Treaty Entanglements: Exploring the Educational Significance of Treaty Understandings Amongst Alberta Preservice Teachers

by

Sara Lynn Solvey

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Abstract

This research seeks an exploration of Indigenous-Canadian relationships through a hermeneutic engagement with and (re)interpretation of the Treaty relationships established through the numbered Treaty processes. Evidenced by the historical and contemporary absence of Treaty education and understandings within curriculum and schooling in Alberta, misunderstandings of the Treaty relationships and neglect of the Treaty teachings have persisted. The purpose of this study is firstly, to attend to the origins and outcomes of these absences and secondly, to interpretively engage with Treaty wisdom as a foundational vision for pedagogical, curricular and reconciliatory work. With this focus in mind, this study engages 4 preservice teachers in a series of dialogues regarding the meaning of Treaties in their lives today. Contributions are made to the field of Treaty education and curriculum by forwarding a form of *relational pedagogy* that is inspired by and founded upon the spirit and intent of the Treaties.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Sara Solvey. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Treaty Canadians: An examination of the educational significance of Treaty understandings amongst Alberta pre-service teachers," No. Pro00061459, Feb. 22, 2016.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The natural environment of Alberta has always been a place of connecting contrasts and symbiotic relationships; open skies meet prairie topographies, mountain silhouettes skirt foothill forests, arterial rivers link expansive waterways and in turn, all of this supports a network of living flora and fauna across the landscape. Alberta is also a place where historical processes of Treaty-making[1] form the basis of relationships between Indigenous peoples and newcomers and their connections to these shared ecosystems. These processes are understood for many as foundational to national sovereignty and equitable relations in what is now Canada. Despite the significance of this history, Treaty education and understandings continue to be fundamentally absent from curricular mandates and have not been centralized as an important focal point for Alberta Education's decade of new curriculum initiatives that seek to engage with Aboriginal perspectives across program areas and subject matter.[2] That educators and students alike cannot make sense of what it means to live in this place now called Alberta through the story of Treaty should warrant our urgent attention. Particularly at this juncture in time, upon the completion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's

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[1] Throughout the study, I have chosen a method of capitalization for the term 'Treaty' on the basis of the following: Treaties in Canada are sacred and formal agreements between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state and thus, their significance should be honoured in the grammatical fashion of a proper noun within the English language. However, my capitalization of the term goes beyond that which constitutes a proper noun in English, for I do not consider the Treaties to be nouns per se but verbs of action. Treaties in this sense, are a living agreement and describe the ongoing action of participating in a relationship.

[2] See Alberta Education: *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, 2002; *Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners*, 2005; *FNMI Collaborative Framework: Building Relationships*, 2012.

Final Report and 94 Calls to Action,[3] where national commitments have been made in the spirit of Indigenous-Canadian reconciliation and relationship building.

Critical to this present moment is the assertion that there is much to be learned from the processes of Treaty-making in this country and the contexts of those historical times that brought differing peoples with differing worldviews together. A quick glance at the not so distant past suggests that we have been in this complex place between peoples, ideologies, and political and socio-economic systems before. At that time, an important partnership was embarked upon which continues to have tremendous relevancy if we would only turn our attention to it today.

Canadian curriculum theorist Cynthia Chambers writes "If anything offers the possibility for community and commonality in this era of multiplicity and difference, it is the land that we share" (1999, p. 147). Following Chambers, it is the land that guides the spirit and intent of this work for it is the relationship to land held between settler-Canadians[4] and Indigenous peoples[5] which mark the very origins where relationships began. Chief Roy Whitney, a member of the Tsuu T'ina nation in Treaty 7 territory offers:

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[3] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. In 2009, they began a comprehensive documentation and historical record of the truth of the residential school system, including stories and testimonies from survivors, families and communities. In December of 2015, the TRC released their final report and 94 calls to action to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015a; 2015b).

[4] Throughout the study, I employ the terms 'settler-Canadian', 'Canadian' and 'newcomer.' With the use of any intentional defining of a group of people, there are always generalizations made and caveats evident that make the terms wholly imperfect, yet necessary for discussions such as these. My use of the term 'settler' follows Asch's (2014) formulation that "'settling on the land' well describes the purpose of those in this group who arrived here" (p. 8). The use of this term denotes people mainly of a Euro-western ancestry who came here to settle and stay for good. My use of the term 'Canadian' in the context of this study denotes people of Canadian citizenship who are not of Indigenous ancestry. Working within ESL education spaces, the term 'newcomer' is employed to describe immigrants and refugees of recent arrival to Canada, usually within one decade but it is also used in some contexts as a synonym for the term settler.

[5] I choose to use the inclusive term 'Indigenous' throughout the study to signify the collective identity of first peoples from diverse worldviews, perspectives, histories, cultures, and languages and to honour their unique relationships to place, ecology and land held here in Turtle Island since time immemorial.

> Treaties were originally the starting point for the process of defining the Aboriginal peoples' relations with newcomers…as the place where we articulated just how we would live with the newcomers and just how we would share the land with them. (Hildebrandt, Carter & First Rider, 1996, p. xv)

As Asch (2014) further formulates, Treaties were the lawful recognition that settlers were "here to stay" while honouring the fact that there were people already living here (p. 153). Unfortunately, the Treaties have a lengthy history of remaining unfulfilled by the Canadian government and the importance of Treaty has been sidelined from official Canadian history telling. In this way, the Treaties also mark a place of origin where relationships between Indigenous peoples and newcomers began to breakdown, where, as Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald forwards, "what was intended for us has not been honoured" (personal communication, January, 2016).

Consequently in our present social context, foundational Treaty understandings remain absent from and misunderstood by the majority of the dominant Canadian populace. This assertion is corroborated by Treaty scholar J. R. Miller, in the opening lines of his book *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada*:

> Treaties between the Crown and Aboriginal peoples are one of the paradoxes of Canadian history. Although they have been an important feature of the country since the earliest days of contact between Natives and newcomers, relatively few Canadians understand what they are or the role they have played in the country's past. Unfortunately, even fewer non-Native Canadians appreciate that treaties are a valuable part of the foundations of the Canadian state. (2009, p. 3)

Located in the context of Alberta, the purpose of this research study is to attend to the origins and outcomes of these absences in understanding through the space of education, and then to move to counter these absences by engaging with Treaty teachings as potentially inspiring visions for pedagogical, curricular and reconciliatory work. These processes follow Kovach (2013) in exploring Treaties as an educational philosophy of teaching *from* and *through* treaty (p. 123). With these points of focus in mind, this study engaged 4 preservice teachers from the University of Alberta in a series of discussions regarding the meaning of Treaties in their lives as educators and Canadians today. Alongside this work is a *discovering* of this researcher, a settler-descendant Canadian from Treaty 4 territory, and my journey of coming to understand myself as a Treaty person. It is hoped through these processes that a vision of Treaty as *relational pedagogy* can be forwarded whereby historical and contemporary Indigenous-Canadian relationships form the foundation where pedagogical and curricular work begin.

It makes sense to begin this work by journeying home, where my own beginnings as a Canadian and a settler-descendant began. Throughout the study, I hope to contextualize and position my identity and subjectivity in relation to this research focus with the personal and community stories that brought me here and which demonstrate my lived experiences to the topic of Treaties. Chambers (1989) describes this form of writing as narrative writing, "a metaphorical means of drawing one's personal experience to bear on a situation, a way of making sense of the reality in which we find ourselves, and of the events which continually fill our lives" (p. 268). This kind of personal experience writing also takes guidance from and aligns with Indigenous forms of storytelling as methodology (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Here, "stories are teachings, and the storyteller has a responsibility to…share with others what he or she has learned" (Regan, 2010, p. 31). Telling my own stories has helped me deconstruct the dominant colonial narratives of Canada that I have grown up with while deepening my understandings of Treaty wisdom. Further, I offer my stories to other settler-Canadians as an attempt to encourage reflective settler-storytelling that serves as potential counter narrative to the master narratives that Canadians have come to live by.

Situating Self, Locating Home

Wherever and whatever it is, home is always a border country,
a place that separates and connects us,
a place of possibility for both peace and perilous conflict.

Chamberlin, 2004, p. 3

I grew up in a place called Fort Qu' Appelle in what is now the province of Saskatchewan, nestled between four lakes known to the local population as the *Calling Lakes*. Calling Lakes is a derivation of the English translation of the French term *Qu' appelle?* – Who calls? One version of the traditional Cree naming of the river that connects the four lakes is given by Chief Loud Voice as *kahtapwao sepe* – What is calling river? This naming describes the story of northern and southern groups of people meeting at the water's edge, who, finding themselves unable to cross, shouted news back and forth from opposite shores (Herriot, 2000, p. 9). Interpretively speaking, this story stands as a profoundly visual metaphor of people in the valley communicating across divides.

The location of Fort Qu' Appelle was a key crossroads and network of trails before and during the fur trade era. Many First Nations and Métis peoples traded and formed relationships and alliances with the French and British, through the Northwest Fur

Company and later, the Hudson Bay Company. In September 1874, Treaty 4 was deliberated upon in this valley between the Crown and the Cree, Saulteaux, and Nakota Sioux peoples. My own settler ancestors began to arrive in what is now the province of Manitoba not too long after that. As Treaties were being negotiated across Canada, my ancestors ventured further west along the newly constructed railway line to the fertile prairie landscapes of the Qu' Appelle valley in the early twentieth century. I am a descendant of settlers arriving from Alsace-Lorraine, on the French-German border, Western Galicia (modern day Ukraine), Slovakia (then Czechoslovakia) and Russia. All of my ancestors left their homelands as a result of political and/or socio-economic strife, carrying the dreams of a better life within their imagination. My Ukrainian and Russian ancestors engaged in agriculture in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. My Slovakian great grandparents first operated a small café in Lethbridge, Alberta, before they moved further west into interior B.C. to farm a fruit orchard until the end of their days.

Growing up in the Qu' Appelle valley meant growing up in the midst of diverse settler and Indigenous populations, surrounded by numerous reserve and farming communities which serviced their needs in town. My experiences and understandings of my place and myself in this world were shaped by these close, and yet often distant, proximities of peoples and the tense and divisive relationships that were frequently bared in our living together. Celebrations of Treaty Days took place each fall but my memories of participating in those celebrations appear through a looking glass, gazing upon the fancy regalia, listening to the boom of the drum and eating Indian tacos. I enjoyed being included but was keenly aware that those particular celebrations were reserved for the peoples who were connected to them and not necessarily for me.

I recall understanding the Treaties as an agreement that existed between First Nations[6] people and the government, to which I was not included. I came to understand this dynamic through the various ways in which Treaty was represented in my community. For example, the Treaty medallion, with the symbol of a First Nations Chief and what I interpreted as a government official (rather than for example, a representative of my own settler ancestors) would often be promoted on flags, building murals, and various newspaper and Indigenous media pamphlets around town. Many First Nations people living in the area carried what was termed 'Treaty cards.' These were their official certificates of Indian status but in my community, they indicated being 'Treaty.' This coupled with the yearly gathering at our local recreation centre, where members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police handed out crisp $5 notes as an annual Treaty payment, made everything appear formal and significant between First Nations people and the government. Yet, it was also perplexing at times, as I later witnessed my Indigenous classmates laughing heartedly at the school lunch tables, wondering out loud how they could possibly spend their five bucks all in one place! This gave the impression that the Treaties were also part of a grand joke. But if it was a joke, I knew somehow that it was a joke for Native[7] people to laugh at and not a joke that I would understand. The narrative in town went like this: to be 'Treaty' was to be Native. It was not a space to ask naïve questions or joke about if you weren't Native. My Indigenous friends often wore the identity marker of *being Treaty* as a badge of honour and a source of pride. It appeared as something to rally around, a setting to which I felt to be an outsider. Still, settler-Canadian people in town often used the Treaty identity marker to fuel discriminatory and derogatory remarks, a setting to which I was definitely an insider.

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[6] The term First Nations is employed when specifically speaking about the numbered Treaties. Historically, the Métis were denied making Treaty with the Crown and have not been recognized as signatories to the numbered Treaties, despite playing a significant role in their fruition. Oral history evidence demonstrates in many cases that First Nations leaders advocated for Métis inclusion in the Treaties (See for example, Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear), Treaty 6 Education, n.d.). With the recent constitutional change to the legal status of Métis, it remains to be seen how Canada will proceed with reconciling Métis-Crown relations.
[7] Native and the derivative, non-Native are colloquial terms used most frequently in my community, for that reason, I employ the term within the narratives of my memory.

In the absence of any developed Treaty curriculum in school, I storied my understanding of the history of my community through these visual, dialogical and symbolic representations of relationships—which were further influenced by long-standing forms of overt and covert stereotyping, racism and discrimination of Indigenous peoples. The Treaties, who was considered 'Treaty' and colonial mentalities mixed together to form a complex space where identity, culture, and race squared off against each other. Growing up in this place of rich Treaty history, my knowledge and understanding of the Treaties, the colonial history of the area, and the residential school a few kilometers from my house, were grossly neglected. I am now left with a profound source of provocation and place for reflection.

Terra Australis Incognita[8] - Colonialism Revealed

In June of 2001, at the age of 18, I travelled to Australia to work as a ski instructor in the Blue Mountain range of the state of New South Wales. Travelling to Australia was a big adventure for a small town prairie girl who up until that time had imagined Australia as a mythological land of equally mythical creatures known as koalas, wombats and possums. The only possums I knew were the possum pie that Fred Flintstone ate on the noon television. Turns out those things are real.

Australia was starkly different from Canada in many ways—girls wore skimpy bikinis to the beach (I had brought my trusty lake-swimming one-piece), people spoke in rhyming slang (a cell phone was an *Al Capone*, and if you needed to make a call you had to *get on the dog & bone*), even McDonald's burgers came topped with carrot and beetroot. Yet gone unnoticed was how Australia was also very comfortable for me. And by that, I mean Australia was comfortably white. Well mostly white. Surprisingly, what I quickly came to observe walking around one coastal New South Wales town and listening to local conversations was that Australia had its own Native peoples. These Native people didn't look like the Native people I grew up with but something was eerily similar about their socio-economic situation. Where they lived in town and how white Australians talked about them appeared virtually synonymous with my own observations, understandings and experiences growing up alongside Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan. I witnessed Indigenous peoples in Australia referred derogatively as abos, black fellas, Aborigines and from time to time, the more politically correct name, Koori.[9] Indigenous peoples were pictured in newspapers and on the news in overwhelmingly negative contexts, and mostly occupied the margins of municipalities in segregated low-income housing projects. Further discourse focused on the perceived direness of their socio-economic conditions including welfare dependency, unemployment, poverty, and substance abuse. These issues were largely insinuated by mainstream Australian society as a result of cultural deficiencies, heard in rhetoric such as "If only they would get a job" or "Need to get off the grog."[10] All of this was troubling to me for the very fact that it was so familiar. It felt like I was looking into a mirror and reflecting back was my hometown. But how could something be so recognizable in a land that was so distant from where I came from? How is it that these seemingly diverse contexts could be so similar?

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[8] The Latin term *Terra Australis Incognita*, used widely during the Renaissance era, is roughly translated as the Unknown (Incognita) Southern (Australis) Land (Terra).

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[9] Koori is the regionally preferred and self-described name of the Indigenous peoples of New South Wales, although further local names exist. Koori means 'people' in the Awabakal language (Broome, 2008).

[10] Grog is the most widely used Australian slang for alcohol.

Several months later, when the winter season was finished, I found myself travelling with a friend across South Australia in a 1972 Volkswagen Kombi van. It was here that I would arrive in a place that would challenge the unexamined biases I was carrying and mark a first transformation of my perspectives on the world. Through a friend of a friend, we had been invited to camp and stay on some land in a place called Hindmarsh Island, *Kumerangk* in the Indigenous Ngarrindgeri language. Kumerangk was part of the traditional lands of the Ngarrindgeri peoples of the lower Murray River area. We had been welcomed by a man named Paul, who I would come to understand was the caretaker of the only Ngarrindgeri land on the island that had not been sold by the Australian government into private ownership and marina development.

I will admit that at first, Paul and I did not hit it off, at least in my mind. When we arrived, there were a few other campers hanging around that evening, we shared some drinks and I was fairly quiet around the campfire, taking in the strangeness of the new. Paul was not quiet. I recall him being loud, intoxicated, stumbling and swearing, and at a foreboding 6’ 3” I was eager to steer clear of his way. The next day Paul continued on, remaining relatively intoxicated and disruptive throughout the day and by the evening, I had made up my mind that I wasn’t enjoying myself so much. I recall distinctly thinking with a bit of disappointment, “well, there’s another drunk Native.”

The next day, my friend and I were wandering around the pine-forested land. There were plenty of creatures milling about, blue-tongued lizards, Australian magpies and an emu farm that skirted the property. I noticed that Paul was rather busy, tidying up and chopping wood and fussing about. He asked if we wanted to go for a ride into town, Goolwa, on the mainland. We agreed and thus began a journey of getting to know Paul and his community over the course of a 3-week stay. In that time, Paul graciously and openly shared with us the struggles of the Ngarrindgeri people on the Murray River resulting from more than 170 years of colonization, injustice, racism and discrimination and their ongoing efforts to resist and retain rights to their traditional lands. Paul introduced us to some of his family members and friends who further shared their own concerns with the present state of political affairs. People were angry, exhausted, and finding it hard to muster strength and hope within a legislated system that functioned to keep them down. I was feeling angry within all this new knowledge too. In that short space of time, I had been welcomed into a community and that community was clearly suffering injustices by the Australian state. I felt like my eyes were being consciously opened where previously they hadn't really been seeing at all.

We were sitting one afternoon in the warmth of the sun peaking down through the pines and Paul was talking to us about some of the plants and medicines on the island. I remember sitting there looking at Paul, this mysterious Indigenous man carrying what occurred to me as an immense amount of wisdom and experience of life. My friend and I had taken to seeing him as our teacher in those weeks we had been staying on Kumerangk. It was at this moment that an ugly thought came to mind, "Well, there's another drunk Native." The hair on my arms stood up and a wave of nausea passed through my body. In that instant, I recalled that I had judged Paul harshly and unfairly. I felt immediately ashamed. I looked at Paul. Did he know what I had thought? I got up from where we were sitting and walked up the road alone. A sinking feeling told me I was being taught a much-needed lesson in life. Still, in my shame, I tucked that experience away, reserving it for my own private rumination until now.

Reflecting on this experience in its entirety, I was left with an indelible imprint on my being. I had been gifted this knowledge and history of a people thousands of miles from my homeland and it was forcing me to see the knowledge and history of my own birth place differently. The struggles of divergent Indigenous peoples—the Ngarrindgeri people, the Gumbainggir people of that coastal New South Wales town, the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux and Métis people of my own community juxtaposed sharply against my own privilege and ignorance. It was a beginning for me, an exposition of the biases, prejudices and privileges that I carried. Paul had opened to me a horizon of understanding that existed in the world that I had been unaware of. To be sure, these revelations did not immediately present themselves and certainly, I had yet to understand the term 'colonization,' but travelling home, I felt different. Things were not the way I had assumed them to be.

Myself as Treaty Person

In the fall of 2012, many moons from those young and impressionable years of Australia, I had finished a bachelor's degree in Development Studies at the University of Calgary, focusing on the colonial history of Canada. I had worked my way into the teaching profession and was itching to do 'something' that would bring meaning to my life. At this time, the Idle No More movement[11] had taken hold across the country. Indigenous peoples, with the support of Indigenous global communities worldwide, were protesting against numerous legislative changes being made by Canadian government officials, demanding that their voices be heard and that histories of legislative abuses against Indigenous peoples and Treaty rights be addressed. In solidarity, recognition and to further my knowledge, I attended an Idle No More teach-in at the University of Calgary. Towards the end of the session, one of the Indigenous panelists shared with the audience that what was coming out of the Idle No More movement needed to matter to everyone, to all Canadians, because after all, "we are all Treaty people" (personal communication, University of Alberta, November 2012). It sounds cliché to say that the statement *we are all Treaty people* struck a chord with me, both immediately and profoundly. Not only was it a sort of Newton's apple falling from the tree and hitting me on the head moment—What?! *I* am a Treaty person?—it also felt like a permission to explore had been granted. I had grown up with the idea that being 'Treaty' meant being 'Native' and I hadn't given much thought to disrupting that idea. But now, the knowledge that I had gained was telling me that perhaps that notion was misguided. Sitting in that space, it was as if an ancestor had just poked me gently on the shoulder, whispering in my ear, *"don't you remember?"*

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[11] Founded in 2012, Idle No More is an ongoing grassroots resistance movement among First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Turtle Island and allied Canadian supporters. Through a series of teach-ins, rallies and protests, the movement has notably fought against legislative abuses of Indigenous Treaty rights, parliamentary bills that seek to erode Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protections (Idle No More, n.d.).

Arriving at the Inquiry

What I declare is necessarily and always full of people, territory, history, and of myself.

Moules, 2002, p. 2

In 2013, I was teaching English as a Second Language through a federal government curriculum known as LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers). My students were recent immigrants and refugees and longer-term permanent residents having arrived from countries such as China, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Burkina Faso and Eritrea. They were keen students' eager to advance their English language skills and learn the ins and outs of settling in Canada, especially those Canadian winters! A portion of our curricular mandate included teaching *about* Aboriginal peoples of Canada (Donald, 2009a, p. 29). In the beginning months of my teaching appointment, I began inquiring with my colleagues regarding their lesson planning around this particular subject. The responses I received from Canadian born teachers ranged broadly around the explanations that there was not enough time in the calendar year for that particular unit, that it wasn't deemed a subject their students needed most and importantly, that there were no resources to draw upon. My internationally-born colleagues were quite open and frank about the fact that they knew nothing about Aboriginal[12] peoples in Canada. And it is true that although the curriculum guide included Aboriginal peoples as a mandated topic to cover at some point in the school year, minimal resources had been provided for teachers to work with. What I did find was sparse and almost exclusively used the past tense to describe how a people lived, presumptuously perhaps "before they became civilized" (Donald, 2009a, p. 24) or alternatively, before they became extinct.

The level that I was teaching at that time was referred to as Canadian Language Benchmark 3 (CLB 3). The students were beginner learners of English, answering most questions with short answers, experiencing difficulty with listening comprehension and speaking and needing a lot of repetition of instructions. I wanted to ascertain some sort of baseline knowledge so I decided to begin with what they could tell me about what they knew about Aboriginal peoples. I was intrigued to find out that although their language skills were limited, they were still able to articulate many of their ideas.

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[12] The term Aboriginal is a legal and constitutional term employed by the Canadian state that recognizes and affirms the distinct rights of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. It is also a term used widely by people of Aboriginal descent who self-identify as such. Within education in Alberta, including curricular documents, the term 'Aboriginal' is almost exclusively used and thus, when conversing about Alberta Education's new curriculum directions the term Aboriginal is mainly employed within this study. Elsewhere, within quotes and paraphrasing, the original discourse of the author is retained.

To begin with, they did not know or understand the term Aboriginal but through a lot of back and forth dialogue, the term Indian was offered by one student and clarity rippled through the classroom. Several students referenced the phrase "cowboys and Indians." In addition, they did not have any prior knowledge or understanding of the terms Indigenous, First Nations, Métis or Inuit. From there, they went on to tell me, in a sort of collective way, with each student nodding approval of another's answer, four key beliefs; Indians in Canada do not work, they do not pay taxes, they drink alcohol and they get their houses for free (personal communication, LINC program, Calgary, September, 2013). I wasn't dramatically shocked by what they said, since I was well familiar with these unwaveringly common and stereotypical colonial narratives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. More so, I was mystified that such stereotypes had worked their way into the minds of my newcomer students so quickly or that they had arrived in Canada with these notions already in place.

I reflect on this experience for two reasons. At this time of teaching, I was aware of Alberta Education's policy frameworks that were asking public school teachers across the province to engage with Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom (Alberta Education, 2012). In the context of my own educational space, language teachers were expected to also be engaging with Aboriginal perspectives in some capacity. The problem that was evident was that educators were not heeding this call and coincidently, students were not gaining any understanding. My previous experiences attending post-secondary education did not indicate that higher education professors were taking up the policy in any significant way. Most troubling however, was that I found myself continually butting up against racist and discriminatory rhetoric regarding Aboriginal peoples in conversation with friends, family and education colleagues. This demonstrated to me a continued misrecognition of the issues, and an ongoing ignorance and misunderstanding with respect to Canada's colonial history.

Additionally, what I found to be worrisome were the kinds of relationships that were being forwarded in Canadian classrooms, teacher lounges and educational spaces that reiterated a colonial mentality towards Aboriginal peoples. I was keenly aware that in my own particular education context, my students as newcomers account for a large portion (2/3's) of Canada's population (Edisa, 2017) and this is only increasing. Alongside this, according to Statistics Canada census in 2006 and 2011, the Aboriginal population is the fastest-growing population segment in Canada. Importantly, Aboriginal peoples are also on the move, settling in urban centres at increasing rates (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada[13], 2010a). That Indigenous and newcomer peoples will meet and work alongside each other in the workforce if not now, in our not too distant future, is certain. But what will be the continued outcomes of peoples who do not understand each other nor have been given the opportunity to relate to each other in meaningful ways?

To be sure, policy shifts were happening all around, spaces were being opened up to acknowledge, engage and learn from Indigenous wisdom traditions. It is from within the spirit of these addressments that I eventually found myself entering into graduate studies. Part of me wanted to investigate where I situated myself in all of this work, these calls for engagement and how I could go about doing my work better. Importantly, I recognize now that a significant part was trying to find an identity footing in the world of decolonizing education, and how I might fit working within Indigenous-grounded educational contexts as a non-Indigenous Canadian educator. Further quandaries arose for me as I advanced my knowledge: What did it mean to be a colonizer? How did it affect my sense of self-worth? Where were all the other Canadian allies eager to embrace this truth together? Taking up the colonial history of Canada is "deeply rooted in issues of identity, culture, and the stories that Canadian students have been told in school for many generations" (Donald, 2010, p. 2). You might say I came to graduate school to find something about the education world *out there* but what has ensued has been a far more personal journey to finding out things *from within*.

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[13] Henceforth in the document abbreviated as INAC.

Coming to the Question

This research study did not begin as a focus on Treaties and Treaty relationships. As an educator, I began with a more global concern for strengthening Indigenous-Canadian relations through the classroom. With this concern, I wanted to investigate how educators might go about preparing themselves to engage with Aboriginal perspectives in classrooms in meaningful ways. In using the term meaningful, I suggest in ways that do not reinforce or replicate colonial mentalities set deeply in the marginalization and misrecognition of Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems nor which seek to maintain a separation and division between Indigenous peoples and Canadians in this land that we share. By meaningful, I follow the guidance of Donald (2009a, 2012) in searching for ways to relate to one another along ethical lines. Donald conceptualizes this guiding principle as ‘ethical relationality,’ an “ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (Donald, 2012, p. 45). Because these conceptualizations place focus on relationships at their core, I felt that I was continually being guided in the direction of the Treaties, to the place where foundational relationships of this nation were established. At the very least, Treaties were the place I needed to begin.

