoliberal contexts “where genuine collegiality, quality collaboration and
effective collective social change are too often sidelined, and are well worth the effort” (Thorpe, Barbour & Bruce, 2011, p. 127). Their auto-ethnography demonstrates how sharing personal stories and experiences through a theoretical lens can expand kinesiology in new ways (Thorpe, Barbour, & Bruce, 2011).

As a physical cultural studies (PCS) researcher, I aim to expand the field of kinesiology to incorporate decolonizing autoethnography as a valid and valued research method. While it may be difficult to assess, evaluate, monitor, and measure a decolonizing autoethnography through the ways in which researchers understand “validity” and “reliability” in quantitative sciences, this method of doing research brings new insights into researcher biases, perspectives, subjectivities, and positionalities. To evaluate the validity, reliability, uptake and dissemination of decolonizing autoethnography, academics and non-academics should assess the “authentication” of the research. To “authenticate” autoethnography, readers must assess how the experience of the researcher enhances, enlightens, or brings meaning to their own experiences and sociocultural conditions of the world (Dutta, 2018; Rodaway, 2015). Autoethnography is “authenticated” by how the research makes people feel, what is learned through the researcher’s experiences, and if the stories brought attention to and challenged colonial, capital, and neoliberal power structures and systems (Dutta, 2018; Rodaway, 2015).

While autoethnography as a method is limited, partial, subjective, emplaced, situated, and context-dependent, there are valuable insights to draw from researcher experiences, knowledges, practices, reflections, and positionalities. These insights can inform and educate academics and non-academics about the processes of how researchers form, develop, and ask their research questions, conduct research projects, and adopt and develop research methodologies and approaches (Thorpe, Barbour & Bruce, 2011). Autoethnography, or storytelling, as a research method, enforces researchers to examine and reflect on the taken-for-granted and ignored details of lived realities and environments – peoples and places (Dutta, 2018; Thorpe, Barbour & Bruce, 2011). Autoethnography is not a method to make generalized, “one-size-fits-all”, “blanket-approach” statements about human lives and sociocultural conditions, but rather, to enhance understandings of how lived experiences of the everyday shapes ways of knowing, ways of doing, and ways of being (inside and outside of research).

Using a decolonial autoethnographic approach, I am (re)centering stories. In line with Anishinabek teachings, this method(ology) is storytelling. Here, I am sharing my stories to illustrate my decolonizing journey through the academy to show researchers the importance of decolonizing their ways of knowing and ways of doing. I also share stories from the field of kinesiology to help build and support
decolonial water education. The public archive and story map will share the stories of the Water Walkers to illustrate their decolonizing journey on Turtle Island and the rest of Mother Earth. While these journeys are streams of the same thesis river, they are intended to be separate to ensure the Water Walkers continue to have full ownership, access, protection, and control of their stories.

In separating the “braided streams” of this thesis, there were slippery and blurred boundaries between the “decolonial”, “auto”, and the “ethnography” components of the project. To do decolonial research, I had to and continue to understand my rights and positionality as a white settler woman. I must critically and openly self-reflect on my settler identity and how I am embedded and implicated in coloniality. I must walk lightly, ensuring that I always ask what the community wants and needs, rather than proposing what I think they need.

Researchers must actively reflect on their rights for doing research. Non-indigenous, white, and settler researchers have different rights for doing decolonizing, indigenous and critical research than Indigenous peoples. There are different rights for non-indigenous, white, and settler people in sharing Indigenous languages, stories, and teachings. Researchers must be aware of the extractive and destructive histories of colonialism/colonization, and understand how that reflects their positionalities and subjectivities in different contexts and places.

Roles for decolonizing, indigenous and critical research are dependent on context, situation, condition, place, community, identity, and, importantly, relationship. Everyone must find their own roles, with community, through reciprocal relationships. Everyone is on their own decolonizing journeys. Everyone has different gifts to give the world. These roles will change through time and space, but responsibilities for decolonizing will help guide new future pathways.

Responsibilities for conducting decolonizing, indigenous and critical research guide one’s rights and roles for research. Researchers must build reciprocal relationships with honour and respect for Indigenous cultures and knowledges (Smith, 1999). Researchers must actively learn, practice, and embody critical, decolonizing, indigenous methodologies. Researchers must collaborate with scholars from other fields for integration and co-existence of knowledges. Researchers must share knowledge with the public in a comprehensive way. Researchers must disrupt the white supremacy and superiority that is embedded in academic institutions while critically and openly reflecting on their positionalities and subjectivities. Researchers must advocate for, reference, acknowledge, learn from, and work with Indigenous, Black, and other racialized and marginalized scholars. And, critically, researchers must continually build
reciprocal relationships of responsibility, respect, love, and gratitude with other peoples, nibi, land, plants, trees, animals, birds, fish, insects, mountains, sky – all of Creation.

While rights, roles and responsibilities may be distinct, they are deeply interconnected. Rights are based in and guided by our roles and responsibilities. Rights and roles are dynamic and changing in various contexts and places. General responsibilities remain more concrete, though specific responsibilities are active and dependent on rights and roles. Responsibilities, rights, and roles are rooted in building reciprocal relationships, and grow in tandem with those relationships.

My rights to help gather, harvest, and map stories for the archive came from building relationships with Grandmother Josephine and Joanne Robertson. I do not have the right to own and control the Water Walkers’ stories. Ownership, control, access, and protection of the public archive and story map are the Water Walkers’ rights, as their stories belong to them. To do this research, I had the right to access and protect the Water Walkers’ to help gather, harvest, and map. It was my responsibility to help gather stories and it is still my responsibility to help harvest and map the stories. I will not have the right and responsibility to protect the Water Walkers’ stories when my role for harvesting and mapping is no longer needed. I will have the right to access the stories as a member of the public, using the archive and map online or in-person.

I have the responsibility to write this thesis with love, care, and gratitude, while protecting the Water Walkers’ stories, teachings, and ceremonies. I cannot write about what I learned in ceremony, although, these ceremonial experiences guide every word that has been typed and continue to guide every footstep that I take. As I move forward, I must continually reflect on my role as a participant and researcher of the Water Walks, and distinguish between which stories I can and cannot share.

As a participant and researcher of the Water Walks, I had to distinguish what is shareable as a researcher, versus what was shared with me as a Water Walker. The streams of knowledge are so closely woven and interconnected, that it was difficult to delineate these bounded experiences. I can never truly separate the “decolonial” from the “auto” from the “ethnography”, but it was important to distinguish what, when, where, how, and why I was sharing or not sharing in this thesis.

For decolonizing my own theories and methodologies, my ways of knowing and doing, I had to trace back, critique, and openly reflect on my settler colonial history and complicity. I must continue to critique my identity and positionality as a white settler woman and western academic researcher to place my rights, roles and responsibilities for decolonial, critical, and indigenous research.
I grew up in Dryden – a small settler town in northwestern Ontario, geographically situated between Winnipeg, Manitoba and Thunder Bay, Ontario, with a population of approximately 7,500 people. It takes approximately four hours to drive to either Winnipeg or Thunder Bay – the big cities for me as a young girl growing up in a small town.

My mother, Margot Woodworth, is an immigrant from Germany, and currently resides in Dryden. She comes from a lineage of German heritage on her mother and father’s sides. Most of my mother’s family continue to live in Germany today. My Oma and late Opa own a local greenhouse in the town of Eichstätt, Bavaria, and my Oma continues to run the greenhouse with the help of my Uncle Reinhart.

While growing up in the family greenhouse in Germany, my mother learned a lot about how to care for Mother Earth, particularly how we need to gift our respect and gratitude to plants to help them thrive. My mother told me that she has always felt a deep connection with plants and the power of water to gift life, and that inherent value has been her inspiration through her career path.
Inspired by her love of plants, my mother started her own business in the early 2000s, called *Evergreen Memories*. Evergreen Memories grows earth-friendly gifts (i.e. tree seedlings and flower seeds) for weddings, corporate events, funerals, birthdays, Earth Day, celebrations, and family occasions.

My mother has always remained passionate about protecting the land and water and gifting back to Mother Earth. She passes on the teachings she has learned to my siblings and me, as well as the rest of the world through Evergreen Memories.

My father, Brad Woodworth, is of British descent. His mother immigrated to Canada from London, England in 1956. His father’s family settled in Canada from Britain in the late 1800’s. My father’s brothers, sisters, and parents still live in Canada, while most of the other family members continue to live in England.

My grandfather, Roy Orvis, was a pioneer in the cable industry for 40 years, and my grandmother, Carol Orvis, was a school teacher. My father worked for my grandfather in Dryden for 15 years, and then continued to follow in his footsteps as a cable technician. He says that his dad was the best teacher in the world. When they worked together, he was inspired and motivated by my grandfather’s love and passion for the industry.
My grandfather was the first person to put satellite television in First Nations communities. He had built his own off-air transmitters to help transmit the television signal through the community. My father listened to his stories of helping connect First Nations communities to the online-world through technology. When the opportunity arose for my father to assist a First Nations community connect to the fibre-network with K-Net, he was happy to help. Although he no longer worked with my grandfather, he enjoyed continuing his legacy of helping First Nations communities. His relationship with K-Net grew and developed over 5 years, and when he had an opportunity to take an early retirement from Shaw, he was offered, and accepted, a full-time job with K-Net.

K-Net is a First Nations owned and operated Information Communication Technologies (ICT) Service Provider, which supports and assists rural and remote First Nations of Ontario, Québec, and Manitoba. My father helps train First Nations technicians for ICT in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, and he travels to various First Nations communities across Ontario to help fix ICT-related issues. While working in the
communities, he ensures that he shares his knowledge with the other community technician(s) to help empower them to solve that problem in the future.

History moves through generations. I did not just end up here because of random chance. I am here because of a decision made by my family in the 1800s to settle on Turtle Island.

I am a white settler.

“JUSTICE FOR GRASSY NARROWS”

In 1993, one year before I was born, my parents built a house in a cleared forest lot behind my grandparents’ house on Wabigoon Lake, a sparkingly body of water stained brown by clay banks. For eighteen years, we lived in that same house in the countryside of the municipality – a privileged middle-class family who owned a great portion of land on the water. While my parents are no longer in a marital relationship, my mother still lives in the house today, with Comet, a rescue dog from Asusubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows), and my two brothers, Josh and Jeremy.
Dryden is upstream from Asusubpeeschoseewagong; the communities are connected by the English-Wabigoon River system. Dryden was built on the mill industry in the late 1890s. Thousands of settlers came to Dryden due to the prospects promised by the booming economy from the mill, and many people in the town continue to work for the mill in various occupations.

The Dryden Reed (now, Domtar) paper mill was constructed alongside Wabigoon Lake and Wabigoon River in 1911. As operations were expanding, a lot of chemical waste was produced by the mill (Bruser & Poisson, 2017; CBC, 2016b). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Reed paper mill dumped mercury waste into the English-Wabigoon river system, and the waste site continues to leak mercury today (Bruser & Poisson, 2017; CBC, 2016b). Asusubpeeschoseewagong community members have been suffering for decades from the mercury poisoning in the river (Bruser & Poisson, 2017; CBC, 2016b).

Growing up in Dryden, everyone knew the mill "smelled funky" (*the smell of money*). The boxy, grey, lifeless building stands out from most areas in the town, with clouds of smoke constantly pouring out the top. It is the town’s biggest, tallest building, and provides the most economic vitality to the citizens of our community. The mill has historically run our settler town like a train.
When I was young, I was aware that the mill was important to my town, but only *slightly* aware of the damage it was causing. My friends, family, and I always talked about how the air we breathed was “probably not as good as it could be” and Wabigoon Lake was not simply stained brown because of the clay banks. Kids from nearby towns would always make fun of Dryden for smelling bad. We had a reputation for our stink. It was no secret... But, the town did have secrets.

My friends and I used to drive on the backroad behind the mill where you could see steam rising from the “pond of poison” and tell horror stories. The “pond of poison” is a moldy grey, bluish, green circular body of liquid that steams, bubbles, and stinks. It is barricaded by an electric fence and thick tree-line to cover people from seeing it from the road. We would find the right place to park and stare at the sickening pool of toxin. No adults ever talked about what it was or why it was there. We assumed it was where the mill dumped the facilities’ “waste”, but little did we know it was the mercury dump site.

Truthfully, I did not learn about the mercury poisoning in Asusubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) until the first year of my Master’s. It was early September in 2016 and I was just at the beginning of my degree. I attended an event on campus called “Water is Life: Justice for Grassy Narrows”, which I thought it would be a good opportunity to listen to community members about water challenges in Asusubpeeschoseewagong. While I did not know what problems impacted the community, or where the community was, I wanted to be there to learn and support those who came to share their knowledges, stories, and experiences.

A young two-spirit person from the community spoke about their daily struggles with mercury poisoning, specifically the severe impacts the poisoning has had on their health, health of their community, health of the river, and health of the land. I listened closely to their story, feeling saddened and enraged that their community has been suffering for decades with no action by the government. Then, in one pertinent moment, they said this was all due to the Dryden Reed Paper Mill dumping mercury in the river in the 1960s. There I was in the audience, frozen in my chair, stunned, like I could not breathe. “Did they just say Dryden?” I thought to myself.

After the event was over, folks were shuffling out of the room while I stayed silently in my chair. I was still in shock, an event I had attended to learn more about water led me back to my home, back to my roots, but, yet, it was a place I had never been before. Memories and emotions flooded my mind and body. I felt like I was drowning from this new knowledge. After what felt like an eternity underwater, I mustered up the confidence and energy to stand up and talk to the young person who shared their story...
with the audience. In an emotional wave, I walked over, said thank you for sharing their story, acknowledged that I was from Dryden, and apologized on the behalf of my community. They smiled and hugged me, “It is okay.”

I walked away unsatisfied and slightly disgusted by what I said. Although I wanted my apology to be sincere, I felt there was no weight behind my words, like it was just another classic settler apology to cover up the violence, dispossession, and destruction. How can I apologize on the behalf of my community, especially when this secret has been kept for so long? Who in the community knows about the mercury poisoning? Why is this history not being taught in our schools? What is our community doing for reparation? I am not sure what they were thinking afterwards, but I knew I felt horrible. I did not know where to begin, where to start, or where to go next. “Should I focus my thesis on Grassy Narrows?” I considered, “What can I do to help?”

I must acknowledge my settler roots and the destruction of settler society to the lives of First Nations peoples, land, water, animals, plants, birds, fish – Mother Earth and all her beings. I have a duty and responsibility to share this knowledge with settlers, especially those from my community. Many people in Dryden continue to remain ignorant and unaware of the poisoning in the river, and, so, I need to help raise awareness about the ongoing poisoning in the river and peoples.

As I explored news and media articles, interviews, images and documentary films to understand the history of mercury poisoning in Asusubpeeschooseewagong, I (un)learned the history of my own community. I began to understand how settler and Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies are profoundly different. Meanings of land, water, animals, peoples, birds, fish, plants – all of Creation – are oppositional and contradictory. Settlers view land as property, commodity, object, and machine, whereas Anishinabe people view land as teacher, healer, responsibility, sacred, gift, family, identity, community, and home (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Regardless of the ontological and epistemological differences, every person is inherently connected to the land and water that sustain them (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). If the land, water, animals, plants, fish, and birds are sick, then the people will get sick too (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Steve Fobister (Former Chief of Asusubpeeschooseewagong) shared, “You can clean the river, but the mercury is in the people” (Grassy Narrows Support, 2017).

The lives of Asusubpeeschooseewagong people are fundamentally connected to the life of the river (Grassy Narrows Support, 2017). Water, in the form of a river, embodies connectivity and continuity,
and provides a place in the universe for future generations (McGregor, 2004a). A river is a source of the knowledge that people require to survive, which has a physical basis (our bodies need water), as well as spiritual (defining the role of humans in the world), emotional (providing strength and vision), and intellectual (developing the minds of the knowledge holders) aspects (Grassy Narrows Support, 2017; McGregor, 2004a; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Deborah McGregor (Anishinabe) (Whitefish River First Nation) (2004a) writes, “The river provides a holistic metaphor between people and the rest of Creation” (p.85). The flow of water teaches us how to live, move and be with each other (Lavalley, 2006).

Deeply connected to the river, Asusubpeeschoseewagong people have never stopped fighting for justice (Grassy Narrows Support, 2017). They continue to resist dispossession and dehumanization from the dominant settler society. Asusubpeeschoseewagong people continue to survive the settler state. There are also other First Nations communities deeply affected by the mercury poisoning in the English-Wabigoon river system that remain invisible to the state, media, and public. Their struggles are equally as important, yet, they are largely ignored and dismissed within the nation state. Apart from a few media articles and mentions in Asusubpeeschoseewagong-focused articles, the other communities downstream from Dryden, such as Wabaseemoong (Whitedog), do not receive attention from the media and by the public like Grassy Narrows. John Paiishk (Wabaseemoong Chief) said, “It’s very sad. Our country doesn’t realize or recognize that there is a problem here” (Toronto Star, 2016).

Because of the actions of settlers living in “Dryden, Ontario” – Anishinabek territory – First Nations peoples were dispossessed from their homelands, murdered, dehumanized, stripped of basic human rights, agency and self-determination, and are suffering a slow genocide from decades-old mercury poisoning. Settlers made a conscious decision to poison the river with mercury. Settlers dumped the barrels of mercury waste into the water. Settlers buried the barrels, hoping no one would notice. Settlers lied to and deceived the First Nations. Settlers covered the truth of the mercury poisoning. Settlers are responsible for the mercury poisoning in the river, fish, plants, and people. Settlers are responsible for not educating settler children on their destructive practices, and, more importantly, for damaging generations of Indigenous families’ connection and education through, with, and on their land through the violent practices of residential schooling.
SETTLER SCHOOLS

Sandy Grande’s (Quechua) (2015) book, *Red Pedagogy*, untangles the colonial threads of settler schools. Settler identities are constructed, built and nourished in academic institutions and settler society at large (Bang, et al., 2014; Calderon, 2014; Smith, 1999; Tuck, McKenzie & McCoy, 2014). Thus, it is critical to disturb and deconstruct settler ontologies and epistemologies.

John Tippeconnic III (2015) asks who is in control of education and how has colonization impacted the classroom? Who benefits from this knowledge? What institutions support and encourage this knowledge? Tippeconnic III (2015) further probes, how do we decolonize education?

Schools all over Turtle Island teach a *settler colonial land ethic* (Calderon, 2014). Settler colonial land ethics, or *settler colonial ideologies*, erase relationships to land and *nibi*, erasing the connections between peoples, land, and *nibi*, to make room for the colonial project and system (Calderon, 2014). Settler colonial ideologies erase the significance of land and water by turning land and water into property, *something* that *someone* can own and use (Calderon, 2014).

Settler colonial ideologies are so entrenched in the education system that they appear as natural (Bang et al., 2014; Calderon, 2014; Grande, 2015; Tippeconnic, 2015). Youth are taught from a young age to treat the land and water as *something* that can be *owned* and *used* for their productivity (Bang et al., 2014; Calderon, 2014; Grande, 2015; Tippeconnic, 2015; Tuck, McKenzie & McCoy, 2014). School spaces are silently controlled through settler ontologies and epistemologies through the reinforcement of settler meanings of land, while explicitly and implicitly undermining Indigenous agency and futurity (Bang et al., 2014; Tippeconnic, 2015). And, while there are teachers, professors, scholars, staff, and schoolboards who work to unsettle settler colonialism in the education system, the system is entrenched in settler colonial ideologies and understandings of the world.

Grande (2015) illuminates the relationship between settler colonialism, capitalism, and Catholicism as ‘*to civilize, is to capitalize, is to Christianize*’. This idea resonates deeply with me and reflects how I was educated in Canada. I grew up learning in a Catholic elementary school followed by a colonial High School and neoliberal post-secondary school, where I was taught in a context embedded in a *settler colonial land ethic*.

From junior kindergarten to the 8th grade, my Catholic elementary school education drilled in to me only colonial, capital, and Christian ideals of the world. Through a settler colonist’s perspective, I was taught
the history of “Canada” started when “explorers” were met with “barren, empty lands” of “resources and prosperity.” I was not taught about the history of residential schools, genocide, dispossession, destruction, violence, or broken treaties.

In my high school, racism spiked, as students had been historically “self-segregated” into racially divided hallways. The “Native doors” were located on the north side of the school, alongside the “Native hallway”, where majority of the First Nations students had their lockers and hung out during breaks. The rest of the doors to the school were broken into various mostly-white cliques, including the “Skid door”, “Smoker’s door”, “Athlete’s door”, “Tech door”, and “Music door”.

Students progressed through Dryden High School, generation after generation, without questioning or challenging the racially and socioculturally segregated hallways and doors, or the systemic discrimination and colonial violence in the education system. When I entered the school, I took things as the way they were. I did not challenge the separation. I was ignorant and complicit in the reproduction of coloniality at the school.

This continued into both my undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Toronto, where I have been mostly exposed to more Western, Eurocentric, scientific and colonial ideologies, methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies. I continued to be taught through a settler colonial land ethic that represents the land, waters, peoples, animals, plants, birds and fish as objects to be owned and (ab)used for productivity. Through a settler colonial land ethic, I was taught to view the world as a body comprised of “natural resources” to be used for human consumption, exercise, physical activity, leisure, benefit, and waste.

“EXERCISE IS MEDICINE”

One simple idea, “the body can heal through movement”, guided and shaped my life path before arriving at the University of Toronto. Throughout my studies in elementary and high school, I aspired to become a physiotherapist, to help people heal from injuries through exercise rehabilitation. “Exercise is medicine” was the ideology and discourse through which I organized my life.

In 2013, in second year of undergrad, we had a mandatory course titled, Sport, Physical Culture, and the Human Condition, which fundamentally changed my life and ways of knowing. Physical culture refers to
the ways humans actively embody culture in various forms (Giardina & Newman, 2011). The human condition refers to the environments, states, contexts, and situations that we find ourselves in as humans (Giardina & Newman, 2011). Our human conditions are entangled with the physical cultures we participate in and embodied in our subjectivities and positionalities (Friedman & van Ingen, 2011; Giardina & Newman, 2011). Bodies are assigned meaning through physical culture by varying and overlapping power structures and systems, which shapes the conditions of human lives (Friedman & van Ingen, 2011).

During our first lecture, the professor discussed how power shapes our lives, while providing concrete examples from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education. He illustrated how biophysical science dominates the way we think, act, and behave in the world, and then critiqued “exercise is medicine” as a discourse that shapes the way kinesiology/health professionals approach the body (Pronger, 1995). Through “exercise is medicine”, students are taught to view the body as a machine, species, and object to be manipulated, probed, and dissected for improvement or to become “normal” (Pronger, 1995). The body was detached from the person (Pronger, 1995). We were not taught to understand people; we were taught to understand bodies (Pronger, 1995).

My world was constructed and understood through the language of western science – my ontologies and epistemologies were rooted in what I now know to be a colonial system of science. All my life, I was seduced by science’s romanticized language to know the world. Science taught me to view humans and Mother Earth as products and objects.

The science I was learning did not teach me how to care for Mother Earth, it did not teach me how to love peoples of all backgrounds, histories, geographies, and cultures. Science did not teach me how to feel responsible for the protection of land and water, or how to love and care for all the beings sustained by Mother Earth’s gifts.

Robin Wall Kimmerer (Anishinabe) (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) (2013) writes “science can be a language of distance which reduces a being to its working parts; it is a language of objects” (p.49). Scientific language defines the boundaries of our knowing – “what lies beyond our grasp remains unnamed” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.49). Unlike the language of science, Anishinabemowin teaches language as a gift and responsibility, and is the heart of Anishinabe culture. (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) further discusses that in Anishinabemowin, the same names and words are used to address a human family and the living world, as we are in relationship with all of Creation (Wall
Kimmerer, 2013). As humans build relationship with the world through language, specifically names, having the same names to address all of Creation shows how we are all in relationship and connected (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Anishinabemowin teaches dabaadendiziwin (humility), as humans are one of many living creatures on Mother Earth (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Anishinabemowin teaches through every word that the world is alive (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Anishinabemowin is alive itself and teaches “kinship with all the animate world” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.56). When talking about a river, the language expresses the life of the river and her interconnections with the rest of Mother Earth (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). You cannot talk about a river without expressing the deeper relationship with all of Creation (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Unlike the science I was learning, Anishinabemowin shows how language is a gift that shapes understandings of the animate world and relationships with it. In contrast, science is mostly a language of objects, where life is detached and extracted. In other words, scientific language strips the life out of the world, it kills the life of nibi, land, plants, animals, fish, birds..., to make productive use of their bodies and being (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) shares, “When a language dies, so much more than words are lost” (p.258). Mother Earth becomes perceived as lifeless, spiritless, dead, objective (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

CRUESES AND CONCUSSIONS

My connection with science has not only been through my education, but also my own personal health. I have a long history of brain injuries. In 1996, I was 18 months old and had a major traumatic brain injury. I was a young infant in a mobile playing station that I could sit in, play puzzles, and move around the house. The basement door was left open while I was shuffling around, and I managed to move through the opened door, down the stairs, and onto my head. I fractured my skull from the tip of my nose to the middle-top of my head. I was rushed via air ambulance to the Thunder Bay airport in the middle of a major snowstorm to get immediate emergency care – a moment when western science and medicine contributed to saving my life.

While I do not remember any of this, this brain injury followed me into the rest of my life. I had many follow-up appointments with medical specialists in Winnipeg to see if I would ever be able to walk again, if I would have severe cognitive disabilities, and/or if I would have any major nerve damage. Eventually, I
started walking as a toddler, my cognitive capacities shaped out to be “normal”, and I did not appear to have any permanent nerve damage. However, my many severe concussions in my childhood, adolescence, teenage years, and early adulthood, each having a progressively worse impact on my physical and mental health, meant that I was in constant contact with western medical science and testing.

My concussion crisis at university occurred at the same time when I was starting to think and build a framework of understanding for the global water crisis and how it links to kinesiology. While examining the many entangled issues with the global water crisis, such as, but not limited to, biodiversity loss, climate change, overpopulation, overconsumption, poverty, malnutrition, and water shortages, I felt I was also living in crisis.

Given the medicalization of concussions and concussion symptoms, my thoughts, behaviours, and actions were embedded in a framework of crisis. I knew that my concussion symptoms were “crises” to my health, well-being, and quality of life, and, I was learning that the symptoms of environmental and sociocultural degradation were “crises” to water – all of life. In these contexts, I was hopeless, negative, pessimistic, depressed, angry, and frustrated. I believed I would continually and gradually decline in daily functioning.

At the end of May 2016, I hit my head significantly (again) and obtained another concussion, or worsened my previous one, it was becoming harder to assess and evaluate my future symptoms and healing progression. Following the double-concussion, I was in a “blackout period” practically all summer. A blackout period is a rehabilitation protocol for concussions when patients must remain in a “zero-sensory” or “blacked-out” room until symptoms improve. In September, 2016 I started my MSc program, was receiving accommodations from Accessibility Services, attending the sport medicine clinic on campus, and seeing a variety of healthcare professionals four to five times a week. I did not have hope of recovery.

However, following my first Water Walk around Waawaase’Aagaming September 30th, 2016, I suddenly felt a shift in my healing and recovery from post-concussion syndrome. My mind, body, and spirit opened to water on the Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk. Something changed significantly within me that day. Since then, every step moving forward has been in healing, love, gratitude, and hope.

When I began to feel hope for water, I began to feel hope for myself. As I (un)learned through the Water Walks, I (un)learned how to take care of myself and Mother Earth. While science does not teach how to
care for Mother Earth, caring can come from elsewhere (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Western science simply provides one way of knowing the world (Pronger, 1995; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Science teaches how to understand the layers and components of bodies, not peoples (Pronger, 1995; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). The Water Walks teach to walk in prayer, to heal and care for the land, water, and all of life. During the 2016 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk, I realized that I needed to heal my spirit before I could heal my mind and body.

As I learn from the Water Walkers and listen to Anishinabe teachings, I am beginning to understand that I am not just physical body. I am not just my brain. I am not only my concussions. Our spirits extend far beyond our physical vessels and entangle with all of Creation (Wagamese, 2016). Richard Wagamese (2016) writes:

“When I allow myself to feel my body, when I can inhabit it and allow myself to close off the world beyond my flesh, I become who I am – energy and spirit. I am not my mind. I am not my brain. I am stardust, comets, nebulae and galaxies. I am trees and win and stone. I am space. I am emptiness and wholeness at the same time. That is when my body sings to me, a glorious ancient song redolent with mystery seeking to remain mystery. Connecting to it, living with it, becoming it even for a moment, I am healed and made more. Ceremony – whatever brings you closer to your essential self” (p.54).

We are nibi. We are fish, birds, butterflies, beavers, moose, bear, insects, trees, plants, land, mountains, sky, clouds, wind, sun, moon, and stars (Wagamese, 2016). By connecting with nibi, we connect with ourselves, with the land, with all living creatures, with all of Creation (McGregor, 2004a; Wagamese, 2016; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Learning this relationality brought me closer to healing the symptoms of my concussions and closer to thinking about my studies and the water crisis I was interested in researching.

When I first studied water through a Western scientific lens of “crisis”, “components”, and “issues”, I viewed all of Creation with this same lens. I inhabited a body of crisis, components, and issues. Crisis was embodied in my understanding and perceptions of the world, and, thus, shaped the ways that I lived and interacted with the land, water, plants, animals, and peoples. My methodological approach to the world and to my research was embedded in a colonial system of crisis.
When I met Grandmother Josephine Mandamin (Anishinabe) (Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations) for the first time during the first semester of my Master’s degree, I asked her if I could do a visual ethnography of the Mother Earth Water Walks. She said, I did not need her permission, and that water gave me permission. I was emotional and touched by her words, without considering that she may not have understood what I meant. After that conversation, I ran with the wind to work on my thesis proposal. I worked hard on reading, writing, and preparing the written proposal and ethics protocol to do a visual ethnography of the 2017 For the Earth and Water Walk. A visual ethnography is a method where researchers visually document (film, video, images) their ethnographic (observations and participation) experience in a specific setting with a specific group (Pink 2001; 2007).

I had a strong fascination with ethnography, and I was becoming more interested in the role of film and video. I wanted to film and document the Water Walk from Duluth, Minnesota to Matane, Québec for four months to understand how the Water Walks connected people to water. I considered how film had the power to open people’s eyes, and how the Water Walks had the power to open people’s spirits. “Combining the two would make this thesis a force for water protection!” I thought while I moved through the research stages.

I thought, with Grandmother Josephine’s “verbal consent”, I could do the type of research that I desired. I did not contemplate if this was the type of research that the Water Walkers needed or wanted. I thought that a visual ethnography of the 2017 For the Earth and Water Walk would be a magnificent contribution to the field of kinesiology and could visually show people the power of the Water Walks. I did not consider the disrespectful, inappropriate, and misrepresentative method I proposed.

Through a thread of Water Walkers, I became connected in email correspondence with Joanne Robertson to talk about my role in the 2017 For the Earth and Water Walk, specifically how I could volunteer for certain tasks as I participated. Joanne was supportive of my initiatives and forwarded our correspondences to Grandmother Josephine to discuss further. When Joanne talked to Grandmother Josephine, it became clear that Grandmother Josephine did not understand what I had intended to do, thinking that I would be looking at webpages about the Water Walks or talking to people who have done Water Walks. She said she discouraged students in the past from doing research on the Water Walks, because it would mean they would be doing it for other purposes, not for the water.
During this time, I never understood fully what the Mother Earth Water Walks were not. Grandmother Josephine distinguished what a water walk was, by sharing what it was not:

“*The water walk is not a protest, activist action, or social event; about the individual or what you can gain; sitting idle nor is it an easy journey; a place to look for your next partner; for boasting, social chatting, carelessly talking nor gossiping; for thrill seekers, nor is it a contest or competition, exercise, a work-out, or a game of “I can handle it” or “go the distance.”; for those that just show up at the end of the walk to be seen and to say they were there; a performance piece; for people who like to sleep/vacation; for those who have romanticized ideas about Indigenous people; for those who feel the need to force other cultural values onto protocols already in place*” (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017).

As a settler, I did not comprehend that I could not be in ceremony whilst filming and recording. My one day experience on the Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk was not enough time to fully acknowledge, appreciate, or respect the Mother Earth Water Walks as Anishinabe ceremony. The Water Walks from start to finish are an Anishinabe ceremony (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Every step is a prayer for water and for all of life (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). I could not visually document a sacred ceremony, especially for the purposes and benefits of my research study.

When I asked to do a visual ethnography, I did not use a common language of understanding with Grandmother Josephine. I was not trying to deceive her, but I was using colonial, Western scientific language that masked the truth behind what I was doing. Grandmother Josephine has never and would never agree to this type of research on the Mother Earth Water Walks. While I believed that I had the best intentions for this project, my epistemologies and ontologies were still embedded in colonial practices. I began to understand why and how I was both ignorant and unaware of my settler colonial logic, behaviours, and practices. I began to realize that I had not critically reflected on my practices and position as a white settler from a small settler colonial town conducting research with Indigenous peoples. I had to continually ask myself, “What has been embedded in my understandings, knowledges, and perceptions of the world, as well as my values, beliefs, and morals?” (Grande, 2015).

After speaking with my supervisor and advisory committee, I re-proposed to Grandmother Josephine and Joanne a project that would be a documentation and analysis of the publicly available online resources about the Mother Earth Water Walks. Unlike the visual ethnography. I believed this new methodological approach reconciled the issues of me participating in the Water Walk while researching. This new revised project was accepted and supported by Joanne and Grandmother Josephine. I set about trying to reconcile, more fully, my colonial methodologies. I needed to unsettle my settler colonialism.
“The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (Smith, 1999, p.1).

When embarking on any kind of research project at the University of Toronto, a researcher must submit an Ethics Protocol to the Research Ethics Board to conduct research with humans. The Research Ethics Board (REB) views all submissions for proposed research studies, and they will approve, reject, and/or give suggestions for changes to re-submit. As a white settler conducting research with Indigenous peoples, I anticipated that I would have to make changes for re-submission. After working on my supervisor’s and department’s feedback, I submitted my research protocol.

Many weeks later, I received my application back with many important revisions to be made. I was feeling overwhelmed by the recommended revisions. Specifically, the external REB recommended:

I must read TCPS2 Chapter 9 – Research Involving First Nations, Inuit, and Metis People of Canada carefully.

I must outline my ethnicity/cultural background as a form of transparency and provide this disclosure as such.

I must state how I will disseminate this information back to the Indigenous communities and the elders involved before research results are published.

I must read the National Aboriginal Health Organization – OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, Protection) Principles and consider outlining how I will qualify these subjects as important principles in my work.

I must describe my methodology, not only the data analytic method.

I must disclose my non-Indigenous identity in my documentation and information letter.

I must outline how I will mitigate backlash from the Indigenous community if someone specifically questions my integrity as a non-Indigenous researcher or what I will do with this information.

I must be prepared that I may come up against some participants being concerned about my work and being non-Indigenous.

I must consider the social risks of this research (i.e., privacy and confidentiality issues that if not managed could lead to embarrassment).
I must have permission to utilize people’s names, blogs, website information etc. to mitigate social risks.

I must provide consent documents that reflect disclosure of ethnicity and ancestry, cultural affiliation as well as OCAP principles and how I have or will mitigate them (Research Ethics Board, 2017).

Last, but, not least, the external REB recommended: I must receive two letters of support from Josephine Mandamin and another member from the Indigenous community stating that they are supporting my research and how I was conducting it (Research Ethics Board, 2017). The reviewer stated, “This seems like a worthy project that may benefit the Indigenous community, but having community support at the onset before you begin is crucial” (Research Ethics Board, 2017).

Breaking down the feedback, point-by-point, and restructuring the REB’s feedback in a first-person perspective showed me what I needed to do. The REB helped me grasp the necessary steps I had to take to do this kind of research and along with my supervisor, I figured out what to do to get there. I worked hard to address every single one of the REB’s points. As I meticulously read the TCPS2 and OCAP Principles chapters and worked through the feedback, I could finally see how bare (and colonial) my application was.

I emailed Grandmother Josephine Mandamin and Joanne Robertson kindly requesting letters of support to show the REB that they supported the research I was doing. Grandmother Josephine was confused by my request for a letter of support, thinking instead I was requesting her full participation in a research study to help me gather Water Walkers’ online stories. This was too much to ask, as she was far too busy to commit herself to this research. During this time, it became clear I did not actually know how to communicate what I was doing to Grandmother Josephine. I was still using colonial, scientific language. I was frustrated with my inability to communicate with Grandmother Josephine. I was not trying to request her time commitment. I tried to ask for her support to do the research, but instead, I used Western discourses to explain my intentions, goals, and plans.

Joanne and I talked on the phone to clear things up about my intentions and proposed project. She was supportive and shared her vision of a public archive with me. I did not know Joanne had envisioned an archive of the Mother Earth Water Walks. We had never had a rich enough conversation with one another about our hopes, dreams, visions, passions, and inspirations for the Mother Earth Water Walks. As the REB stated, community support is indeed crucial (Research Ethics Board, 2017).
I committed to helping Joanne build her vision, and once again abandoned the “discourse, representational, narrative analysis” that I had proposed. She spoke with Grandmother Josephine about the importance of this project in gathering Water Walkers’ stories so that future generations know what their families did for the water. Grandmother Josephine recognized the value of the project, and agreed to let me help gather the stories for the archive. Grandmother Josephine and Joanne signed the letters of support that I had drafted, addressing the revisions the REB outlined. While Joanne sent her electronic signature via email, Grandmother Josephine signed the letter in person during an event on campus, which honoured her and the remarkable work she has done.

Prior to receiving the REB’s revisions, I did not understand how vital it was for me to have letters of support from Grandmother Josephine and Joanne to do this work. I initially treaded carefully with how I asked for consent, because I did not want to disrespect verbal consent as a valid form of consent. However, there is a difference between receiving verbal consent and having someone “agree” to something they do not understand. I did not show *minaadendamowin* (respect) for the protocols of the Mother Earth Water Walks. I did not show *minaadendamowin* for Anishinabe people, knowledge, culture, or history.

First, I never articulated my plans to Grandmother Josephine properly. I was embedded in colonial, Western language that constructed the research through a series of objectives, milestones, timelines, and methods. Second, I did not ask what research Grandmother Josephine and Joanne wanted me to do. I told them what I wanted to do, and I asked for permission to do that. I never once considered the needs or wants of the Mother Earth Water Walk community, instead, I saw a gap in research that needed to be filled and I wanted to show how I could fill it.

When I asked for the letters of support, I received apprehension from Grandmother Josephine again regarding my proposed methods. I was still embedded in colonial methods and methodologies. I did not understand what it meant to conduct research with Indigenous peoples with Indigenous methodologies. I was only considering “me, myself, and I”, despite my intentions and dedications for water protection. However, when I learned what I was doing, how I was doing it, and why I was doing it that way, I understood what I needed to do to change. I had to decolonize my own methodologies, theories, practices, epistemologies, and ontologies. I had to walk the talk and walk the walk. Thankfully, I received ethical approval in December, 2017, and I was finally able to begin gathering stories.
As I began to gather stories for the public archive and I reflected on how I would write the final thesis for submission to the university, I deeply and carefully considered the REB's recommendations. The OCAP Principles stuck out like a rusty nail on an old wood floor.

Ownership.

Control.

Access.

Protection.

The Water Walkers’ stories belong to themselves. I realized that the University of Toronto could not have ownership, control, access, and protection of the Water Walkers’ stories. This concern led to the structure of this final thesis. I considered that if I were to share the Water Walkers’ stories in this document, the Mother Earth Water Walk community could not have full ownership, control, access, and protection of the public archive. I realized that if I shared some of my thoughts about Anishinabek teachings, scientific knowledge, and my stories, experiences, reflections and critiques, that I could still answer the questions I proposed, while ensuring the stories belong to the Water Walkers, not to the university.
Kinesiology is the study of the human body in relation to movement. Kinesiology emerged from a collection of Western biophysical sciences (anatomy, physiology, biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics) to understand the active human body (Andrews, 2008). The field branches off into three “streams” or subdisciplines: biological, psychological and sociological, which have distinct approaches to exploring the various representations, meanings and experiences of the human body. Within each subdiscipline, there are further areas of specialization (Andrews & Giardina, 2008). For example, the sociological subdiscipline branches off into: Sociology of Sport (SS), Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), as well as the area I research in, physical cultural studies (PCS).

As I moved through my undergraduate degree, I realized that while the field of kinesiology is clearly multi-disciplinary, the isolated subdisciplines and sub-areas do not constitute an integrated field of kinesiology (Gill, 2007). An interdisciplinary field requires connections among the subdisciplines, not simply a collection of cross-disciplinary areas that live together (Gill, 2007). Due to this intensified specialization and fragmentation, there is a fundamental lack of comprehensiveness within the field (Andrews & Giardina, 2008).

Students move through the kinesiology program, often unclear and confused as to how each subdiscipline connects with another. In third and fourth year of the undergraduate degree, students begin selecting which stream they want to specialize in, by choosing courses from the different subdisciplines. During this time in the degree, many students still do not understand what kinesiology is. To no surprise, there are debates in the field regarding “what is kinesiology?” (Andrews & Giardina, 2008; Gill, 2007; Tweitmeyer, 2012).

Tweitmeyer (2012) defines kinesiology as:

“a human discipline, born of, and reliant upon the embodied, curious, political and rational nature of human beings. The field examines physical activity from a myriad of scholarly perspectives, with physical activity being understood not as an abstract or literal moniker, but rather as the placeholder term for culturally significant and recreative movement forms. Games, play, sport, exercise, dance (among others) are central to who we are and what we do. If physical activity is understood in this way, then the field is as reliant upon “ethics” as much as it is reliant upon “biology.” Human kinesis is a function of all aspects of the human person whether those aspects are physiological or just plain logical. Kinesiology is neither a pure science nor solely a member of the humanities, but rather a field that necessarily encompasses both” (p.20).
Considering Tweitmeyer’s (2012) definition, kinesiology encompasses biological, psychological and sociological understandings of the active human body. However, there is a scientific hegemony within the field that pushes kinesiology research further away from interdisciplinary and closer to a unidirectional, scientific approach (Andrews, 2008).

Many kinesiology programs across the USA, and Canada specifically, focus on biophysical sciences, without offering any physical cultural studies courses (Andrews, 2008). While the University of Toronto maintains prestige as a multi-disciplinary faculty, scientific hegemony is maintained, this tend to privilege the “hard sciences” over the “soft sciences” (Douglas & Halas, 2013). Across universities and institutions, the “inconvenient truth” in kinesiology is that there is an epistemological hierarchy that privileges positivist over postpositivist, quantitative over qualitative, predictive over interpretive ways of knowing, and Western science over Indigenous Knowledges (Andrews & Giardina, 2008).