Committing to this place of origin, I found myself navigating the relationships between coinciding curricular problems; the neglect of Treaty education in curriculum, schooling and pedagogical practices in Alberta and its connection to the curricular tensions arising from Alberta Education’s policy mandates that ask teachers to engage with Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum (Alberta Education, 2012). What has become evident is that Treaty education inherently involves an engagement with Aboriginal perspectives, histories, and experiences in Canada. These knowledges have the effect of unsettling the origin stories that Canadian educators have grown up with (Donald, 2012). They can become disruptions to common-place stories and as disruptions, have the equal potential in becoming *barriers to* or *catalysts for* change. As Donald (2011) forwards, how we think about [Indigenous-Canadian] relationships has a distinctive bearing on what we do in the classroom. Put in the context of this study, how educators think about the Treaty relationships influences the ways in which they address Aboriginal perspectives in their classroom.

In consideration of these intellections, the research question guiding this work asks: *What is the significance of Treaty understandings in facilitating shifts in the ways* *educators address Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum?* This study draws prominently from Indigenous oral interpretations of the numbered Treaties, as well as the Crown Treaty commissioner intentions and Treaty academic scholarship as points of focus for current Treaty understandings. These understandings are often referred to as the 'spirit and intent' of Treaties. Secondary explorations of the research focus on the ways in which we might foster a way to live together guided by the concepts of ethical relationality (Donald, 2012) and Treaty sensibilities (Donald, 2014). As Tupper (2012) notes, when

> [e]mbedded in treaty education, ethical relationality has the potential to help students think more deeply about the past, present and future of Canada, and to help teachers to think deeply about the implications of their pedagogical choices and the content they teach. (p. 148)

The concept of Treaty sensibilities is something taken up in the participant research component where we consider the personal and professional responsibilities that emerge when honouring the Treaty teachings.

In the spirit of interpretive work, the strategy of inquiry chosen to guide these research processes was informed by a hermeneutic orientation. The rationale for engaging with philosophical hermeneutics was the opportunity to open up a space to converse about the historical Treaties as a living conversation amongst educators that heretofore, at least in Alberta, had not been conversed upon as if they were alive and present in our own educational space and time.[14] Chambers (2003) explains hermeneutics as simply addressing the nature of understanding itself, through language and discourse, "as well as its historicity—how any understanding is made possible by attending to the historical context and how that context may have shaped language, events, institutions, practices, habits, and understanding" (p. 227). When we examine the historical context of the numbered Treaty deliberations, many barriers to understanding arise: misunderstandings between and across nations, language families, worldviews and perspectives. Not to mention how all of this has been interpreted by Canadians since those times. A hermeneutic process of interpretation becomes vital where challenges, neglect and ambiguity are present.

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[14] This statement acknowledges that First Nations peoples in Canada who deliberated upon Treaty hold the Treaty stories as a major part of their collective history and have continued to engage with and recollect the Treaties as a living conversation since the time of their creation (e.g.) Cardinal & Hildebrandt (2000); Craft

Importantly, a hermeneutic orientation informs an underlying current running through this study: the researcher's own investigation of what it means to be a Treaty person. Drawing prominently upon Smith's (1983) work, it is my contention that a claim to understanding Treaties cannot be divorced from a showing of what it means to live with them (p. 74). Smith writes

> What one is researching is part of the same world in which one lives as researcher. It might be said that hermeneutic research involves a form of reconciliation in which researcher and subject are bound together in a common search for common understanding. (p. 75)

As I explore the significance of Treaty understandings within this study, these hermeneutic considerations warrant that I attend to and be mindful of my own shifts in understanding. I attempt to do so through the reflective practice of narrative writing, itself an aligned hermeneutic process.

(2013); Johnson (2007); LeRat (2005); McLeod (1999); Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Hildebrandt, Carter & First Rider (1996).

Finally, what inspired me to look at the Treaties through a hermeneutic lens was a sense that through (re)interpretation of existing tension points, there lives a potential for Canadians to come to understand differently the history of what is now Canada through the locus of relationships. A further point of focus is to understand the present role of educators as being guided by Treaty relationships established for us not so long ago. This instigates a drawing of strength from the knowledge and struggles of the past (Kovach, 2013, p. 113). This requires that we return to the junctures and places where our horizons as a nation began by returning to the original relationships committed through Treaty in order to rebuild and renew relationships again in our own classrooms.

Chapter Two

Reviewing the Literature

This literature review spans several areas that are pertinent to this study of Treaties and Treaty relationships. Firstly, in consideration of the extensive gaps in Treaty knowledge and understandings in Canada, I present a numbered Treaty overview for the reader. Secondly, it is important to situate this study within existing Treaty education curriculum and research in Canada and to explore the issues that continue to arise out of those curricular spaces. Finally, a Treaty narrative is connected to the relationships between national narratives, curriculum and models of citizenry that influence the story of Treaties that exist in Canada today.

Setting a Numbered Treaty Context

The scope of this study focuses largely on aspects of numbered Treaties 4, 6, and 7. Although many of the numbered Treaties contained similar Treaty texts and provisions, they do vary in their content, context and the peoples involved in deliberation. To focus on all of the numbered Treaties would be too large of a scope for this research work. Thus, I have chosen to engage with aspects of Treaty 4, the territory in which my birth home is situated, Treaty 6, the study location of this research project and Treaty 7, my long-term place of residency. Further, engaging with Treaty's 6 and 7 maintain strong relevancy to this Treaty research within the context of Alberta.

Since the time of early contact, trade and partnerships between French and British traders and First Nations and Métis peoples across these plains, parkland and northern lands were established and well-maintained. Sustaining good trade negotiations over centuries required peace and trust-like relations in place. Following traditional

Indigenous protocols and practices, relations between Indigenous peoples and newcomers were premised on mutually respectful and beneficial relationships. However, diminishment of fur-bearing animals and the destruction of the buffalo resulted in the hampering of fur-trade commerce by the late 19th century. As a consequence, the parameters of this relationship would come to change. This late 19th century period is a critical juncture in the history of Canada where the story shifts from being one of friendship, trade and partnership through equitable relations to a story where the land and dominion over it takes precedence.

In 1867, the Dominion of Canada was founded as an autonomous domain of the British Empire; this was Canada's Confederation under the British North America Act. With this designation, new frontiers for settlement and resource exploitation were being sought, most significantly if newcomers were going to build a nation here. This vision included developing the agriculturally rich land of the prairies to encourage people to settle west and building a railroad from Ontario to the Pacific coast, essentially connecting "sea to sea" (Taylor, 1999b, p. 12). If this were to be successful, acquiring Rupert's Land through a land transfer to the Dominion of Canada would be necessary.

Under Royal Charter of the British Crown, Rupert's Land was established as a territory granted to the Hudson Bay Company[15] in 1670 for commercial fur trading enterprises (Taylor, 1999b, p. 10). The area covered an enormous land base including parts of what is today Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, northern Quebec and Labrador. The transfer was negotiated and concluded in London in 1870 without the consultation of First Nations and Métis people. This would later prove a formidable obstacle in the deliberation of several of the numbered Treaties.

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[15] Henceforth in the document referred to under the acronym HBC.

The numbered Treaties were not the first of their kind since early contact.[16] In fact, they were based upon almost two centuries of Treaty-making processes between Indigenous peoples and the British Crown across North America. Numerous “Peace and Friendship Treaties” were made between the Crown and the Mi’kmaq, the Maliseet, and the Passamaquoddy nations in parts of what is now eastern Canada between 1725 and 1779 (INAC, 2013c).

The most important precedent setting legal relationship that the British established was the 1763 Royal Proclamation. Under this law, King George III inaugurated a basis for the British sovereign to administer and govern in North America. The proclamation reads:

> And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to Our Interest and the Security of Our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom We are connected, and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds…
>
> And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever, who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described, or upon any other Lands, which, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said Indians as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements.

According to Beal (2007), this meant

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[16] Indigenous peoples across the land had their own long-standing traditions of Treaty-making well before European contact.

> The sovereign had to acquire Indian land titles before he could make legal land grants to his subjects. Any individual's land title had to come from the sovereign. This was formal, entrenched in the British and then the Canadian mind to at least Treaty Seven of 1877. (p. 113)

This proclamation became the constitutional basis for negotiating Treaties with Indigenous peoples, and continues to be found in section 25 of the Constitution Act of Canada. Prior to the numbered Treaty deliberations, the British negotiated the Upper Canada Treaties (1764 to 1862) and the Vancouver Island Treaties (1850 to 1854). These are often referred to as pre-Confederation Treaties.

Once Rupert's Land had been transferred to the Dominion of Canada in 1870, the newly appointed Canadian government relied on the history of British-Indigenous Treaty-making precedence in order to open up the prairies for settlement. According to Taylor (1999a),

> Ministers and government officials gave every indication that they intended to adhere to traditional practices as closely as possible. They believed that treaties faithfully observed had been responsible for a successful and peaceful relationship with the Indian people of Canada in contrast to the Indian wars in the United States. (p. 5)

As an autonomous-minded Dominion of Canada was yet to be established, the practices of Treaty-making continued to be regarded as a valuable tradition between differing nations.

On the Canadian prairies during this time, there was plenty coming to pass that made the establishment of Treaty relationships between the Crown and First Nations people desirable, if not urgent. News of the American "Indian Wars" was making its way across the border. The drastic reductions in fur-bearing animals and the decimation of the buffalo were causing wide-spread starvation for Indigenous peoples across the lands. Many communities were facing rampant smallpox epidemics resulting in the devastating loss of life. American traders and newcomer settlers were increasingly encroaching on First Nations territory and tribal lands without negotiation. Additionally, the onslaught of the whiskey trade was capturing many young men mixed up in the steadfast changes that had come to their ancestral homelands (Hildebrandt et al, 1996). First Nations leaders and their councils had a pressing interest in asserting their inherent rights to the land, counteracting the encroachment of settlers and American traders, and protecting the buffalo as a vital means for their survival as a people.

The Crown was also under pressure to acquire legal title to the land if settlement and the construction of the railroad were to be undertaken. J.A.N. Provencher, Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories, explained in 1873 the prevailing understanding for the Canadian government:

> The Indians of this Continent have always been considered, if not as proprietors, at least as occupants of the soil. It was always understood that they had rights as owners, and that the Crown would first have to extinguish those rights to afterwards assume full possession of the land. From this point of view there is a double right and a double interest which cannot be settled without the free consent of those interested. (as cited in Beal, 2007, p. 114)

Where earlier, Treaties were signed in the spirit of peace and friendship, now, as Price (1991) sums up, "the government regarded treaties with the Indian peoples as primarily land surrender agreements" (p. 8).

But peace was still regarded as a coinciding intention. Agreeing upon Treaties was necessary to quell American intrusion into Canadian territory and the perceived fear of alliances between First Nations tribes in Canada and tribes from the United States fleeing north across the Canadian border. Despite the effects of disease and the demise of the buffalo, First Nations people across the prairies remained a formidable population base with political power in hand and the opportunity to threaten development interests (W. Hildebrandt[17], personal communication, Chiniki Lecture Series, March, 2017). The Crown did not want to go to war in the Northwest and were considerably fearful of the prospects of going to war with First Nations tribes who still continued to outnumber newcomers. The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples underscores:

> The alternative to treaties was to take the treaty nations' territory by force, an option that was certainly used elsewhere in the Americas. The avoidance of war between Aboriginal nations and the French and British in what is now Canada was a direct consequence of the treaties and the relationships created by them. (p. 19)

Present at each of the Treaty deliberations were First Nations communities and their leaders interested in making or discussing Treaty at that time, and who were available to travel the distance to the designated Treaty gathering site. British Crown representatives, namely the government Minister of the Interior, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest Territories and an appointed Treaty commissioner arrived under escort of militia (Morris, 1971, p. 78) along with a few HBC factors eager to engage in commerce. Translators, mainly Métis men, played an important role in providing interpretation between peoples of differing languages. In most cases, missionaries, living and working in the area, and members of the Northwest Mounted Police (as in Treaty 7) were also present. The Treaty commissioners arrived at the gatherings with a written Treaty document in hand that articulated the terms and agreements of the Treaties. The Crown, prior to deliberations, had written the contents based on precedence from the preceding Treaty deliberations. It was intended that the leaders of those committing to Treaty would sign the document upon conclusion of negotiations.

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[17] Walter Hildebrandt is a Canadian poet and historian, focusing his work on the Western prairies and consulting extensively on the numbered Treaties. Hildebrandt co-authored the books: The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7 (1996) with Carter & First Rider, and Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan (2000) with Cardinal. Hildebrandt was a guest speaker at the Chiniki Lecture Series in Banff, AB., in March, 2017.

Each of the numbered Treaties included further provisions and obligations that were unique to each deliberation. As far as what items were included in each of the numbered Treaties, Taylor (1999a) considers the inclusions and provisions for such items as reserves, annuities, hunting and fishing rights, agricultural implements, education, clothing, horses and other supplies to be a result of "traditional Indian policy and practice" (p. 5). Although each Treaty was built upon the previously concluded Treaties, many differences of items and contents exist. This exemplifies the distinct goals and contexts of each of the deliberating parties, and further, the exceptional negotiation skills of First Nations leaders. As Taylor (1999a) contends, "a good case can be made that the Indians, and not the government, were responsible for introducing most of the important treaty terms" (p. 5). First Nations leaders pushed firmly for resources that would enable them to transition to new ways of life while continuing their right to self-determination and livelihood. These Treaty provisions were then attached to the pre-written Treaty document.

Most of the material inclusions were recorded in this manner however the Crown, as primary author, recorded the Treaty deliberations from their perspective. In this, they neglected to record First Nations interpretations of the Treaty agreements including the particular character of the Treaty relationship—the spiritual guidance, intentions and obligations that constituted the foundation of the Treaties. This is often referred to as the 'spirit and intent' of the Treaties and largely based upon Indigenous oral interpretations. It is these important omissions that represent a major source of disparity in understanding between Indigenous peoples and Canadians today. It is this spirit and intent of the Treaty negotiations that affords major conceptual guidance to this study, and which is prominently engaged with in Chapter Three.

Beginning in 1871 and concluding in 1877, Treaties 1 though 7 were negotiated between First Nations people and representatives of the Crown.[18] Treaties 8 through 11 were deliberated between 1899 and 1921. The Treaty territories span what are now Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and parts of British Columbia, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Treaty 4 was deliberated between the Crown and Cree, Saulteaux and Nakota Sioux peoples at Fort Qu' Appelle in September of 1874, covering what is now southern Saskatchewan. Treaty 6 was deliberated between the Crown and Plains and Woods Cree, Saulteaux, Stoney Nakoda and Dene peoples at Fort Carlton in August and Fort Pitt in September of 1876, covering what is now central Alberta. Treaty 7 was deliberated between the Crown and the Blackfoot Confederacy consisting of the Siksika,

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[18] According to Miller (2009), although Canada was now considered the Dominion of Canada, an autonomous entity from the British Crown, Treaty negotiators chose to exploit "the symbolism of their office. Although they all were appointed by and answerable to the federal government, they portrayed themselves as representatives of Queen Victoria and insisted throughout that the treaties were being made with the Crown" (p. 157). Treaty text documents affirm that the Treaties were being deliberated between the Crown and First Nations people.

Kainai, and Piikani nations, the Tsuu T'ina nation and the Stoney Nakoda nation at Blackfoot Crossing in September of 1877, covering what is now southern Alberta.

The Treaties were negotiated to last *as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers flow.*[19] They were intended as foundational and sacred agreements between diverse peoples that would be honoured and fulfilled for all of time. But change on an unimaginable scale was coming to these prairie lands in the form of increased settler populations and the construction of the railroad. From 1881 to 1885, the settler population base on the prairies increased from 5958 to 28,192 (Beal, 2007, p. 140). In 1881, the Indigenous population numbered 25,631, about 80% of the population (p. 140). By 1885, their numbers had dropped to 20,170, constituting only about 42% of the population at that time (p. 140). This massive influx of settlers solidified a change in relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown. No longer shy of numbers, the Dominion of Canada began on a course of neglecting and contravening their obligations to the Treaty agreements that would continue on to this present day.

One of the most important violations came in the form of the 1876 Indian Act that was developed during the numbered Treaty negotiations without the knowledge of Indigenous peoples. This Act went contrary to everything that the Treaties had intended for Indigenous-Canadian relations, including most importantly, Indigenous peoples' rights to sovereignty and self-determination. The Indian Act is a national policy which is constitutionally recognized, and clarifies beyond the Treaties, the Canadian federal government's relationship with "Indians" including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. This Act defines who is and is not considered "Indian" before the law.

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[19] A widely-used slogan and metaphor representing the longevity of the numbered Treaties as forever. Recorded to have been used by Treaty Commissioner Alexander Morris in his declaration of intentions to Indigenous leaders (e.g.) Morris, 1971, p. 202.

Historically, it set out processes for enfranchisement whereby Indians could renounce their culture, language and beliefs and become full Canadian citizens. Through the Indian Act, the Crown holds reserve lands in trust and dictates how reserves and bands can operate.

The most destructive and consequential product of the Indian Act was the legislated establishment of mandated education for Indigenous children in the form of residential schools. Children were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and placed in church-run schools, taking place all cross what is now Canada for over 160 years. Contrary to the public schooling that Canadian children were afforded, these schools were the sites of cultural and linguistic eradication, gross neglect, sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse and, too often, death. Recently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has declared Indian Residential Schools as the cultural genocide of a people (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015c).

The overarching goal of the Indian Act was the eradication of the Indian through assimilation into the new Canadian nation-state. In 1887, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald acknowledged that "The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change" (Joseph, 2016, n.p.). The Act touches on every facet of Indigenous rights, identity, and self-determination, and ushered in an era of paternalism, discrimination and racism, and the enforcement of Euro-Canadian standards of civilization that continues today.

Despite the colonial policies and legislations of the Indian Act, the numbered Treaties continue to stand as legally binding agreements in perpetuity. They remain an important and foundational basis for sovereignty in this place now known as Canada. In 1977, the hundredth anniversary of the signing of Treaty 7, a commemoration was held as part of the Western Canadian Studies Conference in Calgary. This was an opportunity to consider the past century of Indigenous-Canadian relations and to question what the next century would look like (Snow, 1977). Treaty 7 was honoured through ceremony and re-enacted at Blackfoot Crossing with Prince Charles in attendance representing the Crown. This commemoration signified a renewal and responsibility to the Treaty agreements and to a strengthening of relationships between Indigenous peoples and Albertans. Unfortunately, there hasn't been a celebration of its kind in Alberta since then. Much work needs to be done to honour the Treaties in the ways that they were intended for Indigenous peoples and Canadians.

Treaty Education in Canada

The prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba share a common trait in which the entirety of lands within these provincial jurisdictions find themselves situated within Treaty negotiated territory through the processes of the numbered Treaty agreements. Saskatchewan has taken the lead on Treaty education initiatives by establishing the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC)[20] in 1989 to facilitate a common understanding on the numbered Treaties within Saskatchewan between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the Government of Canada (OTC, 2017). Curricular work began in 2002 with the OTC disseminating a Treaty Resource Kit to public and on-reserve schools across the province as a growing response to the lack of knowledge of historical and present-day understandings of the Treaties by the Saskatchewan populace. This kit contains three important resources that provide extensive interpretive understandings of the numbered Treaties; *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized As Nations* (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000); *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Ray, Miller & Tough, 2000); and *The Statement of Treaty Issues: Treaties as a Bridge to the Future* (OTC, 1998). The OTC eventually worked to mandate Treaty Education for K-12 students in Saskatchewan in 2008, the first and only province to do so in Canada and broadened their curricular and resource development with the Treaty Essential Learnings reference guide (OTC, 2008). This guide outlines explicitly what educators are expected to be teaching in their classrooms, including foundational knowledge and understanding of Treaties and Treaty relationships, historical and contemporary contexts, and primary source documents revealing First Nations' worldviews, perspectives and stories of the Treaties (OTC, 2008). Furthermore, in collaboration with the OTC, province-wide professional development workshops were developed that continue to take place regularly across the province today. In this regard, Saskatchewan has been a leader of Treaty education in Canada.

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[20] Henceforth in the document referred to under the acronym OTC.

In 2003, Manitoba established the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) (INAC, 2011), similar to the OTC in Saskatchewan. However, Manitoba only began to develop K-12 public education programming through the Treaty Education Initiative in 2011. This programming began with a pilot project focusing on Grades 5 and 6 and has since been rolled out province-wide (TRCM, 2017). Treaty education is not mandated in Manitoba and teacher guides and resources are intended to complement the existing Manitoba Social Studies curriculum.

Ontario has not established a Treaty Commission like Saskatchewan and Manitoba. However, in 2007, the Government of Ontario's Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry "recommended that provincial and First Nation governments should establish a permanent, independent, and impartial agency called the Treaty Commission of Ontario to facilitate and oversee the settling of land and Treaty claims in Ontario (Chiefs of Ontario, n.d.). Presently, it is still in the recommendation phase. The majority of Treaty education initiatives in Ontario are being developed by the Anishinabek Nation's Union of Ontario Indians incorporated in 1949 (Union of Ontario Indians, 2016). These resources include *We Are All Treaty People: Teacher's Kit*, the teacher's guide *Gdoo-Sastamookii Mi: Understanding Our Nation to Nation Relationship*, and *Treaties Matter: Understanding Ipperwash* (Union of Ontario Indians, 2016). The Ontario Ministry of Education is partnering with organizations such as the Union of Ontario Indians to include such materials within Ontario curriculum but has not engaged formidably in creating their own Treaty curriculum apart from the *First Nation Treaty Education in Ontario* Power Point presentation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011).

In Alberta, there do not exist any provincial mandates for Treaty education nor are there any government initiatives on the horizon to establish a Treaty Commission. To date, there has been minimal development of Treaty education curriculum. In this way, Treaty education might be considered a kind of 'null curriculum' (Eisner, 1979) – that which schools do not teach in Alberta (Flinders, Noddings & Thornton, 1986, p. 34). Paying attention to the null curriculum is not just about its literal absence within educational spaces, but curricular and pedagogically, what that absence has to say about what knowledge is considered of most worth and who gets to decide. Consequently, the null curriculum interacts with what *is* present via what is *not* present (Dodds, 1985, p. 93, emphasis in original).

According to Hildebrandt (2017), around the time of the 1977 commemoration of Treaty 7, there was an ongoing effort to incorporate Treaty education into Alberta provincial curricular mandates and to promote Treaty 7 as an important historical agreement that maintained its relevancy in the present. Unfortunately, shifting political tides and funding cuts to education dashed any hopes for the development of Treaty education in Alberta. Within this mindset, Treaties were regarded as irrelevant and lacking worth. Importantly, the absence of Treaty education as a kind of null curriculum systematically produces consequences of ill-effect (Kridel, 2010, p. 613). Omissions and restrictions of particular subjects, programs, and activities inform teachers and students of the value placed upon that knowledge while simultaneously limiting the expansion of their perspectives vis-à-vis what that subject might have to offer. As Eisner (1979) writes, “What students cannot consider, what they don’t know, processes they are unable to use, have consequences for the kinds of lives they lead” (p. 88). The neglect of Treaty teachings has had far reaching outcomes in Alberta and Canada at large. Its absence has resulted in an enormous gap in understanding and knowledge of the Treaties in Alberta as this study indicates. But, as the null curriculum subtly instructs, this absence does not necessarily indicate that teachers and students do not have anything to say about Treaties. Treaties remain present through the processes of their exclusion. Accordingly, and attended to further along in this chapter, is the assertion that a Treaty narrative exists within the consciousness of the Canadian populace which aligns with and substantiates a Canadian national narrative predicated on privileging the settler on the landscape. This

Canadian national narrative could be considered a vestige of both an explicit and an implicit national curriculum agenda that has a direct relationship to Treaty narratives via their omission.

Teaching Treaties in Saskatchewan

Research focusing on Treaty education in Canada remains within the context of Saskatchewan. Considering Saskatchewan has had the most experience implementing and engaging with Treaty teachings, it is important to explore how these mandates have been received by educators and students and to what extent knowledge and understandings of Treaties have increased across the province. Both Tupper and Cappello have published extensively in the area of Treaty education, within the contexts of elementary, secondary, preservice and in-service education spaces. I engage prominently with their research throughout this section to highlight understandings and insights stemming from their work.

Tupper and Cappello (2008) conducted research with secondary school students in Saskatchewan, investigating what students, across school districts, grade levels and subject areas, knew about Treaties and the relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations people in their province. Their results revealed that half of the 168 student respondents "did not know what a treaty was or misunderstood what a treaty was" and "60% of students did not know how treaties affected them, their families, friends and neighbours" (p. 565). Their findings eventually led both researchers to assert the following concern:

> in a province where the land was entirely ceded through treaties, there is little historical or contemporary understanding of treaties and by extension little

> understanding by these students of the colonial legacies that continue to shape the province of Saskatchewan. Further, we would argue that based on the survey results, non-Aboriginal students do not have a sense of how their own economic and social privileges can be connected to, and produced through, treaties. (p. 566)

Tupper and Cappello's findings coincide with the OTC's 2008 mandate for educators to teach Treaties in their classroom. Thus, we might consider their results to be representative of a Treaty baseline knowledge in Saskatchewan in 2008.

Three years after the OTC's Treaty education mandate was implemented, Tupper (2011) conducted research with preservice teacher candidates at the University of Regina. The data results coincided with Tupper and Cappello's (2008) research with secondary students. Of 368 participants, 64% cited limited or no experience with treaty education, this after a decade of the OTC supporting teachers with the implementation of treaty education (Tupper, 2011, p. 43). Tupper's (2012) conversations with the same demographic confirmed that very few students could articulate the importance of treaty relationships and did not consider themselves treaty people (p. 146). This data took place over several years with different educational audiences, revealing that "despite the efforts of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner over the last two decades, and the provincial mandate for treaty education, preservice teachers' knowledge and understandings of treaties and the treaty relationship is distressingly limited" (Tupper, 2011, p. 40). It is worthwhile to examine what sources influence this ongoing gap in understanding within the context of Saskatchewan.

Kovach's (2013) research explores the inadequacies within educational institutions in Saskatchewan that seek to take up Treaties as a "thing" (p. 111). This curricular and pedagogical approach sees Treaties as an event of the historical past and thus diminishes the importance of Treaties in the lives of Canadians today. Regarding the Treaties as an anachronistic concept contributes to the pedagogical imperative to teach *about* Treaties in Saskatchewan. As one of Kovach's participants remark "Teach about the treaties right? You can have a kit and the problem with that entire thing is you do the kit and then you forget it for the rest of the year" (Kovach, 2013, p. 119). Here, Treaty is being taken up as a subject (noun) rather than as a process (verb) whereby actions like 'engaging with' and 'honouring' become the focus. Kovach contends that engaging with Treaties through a factual or informational lens misses the spirit and possibility of "teaching *from* and *through* an Indigenous and Treaty perspective" (p. 114). Further, teaching *about* Treaty speaks to a way of teaching that ascribes to the curriculum as it is planned (Aoki, 2005, p. 159) by curriculum developers. This strategy of teaching suppresses Treaty curriculum from moving beyond an informational space of learning to that of an interpretive and depth-learning space (Donald, 2014). Within these learning spaces, there exists a potential for teacher and student to engage in a dialogical exchange whereby the stories of Treaty are taken up as an ongoing process of (re)interpretation. Teaching *from* and *through* Treaty requires different pedagogical philosophies that perhaps are being largely missed within Treaty education in Saskatchewan.

In Tupper and Cappello's (2008) research, many student responses confirmed that despite not knowing much about Treaties, pre-conceived assumptions regarding the Treaties and their relationships to First Nations peoples existed. For example, many students "indicated that because of treaties, First Nations people do not have to pay taxes and/or enjoy free post-secondary education" but 73% of respondents were unaware of the ongoing economic benefits of the treaties to the people of Saskatchewan (p. 565). In response to a question regarding who benefits from Treaties in Tupper's (2011) research, a preservice teacher writes "First Nations people do I believe. They are the ones that have treaties and you are only able to get one if you are First Nations" (p. 45). Corroborating this student, another suggests,

> Of course there were originally more benefits for the newcomers, the tables have turned and now the Indigenous people are riding on the benefits. Not only that but taking advantage of the system by not having to pay for certain things (like University). (2011, p. 45)

Tupper and Cappello's research indicates that a Treaty narrative exists despite the lack of knowledge in schooling in Saskatchewan. The narratives embedded within these statements are fixated on the benefits afforded to First Nations because of the Treaty agreements while misrecognizing the Treaty relationship that exists between Indigenous peoples and Canadians.

The perspectives of the people from my home community of Fort Qu' Appelle in Treaty 4 territory show further connections with Tupper and Cappello's research findings. As I have previously mentioned, I recall understanding the Treaties as some sort of 'deal' between the Canadian government and First Nations people. Accordingly, a Treaty narrative did exist in my community even in the absence of Treaty curriculum in the 1980s and 1990s. Familiar rhetoric in the community also emphasized the benefits that First Nations people received every year as a result of this 'arrangement' with the government. In fact, each year around the time of the Treaty 4 celebrations in September, it was common to overhear townspeople in coffee shops discussing which band and Chief would be receiving a large sum of money that year. These fabricated community-stories highlight the entertainment value of Treaty (mis)understandings and the importance of the monetary value placed upon them. The Treaty narrative in my community echoed the sentiments offered by Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald, that the Treaties are about *some people getting things for free and others having to pay for it* (personal communication, University of Alberta, January 2016).

Recent conversations with two public school educators from Saskatchewan provide further illumination in this context. In the first conversation, my educator friend had come through teacher education in Saskatchewan at a time when the OTC was just gaining traction. Her education experiences did not include Treaty education or mandates to teach about Treaties in her classroom. Although she now seeks to fulfill the Treaty mandates to the best of her ability, she feels that her knowledge levels regarding the Treaties are underdeveloped. My friend had hoped to invite a newly graduated teacher into her classroom to speak about the Treaties and the work being done in teacher education programs. Unfortunately, in a recent conversation with one graduate, her hopes were dampened. The student offered only negative comments about Treaty education in Saskatchewan. The student had felt that the treaties *were shoved down their throats* and gave my friend the impression that some new teachers despised even the mention of Treaties (personal communication, March, 2017). In reviewing Tupper's (2011) research with preservice teachers at the University of Regina, I came across a strikingly similar quote from a participant:

> Honestly, I feel like Aboriginal education is shoved down our throats at every opportunity, but no one is ever clear on how to actually teach it. I know a lot about it, but I'm afraid to fail miserably when I teach it. (p. 47)

The incongruencies involved with such statements are significant for understanding the ways in which Treaty education is being received by some preservice teachers in teacher education programs in Saskatchewan. A perception of violence as it is related to the transmission of Aboriginal knowledge supports the idea that one is being (forcefully) taught a subject matter against their will. Further evident is the presence of ambiguity regarding how to teach someone else's knowledge within an educational environment where no one knows how to teach 'it.' Additionally, there appears a tacit amount of anxiety created by the perception that there is a correct way to teach Aboriginal and Treaty education and, accordingly, a fear of failure arises because of that discernment. It is doubtful that any of these outcomes could lead to meaningful engagement with Treaty teachings and Treaty wisdom.

A second conversation with another Saskatchewan educator revealed further noteworthy considerations. This educator had been engaged with Treaty education over the past decade in Saskatchewan through the Treaty 4 Education Alliance (T4EA), an alliance of Treaty 4 First Nation schools, school boards, local communities and educators focusing on a mandate to honour and fulfill First Nations Treaty rights to education in Saskatchewan. Through the alliance, this educator has engaged in much work regarding residential schools, participating in such professional development workshops as the blanket exercise[21] and ongoing workshops working with the OTC resources. Her opinion was that although much great work has been done and continues to be done, educators in

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[21] See Kairos Canada. (2015). The Blanket Exercise.

Saskatchewan are fatigued with the constant mandates to teach about the Treaties and the residential schools. Her remarks echoed the sentiment that people are tired of ‘it’ which suggests to this educator that something is missing from the curriculum (personal communication, April, 2017).

From the above research and conversations, it would appear that despite extensive curriculum supports and provincial mandates, notwithstanding alliances such as the T4EA and formidable public school involvement in Saskatchewan, difficulties continue to exist that prevent meaningful depth engagement with Treaty teachings and understandings. Treaty education in Saskatchewan is being received by some as ‘forceful,’ and emoting reactions that might be considered a barrier to meaningful engagement. New teachers appear concerned with the practicalities of bringing Treaty education into their classroom as someone else’s knowledge. In other words, Treaty education continues to be perceived as First Nations peoples’ histories and experiences rather than a story about Indigenous-Canadian relationships.

Tupper (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) situates these misunderstandings regarding Treaties and their subsequent ignorance within classroom spaces as being a product of the national and curricular stories we tell in Canada. She states that settler students,

> rather than understanding the history of European settlement as one of invasion of the land, made possible by the signing of the numbered treaties in the first place, students come to read the “foundational” story of Canada as the resilience and strength of the pioneer homesteader in the face of adversity (2011, p. 41).

A narrative based upon this resilience and strength of the pioneer can be found embedded, explicitly and implicitly, within curricular activities and Programs of Studies across Canada (Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Solomon & Daniel, 2007). The national stories that are presented interact with the stories that are not presented, highlighting the "educational significance of what is left unattended via schooling, of what is taught by omission, *in absentia*" (Kridel, 2010, p. 613). The educational significance found within this research indicates that a Treaty narrative exists in public memory that closely aligns with and authenticates the Canadian national narrative. This narrative, as Saul (2014) reiterates, sees

> White settler identities as hard working, industrious, courageous, and as embodying the pioneering spirit necessary to the early economic success of Canada. Rendered absent in these narratives of course is how the land came to be available for settlement in the first place. (as cited in Hildebrandt, Lewis, Kreuger, Naytowhow, Tupper, Couros & Montgomery, 2016, p. 18)

The major discordance at issue here is that in the absence of meaningful Treaty understandings, ongoing colonial mentalities set deeply in issues of identity, power, race and culture prevail. What is not taught interacts with what is taught. Programs of Study and current Treaty narratives continue to nurture the idea of the benevolent settler on the landscape. They produce and define Canadian identity, and reinforce white power and privilege in society, while marginalizing Indigenous identities, histories, and ways of knowing and being. The perpetuation of traditional activities (such as the singing of the national anthem), and their consequent modes of thinking about the world is passed on from teachers to students, whose worldviews are necessarily limited by not having more expansive and divergent opportunities in which to learn (Dodds, 1985, p. 95). These dynamics function to reinforce divisions between communities and peoples attempting to live together. In Saskatchewan, Treaty education has existed for over two decades but understandings regarding the Treaties are largely misguided and misrecognize the Treaty relationships that have been established. Points of contention are fueled precisely because the Treaty relationships are not being honoured as they were intended for Indigenous peoples and Canadians (D. Donald, personal communication, January 2016).

What are needed are understandings which would implicate Canadian educators within the stories of Treaty rather than being a story they remain outside of. Students and teachers are busy learning (or perhaps resistant to learning) *about* Treaty but it does not appear that there is provocation to consider Treaties in the contexts of people's lives as they are lived today. Coming to understand the roots of current Treaty narratives is necessary if we are to do better by Treaty education and work towards a renewal of the Treaties in the contexts of our lives as educators and Canadians today.

Understanding Current Treaty Narratives

Contemporary Canadian interpretations of the Treaties are largely derived from the written accounts of the Crown in the form of the Treaty texts. Placing these written accounts on 'official' government paper, writing them in the legalese of the century and presenting them in the formal traditions of the British Crown firmly planted a particular version of those events as the 'official' version of Treaties to the Canadian nation. Within these documents, the recursive employment of such legal terminology as cede, release, surrender, yield,[22] relinquish, and give up, have solidified a conception of the 'right' interpretation of the Treaty making process. Devoid of any metaphor or symbolism (McLeod, 1999, p. 72) and similarly written for all the numbered Treaties

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[22] Terminology used exclusively in all of the numbered Treaties written documents. See for example, INAC (2013a; 2013b). Elsewhere, the term 'surrender' is used in curriculum texts such as the Alberta Teachers' Association resource manual *Education is Our Buffalo*, 2006.

(with the insertion of the name of the signing Indigenous tribes), a portion of the official Treaty document reads (here of Treaty 6):

> The Plain and Wood Cree Tribes of Indians, and all the other Indians inhabiting the district hereinafter described and defined, do hereby cede, release, surrender and yield up to the Government of the Dominion of Canada for Her Majesty the Queen and Her successors forever, all their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever, to the lands included within the following limits… (INAC, 2013a)

This interpretation suggests indisputably that the Treaties signified lands surrendered and as Asch (2014) confers, "…for each of the numbered treaties, governments in Canada (and others) insist that Indigenous peoples consented to transfer all authority to the Crown, thereby leaving Settlers free to do as they please with their lands" (p. 76). This narrative has long become naturalized, unequivocally, in the creation story of Canada, serving well the interests of mainstream Canadians. Epp (2008) maintains:

> Imbued with that myth, Canadians can live more comfortably, forgetfully, with the dirty little secret that the treaties were a one-time land swindle than with the possibility that they might mean something in perpetuity. They do not want to know that aboriginal peoples had their own understandings of treaty-making as a form of sharing. (p. 133)

Over time, with the broad implication from the written Treaty text that all the lands here had been given up, there was never any reason to attend to understandings with regard to the Treaties that might suggest otherwise. The Treaty story of the nation at this point is a story about land surrender and if the land has been surrendered, why would there be a need to engage with a story that was seemingly finished? Certainly, you could not find any storied versions of Treaties that went against this interpretation within curriculum and schooling in Alberta, if you could find mention of Treaties at all. Thus, the Treaties have been largely left in the past as a one-time business deal as Epp (2008) has suggested. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) states:

> The view…that treaties are no more than outdated scraps of paper — has led many Canadians to consider that the specific obligations described in the treaty documents are trivial and can therefore be easily discharged. In this view, treaties are ancient and anachronistic documents with no relevance today. (p. 15)

I would suggest that this particular belief in Treaties as outdated pieces of paper constitutes the main camp of 'Canadian understandings' of the Treaties and reinforces the notion that Treaties are wholly irrelevant in the lives of Canadians today. In Tupper's (2011) research with preservice teachers, one student offered in response to the contemporary relevancy of Treaties, the following:

> It is relevant to Aboriginal people due to the fact that it teaches them of their heritage but I believe that it is quite unfair to force such education upon people of non-aboriginal decent [sic] who have no interest in such things such as myself. (p. 46)

Another student noted, "I do not feel they are of contemporary relevance in the least and are targeted to benefit First Nations people only. I feel they should be redone and brought up to date" (Tupper, 2011, p. 46). It is this irrelevancy of Treaties that works to justify the absence of Treaty education and understandings within public schooling in Alberta.

But these sentiments do not imply that all Canadians believe the narrative of a "one-time land swindle" (Epp, 2008, p. 133) or that this narrative is unproblematic. Here, I would suggest a second main belief exists for Canadians who may know a little bit of Treaty history based upon the written Treaty text. Here, understandings wrestle with the notion that the Treaties have been marred by unfulfilled obligations and broken promises. As Miller (2009) suggests:

> Once treaty-making was concluded in the 1870s, the self-interested and at times insensitive nature of federal treaty-making was revealed. There were numerous problems with the treaty implementation because a distant government had little interest in the welfare of western peoples…Some later commentators…suggest that this heartlessness 'proves' that Canada never intended to honour its treaty promises. (p. 296)

The absence of further opportunities to engage with an interpretation of the Treaties has led many people to the conclusion that the Treaties were fraudulent misdealings of a colonial government. And by extension, these same people call into question whether the Treaty commissioners actually meant what they said (Asch, 2014). These views are propagated by the legislations and policies of the 1876 Indian Act, which go against what was deliberated and agreed upon in the Treaties and which ushered in a century and a half of broken Treaty promises. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) notes

> The…view…that treaties were weapons in a war fought not by combat but by deception and the systematic dishonouring of the sovereign's solemn pledges—leaves many Canadians puzzled, even appalled, by the prospect of giving renewed effect to treaties made in the distant (or even the recent) past. (p. 15)

This conclusion of dishonorable or unlawful intentions of the Crown renders Treaties as obsolete for contemporary Canadian interpretations as viewing them as antiquated pieces of paper. Both of these understandings reinforce the continued absence of Treaty education in Alberta. Moreover, they leave the numbered Treaties far from any contemporary Canadian discussion of reconciliation or relationship building.

Within a deficit of Treaty understandings, it is not difficult to ascertain that few Canadians have any real understanding of the Treaty deliberations, including importantly, who was present at the Treaty negotiations and who they represented, what was agreed upon between the different parties, what each of the treaties signified and how Canadians have benefited from the agreements. Certainly, most Canadians living within Treaty territory would not understand the assertion that they have a Treaty right to occupy that territory (Johnson, 2007, p. 25), nor the implications of such rights and what was given in exchange. In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples acknowledged the following:

> Canadians' knowledge and understanding of treaties have not kept pace with [the] changes. Canadians are not taught that Canada was built on the formal treaty alliances that European explorers, military commanders and later civil authorities were able to forge with the nations they encountered on this continent. Today, with increasing awareness of Aboriginal issues, young Canadians may learn more about the treaties than their parents did, but there is still little in the way of teaching material and curriculum development to dispel this ignorance. (p. 15)

Accordingly in the present, I have now come to believe that Canadian Treaty understandings have become profusely estranged and divorced from any original intention and meaning, written or oral. I find myself no longer shocked when I overhear students and educators admit that they cannot name the Treaty territory they live in nor when they express dismay after learning that the Treaty territories are an actual legally binding jurisdiction rather than say, a metaphorical boundary. These misrecognitions are far-reaching. They feed ongoing political and socio-economic divisions between Indigenous peoples and Canadians and continue to reiterate prejudice, racism, discrimination and the propagation of white-settler privilege in Canada.

Treaties as connected to national narratives.

We need to identify the holes in the story of our country and note what has been left out. This is necessary, not to lay blame, but to repair the story. Doing so will repair us as citizens. Holes in a story mean that passageways for new understanding still have a chance.

Donald, 2010, pp. 2-3

It is important to examine the connections between national narratives, curriculum and models of citizenship if we are to understand the contexts in which contemporary Treaty education and narratives exist, or which render them absent. This contextualization helps us to situate the barriers that exist to understanding Treaties beyond outdated pieces of paper that hold little relevancy in our lives today. Deepening our attention to these embedded processes allows for a reconsideration of how Treaties, as Tupper (2011) suggests, can function as a counter narrative to the dominant narratives of this nation (p. 40).

Aoki (2005), working with Jean François Lyotard's (1984) term *metanarrative*, describes this kind of narrative phenomenon as "the grand stories through which we have come to accept certain notions about "truth," "progress," "goals," "rationality," "unity and totality," "subjectivity," "objectivity," "end-means," and so on—master narratives that cradle modernism" (p. 208). Canada's metanarrative has such a formidable presence in Canadian accounts of national history that it has been similarly conceptualized and theorized by numerous other Canadian scholars, for example, “mythistories” (Francis, 1997), “national mythology” (Razack, 2002), “grand narrative” (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011; Stanley, 2006), “peacemaker myth” (Regan, 2010), “benevolent Mountie myth” (Mackey, 1999) and “creation stories” (Donald, 2012). All of these examples describe in varying yet interrelated ways, the particular stories that Canadians have come to live by, stories that teach us about ourselves, where we have been and where we are going.

In Canada, the metanarrative has over time evolved into a ‘multi-faceted’ master narrative. However, by all accounts, it is founded upon one familiar version regarding the origins of this nation–the tale of its colonial beginnings. Razack (2002) outlines three phases of this colonial story of Canada. Simplified, the first phase begins by highlighting the initial arrival of European newcomers and the subsequent indoctrination of the myth of terra nullius[23] into laws such as the British North America Act. The perceptions of and loyalties to these myths[24] by settlers allowed for large tracts of land to come under the control of the Dominion of Canada and eventually formed the foundation for the Constitution of Canada (p. 3). With these Acts, what Razack terms “white settler colonies” were able to become a nation (2002, p. 3). Once the nation had been established, the myth of a previously empty land was further nurtured and the beginnings of a national identity were formed. Razack defines “white men of grit” (p. 3) as the popularized image of the Canadian, which evokes such descriptions of rugged independence and self-reliance. Razack states “In the Canada of the national mythology, there are vast expanses of open, snow-covered land, forests, lakes, and the occasional voyageur (trapper) or his modern-day counterpart in a canoe" (pp. 3-4).

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[23] Terra nullius is the Latin term for empty land; land not legally belonging to anyone. The ‘myth of terra nullius’ (Butler, 2000; Martin, 2003; Razack, 2002) describes the process where found lands seemingly absent of human occupation could be claimed by colonial nations under the Doctrine of Discovery law.

[24] Razack’s particular use of the terms myth and mythology echo the sentiments of Donald (2009b) who suggests rather than a myth being something considered false or inaccurate, myths “are actually truths about culture and conventional views of history that have both been deeply influenced by the stories of our country that we have been told in school” (p. 3).

This is a narrative I recognize from the days of my prairie Saskatchewan youth. Vast expanses of open land, inhospitable and wild as it was, were now tamed through the trials and tribulations of settler ancestors tilling away tirelessly, making wheat spring from a previously barren and course earth. This storyline situated my people as settlers and myself as a settler descendant at its epicenter and depicted our arrivals here in unproblematic and benevolent ways. These ideologies venerated a teleological imperative towards progress and development that would see this new found land 'civilized.' As Smith (2006) conceives it, notions born of the Enlightenment era and exclusivist theories surrounding the ideas of 'pure identity' in relation to race, were contingent upon suppressing and denying the identity of the Other (p. 111) in order to justify settlement of the land by newcomers. Indigenous peoples were now being seen as an impediment to this development and as such, were increasingly being relegated to the sidelines of this story. Donald (2009a) theorizes this as a "socio-spatial separation" that themes Canadians as insiders and Aboriginal peoples as outsiders and this divide has become a recurrent discourse in our national story (p. 23).

My hometown of Fort Qu'Appelle began as a trading post in a different location within the Qu'Appelle valley set up by the North West Company between 1801 and 1805. It was later taken over by the HBC and moved again to another location in the valley between 1813 and 1819. The third and current site was established as a wintering post by the HBC in 1852. Commerce was intermittent until a permanent post for trade was established and maintained from 1864 to 1911 (The Town of Fort Qu'Appelle, 2015). After 1864, upon the heels of Canada's confederation, relations between newcomers and Indigenous peoples would come to change. As previously mentioned, relationships were historically premised on mutual respect, peace and trading partnerships. But with the land now squarely in the government's sight, the balance of relations was shifting. Newcomers, missionaries and fur-trade company officials were situating themselves and their business endeavours inside the new walls of the 1864 fortified structure as a strong political move. A fort established their presence and intentions on the landscape and provided protection, presumably from threats originating from outside the walls. First Nations and travelling Métis peoples found themselves positioned spatially outside of the fort walls, seen here:

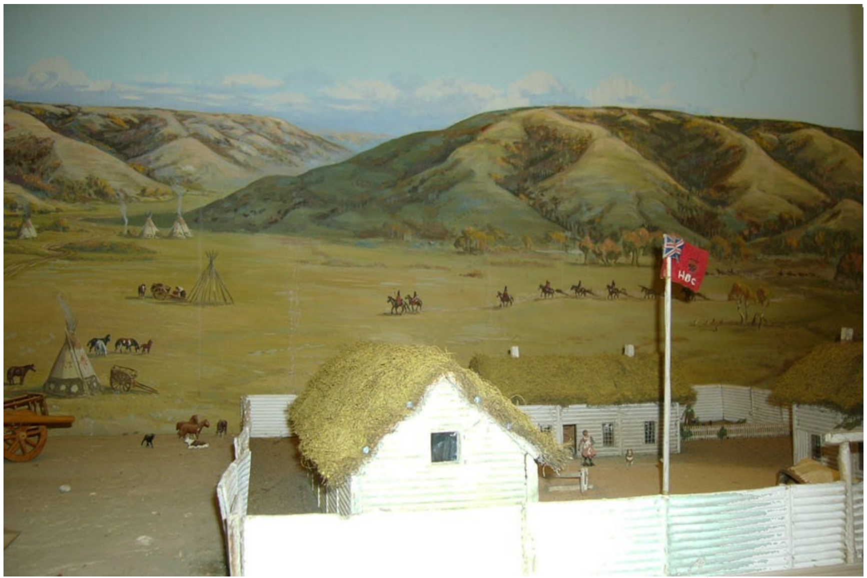

Figure 1. A painting of the Qu'Appelle Valley, late 19th century. Artist unnamed. Reprinted from the *Fort Qu'Appelle Website,* Brief History of Fort Qu'Appelle and Lebret. Copyright 2015 The Town of Fort Qu'Appelle.

As time progressed, these purposefully physical separations became solidified in the social relations between newcomers and Indigenous peoples; effectively sanctifying already held Euro-Western ideologies and value systems that categorized people into polemic conceptions of civilized an uncivilized, insider and outsider (Donald, 2009c).

The land too, was categorized within these conceptions, seen as unkempt, wild and in need of taming. The buffalo were being eradicated since they were considered a hindrance to developing the land into something productive. Indigenous peoples were regarded as backwards, living a pre-civilized lifestyle that neglected to use the land 'appropriately.' Thus, the role of the settler was to turn the land into something of worth. As Donald (2009b) asserts,

> Indigenous knowledge systems, values, and historical perspectives have been written out of the 'official' version of the building of the Canadian nation. This "writing out' has led to a massive misunderstanding of Indigenous perspectives on the part of the average Canadian citizen. (p. 9)

Most egregiously, the ruminative telling of the above narratives relegated Indigenous peoples not only physically to the outside but, metaphorically, to the peripheries of history.

Curricular nation-building.

Mainstream education is an extension of colonization insofar as it has been used to promote a dominant narrative of the past and privilege certain ways of knowing.

Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 563

How is it that national narratives are generated, nurtured and carried forth? The most important, far-reaching instrument is that of public schooling. By the late 19th century, compulsory public schools were being set up with control of education granted to provinces through the British North America Act (Richardson, 2002, p. 58). In response to the large influx of non-British 'immigrants' between 1896-1940, curriculum scholars looked to the values of the British Empire in the absence of a yet determined common national identity (p. 59). Chambers' (2012) work concurs, "…by the twentieth century, the Dominion of Canada had evolved "peacefully" into "an autonomous nation" united with other countries by a "common allegiance" to the British Crown" (p. 26). It is here where the projects of nation-building, citizenship and curriculum intersect.

In the prairie provinces, a standardized curriculum was developed with the very important goal of uniting the nation through a model of Canadian citizenship that promoted the dominant British group's language, culture, history, and religion. However, because curricula were developed provincially and not federally, they retained a strong regional and linguistic character that did not necessarily lend itself to the creation of a unified national identity from east to west. What has characterized the last century and a half of Canadian national identity has been the fervent and yet divided influences of both the British and the French, and strong ethnic allegiances from the large migration of immigrants both past and present.

In the west, due to the large population base of non-British people arriving from diverse countries across western and eastern Europe, most did not speak English or practice British customs. This was a problem to be solved by an assimilationist model of citizenry and history education in schools (Seixas, 2006, p. 13). To forge 'good citizens' willing to grant their individual power to the collective will of the nation, a common narrative of the history of the nation was needed. Seixas (2006) states

> The exercise of collective will depends to a certain extent upon a common public sense of where the collective has been and where it should go – a loose narrative trajectory that situates decisions in the present between an imagined past and an imagined future. (p. 12)

This Canadian nation-building project focused on a commonality amongst newcomers, that they were all ‘settlers’ with ‘settler-stories’ of ‘settling’ the land. This narrative placed newcomers on the landscape, developing the land ‘peacefully’ into productive commodities for the future of a Euro-Canadian civilization. This is the foundation upon which Programs of Study are based and which function to transmit, reinforce and internalize a story of Euro-Canadian experiences, histories and perspectives. Through these processes, a Euro-Canadian worldview is centered leaving little if any room for Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

In the present, age-old curricular stories find themselves challenged and uprooted when teachers begin the tasks of engaging with the different knowledge presented through engagement with Aboriginal perspectives and Treaty teachings. Such knowledge unsettles the creation stories (Donald, 2012, p. 41) that Canadian educators have grown up with. Stories told around the dinner table, enacted out on the playground, in backyard forts and snow caves, tucking us into bed at night, and eventually carrying them into our classrooms. This knowledge is deeply embedded in our own historicity, understandings of self, culture and being. Thus, there is a deep pedagogical imperative that as educators, we attend to the stories that we live by. Further, that we attend to how misunderstandings are generated and continue to be generated if we are to offer a different kind of guiding ethic in the ways we educate and live our lives in the future. As Solomon and Daniel (2007) forward,

> The failure to change will ensure that millions of Canadian children will continue to be schooled by teachers who fail to recognize the extent to which these

> children's lives are framed by historical legacies and institutionalized practices that limit possibilities. (p. 170)

Such a view is a reminder that the past lives with us in our present. This recognition has the potential to change the way that Treaties of the past are considered in our present. It is in the process of building understanding *from* and *through* Treaty (Kovach, 2013) that we can firstly unsettle and disrupt. Secondly, there is potential to (re)centre and (re)imagine a curricular and pedagogical philosophy that is founded on ethical relations between diverse peoples. Treaty education and engaging with Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum offer opportunities to pre and in-service teachers to rediscover Indigenous-Canadian relations and their shared histories in the context of their own lives. These intellections also represent an imperative to honour the Treaties in the ways that that they were intended for us. It is at this juncture in the study that I move into a space of looking at the potential of Treaty teachings in offering a form of relational pedagogy that can guide educators in their work.

Chapter Three

A Different Kind of Treaty Narrative

So far in this study, I have situated this work within Treaty education as it is currently implemented across Canada, and explored the Treaty and national narratives that exist within the dominant Canadian consciousness. These narratives constitute the foundations upon which curriculum, pedagogical practices and Programs of Study are based. In order to understand the significance of Treaty understandings in facilitating shifts in the ways educators address Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum, it is important to explore which Treaty understandings have been neglected. Accordingly, this chapter involves an engagement with a different kind of Treaty narrative offered *from* and *through* the lens of Indigenous oral interpretation and reinterpretation of Crown Treaty commissioner accounts. In effect, the goal is to set aside understandings based upon the written Treaty text, which themselves are wholly incomplete, in order to bring focus to the Treaty understandings and teachings that hold potential in providing guidance to educators as they prepare to do their work.

Within this chapter, further attention is paid to dispelling the two main camps of Treaty understandings that I have outlined in Chapter Two: that the Treaties are considered outdated pieces of paper and that the Treaties are fraudulent dealings of a dishonourable government. Research in Saskatchewan has shown that the Treaties, as understood by educators within the framework of either of these conceptions, continues to impact pedagogical efforts in the classroom and influence students' reception of Treaty education. What is important to reiterate at this junction is this: how educators understand the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians has tremendous influence over how they approach such topics and themes in the classroom (Donald, 2011). In this way, Treaty relationships, and the understandings and misunderstandings that connect them are directly associated with pedagogical practices in the classroom. Offering a different kind of narrative opens up the potential for different kinds of relationships to be explored that do not (re)enforce colonial relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadians.