Fortunately, there are scholars in the field of kinesiology who are actively working to decolonize and deconstruct racialized western scientific paradigms that have marginalized people of colour and Indigenous peoples, such as Janice Forsyth, Janelle Joseph, Audrey Giles, and Vicky Paraschak. Nevertheless, much of the field continues to lack a fundamental comprehension and integration among subdisciplines, and certainly as a whole does not encompass decolonizing research practices, methodologies or teaching (Douglas & Halas, 2013). Connecting the subdisciplinary knowledges of kinesiology is essential to disrupt the institutional (re)production of scientific hegemony in the field and to build a more comprehensive and integrative approach to understanding the human body (Andrews & Giardina, 2008). As a physical cultural researcher, I acknowledge and respect my colleagues who have built and laid the groundwork for my research in the various subdisciplines. At the same time, I hope to expand and disrupt and decolonize the conventional ways kinesiology researchers have understood bodies, environments, and, most importantly, waters.

**PHYSICAL CULTURAL STUDIES AND SOCIAL THEORY**

Physical cultural studies (PCS) examines the ways active bodies are organized, represented and assigned meaning by systems and structures of power (Friendman & van Ingen, 2011; Giardina & Newman, 2011a; Giardina & Newman, 2011b; Silk & Andrews, 2011). PCS is a synthesis of empirical, theoretical and methodological influences and focuses on the critical analysis of active bodies, particularly how they
become organized, represented, and experienced in relation to structures of power (Andrews, 2008). Derived from cultural studies and the sociology of sport, PCS joins fields, such as gender studies, race and ethnic studies, and queer studies, in recognizing the embodiment of power relations (Andrews, 2008; Friedman and van Ingen, 2011; Silk & Andrews, 2011). PCS attempts to address the absence of the body in its parent disciplines by reclaiming the body as its focus for inquiry (Friedman and van Ingen, 2011).

Specifically, the sociology of sport examines societal power relations in the context of sport and physical activity, and cultural studies examines how people live their lives within historically-based structures. PCS extends these analyses to incorporate the ways active bodies are organized, represented and assigned meaning (Friedman and van Ingen, 2011; Giardina & Newman, 2011b). However, while PCS researchers have established a critical inquiry of the body, the field is criticized for over-disciplining knowledge production(s) and disregarding earlier (feminist and critical race scholars’) contributions to the field (Adams et al., 2016). Indeed, PCS researchers must remain cognizant of the crucial previous contributions around racialized, gendered and sexualized embodiment in sport (Adams et al., 2016).

While PCS incorporates knowledge from a wide range of sources, encompassing cross-disciplinary knowledges does not necessarily facilitate an interdisciplinary understanding (Andrews, 2008; Atkinson, 2011). Generally, there has been a disregard for knowledge translation, lack of widely accessible theory, and too few connections or dialogues with other disciplines for joint research efforts within PCS (Andrews, 2008; Atkinson, 2011). Accordingly, physical cultural researchers must not just attempt to fill the gaps of knowledge with their research, but instead, must actively work to collaborate with other disciplines and disseminate knowledge to the public to effectively build an integrative and comprehensive kinesiology.

There is also a tendency in the field to disconnect the material conditions of existence from the lived experiences of the (sub)cultural groups, communities and/or populations examined (Adams et al., 2016; Andrews & Giardina, 2008). Material conditions of existence are the physical and sociocultural environments in which people live (Andrews & Giardina, 2008). When separating the person or group from their environment, it is impossible to understand their lived experiences and realities (Andrews & Giardina, 2008). Humans are embedded in their environments; the conditions of their lives are inseparable from such environments. There is a need in kinesiology and PCS to actively deploy critical interpretive methodologies to return to the material conditions of existence as they are, and not how researchers purport them to be (Adams et al., 2016; Andrews & Giardina, 2008). In doing so, PCS
researchers are urged to consider the conditions of emergence (micro and macro; institutional and societal; internal and external) that provide the foci and sites of critical engagement (Adams et al., 2016; Andrews & Giardina, 2008).

As a young PCS scholar entering my Master’s degree in 2016, I quickly learned that dominant, Western methodologies and theories constrain the field. Histories and geographies are often taken-for-granted, and Indigenous methodologies and knowledges are too frequently ignored or dismissed. As a field rooted in Western, colonized methodologies and theories, it is clear why PCS researchers have tended to separate the human condition from the lived realities of the peoples and groups they are studying. To build an understanding of decolonizing in sport and physical culture, I dug through the literature in kinesiology, specifically PCS, to see what previous scholars have done for decolonizing the field. I also stepped outside of the field to learn more decolonial perspectives from scholars in Anthropology, Women and Gender Studies, Geography, History, Indigenous Studies, and Social Justice Studies. By listening to and learning from scholars inside and outside of kinesiology, it became clear how whiteness is central to colonialism, and that deconstructing whiteness is central for decolonizing. For decolonizing PCS, we, as scholars in the field, must deconstruct whiteness.

WORKING IN THE “DEATH STAR”

While I was thinking about what it means to be a feminist, I saw a picture on Instagram of a woman wearing a t-shirt saying “I AM A FEMINIST.” It was bold and bright. I admired her confidence in actively wearing a strong and controversial label. Yet, mainstream feminism has been viewed as Eurocentric, as it does not consider the effects of colonialism and intersecting identities (i.e. race, class, ability) (Mishra, 2013). The historical tendency in the Western world to homogenize and universalize both women and their experiences led to the emergence of postcolonial feminism (Mishra, 2013). Postcolonial feminism examines how racism, prejudice, discrimination, violence, and other historical and modern political, socioeconomic and cultural effects of colonialism impact non-white, non-Western women in the postcolonial world, as well as how Western white women have benefitted from structures of power (Pedwell, 2007).

In PCS, there is both an absence and presence of (postcolonial) feminist thought. There has been concern among feminist PCS scholars regarding recent publications that were intending to establish PCS
as a distinct approach to study physical culture (Adams et al., 2016), but that misrecognized its histories, and thus feminist PCS scholars are pushing for feminist cultural studies, because they share with traditional feminist approaches “a commitment both to exploring social difference and injustice and to contesting the relations of power that organize knowledge and disciplinary formations” (Adams et al., 2016, p.76). It is important to recognize the important contributions of feminism to PCS, as these perspectives and approaches help build the foundations of this emerging discipline. There are many feminist scholars in PCS that have shaped my understandings of postcolonial feminism and have grounded my study in kinesiology.

Several researchers in PCS work in the area of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP). Many use postcolonial feminist perspectives to critique various SDP initiatives, policies and implications and discourses of colonialism, neoliberalism, development and globalization. For instance, Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) suggest that given sport’s implication in colonizing relationships, a decolonization approach for the study and practice of SDP is imperative. By infusing decolonizing methodologies with a postcolonial, feminist, international relations (IR) framework, SDP researchers can engage in more transformative research that both attends to the inequalities perpetuated by colonialism and connects the diversities and lived experiences of those affected (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011). Likewise, Hayhurst (2016) examined the tensions involved in conducting an empirical study that employed a postcolonial feminist approach to a multi-sited global ethnography of SDP intervention. She argues for SDP researchers to conduct decolonizing, postcolonial feminist, participatory action-oriented research to produce more ethically-charged, responsible scholarship and practice (Hayhurst, 2016), a commitment that is very important to me.

Other PCS researchers employ postcolonial feminist approaches by examining discourses of health. For example, MacNeill and Rail (2010) employed a postcolonial feminist analysis to investigate how young people living in Canada discursively construct fitness and health. They addressed how young people appropriate or resist bodily discourses and constitute themselves as subjects within those discourses (MacNeill & Rail, 2010). MacNeill & Rail (2010) found that dominant messages of neo-liberal healthism mediate curriculum and programming, and students are expected to learn and enact such discourses. They found that Eurocentric and gendered biomedical knowledges are active in normalizing the body, reflect broader power relations of racism, sexism and slim able-bodied healthism (MacNeill & Rail, 2010; Rail, 2012).
It has also been argued that discourses of whiteness and neoliberalism are also reinforced in everyday sport and recreation spaces – evoking cultural landscapes of purification (Fusco, 2005; 2006b; 2007). Using a critical feminist analysis, Fusco (1998) demonstrated how heterosexism and homophobia are perpetuated locker room spaces and impact on the subjective experiences of lesbians in sport. Fusco (2005) further demonstrated, using critical cultural geographies to conduct a spatial ethnography of locker rooms, that discourses of whiteness and neoliberal discourses affect subjects who administer, use and maintain everyday sport and recreation spaces, and that these discourses (re)produce racial (spatial) superiority and cultural hegemony. Fusco (2006a; 2006b; 2007) showed how spaces of health and fitness inscribe discourses of responsibility and self-governance to maintain (western) neo-liberal imperatives of health. These kinds of spaces produce a ‘culture of healthism’ and ‘imperatives of hygenism’ based on western notions of purity. All these spaces work together to instruct individuals to actively participate in (western) healthification practices (Fusco, 2006a), which promotes taking responsibility for one’s health and physical activity (Fusco, 2007). Fusco’s work (1998; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007) is critical for the field’s consideration of space and the relationships between power, peoples and places. As my thesis supervisor, Caroline has shown me that we cannot understand the human body in relation to movement without the consideration of space and place. Her research demonstrates how health spaces are normalized, capitalized, commodified, gendered, sexualized and racialized.

As physical cultural spaces are commodified, so too are (physical) cultures. For example, Joseph’s (2008) ethnography examining the cultural commoditization of Afro-Brazilian martial art in Canada shows how discourses of multiculturalism in Canada are critical to the commoditization of cultural practices, identities and knowledges. These results have important implications to understanding the Canadian identity and how cultures are misrepresented and appropriated to be sold for dominant culture’s mass consumption (Joseph, 2008). Such commodification leads to the appropriation of cultures, identities, spaces, and places, and works to colonize, racialize, and commodify the “Other”.

It is critical to recognize the foundational research that has been conducted in PCS that employs postcolonial feminist approaches and actively works to deconstruct discourses of whiteness. There are many more Physical Cultural (postcolonial) feminist scholars who have, and, are doing, important decolonizing work in the field: Janice Forsyth, Yuka Nakamura, Delia Douglas, Mary MacDonald, Heather Sykes, Cathy Jamieson, Samantha King, among others. Unfortunately, I was not exposed to the works of these postcolonial feminist scholars in my academic courses, as there is still a profound lack of racial
diversity and a strong prevalence of whiteness within Canadian faculties of Kinesiology and Physical Education (KPE) (Douglas & Halas, 2013), but I will introduce some of their important work in the next section. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate studies, my education was limited mostly by dominant white men in the field. The theories and methods I was taught, and the articles and books I read, were from the perspectives of a white settler man. To find a base in the field for my research, I had to conduct significant reviews of literature in kinesiology and PCS outside of my classroom experiences.

As a white physical cultural researcher in the field of kinesiology, I recognize how I am privileged in this system of whiteness, however, I wanted to actively work to dismantle discourses of whiteness, racism and colonialism in my faculty, discipline and in my own research. Importantly, I had to consider how the discourses of whiteness, exercise as medicine, and its production of healthism worked to purify bodies, spaces and social relations, as this is a classic example of settler colonial ideologies and narratives of (health) assimilation.

Outside the discipline of kinesiology, I have learned that settlers justified that they were superior to First Nations peoples because they believed they had the civilized and rational way of managing and governing the land and water and peoples (Harris, 2004; Hill, 2017; Nixon, 2011). Settler colonists’ self-interest of controlling territory (including Indigenous peoples) is embedded in white supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism (Harris, 2004; Hill, 2017; Nixon, 2011). Settlers have worked to (un)imaginatively dispossess Indigenous peoples through discourses of “purification”, “civilization” and “assimilation”. Through a national discourse of development, the state actively imagined settlers as “productive”, “pure”, “clean”, “civilized”, and “rational”, while Indigenous peoples were actively unimagined as “unproductive”, “dirty”, “lazy”, “stupid”, “irrational”, “uncivil”, “savage”, “beastly”, “underdeveloped”, “illegitimate”, “animalistic”, and “non-human” uninhabitants (Harris, 2004; Hill, 2017; Mollett, 2011; Nixon, 2011; Radcliffe, 2012; Wainwright, 2005).

Through the active imagination of the settler identity and unimagination of indigeneity, the imperial state was established to dominate territories and dispossess the peoples. Settlers, of course, also relied on physical power (violence) and the supporting infrastructure of the state (i.e. dams, mills, factories) to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands (Harris, 2004; Hill, 2017; Nixon, 2011).

Specifically, in northwestern Ontario in the 1950s, settlers transformed the English-Wabigoon river system with dams. The landscape transformed from a natural river system equally flowing between and among communities to a man-made channel diverting water from the powerless to the powerful (Nixon,
2011). While the dams physically diverted water, they also imaginatively diverted attention away from Asusubpeeschoseewagong (and the other First Nations communities) and towards Dryden (and other settler communities) (Nixon, 2011). The hydro damming flooded and destroyed sacred sites and wild rice beds, which were historically significant cultural places for Asusubpeeschoseewagong people (Free Grassy, 2017; CBC News, 2017). These attempts to control the power of water represents the limitations of (white) man-made governance and colonial ideologies (conquer and dominate) over natural laws (Danard, 2013). Once settlers established an imaginative (imperial state) and physical (state infrastructure) threat and domination, colonial culture and settler discourses of “purification”, “productivity”, “rationality”, “civilization”, and “development” spread like an infectious disease throughout Canada, though in different ways, contexts, dynamics and formations (Harris, 2004; Hill, 2017). To continually colonize and access the land, water, and peoples, the imperial state relied/s on the discourses and myths of “purity” and “emptiness” (Harris, 2004; Hill, 2017). Such discourses of “purity” have worked to reinforce settler-colonial healthification practices inside and outside of sport spaces.

The relationship between settler colonialism and healthification is apparent in what many of us call the “Death Star™”, which is more commonly known as, the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport. My graduate office is in the “Death Star”d, located in the Sport and Cultural Environments (SPaCE) Lab on the fourth floor of Goldring, where I have had the privilege as a researcher to work on issues related to kinesiology. The SPaCE Lab although a windowless room, and is box-like, which has more of the appearance of a science lab, is a place where graduate students can gather to read, write, and research, and discuss whiteness in the faculty, and reflect on how the “Death Star” is the material and spatial embodiment of discourses of neoliberalism, healthism, and colonialism.

In the “Death Star”, the lights are florescent white. The walls are white. The floor is white. The people are, for the most part, white. The building oozes whiteness from every corner, wall, floor, and ceiling. Whiteness spreads from the top to bottom – researchers and health professionals (physicians, physiotherapists) on the top floor, coaches and staff on the third and second floor, then athletes and students on the first floor and below.

d The “Death Star” references the imperial star and planet destroyer weapon that appeared in several Star Wars™ movies.
I think about whiteness every time I enter the building. Every inch of the architecture reflects how whiteness is embedded in the foundations of the institution. Whiteness is the operation of white power and privilege through the denial and lack of comprehension of a “non-white” reality (Douglas & Halas, 2013). Whiteness is an ideology, discourse, system, and structure that governs the field of kinesiology and Physical education (KPE) (Douglas & Halas, 2013). The predominance of White people and (Eurocentric, western scientific) cultures of whiteness have shaped, and continue to shape, the field’s research, pedagogies, practices, and knowledge production, as well as the recruitment and retention of racialized minority and Indigenous students (Douglas & Halas, 2013).

The “Death Star” and its Stormtroopers™ (researchers, health professionals, graduate students, and athletes) are an example of how an Imperial and white empire governs the field. There is a profound lack of racial diversity and a strong prevalence of whiteness within Canadian faculties of KPE (Douglas & Halas, 2013). There is often a complete underrepresentation of non-white faculty members and of curriculum content related to race, diversity and whiteness (Douglas & Halas, 2013). As a student at the Faculty of KPE at the University of Toronto, I have observed the (re)production of whiteness in its programs, hiring, and research. There are currently no graduate courses offered that cover Indigenous histories, knowledges, research or methodologies, or no Indigenous faculty members in the Faculty of KPE at the University of Toronto. Current and future faculty members of all subdisciplines in kinesiology must integrate indigenous knowledges and methodologies into their course curricula to deconstruct whiteness in the field, and actively promote the hiring of Indigenous faculty.

As a white settler researcher at the University of Toronto, I have actively benefitted and experienced privilege from the same system that oppresses, marginalizes, and excludes racialized and Indigenous peoples. And, so, as a privileged white settler researcher, I know I am responsible for actively dismantling discourses of whiteness, racism and colonialism in the “Death Star”, the field of kinesiology, and in my own research.

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*Stormtroopers references the imperial troops/guards that appear in many Star Wars™ movies. Interestingly, the Stormtroopers are humans, bred for war, dressed in all-white body armour.*
POW WOW IN THE “DEATH STAR”

“Pow Wow is about celebrating the power of the earth. To dance is to bless it with each step. To sing is to honour it with each vocable, each sound I make” (Wagamese, 2016, p.150).

Given the reproduction of imperial whiteness in KPE, I was surprised that on a cool, winter Saturday afternoon in March, 2018, that the Indigenous Students Association Annual Pow Wow was held in the gymnasium of the “Death Star”. Holding a significant celebration of Indigenous cultures in a place that typically celebrates significant achievements of “High Performance Sport” is an important step forward for decolonizing sport. High performance and professional sport is not known for its empathy towards racialized and Indigenous peoples. There are studies within PCS, that have been critical of the use of stereotypes of Indigeneity in sport, the use of “Native American mascots”, sport for development and community-based programs in First Nations communities, and sport mega-events for Indigenous peoples. PCS scholars have also critiqued discourses of racism, whiteness, neoliberalism and healthism in Indigenous sport and physical cultural spaces.

Davis (1990) brought attention to how media, particularly television programming and bioscientific discourses, work to rationalize racist preoccupations in sport. Her research shows how racial formation in sport legitimizes white power structures because perceived genetic differences between black and white athletes are used to justify the racial status quo (Davis, 1990). Davis (1990) suggested by increasing media programming and research that focuses on deconstructing biological determinist interpretations of social stratification and presenting alternative sociological interpretations, the public will begin to question the ‘commonsense’ assumptions of biological determinism. Examining racial preoccupation is critical both inside and outside of sport, as bioscientific discourses (re)produce capital, neoliberal and colonial power structures that discriminate against people of colour and Indigenous peoples. Davis (2007) has also, like other scholars (Staurowsky, 2004), critically interrogated the use of Native American Indigenous imagery in college and professional sports, concluding that such use is blatantly racist and denies the histories of violent colonialism and cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples, which I will outline in more detail in another paragraph.

In Canada, sport has historically been used by the Canadian government as a civilizing agent to assimilate Indigenous peoples, encouraging them to embrace mainstream values and cultural practices and to abandon traditional languages, cultural practices and ceremonies (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006; Staurowsky, 2004). To illustrate, Vicky Paraschak (1991; 1997; 2000a; 2000b) established that, given the unequal power relations between majority of the Canadian population and First Nations, sport
initiatives and interventions may be perceived as strategies for assimilating Indigenous peoples, rather than as strategies for promoting community identity. To give another example, Lyndsay Hayhurst, Audrey Giles and Whitney Radforth (2015) used a post-colonial feminist, participatory action-oriented, decolonizing girlhood approach to uncover how gender inequalities intersect with other categories of difference for urban Indigenous women in Vancouver, British Columbia, who were participating in a sport, gender and development (SGD) programme. The researchers found that stereotyping, racism, and gender inequalities in both everyday life and in the programme created challenging circumstances for the women (Hayhurst, Giles & Radforth, 2015). However, despite the barriers, the women used the SGD programme as an opportunity to resist and challenge perceptions of their bodies, sporting abilities, lifestyles and Indigenous stereotypes (Hayhurst, Giles & Radforth, 2015).

However, despite the colonial history of assimilation of Indigenous peoples through sport, sport (and other programs) can be used to rebuild community health and foster social inclusion, if Indigenous peoples have self-determination and agency of the program (Harvey, 2001). Indigenous peoples must have the decision-making power on delivery of recreation and sport services for their communities (Harvey, 2001). To use sport (and other programmes) to rebuild community health and foster social inclusion requires the self-determination and agency of the individuals the program is directed towards (Harvey, 2001). Indigenous leaders have inverted this historical process of assimilation to achieve self-determination through sport (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006). For example, the North American Indigenous Games and the World Indigenous Games were created to empower Indigenous peoples, rather than reproduce the historical disempowerment through colonial sporting practices (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006). These Games promote the freedom to express Indigeneity in sport. Hosting the Indigenous Students Association Annual Pow Wow at the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport then can be part of the faculty’s promotion of an important act of self-determination for Indigenous students at the University of Toronto. Producing and using sport, physical activity, and recreation spaces to celebrate indigeneity, rather than coloniality, helps deconstruct cultures of whiteness in sport (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006).

When I attended the Pow Wow, the drums were beating loudly, the singers were chanting strongly, the dancers were moving beautifully, and the room was alive. The space was filled with waves of love, gratitude, peace, and joy, synchronized together through the sounds of the drum beating, voices soaring, and feet flying, an unusual sight in a space that is dedicated to dominant performances of competitive sport.
The first dance that I watched was the grass dancers. With every step and movement, they glided along the floor, like blades of grass blowing in the wind. Song after song, several groups of men, women, Grandmothers, Elders, and children performed smooth and elegant dances. The vibrations of the drums and singers’ voices rippled through the space and into my body, mind, and spirit.

The MC announced the next dance was a healing song performed by jingle dress dancers. He invited those who feel they need healing to come to the outside circle of the dance floor and offer a jingle dress dancer *semaa* (tobacco). There were bundles of *semaa* in a weaved basket by the MC table. I walked over to grab a bundle of *semaa* and then offered it to a jingle dress dancer. I whispered my name to her, and shared, “I have post-concussion syndrome and my two beloved family dogs, Bodhi and Neo, just passed away.” In that moment, I broke into uncontrollable tears. She hugged me tight, and said, “It is going to be okay.”