Treaty Entanglements

The term entanglement is adopted from Borrows' conception of seeing the world as a series of 'entanglements' (in Dault, 2017, p. 9). Borrows offers "To be alive is to be entangled in relationships not entirely of our own making…There are countless ways in which we are entangled that we have no control over" (p. 9). For Borrows however, the importance lies in "recognizing and re-weaving those patterns" (p. 9) of entanglements in order to draw upon the best of traditions. Past interpretations of the Treaties, as seen through the written Treaty texts have resulted in significant disagreement (Craft, 2013, p. 12). However, this does not mean that present interpretations cannot work towards something different. This would include seeking points of focus to work from that demonstrate the potential of Treaty teachings for contemporary curricular and reconciliatory work. As Borrows has suggested, it is necessary that we draw strength from the best of traditions (Dault, 2017, p. 9). In doing so, these actions offer hope to a strengthening of reconciliation efforts and creating productive Treaty entanglements for future generations.

Understanding Treaties *from* and *through* Indigenous oral interpretation.

For as long as newcomers have been arriving on the shores of this continent, Indigenous peoples, in accordance with their sacred laws and doctrines governing all relations - political, spiritual and socio-economic, have welcomed and embraced them (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, pp. 14-15). Relations have been recorded abundantly across this place of Turtle Island as relationships of mutual respect, friendship, cooperation, trade and alliance. As Johnson (2007) offers,

> Our oral histories…are consistent with our understanding of our role as humans under the laws of the Creator, which mandates that we should be kind and generous and share the bounty of the earth with each other, with the animal nations, the plant nations, and with you *Kiciwamanawak.*[25] (p. 41)

Integral to understanding Treaty-making in general is the knowledge that the tradition of forging Treaty agreements between nations was nothing new to the Indigenous universe. As the Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal council recount:

> Alliances have always been common to our people. There were alliances for trade, for cohabitation of territory. *Innaihtsiini* are sacred alliances of peace between individuals, families, and nations. These alliances find their beginning in the sacred ways of the Plains people, and they go back for thousands of years. (Hildebrandt et al, 1996, p. 5)

Treaties are further recalled having not been restricted to human-to-human relations but were originally “a part of a sacred ecology that gives life” (D. Donald, personal communication, October, 2015). These processes extended relations with other-than-human beings, for example, through ceremony and sacred Treaties made with the animal nations.[26] These protocols functioned as part of recognizing and ensuring Indigenous peoples lived in balance with the natural world (Simpson, 2008, p. 32). Many conceptions from these ongoing Treaty relationships became important components transferred to the numbered Treaty deliberations.

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[25] Johnson (2007) uses the Cree term Kiciwamanawak to describe the Cree relationship to the newcomers that were coming to this land stating, “My Elders advise that I should call you my cousin, *Kiciwamanaw*ak, and respect your right to be here” (p. 13).

The following interpretation of Indigenous oral understandings relies heavily on five principles set out by the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000). The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan resource represents a conceptual framework and theoretical foundation of First Nations Treaty making (p. viii) and is considered a combined effort by Elders from the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene and Assiniboine Nations (p. ix). I further use this resource within the participant component of the research in Chapter's Four and Five. In some places, I have also included additional sources from Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 as further interpretative understandings.

To begin, it is important to understand that Treaty-making must be understood within the context of Indigenous peoples own spiritual foundations and processes, guided by Indigenous peoples relationships with the Creator and the spiritual principles, traditions, protocols, and ceremonies that surround and are embedded in any Treaty deliberation. The processes of entering into the numbered treaties were no different. First Nations people firstly began in acknowledgment and bestowal of the Creator's universe and their position within all of creation. The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan explain,[27]

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[26] See for example, Simpson (2008), "Nishnaabeg Treaty Making with Animal Nations", p. 33.

[27] The oral histories presented in the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan book were originally recorded in the respective language of the Elder, either in Cree, Dene, Saulteaux or Nakoda. They were then carefully translated into English and on some occasions, the book retains the Cree words to describe First Nations concepts. My own understandings and articulations here are interpreted to the best of my ability, as someone born into a perspective different from that of an Indigenous worldview.

> the objective in the treaty-making process was to have the new peoples arriving in their territories recognize and affirm their continuing right to maintain, as peoples, the First Nations relationships with the Creator through the laws given to them by Him. (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, pp. 6-7)

Thusly, this recognition jointly served to establish First Nations sovereign rights as a nation before the divinity of God, articulated here:

> The treaties, through the spiritual ceremonies conducted during the negotiations, expanded the First Nations sovereign circle, bringing in and embracing the British Crown within their sovereign circle. The treaties, in this view, were arrangements between nations intended to recognize, respect, and acknowledge in perpetuity the sovereign character of each of the treaty parties, within the context of rights conferred by the Creator to the Indian nations. (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000 p. 41)

This is an important recognition in consideration of current Euro-Canadian understandings of the sovereign character of the Canadian state. Within the above conceptions, what is now Canada was being invited on a nation-to-nation basis into the larger framework of an Indigenous universe and worldview. Had Canada honoured and respected its location within that expansion, what is now Canada would likely be a very different place, with different histories, official languages, celebrations, ceremonies, values and belief systems.

Following the first principle is the second commitment to maintain a relationship of peace best understood using the Cree terms *miyo-wîcêhtowin* and *wîtaskêwin. Miyo-wîcêhtowin* describes a core value of having or possessing good relations in life (Cardinal

& Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 14), including conducting oneself in terms of high ethics with all other peoples and maintaining positive relationships through supporting, helping and caring for one another (p. 80). *Wîtaskêwin* describes the core principal of living harmoniously and peacefully together on the land and most often refers to "individuals or nations who are strangers to one another, agreeing to either live on or share for some specific purpose a land area with each other (p. 39). Hence, First Nations entered into Treaty-making with newcomers for the "purposes of establishing peaceful relationships and territorial sharing arrangements" (p. 39). McLeod (1999), writing from a Treaty 6 Cree perspective, underscores that the people envisioned they would live in peace and share the resources of the land with those to come (p. 69). Treaty 7 Elders confer that their leaders knew that an alliance of peace was necessary (Hildebrandt et al, 1996, p. 25) and were unanimous in their agreement, across the five First Nations of Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Siksika, Tsuu T'ina and Stoney Nakoda (Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley/Goodstoney) that Treaty 7 was primarily a peace Treaty (Hildebrandt et al, 1996, p. 111). Thus, the Treaties are interpreted across diverse First Nations cultures in Saskatchewan and Alberta as Treaties of peace and necessary components in establishing good relations amongst divergent peoples.

The third principle outlined by the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan refers to the Cree concept of *wâhkôhtowin* (the overarching laws governing all relations including those set out in the concept of *miyo-wîcêhtowin*) and creating familial relationships based on these laws. The concept of *wâhkôhtowin* orders the many different arrangements of kin relationships in a Cree world. Elder Simon Kytwayhat says:

> When our cousins, the White man, first came to live peacefully on these lands (*ê-wîtaskêmâcik*) with the Indigenous people, as far as I can remember, Elders have referred to them as "*kiciwâminawak*" (our first cousins). I have heard [from my Elders] that the Queen came to offer a traditional adoption of us as our mother. "You will be my children," she had said.[28] (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 33)

As follows, the oral records of the Treaty deliberations strongly assert that the Treaties were agreements that brought newcomers and Indigenous peoples together as relatives and, in the spirit of being relatives, to treat each other according to those relational ethics. Cardinal & Hildebrandt (2000) contend that "all of the different treaty nations possess similar doctrines of laws governing conduct within relationships" (p. 34) and importantly, that "there is an interconnectedness (*ê-miciminitômakahki*) among the sacred ceremonies, teachings, and beliefs of First Nations" (p. 9). This underscores the idea that the concept of entering into a familial relationship or adopting each other as relatives is a concept widely acknowledged and remembered across diverse First Nations cultures throughout all of the numbered Treaties.

The fourth principle set out in the Treaty arrangements was the guarantee of each party's survival, anchored on the principle of mutual sharing (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 34). This was not just about sharing the land through the principle of *wîtaskêwin*; it was also about sharing the different offerings that each nation would bring, to "share with one another some elements of the special gifts accorded to them by the Creator" (p. 37). Treaty 7 Elders forward that a major goal for the First Nations leadership was to begin transitioning to a new way of life in light of the recognition that they could no longer rely on the buffalo for their subsistence (Hildebrandt et al, 1996, p. 210). For some, this transition included knowledge and anticipation of what an agricultural life might be able to provide, to willingly take up practices of farming and ranching and to "benefit from the educational and health benefits that Canadian society offered" (p. 210).

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[28] Elder Simon Kytwayhat (Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation, Treaty 6), December 21, 1997, FSIN interview, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Translated from Cree.

Finally, the fifth principle recorded by the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan builds on the fourth principal of survival; guaranteeing each nation's continuing right to livelihood. This inferred that upon deliberating Treaty, First Nations way of life would be able to continue as they saw fit, including their ability to hunt, trap, fish, harvest resources off of the land, maintain their sacred ecological relationships with the plants and animals and that these resources would be protected for future generations (Elder Martin Josie, as cited in Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 36). Elder Norman Sunchild recalls the following:

> It was understood that the Queen had given Alexander Morris instructions to say…go tell them that I am not asking for anything, just his land for the purpose of Her Majesty's subjects to make a livelihood upon these lands. And everything else where he [the Indian people] lives, those things continue to belong to him and nobody can control that for him. (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 36).

The right to continue to control their own lives was a prominent concern for most Indigenous leaders. For example, Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear) of Treaty 6, is recorded by Morris (1971) to have said "…what I most dread, that is: the rope to be about my neck" (p. 240). However, according to Beal (2007) this is a misinterpretation by Morris of Mistahi Maskwa's literal fear of being hanged. What Beal (2007) suggests is that Mistahi

Maskwa is declaring his assertion that "he did not want to be tethered or corralled, but to live his life according to Cree standards" (p. 127). Indigenous leadership took clear measures to ensure that their sovereignty and rights to self-determination as a nation would be unhindered.

In the hopes of moving beyond conceptions of Treaties as antiquated pieces of paper, there is an additional understanding that is vital for these discussions. Looking interpretively at 'Treaty' as a verb of action, it describes the nature of an ongoing relationship. Treaty as a noun lacks movement, as a piece of paper might – remaining static and unchanging. Written interpretations of the Treaties embody this static notion, they have been closed off from historicity and (re)interpretation within the present lives of the people and the network of communities connected to them. Indigenous peoples recall and renew the Treaties within a different kind of consciousness. As I have come to learn, Treaties are a part of complex ceremonial cycles that hold the spiritual, political and social relationships of peoplehood together (Corntassel, 2012, p. 89). Corntassel (2012) writes,

> Our commitment to our relationships means engaging in continuous cycles of renewal that are transmitted to future generations. These are the new stories of resistance and resurgence that compel us to remember our spiritual and political principles and values and act on them. (p. 94)

Importantly, the Treaties were primarily entered into through the sacredness of ceremony and as such, were intended to be enduring. Commitments to honouring and remembering the Treaty relationships are embedded within these processes of ceremonial cycles. Speaking of Treaty 6, McLeod (1999) asserts that in telling the story of Treaties, they "must be recreated every time that the narratives are told" (p. 73). Each time the story of Treaty is recalled, it is recalled within the communities and life-ways of old and new generations, where roles and responsibilities are passed on. From this perspective, Treaties are understood to be animate, adaptive, and alive among the people. Many Indigenous communities have continued these processes of recollection and resurgence (Corntassel, 2012) of the Treaties since the time of their origin. It might be said that much gratitude and appreciation are indebted to the many Indigenous peoples and communities who have continued to carry the responsibilities for and recollections of the Treaties so that they may be engaged with now in the present.

Reviewing the above key understandings, conceptions of roles and responsibilities conferred to each signing party and the communities and peoples they represent can be recognized and comprehended. This different kind of Treaty narrative recalls relationships built upon moral and ethical associations and living in peace together. Familial relations were established between Indigenous peoples and settlers, recognizing each other as relatives, in which the mutual sharing of each other's gifts would prevail. Finally, each nation would have the continuing right to livelihood within the epistemological and ontological understandings of their universe.

The issue that continues to plague Canadian understandings of the Treaties, understandings that lack a recognition of the above perspectives, is that those who wrote the written version of the Treaty text were not witness to these oral understandings and could not comprehend the mutual interpretations that were arrived upon at each deliberation. What was recorded and subsequently administered was a betrayal of what has been stated here and elsewhere by Indigenous peoples. Thus, it is not difficult to ascertain that Indigenous oral interpretations and the Treaty narrative that is derived from the written Treaty texts represent seemingly disparate points of view (McLeod, 1999). Simply articulated by Johnson (2007), "The misunderstanding between us, *Kiciwamanawak*, is the difference between the written text of the treaty and our oral histories (p. 41)." The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan further offer the following caveat:

> While, on the one hand, the fundamental variance between the oral and written record of the treaties might be seen as questioning the validity of the treaties, the Elders are adamant about the fact that such is not the case. Indeed, in a number different areas, the written texts and First Nations oral history indicated that the parties reached substantive agreements at the treaty negotiations. It is clear that the treaty parties intended to create peaceful relations among each other, that they desired to "live together" and they desired to share in the livelihood opportunities arising from the land. (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 59)

What I have come to learn from engagement with Indigenous oral interpretations of the Treaties is that differences in understandings and meanings of the Treaty relationships can actually aid in expanding perspectives on Treaty and further, perpetuate positive notions of what difference can achieve. My personal understandings of the Treaty relationships have been nurtured by this engagement with differing narratives and interpretations of the Treaties and I have come to understand my role and responsibility to the Treaties in a more intimate and complex way. Further, in understanding a different kind of narrative, my perceptions of Indigenous and Canadian relationships have been strengthened.

Merging and diverging narratives.

To elaborate further on the significance of Treaty understandings, it is instructive to explore Crown interpretations and Treaty academic scholarship beyond the written Treaty text. In Chapter Two, I contended a second main belief held by many Canadians that the Treaties were fraudulent dealings of a colonial government and that the Treaty Commissioners did not intend to keep their promises. Treaties, as understood by educators in this way, leave the spirit and intent of Treaty understandings irrelevant to current curriculum conversations and pedagogical efforts. Further, they remove the possibility of Treaty teachings as a source for strengthening Indigenous-Canadian relations through the classroom. Below, I review some of the Treaty Commissioner's interpretations in order to illuminate further, how deeper examinations of the differences in Treaty understandings can strengthen our understandings of the Treaties rather than weaken them. These are our Treaty entanglements. It is within this work of broadening perspectives and understandings on the Treaties that significant insight is revealed, insights which reconceptualize the way Indigenous-Canadian relationships are considered. It is this inspiration that can provide much needed guidance to educators as they engage with Aboriginal perspectives within curriculum.

In this section, I examine some of the Treaty Commissioner accounts as well as Treaty academic scholarship alongside several Treaty principles outlined by the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan in order to juxtapose sometimes mutual, sometimes differing viewpoints. Regarding the second principle of maintaining peaceful relations, much has been already discussed in the numbered Treaty overview at the beginning of Chapter Two. The calamity of war happening in the United States influenced many at the deliberations to pursue a Treaty agreement through peaceful means. This was not construed as ‘peace at all costs’ but the recognition of peace through fair and just deliberations. Moreover, peace cannot be obtained through force, thus a Treaty agreement would not have been actualized in the absence of some manner of peace.

Interpreting an understanding of peace by the Commissioners within the Cree concepts of *miyo-wîcêhtowin* and *wîtaskêwin* is much more difficult to extend. These are concepts stemming from a verb-centered language, which do not readily transfer to the noun-centered language of English. To state the problem simply, noun-based languages privilege the noun form and generally consider the world within a view of inanimacy. English confers animacy—that which is considered to be alive—through the use of male, female and neutral pronouns (Bronson, 2017). Further, the universe in a noun-centered language is foundationally static, with the addition of verbs bringing movement to objects and subjects. Verb-based languages are generally considered to be quite distinct from noun-centered languages. They begin with a view of the world that sees animacy in everything (Bronson, 2017). The foundation of these languages is movement, without denoting that it is movement of the past, present or future. Gender is usually not signified in a verb-centered language and to form a noun, an affix or prefix is added to the core verb form. Looking at the word “peace” in English, it is firstly a noun and a thing. One would have to add a verb “to obtain” or “to maintain” to the noun in order to make the sentence describe an action, “to obtain peace.” Further, this sentence denotes a one-time action rather than something that someone has to attend to in perpetuity. *Miyo-wîcêhtowin* and *wîtaskêwin* describe many core principles contained within them and which are already implied, for example “living harmoniously and peacefully on the land.”

The English equivalent of obtaining and maintaining peace are much less descriptive and are not imbued with a complexity of meaning as is shared in the Cree language.

According to many accounts of the numbered Treaty deliberations, there were inevitable communication breakdowns by way of language as differing nations attempted to communicate with one another. English words like ‘reserve,’ ‘mile,’ ‘square,’ ‘title’ and ‘surrender’ which can be found prominently in the written Treaty text, were recorded to have also been used at the Treaty signings, yet these words had no similar translations in any of the First Nations languages at those times (Hildebrandt et al, 1996, p. 24). It remains to be determined how such terminology representing firstly, complex British legalese and secondly, a noun-based language, could be accurately conveyed to the signing parties, or translated into a verb-based language without losing much of its inherent meaning. Thus, the lack of a direct language translation is considered to be one of the greatest barriers to effective cross-cultural communication at this time. However, an important consideration is to understand that language was not the only medium used to convey meaning and understanding between the Crown and First Nations people; the use of symbolism and metaphoric language was employed extensively.

The third principle of kin relations can be seen in the relationships that preceded, and ultimately shaped, the Treaty negotiations. Promislow’s (2009) research confirms that trading practices with the HBC and their Indigenous trading partners, reflecting symbolic acts of ceremonial and kinship recognition, were traditions carried forth into the Treaty negotiations (p. 55). Her research demonstrates the complex and ambiguous relational terrain that was being navigated during this period. Through fur trade and related commercial endeavours, this was a time of friends and foes, enemies and allies, shifting political tides and unclear economic futures. According to Promislow's (2009) research, long-standing relationships built on centuries of Indigenous-newcomer relations in the area were transferred in many ways to the Treaty gatherings. Her work indicates that the Treaty Commissioners, having been living in those lands for quite some time, would have been knowledgeable about Indigenous trading practices and knew how to work in their country (2009).

What is clear from the Treaty literature is that some sort of important familial relationship was established and the symbolism of that relationship is clearly drawn upon in the Treaty Medallion that was given to each Indigenous Chief upon signing Treaty:

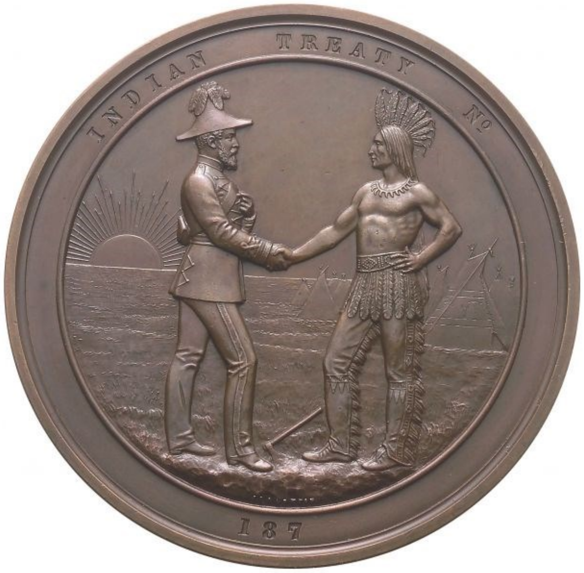

Figure 2. Indian Chiefs Medal, presented to commemorate Treaty Numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, from Library and Archives Canada.
The medals were prefabricated, and spaces were deliberately left blank, later incised with the Treaty number and date at the appropriate time.
Reprinted from INAC, *Treaties in Manitoba*. Copyright 2014 Government of Canada.

Many Elders and First Nations people link the fourth principle of mutual sharing to the images symbolized by the Treaty medallion. The medallion depicts two figures shaking hands in friendship, with a 'hatchet' buried between them, in full view of the Creator's gifts of the sun and the rivers and the grass. The most important aspect of this Treaty image is that the two figures are standing side-by-side on equal ground, highlighting the very significant portrayal of a nation-to-nation agreement. This image was created and gifted during the Treaty deliberations, capturing a tangible spirit and understanding of that moment in time. First Nations people use the symbols contained within the Treaty medal to "augment their understanding of the treaty relationship and to teach about the character and nature of that relationship" (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 55). The use of a strong metal to forge these medallions was also an attribute influenced by the First Nations leaders who would not accept a flimsy material to be used to signify a relationship that was to last forever (p. 37).

According to the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan, "At the treaty negotiations, Crown representatives used symbolism in a calculated manner making sure that it was clearly, plainly visible to the Indian nations" (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 55). Morris himself is recorded to have heavily drawn upon the use of metaphor in his Treaty deliberations and the metaphor of 'the shaking of hands' seen in the medal was used widely (Morrison & Beal, 1999). Beal (2007) notes "By accepting the treaty and shaking hands with Morris, the Indians were shaking hands with Queen Victoria herself and forming an everlasting friendship and relationship with the English Crown" (p. 123). Morris (1971) told the Treaty Four Indians:

> What I want, is for you to take the Queen's hand, through mine, and shake hands with her for ever,... [sic]
>
> In our hands, they feel the Queen's, and if they take them the hands of the White and Red man will never unclasp. (as cited in Beal, 2007, p. 123)

The use of symbolism and metaphor appears to have been highly exercised by all involved. Thus, the Treaty medal stands as one of the most important symbols arising from the Treaty deliberations that can offer reconciliation of understandings between the Indigenous leaders and the intentions of the Treaty commissioners. In the absence of a mutually understood language, both sides advanced the use of symbolic metaphors and grand hand gestures in order to arrive at a shared understanding. As Davey (2006) offers "Metaphor, simile, and other modes of imaginative juxtaposition demonstrate how language can by means of nuance and indirect association link subject matters that are not logically or causally connected" (p. 25). This aspect of creating understanding between two different peoples via symbolism and metaphor remains remarkably significant, especially in light of the fact that the symbolic nature of the Treaties has been absent from Treaty narratives and understandings in Canada. As McLeod (1999) offers, Indigenous oral consciousness employs ceremony, metaphors, symbolism and hand gestures to reflect worldviews and solidify knowledge in memory (p. 74). Commissioner Morris' own words recorded in the official transcripts of the Treaty negotiations confirm his knowledge of these oral traditions as well as his own participation in them by making use of the very same methods. This does not imply that any perfect version of understanding was arrived at but, it does speak to the ways in which two divergent cultures did their best to communicate with one another and arrive at shared understandings. Thus, although effective cross-cultural communication has been recorded by many to be the major barrier to mutual Treaty understandings, it would appear that much work was endeavoured to overcome this barrier. It is the absence of these understandings that allow for the notion that *no mutual understanding was arrived at* to be nurtured.

As for the fifth principle of a continuing right to First Nations ways of life, the oral transcripts that recorded the words of Alexander Morris are worthy of examination (here of Treaty 6):

> Understand me, I do not want to interfere with your hunting and fishing. I want you to pursue it through the country, as you have heretofore done; but I would like your children to be able to find food for themselves and their children that come after them. (Morris, 1971, p. 204)

> Now the whole burden of my message from the Queen is that we wish to help you in the days that are to come, we do not want to take away the means of living that you have now, we do not want to tie you down; we want you to have homes of your own where your children can be taught to raise for themselves food from the mother earth. You may not all be ready for that, but some, I have no doubt, are, and in a short time others will follow (Morris, 1971, p. 233).

According to Beal (2007), "Morris was particularly assiduous in using [this] kind of language at the Treaty Six talks" (p. 124) and any perusal of Morris' transcripts from the Treaty deliberations for which he was commissioner weaves an unfaltering narration: Indigenous peoples would be unimpeded by the Crown in choosing to live their lives as they deemed best within the responsibilities and philosophies of their worldviews.

Further scholarly work regarding Aboriginal Treaty rights and Canadian sovereignty has been conducted by Asch (1984; 2014). Specifically, Asch (2014) has focused some of his work on investigating the honour of Crown intentions at the Treaty deliberations. What has been found is rather important for these discussions and in dispelling the myths of a fraudulent government. Asch (2014) begins his book by stating his own concern that “the representatives of the Crown acted fraudulently in the sense that they did not mean what they said” (p. viii). Through his research, Asch finds a passage from the Supreme Court of Canada decision in the case of *R v. Badger* that makes a compelling claim to arguments of fraud dealings. According to the Supreme Court of Canada,

> First, a treaty represents an exchange of solemn promises between the Crown and the various Indian nations. Second, the honour of the Crown is always at stake; the Crown must be assumed to intend to fulfil its promises. No appearance of “sharp dealing” will be sanctioned. (*Badger*, 1996, as cited in Asch, 2014, p. viii)

Asch interprets this to mean that as far as the courts are concerned, “what the Crown represented at the negotiations had to be considered as truthful regardless of original intent” (p. viii). Leslie (2002) further substantiates Asch’s contention in his work looking at the Peace and Friendships Treaties between the Crown and the Mi’kmaq peoples beginning in 1726 (p. 127). Supreme Court judgements in *R. v. Marshall* (INAC, 2010b) showed that extrinsic historical evidence, which informed the written text, must be taken into account, and “the honour of the Crown required that the Mi’kmaq and British perspectives be given equal weight” (Leslie, 2002, p. 128). As far as the Supreme Court of Canada is concerned, considerations of fraudulent intentions cannot be entertained within the law, which serves to substantiate Indigenous oral interpretations of the Treaty deliberations.

Additionally, Asch examined Treaty commissioner Morris's own biographical accounts in addition to the words of Canada's Governor General at the time, Lord Dufferin (2014, p. 158). From this, Asch contends that the accounts are reasonably suggestive that Morris and subsequent Treaty commissioners and Crown representatives did believe that what they promised at the Treaty deliberations would be fulfilled. His findings suggest, at the very least, that at the time of the Treaty deliberations, the Crown acted honourably in their negotiations with Indigenous peoples. Asch holds that the evidence shows

> the commissioners [at Treaty 6]…were honourable people in that they honestly believed that the commitments they made in return for permission to settle on those lands would be kept. What happened, however, is that those who implemented that treaty (and others negotiated by Morris) transformed those solemn obligations into policy options to be fulfilled at the government's whim… (p. 157)

Asch's research holds that what the Crown has been recorded to agree upon, including Indigenous oral interpretations and Treaty commissioner Morris' own accounts, must be interpreted as truthful today. This is not necessarily a neat and tidy reconciliation of divergent viewpoints but that in the end, in order to move forward, we must come to understand the Crown intentions as honourable in order to take them up in pedagogical, curricular and reconciliatory ways today.

This is an important interpretation for contemporary understandings of the Treaty deliberations. What is imperative to understand is that those responsible for enacting the Treaties, along with the obligations and responsibilities that they contained were not actually present at the signing of the negotiations. They did not hear what was said. What they received was a pre-written Treaty text, with added amendments, shown to be heavily divorced from the actual agreements that took place. The character set out in the Treaties was to be a relationship based upon nation-to-nation relations. The sovereignty of Indigenous peoples was to be unimpeded, and significantly, the land was to be shared for mutual benefit. The Dominion of Canada, operating from Ottawa, chose a much different relationship to pursue with Indigenous peoples, one built upon the 1876 Indian Act. This legacy has forever changed the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians and ushered in 150 years of injustice, genocide and assimilatory efforts. The problem has never been that the Treaties were inadequate, or that they are outdated, or that the Treaty commissioners lied to Indigenous leadership about promises intended. The problem is that the Treaties have never been honoured in the way that they were intended (D. Donald, personal communication, January 2016). As Asch (2014) conceives it, “The place to begin is no different today than it was at the time the treaties were negotiated. We must fulfil the terms of those agreements as negotiated, in good faith and with their spirit and intent in mind…” (p. 150). This is an important call for Canadians to return to the original spirit and intent of the Treaties in order to take responsibility and fulfil historical and present-day Canadian obligations. There is no need to search elsewhere for a path of reparation and renewal of Indigenous-Canadian relationships. It is a matter of returning to the place where those relationships began.

Beyond taking Crown intentions as honourable, it is an understanding of difference as a point of focus rather than a point of contention that presents a possibility for enlivening Treaty teachings as national commitments. Judge David M. Arnot, Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan in 2000 proposed that,

> What many people may not know is that those differences, when carefully examined, can serve to strengthen our understandings of the importance, solemnity and honour that was forged into the treaties in Saskatchewan at the turn of the last century. (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. vii)

It is hoped through this kind of (re)interpretation of Treaty entanglements that dominant perceptions of the Treaty narrative can be disrupted. Furthermore, it is through these kinds of engagements that honour can be restored to the original intentions of the deliberating parties; providing again a vision for the nation that sees the commitments of the past as commitments of the present and the future. It is imperative that Canadians work towards coming to understand a different kind of Treaty narrative based upon inspiring and hopeful visions that already exist. It is this merging of past and present that can shape the future of Indigenous-Canadian relationships positively and relationally.

Chapter Four

Hermeneutic-Inspired Research Approach

Hermeneutics is organized around the disruption of the clear narrative, always questioning those things that are taken for granted.

Moules, 2002, p. 3

The term hermeneutics is derived from the Greek root words *hermeneia* (noun) meaning interpretation, and *hermeneuein* (verb), to interpret or interpreting, and is said to be etymologically linked to the God *Hermes*, a messenger between the God Zeus, humans and the underworld below. Hermes' role was to interpret the divine messages of the Gods and make them understandable and comprehensible to the human intellect. Thus, hermeneutics principally concerns itself with the "process of bringing a thing or a situation from unintelligibility to understanding. [It] has to do with making familiar and comprehensible, the strange, the alien, the mysterious" (Smith, 1983, p. 27). The interesting aspect of the role of Hermes however, was that he wasn't always reliable to deliver the messages in the original form they had been entrusted to him. Hermes took 'liberties' with the deliverance of messages, provoking variation of meaning and playing with the multi-faceted nature of words, language, and understanding. Wallin (2007) articulates that "… Hermes is both thief and trickster, transgressing 'clearly' defined borderlines with ease and without qualm. An illusionist and magician, his elucidation of God's message is marked by potential omissions, substitutions and embellishments" (p. 5). Hermes 'trickster' antics posed as life lessons, exposing the *double-entrendre* of language and the relative ambiguous nature of living life itself. That in the words of Jardine (1992), there is always something *left to be said* (p. 119, emphasis mine). Though Hermes was rather self-indulgent, relishing in the plight of human (mis)understanding, he was simultaneously a teacher, urging creative (re)readings of messages. He embodied a notion that meaning and understanding are not always as they appear to be, that understandings can be messy and paradoxical and many things at once. Hermes was also a figure who moved with ease between realms above, in the middle and below. He transgressed the past and the future, all the while engaging with the present. Paying attention to the movements and lessons provided by Hermes supports a hermeneutic imagining of a different way to connect with the Treaties.

In choosing this hermeneutic research approach, I was drawn to the scholarship of David Geoffrey Smith (1983, 1988, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2014) and Terrance R. Carson (1984; 1986). Smith (1983) writes that the fullest significance of the hermeneutic project "is to discern that which is spoken through speech and to make it speak again as a new voice" (p. 10). It remains as a basic assumption within all hermeneutic endeavours that "there is always a difference between what is said (the surface phenomenon of language) and what is meant (the fuller range of possible meanings contained within the surface phenomenon)" (Smith, 2014, p. 177). This immediately presented an alignment with the spirit and intent of Treaty understandings, which stand as a fuller range of meanings beyond what has been written in the Treaty text. As has been reviewed, what was said has not been translated into what was meant. In fact, what was said between each deliberating party at the Treaty gatherings has remained on the peripheries of knowing and understanding within the Canadian consciousness since that time in history. Smith (2014) writes "In removing the requirement of the original speaker, words rendered as texts are easily subject to interpretations that the original speaker never intended" (p. 178). The ways in which the Treaties have been administered by the Canadian state do not honour, respect or comprehend what has been said. As a result, the Treaties have been governed within a colonial mindset based largely upon the legislation of the Indian Act; an Act signifying a gross departure from what was agreed upon at the Treaty gatherings. Here, as Atkins (1988) notes, “Hermeneutics becomes necessary when the message transmitted within a tradition becomes problematic” (p. 441). Misunderstandings regarding the Treaties exist not only at each level of state governance but profoundly within the hearts and minds of Canadians. It is the genesis of these misunderstandings that call for a (re)interpretation of our past (Smith, 2014, p. 181). Within the context of this study, a hermeneutic orientation encourages the employment of sensibilities that would allow for deeper understandings and connections with the Treaty relationships alongside honouring the reality that divergent interpretations exist.

According to prominent hermeneutic scholar H. G. Gadamer (1975), part of the way to proceed within a philosophical hermeneutic inquiry is contained within the very thing under investigation. Only prolonged interaction with that ‘something’ can reveal a way to proceed for the interpreter. From this hermeneutic guidance, I was compelled to position Treaties at the forefront of this study, without certainty on how I would proceed. In this, I was attempting to allow for a process of being guided *from* and *through* Treaty as Kovach (2013) suggests. Along the way, I came to understand that engaging with a hermeneutic orientation is essentially an ontological endeavor; to understand more clearly, our existence, by way of an artifact, text, speech or event (Smith, 2014, p. 178), as it is related to history and culture and the traditions that we are born into. Embarking on a hermeneutic journey to deepen my understandings of the Treaties would, in process, reveal much about who I think that I am. Further, engaging with the Treaties in this way offered the potential to understand more clearly, the history of the land that I live on, and the relationships between the peoples who lived here before and who continue to live here. What I have discovered is that what hermeneutics asks of the researcher: to explore the meaning of understanding through historical contexts, language, events, institutions, practices, and habits (Chambers, 2003, p. 228), has constituted taking a responsibility for the Treaties as a commitment that I endeavour to honour in my everyday actions. This would include what Corntassel (2012) refers to as "everyday resurgence practices" (p. 89). Engaging in daily processes of resurgence encourages paying attention to and being responsible for local, community-centred actions that are "premised on reconnecting with land, culture and community" (p. 93). Committing to a renewal of the Treaties means weaving my roles and responsibilities to them into the very fabric of my life.

Within these understandings, I consider the tradition of hermeneutics, like Treaties, to be a kind of sensibility orientation rather than a particular method, in line with Smith's (1999) "hermeneutic imagination." This sensibility embodies an ongoing process and a life-long endeavour. In other words, understanding is never complete, it will continually call upon the interpreter to (re)connect and (re)imagine understandings within new insights and evolving conversations. Both the tradition of hermeneutics and the Treaty teachings ask for a (re)orientation of our lives in a way that sees our past, present and future as interconnected, and relational. Through these processes, hermeneutics aligns positively with Treaty wisdom as seen in Chapter Three. Gadamer (1976) forwards hermeneutics as a reflective inquiry concerned with "our entire understanding of the world and thus…all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself" (as cited in Moules, 2002, p. 3). The Treaties were meant as an ethical foundation for guiding understandings of the world and, the roles and responsibilities contained within that world. Thus, the tradition of hermeneutics helps to provide guidance on ways to proceed and engage with the Treaties of our past as conversations of our present.

The Importance of Horizons

One principle theorized by Gadamer (1975) that has helped provide support through this process of interpretation is the concept of horizon. This concept begins with the idea that human beings are born into a way of understanding the world through the specificities of our own cultures, communities, families and histories. Gadamer refers to these aspects of our lives as ‘traditions.’ Moreover, these traditions are comprised of pre-conceived judgments or prejudices that allow us to take in the world as we come to experience it. Although these prejudices are necessary components enabling us to understand the world, they most often remain as unacknowledged biases—understandings of the world viewed from the limited space of our own location within the web of relations that encompass our lives. Remaining unacknowledged, they can be limiting in that they inhibit opportunities to engage and learn from other people, cultures and histories, in which we might expand a depth understanding of the meaning of human experience (and here of Treaty understandings). Unengaged prejudices work to keep the basis of our understandings closed off from that which might be different in the world.

A necessary condition for developing a hermeneutic understanding of something is that we begin to attune ourselves to these prejudices that we carry. Smith avers,

> human experience of the world takes place within a horizon of past, present and future. Understanding that which confronts us as new is made possible in the

> "now" by virtue of the forestructure of understanding which is already in us through past experience. (1999, p. 33)

When we encounter something strange or unfamiliar, we bring what we know *already* about the world to the encounter. Engaging with our prejudgments, understanding their character, their parameters, and their origins allows us to see the particular point of view, or 'horizon' in which we take in the world (Gadamer, 1975). Gadamer considers this horizon as a "range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (2004, p. 301). Included in this 'everything' are all of a person's traditions, cultural and historical, manifested in the world through the medium of language. Gadamer (2004) forwards

> The concept of "horizon" suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand—not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion. (p. 304)

We cannot gain a horizon without the necessary work of identifying and engaging with our own assumptions and prejudices, which themselves, are historically situated. Smith (2006) portends "What is required for this process of understanding is an *openness* to my prejudice, not only to see clearly the way that my self-understanding emerges from a set of particular conditions, but also to see how my identity opens out onto the horizon of Other identities" (p.111). Within this Gadamerian view, prejudice is considered not only an important means in which to understand the world—without it we could not know anything—but the work of hermeneutics attempts to positively engage with a person's prejudgments in order to gain insight into how they influence current understandings. Prejudice is most often considered within the framework of causing harm, as in the act of forming a preconceived judgement against someone. Gadamer seeks to resurrect this "prejudice against prejudices" (2004, p. 274) by rehabilitating the way we consider the role prejudice plays in our lives. Thus, understanding prejudice can yield positive insight and enable growth in understanding rather than forestalling it. Prejudice may limit our understandings but it is also the source in which understanding is made possible.

I began this study by engaging with my own prior knowledge of the Treaties, and reflecting on my personal experiences as they relate to identity, belonging, Indigenous-Canadian relations and the colonial history of Canada. In this, I was coming to understand the prejudices and traditions that I come from in relation to Treaty. This is the necessary beginning work of a hermeneutic inquiry, to attend to the horizon in which I am situated. The concept of horizon was then broadened beyond my current understandings. It was necessary to pay attention to the horizons of understanding that exist in contemporary Canadian society; to understand the roots of misguidance and misunderstanding. But this was just one part of the process of coming to understand Treaties differently than I had before. It became imperative to attend to a different kind of Treaty narrative in order to expand my own interpretations of the significance of Treaty teachings. Through these processes, I have engaged with a multitude of horizons: Canada's national narrative and its relationship to current Treaty narratives, Indigenous oral interpretation of the Treaties, Treaty commissioner understandings of the Treaty negotiations, and present-day academic scholarship on Treaties. Lastly however, there are the horizons of the research participants, yet to be introduced.

If we consider that all of our understanding is rooted in its relationality to other people, then within the hermeneutic spirit, understanding is always occurring alongside others. Thus, this research endeavour would not be complete without drawing it into a conversation of the present, of the present with others, and in particular, of the present with other educators. A central tenet of a hermeneutic imagination becomes this engagement with the other, be it through text, an event, or a conversation. As Smith (1983) writes "hermeneutic understanding is that which unfolds in the dialogical engagement of one life and another" (p. 74). Through a hermeneutic orientation, a new way of understanding the Treaties might be described as participative, conversational and dialogic. These qualities speak to an ethical way of encountering new and different knowledge. From this perspective, I endeavoured to engage in conversation with preservice teachers regarding their current understandings of the Treaties and Treaty relationships. In Chapter Five, I further use Gadamer's concept of 'horizons' to interpret and engage with the particular prejudices and horizons of each participant and the experiences and understandings they bring to the dialogues.

Conversation as a Research Mode

To understand the significance of Treaty understandings among preservice teachers, I chose to employ conversation as a research mode following Carson's (1984) work using conversation as a means for researching curriculum implementation. Gadamer (2004) considers hermeneutics to be the art of conversation, to discover where another person comes from and their horizon through meaningful dialogue (p. 302). He portends "[i]n a conversation, when we have discovered the other person's standpoint and horizon, his [sic] ideas become intelligible without our necessarily having to agree with him..." (p. 302). Conversation in this sense is not set up as a means to convince someone of one's argument or to subsume and subvert another's beliefs and values systems, but to open up a space where those differences of perspective can live out in the open. It compels us to consider how we navigate complex and divergent ideas, of "trying to hold different truths in our hands at the same time without smashing the ones we don't like" (Thomas, 2001, p. 194). The point, according to Gadamer (1975), is thus, not to seek agreement, or conversely, eliminate opposition but to seek understanding beyond what one had understood beforehand by engaging with the traditions and horizons of others. Davey (2006) builds on Gadamer's conceptions of understanding, suggesting that

> "arriving at an understanding" by no means implies an unqualified agreeing with the other. It can involve an agreeing to differ based upon a mutual, sympathetic dialogical awareness and tolerance of difference…For those involved, the encounter with difference opens the possibility of a mutual transformation of the initial understanding each party brings to the encounter…It is the dialecticity of the hermeneutic encounter, rather than the wills of the participants, that achieves a fundamental shift in how different parties understand themselves and each other. (p. 10)

It is this shift in understanding that the participant component of this research is interested in. By encouraging the opening of horizons and doing so in an ethical way, following Donald's (2009a, 2012) concept of ethical relationality, conversations of difference become points of focus to rally around. According to Davey (2006), the fundamental nature of a hermeneutic encounter is profoundly ethical because of its concern for and requirement of difference. As an ethical engagement, hermeneutics expresses itself best within this space of difference. Davey states "Hermeneutic understanding is born of an ethical encounter with an other, an encounter that leads to the participating subjects coming to think in different and unexpected ways" (2006, p. 22). This is the hopeful work of engaging in the space of encountering prejudice and opening ourselves to the horizons of others.

Treaty artifacts for engagement.

Keeping Kovach's (2013) and Donald's (2009a, 2012) call to learn *from* Indigenous perspectives and Treaty teachings as a component of an ethical engagement, I sought to introduce an additional element to the participant research by bringing in 'artifacts for engagement' based upon Indigenous and settler-Canadian perspectives of the Treaty deliberations. Firstly, I wanted to provide some baseline informational and interpretive data of the spirit and intent aspects of the Treaties. The question arising in preparation for the discussions concerned how to initiate and 'provoke' conversations regarding the Treaties within the potential of a deficit of knowledge? All the participants had finished the mandatory education course EDU 211 - Aboriginal Education and the Context for Professional Engagement, and in some cases, additionally the education course EDES 409 - Aboriginal Curriculum Perspectives. Although these courses engaged with Treaty teachings and knowledge, they did not make Treaty understandings the focal point of their purpose, objectives or outcomes. Thus, I could not be sure of the knowledge levels of the participants regarding Treaties and was therefore concerned with how we would begin to speak meaningfully about the Treaties without needing to firstly learn *about* the Treaties? I decided that engaging with certain artifacts or 'texts' would provide some informational and interpretive stimulus without needing to take time in the study to purposefully *teach Treaties* to the participants. Teaching informationally in this way seemed inappropriate for the kinds of discussions I was attempting to facilitate and goes against Kovach's (2013) call to teach *from* and *through* Treaty. Here, it was necessary to draw the participants in to thinking about the spirit and intent of the Treaties.

This kind of artifact use (such as film, video clips and photographs) is often employed as a research method and usually embedded into the larger scope of a research process as in this study. Conventionally, artifacts of various forms are used as 'texts' for interpretation within research interviews and conversations, however their use within a variety of disciplines can serve a broad array of social and cultural inquiries (Emmison & Smith, 2007, p. 58). For example, Herrman (2006) used film clips in nursing education to "generate discussion, critical thinking, and personal application of material that was deemed important in active learning" (p. 264). Herrman writes that film clips captured "situations difficult to depict in the classroom yet important for nursing education" (p. 264). In the nursing classroom, film clips were used as a provocation for conversation where traditional textbooks fell short.

Wagner (1978) used photograph elicitation as a means to provide interview stimuli (as cited in Harper, 2002, p. 14). Wagner's research with farmers and the changing nature of farm techniques used historical photos to evoke "aspects of the past that have a great deal of significance in the context of farming's continuing evolution" (p. 20). Photographs were used as a bridge between past experiences and current understandings of farm technology. Importantly, Wagner describes the goal of photo elicitation as one of 'breaking the frame.' He writes,

> The idea behind breaking the frame is that photographs…can jolt subjects into a new awareness of their social existence. As someone considers this new framing of taken-for-granted experiences they are able to deconstruct their own phenomenological assumptions. (p. 21)

I consider this idea of 'breaking the frame' as a kind of provocation necessary within a hermeneutically orientated conversation. As Carson (1984) writes, hermeneutic understanding "flows from an openness to the meaning of the text, i.e., being prepared for it to tell us something new" (p. 52-53). I wanted to understand participants present understanding of the Treaties but I also wanted to challenge that understanding with new horizons and differing narratives to see how understanding could be deepened. In essence, to break the frame of the participants normalized understanding of Treaties (Wagner as cited in Harper, 2002, p. 20). Thus secondly, it was necessary to engage in an interpretation of historical and contemporary texts regarding the spirit and intent of the Treaties in preparation for encountering something new within a hermeneutic conversation. It became a way to provide an aperture into which we could begin discussions regarding the Treaties as well as anchoring our conversations to something tangible.

Staddon, Taylor, Beard, Kendall, Dunn, Curtis & Vreithoff (2002) affirm that artifacts "can contribute to understandings of complex… processes through the critical interrogation of taken-for-granted understandings as well as the communication of baseline information" (p. 271). Provoking taken-for-granted understandings or prejudices, initiated a call for reflection on behalf of the participants. This reflexivity is born of the tradition of hermeneutics. It is

> not a practice of analyzing texts per se but a means of bringing something unexpected about, a way of inducing interpretative interactions that not only expose us to the unusual and unanticipated but which also place the assumptions of our customary horizons at risk. (Davey, 2006, p. 4)

It is within these reflexive actions, moving between the past and the present, that I hoped to come to understand the significance of Treaty understandings in facilitating shifts in the ways educators address Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum.

The two main artifacts for engagement used in this study were *The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream is That Our Peoples Will One Day be Clearly Recognized as Nations* (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000) and several video recordings of scenes from the Making Treaty 7 theatre production from Calgary, AB (The Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society, 2015; Blood, 2014). This production, put together by a diverse collaboration of Indigenous peoples and Canadians beginning in 2012, takes a profound look at the varying historical and contemporary interpretations of the signing of Treaty 7 at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877 and the significance those interpretations hold for present-day Indigenous-Canadian relations. The production not only addresses the absence of Treaty stories in Alberta but through a series of provocations brought to life through live theatre, song, dance, storytelling, narration, and drumming, it investigates the complexities of the interpretations and subsequent implications of the written and oral understandings of Treaty 7. The production has developed scenes situated from a variety of perspectives and horizons, for example, First Nations oral understandings, historical contexts of the Treaty commissioners, and Métis perspectives on the deliberations. In offering multiple interpretations, Making Treaty 7 demonstrates the polysemic nature of the Treaty deliberations and addresses the problematic representation of Treaty narratives over the course of history.

Participant Recruitment

In drawing the sample for this study, I sought out a small group of pre-service students from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education who would be interested in engaging in a series of discussion groups focusing on Treaty stories and Treaty relationships in Canada both past and present. Recruitment of potential participants commenced in March 2016, once I had received ethics approval to conduct my discussion groups. I chose to purposefully select and seek potential participants who met certain specific criteria (Creswell, 2009, p. 178). As previously mentioned, I targeted students who had previously completed the mandatory education course EDU 211 and/or EDES 409. I engaged in recruitment by way of a previous relationship established with potential participants in two ways: 1) as their previous seminar facilitator in the course EDU 211 or 2) as a fellow [graduate] student attending the course EDES 409 as an individual study. It was my belief that having completed one or both of these courses would provide the necessary background for taking up the kinds of inquiries that would be involved with this research. It was important for the participants to have some prior knowledge, albeit even limited knowledge about Treaties and Treaty history in Canada and this would be obtained through their participation in the above courses, as both courses engage with the topics of Treaties and Treaty relationships in various ways. Secondly, it was assumed that with their participation in the above courses, they would have already been predisposed to a reflexive process of engaging with Indigenous issues in Canada (as demonstrated through course methods and assignments) that would aid them in engaging in our conversations in self-reflective ways. Through a prior academic relationship with the potential participants and in collaborative conversations with my supervisor, the potential participants targeted all demonstrated an inclination to be interested in the topic of the study by way of their meaningful involvement and contributions within the above education courses.

In terms of sample size for the discussion group, I was interested in an ideal sample of 3-4 participants to procure the likelihood of an in-depth conversation amongst many voices. Keeping in mind my own inexperience conducting and analyzing such research, I also wished to keep the data size manageable for a thesis study. As the sampling population targeted were students just finishing their winter term and moving into either a spring term of study or beginning summer work or in many cases, both, I knew that accepting participation would be difficult to navigate for some participants with their busy schedules. In turn, eight invitation packages were sent out by university e-mail including an information letter and consent form (Appendix A) between March 1, 2016 and April 30, 2016 and four students accepted final participation.

Orientation and Preparation of Discussion Groups

I organized three discussion group sessions over the course of a six-week period, commencing May 12, 2016 and finishing June 9, 2016 with a two-week time frame for reflection between each session. Each discussion group focused on a corollary Treaty theme, and in some cases an artifact for engagement (a text, film clip or video), and a planned meal in which we would eat together. Each session lasted three hours and was audio recorded in its entirety for my records and data analysis. I chose to situate myself as a fellow participant and facilitator of the discussions, rather than as a researcher taking notes or viewing the conversation from afar. I did not take field notes during the discussion groups because I felt I could not immerse myself in the conversations and listen carefully if I was concentrating on taking notes as we went along. I did take field notes immediately following the discussions, once the participants had left, noting as much of my initial thoughts and queries as possible. Following each discussion group, I returned to my original plan for each session and listened once to the previous recorded discussion to gauge an overall sense of the direction that the conversation headed in and possible emerging themes. I jotted down questions to re-visit and adjusted my original discussion plan accordingly. I then sent out an e-mail one week prior to the next session to the participants outlining the theme for our conversations and in some cases, a link to an ‘artifact for engagement’ that I wished them to consider before arriving for our discussions.

Ethical Considerations

The care and consideration of the participants throughout this process was of the utmost importance to me. I was aware that the nature of the topics under discussion in this study might cause the participants to feel varying levels of emotional discomfort as they encountered different kinds of narratives from the ones they grew up with. As a seminar facilitator for the course EDU 211, I have experience facilitating discussion topics regarding Indigenous-Canadian relations and Indigenous issues in Canada that often elicit difficult conversations, feelings of apprehension, shame, guilt, resentment, and various other forms of resistance from the students. My role as a facilitator was to help guide the students through those emotions, not to attempt to admonish, correct or deny them but to aid in honouring the emotions that they were feeling, and then to reflect on the source of the emotions as a way to move through those barriers rather than getting stuck. I was prepared to use these techniques within the group discussions if tension points arose. Importantly, these emotions exist outside of the sphere of this research for many educators, thus it is necessary to confront the risks involved with the research (discomfort of emotions) in order to engage meaningfully with the diverse perspectives offered through engaging with Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum and it is essential that they are examined within a safe space.

The other critical aspect that I identified in putting together my discussion group plan was the importance of building relationships immediately within the group. If we were to use our brief time together in productive ways, we needed a way to get to know each other rather quickly and intimately. Often 'ice-breaker' activities are chosen to accomplish this in educational spaces but I wanted to expand on 'ice-breaker' in order to facilitate a more familial or kin atmosphere in our discussion room in line with Treaty wisdom. Building on my own love of food passed down to me from my mother and her obsessive compulsion to feed our community via home baked goods, I decided we needed to share a meal together to begin our work. This action also mirrors my experiences working within Indigenous spaces where the tradition of feasting together is often the centerpiece of ceremonies and cultural practices. Participants would be arriving at 5pm after a long work or study day and it was essential that I was able to provide sustenance of the delicious kind that nourished both stomach and soul.

Data Analysis Procedures

Within a hermeneutic study, analysis is generally made synonymous with interpretation (Moules, 2002, p. 14). As researcher, my interpretations focus on points of significance rather than attending to questions of validity or reliability. Thus, the data analysis process used in this study was an ongoing interpretive endeavour of the conversations with the participants in our discussion groups. I sought meaning of the participants' contributions through a series of listenings and relistenings of the audio recordings that were generated during the discussion group conversations, looking firstly for commonalities that might be organized thematically for consideration. But Moules (2002) reminds me that hermeneutic analysis is often different than other forms of qualitative research analysis, which search for themes that are continually repeated and re-emerge (p. 14). She contends, "hermeneutics…pays attention to the instance, the particular, the event of something that does not require repetition to authenticate its arrival" (2002, p. 14). In attempting to interpret the significance of Treaty understandings for educators, my analysis of the conversations attend to the horizons of Treaty understandings that appear and the possibility of misunderstandings. I pay attention to the nature of the speaking, the emergent and evolving questions from the participants, the stories and insights shared, and the offering of potential anecdotes and explanations.

Transcripts of specific passages and dialogues between the participants were produced. However, the entireties of the audio recordings, nine hours in total, were not transcribed. The focus of this analysis was not to transcribe all of the conversations in order to work with and capture all of the emergent themes but to listen and transcribe the moments in the conversations that held tension or insight into the nature of this inquiry, those "instances and arrivals" as Moules (2002) suggests. Smith (1983) proposes

> In a hermeneutic study…the interest is also to identify what are heard to be the dominant ontological issues speaking through the spoken 'data' of experience, and the selection and organization of themes explored…does represent an interpretive judgment that the themes identified touch on what seems to be most powerfully present in the experience of the participants. (pg. 227)

As follows, what is heard through the dialogue of participant experience and deemed an 'arrivant' (Wallin, 2007) stands as an interpretive judgment on the part of the researcher (myself), which are themselves firmly held up in the horizons I bring to the analysis table, including the Treaty understandings which I live by. The transcripts of the participants' oral contributions were then given back to each participant to confirm their recollection and accuracy of their views. Further, participants' privacy and confidentiality has been protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Once the data from the participant discussions was worked through, I organized selected conversation passages into three larger 'entanglements' which I then juxtapose with my own interpretations, insights and reflections. It is hoped that the chosen participant dialogues highlight the commonalities, ambiguities, complexities, and emergences of understanding that become evident through a deepened exploration of Treaty relationships and engaging with different Treaty stories. Further, that they demonstrate how the participants' experiences of Treaties can be understood hermeneutically and how these understandings can facilitate shifts in the ways educators address Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum.