The music started and the dancers began jingling gracefully in a circular, clockwise motion. I cried to myself silently while I watched the jingle dress dancers move around the room in a beautiful ringing of *zaagi’idiwin* (love), *minaadendamowin* (respect), *debwewin* (truth) for healing the spirits of those around the circle. I focused on the dancer who had the *semaa* I offered, and I prayed for Bodhi and Neo.

The healing song finished, I wiped my tears, and walked to another area of the gymnasium to meet a graduate colleague. We sat together and started talking about the beautiful dancers and their remarkable *regalia*. She, mistakenly, called their regalia “costumes”. I kindly said that “costumes” is an inappropriate, offensive, colonial term to describe the traditional, sacred, ceremonial regalia. She
immediately recognized the problem of referring to traditional regalia as a “costume”, which sparked a
discussion about colonialism in sport. Costumes are a set of clothes to mimic a group, country, or
historical period. Sport has historically used indigeneity as a “costume” in various capacities, such as the
use of “Native American mascots”, as I briefly mentioned above.

The use of ‘Native American mascots’ in sport have been critiqued by PCS scholars for the harmful
representations of Indigenous identity and culture (Davis, 1995; Davis, 2002; Davis-Delano, 2007;
Staurowsky, 2004). Mascots, logos and nicknames invoke stereotypes that portray Indigenous peoples
as aggressive fighters, savage and animalistic, ignoring the litany of historical violences enacted on
native Americans, make invisible contemporary Indigenous life, ignoring cultural differences between
different Indigenous societies, and misrepresent and trivialize aspects of Indigenous cultures (Davis,
1995).

Such mascots, logos and nicknames reflect and reinforce racist stereotypes which are harmful to
Indigenous peoples (Davis, 1995; Davis, 2002; Davis-Delano, 2007; Staurowsky, 2004). To reinforce the
division between white and Indigenous peoples in sport, there are also mascots that embody
patriarchal, conservative, “Old South” Whiteness (Newman, 2007). The two stereotypical figures,
battling in a sporting arena, depicts the violent past and current colonial relationships between white,
non-white and Indigenous peoples (Newman, 2007). However, during the Pow Wow in the “Death Star”,
the battling contradictions of whiteness and indigeneity collapsed into a celebration of culture, history,
peoples, resistance, and survival. It was a beautiful example of the lived co-existence of knowledge that
could be in the future, separate and distinct, overlapping in a dance and song of love and gratitude, with
footsteps for social and environmental justice.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Physical cultural researchers have critiqued the long-term environmental impacts of sports, recreation,
leisure and physical activity (Stoddart, 1990; Bouchier & Cruikshank, 1997; Cruikshank & Bouchier, 1998;
Schmidt, 2006; Taylor, Poston, Jones & Kraft, 2006; Otto & Heath, 2009; Scott, 2013; Millington, Darnell
& Millington, 2016). The unsustainable practices, development and management of sports and sports
mega-events contribute to the degradation of the land and water, as well as increase greenhouse gas
(GHG) emissions and waste (Schmidt, 2006). Sports activities, such as skiing, snowmobiling, golf,
NASCAR, fishing and boating, and sports manufacturing practices have been critiqued for their unsustainable environmental uses. Whether watched or played, these activities both use and abuse natural resources (Schmidt, 2006). For instance, sports create obsolescence waste, as athletes are constantly (re)purchasing sports and athletics equipment (Schmidt, 2006). Ski slopes disrupt fragile alpine ecosystems and snowmobiles increase GHG emissions by spewing exhaust fumes into the air (and water) (Schmidt, 2006).

Golf, a socially stratified elitist sport, (re)produces neo-liberal, capitalist and colonial discourses of how to (ab)use land and water resources (Stoddart, 1990). Golf courses (re)shape, modify and develop the natural landscape into exclusive (white) spaces, while consuming large amounts of land, pesticides and water (Millington, Darnell & Millington, 2016; Schmidt, 2006; Stoddart, 1990). NASCAR, an expression of white American cultural citizenship, manages economic and ecological insecurities through a (re)articulation of patriarchal familial, commodity consumption, and mobility (Scott, 2013). As NASCAR’s patriarchal discourses oppose and reject discourses of environmental sustainability, they in turn support and maintain economic and ecological insecurities (i.e. climate change) (Scott, 2013).

Parking lots for stadiums, arenas and other sport facilities create vast paved, impervious surfaces (Schmidt, 2006). Paved surfaces decrease stormwater absorption and speed delivery of both water and pollutants (commercial, industrial and residential activities) into the waterways (Environmental Protection Division, 2005). These pollutants commonly contain nutrients, sediments, pathogens and toxins, which poses significant threat to water quality, marine life, ecosystems, and habitats (Environmental Protection Division, 2005).

Sports-mega-events overall consume vast amounts of energy, and produce voluminous greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and waste (Schmidt, 2006; Otto & Heath, 2009; Millington, Darnell & Millington, 2016). While there is a clear relationship between the sports-mega event tourism industry and climate change, various stakeholders are not aware of and/or hide their operation’s contributions (Otto & Heath, 2009). Thus, the environmental impacts of sports mega-events must be considered and managed before, during and after the event is designed, organized, and hosted (Otto & Heath, 2009).

Furthermore, spectacular sport spaces (i.e. professional sports stadiums like Major League Baseball’s Oriole Park) are majorly disconnected from the realities of those living in impoverished neighbourhoods (Friedman, Andrews & Silk, 2004). Cities continue to use sport amenities for urban (re)development initiatives, which (re)produce capitalist, neoliberal and colonial power structures in postindustrial cities
(Friedman, Andrews & Silk, 2004). Likewise, Friedman (2010) showed how public spaces, such as Major League Baseball’s Washington’s Nationals Park, deny community participation and freedom, as well as commodify aspects of everyday life towards furthering alienation and exploitation. Commodified urban public spaces work to dispossess and restrict marginalized groups (i.e. LGBTQ, homeless), promote consumption, and exclude all but consumers (Friedman, 2010).

There is a small body of PCS research examining how sports (events, mega-events, tourism), recreation, leisure and physical activity degrade the environment, and the environmental barriers that restrict low-income and racial minority populations from participating in sports and physical activity. However, despite the foundational research on the relationships between the environment, bodies, spaces, and health, there is a need for more social and environmental justice research in PCS to examine barriers between the environment, movement and the participation in sport and physical activity. Social and environmental justice research can address the disproportionate exposure to and burden of harmful environmental conditions experienced by low-income and racial/ethnic minority populations (Taylor et al., 2006). Racialized and marginalized populations have substantial socio-environmental barriers to becoming physically active, to acquire healthy dietary habits, and to maintain a healthy lifestyle (Taylor et al., 2006).

It was within the context of this expanding field of social and environmental justice research in PCS, that I believed I could conduct a decolonizing autoethnography to contribute to “a meaningful PCS with the intent to displace, decentre, and disrupt” colonial, capital and neoliberal power structures (Silk & Andrews, 2011, p. 29). Given my interest in water, I hoped also that my research could also help bridge the gaps between the subdisciplines of kinesiology to understand water in a holistic way, and, thus, contribute to the comprehension and integration of the field. But, first, I needed to ask and answer the question, “where’s the water in kinesiology?”

**FINDING THE WATER IN KINESIOLOGY**

Given that approximately 60-70% of the human body and 71% of the Earth’s surface is comprised of water (Younger, 2012), our relationship with water is direct and foundational (Anderson, 2013). Our knowledge and perceptions of water and water-related issues, as well as our access to reliable, safe and clean water resources, will (in)directly shape how we value and interact with water (Baird et al., 2015).
Considering this deep relationship between people and water, I want to know: where is the water in kinesiology and physical education research?

Researchers in the biological and psychological subdisciplines of kinesiology have studied water as an exercise medium (Cesar Barauce Bento, Pereira, Ugrinowitsch & Roacki, 2012), hydrotherapy treatment (Elias et al., 2012; Korel, 1996), balancing water levels in sport and physical activity (Maughan et al., 2007), and nutritional considerations for water-based athletes (i.e. swimming, water polo) (Cox, Mujika & Van den Hoogenband, 2014; Shaw, Koivisto, Gerrard & Burke, 2014).

For example, water properties, such as relative density, buoyancy, hydrostatic pressure, viscosity, cohesion and moment of force, are measured for the effects and benefits of hydrotherapy (Korel, 1996). Hydrotherapy can increase circulation of the muscles, increase heart rate, increase respiratory rate, increase general muscle metabolism, decrease blood pressure, decrease sensitivity of sensory nerve endings, relax muscles, decrease pain, decrease joint effusion, improve range of motion and flexibility, increase strength and coordination, improve ease of ambulation and activities of daily living, improve mood, and increase feeling of wellbeing (Elias et al., 2012; Korel, 1996).

In the sociological (i.e., PCS) subdiscipline of kinesiology, I could find only three studies that examined water and/or properties of water. Audrey Giles, Heather Castelden and Ava Baker (2010) examined how Indigenous residents of Taloyoak, Nunavut and Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories perceived aquatic-based risk communication, and how that information could be used to improve water safety. They argued that aquatic risk communication with northern Indigenous populations can be improved by identifying and accounting for the consequences of colonialism and, in turn, decolonizing water safety programs (Giles, Castelden & Baker, 2010). They showed that researchers and practitioners must recognize the impact of colonial relationships to address future risk communication with respect and a genuine desire to do meaningful research and work (Giles, Castelden & Baker, 2010).

Nancy Bouchier and Ken Cruikshank (1997) examined how the Hamilton Harbour transformed following European settlement between 1858-1914. Their analyses focused on sportsmen and pothunters, and how discourses of environmental conservation evolved over the decades (Bouchier & Cruikshank, 1997). They showed how environmental changes and fishing practices threatened water quality, species of fish, ecosystems, and habitats in, and around, Lake Ontario (Bouchier & Cruikshank, 1997).

Cruikshank and Bouchier (1998) also investigated the shift from public swimming beaches to outdoor pools as a response to the dangers of water pollution in the Hamilton Harbour area. Physical (industrial
and residential waste) and moral (capitalist, neo-liberal, unsustainable ideologies) pollutions spread throughout the city, creating *dirty spaces*, unfit for swimming or other water-based recreational activities (Cruikshank & Bouchier, 1998). These dirty spaces resulted in the closure of Hamilton’s public beaches, as the beaches were not immune to the spread of the physical and moral pollutions (Cruikshank & Bouchier, 1998).

Other than this small pool of literature, there are no published studies in kinesiology that I found that examine how access to water shapes human lives. This is shocking, given that we are dependent on water to live, as well as the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education’s dependence and reliance on water (i.e. swimming, showering, drinking water for sports, physical activity and recreation, washing sports equipment, etc.). All kinesiology researchers must understand the various properties and dimensions of water to understand the active human body. Water and access to (reliable, safe, clean) water fundamentally shapes how we move, where we move, and why we move. Indeed, there are a lot of studies outside of kinesiology focus on the importance of water to cultural, social and physical health.

The lack of attention to water in kinesiology reflects how water is taken-for-granted in Western societies, especially urban Canada. Reliable, safe, and clean drinking water is commonplace for most people living in Canada (Galway, 2016). Many people see water as something that comes from the tap, is in bottles, for sale on shelves, to use for their disposal whenever they desire. In this way, water is a commodity, property, and understood as a human right.

As I volunteered with *Waterlution*
\(^{1}\), I learned first-hand how many people living on Turtle Island perceive and enjoy water as a “human right”. When I travelled to Brasilia, Brasil in March, 2018, for the 4\(^{th}\) General Assembly of the World Youth Parliament for Water and 8\(^{th}\) World Water Forum, it became clear to me that many people living outside of Turtle Island also perceive “Canada” as having “unlimited” safe, clean water. Yet, many did not know about the historical and continuing struggles for Indigenous communities on Turtle Island to access safe, clean water. While many people living in urban Canada do enjoy the “human right” privileges of “unlimited” access to safe, clean water, countless First Nations communities lack access to safe, clean water (Galway, 2016; Patrick, 2009; Sarkar, Hanrahan & Hudson, 2015). Lack of access to reliable, safe, clean water leads to a range of health, sociocultural and

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\(^{1}\) Waterlution is a non-governmental agency that aims to build and engage youth water leaders and facilitate water-dialogue between, with, and among water sectors.
environmental issues, and deeply threatens traditional Indigenous knowledges and ways of life (Galway, 2016; McGregor, 2009; Patrick, 2009; Sarkar, Hanrahan & Hudson, 2015; Simpson, 2002). These issues stem from past and current colonial, capitalist and neoliberal power structures that continue to govern, regulate and discriminate against Indigenous peoples (Baird, Plummer & Dupont, 2015; Castelden et al., 2017; Hanrahan, Sarkar & Hudson, 2016; McGregor, 2009; Patrick, 2011; Sarkar, Hanrahan & Hudson, 2015; Simpson, 2002; White, Murphy & Spence, 2012). This is also a complete paradox given how water has (historical) spiritual and cultural significance for many Indigenous peoples (Baird, Plummer & Dupont, 2015; McGregor, 2009; Simpson, 2002). For Anishinabe people, nibi is viewed as home, identity, family, community, life, alive, and a precious gift (McGregor, 2013; Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

The lack of safe, clean water in First Nations communities is a social and environmental justice issue that is entangled with the common (mis)understandings of water as commodity and property. Colonial, capital and neoliberal power structures and systems work to ensure that First Nations communities do not receive water (e)quality. To illustrate, First Nations communities are in desperate need of more adequate infrastructure to deal with the ongoing, long-term, urgent, and/or immediate drinking water and wastewater treatment needs (Breffle et al., 2013; Health Canada, 2017). Yet, federal funding has been, and continues to be, inadequate (Patrick, 2009; White, Murphy & Spence, 2012). The federal government views privatization as a quick fix for water crises in First Nations communities and is keen to facilitate public-private partnerships (Health Canada, 2017; Labonte, 2004). Thus, private water companies are aggressively pursuing new “markets” in First Nations communities (Health Canada, 2017; Labonte, 2004).

However, privatization reduces the accessibility of water for individuals and communities living in poorer rural areas (Labonte, 2004). Private companies sell the idea that they can increase water efficiency and sustain water treatment plant operations over a long period (Labonte, 2004). As the companies gain power and control, marginalized populations are severely impacted and left without access to water (Labonte, 2004). Both the government and corporations have a short-term, narrowed focus of maximizing profit, ignoring long-term consequences of water privatization (Labonte, 2004). Indeed, Anishinabe Elders assert that First Nations peoples must say “no” to selling water rights and water resources to protect waterbodies (Lavalley, 2006). Water privatization will not improve the status of First Nations water (e)quality, but, rather, will give more power, control, and access to capital, colonial, and neoliberal systems of power (Lavalley, 2006).
To worsen the state of water (e)quality in First Nations communities, provincial regulatory water standards do not apply on reserves (Danard, 2013). Consequently, First Nations peoples are responsible for the construction, design, operation, and maintenance of their water systems, as well as 20% of the cost (Danard, 2013). First Nations water technicians get paid significantly less than mainstream technicians (Danard, 2013). Also, there is little to no funding for First Nations communities to take samples of their water for testing (Danard, 2013). The lack of financial aid for water treatment facilities and staff results in breakdown of infrastructure and wellbeing, with no funding to help the community (Danard, 2013). The detrimental water (e)quality conditions in First Nations communities continue to demonstrate systemic barriers for First Nations peoples and inherent rights to govern water (Danard, 2013). Such harmful environmental and sociocultural conditions in Indigenous communities across Canada extend far beyond water, and are rooted in capital, colonial, neoliberal power structures and systems (White, Murphy & Spence, 2012). To improve water (e)quality in First Nations communities, First Nations peoples must have the self-determination to shape their own water governance systems, and water governance must be seen from the perspective of the water (Danard, 2013; Lavalley, 2006).

Debby Danard (Anishinabe) (2013) writes:

“The possibility of water governance from the perspective of water can be made possible through accessing and incorporating Traditional Knowledge and teachings as a method of consultation and participation in decision-making, clarifying roles and responsibilities through consultation and examining water’s perspective in relation to stewardship, management and governance. Be the water” (p.119).

“Be the water” (Danard, 2013, p.119). Water is you. Water is me. Water is us. You are water. I am water. We are water. Humans and non-humans deserve rights. Water deserves rights.

Water rights are being recognized throughout regions in the world. In March, 2017, New Zealand granted Whanganui River its own legal identity with all the corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a legal person (The Guardian, 2017a). For over 140 years, the local Māori tribe of Whanganui in the North Island of New Zealand fought for the recognition of their river as an ancestor, and, now finally, the governance and stewardship of the river is aligned with their worldviews (The Guardian, 2017a). Not long after Whanganui River was granted legal personhood, two rivers in India, the Ganga River and Yamuna River were also given human rights (The Guardian, 2017b). When waterbodies have recognized legal rights, damaging the waters with pollution is equivalent to harming another person (The Guardian, 2017a; 2017b). Polluting the water is illegal. The Whanganui River, Ganga River, and Yamuna River have
legal rights because people fought for the respect of the water (The Guardian, 2017a; 2017b). The peoples value the rivers as they value their own family (The Guardian, 2017a; 2017b).

Here I want to take a minute to consider the impact this law could have on the Great Lakes. Over 40 million people in Canada and the United States depend on the Great Lakes watershed for economic, societal and personal vitality (Breffle et al., 2013). Yet, the Great Lakes have been and continue to be (ab)used for sport, commercial and recreational fishing, recreation and tourism, industrialization, and agriculture (Anderson, 1998; Szylyan, 2004). Consequently, the health of the Great Lakes is threatened by pollution and contamination, agricultural erosion, non-native species, degraded recreational resources, loss of wetlands habitat, climate change, risk of clean water shortage, vanishing sand dunes, and population overcrowding (Breffle et al., 2013). If governments (of Canada and the USA) granted legal rights to the Great Lakes, human pollution would be illegal. By recognizing the rights of water, the health of the Great Lakes’ waterbodies (human and non-human bodies and lakes, rivers, creeks) would improve significantly. The Canadian and American governments and public citizens would have a collective responsibility to respect, care for, and value the water.

The 2017 Nibi Onji Canoe Journey sent a petition across Turtle Island to recognize the rights of the Great Lakes. The petition called for granting the Great Lakes legal personhood – to distinguish the rights of water in the federal government. This petition shares that we, as humans, must value water as a living being, just as we value another human. Hopefully, in the future, the Great Lakes will have legally identified rights in the court system, as our human (and non-human) waterbodies are the same waterbodies that gift us life.

*Water is life.* Water is connected to everything we do in everyday life, and without access to safe, clean water, entire livelihoods are negatively impacted and altered. Education, relationships, economies, cultures, knowledges, spiritualties, identities, communities, food, health, and spirit are entangled with the quality and quantity of water. By integrating different knowledges of water inside and outside of the field of kinesiology, this research aims to build and support a decolonial water education for the discipline.

Building on what has been studied inside the field, and sharing knowledge and perspectives from outside the field, these spheres of knowledge can enhance and develop a decolonizing perspective of water and build decolonial water education (see Figure 1: *Spheres of Water in Kinesiology*). The spiritual sphere adds an understanding of water based in Indigenous Knowledges, whereas the biophysical,
behavioural, and physical cultural spheres build off knowledge in quantitative and qualitative sciences (kinesiology).

Decolonial water education connects, respects, and honours different spheres of knowledge to understand water in a holistic way. Decolonial water education is physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual, which requires connections among mind, body, spirit, and water. Decolonial water education values Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in their many, diverse material, psychological, epistemological, and spiritual forms (Simpson, 2014; 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Decolonial water education requires time, patience and continuous effort, and working actively for futures rooted in traditional Indigenous values and connections to the land and waters (Smith, 1999).

Decolonial water education necessarily unsettles colonialism, as pedagogical practices deconstruct and disrupt whiteness and colonial ways of thinking and acting, as well as colonial relations of power that threaten Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being (Smith, 1999). Decolonial water education requires reimagining and rearticulating power, change, and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies (Smith, 1999). As Indigenous Knowledges are diverse and distinct, due to the embedded knowledge in the land unique to local contexts and geographies, decolonial water education will have different pedagogies, shapes, configurations, formations, processes, and implications depending on context (places and peoples) (McGregor, 2008b; Smith, 1999). Accordingly, the desired outcomes of decolonial water education will be diverse.

There is endless work to do to fill, change, and reshape the depicted spheres with research studies and teachings about water and to continue to enhance our understanding of water and how to build relationships with water. The spheres themselves (see Figure 1: Spheres of Water in Kinesiology) are constructed and arbitrary, and are always open and fluid to change. It is impossible to separate entangled ways of knowing from our experiences of the world and the experiences in our respective disciplines. Our body, mind, spirit, and culture are always connected, and knowledge is embodied in countless spheres of understanding. Nonetheless, I argue that this figure provides a visual way of seeing where the water is (and is not) in kinesiology and what work needs to be done to fill the gaps of knowledge up with water.

Now that I have established where the water is in kinesiology, I would also like to consider where is the walking (because that is the other important part of the Mother Earth Water Walks).
WALKING THROUGH FIELDS

Mother Earth Water Walks are Anishinabek ceremonies that pray for, heal, and protect the waters by building sacred relationships between people and water. Every step is a prayer, for water, land, peoples, for all of life. Prayers are imprinted on Mother Earth with each of the Water Walkers’ steps. Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples are mobilizing together to walk for the protection of the waters.

The Mother Earth Water Walks retrace the paths of their Anishinabe ancestors by walking along the perimeter of different waterbodies. Walking their ancestors’ paths connects the past, present, and future for the water, in every and all moments of the Water Walk. Walking the pathways of the past helps the future generations know the waters are healthy, living entities (Bédard, 2008; McGregor 2013).