Chapter Five

Discussion Groups and Interpretations

As a relational activity, [conversation] clearly depends on a certain kind of commitment, the commitment to stay together in the work of gaining understanding.

Smith, 2006, p. 108

This chapter presents conversational passages collected in this study and interprets the significance of Treaties and Treaty understandings in the lived experiences of the participants. As discussed in Chapter Two, Treaty education and its location within curriculum conversations in Alberta has been glaringly absent and representative of a kind of null curriculum (Eisner, 1979). The convening of the discussion groups was an attempt to begin a new strand of conversation regarding Treaty education, branching of course, from the evolving stream of curriculum conversations already underway. To a certain degree, these discussions felt like unchartered territory. By offering the selected excerpts from three discussion groups, it is hoped that the reader gains a sense of the traditions and horizons that the participants bring to the conversations and how meanings of Treaty understandings can be interpreted and generated from their lived experiences.

Within this hermeneutic encounter with the stories of Treaty, I anticipated that something would be asked of the participants, as it had done for me. These conversations would provoke the participants to (re)consider their own personal and professional identities in the present in light of the history of Treaties in Canada. The participants would be addressed in differing ways within our conversations and they would have to decide if they were willing to be open to those addressments. As Davey (2006) reminds, a "[d]ialogical engagement is not necessarily easy or comfortable. It requires a willingness to be subject to the address of the other and to place one's self-understanding before the other's claims" (xv). The difficulty of these conversations resided in being open and remaining open to what was being shared.

Discussions regarding the spirit and intent of historical relationships had the potential to provide guidance on the future pedagogical practices of the participants yet they also had the potential to muddle the pathways, and reveal further ambiguities and complexities that might prove difficult to work out. Meaning-making remains subjective and contextual, and there may be no emancipation from our queries. While part of me wanted to avoid contributing to further uncertainty and anxiety about the tasks ahead, I have also come to understand that these difficulties are an important part of the process of a hermeneutic inquiry. Arriving at understanding something differently than you had before *is* difficult work. This uncertainty also represents my own struggle with engaging with hermeneutics as a research approach; that I seek a neat reconciliation of the complexities, in full knowledge that such wantonness of an 'end-result' is likely unattainable, undesirable, and anti-hermeneutic. Hermeneutics has never pretended it could provide such reconciliation:

> In the end…hermeneutics does not lead us back to safe shores and terra firma; it leaves us twisting slowly in the wind. It leaves us exposed and without grounds, exposed to the groundlessness of the mystery…this intractable mystery is the final difficulty that hermeneutics is bent on restoring. (Caputo, 1987, p. 267)

The difficulty that Caputo (1987) speaks of is the hard work of a hermeneut. The end result is the ability to accept the difficulty and continue on—as Chambers' (2003) offers "the solution may be in understanding the difficulty rather than trying to find a way to make it go away" (p. 228). Caputo (1987) further articulates:

> Hermeneutics wants to describe the fix we are in, and it tries to be hard hearted and to work "from below." It makes no claim to have won a transcendental high ground or to have a heavenly informer. It does not try to situate itself above the flux or to seek a way out of *physis*, which is what the fateful "meta " in meta physics always amounts to, but rather, like Constantin, to get up the nerve to stay with it. (p. 3)

This was our call as a conversation group, to stay committed when understanding seemed impossible, to way-find and path-make through the discussions. It was also a call to me as researcher to stay committed to the interpretation of the dialogues as a process of honouring difference while gaining deeper understanding, rather than trying to interpret my way out of the difficulties.

Participant Profiles

The views and perspectives of these four preservice teachers should not be considered as generally representative of the views held by all educators in Alberta. However, they do hold several congruencies amongst them that are representative of the commonalities of many Canadian teachers. Firstly, the participants have all been educated within a Canadian public schooling system in which Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum and Treaty education have been largely absent. Secondly, they face the shared task of determining how they will engage with Aboriginal perspectives in their classrooms in ethical and meaningful ways as called upon by Alberta Educations' (2012) mandates. Thirdly, all the participants identified racially as white at some point in the conversations, although they were less inclined to identify as such within opening introductions. Here, I noticed that they preferred to identify in terms of ethnic heritage including in some cases, the inclusion of Indigenous ancestry. Further commonalities amongst the participants include their birthplace of Edmonton and each participant has spent time living in both urban and rural spaces across Alberta and western Canada. They ranged in age from 20-35 years old and are characteristic of the normative categories of gender representation within Canadian education spaces—3 female and 1 male.

Discussion Group One Preface

Carson (1984) outlines three stages of a conversational research approach: initiating conversation, continuing the conversation by keeping the question open and finally, reflecting on the meaning of the research focus (p. 70). I began the first discussion group by centering our conversations around the theme of 'Telling our own stories.' This first conversation constituted an introduction to the research and my reasons for exploring the significance of Treaty understandings via preservice teachers lived experiences with them. This first meeting together represented a guiding principle of a hermeneutic engagement with the Treaties – to engage with one's prior knowledge, one's own traditions & prejudices regarding the Treaties. For this reason, I did not begin with the support of any artifacts for engagement but focused on the participants current understandings of the Treaties.

Upon arriving at a classroom within the department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta on May 12, 2016, (that would also function as our group discussion space for the entirety of the three discussion sessions), the participants and myself sat down and went over the consent forms, including agreeing on pseudonyms to be used in the final research document. We then proceeded to prepare a meal together to share as we began our conversations.

Entanglement # 1: Beginnings

Introductory Synopses

Marie

Marie was born in Edmonton and has lived there her whole life, describing herself as of Catholic faith and a lover of history. Marie is in her second-year of a Bachelor of Education program in Elementary Education. Marie expresses her ancestry as originating from all over North America and beyond, including Acadia, the United States and Ireland. Marie's maternal grandfather is of Métis descent. He is, in her sentiments, her strongest connection to an Indigenous identity and worldview. Although she admits that growing up, she viewed her grandfather with a "white gaze" (Discussion # 1, May 12, 2016). Coinciding with her grandfather's growing pride in his Métis identity, it has only been during Marie's adulthood that she has come to understand him more fully as an Indigenous person.

Marie's maternal grandfather grew up in Kenora, Ontario and early on, worked for the HBC, later fighting in WWII. When he returned from the war he was able to go to university and become a geologist and consequently, Marie states that he was able to pass in society as a white person. For a variety of reasons, including prejudice on his in-law's side of the family, Marie's grandfather kept his Métis ancestry hidden. Later in life, when he felt it had become acceptable to talk about the past, he began to openly embrace his identity as a Métis person and in recent years, has shared much of his experiences of racial discrimination with Marie.

Marie's mother, 1 of 11 children, was closest to her father of all her siblings. When Marie was born, she would continue that close relationship with her grandfather and as a result, feels most influenced by him in her life. Marie speaks lovingly of her grandfather and prideful of his nature, of his craftsmanship as a wood carver, his time spent building a cabin in the foothills of Alberta and notably, that he taught Marie how to canoe. In terms of whether or not Marie considers herself of Métis ancestry, Marie offers:

> that's the identity that I always identify the most with but on the other hand I am like completely white so it's a side that feels fake sometimes to say "oh I am Métis" but that is something that I value very much in my family history so I always want to say to people: I don't mean that I am an expert on anything Aboriginal or that I have some great connection, it's just this is like, this is a part of who I was, the man who brought me up and I really want to honour that. (Discussion # 1, May 12, 2016)

Kumari

Kumari was born in Edmonton but grew up in Hinton, Alberta. After she graduated high school, Kumari moved to Kolkata, India where she spent six years travelling and working with children living in poverty. This experience was a catalyst for transforming the way that Kumari saw the world in terms of culture and privilege and identity. Kumari is now in her second-year of a Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education specializing in English Language Arts and Health.

Kumari is rather hesitant to describe her ancestry. She states apologetically, "I don't know, I had to call my mom about my ancestry. I never asked questions. I never thought about it or cared too much" (Discussion #1, May 12, 2016). Kumari offers that her grandmother was placed in foster care at an early age and as a result, there are no records of ancestry in that line. Elsewhere on her maternal grandfather's side there is a bit of Scottish and on her father's side, they are "very German" (Discussion #1, May 12, 2016). Finally, Kumari confesses that she "didn't grow up with that passion to know" (Discussion #1, May 12, 2016) but that is now changing for her as an adult. Kumari further describes herself as a practicing Christian. However, she has been currently exploring her spirituality in juxtaposition to her religious upbringing and is interested in expanding her understandings of spirituality as it exists in the world for others.

Brittany

Brittany was born in Edmonton and has spent the entirety of her life there. Brittany is in her third-year of a Bachelor of Education program specializing in Social Studies. Brittany describes herself as a Ukrainian-Canadian with well over 3/4's of her family of Ukrainian descent and a little bit from Ireland. Her first ancestors arrived from the Ukraine in 1897 and began farming in Manitoba, moving west as the land became available for settlement. Much of Brittany's family still speaks Ukrainian, including Brittany herself and this language connection has helped Brittany's family keep much of their Ukrainian traditions alive. Brittany also offers that her family has benefitted greatly from the Ukrainian programs that they had at their schools and Brittany contributes to this kind of cultural programming by working at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village east of Edmonton during her summers. However, she also offers that growing up, she saw a lot of differences and tensions between generations of people she terms 'Canadian-Ukrainians' and 'Ukrainian-Ukrainians.' Finally, Brittany admits that she didn't have a lot of interactions with Aboriginal people throughout her adolescence but feels her mom was open-minded about diversity to which Brittany has benefited from.

Richard

Richard was born in Edmonton, later moving to Vancouver and then Camrose. Additionally, he has spent many years living and working abroad as a development worker and Canadian diplomat, most recently in Jerusalem and Jordan. Richard now lives near Tofield, Alberta with his wife, working on his wife's family farm. Richard is in his third-year of a Bachelor of Education program with a Physics major. Richard admits, "I'm a bit of a Heinz 57. Can I say that? [chuckling]" (Discussion #1, May 12, 2016). Richard's father's side is Scottish, Irish, and French but describes his mother's side of the family as "long-term Canadian," tracing some of their genealogy to Peter Erasmus (Senior), an HBC trader from Denmark, who later became a Red River colonist after marrying a Cree-Métis woman named Catherine Budd. Peter Erasmus' son by the same name would later act as an important interpreter at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt during the negotiations of Treaty 6, fluent in speaking English, several Cree dialects, Ojibwa, Stoney Nakoda, and Blackfoot. In his final years Peter Jr. would write a memoir about life in Western Canada and relationships between First Nations and Métis people titled *Buffalo days and nights* (Erasmus, 1976).

Richard describes his adolescence as growing up typical "rural Alberta," feeling relatively isolated from any Native reality because his community of Camrose did not have much of a Native presence nor was it located close to a Native reserve. Richard remarks that much like a lot of Alberta, Camrose appeared visually homogenous to him, meaning it was visually white. Richard considers that because of these dynamics, he mainly carried a colonial mentality in life before he began travelling internationally.

As an adult, Richard's work overseas in diplomacy matters has allowed him to view colonization from many different lenses. Some of his public diplomacy responsibilities involved promoting "Canada" internationally as a model of good relations but this never sat well with Richard because of Canada's colonial past and miscarriages against Indigenous peoples. In his mind, Canada has not heeded any lessons from its own colonial origins and thus, is not necessarily the best candidate to offer advice in regards to the ongoing conflicts in Israel and Palestine. Richard affirms that his questions regarding the Treaties come from these experiences working within the colonial dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But further, his concerns are also grounded in the addressment of Métis inclusion within the Treaties. As he presently understands the Treaty framework, the Treaties are characterized by two sides and this leaves a Métis presence within the Treaties rather ambiguous.

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Dialogue # 2

R: I don't know if this was other people's experience, but growing up here, I was raised to believe that race or ethnicity didn't matter.

M: Yeah.

K: Like it was invisible. You don't see colour.

R: Yeah, in the sense, that idea that it doesn't matter who you marry. It doesn't matter any of these things, maybe not necessarily being colour blind but almost this pride in the idea that race doesn't matter.

M: Yeah.

K: Yeah.

R: And it took a while for me to realize the truth of that in some ways—interacting with other cultures around the world where that's definitely not the case, you know, where you fit racially and ethnically are super important along with religiously and linguistically and all these things. There's that aspect within my up-bringing in Canada that there's kind of this, unwillingness, or even just a naïve ignorance [pause], or something, that has prompted me over the years to not see things—that underlying colourblindness I suppose, that, I don't know—I don't know what shocks people out of that.

And then relating it back to Treaty, I guess, is this—in my own mind, this reluctance to see Native people as different than the other ethnic minorities in Canada—that multiculturalism is not what we are actually talking about when we talk about Treaties. This is something very different than multiculturalism so how does that fit in this image or mythology of Canada that we have created? Actually we're not talking about that [multiculturalism], this has to be something different, so how do I bring that into my imagination?

M: Sometimes you get a glimpse of what it's like for other people and then you can either push that knowledge away or think about it…

R: Sorry, think about what?

M: Think about seeing racism happening, cause, at a certain point I think people want to believe that we are a wonderful country and we treat everybody equally and maybe there are a few people who are racists but like, they are dying off now so we're all going to be this new generation that has no discrimination.

K: Yeah, I agree.

Interpretations

Introducing the participant's backgrounds outlines some of the traditions and horizonal vantage points in which they approach Treaty education and engaging with Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum. Evident in all of their introductory offerings was a sense of tension or perhaps a "where do I start?" Common to all five of us within the group is that we function as part of the dominant white Anglophone majority in Canada. We are white Canadians who have all been educated within a dominant public school discourse which has nurtured the normalization of *being white* in Canada. The participants had also willingly entered into a space where the colonial and Treaty history of Canada and foundational Indigenous knowledge, histories, and experiences would be discoursed in relation to their lived experiences and identities as Canadians. As Tupper (2012) suggests, what is being dialogued on has a cost to their identities (p. 151), both as Canadians and as future educators. Although whiteness remains relatively unnamed and unacknowledged in society, Canadians often seek ways to identify in terms of a strong ethnic allegiance or within a perception of ethnic ambiguity, as *just* Canadian.

In consideration that in diverse ways, our conversations inhabit critical reflections on identity, it is helpful to reflect upon my own origins and evolutions of claiming and naming identity. Up until my early 20s, I would have introduced myself within Canada as being of Ukrainian descent (Canadian being a default). "I'm Ukrainian," I would say with some confidence. I was raised prominently within certain Ukrainian traditions, including folk dance, which was a part of my life for over a decade. Through dance, I spent time with other families who I deemed more ‘authentically’ Ukrainian. I differentiated these families as ‘authentic’ because my dance colleagues spoke proficient or even fluent Ukrainian with their parents and grandparents, not unlike the experiences of Brittany. They had strong Ukrainian names like Bohdan and Valeska, and their mothers often hand stitched the Ukrainian symbol of the red poppy onto all the dancers’ sleeves. Further, they lived in small rural communities popularly known for being Ukrainian towns. In my family, my siblings and I danced and my great grandmother Anne and grandmother Audrey prepared traditional foods for celebrations including perogies (*varenyky*), *holubtsi,*[29] borscht, wheat salad, and *kovbasa* sausage. However, there was no Ukrainian spoken in our home, nor was there in my father’s home and we were brought up in a Protestant church rather than a Ukrainian Orthodox Catholic church. Sometimes I felt falsely Ukrainian, after all, we were not living in the Ukraine and I did not speak the language.

Many years later, after my bachelor’s degree in Development Studies, introducing myself became a lot more complicated. I would suggest that it has also become more complicated for the participants. Usually within the Humanities and especially within Faculties of Education, introducing oneself to professors and classmates is a requirement of getting through the first week of courses, and something that must be done every semester. As students’ previously held knowledges interact with new knowledge, course content and the experiences of others, *how* one chooses to introduce themselves becomes significant. It is significant in the relationships that are formed, and how one is received and situated in the world by others.

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[29] Ukrainian-style stuffed roll, usually a cabbage roll with ground beef and rice served with tomato sauce or a beet roll wrapped around bread with dill cream sauce.

After finishing my bachelor's degree, I was fairly versed in the colonial history of Canada and admittedly, coming to terms with understanding the nature of white privilege. Here, identifying myself as 'non-indigenous' became the acceptable form for an introduction. Over the years, I have sat through many education-related conferences where Canadian educators, positioning themselves, run the awkward course of deciding on how they will reveal their colonial roots; perhaps colonial settler is chosen, or settler-descendant, settler-Canadian, non-Aboriginal, or non-Indigenous. Sometimes whiteness and privilege are acknowledged. But the discomfort glimmers across most faces. Perhaps people aren't really sure what is the *correct* way. Nonetheless, naming the settler has become an important marker of critical race theorizing, anti-racism and decolonizing education spaces. It is important for the very reason that the history of the settler on these lands has been rendered invisible, alongside the violence of settling here. I am a settler-descendant and I am white. This describes well the nature of how I came to be here. But I have come to understand that I am more than those identity markers. And saying that I am more to the world is sometimes difficult within the shame of the history of this country, and my relative privilege and power within that history.

Concerning the introductions of this study, there is tension held between '*Canadian*-Canadian' identities (Mackey, 1999), as "unmarked, non-ethnic, and usually white" identifications, and ethnic allegiances nurtured and supported through 'multicultural' and 'tolerant' notions of Canada. For Marie, she presents some stories of her grandfather's Métis ancestry and her connections to him through that heritage. But it remains challenging for Marie to identify her own understandings and awareness of a Métis identity. As she says, "I am like completely white so it's a side that feels fake sometimes…" Similar to Marie, Richard does not confirm that he considers himself in terms of a Métis identity. Instead he jokingly envisions himself as a 'Heinz 57,'[30] implying a sort of Euro-ethnic mix of everything. With ancestral ties to the Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia and France/Germany, I too have been referred to by Canadians as a 'Heinz 57.' Richard also states that he grew up in a rather homogenously white community, with very little Indigenous presence. For Kumari, her opening remarks register a caveat of apology. She does not know her heritage, or very much. And she is embarrassed that she has never been interested. There is an imagination of '*Canadian*-Canadian' that comes through. Brittany's naming of her ethnic heritage is strong. She understands Edmonton and what is now Alberta through the lens of her Ukrainian ancestors, and importantly, through the language of her ancestors. The gift of a second language guides Brittany as she struggles to understand her world through a merging of cultures, familial generations, and landscapes. Brittany defines herself as a 'Ukrainian-Canadian' and older generations of her ancestors arriving in Canada as 'Ukrainian-Ukrainian.' Mackey (1999) conceptualizes this kind of phenomenon as the hyphenated Canadian (p. 20) that has been birthed from multicultural national policies which purport the celebration of ethnicity, diversity and equality of peoples. Indeed, after 1970, programs promoting the Ukrainian language have helped to continue its use across the prairies. However, historical Canadian policy and legislation generated cultural and linguistic discrimination of Ukrainians in Canada in the early 20th century (Gerus, 2017). These early Ukrainian peoples were not considered within the imagination of a hyphenated Canadian. In light of the colonial history of Canada, naming one's identity can be challenging because it is intrapersonal, entangled in history and not without significance.

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[30] The term Heinz 57 is a shortened form of a historical advertising slogan promoting "57 Varieties of Pickles" by the H. J. Heinz Company. Popularly, it has come to mean anything that is made from a large number of parts or origins, including ancestry, culture and ethnicity.

What appears evident is a kind of ontological struggle that ensues when attempting to introduce one's self in meaningful ways: Questions like the following come to the surface: Who am I in relation to the ancestors of my homeland? Is that a definable relationship? Who am I in relation to this place of (Edmonton and Alberta)? What are my stories of this place? Who am I in relation to the colonial history of Canada? What does it mean to say "I am Scottish… or Irish, or Ukrainian", when I have not come from those places? How is a Métis identity included and nurtured within a polarizing vision of white and Indigenous Canada? As adults in higher learning, we[31] are gaining new horizons and these horizons have an effect of troubling what we thought we knew. It's no longer an easy task to reiterate national, cultural and ethnic identity markers of our past when they are in the midst of being disrupted. Engagements with Indigenous knowledge systems, histories and experiences highlight some of the fallacies of Euro-Canadian imaginings of self. They problematize the hegemonic nature of dominant culture thinking. We are increasingly cognizant that despite what our national narrative tells us about our benevolent beginnings here, a much more disturbing story of colonial domination exists. How you let go of one story of self and embrace different and diverging stories is an enduring yet, ambiguous process.

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[31] The use of the personal pronoun 'we' in this section constitutes the participants and myself as a group.

So how does an imagination of the Treaties provoke a sense of belonging and significance of place to people? When I hear Indigenous people introduce themselves, it is almost always particular to place. And more often they present an additional name in their first language, along with a clan or tribal identity and community. Through these introductory offerings, I come to understand that this person and their family line have been here for longer than the concept of time allows me to imagine. It is an imagining of what deep time and long residence must feel like (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). My ancestors have not been here for very long nor have they been very good at learning the place names or listening to the stories that were here before they arrived. A resurgence of acknowledging and honouring Indigenous identity challenges and defies a century and a half of Canadian government policies and legislation that have controlled Indigenous identity and which still attempt to do so through the Indian Act. How I feel stating my colonizer roots pales in comparison to the long-standing legislated identity of being named Indian and the racialized connotations that have been attached to that identity marker. Yet both effectively create a distance between Indigenous peoples and Canadians.

When Canadians from B.C. and Ontario mock me by calling me a "flatlander," I turn it on its head, puffing up my chest in pride instead. Visions of the purple flax and yellow canola fields pop up in my mind. I can smell the algae on the lake, hear the crickets and frogs singing from the back deck, and imagine the out stretched blue sky just before you descend from the prairie top into the Qu' Appelle valley. "Heck yeah I am a flatlander! I am a prairie person." In that consciousness, I understand the symbolism embedded in language like *driving on the grids*, or *putting your car in the rhubarb*, or the exchange of barters during Saskatoon berry picking season: “You pick, I cook, we’ll both have jam for breakfast and berry sauce for our elk steaks.” In Fort Qu’ Appelle, if you ask for directions, people use their lips to point the way, a tradition passed down from our Indigenous relatives—everybody knows how to speak that language in town! These things are rooted in people, community, landscape, and history. And sure, they have aesthetic and novel qualities too. They exemplify the merging of different cultures and peoples who despite their issues, have been living here together for a century and a half. It is this local identification that makes me feel spirited, that allows me to introduce myself to people in a way that lifts spirit rather than harming it. This local spirit often gets lost within colonial mentalities and rhetoric that seek to deny that these healthful relationships do exist, and that they have always existed in spite of ongoing racism, discrimination, violence and prejudice within communities. It has been the struggle of ethical relationships to win over the excessive nature of national narratives that reiterate the divisions between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. Long-standing misunderstandings within the Canadian consciousness of *the stories that were always here* have created a considerable void in understanding identity on the landscape. As Sheridan & Longboat (2006) forward, “Those in North America unaware of the spiritual and cultural accomplishments of Indigenous Peoples would do well to comprehend that where one is has everything to do with who one is (p. 369). In coming to understand Treaty as *relationary*—between differing peoples and the ecology of the land—a stronger sense of identity and belonging has been nurtured within me. Through the story of Treaty, I have expanded my understandings of self and home—the Qu’ Appelle valley. The unique Indigenous and Canadian relationships that transpire and find their ways within my community speak to relatedness *alongside* difference. Admittedly and frequently, contempt for difference gets in the way. But everyone who lives there has committed to being there to stay, so relationships get worked out, patched up and renewed or they don't, and people part ways. Canadians are certainly able to talk about connections to place, but there is a lot of layered understandings and depth histories that get missed when they do. Ultimately, understandings of self as a continuing conversation between our past and our present, where we are different and yet simultaneously related (Donald, 2011) have the potential to be nurtured when Treaty understandings are engaged with in meaningful ways.

Juxtaposed with the participants introductory offerings, comes a follow-up discussion by the participants, highlighting an awareness that they grew up within the belief that "race and ethnicity didn't matter." Richard affirms that it was "almost this pride in the idea that race doesn't matter." Official policies of multiculturalism have been in effect in Canada since the early 1970s when former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau institutionalized a policy of multiculturalism which was later made into national law in 1988 as the Multicultural Act (St. Denis, 2011, p. 307). The concept of multiculturalism aims to prevent discrimination based on race and culture through the celebration of cultural diversity, with an emphasis on equality of peoples and tolerance of difference. Curricular frameworks modeled upon these notions have influenced Programs of Study since that time. Beyond these altruistic endeavours, multiculturalism as an ideal has been used to promote a particular kind of Canadian nationalism that defines Canada for its tolerance and celebration of difference—something widely projected in international arenas as uniquely Canadian. Mackey (1999) asserts,

> A settler colony with official policies of multiculturalism and bilingualism, Canada has an official national culture which is not '*homogenous* in its whiteness' but rather replete with images of Aboriginal people and people of colour. The state-sanctioned proliferation of cultural *difference*…seems to be the defining characteristic of Canada. (p. 8, emphasis in original).

Through the concepts of multiculturalism and tolerance, Canada has built a reputation of being a welcoming country, a country of equality, freedom, peacekeepers and safe spaces (Mclean, 2011, as cited in City of Saskatoon, 2012). Marie's comments reiterate this imagined reputation: "people want to believe that we are a wonderful country and we treat everybody equally."

As Mclean further explains however, an issue arises because "the experiences of immigrants and the experiences of Aboriginal people in our communities is not one of multiculturalism but one of racial oppression" (cited in City of Saskatoon, 2012). In the last two decades, policies of multiculturalism have been heavily criticized because they actually work to divide and separate people considered "of culture" from the normative [white] identity of the majority Canadian populace (Légaré, 1995, p. 347). Power is placed in the hands of the 'tolerators'; those holding influence and authority in society [white Canadians] get to decide what kinds of cultural differences are considered 'tolerable' (Mackey, 1999, p. 16). Canadian whiteness operates in the background, remaining unspecified as a kind of cultural difference. A value is attached to skin colour and ethnicity in Canada yet under the guise of multiculturalism, race and experiences of racism are silenced. As Marie offers, sometimes racism is 'glimpsed,' but the opportunity and privilege available to white people is to ignore that experience. Within a multicultural framework, there is also a rather purposeful forgetting of the history of colonialism and legislative abuses against Indigenous peoples contained therein. As discerned by Schick and St. Denis (2005),

> …claims on freedom and tolerance as parts of the modern national narrative are predicated on forgetting parts of traditions that do not add up to a heroic stature - parts of traditions that the national narrative would just as soon forget. (p. 302)

Illusions that race doesn't matter proliferate within the dominant culture's adherence to a national narrative founded upon benevolence, tolerance of difference and an historical 'amnesia' of the history of this country. These perspectives play well with the Canadian national narrative outlined in Chapter Two.