This spiritual, physical, emotional, geographical, historical, social, and cultural movement weaves together environmental and social justice by the act of walking around waterbodies. Walking symbolizes our bodies as flowing rivers, in need of continuous, forward movement, without stopping or turning back (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). While walking, Water Walkers pass by traditional and sacred plant medicines, living creatures in the trees, shrubs, grasses, sky and water, animals along the roads and shores that have died, garbage and pollution, people who are kind, people who are hateful, beautiful landscapes, and loving waterbodies. There is much to pray for and to be grateful for.

Water Walkers acknowledge and honour all of Creation with each step, recognizing the deep relationship between, among, and with every life form. Walking is a way to remember our connections with Mother Earth and Creation. Walking is a way to remember to remember (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Every step and every prayer is braided in a relationship of reciprocity for and with all of Creation. Every step teaches you to walk with intention and attention to every movement, breath, word, action, behaviour, and attitude. Walking with intention and attention to nibi’s gifts of life brings powerful energies of healing from the sky to the earth. The act of walking with love and gratitude for water teaches humility and responsibility, and emanates powerful emotions and energies outwards.

There are also other movements around the spirituality of walking that have been inspired by the Mother Earth Water Walks. Marrie Mumford (Anishinabe) (2016) describes how Walking at the Edge of Water, an inter-tribal contemporary dance expression of Indigenous nibi perspectives, was inspired by the Mother Earth Water Walks. The performances drew on local Anishinabe stories of nibi, and embodied the perspective that nibi is our relative and needs our help (Mumford, 2016). Marrie
Mumford (2016) describes how Grandmother Josephine has inspired other movements, such as *Nibi Emosaawdamajig* (those who *walk* for the water). Grandmother Josephine is an influential leader for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and every footstep she takes is fueled by her passion for protecting *nibi* (Mumford, 2016). Her love and gratitude for *nibi* flows into the bodies, hearts and spirits of those around her (Mumford, 2016). Together, the Water Walkers, “*Walking at the Edge of Water*” and “*Nibi Emosaawdamajig*” raise a collective awareness of water that ripples from a local to global scale.

Walking as a decolonial movement brings attention to political, social, cultural, and environmental issues (Walsh, 2015). While the Mother Earth Water Walks are not a political protest, Water Walkers are walking due to the destructions and negligence of the colonial, capital and neoliberal power system. Every step brings attention to the ongoing inequities in First Nations and Native American communities on Turtle Island. Every step prays for the health of the waters and communities. Every step remembers the lost, missing, and murdered Indigenous peoples. Every step acknowledges and celebrates women’s connection with water. Every step connects people to place, increasing individual and collective responsibilities to water. Walking holds historical and geographical significance for resisting domination, oppression, marginalization by systems of power (Springgay & Truman, 2017). Protestors walk as a form of political engagement and resistance. Parades flow through towns and cities in celebration of spirit and pride. People walk to raise money for and educate the public on specific health and environmental issues impacting communities. People walk to trace the paths of their ancestors for healing. There are countless forms of walking and ways of walking that are decolonizing the colonial system.

Considering the significance of walking for the Mother Earth Water Walks and other decolonial movements, it is important to understand how physical cultural studies have examined walking in the past. An exploration of the PCS literature demonstrates that mostly that walking is viewed a symbol for active transportation (to improve one’s physical activity by walking to school, work, etc.), and focuses on youth and neighbourhood walkability scores, and children’s understanding of active transport (Faulkner, Buliung, Flora & Fusco, 2009; Faulkner, Richichi, Buliung, Fusco & Moola, 2010; Fusco, Moola, Faulkner, Buliung & Richichi, 2012). In the field of kinesiology, walking is measured as an object of health through walkability scores, cellphone apps, heart rate tests, pedometers, the discourse of “10,000 steps a day”, performance outcomes, rehabilitation treatments, and active transportation. Walking is understood through the lens of science to predict and measure health and human movement. Taking physical steps is monitored, recorded, assessed, and evaluated for physiological and psychological benefits. Walking in
PCS or kinesiology research is not seen in the same spiritual ways as seen in Anishinabek culture and the Mother Earth Water Walk. PCS and kinesiology research focuses on moving the body for health rather than moving the spirit for healing water, land, peoples, and all of life. Water Walkers do not walk for themselves, but rather, for their communities, for all peoples and places, for Mother Earth. Walking for a community and collective responsibility is respect, love, and gratitude.

There is a need in PCS and kinesiology to research, teach, and practice walking as a decolonial movement. Integrating science and Indigenous Knowledges will enhance understandings of walking in kinesiology. Walking is spiritual, emotional, physical, geographical, historical, social, cultural, and political, and holds countless meanings and symbolisms across cultures and communities (see Springgay & Truman, 2017). By walking through fields of knowledge, kinesiology researchers will find pathways for building decolonial (water) walking education.

Every step counts. If you are walking to heal the land and water – whatever the purpose is, every step needs to make a difference for you, your community, and the rest of the world. “Keep what’s true in front of you” (Wagamese, 2016, p.72) while walking with love and gratitude for the land, water, peoples, animals, insects, fish, birds, plants, mountains, earth, sky, stars, sun, and moon.
CHAPTER FIVE: MOTHER EARTH WATER WALKS

In 2003, two Anishinabekwe Grandmothers, Josephine Mandamin (Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations) and Melvina Flamand (Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations), decided to walk around Anishinaabewi-gichigami (Lake Superior) to heal and protect the water. Their decision was inspired by Grand Chief Edward Benton Banai (Anishinabe) (Three Fires Midewiwin Society) at a Sundance Ceremony in 2000, who shared a prophecy of the Seventh Fire (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2003).

For Anishinabe people, fires refer to the places lived and the stories, teachings, and knowledge surrounding them (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Prophecies share how our histories are braided with our present and futures (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Truthfully, I am only beginning to learn about what a prophecy means and how it connects to our past, present, and future (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Anishinabekwe Grandmothers, Elders, and Water Walkers hold the knowledge of the Seventh Fire, and I do not feel this is my teaching to share. Thus, I will write only what has been shared widely by Grandmother Josephine.

Grand Chief Edward Benton Banai shared that the abuses of water will result in an ounce of water costing the same as an ounce of gold, if no one does anything about it (Anderson, 2013). Prophecy brings hope, and, with this prophecy, hope rests in the word if (Anderson, 2013). Carrying this prophecy and hope for the future, the annual Mother Earth Water Walks began (Anderson, 2013). With a copper vessel filled with water from the lake and an eagle staff, the two Grandmothers rounded up a small group of Water Walkers and walked around Anishinaabewi-gichigami (Anderson, 2013). The Anishinabekwe Grandmothers’ goal was to build sacred relationships between Anishinaabewi-gichigami and the peoples living around Anishinaabewi-gichigami by raising awareness of everyone’s responsibility to care for and protect nibi. Nibi means water in Anishinabemowin.

After the inaugural Water Walk in 2003, Grandmother Josephine led annual Mother Earth Water Walks around the five Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River, and elsewhere, encouraging innumerable people to walk for nibi. Many individuals and communities around the world are inspired by Grandmother Josephine and have committed themselves to nibi as Water Walkers, water carriers, and water protectors (Danard, 2013). Following in Grandmother Josephine’s footsteps, several Anishinabe women have started annual Water Walks in their communities to protect and heal their waterbodies.
Mother Earth Water Walks are an Anishinabe Ceremony from start to finish (Bédard, 2008; McGregor, 2013). The ceremony is rooted in the importance of enacting Anishinabekwe (Ojibwe woman) responsibilities to carry, care for, and speak for nibi (McGregor, 2008a; 2009; Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). The mission of the Mother Earth Water Walks is to build sacred relationships between peoples and nibi by walking around, through, with, and for waterbodies. Water Walkers hope to wake up the consciousness of current generations to ensure that future generations know the waters are (healthy) living entities (Bédard, 2008; McGregor, 2013).

Robin Wall Kimmerer (Anishinabe) (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) (2013) writes that for Anishinabe people, “ceremony is a vehicle for belonging – to a family, to a people, and to the land” (p.37). Ceremony offers a precious gift to Mother Earth in a moral covenant of reciprocity, as “a gift creates ongoing relationship” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.26). Ceremony builds reciprocity and responsibility; when people stand together and make a commitment to their community, they are accountable to that commitment (McGregor, 2009). Ceremony “focuses attention so that attention becomes intention” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.249). Ceremony transcends the boundaries of the individual and resonates with the spiritual realm (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Ceremony is “the way we can remember to remember. In the dance of the giveaway, remember that the earth is a gift that we must pass on, just as it came to us” (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p.383).

It is crucial to understand how the Mother Earth Water Walks are not a form of political protest. Mother Earth Water Walks are first and foremost ceremonial journeys of healing and protection, through the development and nourishment of sacred connections and relationships between peoples and nibi (Bédard, 2008; Danard, 2013). Mother Earth Water Walks braid reciprocity, responsibility, and respect for nibi in a sacred bond of partnership. By building relationships between people and nibi, waterbodies join in a powerful symbiosis. “Every step is a prayer” for nibi, land, peoples, plants, animals, birds, fish – all of Creation (Bédard, 2008; Danard, 2013; McGregor, 2008a; 2009; 2013, Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017).

WATER AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

I first learned about the Mother Earth Water Walks at the beginning of my Master’s degree. I was trying to figure out graduate course selection and was considering “the environment” and how “populations”
and “ecosystems” were impacted by the “global water crisis”. When I met with a geography professor, another student with her asked me if I had heard of an undergraduate course in the Department of Women and Gender Studies, “WATER AND SOCIAL JUSTICE”, taught by Dr. Bonnie McElhinny. I had never heard of the course, but was immediately interested. On the first day of class, I excitedly flipped through the blue pages of the syllabus, reading the titles of articles and book chapters assigned and the “Get your feet wet!” activities for the course. Each student had to attend at least one of the “Get your feet wet!” excursions to receive course credit. As an auditor, I was not expected to attend any of the course excursions, nonetheless, I asked Bonnie if it was okay that I attend as many as I could. She was delighted to have me tag along, if I did not detract from others’ participation in the activity (i.e. only a few spots per excursion).

One of the “Get your feet wet!” activities was participating in “2016 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk” around Lake Simcoe on September 30th. The “Get your feet wet!” activity was a commitment of one day, though the Water Walk was nine days in length. At first, I had no idea what a Water Walk was. I had never heard of the Water Walks before, as they never appeared in my research or day-to-day life. I looked forward to learning more about the Water Walks and hoped they would help me understand how to improve connections and relationships with water. During the 2016 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk, everything I was learning and hoping to learn was brought to life and reframed in ways unimaginable to me at the time. The Water Walkers shared stories that illuminated the entanglement of social and environmental issues around the water crisis, such as overdevelopment, biodiversity loss, climate change, and colonialism/colonization (violence, and destruction). However, rather than focusing on a framework of crisis, they spoke of the injustices, inequities, and challenges through, and in, a perspective of love, gratitude, and hope.

The day of the Water Walk was also “Orange Shirt Day”, a day to remember missing and murdered Indigenous peoples. A Water Walker spoke about the issues of violence against Indigenous peoples. She connected the Water Walks to remembering the children, sisters, brothers, cousins, daughters, sons, nephews, nieces, moms, dads, aunts, and uncles missing and murdered. As we walk for water, we walk for them, and for all people, to heal and protect one another from colonial violence by practicing love and gratitude.

Before the Water Walk started, we all sang *The Nibi Song*, to gift our love, gratitude, and respect to nibi:
“Ne-be Gee Zah- gay- e- goo
Gee Me-gwetch -wayn ne- me -- goo
Gee Zah Wayn ne- me- goo

(translated from Ojibway to English)

Water, we love you.
We thank you.
We respect you.” (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017)

THE NIBI (WATER) SONG was created by Doreen Day (Anishinabe) at the request of her grandson, Mashkoonce (Little Elk) (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Doreen Day had attended a conference held by Dr. Masaru Emoto, where he said, every day the least we should do is speak to the water (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). So, every morning when Doreen drove Mashkoonce to school, they would say the words “Water, we love you, we thank you, we respect you” as they passed bodies of water (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). One morning, Mashkoonce requested that they say the words in their (Ojibwe) language (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017).

After they had learned how to say the words in Ojibwe, Mashkoonce had requested to sing the words to the water instead, and since then Doreen and Mashkoonce would sing The Nibi Song every day on the drive to school (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Doreen and Mashkoonce have given permission for everyone to share and sing this song to the waters every day (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). The song is now commonly sung in Anishinabe water ceremonies, such as the Mother Earth Water Walks. Singing for nibi focuses your intention and attention before walking, and ripples your love and gratitude outwards for all of Creation.

Every time I returned to my studies after the 2016 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk, I thought about nibi, the copper vessel, the eagle staff, the women, men, children, Elders, Grandmothers, Grandfathers, semaa, “The Nibi Song”, and the beating sound of the drums. I could not think about anything else. I wanted to understand how the Mother Earth Water Walks changed my relationship with water, which, in turn, eventually led to my research question. As Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) writes: “It was an architecture of relationships, of connections that I yearned to understand. I wanted to see the shimmering threads that hold it all together” (p.46).
Nibi is the basis of life and the life-blood of Mother Earth (McGregor, 2008a; 2009). Nibi is alive and sentient, carries memories and emotions, and can experience historical traumas just as peoples can (Anderson, 2013; Lavalle, 2006; McGregor, 2013). All water is viewed as “spirit”, or carries spirit, because water is capable of establishing relationships with other life forms (Anderson, 2013). As nibi is alive, a being with her own spirit, nibi must be respected as a living being (Anderson, 2013; Lavalle, 2006; McGregor, 2013). Every waterbody is believed to have a unique personality and responsibilities, which require different forms of respect and acknowledgment (Anderson, 2013). Nibi is understood to have feelings, and if nibi is not treated with care and respect, nibi can become sad and/or angry (Anderson, 2013). Nibi’s life-giving responsibilities must not be interfered with (Anderson, 2013; McGregor, 2013).

Nibi is a gift and a sacred medicine with immense cleansing and purifying powers, and is not meant to be bought or sold (McGregor, 2009). Nibi must be treated with love, respect, kindness, care, gratitude and appreciation (Anderson, 2013; Bédard, 2008; McGregor, 2013). Nibi needs protection, and to heal nibi is to accept the responsibility to take care of her (Lavalle, 2006). Nibi must be clean and respected, free from physical and moral pollutions (Cruickshank & Bouchier, 1998; Lavalle, 2006; McGregor, 2009). Nibi is a symbol of the soul, the prime substance of the universe (Anderson, 2013). Nibi is a symbol of social connection, family, community, sacredness, collective identity, sovereignty, home, love, and gratitude (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).
Anishinabeg knowledge and understandings of *nibi* is passed down and through generations of families and shared through many ceremonies, teachings, and stories (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). During an interview with Kim Anderson, Barbara Clow, and Margaret Haworth-Brockman (2013), Grandmother Josephine Mandamin expressed her deep, spiritual relationship with *nibi* through her stories and teachings of the Mother Earth Water Walks. Grandmother Josephine shared how this relationship is what drives the work she does for *nibi* (Anderson, 2013). Grandmother Josephine teaches how we, as humans, can establish, develop, and build sacred relationships with *nibi* by honouring and celebrating her spirit (Anderson, 2013). Anderson, Clow, and Haworth-Brockman (2013) further share that Grandmother Josephine explained how the extended time she has spent with the Great Lakes has allowed her to listen to each of the waterbodies’ distinct stories. Lake Superior teaches strength and survival, Lake Michigan shows the caring presence of the ancestors, and Lake Huron expresses the coming together of the male and female (Anderson, 2013).
As *nibi* is alive, sentient, and capable of establishing relationships with humans, plants, animals, and other life forms on Mother Earth, it is critical to protect, heal, and care for *nibi*. In *Be the Water*, Debby Danard (2013) reflected on her experience as a Water Walker around Lake Ontario (2006), Lake Erie (2007), St. Lawrence River (2009) and Four Directions Water Walk (2011). Her reflections illustrate how the waters need our help, and human beings must continue to care for the water, to care for each other, and to respect all of life as it was placed here from the beginning of Creation (Danard, 2013).

Kim Anderson (2013) interviewed eleven First Nations, Inuit and Métis Grandmothers from across Canada to explore the diversities and commonalities with their relationships with *nibi*. The interviews were open-ended and unstructured based on three areas of interest: significance of *nibi*; *nibi* and the roles of women; and health of *nibi* (Anderson, 2013). Josepbine Mandamin was one of the Grandmothers interviewed, and she discussed what inspired her to start the Mother Earth Water Walk:

“It was in 2000 when Eddie Benton was at this big gathering in Pipestone, Minnesota where we go for our sun dances. He was one of the speakers at the gathering to the people there, and he talked about the prophecy—that 30 years from now, an ounce of water is going to cost the same as an ounce of gold if we continue with our negligence. [He] talked about how women have to start working to pick up their bundles about the water, and how water is going to be so precious that there might even be wars about water. When he finished talking, he said, "What are you going to do about it?" to all the people. It seemed like he was looking straight at me when he said that, but I know he wasn’t. It just hit me, that what I am going to do about it? And I thought about it for a long time. I thought about it and talked to people about it. And that one little word ‘if’ brings hope. There’s hope in that. Every prophecy has a message of hope. Even though prophecy may be dire or whatever it is, but there is hope in every prophecy. This one is that little word ‘if—if we continue with our negligence, that’s what is going to happen. And if we don’t, what could happen? We could change things around. So there’s that hope right there. If we discontinue our negligence then we could really make things happen. So in that winter of 2002, that’s how the idea came that we were going to walk around Lake Superior with a pail of water” (Grandmother Josepbine Mandamin as quoted in Anderson, 2013, p.28-29).

When Grand Chief Edward Benton Banai shared that prophecy, Grandmother Josepbine immediately acknowledged her roles, rights, and responsibilities for protecting *nibi*. She found a way to gift her love and gratitude to *nibi*, and to inspire others to protect, heal, and care for her.

The relationship between *nibi* and humans is responsive and reciprocal, and there are many responsibilities, ceremonies and teachings for Anishinabe people related to caring for Mother Earth and her *nibi* (Anderson et al., 2013). Anderson (2013) asks, “What are we doing to foster our relationship to this powerful and complex entity [nibi]?” (p.31). Anderson’s (2013) question is critical – how are we, as humans, nurturing our connection to *nibi*? Do we appreciate *nibi* and the life she provides us? Or do we
take *nibi* for granted and forget her irreplaceable value? Do we recognize the connections between our waterbodies and the waterbodies that gift us life?

The Grandmothers, interviewed in Anderson, Clow, and Haworth-Brockman’s (2013) research, spoke of how good health is dependent on how well we manage our relationships with *nibi*. *Nibi* is sentient and carries immense powers and purposes (Anderson et al., 2013). Women have a special connection to *nibi*, as women are the carriers of *nibi*, of life (Anderson et al., 2013). The relationship between waters within our waterbodies and the waterbodies that gift us life exemplifies how everything is connected and how life is dependent on this connection (Anderson et al., 2013).

Renée Bédard (Mzinigiizhigo-kew) (Nishnaabekwe from Dokis First Nation) (2008) discusses the historical and contemporary significance of *nibi* and *nibi* protection to Anishinabe people, specifically the women, through the words and *nibwaakaawin* (wisdom) of Anishinabe-kwewag Elders from Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations, Shirley Williams and Josephine Mandamin. Debby Danard (2013) also shares how women conduct and lead ceremonies with gratitude to *nibi* that gifts life. As the women hold a copper vessel of *nibi*, they speak and sing to her (McGregor, 2008a). Women are the caretakers and carriers of *nibi* (Bédard, 2008; Danard, 2013). Women govern *nibi* and must stand up for her protection (Bédard, 2008; Danard, 2013). Anishinabekwe play an important role as spokespersons for *nibi* and carry the primary responsibility for protecting that *nibi*, yet are consistently denied their connection to *nibi* in Western-imposed systems of “water-management” (Danard, 2013; McGregor, 2008a; 2008b; 2009). Traditional Knowledge is vital to protect *nibi*, and these views on caring for *nibi* can contribute to community and government-level source *nibi* protection planning in Ontario (McGregor, 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2013).

Men’s responsibilities are supporting the women in their role of water protection (Danard, 2013). Their duty is to ensure the sacred fire (vision) is burning strong (Danard, 2013). Anishinabek teachings recognize fire as the heart of Mother Earth and represents the vision to see ahead seven generations (Danard, 2013). By working together and following the natural laws, men and women must respect, protect and take care of Mother Earth (Danard, 2013). *Natural law*, derived from fundamental experiences and observations of the natural world, has allowed for Anishinabe people to survive, resist and heal for many generations (McGregor, 2013). The foundations of natural law are to establish and maintain strong, health relationships with the land and *nibi* (Creation) (McGregor, 2013).
Debby Danard (2013) demonstrates how human beings (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) have the responsibility to protect the spirit of **nibi**, the life-blood of our bodies and of Mother Earth. Her powerful poem “**Be the water**” teaches us to care for the **nibi** inside and outside of ourselves (Danard, 2013). The end of her poem reads:

> “The water inside of us
> Speaks to the water outside of us
> Reflects itself outward
> What we do to Water
> We do to ourselves
> Be the water” (Danard, 2013, p.116).

We must consider how “**what we do to nibi, we do to ourselves**” and take on the responsibility of protecting and caring for **nibi** as we would ourselves (Danard, 2013, p.116). If we pollute our outside waterbodies, we also pollute our inside waterbodies. “**Be the water**” and connect with the **nibi** inside and outside of ourselves, understand stewardship from the perspective of **nibi**, perceive life as a blessing of **nibi**’s generous gift, and repay that gift with love and gratitude (Danard, 2013).

How can we understand water stewardship from the perspective of nibi? How would we govern the Great Lakes from the perspective of nibi? If we listened to **Niigaani-gichigami** (Lake Ontario) **Anishinaabewi-gichigami** (Lake Superior), **Naadiwewi-gichigami** (Lake Huron), **Waabishkiigoo-gichigami** (Lake Erie), **Ininwewi-gichigami** (Lake Michigan), what would we hear? How do they want to improve their health? How do they want to live?

Grandmother Josephine initiated the Mother Earth Water Walks to connect and build relationships between peoples and **nibi** because of the social and environmental issues impacting **nibi** (Danard, 2013). Water Walks raise awareness of social and environmental issues impacting water, such as how water pollution results from chemicals, vehicle emissions, motor boats, sewage disposal, agricultural pollution, leaking landfill sites, and residential usage (Danard, 2013). Water Walks bring social and environmental justice for Mother Earth. Discourses of environmental justice typically centre on the “environment” and the groups of people (i.e. “minority”, “poor”, “disadvantaged”, or “Native”) impacted by environmental destruction (McGregor, 2009). For Anishinabe people, environmental justice is not just about power relationships among people and between various institutions of colonialism, but rather it is about justice for all beings of Creation, which includes **nibi** (McGregor, 2009). All living beings have responsibilities
and duties to each other to ensure the sustainability of Creation (McGregor, 2009). Social and environmental justice must go beyond a human-centred approach, to understand, accept, enact, respect and honour relationships with all of Creation, which includes humans’ relationships with each other, all plants and animals, the sun, the moon, the stars, the Creator, and so on (McGregor, 2009).

Deborah McGregor (Anishinabe) (Whitefish River First Nation) (2013) illuminates Anishinabek concepts of zaagi’idiwin (love), mutual respect, and responsibility towards the natural world, specifically nibi. Although the dominant discourse on water is “resource”, McGregor (2013) describes how water justice can be achieved by considering “zaagi’idiwin” – water is living and in need of zaagi’idiwin. Nibi is understood as a sentient being that needs healing from historical trauma, just as peoples do (McGregor, 2013). To frame water justice in an Anishinabek understanding, McGregor (2013) shows how the Mother Earth Water Walks transcend the binaries of water as a resource vs. human right, expanding notions of justice to include responsibilities to non-human entities and nibi. Principles of healing are power, zaagi’idiwin, and vision, which can restore our relationships with nibi (McGregor, 2013). While zaagi’idiwin is not an easy concept for many indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to embrace in the face of continued oppression, violence, racism, environmental degradation and colonialism, it is a powerful force which, like nibi, transcends time and space (McGregor, 2013). Mnaamodzawin (total state of being well) involves living on respectful and reciprocal terms with all of Creation on multiple planes (spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical) and scales (family, clan, nation, universe), and is guided by the Seven Grandfather teachings (McGregor, 2013).

By exploring the Mother Earth Water Walks, McGregor (2013) articulates that we need to change our mindset from one of taking to one of giving. We need to be more grateful of the life nibi gives us, and find ways to give thanks to nibi in our daily lives (McGregor, 2013). Grandmother Josephine’s stories from Niigaani-gichigami (Lake Ontario) Anishinaabewi-gichigami (Lake Superior), Naadiwewi-gichigami (Lake Huron), Waabishkiigoo-gichigami (Lake Erie), Ininwewi-gichigami (Lake Michigan) illustrate her deep connection with nibi and her belief that nibi is sentient (Anderson, 2013).

“There’s that feeling of sensing Mother Earth. There’s times when I stand by the water, and I can feel the pulsing, the pulsing of the water standing by the shore. I can feel that connection myself with the water” (Grandmother Josephine Mandamin as quoted in Anderson, 2013, p.12).

Katherine Mozirisseau-Sinclair (Anishinabe) (2014), organizer of the 2014 Winnipeg Water Walk, shared how the Nibi Walk can help build a better future for all peoples and provide healing and empowerment. “Nga-zhichige Nibi Onji” (I will do it for the water) speaks to the responsibility of Anishinabekwe to be
caretakers of *nibi* (water) (Morrissette-Sinclair, 2014, p.1). Morrissette (2014) wrote that there was a healing and change in the energy of the women who participated in the *2014 Lake Winnipeg Water Walk*. Mother Earth Water Walks connect people spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically with *nibi* as they teach people how *nibi* is alive and is the lifeblood of Mother Earth. The health of our waterbodies is dependent on the waterbodies that gift us life. The Water Walks also teach people how to be caretakers of themselves, of each other, and all of Creation. Through these teachings, how does one build a reciprocal, responsible, and respectful relationship with *nibi*?

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*We must love *nibi*, so *nibi* can love us back* (McGregor, 2013).

*Take the time to sit and listen to *nibi* (Anderson et al., 2013).*

*Keep moving forward, keep your inner rivers flowing* (Mumford, 2016).

*Be the water* (Danard, 2013).

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When I walk for *nibi*, I can feel Mother Earth saying thank you in return, I can feel her love rippling through the vibrations of the sacred water inside the copper vessel. By learning with and from the Water Walkers, through the stories gathered, the literature and my personal experiences, I have come to find my rights, roles, and responsibilities for water. As a white settler woman and academic researcher, I must walk lightly and learn what Anishinabek teachings are shareable and non-shareable. I have different rights and responsibilities than an Anishinabekwe in this ceremonial movement of Water Walking. Although, I still have an important role to help and I have engaged in this work to support the community in this significant work for the water.

By building a relationship with Grandmother Josephine Mandamin, Joanne Robertson, as well as other Water Walkers, I am finding my role to help the Water Walkers in a reciprocal, responsible, and right way. As a researcher, I gathered Water Walkers’ stories for a public archive and am participating in the creation of a digital story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks from 2003 forward, which will be owned, controlled, accessed, and protected by the Water Walkers. As a participant, every step is a prayer, for water, and for all of life. Every step teaches me what I need to do to move forward and continuously, like a river, all day long.
WALKING FOR NIBI

Significant planning is required for a Water Walk. Water Walkers require places to camp and sleep along the way, food and water for the Water Walkers, venues to host ceremonies, support vehicles, gas money, donations for unexpected costs (i.e. medical, shelter, food), and volunteers (Bédard, 2008; Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017).

Mother Earth Water Walks accept only fundraising and donations and strictly no governmental funding (Bédard, 2008; Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Government-based funding not only requires meticulous paperwork details, but the Canadian and American government systems are also a major source of the ongoing colonial discrimination, and oppression against Indigenous peoples in Canada fails to solve the water crisis in First Nations’ reserves (Danard, 2013). The organizers of a given Water Walk will host various fundraisers, auctions, events, concerts, raffles, crowdfunding pages, etc., to raise money for the walk. Thus, Water Walks rely on people taking responsibility by donating, volunteering, organizing, and walking – for nibi.

Typically, Water Walks require a team of approximately six to eight people (could be less or more) to volunteer to walk and help with everyday necessities, such as driving to accompany walkers, and switch walkers, food preparation, refreshment breaks, camp set-ups, cleaning, laundry, etc. (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Volunteers can also help coordinate and organize the Water Walkers from a distance. Some volunteers work online to coordinate times and places, including the navigation of Spot, a GPS-tracking technology that updates the Water Walkers’ location every few minutes (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Other volunteers travel to upcoming community stops to prepare for the Water Walkers stay, meals, and ceremonies. Equipment also needs to be rented, such as cellphones, radio phones, cameras, Spot, and vehicles (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2011).

Water Walks typically begin in the spring, when the snow and ice melt and life blossoms again. The duration of a Water Walk can last from days to months, depending on the journey set forth and the distance of the waterbodies. For example, the 2017 Great Lakes Water Walk was one day, the 2017 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk was nine days, and the 2017 For the Earth and Water Walk was over four months (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). Every Water Walk is unique, spanning a different ancestral path with different communities involved and affected by the messages of the Water Walkers.

Water Walkers begin each day with a smudging ceremony with mashkodewashk (sage) to align the Water Walkers’ spirits, and Water Walkers start and finish each day with a blessing of the water. They
fill a copper vessel with *nibi* from the waterbody (i.e. ocean, lake, river) at the starting point of the day, and then return *nibi* back to that waterbody at the stopping point for the day. The place where *nibi* is returned is the location where *nibi* is picked up the following morning. This cycle continues until the journey is complete. Joanne Robertson (2018) shared with me that returning *nibi* to herself at the end of the day, allows her to *remember to remember*. Through every prayer, song, and footnote, and with the final pour, *nibi* is reminded of how she began: clean, pure, and healthy.

Following the paths of their ancestors, Water Walkers move forward and continuously like rivers, all day long, without stopping or turning back, praying for all of life with every step (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). To make sure *nibi* is always moving, Water Walkers switch on and off with the copper vessel and eagle staff like a relay, with support vehicles staggered along the way to pick up the past walkers. Water Walkers must always keep their inner rivers flowing forward when carrying *nibi*. Rivers cannot stop or flow backwards.

During a Water Walk, women carry the copper vessel filled with *nibi* for healing, while a man carries an eagle staff for protection. A woman will sometimes carry the eagle staff if there are not enough men to walk. Also, if there are not enough walkers, one woman will carry both the copper vessel and eagle staff. Women wear long skirts, and men long pants, to be close to Mother Earth, as well as to gift respect to the Grandmothers, and to themselves.

Water Walks honour and uphold women’s rights, roles, and responsibilities as carriers of water and carriers of the messages of water. Women are the ones who walk with the copper vessel of water because women carry the water of life. Indigenous and non-indigenous women can carry the water. Anishinabekwe lead the Water Walks through Anishinabek ceremonial teachings, values, and protocols. The Water Walks respect, celebrate, and honour Anishinabekwe connections with and knowledge of *nibi*.

As a participant of the 2016, 2017 *Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walks*, I learned that the water must always be moving, not sloshing, and you must always look forward, never look back. The man with the eagle staff walks on the side of the road with traffic and slightly behind the water. The woman carrying the water is always walking in front.

Water Walkers also carry *semaa* (tobacco) to offer to *nibi*, animals, plants, and trees along the way. *Semaas* is a sacred medicine for Anishinabe people to communicate and connect with Creator (Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Offering *semaa* also shows respect for Mother Earth (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).
While walking, Water Walkers sing *nibi* songs and make petitions for *nibi* to be pure and clean. Water Walkers also visit communities along the way to lead ceremonies and share stories about their waterbodies. Connecting the mission of the Water Walks to each community is important to spread the messages and teachings of *nibi*. Every person has a responsibility to protect, heal, and care for *nibi*, so the Water Walkers ensure they share their prayers with the communities along the way.

A sacred canoe journey also follows some of the Mother Earth Water Walks, such as the *2017 For the Earth and Water Walk* (McGregor & Plain, 2014). The canoe journey is an extension of the important work of the Water Walks (McGregor & Plain, 2014). Canoeing requires spending time on *nibi*, which strengthens and builds upon the relationships developed from walking around her (McGregor & Plain, 2014). Healing and protection is reinforced with every paddle along, through, with, and for *nibi*.

Together, paddling and walking for *nibi*, builds relationships between peoples and all of Creation. These journeys are a humble reminder that our connections with *nibi* and all living beings can and must be stronger. With every footstep, Water Walkers are struck by the magnificence of Mother Earth. The land, water, animals, plants, birds, fish, sun, wind, clouds, air, and sky open in a way that is difficult to describe.

Water Walks also connect diverse peoples with a collective responsibility of healing, protecting, caring, and celebrating the gifts of Mother Earth. To illustrate, in Tkaronto, a group of Anishinabekwe and priests from the St. James Cathedral posed the question, “How do we live in right relationship with Niigaani-gichigami (Lake Ontario)?” To live in good relationship with *nibi*, they created an annual *Niigaani-gichigami Gratitude Festival*, which included the *2017, 2018 Niigaani-gichigami Gratitude Walks*. When I participated in the *2017, 2018 Niigaani-gichigami Gratitude Walks*, there were many people of diverse backgrounds gathered together to gift thanks to *Niigaani-gichigami*. Though coming from different places, histories, religions, and experiences, everyone at the Water Walk recognized their responsibilities to protect *nibi*. 
The 2017 Great Lakes Water Walk is another example of how the Water Walks connects diverse groups of people. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, there were two groups of walkers, starting in the western and eastern directions along Niigaani-gichigami, led by four Anishinabekwe Grandmothers. Countless people from various ethnicities, faith backgrounds, histories, cultures, and places gathered to walk for Niigaani-gichigami. As a participant of the Water Walk, I had never witnessed such a large gathering of diverse people in one place for nibi. From the east, we walked along the shorelines of the waterfront, praying, singing, drumming, and moving for nibi. At the end of the walk, the western and eastern directions united at Marilyn Bell Park. The four Anishinabekwe Grandmothers met in the middle with the copper vessels of nibi. Together, the Grandmothers poured nibi back into Niigaani-gichigami. Following the Anishinabekwe Grandmothers, twelve faith leaders of different cultural groups, one by one, offered prayers and gifts of gratitude to Niigaani-gichigami in their own traditions. The 2017 Great Lakes Water Walk celebrated, honoured, and respected the different faith leaders’ ceremonies, values, and beliefs. Each of the ceremonies shared how water is sacred, a gift that must be cared for. While the 2017 Great Lakes Water Walk and 2017, 2018 Niigaani-gichigami Gratitude Walks did not cover the length or perimeter of Niigaani-gichigami, these Water Walks gathered multi-faith groups for nibi, and allowed for a large scale of people to participate because of the centralized location, date, and time.

As both a participant and researcher of the Water Walks, I experienced and learned how the Water Walks can connect people to water and to one another. As a participant, I experienced a profound spiritual and emotional shift in my ways of knowing, doing, and being. Then, as I gathered, harvested, and mapped the Water Walkers’ stories as a researcher, my experiences of the Water Walks were explained, described, and enlightened.
GATHERING STORIES

When I first walked for water during the 2016 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk, my relationship with water changed, and, soon after, my research on water changed. Beginning and ending with my passion for water and social justice, this thesis became a journey of learning my rights, roles, and responsibilities to help the Water Walkers, to help protect, care for, and heal nibi, and to help the field of kinesiology understand the importance of water.

Since 2011, Joanne Robertson has envisioned gathering, harvesting and mapping stories from the Mother Earth Water Walks. After the 2011 Four Directions Water Walk, Joanne made a promise to three Grandmothers that she would document and share their names and stories, so their families will remember their steps and prayers for nibi. To help Joanne keep her promise and create her vision, my research entailed gathering Water Walkers’ stories from 2003 to 2018. First, I helped gather stories, like a harvester in the woods gathering for my community. I had to be responsible and respectful of the stories gathered and build a relationship of reciprocity with the Water Walkers. I tried to take only what I needed to for the research, and use everything I saved from the web for the public archive. For the stories not used in the archive, they were recycled into the digital blue bin.

Before I prepared my basket for gathering, I set gratitude as my highest priority, and, so, gratitude led me through the depths of the dark forest web. Gathering stories transitioned through four phases, as the stories filled the harvesting basket, I found new strategies to keep searching.

When I entered the web forest, I searched for the thirteen annual Mother Earth Water Walks led by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin. I had references for these Water Walks from the Mother Earth Water Walk webpage, and I knew they would help lead the path to more Water Walks. Indeed, as more stories were found related to the Mother Earth Water Walks led by Grandmother Josephine, more Water Walks emerged, and the stories continued to grow. While the Water Walkers started with a small core group of women in 2003, they have since rippled into a large network of peoples from different communities, cultures, religions, and backgrounds. Grandmother Josephine Mandamin has inspired Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island, as well as other places around the world, such as New Zealand, Japan, and countries in Europe, to raise awareness about the state of the waters that surround their homelands. With her teachings, love, and gratitude, Grandmother Josephine empowers individuals and communities to acknowledge their roles, responsibilities, and cultural
identities. People everywhere are recognizing their rights, roles, and responsibilities to protect, care for, and heal their waterbodies for future generations.

During the Water Walks, the Water Walkers share their teachings and listen to the communities connected to their waterbodies. Every community has unique water challenges and water stories. The Water Walkers help carry these stories downstream to connect the communities’ challenges and stories. No water story lives in isolation, every story connects with every step, as “every step is a prayer”. The Water Walkers share stories to help people recognize and honour nibi as a gift of life and as a living being. As the stories grew in number, I began to understand how each story has a life of its own. The stories are the Water Walkers. The stories share what the Water Walkers’ are doing to heal and protect their waterbodies across the world. Each story is embedded with knowledge of the land and water in that place. The stories share and illuminate what the Water Walkers are praying for with each step. As every step is a prayer for water, every story is a prayer for water, for all of Creation. The Water Walkers’ footsteps create vibrations of love, respect, gratitude, reciprocity, joy, peace, and healing. With those vibrations rippling throughout Mother Earth – from the Water Walkers’ bodies, to the soil, within the roots of the plants and trees, into the sky, and down again onto the earth – a web of reciprocal connections expands outwards.

Following the footsteps of the Water Walkers helped lead into the second phase of gathering stories, where I started using general searches in the forest web, based on common words used in stories already found.

Web searches were based on using combinations of key terms, such as:


I continued to gather and harvest Water Walks and Water Walkers’ stories using this method. As time progressed, I saw how the ceremonial movement continued to grow larger, rippling across Turtle Island. Quickly, many additional Water Walks were gathered, and I had to think of more tactics for searching.

For the third phase of gathering, I narrowed my search for every specific year from 2003 to 2018. I dug through 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006..., searching for new Water Walks for each year, while always including an overlap of two years. I also used specific key word searches based on the Water Walks that I had
already found (i.e. 2013 “Ohio River Water Walk”). I repeated this process until I had deeply and thoroughly searched the web for Water Walks between 2003 and 2018. After completing these steps, I went back to 2003, thoroughly searching one more time for all the Water Walks found, to gather any hidden stories. This transitioned into the final phase of gathering. I looked through the roots of the trees and further narrowed my search for each Water Walk from 2003 to 2018. I did a “final sweep” of the bottom of the forest web before stopping the harvest. I wanted to make sure I had found all the stories I could for each of the Water Walks, while respecting and honouring the privacy of the Water Walkers.

It took five months to gather as much as I could about the Mother Earth Water Walks – I gathered 135 documentations of Water Walks (see Appendix B: List of Water Walks). I eventually came to a point where I was constantly circling back to the stories that had been previously gathered. While I did sense that I gathered all that I could, I am certain that there were Water Walks I could not find. The limitations of my search engine and search tactics led me to certain paths and not others, which restrained the number of Water Walks I could find digital documentation for. For instance, there were several Water Walks mentioned in an article pertaining to a different Water Walk, though I could not find any digital documentation on that mentioned Water Walk (see Appendix B: List of Water Walks). There are also many more future Water Walks emerging, and, so, gathering stories will never legitimately end. Fortunately, with the public archive, Water Walkers can continue to share their past, current, and future Water Walks and stories.

Nonetheless, by the end of gathering stories, I had travelled through countless paths of webpages, links, documents, and folders and Water Walkers’ stories appeared in various forms. Importantly, every story showcased and celebrated the different ways Water Walkers’ are healing water and have too been healed by the water. The types of stories found were:

- Activities
- Articles
- Audio recordings
- Awards
- Blogs
- Book reviews
- Books
- Brochures
- Contacts
- Curriculum content
- Facebook pages
- Fundraisers
- Emails
- Events
- Journals
- Letters
- Links
- Logos
- Magazines
- Maps
- Media and press releases
- Music
- Newsletters
- Newspapers
- Pamphlets
- Photographs
- Podcasts
- Posters
- Radio interviews
- Reports
- Schedules
- Sponsors
- Statements
- Timelines
- Videos
- Webpages
- Word documents.

The Water Walkers’ stories share how nibi has helped different people heal while on a Water Walk. These stories also teach us how peoples from different cultures, backgrounds, histories, places, feel a
profound shift while walking for nibi. The physical footsteps in spiritual ceremony connect movement with prayer. The stories share the prayers for the waterbodies walked for. The stories honour the work of the Grandmothers and the other Water Walkers who have dedicated themselves to protect, care for, and heal the water.

To account for the various Water Walks (N=135) and Water Walkers, I organized the stories chronologically (2003-2018), and then by Water Walk/place (see Appendix B: List of Water Walks). The main folders are each year of the Water Walks to view the movement through time. Stories are organized into subfolders of each Water Walk to view the movement through space.

Each file is labeled using the template: Year_TypeOfFile_WaterWalk_Source_Author.file

Example:
2017_ARTICLE_ForTheEarthAndWaterWalk_CBC_BrigitteDubé.pdf

This naming was done purposefully to organize the stories historically and geographically. The file type is listed in the file name to organize the various stories in each of the Water Walk folders. Each story will communicate a different purpose depending on what that story was used for during the Water Walks. The source and author are listed to identify where the knowledge comes from and for easy referencing. The place of a Water Walk was significant in the gathering, harvesting, and naming of the stories. Each place had different relations to consider, issues impacting the lands, waters, peoples, and creatures, as well as peoples dedicated to protecting the water. Water Walkers follow the paths of their ancestors to remember, recognize, acknowledge, and honour their responsibilities to protect nibi. They are ceremonial journeys of healing by reconnecting peoples’ waterbodies with the waterbodies that gift us life. And, so, this naming system aims to honour the past, present, and future of the Water Walkers, by showcasing when and where the Water Walk occurred.

Stories gathered will be physically harvested in the public archive at the Anishinabek Discovery Centre in Garden River, Ontario, hosted by, and home to Shingwauk Kimoo maage Gaming (SKG) at Algoma University. The archive will also be accessible online via the Mother Earth Water Walk webpage, and will include a digital story map.
Shingwauk Kimooamaage Gaming (SKG) is an Anishinabek Teaching Lodge (University) that offers Anishinabe Studies and Anishinabemowin undergraduate degrees in conjunction with Algoma University. The Anishinabek Discovery Centre, home to SKG, is a $11.9 million facility, currently under construction, directly across from Algoma University (Hopkin, 2018). Construction is set to finish in late November, 2018, with the centre’s doors opening in early 2019 (Hopkin, 2018).