Conversely, for at least two of the participants, this statement that race and ethnicity doesn't matter contrasts what they reveal in their introductions. Indigenous ancestries within Marie and Richard's families were actively suppressed if not denied. Marie discloses that her Métis grandfather hid his ancestry for most of his life and further, that he experienced racial discrimination from his white in-laws and the Euro-Canadian settler communities in which he lived. Richard states that he has ancestral geneology on his mother's side originating from the Red River colony in Manitoba and yet, he grew up feeling isolated from any Native reality. Richard later affirms that his Métis ancestry was explicitly unacknowledged by his family for a large part of his life (personal communication, February, 2018). So race and ethnicity have mattered in the context of the participants' lived experiences, but only as something reflexive and revealing within their experiences of adulthood.

Richard then brings our conversation to the focus of this research: Treaties. He states that there is a "reluctance to see Native people as different than the other ethnic minorities in Canada…that multiculturalism is not what we are actually talking about when we talk about Treaties." Treaties, as understood within a Canadian multicultural narrative, do not fit well within an ideal of equality of all peoples. Treaties, understood as agreements between First Nations people and the federal government, have been framed in terms of the 'special status' of one group of people over everyone else. These notions are largely birthed from the conceptualization of the term 'Citizens Plus,' first theorized by Hawthorn (1966-1967) in his report on the social conditions of Aboriginal peoples across Canada. Hawthorn writes "Indians should be regarded as 'Citizens Plus.' In addition to the rights and duties of citizenship, Indians possess certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community." The Indian Association of Alberta (1970) solidified the use of the term in their document *Citizens Plus* ("The Red Paper") in opposition to the federal government's White Paper.[32] The White Paper attempted "to achieve equality among all Canadians by eliminating *Indian* as a distinct legal status and by regarding Aboriginal peoples simply as citizens with the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities as other Canadians" (Indigenous Foundations, 2009). The idea of legislating Indigenous peoples so that they would have the 'same' legal and constitutional rights as other Canadians influenced generations of Canadians to reject Indigenous peoples demands for sovereignty and rights to self-determination. Within the gap in

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[32] In 1969, the federal government under then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, unveiled a policy paper (called a *white paper*) that proposed ending the special legal relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state and dismantling the Indian Act. This white paper was met with forceful opposition from Aboriginal leaders across the country notably, through the publication of the Indian Association of Alberta's (1970) document *Citizens Plus* ("The Red Paper"). (Indigenous Foundations, 2009).

Treaty knowledge, including major misrecognitions of the character of the Treaty relationships, policies of multiculturalism only strengthened opposition to Indigenous peoples 'special status.' As the literature and research has shown, Treaties are perceived to be exclusionary because the dominant Treaty narrative teaches that First Nations people receive special rights based upon the Treaties, to which Canadians have to pay for (D. Donald, personal communication, University of Alberta, January, 2016). The continuation of this kind of Treaty narrative deters people from seeing Indigenous-Canadian relations as anything more than the special status of one group over others. Further, the recognition of special status is perceived as in direct opposition to the multicultural ideal of equality.

Importantly, it is this multicultural framework that Richard and the other participants have been brought into through their own schooling experiences. The ideal of multiculturalism is one tradition that weaves its way in and out of these introductory conversations, informing the horizons the participants bring to the conversations when trying to better understand Treaties. Tupper's (2013) research with education faculty and preservice teachers at the University of Regina also cited multiculturalism as a challenge to supporting Treaty education mandates within the classroom (p. 123). Tupper's faculty participants reiterated a conception among their students that because Saskatchewan was "a multicultural province," focusing uniquely on Treaty education and Indigenous knowledge systems undermined that ideal (p. 123). The participants in this study appear to recognize some of the fallacies inherent within a multicultural ideal and attempt to work their way through such conceptions. Richard expresses that the Treaties signify a much different relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples than what is represented through the ideal of multiculturalism. He states, “This is something very different than multi-culturalism so how does that fit in this image or mythology of Canada that we have created?” As an opening conversation, this line of questioning highlights that the stories of Treaty, however they are framed within explicit and implicit curriculum in Alberta, are inadequate for providing guidance in comprehending Treaties beyond existing colonial conceptions and national narratives. Richard asks “... how do I bring that into my imagination?” Engaging meaningfully with Treaty understandings requires a significant (re)conceptualizing in the ways that Treaties are storied by Canadians.

Discussion Group Two Preface

Carson’s (1984) second stage of conversational research guides the researcher to “continue the conversation by keeping the question open” (p. 70). In bringing several artifacts for engagement to this conversation, I intended to demonstrate a furthering of a hermeneutic engagement with the Treaties beyond our own horizons; to encounter a text, film or play about the Treaties that would serve as a different kind of Treaty narrative than the stories the participants were familiar with. Our task was to remain open to that which presented to us as unfamiliar or different within our discussions. Over a week prior to the second group discussion, I sent the participants an e-mail inviting them to engage with the first of our artifacts for engagement: Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000). They were encouraged to read and jot down any words or passages that spoke to them or provoked a question. This was also used as a pretext for setting up the viewing of select scenes from the Making Treaty 7 theatre production, narrated by the late Kainai Elder Narcisse Blood (Blood, 2014). It is within these engagements that begin to surface back and forth movements between the new knowledge offered by the artifacts and the participants' familiar understandings. Conversations are carried forward by certain fundamental questions regarding the discrepancies between Treaty relationships, Crown intentions and how the Treaties have been administered since.

Entanglement # 2: Transitions

Dialogue # 1

R: I don't know. Part of me often times feel—I feel like our average students experience and where they're coming from is so far away from this that, is Treaty where we need to start? Or is it kind of where we need to end up or [pause], is it too complex…

Part of me feels like the time in which the Treaties were signed was also a time of distress, mourning and, the smallpox aspect of it. It's almost as if the Treaties themselves are a product of unhealthiness in a sense too, like they are trying to make the best of a very *very* bad situation and what the end product is isn't whole either. So—and so I am not sure. I don't feel like Treaty is, a complete solution because the Treaties themselves weren't adequate. Like at the time they weren't adequate to achieve what needed to be achieved because obviously there were failings, massive failings in the process of reaching the Treaties and the power dynamics and all these things. Yet, so are we going to rely on Treaty as being enough? I am not sure it's going to bring us to the point where we need to be—in a sense—if we come to understand different perspectives on Treaty. Like, I don't know, there needs to be something in my mind, more than that to overcome, because there are so many contradictions in the Treaties themselves…

Ugh. [Sigh]. It's almost like—what do we expect Treaty to be able to do? And I am not exactly sure. If we're going to try and revive Treaties, or renew them, what is it that we expect them to do?

[Pause]

K: I don't know if my perspective is the correct answer but, I believe, mostly from those readings is where I am drawing my answer from, it's just—relationship. Not even "I will allow you to prosper," but like, "I will help you prosper, and I will help you survive and I will ensure that you can maintain yourself" and I think there is a lot in the lists [Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan principles, Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000]. One thing that comes up a lot is non-coercive relationships. Which I think is really—that was something that really stood out for me. I think that is really meaningfully, like "I'm not trying to force you to be someone that you are not and you are not trying to force me to be someone that I am not" but we can both come along beside each other and support each other. I mean, it's corny but it's about love. It's about respect.

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Dialogue # 2

M: What I have been thinking is that symbols and stories are very important. And Crowfoot,[33] he was a smart man, he has always been a hero of mine and he knew that they were not going to be able to keep all of the promises. Like he knew what was coming down the pipeline, he was already seeing his people starve and he didn't—he wasn't dumb. So it wasn't that they went into it [pause] naively, that they thought the Treaties were going to be perfect and they weren't people that didn't know there were power dynamics, but they still had this ideal. So, um, the way that I see the Treaties is that there are two different parts: people are always going to be trying to figure out what clause goes with what legally and who gets this and who gets that and then on the other hand, there's the ideal. And both of them may be important in some sphere, but the ideal is definitely important for everyone.

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[33] Issapo'mahkikaaw (Crowfoot) was Chief of the Siksika Nation within the Blackfoot Confederacy alongside Natosapi (Old Sun), head Chief of the north Siksika. Issapo'mahkikaaw played a pivotal role in the negotiations of Treaty 7 (Hildebrandt et al., 1996, p. 30).

R: Huh [Affirmation]. Yeah, I like that.

M: And the fact that it is an important symbolism that's not in the curriculum makes it important that we bring it up.

R: I really like that idea that you were talking about—that happens to me all the time actually, I say things that center me back onto important things. But the idea of the Treaties having an aspirational side, if you want to call it that. Like there's the textual side, and who gets what sort of side and then the aspirations of it [pause]. The idea of the spirit and the intent may be the most important and that—that's how we might bring [pause]—I'm just thinking about all the people in our classrooms that are newcomers or various other peoples who don't feel they are a part of the Treaties…

Interpretations

These comments follow engagement with the two artifacts. Thus, we might interpret them within the framework of encountering new or different knowledge. Richard begins by stating that he feels like the average student experience is so far away from the story of Treaty that “is Treaty where we need to start?” He indicates that Treaties are a knowledge unknown to the ‘average’ Albertan student and that since they are mostly understood as products of the distant past, perhaps it is not where we need to start conversations. Richard goes on to narrate the Treaties as “a product of unhealthiness,” having been created at a complex time, when Indigenous peoples were experiencing tremendous suffering due to the eradication of the buffalo, smallpox epidemics and encroachment of their land. Interpretively, I would contend that the Treaties are understood by Richard at this location within the conversation as a product of harmful relations rather than say, as a framework for ethical relations. The genesis of this understanding renders Treaties currently inadequate in Richard’s mind because Treaties did not work in the way he imagines they should have. Undoubtedly, nation-to-nation relationships have deteriorated and injustices against Indigenous peoples have prevailed since the making of the Treaties. The terms of the Treaties and the distinct character of the provisions of each of the numbered Treaties have not been honoured by the Canadian state. However, the nature of the Treaties—the gathering of peoples, the ceremonies that were conducted, the negotiations that took place—in my mind, those are artifacts and processes of an attempt at an ethical, nation-to-nation partnership. Richard’s commentary traces a particular kind of horizon of understanding regarding the Treaties that results in a denial of such interpretations. Instead, the narrative of the ‘massive failings’ and the power dynamics, as he suggests, place focus on the ways in which the Treaties have been dishonoured. Additionally, the agency of Indigenous leadership and the voices of Indigenous interpretations of the Treaties remain absent. This kind of narrative does imply a nurturing of Euro-Canadian perspectives on Treaties, once again leaving little room for Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

Smith (1983) asks "…what are heard to be the dominant ontological issues speaking through the spoken 'data' of experience?" (p. 227). For Richard, the Treaties were inadequate for fixing the negativities involved with newcomers arriving to this land and settling within Indigenous territories. Thus, the ontological struggle might be that the nature of human existence is inherently one of power and dominion rather than say, one of respect and interrelationship. There is an ardent worldview that is coming through that showcases the influences that Richard's work in international relations and diplomacy matters has had on the vantage point of his horizon. These past experiences have not likely yielded much inspiring guidance regarding respectful Treaty-like relationships. Within a hermeneutic inquiry, Smith (1983) further instructs the interpreter to pay attention to that which "seems to be most powerfully present in the experiences of the participants" (p. 227). Uncertainty and ambiguity remain distinctly present within Richard's dialogue concerning the meaning of the Treaties. For example:

> "I don't feel like Treaty is, a complete solution…"
>
> "Like at the time they weren't adequate to achieve what needed to be achieved…"
>
> "Yet, so are we going to rely on Treaty as being enough?"

This pattern of questioning presses upon the conversation. As a hermeneutic dialogue, they appear powerfully intertwined with Richard's lived experiences, which have yet to be disclosed further since the sharing of certain stories during the introductions.

Of note is the absence of addressing or speaking to the particular character and the spirit and intent of the Treaties within Richard's comments. This is noteworthy because the artifact, *The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000) does not highlight the historical text of the Treaties written by the Crown but rather, First Nations oral interpretations and worldviews. I would consider *The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* to be an ontological, epistemological and spiritual understanding of the Treaties. So, in light of what has been read, what refuses to step aside remains the tension points associated with a Treaty narrative based upon primary understandings of land surrender and the subsequent "failings" of the Treaties, as Richard suggests. Weaved through the comments is a sense of frustration, hindrance and perhaps, an unknown obstruction, based upon his current understandings and experiences of Indigenous, Canadian and Métis relations. Further, the story that is narrated is symptomatic of how his understandings have been framed and supported through an absence of Treaty education and engagement with Treaty understandings in schooling. These interpretations lead us to our first major interpretive insight of this participant component of the research:

Major Interpretive Insight #1

- *Existing Treaty narratives pose themselves as negativities of experience which must firstly be engaged with before a different kind of Treaty narrative can be considered.*

Some of the data highlighted thus far represents the tensions that arose for the participants in understanding Treaties beyond historical narratives predicated on outdated, inadequate pieces of paper and duplicitous dealings of a colonial government. These narratives danced around the background of our conversations despite the participants' lack of Treaty education in school. In the beginning entanglement, the ideal of multiculturalism arrives to our conversations as a fairly prominent barrier to taking up the Treaty relationships in meaningful ways. Treaties and the concept of multiculturalism ideologically represent some comparable ideals, for example, the acknowledgement of diversity and the principle of equitable relations. Yet, as applied, multiculturalism and Treaty wisdom are founded upon very different conceptual frameworks, if not disparate worldviews. Furthermore, the narrative of a raceless society that is forwarded within multicultural rhetoric serves to disguise and deny the race-related experiences of Indigenous peoples and minority groups in Canada. Reflexively, the participants are coming to terms with the reality that race and ethnicity do matter in Canada and that they matter in the context of their own lives.

Gadamer (1975) might consider the participants current reflections on Treaty understandings as arising from a negativity of experience within their lives. He states "experience is initially always experience of negation: something is not what we supposed it to be" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 349). Reflecting on this interruption within one's experience is the beginning tenet of a hermeneutic inquiry in that it compels someone to investigate further what is behind a misunderstanding. As Carson (1986) notes, "a negativity of experience enables researchers to come to the question of their studies" (p. 76) and those experiences become an important reflection point in which to gain understanding. I began this study in the midst of my own personal negativities of experience which brought me to the question of this inquiry. The implication derived from the principle of the negativity of experience is that there is much important learning to be found within the experiences that cause us to cast our previous conceptions into question. In this manner, learning and understanding originate from a negativity of experience in one's life. Davey (2006) ascertains that "the inescapable negativity of experience— pathei mathos —is truly educative" (p. 7).[34] For the participants, negativities of experience are being revealed as our conversations are underway. They are a prevailing feature of this hermeneutic inquiry into Treaty understandings and their significances for educators. Accordingly, paying attention to the participants' negativities of experience allows for a better understanding of their experiences of everyday life.

Hermeneutic scholar Davey (2006) portends that:

> Engaging with a text can check or frustrate a reader's presuppositions and reveal the inadequacy of previous understandings. Being so thwarted can expose a reader to the extent of his or her previous oversights. These experiences are not sought out but a reader risks them in the encounter with a text. (p. 7)

Davey's quote provides a glimpse into the ways in which responses like frustration can actually be redeemed from there negative foundation by being a catalyst for further reflection. This dynamic is demonstrated specifically in this study through the patterns of questioning that the participants bring to the inquiry. In the case of the questions posed within Richard's above dialogue, encounters with Indigenous interpretations of the Treaties have presented different knowledge worthy of consideration, but his previously held judgements have closed him off to their potentiality for the moment. Yet, in a hermeneutic exploration, frustration does not need to lead to forestallment of understanding. Richard is carried through by his engagement with the other participant's horizons of understanding within our conversations. Davey (2006) refers to this as a socializing aspect of a hermeneutic conversation. He conceptualizes:

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[34] *Pathei mathos* is a Greek term deriving from the book *Agamemnon* written by Aeschylus, a Greek tragedian (458 BCE). It is most often simplified to mean *learning through suffering*.

> The socializing aspect of hermeneutic experience is twofold. First, the encounter with the other sharpens loyalty to the exposed assumptions within one's tradition. Second, because that exposure reveals my dependence on the other for opening me to the reality of alternative possibilities that are not my own, it also binds me to that which is different and which does not immediately spring from within my horizon. I am indebted to the other for revealing to me what is strange in me …Hermeneutic experience involves an ethical revelation of the extent to which I can become bound to that which is both different from and stands at the limit of my horizon. (p. 1)

In our discussion space, old Treaty narratives met new and different ideas and in those spaces, many complex happenings arose. Davey (2006) denotes, "The "negativity of experience" may disrupt one's expectancies of a text but it also opens unexpected alternatives" (p. 14). Kumari responds to Richard's contentions of the failings of the Treaties by suggesting that what engagement with Indigenous interpretations of the Treaties has offered her is an understanding of Treaties as love, respect and relationships. Her engagement with *The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* has prompted the potentiality of this kind of understanding for Kumari. If we consider that Richard finishes his commentary with the question "What do we expect Treaty to be able to do?" then Kumari is providing a direct response to Richard's question, although she also speculates whether it is the "correct" answer. There is however, a growing sense of consciousness of the spirit and intent of the Treaties in her dialogue. By bringing in some of the understandings from *The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan*, Kumari is not only engaging her own horizon in interpretation but offering that possibility to others in the conversation.

The second dialogue illustrates well the transitional space of this particular Treaty entanglement. At this point in our discussions, it is clear that some semblance of existing Treaty narratives have been brought by the participants to the discussions. Everyone at the discussion table knows something about Treaties and existing prejudices are being revealed and worked out. Part way through this second discussion group, the participants viewed a series of film clips from the Making Treaty 7 production, narrated by the late Kainai Elder Narcisse Blood (2014). Marie's comments regarding Chief Crowfoot (from Treaty 7) and the idea of symbols and stories has been spurred on by this artifact for engagement. What I find interesting about Marie's contributions is that she is attempting to work back into our conversations the issue of Indigenous agency regarding the character of the Treaty negotiations. She submits that Crowfoot was a smart man, far from naïve about the character of the relations and a hero of hers. Marie's dialogue engages with an interpretation of that historical moment as a complex network of interrelationships. Her comments support Promislow's (2009) research revealing the long-standing relationships held between Indigenous peoples and newcomers that, importantly, would have been transferred to the Treaty gatherings. Both Indigenous leadership and the Treaty Commissioners would have been knowledgeable of each other's trading practices and negotiation skills. Such interpretations, like Marie's, work to bring a semblance of balance into the conversations regarding understanding different Treaty narratives. Furthermore, this dialogue draws attention to a new idea merging into our conversations: as Marie conceptualizes, "the 'ideal' of Treaties," juxtaposed with the literal interpretations of the Treaties based upon the written historical text.

A merging of different dictionary definitions suggests an 'ideal' is meant to signify a principle or value that a person(s) actively pursues as a goal, usually in the context of ethics. How people choose to prioritize that ideal implies the extent to which they are committed to the actualization of that goal. Conceptualized in our first entanglement was the ideal of multiculturalism, a widespread principle and perception of equality of peoples. At this juncture in our conversations, attention to the spirit and intent of the Treaty relationships is being recognized through the discourse of an ideal. This ideal, according to Marie, is symbolic and important to everyone and identified as missing from curriculum. Richard is drawn to this interpretation as a sort of sketching of dichotomous perspectives; the literal translation of Treaties and the ideal of Treaties. Yet, I would also suggest that this theorizing works towards reconciling certain contradictions for him. His standpoint has been relatively firm to this point in the conversation. In his view, the Treaties are inadequate for contemporary conversations of 'realistic' relationship-building. His comments within the introduction made it clear that his current understandings situate Treaties as representing two parties and Métis inclusion within that binary relationship has not been reconciled. From this framework, Richard has taken up the Treaties in a very literal way, concerning himself with the failings of government action since conception. But now, Marie has offered something that opens an expansion of Richard's understandings. The limits of his understanding have been pressed upon by the very nature of conversing with the horizons and traditions of others that are brought to the discussion (Gadamer, 2004). The unfamiliarity of Marie's conception catches Richard off-guard, he reacts affirmatively with a "Huh!" Richard's prejudices illuminate before him momentarily and an opening is created in which he has a chance to understand something differently than he did before. I consider this to be a significant moment where Richard's previous prejudices allow him to open himself to the potentiality of different and divergent narratives. Thus, the dialogues really inhabit a transitional space where traditional prejudices and barriers to taking up the Treaties remain strong but attempts are being made to begin to engage with different kinds of Treaty narratives. For example, Richard expresses that

> The idea of the spirit and the intent may be the most important and that—that's how we might bring [pause]—I'm just thinking about all the people in our classrooms that are newcomers or various other peoples who don't feel they are a part of the Treaties…

The push and pull dynamics of engaging one's own horizon with new and different horizons is evident. A negativity of experience appears once again. The narrative embedded in this comment speaks once more to the idea that Treaties are often conceived as exclusionary. This is connected to our previous discussion regarding the concept of multiculturalism and the special status of First Nations people. But I would contend that it also has much to do with Richard's conceptions of Métis inclusion within the Treaties, even though he doesn't explicitly mention it.

Barthes (1980) considers conversation as an "almost" (*presque*): the participants are speaking about something which cannot yet be articulated (as cited in Carson, 1984, p. 65). This action of the 'almost' speaks well to the localities that the participants find themselves within our discussion groups. Within these conversations, there are many specific examples of negativities of experience and how those experiences have resulted in the kinds of Treaty narratives that the participants are able to envision at this juncture. Particularly for Richard, his negativities of experience have simplified the Treaty deliberations into two opposing agendas. The discourse employed narrates a story about those who hold power and those who, more or less, are victims of the power relations. As Davey (2006) points out "The words and concepts deployed in communicative practices are invariably shaped by complexities of historically formed meaning and insight" (p. 4). These comments speak to a literal interpretation of Treaties based on the written historical text rather than to an imaginative transmission of Treaty teachings. Richard's concerns that the Treaties do not represent newcomer Canadians and various other peoples highlights a common misrecognition of the Treaty vision as it was set out by Indigenous leadership and Crown representatives. But this misrecognition stems from the fundamental exclusion of meaningful Treaty education in the lives of Canadians. Canadians have trouble understanding how they are a part of the Treaties precisely because the Treaties have been repressively narrated by the Canadian state (Starblanket as cited in Abusaleh, 2017). Admittedly as well, this study has not placed focus on the historical exclusion of the Métis peoples, who were denied making Treaty with the Crown despite the extremely significant role they played in their conception. Reconciling Métis-Crown relations remains an important step in honouring the Treaties as they were intended for everyone.

The overarching sentiment emerging from the above two Treaty entanglements is that the ideas that the participants are discussing—identity, multiculturalism and race relations, literal interpretations and ideals, understandings of the Treaty deliberations based upon colonial narratives and the written text—can pose themselves as barriers to understanding Treaties beyond outdated pieces of paper. Furthermore, it is apparent that Treaty (mis)understandings influence the kinds of receptions that Canadian educators give to topics of Treaty education and Indigenous perspectives in curriculum. If Treaties are to be brought into a conversation of the present, where educators look to the Treaty relationships and Treaty wisdom for guidance on how to engage with Indigenous perspectives and proceed ethically in their classrooms, then it is vital that such engagement goes deeper than the Treaty miscarriages. It is a misfortune to get stuck at the Treaty miscarriages because the character of the Treaty relationships that have been founded provide a much more important and dynamic framework in which to situate and do *ethically relational pedagogical* work today.

Discussion Group Three Preface:

Carson's (1984) third stage of conversational research is reflecting on the meaning of the research focus (p. 70). The third and final discussion group served as a critical reflection on what had been underway within our conversations at the same time as moving to further the potential of Treaty understandings through the lens of a Treaty sensibility (Donald, 2014). This shifted the conversation from focusing on current understandings, which frequently come in the form of barriers to understanding the contemporary relevancy of Treaties, to examining what inspiring entanglements exist. There is an intertextuality that also occurs among the artifacts for engagement. Common meanings contained within spur participant reflection and engagements with new narratives. It is this third discussion where the participants really begin to speak in depth regarding the spirit and intent of the Treaties and generate some of the concepts from the artifacts for engagement into their imaginations. Through the processes of these hermeneutic conversations, the participants have the opportunity to consider the meaning of Treaty understandings in relation to their pedagogical practices. Not surprisingly however, old Treaty narratives continue to stake a claim at the Treaty discussion table.

Entanglement # 3 - Revealings

Dialogue # 1

R: So me being a Treaty person—I guess, in a sense, being on the Crown side of Treaty if we are thinking of it again, with this binary problem that comes with the Treaty, that you are either on one side or the other—that if the Crown side is my side and the Crown side, we are being repeatedly shown that it's wrong—I guess, and that's the strange thing—that we are trying to talk about perspectives about Treaty and all the different people on the Crown side, I shouldn't say that there is only one Crown perspective, there are many *many* Crown perspectives because there were many *many* people involved, but the idea that yes, they had a perspective back then and they proceeded in a certain way and whatever you want to take that as—it was colonialist, it was exploitive blah blah blah—but it doesn't really seem like we are trying to share perspectives and engage multiple perspectives. It seems to me that, not just this research, but the broader sort of process of truth and reconciliation is actually [pause]. Well the way I feel about it is—what we are essentially saying is that the Crown perspective was wrong. And then, so the question that I am left with, for me is that being the inheritor of the Crown side of this relationship is that—can we redeem that perspective? But how do you do that because you cannot go back and revise history. So the historical perspectives are there and that is what brought us here today, so how to actually… [pause].

S: Reconcile that?

R: Yeah. Yeah.

S: Does it help if you consider that what the Crown was doing was not necessarily wrong but perhaps, what has come after? Is it plausible to make that distinction between different groups of people making decisions?

R: No, I think the Treaties were inherently exploitive. And I don't think there is any way around that. I think the Treaties were inherently utilizing a power dynamic for the benefit of the colonizer and the Treaties were a tool to do that and from my perspective, we cannot escape that reality. That they weren't agreements between equals, that there was a power dynamic involved, as much as we might like to imagine it that way. I think the Crown knew what they were doing and they were using Treaties as a tool to enhance the colonization of the territory and…

[pause]

S: You don't know how to get around that?

R: Well.

I don't think we need to get around it.

[pause]

B: I just want to raise one point—this is one thing I learnt from a history professor—it's that history can change, it's the past that doesn't. As the phrase goes, "history is written by the victor" and how many times has history been re-written as more perspectives are added in, that weren't previously considered? So history can be re-written, it's the past that doesn't change. So that sometimes can make things a little easier to handle, because sometimes people believe history is fact.

R: But we never truly have access to the past do we?

B: Exactly. And history is not absolute truth.

M: Ok so I have been thinking about this too. Like, yes, it was an exploitive thing. I think one of the things—my perspective on Treaties is that it's not so much what they were, but what the people wanted. And on the one side, they definitely wanted peace—this relationship—and on the other side too, even if there was mixed motives, the people who were negotiating really did want peace, and good relationships and they were messed up sometimes in their minds of how we would all live together—but they did want this. So I see the whole Treaty thing as aspirational. If we didn't have the Treaties we would have to invent something else—as a symbol of coming together. Making Treaties is a natural human thing, that if we didn't have this, we would need something else. And if we want to come together we need something. The whole thing about history not just being about the facts but how we tell the story—sometimes you need a story that people can bond over. So that's how I see it.

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Dialogue # 2

K: It just makes me think about what you [Sara] were just saying about the process unfolding.[35] We just need to be a part of the process unfolding. Maybe we won't even get—maybe you won't get to white privilege but to be a part of the process unfolding—maybe if we are less focused on reaching a place and just that we are a part of a journey, it takes some of the pressure off.

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[35] Kumari is referring to a passage by Chief Roy Whitney (as cited in Hildebrandt et al., 1996). It is taken

R: So you're thinking in a sense, there are certain principles that would guide your whole process then, in terms of how you would interact with your kids but not necessarily some end point?