The Anishinabek Discovery Centre’s infrastructure holds significant meaning for Anishinabek communities (Hopkin, 2018). Two Row Architect from Six Nations designed the centre in the shape of a fish, and the building will reside along the St. Marys River waterfront (Hopkin, 2018). The dome structure of the centre is modelled after the teaching lodges that have stood in Anishinabek communities for thousands of years (Hopkin, 2018). The centre will include a large, open area facing the St. Marys River, as part of a “living” classroom (Hopkin, 2018). The architectural and pedagogical design of the Anishinabek Discovery Centre is to enhance and support land-based and culture-based learning from an Anishinabek worldview (Hopkin, 2018). The Anishinabek Discovery Centre will celebrate the survival of Indigenous peoples by focusing on Anishinabek cultural and spiritual values, through the sharing of Anishinabek history, knowledge, teachings, beliefs, meanings, and stories.

Specifically, the Anishinabek Discovery Centre aims to fulfill Chief Shingwauk’s vision of a teaching wigwam, “where his people could acquire the necessary educational tools in modern society” without comprising cultural and traditional values (Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig, 2018). By focusing on Chief Shingwauk’s vision and expanding the scope of SKG’s Anishinabe Studies and Anishinabemowin program, the Anishinabek Discovery Centre will create symbiotic and reciprocal relationship with communities through education, celebration, responsibility, and respect (Hopkin, 2018). Home to SKG, the Anishinabek Discovery Centre will include SKG classrooms, administrative offices, a student lounge, cafe, art gallery, performing arts space, libraries and archives, such as the National Chiefs Library supported by the Assembly of First Nations (Hopkin, 2018). The National Chiefs Library is an official repository for First Nations-created and First Nations-related research and scholarship information across the country (Hopkin, 2018).

Mitch Case, director of student services and outreach and resources for SKG, discussed in SooToday that the centre will be a place for First Nations in the region to store archival materials (Hopkin, 2018).
Specifically, he shared that the Anishinabek Discovery Centre will be housing memorabilia from Water Walks led by Grandmother Josephine (Hopkin, 2018).

“*We could be housing all the media clippings and all of those sorts of things - all of the documents for itineraries and planning and putting together the walks, so students can get a sense of how that happens and the behind-the-scenes of that. [...] We could very well end up with a collection of Josephine's old sneakers, you know?*” (Mitch Case as quoted in Hopkin, 2018).

The archive will be used as a teaching tool for students at SKG to learn about the Water Walks: the significant planning required, the peoples and places involved, and the Anishinabek teachings and ceremonies that guide every step. With physical and digital memorabilia/stories, the archive will share the teachings of the Water Walkers and their prayers for the water, land, peoples, animals, fish, birds – all of Creation. The public archive and story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks will be one of the many First Nations-related research information hosted at the centre.

To start harvesting the Water Walkers’ stories for the public archive, Joanne and I gathered in mid-May, 2018, with Krista McCracken, an archivist who works at Shingwauk Residential School Centre, which resides in the Shingwauk Kimoomaage Gaming (SKG). We spent two long days to start *harvesting stories*: storytelling, envisioning, connecting, celebrating survival, remembering, negotiating, reading, representing, reframing, sharing, discovering, and creating (Smith, 1999). Shingwauk Residential School Centre and SKG have a breadth of experience working with sensitive documents and archives related to First Nations peoples and research. To illustrate, the Shingwauk Residential School Centre ensures that residential school survivors’ stories are dealt with in a trusting, responsible, respectful, honourable, and reciprocal way, that builds relationships through healing and protection. We trust holding the archive at the Anishinabek Discovery Centre because of SKG’s and the Shingwauk Residential School Centre’s trustworthy reputations with First Nations peoples and communities.

The public archive of the Mother Earth Water Walks will be harvesting stories from the Water Walks, from 2003 forward. The public archive will harvest the Water Walkers’ prayers, stories, and footsteps in one place, to share the knowledge, teachings, and experiences. As Water Walkers learn about the public archive, we hope they will share stories, pictures, videos, audio, etc., from the Water Walks they

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8 The University of Toronto’s Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education funded my travels from Toronto to Sault Ste. Marie to harvest stories, which was an important step forward in supporting decolonial water education.
participated in, as well as donate (temporarily or permanently) any items from their journey (i.e. running shoes, socks, t-shirts, flyers, photographs). We hope the archive helps foster community among the Water Walkers, by gathering, harvesting, mapping, and celebrating their stories and prayers. The archive is primarily for the Water Walkers, but it will also be for all people who want to learn more about the Mother Earth Water Walks and Anishinabek teachings, stories, history and culture.

When I first arrived to SKG, Joanne shared stories of her time on campus as a student and employee. She spoke about the connections Grand Chief Edward Benton Banai and Grandmother Josephine have with the university. Grandmother Josephine previously studied Anishinabemowin here, and Grand Chief Edward Benton Banai teaches Anishinabe Studies and Anishinabemowin. The Grand Chief who inspired the idea of the Water Walks, the Grandmother who started the Mother Earth Water Walks, and the woman who has organized and coordinated the Mother Earth Water Walks since 2011, all have deep connections with this place. It is important to understand these stories of connection to know the archive will be in a good home for the community. Joanne also told me that the university is the site of an old Residential School, before it was closed in 1970. She pointed to different areas of the campus and described different places of the school. Before going to SKG, I did not know that Algoma University resides in the old Shingwauk Residential School. It is significant to understand the history of this space and place, as the Mother Earth Water Walks archive is residing here.
While at SKG, Krista invited Joanne and I to join her afternoon class tour of the history of the Shingwauk Residential School. We started inside with a brief introduction to the history in the landscape. We then walked through hallways of photographs of First Nations students from the earliest days of the Shingwauk Residential School. The descriptions were written by the principal, who used harsh, vulgar, dehumanizing language to describe the children. Every student was assigned an English name, and were no longer called by their birth name. The students were also assigned a number, and were almost always referred to by that number, rather than their assigned name.

We moved passed the profiles to a staircase. Krista explained how this hallway was filled with classrooms, laundry, kitchen, and this stairway was the girls’ entrance to the school. The small cubbyhole underneath the back of the stairs was where children would be sent inside as punishment for unknown, extended periods of time. There was another cubbyhole underneath the boys’ stairwell, which was covered by plaster, though you could still see the outline. Everything in the residential school was segregated by gender; the classes, work, entrances, classrooms, residence, playground... The boys and girls were most often not permitted to communicate, and family members were also typically separated from one another.
As we moved outside to the main entrance, Krista shared what the building used to be like and the recent developments added. A stone wall in the centre of the field in the front of the school depicts the seven Grandfather teachings: *nibwaakaawin* (wisdom), *zaagi’idiwin* (love), *minaadendamowin* (respect), *aakode’ewin* (bravery), *gwayakwaadiziwin* (honesty), *dabaadendiziwin* (humility), and *debwewin* (truth).

When we entered the church chapel, the air was cool and chilling. Krista spoke about how the children built most of the chapel with one adult supervisor, but the stained-glass windows were sent in from elsewhere. Standing inside the wooden chapel, I imagined the children constructing the church, and how difficult and strenuous it must have been. Following the church, we moved down a path behind the school in the forest to a gated cemetery with a few grave stones inside. Both students, teachers, and principals were buried here. Although, the marked graves honour white teachers and students, most of the First Nations children have unmarked graves. The trees stand tall, protecting the land here. The space is haunting and beautiful.

We walked from the cemetery back inside the Shingwauk Residential School Centre. We moved through an art installation that expanded across the walls of the eastern corridor. The art features a project of reconciliation. Students across Ontario met with residential school survivors to listen and learn their stories. Afterwards, they painted wooden tiles and wrote letters for the survivors, deceased, and missing students. The tiles and letters were scattered on the walls and around a cylinder piece in the centre of the hallway. Krista finished the tour by sharing binders of old photographs of Shingwauk Residential
School. The students tried to identify the photographs from oldest to newest. While the students search through the old photographs, I sat on the chairs near the archive stacks with Joanne. We were physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally exhausted. The tour of the residential school was brief, only lasting one hour, though, it felt like we travelled back through settler colonial history. While the residential school tour was exhausting, the tour celebrated survival and remembered the history, traumas, and those who lost their lives. It is an important decolonial movement of walking, to remember to remember.

When we started harvesting stories, Krista, Joanne and I sat in a circle in Krista’s office, with Kelsey Leonard (PhD student at McMaster University) on Skype. We started by sharing stories of how we all got involved in archiving the Mother Earth Water Walks. Since 2011, Joanne had envisioned, and made a promise of, gathering and archiving the stories from the Mother Earth Water Walks— to remember what the Water Walkers have done, and, are doing, for nibi. Krista is determined to help the Mother Earth Water Walks by supporting and facilitating the public archive. She is happy to use her role as an archivist at the centre to provide a safe place for the Water Walkers’ stories to be gathered and harvested. She wants the stories to be shared in a respectful way, and she knows that SKG will honour that responsibility.

Kelsey is helping Grandmother Josephine and Joanne gather Water Walkers’ stories to facilitate and contribute to the important work for nibi. She is using her role as a PhD student/researcher to gather stories from the Water Walkers using an online survey and in-person talking circles. In her research, Water Walkers submit their digital stories and photographs online, and they can also participate in sharing oral stories. When it was my turn to share, I told Krista and Kelsey about the miscommunication I had with Grandmother Josephine and how that led me to think I had permission to do what I had wanted to do and how that had profoundly changed, my intention was always to help nibi and the Water Walkers. I got dubbed the nickname “The Water Stalker” due to my unceasing dedication to help the Water Walkers. As Grandmother Josephine says, “Nga zhichige Nibi Onji (I will do it for the water).” I am dedicated to the water, and I never gave up on this research. However, to do the research, as I have outlined carefully in this MSc story telling archive of my own histories and decolonizing journeys, I had to unsettle my settler colonialism.

Bundle by bundle, folder by folder, we searched through the stories gathered from the forest web. We shared our visions and dreams for the public archive, and created a plan of what we need to accomplish for next steps. As we envisioned and discussed the creation of the public archive, our relationships grow
stronger, nourished by the *nibi* in our stories and in our waterbodies. We thoroughly discussed the logistics of the archive and how ownership, access, control, and protection of the stories and items of the Water Walks will be facilitated. Joanne, Krista, and Kelsey are relieved and thankful that I did not share any of the stories gathered in this written thesis. To reiterate, it is critical that the Mother Earth Water Walk community have full ownership, access, control, and protection of their stories. As I stated earlier, my reframing of the written thesis ensures the Water Walkers’ stories do not belong to the University of Toronto. The research still achieves all objectives set forth, although, now, the university cannot own the stories gathered and harvested.

To ensure the Water Walkers maintain ownership, control, access, and protection of the stories gathered online, we will reach out to the individuals for consent to be included in the archive. We will then send a call out to other Water Walkers to share their digital and non-digital stories and items from past, current, and future Water Walks. The Anishinabek Discovery Centre will ensure that the archive will be a place of *loaning or storing* items and stories from the Water Walks. If, at any time, a person or family wants to have their items or stories removed, they will go back to that family and the centre will no longer have ownership. This will allow the Water Walkers to maintain full ownership, access, control, and protection of their stories, even when they are included in the archive.

From May 2018 to January 2019, Joanne, Krista, Kelsey and I are harvesting the Water Walkers’ stories, both digitally and physically, for the opening of the Anishinabek Discovery Centre in early 2019. In these next steps of harvesting, there will be more people from SKG to ensure the process of harvesting is accomplished with the upmost respect and reciprocity. Through SKG, we are sending consent letters to Water Walkers whose stories were gathered, to respectfully request if they would like to include (temporarily or permanently) their stories in the archive. Following informed consent, we will add the digital stories to the online archive, and begin printing and organizing materials for the physical archive. During this process, we will also inform Water Walkers about the digital *story map* that will be part of the archive, and request if they would like their stories to be included in the story map. Additionally, if they would like to add their own stories to the map, we will describe how to add stories using the mapping technology, while providing additional resources to learn more about story mapping tools.

The Anishinabek Discovery Centre and Mother Earth Water Walk webpage will host the story map of the Water Walks. The story map will be a digital, interactive, online, accessible, open, crowdsourced story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks, starting with the first Mother Earth Water Walk led by
Grandmother Josephine in 2003. The story map will visually connect the Water Walkers’ stories and prayers, while honouring and celebrating the Water Walks and Water Walkers.

MAPPING STORIES

A story map is an online tool to share narratives, texts, images, videos, and other multimedia content using a base-layered, interactive mapping technology. Story maps illustrate the connections between peoples, places, and spaces using digital maps. As a method, a story map centralizes and shares stories using visual, interactive maps, to disseminate knowledge to the public in an accessible, comprehensive, integrative, and open way. Story maps are significant for decolonizing work, as they offer alternative ways of sharing knowledge and re-centre stories and their relationship with place. Place is central to story maps, as land is central to (de)colonization. By (re)centering place (land and water), story maps can be used to privilege, honour, and celebrate indigenous voices, knowledges, cultures, ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. Story maps can be used by academics and non-academics, to illustrate the deep relationship between knowledge and place.

By connecting stories to physical places, people can envision storytelling in new, creative ways, and establish how, when, where, and why their stories are shared (Smith, 1999). By forcing the breakdown of colonized, Western mapping systems, individuals and communities can remember their history, culture, geography, values, and beliefs by celebrating their survival, through self-determination, self-recognition, and self-respect (Smith, 1999). Story maps also allow for the critical (re)examining of geography and history around the world by reading, representing, and reframing place and space through stories (Smith, 1999). Overall, story maps create methods to share and discover knowledge in numerous ways, by imagining a new medium for the translation of knowledge for both academic and non-academic communities (Smith, 1999).

As I mentioned, mapping the history of the Mother Earth Water Walks has been Joanne Robertson’s vision since 2011. Joanne made a promise to the Grandmothers on the 2011 Four Directions Water Walk that she would document and share their names and work for nibi, so their grandkids will remember what they did for nibi. She had started creating the map online using her webpage EG4W – emptyglassforwater. Unfortunately, Joanne’s digital map on her website disappeared, with the geotags lost in the depths of the internet ocean. Happily, she still has a physical copy of the 2011 Four Directions Water Walk map to share with communities. Her map covers a large poster board, with coloured pins
marking the routes of the Water Walk. Starting in the north, east, south, and west of Turtle Island, four Grandmothers led different groups of Water Walkers for the Sacred Water Walk. At the end of their journey, the four pails of salt water met at Madigan Lake, Bad River, Wisconsin (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2011). This was the first Water Walk Joanne organized, and she has been helping organize and coordinate Mother Earth Water Walks since then.

To help Joanne create her vision and keep her promise of mapping the Water Walkers’ stories, Joanne, Krista, Kelsey, and I are creating a *story map* using a premium account with ArcGIS, generously supported and hosted by Algoma University and McMaster University. The story map will be user friendly, crowdsourced, open, and accessible. As every step is a prayer for the water, the story map will help share and remember the Water Walkers’ prayers for the waterbodies around the world.

Fortuitously, in the spring of 2018, Eve Tuck provided an opportunity to build a Story Map for a course assignment using ArcGIS, an online, interactive mapping tool to share stories in alternative ways (see Figure 2: *Story Map: Mother Earth Water Walks*). With this course assignment and Joanne’s vision, I began (re)creating the map for Joanne, the Water Walkers and the Mother Earth Water Walk community, to share the Water Walkers’ stories and connect generations together, with *nibi*.

However, due to the limitations of my public account with ArcGIS, my trial expired and then this digital map also disappeared (see Figure 2: *Story Map: Mother Earth Water Walks*). Inappropriately, I had not considered the timeline restrictions of the public account, and, so, the features of the map were lost in the ArcGIS system. After communications with the ArcGIS online customer care team, it was certain that this map was indeed irretrievable. Thankfully, I had all the stories from the map saved and backed up in a separate word document. As a researcher, I must always consider the possibilities of losing digital data, so it is critical to always back-up data in case of an incident such as this one. As the story map remains a high priority for the public archive, Joanne, Krista, Kelsey, and I are currently working on revitalizing the map, with thorough steps to ensure its futurity. We will ensure that stories included will be harvested with the Water Walkers’ knowledge and informed consent, and through the building of respectful, responsible, reciprocal relationships.

Everyone has their own (important) role for harvesting and mapping. Joanne has envisioned gathering and harvesting the Water Walks and Water Walkers’ stories for over 7 years, is well connected with the Mother Earth Water Walk community, especially Grandmother Josephine, and has a responsibility to the Grandmothers of the 2011 *Four Directions Water Walk* to harvest and map their stories. Krista is a professional archivist at the Shingwauk Residential School Centre, and understands the logistics and
meticulous details for the process of ownership, access, control, and protection of First Nations’ stories, research, and information. Kelsey is a PhD student at McMaster University with significant knowledge of digital story mapping tools and working with Indigenous communities. She is also researching the Mother Earth Water Walks through the collection of online surveys, as well as in-person focus groups with Water Walkers. Finally, as part of the work for my MSc thesis, I gathered Water Walkers’ stories from 2003 to 2018 for the public archive and digital story map, and I have a responsibility to ensure these stories are harvested and mapped with respect, responsibility, reciprocity and care.

Specifically, Kelsey and I will add stories to the public archive and story map through our different research projects. Alongside the archiving process, our first step is to send/receive consent letters from the Water Walkers whose stories were gathered as part of the research. We will send consent letters, through SKG, to the Water Walk organizers and Water Walkers to inform them about the public archive and story map, and respectfully ask if their specific stories can be included (temporarily or permanently). For those Water Walkers who wish to include their stories in either the archive or map, we will physically add the stories for them or direct them on how to upload the stories themselves. The Water Walkers will always maintain full ownership, control, access, and protection of their stories. At any time, the Water Walkers may retract or add stories to the public archive and story map by sending a request (physically or electronically) to the Anishinabek Discovery Centre. The logistics of ownership, control, access, and protection will be outlined in the consent letter by SKG/the Anishinabek Discovery Centre for the Water Walkers.

Next, we will be sharing and distributing information about the public archive and story map to the wider network of Water Walkers. Joanne, Kelsey and I are currently creating a poster to distribute physically and digitally to the Mother Earth Water Walk community. The poster will outline specific details of the archive and map, where/how to share stories, and how contributing stories will help celebrate and honour the Water Walkers’ prayers, carrying the legacy of the Mother Earth Water Walks for future generations. This poster will be approved by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin before distributed publicly.

As the Anishinabek Discovery Centre is currently under construction, we are working on uploading the digital documents to the online archival system and digital story map. When the online archive and story map are fully established, Krista and Joanne will be embedding the digital archive and map into the Mother Earth Water Walk webpage. While creating the digital archive and story map, we will prepare the various documents and images for printing/harvesting. The physical archive will then be established
when the Anishinabek Discovery Centre opens in early 2019 (Hopkin, 2018). The Anishinabek Discovery Centre will physically host both the public archive and story map, and the Mother Earth Water Walk webpage will host them digitally. The story map will be a reciprocal and interactive digital form of storytelling. When the map is established and accessible to the public, stories will be crowdsourced, and the Water Walkers can upload their stories directly onto the map. Specifically, the Arc-GIS tool has an embedded crowdsourcing software, so Water Walkers can add their stories using titles, descriptions, and digital images. A Water Walker’s story will never be re-written or changed by someone else, rather, stories will continually add onto the base-layer map.

Joanne, Krista, and the archival team at SKG will organize and manage the stories added and retracted in the public archive and story map. As Krista is the archivist, she will be responsible for organizing the digital and physical stories for the public archive. Joanne will assist Krista in managing the Water Walkers’ stories to ensure their voices are represented with honour, respect, and self-determination. When the story map and archive are shared publicly, we hope the Water Walkers embrace them as their own – made for them, by them, and with them. We also hope to reach people who are interested in learning about the Water Walks. The work for the water continues forward, and future Water Walks will need future Water Walkers.

As the Water Walk(er)s connect every step, with every prayer, with every story, the story map celebrates and acknowledges their footsteps, prayers, and stories. Specifically, the story map will visualize the Mother Earth Water Walks from 2003 onwards, including stories, narratives, images, peoples, locations, and names of Water Walks on Turtle Island, as well as other places around the world, demonstrating how the Mother Earth Water Walks connect people to nibi. The map and archive will share, connect, honour, acknowledge, and celebrate the work of the Water Walkers in one place. As the Mother Earth Water Walks flow throughout Turtle Island and into other parts of the world, the scale of the map ripples from local (communities) to regional (the Great Lakes) to international (Turtle Island) to global (Mother Earth). The map will plot rivers, creeks, and lakes, as well as towns and cities, and, where available, the geographical routes of the different Water Walks will be included and overlapped onto the base-layer of the map.

The places marked on the map will be the specific locations and routes (where available) of the Water Walks. These marked areas will include the years Water Walks were held, name of the Water Walks, and narratives, images, and videos of Water Walkers who have either shared their stories online or through the Anishinabek Discovery Centre. Pinned areas will be named after the specific Water Walk in that
area. The naming system is designed to be user friendly for the Water Walkers, so they can easily identify Water Walks and add their stories to the Water Walks they participated in. Names of Water Walks include the year first, and then typically the waterbody walked for second. These names express the centrality of time and place. Water Walkers move around waterbodies through towns, cities, streets, countryside, trails, sidewalks, beaches, and paths to heal and protect those peoples and places by building sacred relationships between the communities and the waterbodies. History and geography is embedded in both the landscapes of Turtle Island and the values of the Mother Earth Water Walks (Smith, 1999). The story map will illustrate these deep layers of history by using layered base maps of the places of the Water Walks, the physical and geographical routes, photographs and videos of the Water Walks, and Water Walkers’ stories.

Story mapping as a method for research holds significant implications for kinesiology. Thinking and creating through story mapping can help reframe sport, social and environmental issues in relationship to place and space. Story mapping can be used to critique the history and geography of sociocultural conditions of sport, physical activity, recreational, and leisure places and spaces. Story mapping can be used in countless ways to examine the human body in relation to movement around place and space. Story mapping, as a digital tool and methodology, that draws on Indigenous ways of knowing can help decolonize the field’s research methodologies, theories, and practice, by re-centering stories in relation to place.
I return where I began, in entangled “braided streams” of knowledge for decolonizing pathways of action. At the beginning of this thesis, I proposed three questions: (1) How do the Mother Earth Water Walks, as physical, emotional, spiritual and geographical walks, connect individuals and communities to water, and decolonize place and space around water and walking? (2) How do I, as a white settler woman and western researcher, decolonize my own methodologies, theories, and practices? and (3) Where is the water in kinesiology and how can we enhance decolonial water education in the field?

To answer these questions, I had to find my way through my graduate degree, through the hurdles, barriers, boundaries, structures and ideologies of the field of kinesiology and larger academic institution, and through life as a white settler woman and western researcher living and researching on Anishinabek and Haudenosaunee territory. I had to keep my truth, love, gratitude, and hope in front of me, while challenging, critiquing, and disrupting colonial systems, knowledges and practices, and learning from Anishinabe people, Water Walkers, friends, family and scholars, and the land, water, plants, trees, animals, fish, birds, mountains, stars, sun, and moon. As a participant and researcher of the Water Walks, I learned how the Mother Earth Water Walks build relationships between people and water while my own relationship evolved with water. The Mother Earth Water Walks teach that all peoples have responsibilities to protect and heal nibi through respect, love, gratitude, peace, joy, hope, and trust. With every step, Water Walkers build reciprocal relationships with nibi, land, plants, trees, animals, birds, fish, insects, mountains, sky, wind, sun, moon, stars, clouds, rain, ice, and snow.

Although the Mother Earth Water Walks are not a political protest, the Water Walks are a response to the destructions, violences and genocides of the past, and present, colonial, capital, and neoliberal power system and dynamics. Walking as a decolonial movement brings awareness to political, social, cultural, and environmental issues entangled with colonial, capital, and neoliberal power systems.

Every step prays for the health of the waters and Indigenous communities affected by water insecurities. Every step remembers the lost, missing, and murdered Indigenous children, women, men, and peoples. Every step acknowledges and celebrates Indigenous women’s connection with water. Every step connects people to place, increasing individual and collective responsibilities to the land and water.
Every step vibrates with love, gratitude, hope, joy, and peace for all of life. There are many teachings I have not learned, and there are many I am still trying to understand, but there is one thing I am certain about: as I walk for nibi, I feel my care, love, and gratitude for all of Creation flow outwards, every step of the way. With every step for the water, and with every story gathered, mapped, and harvested, I am starting to understand the messages of the Water Walkers and the Anishinabek teachings that carry the copper vessel and sacred eagle staff. Every step is a prayer, for nibi, and all of Creation. Nibi both gifts life and is alive. Nibi is the lifeblood of Mother Earth and of our waterbodies. We must sing to nibi (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017) and think and act from the perspective of water. Be the water (Danard, 2013). Stand up and say “Nga zhichige Nibi Onji (I will do it for the water)” (Mother Earth Water Walk, 2017). And, listen to the plants, as they are our oldest teachers (Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Throughout this journey, I have, and continue to, learn how to build reciprocal relationships to conduct ethical, decolonizing, critical, and indigenous research, while acknowledging my rights, roles, and responsibilities for this work as a white settler woman and western researcher. By sharing my experiences, reflections, critiques, and actions through a decolonizing autoethnographic journey and storytelling methodology, I demonstrate in this thesis how decolonizing is a personal journey dependent on context (place, people, scale, relationality), requiring significant time and effort, through the building of reciprocal relationships of respect and responsibility with Indigenous peoples, for pathways of Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and futurities (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Everyone is responsible for decolonizing. Wherever your pathways may lead will be dependent on the entanglement of your identities, histories, geographies, cultures, societies, friends, families, and personal experiences, and how you are situated in a specific context – place, space, time, scale, and relationality with Indigenous peoples and on Indigenous land and waters.

Using a story-based methodology (decolonizing autoethnography, storytelling, gathering stories, harvesting stories, mapping stories), I work to change the way knowledge is represented, controlled, owned, shared, accessed, and protected in the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Toronto. This methodology was rooted in, and shaped by, a critical recognition of my rights, roles, and responsibilities to help Joanne Robertson gather, harvest, and map Water Walkers’ stories, while ensuring Water Walkers maintain ownership, control, access and protection of their stories. The primary goal of this research was to help support the Mother Earth Water Walk community in harvesting and mapping Water Walkers’ stories so that the future generations know their prayers for the water.
To recognize, acknowledge, share, and celebrate the Water Walkers’ prayers and stories for nibi, Joanne Robertson, Krista McCracken, Kelsey Leonard, and I are working with the Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig (Anishinabek Discovery Centre) on the public archive and digital story map of the Mother Earth Water Walks (2003 forwards). The archive and map will be used as an educational tool for SKG’s Anishinabe Studies and Anishinabemowin undergraduate programs at the Anishinabek Discovery Centre. After the completion of this MSc thesis, I will continue to uphold my rights, roles and responsibilities for the Water Walks by harvesting and mapping stories, and walking for nibi.

Additionally, this research also aimed to help build, support, and enhance decolonial water (walking) education in the field of kinesiology and subdiscipline physical cultural studies. By establishing “where’s the water in kinesiology?” through a critical literature review of the field’s research on postcolonial feminism, social and environmental justice, Indigenous peoples in sport and physical culture, water and walking, I demonstrate that there is a profound need to study, teach and learn about water in kinesiology. Many scholars, inside and outside the field of kinesiology, laid the foundations for this research, and have guided my streams and pathways for decolonial water education. This thesis aims to support their methodologies, pedagogies, and practices by highlighting pathways for decolonizing in the field of Kinesiology.

The goals of decolonial water education in kinesiology are to (1) support Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and futurities, in their many, diverse material, psychological, epistemological, and spiritual forms; (2) teach people the value of water, and stewardship from the perspective of water; (3) connect, respect, and honour different spheres of knowledge to understand water in a holistic way; (4) unsettle settler colonialism, deconstruct and disrupt whiteness and colonial ways of thinking and acting, and oppose and resist colonial relations of power that threaten Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being; and (5) enhance racial and ethnic diversity within undergraduate and graduate programs, course curriculum, research, hiring, and teaching practices at the University of Toronto and the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education.

Based on my experiences as a researcher and student in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, at the University of Toronto, on the land of the Anishinabek and Haudenosaunee peoples, I have several recommendations for building and supporting decolonial water education in the field:
One must actively learn, practice, and embody critical, decolonizing, indigenous methodologies, through a reciprocal, respectful, and responsible collaboration with Indigenous scholars and peoples.

One must advocate for, reference, acknowledge, learn from, hire, and work with Indigenous, Black, and other racialized and marginalized scholars, both faculty and students.

One must balance the co-existence of knowledges between science and Indigenous Knowledges, while acknowledging and critiquing the colonial history (and presence) of science and academia.

One must critically and openly reflect on their positionalities and subjectivities, while positioning themselves and in relation to the research, context, peoples, and place.

One must ensure that Indigenous peoples involved with any research always maintain ownership, access, control, and protection of “data” related to, or gathered with and from, them.

One must disrupt the white supremacy and superiority that is embedded in the field.

One must integrate the subdisciplinary knowledges of kinesiology, and disseminate and mobilize knowledge to the public in an open and accessible way.

It is important to re-emphasize that because Indigenous Knowledges are diverse and distinct, decolonial water education will have different pedagogies, shapes, configurations, formations, processes, and implications depending on the educational context (places and peoples) (Hill, 2017; Simpson, 2002; 2014; 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). This research does not intend to make “one-size-fits-all” claims or statements about decolonial (water) education, but, rather, attempts to share pathways for decolonizing the field of Kinesiology. The suggestions listed above are simply meant to act as guidelines for reflection and introspection. The suggestions are not intended to be a framework, structure, or concrete list for decolonizing, but, rather, are simply a collection of reflections and insights I learned while doing this research, in this specific place, space and time, with my entangled identity, culture, histories and geographies.
This thesis flowed in, and from, “braided streams” to build, support, and enhance decolonial water education in Kinesiology, with Anishinabe people, through the co-existence of knowledge between (kinesiology) science and Anishinabe knowledge. For decolonizing, we must continue to flow forward, like rivers, continuously, without stopping or ever turning back.
AFTER THE FLOOD

May 28th, 2018. (1 week after submitting the first draft of my thesis)

Buzz...buzz... *incoming text message*

“The ‘Death Star’ will probably be closed tomorrow.”

Nibi flows from the ceiling of the main floor on the “Death Star”. A main pipe burst and rushing water floods the building. The two basements, mezzanine, and main floor are underwater. Five feet of nibi drowns the bottom floor. I wonder if their plans to build a fourteen-story wooden building on top of the “Death Star” are going to go through now? There are many repairs to do...
Do you know I am here, now?

Written by Stephanie Woodworth (June 8, 2018)

Do you hear me?
Do you feel me?
Do you taste me?
Do you smell me?
Do you see me?

Do you know I am here?

I flow through the floors, walls, and ceilings,
through your heart, lungs, and body,
through the trees, soil, and plants,
through the mountains, clouds, and sky,
through the fish, animals, and birds,
I am all around you.

Do you know I am here?

Do you see me?
Do you smell me?
Do you taste me?
Do you feel me?
Do you hear me?

My love and gratitude ripple outwards for you –
all of Creation,
all my relations.

My life purpose is to gift,
to protect,
to heal,
you.

No matter who you are,
human,
fish,
bear,
goose,
turtle,
martin,
tree,
you need me.
And, I need you too.

I am here to help you.
And, I need your help too.

Do you hear me?

How do I show you I am here?
REFERENCES


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**SPHERES OF WATER IN KINESIOLOGY**

*Figure 1.* Venn diagram “Spheres of Water in Kinesiology” showcases the literature on water in kinesiology. By embedding this thesis in the field, this diagram demonstrates the sphere of knowledge that was missing and what can be added.
Figure 2. Example of a digital story map. Blue points represented *nibi* and identified the Annual Mother Earth Water Walks, led by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin. Green points represented land and identified the Water Walks that have been inspired by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin.
ANISHINABEMOWIN GLOSSARY

Aakode’ewin – bravery
Anishinaabewi-gichigami – Lake Superior
Anishinabe – people
Anishinabekwe – (Ojibwe) woman
Anishinabemowin – (Ojibwe) people’s language
Dabaadendiziwin – humility
Debwewin – truth
Gwayakwaadiziwin – honesty
Ininwewi-gichigami – Lake Michigan
Kiizhik – cedar
Mashkodewashk – sage
Meegwetch – Thank you
Minaadendamowin – respect
Mnaamodzawin – total state of being well
Naadiwewi-gichigami – Lake Huron
Nga-zhichige Nibi Onji – I will do it for the water
Nibi – water
Nibwaakaawin – wisdom
Niigaani-gichigami – Lake Ontario
Niwa’ah Onega’gaih’ih – Humber River
Ode’imin – Strawberry
Semaa – tobacco
Waabishkiigoo-gichigami – Lake Erie
Waawaase’Aagaming – Lake Simcoe
Wiingashk – sweetgrass
Zaagi’idiwin – love
LIST OF WATER WALKS

LEGEND

Name = Year of Water Walk / Name of Water Walk / (Annual #) / (Waterbody walked for)

Blue = Mother Earth Water Walk led by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin

Black = Nibi/Water Walk inspired by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin

Red = Digital documentation of Nibi/Water Walk not found

1. 2003 Lake Superior Water Walk (Lake Superior)
2. 2004 Lake Michigan Water Walk (Upper Lake Michigan)
3. 2005 Lake Huron Water Walk (Lake Huron)
4. 2006 Lake Ontario Water Walk (Lake Ontario)
5. 2007 Lake Erie Water Walk (Lake Erie)
6. 2008 Lake Michigan Water Walk (Lower Lake Michigan)
7. 2008 Walk for Water (Chattahoochee River)
8. 2009 St Lawrence River Water Walk (St. Lawrence River)
9. 2009 Crawford Lake Water Walk (Crawford Lake)
10. 2009 Menominee River Water Walk (Menominee River)
    a. 2015 Menominee River Water Walk
    b. 2016 Menominee River Water Walk
11. 2009 Omaha Nation Water Walk (Omaha Reservation / Missouri River)
12. 2009 Halifax Water Walk (1st Annual) (Point Pleasant / Solidarity with Pictou Landing)
    a. 2010 Halifax Water Walk (2nd Annual)
    b. 2011 Halifax Water Walk (3rd Annual)
    c. 2012 Halifax Water Walk (4th Annual)
    d. 2013 Halifax Water Walk (5th Annual)
13. 2010 Kawartha’s Water Walk (1st Annual) (Rice Lake Water Walk)
14. 2010 Waimakariri Water Journey (Waimakariri River)
15. 2011 Four Directions Water Walk - North Direction (Arctic Ocean/Hudson Bay)
    a. 2011 Four Directions Water Walk - East Direction (Atlantic Ocean)
    b. 2011 Four Directions Water Walk - West Direction (Pacific Ocean)
    c. 2011 Four Directions Water Walk - South Direction (Gulf of Mexico)
16. 2011 Kawartha’s Water Walk (2nd Annual) (Upper Stoney Lake Water Walk)
17. 2011 Pokagon Women’s Water Walk (4th Annual) (Lake Michigan)
    a. 2008 Pokagon Women’s Water Walk (1st Annual)
    b. 2009 Pokagon Women’s Water Walk (2nd Annual)
    c. 2010 Pokagon Women’s Water Walk (3rd Annual)
18. 2011 Wasauksing Water Walk (1st Annual) (Georgian Bay/Lake Huron)
    a. 2012 Wasauksing Water Walk (2nd Annual)
    b. 2013 Wasauksing Water Walk (3rd Annual)
c. 2014 Wasauksing Water Walk (4th Annual)
d. 2015 Wasauksing Water Walk (5th Annual)
e. 2017 Wasauksing Water Walk (7th Annual)
19. 2011 Water is Life Walk (Nisqually River/Alder Lake)
21. 2012 Lake Monona Water Walk (1st Annual) (Lake Monona)
   a. 2013 Lake Monona Water Walk (2nd Annual)
   b. 2014 Lake Monona Water Walk (3rd Annual)
   c. 2015 Lake Monona Water Walk (4th Annual)
22. 2012 Lake Nipigon Water Walk (Lake Nipigon)
23. 2012 NAHC’s Water Walk (1st Annual) (Pacific Ocean/San Francisco Bay)
   a. 2013 NAHC’s Water Walk (2nd Annual)
   b. 2014 NAHC’s Water Walk (3rd Annual)
   c. 2015 NAHC’s Water Walk (4th Annual)
   d. 2016 NAHC’s Water Walk (5th Annual)
24. 2012 Water is Life Walk Sacred Journey (Ti’Swaq, Alder Lake, Tumwater Falls, Bus-chut-hwud)
25. 2013 Chequamegon Bay Water Walk (Chequamegon Bay)
26. 2013 Georgian Bay Water Walk / Spirit Lake Water Walk (Georgian Bay/Lake Huron)
27. 2013 Kawartha Water Walk (4th Annual) (Rice Lake Water Walk)
28. 2013 Mississippi River Water Walk (Mississippi River)
   a. 2014 Mississippi River Water Walk
29. 2013 Ohio River Walk (Ohio River)
   a. 2014 Ohio River Water Walk
30. 2013 Saugeen Nation Water Walk (Lake Huron)
   a. 2017 Saugeen Nation Water Walk
31. 2013 Seneca Lake Water Walk (Seneca Lake)
   a. 2015 Seneca Lake Water Walk
32. 2013 Sudbury Water Walk (Ramsey Lake)
33. 2013 Toronto Walk for Water (Lake Ontario)
34. 2013 Water is Life Walk (Androscoggin River)
35. 2013 Women’s Waters Ceremonial Walk (Vancouver - Pacific Ocean)
36. 2014 Central Wisconsin Water Walk (Lake Camelot)
   a. 2016 Central Wisconsin Water Walk
37. 2014 Kawartha Water Walk (5th Annual) (Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation Territory)
38. 2014 Lake Winnipeg Water Walk (Lake Winnipeg)
   a. 2015 Lake Winnipeg Water Walk
39. 2014 Milwaukee River Watershed Walk (Milwaukee River)
40. 2014 St. Louis River Water Walk (St. Louis River)
41. 2014 Unity Paddle and Water Walk (Lake Huron)
42. 2014 Waawaase’Aagaming Water Walk (1st Annual) (Waawaase’Aagaming [Lake Simcoe])
   a. 2015 Waawaasee’Aagaming Water Walk (2nd Annual)
   b. 2016 Waawaasee’Aagaming Water Walk (3rd Annual)
   c. 2017 Waawaasee’Aagaming Water Walk (4th Annual)
43. 2014 Water is Life Water Walk (Cheyenne River)
44. 2015 Anishinaabe Water Walk (Eagle Lake to Shoal Lake)
45. 2015 Chippewa River Water Walk (Chippewa River)
46. 2015 Cuyahoga River Water Walk (Cuyahoga River)
47. 2015 James River Unity Water Walk (James River)
48. 2015 Kawartha Water Walk (6th Annual) (Otonabee River)
49. 2015 Lake Winnebago Water Walk (Lake Winnebago)
   a. 2017 Lake Winnebago Water Walk
   b. 2018 Lake Winnebago Water Walk
50. 2015 Sacred Water Walk / Migration Water Walk (Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron/Georgian Bay, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence River)
51. 2015 Nibi Onji Canoe Journey (Lake Huron/Georgian Bay)
   a. 2016 Nibi Onji Canoe Journey (Lake Huron/Georgian Bay, Lake Superior)
   b. 2017 Nibi Onji Canoe Journey (Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron/Georgian Bay, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence River)
52. 2015 Water Is Life Walk (Quinebaug River)
53. 2015 Water Ways Walk (1st Annual) (Lac du Flambeau Waters)
   a. 2016 Water Ways Walk (2nd Annual)
   b. 2017 Water Ways Walk (3rd Annual)
   c. 2018 Water Ways Walk (4th Annual)
54. 2016 Boulevard Lake Water Walk (Boulevard Lake)
55. 2016 Flint Water Walk (Flint River)
56. 2016 Hamilton Harbour Water Walk (Lake Ontario)
   a. 2017 Hamilton Harbour Water Walk
57. 2016 Heal the Deschutes Estuary Water Walk (Capital Lake)
58. 2016 Kawartha Water Walk (7th Annual) (Odenabe Zibi to Little Lake)
59. 2016 Kettle River Water Walk (Kettle River)
60. 2016 M’Chigeeng Water Walk (Otter Lake)
61. 2016 Mi’kmak Water Walk (Shubenacadie River)
   a. 2017 Mi’kmak Water Walk (2nd Annual)
62. 2016 Minnehaha Creek Water Walk (Minnehaha Creek)
63. 2016 MN’isota River Water Walk (Minnesota River)
64. 2016 Peace and Dignity Water is Life Walk (Saskatoon - Saskatchewan River)
65. 2016 Peguis Water Walk (Fisher River)
66. 2016 Potomac River Water Walk (Potomac River)
67. 2016 Sacred Water Walk (Passamaquoddy Bay)
68. 2016 Sacred Water Walk (2nd Annual) (Rice Lake, Vancouver)
   a. 2017 Rice Lake Vancouver Water Walk (3rd Annual)
69. 2016 Sacred Water Walk for Standing Rock (Missouri River)
70. 2016 Water is Life Walk (Penobscot River)
71. 2016 Water Keepers Journey (Wahnapitae Lake)
72. 2016 Wikwemikong Water Walk (Georgian Bay/Lake Huron)
73. 2017 Constance Lake First Nation Water Walk (Constance Lake)
74. 2017 For the Earth and Water Walk: From East to West (Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron/Georgian Bay, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence River)
75. 2017 Great Lakes Water Walk (Lake Ontario)
76. 2017 Mni Ki Wakan Water Summit (Bde Maka Ska)
77. 2017 Missouri River Water Walk (Missouri River)
78. 2017 Nibi Emosaawdamajig (Serpent Mounds to Hiawatha First Nation / Rice Lake)
79. 2017 Niigaani-gichigami Gratitute Walk (Lake Ontario)
   a. 2018 Niigaani-gichigami Gratitute Walk
80. 2017 Penetanguishene Elementary School Water Walk (Waawaase’Aagaming [Lake Simcoe])
81. 2017 Sacred Water Walk (Waneka Lake)
82. 2017 Sacred Water Walk (Georgian Bay/Lake Huron)
83. 2017 Water is Life Walk (Merrimack River)
84. 2017 Water Walk (Antigonish – Nova Scotia)
85. 2017 Water Walk (Round Lake to Whitefish Lake)
86. 2017 Water Walk (Thames River)
87. 2018 Central Sands Water Walk (Speed River / Eramosa River)
88. 2018 Sacred Water Walk (Rights River)
89. 2018 St. Marys River Water Walk (St. Marys River)
90. 2018 Water is Life Walk (Housatonic River)
91. 2018 Wisconsin River Water Walk (Wisconsin River)