K: Yeah.

S: Ok. What kinds of principles?

M: One of the principles that has come out for me is listening…

K: I have words popping into my head…

B: Taking things a bit more slowly—having that silence…

K: I'm thinking about the Neal McLeod article (1999), when he's introducing the topic and how they specifically named the North Saskatchewan River, which was, that really jumped out for me this time. So I went and sat by the river cause I live really close. [pause] Man that river flows! And we all have, if we grew up here [Edmonton], we have a relationship with that river in some way. I have so many different memories being by that river, with family and friends, and even these terrible nightmares in my teens, crashing on the bridge and falling into the river! So I sat there looking out and thinking what does this have to do with Treaty? And that relationship I have with that river—it has this massive symbolic meaning for—at least Treaty 6, and I had never been able to make that connection. [pause]. So, it just brought it home for me in a way. I could see using that in my teaching.

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up in the interpretive section of this dialogue.

Going to the river and saying “this river is part of a covenant and it is flowing and it is strong.” There is so much meaning there.

M: It’s like a language that can speak to people.

R: I think the kinship stuff keeps coming back to me all the time when I think about what principles are guiding all of this…

Ok, like—I was working on the Israel-Palestinian peace process for the last three years and that’s a sort of situation where—it’s like the worst of the worst in terms of the way people treat each other in a negotiation/Treaty type situation right. They are as disingenuous as possible, they are trying to extort as much as possible, it’s basically as negative a dynamic you can find because people are trying to use power dynamics to achieve ends and find different ways to get power. Whether it’s through violence—in a sense, its seems to me what the First Nations perspective on the Treaties provides is that actually, there is a different way to think about all of these things—that there is a different way to think about international relations—which is what it was back then—it doesn’t have to be a “realist-politics-dog-eat-dog” concept. It doesn’t have to be that way and the way they tried to deal with it, even if they understood that they weren’t in a position of strength, that they could still try to pursue kinship relationships with these people…

[pause]

Again it’s aspirational. So, hoping for a better way of interacting. And so, I guess there is hope in that too for me, that’s a key principle of all of this that there is a different way to think about how we relate to each other.

M: Part of the problem for me is that if you reflect on everything that did go wrong, that sort of reinforces the cynical side, so the more you talk about how like the western, for example—the land grab, trying to swindle the stuff, and we stole their stuff and go over all the terrible things that happened, that instills—it makes you think cynical thoughts about people—"this is how our ancestors were, this is how the world is," even if you think the world should be better, but practically, this is how we are.

B: I think most of us want to be that 'better' but there is a fear of opening up if others don't follow. There's a lot of that "you got to protect yourself."

S: Seems to me what we are getting at is—if we want to take this up in a meaningful way, a lot is being asked of ourselves. I think a lot was asked of First Nations people when they signed Treaty and that was given.

K: Yeah, yeah.

M: I think back to EDU 211, when Dr. Donald said to us "Our ancestors prayed for us to be here." When I think about it literally, my ancestors did hope and pray for that but I think anyone's ancestors would have wanted to pray for that too, for peace. I thought that was very special.

R: It kind of struck me how when you are thinking seven generations into the future, how quickly anything related to a 'dog-eat-dog' world and trying to get ahead—fall away so quickly, it's like all of a sudden, they are completely irrelevant, you are thinking about something more important, longer lasting…

K: This ends up coming back to being a process. It's all a process. This is just where I am in the process; the process is outside me and I just need to facilitate movement forward.

Interpretations

Throughout the interpretive work with these conversations, I paid particular attention to the discourses used and the different ways in which the participants speak about the Treaties. Richard's expressions of Crown and Indigenous relations certainly stand out from the expressions made by the other participants. At the time of the first dialogue within discussion group three, I felt a heaviness circulating in the air as Richard worked out his tensions with the Treaty relationships and as the other participants listened. I found myself waiting for the disclosure of an experience in which I could better situate his current understandings of Treaty. It seemed clear that Richard wasn't convinced there was potential inspiration from the Treaty narrative because of the way he characterized Crown relationships as inherently exploitive, and as tools of the colonizer. The question that occupied my mind was: Why did Richard think this way and with so much passion? More importantly, what was the nature of the traditions and experiences in Richard's life that produced the prejudices he carried into our conversations? Disclosure was not forthcoming for us yet. During this third conversation, Richard was quick to state his apprehensions regarding the Treaty relationships once again. He advances: "…you are either on one side or the other…and the Crown side, we are being repeatedly shown that it's wrong…" As the researcher, it felt like his comments were being directed at me. After all, I was the one who chose the various Treaty artifacts for engagement. Did I unwittingly suggest the Crown was wrong? Richard further states,

> …it doesn't really seem like we are trying to share perspectives and engage multiple perspectives. It seems to me that, not just this research, but the broader sort of process of truth and reconciliation…Well the way I feel about it is—what we are essentially saying is that the Crown perspective was wrong.

I will admit that this dialogue left me feeling perplexed about the process we had been engaging in as a group. I had thought that what we were attempting to do was exactly the process of sharing perspectives (and our prejudices) and engaging in multiple perspectives of the Treaties. Furthermore, the artifacts for engagement brought elements of different Indigenous perspectives and present-day Canadian interpretations (TED, 2013) of the numbered Treaties to the conversations. My intention was to bring different kinds of Treaty narratives to the discussion table that would provoke thoughtful engagement by the participants. As far as I knew, nowhere in the artifacts is the discourse 'wrong' employed nor was it employed within our conversations until Richard's pointed use of the term in the conversation. I likewise didn't think there was the *implication* that the Crown perspectives were or are wrong but that is a relatively subjective understanding. I would characterize the different Treaty artifacts as offering a new narrative and interpretation of events *alongside* what the written historical text presents rather than in opposition. They are alternative readings of Treaty events and relationships, and mostly steer clear of disparaging Crown intentions. Although, for example, a scene from Making Treaty 7 does use humour to exaggerate some of the colonial mentalities of Crown representatives during Treaty 7 negotiations, but its use highlights fundamental differences in worldviews and is not about criticizing the beliefs of the Treaty commissioners.[36] *The Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* ground their interpretations in the oral traditions of the First Nations people of Saskatchewan and refrain from offering a position on Crown interpretations. Looking back, I did not offer an artifact grounded specifically in a Métis understanding of the Treaties and perhaps, this would have been helpful for Richard.

Further along in our dialogue, I ask Richard if it is possible to consider that there were different governing parties making different decisions across the country. His reply is "No, I think the Treaties were inherently exploitive. And I don't think there is any way around that. I think the Treaties were inherently utilizing a power dynamic…" This understanding does seem born from a Treaty narrative that misrecognizes the relationships between the Crown and the Dominion of Canada, and further, between the Treaty agreements and the governing of Indigenous peoples established by the Indian Act. The distinction between what the Crown promised with the Treaties and how the Dominion of Canada was firstly, transferred power from the Crown and secondly, chose to legislate through the Indian Act, cannot be imagined. Further, as a result of the absence of Indigenous oral interpretations in curriculum, Indigenous leadership at the Treaty deliberations is portrayed as powerless and without agency. This significantly misrepresents their position and influence at the Treaty negotiations. These are critical understandings that are missing from many Canadian educators' perspectives on the Treaties. As we have come to understand, and as this participant research component continues to demonstrate, absent crucial understandings, Treaties remain inadequate for considerations of renewal and reinterpretation in the present.

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[36] Scene: "THE PITCH" (Kris Demeanor & Andy Curtis). A satire on Colonel James Farqharson MacLeod and Governor, Chief Commissioner David Laird visioning the future of Western Canada and their "pitch" for Treaty to the participating Chiefs, highlighting divergent worldviews and cultures and the barriers to cross-cultural communication (The Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society, 2015).

Atkins (1988) forwards:

> Instead of reading major humanistic texts as accounts of human encounters with absolute truth or reality, Bruffee (1985: 232) asks us to read them as stories of attempts to solve problems, to work out the potentialities of the language and activities available to us. (p. 446)

This is helpful guidance and something that the participants are attempting to work out—the discrepancies inherent when interpreting the Treaties through the historical text as absolute truth—and engaging with the possibility of different kinds of understanding. Brittany responds to Richard's dialogue by suggesting that "history can be re-written, it's the past that doesn't change. So that sometimes can make things a little easier to handle, because sometimes people believe history is fact." I would contend that Brittany is trying to help Richard work his way through this dilemma of the failures of the Crown by suggesting that it is possible to tell a different kind of story of our history. After all, she states, "history is not absolute truth." Indigenous author Thomas King has been writing *the truth about stories* for decades (2003). King writes, "Most of us think that history is the past. It's not. It's the stories we tell about the past. That's all it is" (2012, p. 2-3). What appears to be coming through in Brittany's comment is that history *can* be reimagined because the subjectivity of the past makes the possibility of 'absolute truth' illogical. There is no way to know for certain, the past as if we had lived it. But the past is available to us through the stories we tell, as inheritances and embedded within the horizons of our current understandings. Within an expansion of understanding, comes the necessity to change the way one tells their stories. As King posits, "Want a different ethic? Tell a different story" (2003, p. 164). Marie remarks:

> I see the whole Treaty thing as aspirational…as a symbol of coming together. Making Treaties is a natural human thing, that if we didn't have this, we would need something else. And if we want to come together we need something. The whole thing about history not just being about the facts but how we tell the story—sometimes you need a story that people can bond over.

Marie has carried this thread of the significance of story here and elsewhere throughout our discussions. Stories are incredibly significant because as human beings, we are not only embedded within them, we define our identities by them, and importantly, they provide the framework in which we live our lives alongside others. If we want to consider the stories of Treaty and Treaty relationships differently in our lives, then we have to narrate them differently, and that begins with an engagement with divergent perspectives. As this study has worked to demonstrate, the potentiality of language and activities that are available to us in terms of telling a different kind of Treaty story are actually abundant. At this point in our conversations, the participants are really starting to dig deeper into the meanings of the Treaty stories that they are encountering in our conversations.

Major Interpretive Insight # 2:

- *Through a process of engagement with different kinds of Treaty narratives, the potentiality of a Treaty sensibility emerges through the messiness of discussion.*

Fostering a Treaty sensibility

Part of a secondary and yet crucial and interrelated aspect of this research is articulating what Donald (2014) conceptualizes as a 'Treaty Sensibility.' He writes,

> educators need to understand that their professional responsibilities to address Aboriginal perspectives are connected to their responsibilities to honour the integrity of the Treaties in effect in Alberta today. They are being called to honour the spirit and intent of the Treaties. Gaining curricular and pedagogical sensibilities guided by the Treaties comes from engaging with them as more than just pieces of paper that chronicle 19th century business deals. This requires engagement with the holistic and ethical philosophies that inform how First Nations peoples remember the Treaties as sacred covenants through which newcomers were adopted as relatives. (n.p.)

It is not until this third discussion session that we take a look at the passage from Donald (2014) above. Inevitably, conversations regarding the Treaty relationships (whether literal or aspirational) become interreferentially related to an awareness that a responsibility to those relationships exists. The participants move back and forth between old Treaty narratives, new imaginings of a Treaty sensibility and then, practically speaking, "well, how do I bring those ideas into the classroom?"

Kumari begins in the second dialogue influenced by the words of Chief Roy Whitney. Whitney states,

> What has become abundantly clear is that in 1877 two peoples with mutually exclusive world views attempted to communicate with each other as they negotiated Treaty 7. We would like to register the caveat that much work still needs to be done before either side can be effectively understood by the other. A

> process of things unfolding has always been a part of the Native world view, and perhaps it could become part of the Euro-Canadian world view as well. (as cited in Hildebrandt et al, 1996, p. xiv)

Kumari reiterates that “We just need to be a part of the process unfolding.” Her comments come shortly after Richard’s discussion regarding the exploitive nature of Crown intentions from the first dialogue. Recalling the discussion shared previously, Richard asks the group “…being the inheritor of the Crown side of this relationship is that—can we redeem that perspective?” Subsequently, there is the idea of redeeming Crown intentions hanging in the discussion space, but I also sense uncertainty and anxiety about bringing Treaty education and Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom, and respectively, into the different disciplines of each participant. Kumari’s comments come in relation to those inquiries. She is suggesting that as educators, if we consider ourselves as part of an enduring process, one that is unfolding in our present and will continue to do so in our future, then perhaps, “it takes some of the pressure off.” Assumedly, it takes some of the pressure off to a) immediately resolve and redeem Crown perspectives in order to move forward and b) to be an expert on Treaty education and engage with Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom in the *correct* way. Understanding these actions as a responsibility to an ongoing process is a beginning tenet of participating in a Treaty sensibility. To be a Treaty partner is to inhabit the Treaties as life-long commitments to building and maintaining ethical relations between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. Like Kumari, I too find guidance in Chief Whitney’s words. He is reminding us that the Treaties are not closed off from engagement or interpretation in our present as has been indicated by the fundamental nature of the written historical text.

They are a part of a complex and open network of interrelationships. Thus, the significance of participating in processes of renewal and reinterpretation of the Treaties is really important. You have to be a part of that process for the process to continue; for effective, thoughtful engagement and cross-cultural communication to take place. Canadians have not been a part of that process, yet Treaties have endured. It is time to be a part of that process once again.

I would like to dwell further on Richard's idea of redeeming Crown perspectives. As I have come to understand through my engagement with Crown interpretations of the Treaties, Treaty commissioner Alexander Morris, who negotiated Treaties 3 to 6, held a deep respect and admiration for the Indigenous peoples of the prairies. Talbot (2009) suggests further that Morris experienced an ongoing transcendence of his own ideological worldviews—considered primarily conservative and imperialist (p. 12)—on account of his long-term engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities. For example, Morris demonstrated his understandings of the pending Treaty relationships by applying

> Aboriginal ways of speaking, symbolism, and concepts of diplomacy in his own speeches and explanations of the treaty relationship. He evoked the principles of reciprocity, equality, and mutual trust that persist today in Aboriginal understandings of the treaty relationship. (Talbot, 2009, p. 65)

Notably, what this interpretation suggests is that Morris allowed his horizon and the traditions that comprised that horizon to be expanded by his interactions and engagements with Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing. Morris came to mutually respect the Indigenous peoples of the prairies and sought to make Treaty with them, as equals, and within the metaphorical language and symbolism of their universe.

That Morris meant what he said, and further, that he believed wholeheartedly that what was promised by the Crown would be honoured has been strongly advanced by numerous historians and Treaty academics (Asch, 2014; Beal, 2007; Talbot, 2009), as discussed in Chapter Three. Of significant importance to this hermeneutic inquiry is that Morris' own changes in understanding represent the Gadamerian principle of a 'fusion of horizons' (1975; 2004). A fusion of horizons constitutes horizons that meet and engage and ultimately understand the world differently than they did before. As Smith (2006) conceives it, "whereby what I bring and you bring to the encounter can be dialogically engaged to produce a condition whereby we feel that we understand each other" (p. 111). Historical records of Morris' interactions with Indigenous peoples and the subsequent successful negotiation of the Treaties does signify that indeed, some aspect of a fusion of understandings was manifested.

The nature of this research approach has placed a major focus on relationships between peoples. However, the spirit and intent of the Treaties is not just about people, it is much more significant than that. The Treaties are "a part of a sacred ecology that gives life" (D. Donald, personal communication, October, 2015). As described in Chapter Three, the Treaties are not restricted to human-to-human relations but are inclusive of and founded upon extensions of relations with other-than-human beings, for example, the continuation of sacred Treaties made with the animal nations as Simpson (2008) articulates. According to Indigenous oral interpretations (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000; Craft, 2013; Hildebrandt, Carter & First Rider, 1996; Johnson, 2007; LeRat & Ungar, 2005), the numbered Treaties are not to be understood within an exclusive context of nations and peoples. Rather, they are conceptualized as Treaties between differing peoples and the ecology of the land. Kumari's comments in our second dialogue are the first time that 'spirit' is applied to something that is more-than-human within our conversations. Richard has asked the group about certain guiding principles that would be significant for their pedagogical practices in the classroom. Through a reading of McLeod (1999), Kumari's relationship with the North Saskatchewan River reveals a new significance. The Treaty boundaries follow the flow of the rivers across the land, highlighting the importance of the people's relationship with the water networks in their territory. The North Saskatchewan River that flows through what is now Edmonton played a significant role in negotiations for Treaty 6. It is through the use of metaphor and symbolism that Kumari is able to comprehend and appreciate something new about the Treaties:

> And that relationship I have with that river…it has this massive symbolic meaning…I could see using that in my teaching. Going to the river and saying, "this river is part of a covenant and it is flowing and it is strong."

I would consider this story that Kumari is attending to as part of a growing consciousness of a Treaty sensibility. She is imagining herself honouring the Treaty that she is a part of through her responsibility and relationship to the river of her home. Kumari is discovering an expression of self and others within the spirit and intent of the Treaties.

After Kumari's dialogue, Richard offers that "I think the kinship stuff keeps coming back to me all the time when I think about what principles are guiding all of this…" What follows is immensely important for the interpretation of Richard's contributions to our discussions. Richard finally shares with the group, a major negativity of experience that has been informing his perspectives on the Treaty deliberations. He characterizes his work in diplomatic relations in Jerusalem as “the worst of the worst in terms of the way people treat each other in a negotiation-Treaty type situation…” As interpreter, this is a gigantic “Ah-ha” moment for me. His understandings of Treaties in Canada are largely shaped by his negativities of experience overseas. Up until now, it has been challenging to position his contentions within any lived experiences that he shared with the group. Now, I am able to understand that embracing a different kind of Treaty narrative does not immediately present itself as something Richard could use to guide his pedagogical and curricular efforts in the classroom precisely because of the forestructure of his past experiences. The experiences of international Treaty and colonial relations have produced some of the prejudices and informed the horizon that Richard has brought to the discussions. The Treaty narrative that Richard is familiar with overseas describes the dynamics of power, authority and influence as things obtained at the expense over others. Furthermore, current Treaty narratives in Canada reinforce such a narrative for him. It might be contended that Richard has not had the opportunity to engage with a narrative that would suggest a Treaty could be about something that enhances well-being rather than causing harm.[37] Engagement with the Treaty artifacts and the dialogical conversations occurring between the participants are qualitatively different than what has been experienced in the past for Richard.

Davey (2006) offers that “Philosophical hermeneutics is, much rather, an interpretation of interpretation, a prolonged meditation upon what “happens” to us within “hermeneutic experience” when we are challenged by texts and artworks, ancient and modern" (p. 1). Within the participant conversations, the unpacking of the biases and prejudices that they bring to the discussion happens naturally within the framework of conversation and being committed to that conversation. Remembering that Gadamer (2004) considers hermeneutics to be the art of conversation, which is to discover where another person comes from and their horizon through meaningful dialogue (p. 302), I would say that the participants were rather successful in their own 'art of conversation.' Somehow within this limited hermeneutic experience, something has happened to us (Davey, 2006) which makes us different than what we were when we first arrived. The participants, through an opportunity to *converse*, have been unpacking their horizons and opening themselves to the potential of what others have to say. In various ways, the participants and myself were testing our pre-judgements with and against each other, forming and then reforming our ideas within new spaces of understanding. I would suggest this to be a measure of Gadamer's concept of a fusion of horizons once again. As Smith (1999) avers "Understanding between persons is possible only to the degree that people can initiate a conversation between themselves and bring about a "fusion" of their different horizons into a new understanding which they then hold in common" (p. 33). In our conversations, something happened in that dialogical exchange of horizons—through those processes, understandings were not the same as they were before.

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[37] This statement is informed by Ermine’s (2007) definition of ethics as the “capacity to know what harms or enhances the well-being of sentient creatures” (p. 195).

Significantly for Richard, he states

> its seems to me what the First Nations perspective on the Treaties provides is that actually, there is a different way to think about all of these things…there is a different way to think about how we relate to each other.

Through hermeneutic conversations with the other participants, Richard has finally been able to gain some fundamental insight into how he might consider the Treaty relationships differently than he did before. Further, this opportunity allows Richard to consider the meaning of Treaties for his pedagogical practices. He remarks as a final thought: “My goal [pause], would be to find some way to really, like not in a token way, bring this into a Physics class and a Math class and I feel like I am a long way from that right now. I think for me, I have a lot more work to do” (Discussion Group Three, June 9, 2016). Davey (2006) notes that “Conversation shows how an experience of change is part of understanding and demonstrates that, like itself, understanding has no end. The achievement of understanding is and will always remain difficult” (p. 2). Richard’s disclosures have exemplified well the challenges evident when engaging prejudice and the processes involved with coming to understand something differently. In recent communication, Richard shared with me that since the discussion groups, he has officially gone through the processes of becoming a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta (personal communication, February, 2018).

Marie situates her commitments to the Treaties within the wisdom of understanding the relational significance of newcomers being adopted as relatives. She states “When I think about it literally, my ancestors did hope and pray for that but I think anyone’s ancestors would have wanted to pray for that too, for peace.” Marie is merging her past inheritances with her present understandings of the Treaty relationship, exemplifying that horizons of understanding cannot exist without an acknowledgement of who one is in relation to the past. In her final remarks, Marie offers

> The Treaties, the reason why the Treaties really appeal to me is that we all live by the stories that we like to tell about ourselves, and what our lives mean together and I think the Treaties is a story about people coming together and becoming one family…and it's like, I almost feel like this is showing me the way forward and I can continue on doing what I think they [Marie's ancestors] wanted and what my grandfather wanted and honour that. Sometimes it sounds like a fairy tale, like this future where we are going to all be brothers but on the other hand, I have had these relationships so I want other people to have this too. (Discussion Group Three, June 9, 2016)

What I find most significant about what Marie has to say here is that throughout all three discussion groups, Marie has remained committed to the idea that engaging with the Treaties is a process of learning to live together and honour our differences. By being aware that her perspectives are embedded within the social structures of her families' history and experiences, and her schooling, Marie worked to bring diverse Treaty understandings offered through the artifacts for engagement into the horizon of her own vantage point. Through this work, she was also able to offer those horizons to the other participants in the conversation. Importantly as well, Marie recognized and affirmed Indigenous identity as a distinct and autonomous view of the world through chosen discourse.

Kumari and Brittany also take the opportunity to consider the meaning that Treaties have on their pedagogical practices. Kumari offers

> I think that my time spent at the river and contemplating what that river means in terms of Treaty…it's almost an intimacy with…it comes back to having a

> relationship with the land…but the river also represents a responsibility and also something I am entitled to…I am discovering relationship with the land and it's changing the way I am willing to look at Treaties. (Discussion Group Three, June 9, 2016)

These conversations represent the participants' attempts to make sense of their world in relation to new understandings of the Treaties. Stories and symbolism have been triggered, and there appears a tangible effort to employ sensibilities that might help the participants attain a more depth understanding of the Treaties. For Brittany, she explains

> …one thing I want to do—be more—you don't have to be the complete expert on this topic [pause]. So be more vulnerable and more open and rely on those relationships because then you are going more with the Treaty being about relying on each other. (Discussion Group Three, June 9, 2016).

As this research reveals, through a process of meaningful engagement with different kinds of Treaty narratives, the potentiality of a Treaty sensibility begins to emerge for each of the participants. Additionally important to note is that an engagement with the Treaty teachings provoked a critical reflection on identity and the participants' identities in relation to Indigenous-Canadian relationships. Kovach (2013) explores conversations with non-Indigenous education faculty members inquiring into their perspectives on integrating Indigenous knowledge into their teachings. Kovach states that the research participants

> were not specifically asked about teaching treaty but the conversations inevitably spoke to the core Indigenous philosophy inherent in a treaty perspective…as Treaty teaches us, the conversations were largely *relationally* situated within the

> dialogue illuminating the push/pull dynamics of human relationships where hesitancies and uncertainties were present. (p. 116, emphasis in original)

As Kovach suggests, contained in these conversations within education spaces, there are pushes and pulls evident that indeed illuminate the hesitancies and uncertainties involved with coming to understand a different kind of foundational story. Taking up divergent Treaty narratives does not necessarily lead to a neat reconciliation of how one might begin to tell a new story. Being comfortable with the challenging nature of understanding different and often competing stories is a part of an interpretive process of honouring the Treaties. Part of the quality of the dialogues came from the commitment of the participants to work *together* to attain some element of a common understanding regarding the Treaties in their lives. This does not infer that the participants understand Treaties in the same way, but perhaps, a shared understanding that different narratives have the potential to provide guidance on their pedagogical and curricular practices. Donald (2014) suggests the collective engagement fostered through group conversations can serve "a pedagogic function amongst participants in that they are engaged in an extended process of thinking together to achieve higher levels of understanding of issues critical to their teaching practices." Embedded within the collective engagement for the participants in this study was the sharing of stories and the significance involved with learning from a negativity of experience. The discussions with the participants show that what might be most important to begin with is the conscious creation of a space for divergent perspectives to meet and converse alongside one another. Such a statement is informed by Ermine's (2007) concept of the 'ethical space.' He forwards:

> the idea of the ethical space, produced by contrasting perspectives of the world, entertains the notion of a meeting place, or initial thinking about a neutral zone between entities or cultures. The space offers a venue to step out of our allegiances, to detach from the cages of our mental worlds and assume a position where human-to-human dialogue can occur. (p. 202)

Bringing this space to education in the context of learning *from* and *through* Treaty wisdom and teachings provides educators with an opportunity to share current perspectives, encounter different narratives and importantly, engage ethically with one another in the processes of coming to understand something differently than they did before. Both Kovach's (2013) and Donald's (2014) research reiterate that whether intended or not, conversations in which Indigenous histories and ways of knowing are placed at the center provoke beliefs, ideas and behaviours that at their core, are *relational*. The participants, in various ways, demonstrated too their connections not only to the topic of Treaties and Treaty relationships, but their connections to each other as fellow educators and human beings.

Curricular Significances

In the final scene of the Making Treaty 7 production, Colonel James MacLeod and Chief Crowfoot rise from the grave to look back at the true spirit and intent of Treaty 7, asking the audience, what have we learned?

The Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society, 2015.

Treaty as *relational pedagogy.*

Pinar (2000) considers curriculum as a complicated conversation with self and others (as cited in Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers & Leggo, 2009, p. 2). This represents well what has been illuminated in this study through the various kinds of discussions that have taken place. Through these conversational processes, I have explored the following curricular question: What is the significance of Treaty understandings in facilitating shifts in the ways educators address Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum? This question was examined in the context of attending to the origins and outcomes of Treaty absences in education and interpretively engaging with Treaty wisdom as a foundational vision for pedagogical, curricular and reconciliatory work. It has been demonstrated that a Treaty narrative exists despite the absence of Treaty education in Alberta. These understandings influence the ways in which educators meaningfully address Aboriginal perspectives in their classroom. What I hope has been revealed in this study is that through a deeper examination of the differences in Treaty meanings, understandings of the Treaties can actually be strengthened rather than weakened. The significance of Treaty understandings in shifting the ways in which educators address Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum emanates from a process of exploring Treaties as an educational philosophy of teaching *from* and *through* Treaty (Kovach, 2013). Through this process, the potential of a different kind of Treaty narrative and guiding pedagogical ethic is presented.

For educators, considering Treaties as a form of *relational pedagogy* provides a dynamic framework in which to ground pedagogical practices in the founding relationships of the nation. These practices begin within acknowledgement of the ethical and moral responsibilities established by the Treaties and the complex network of interrelationships to which the praxis of teaching is a part. Here, pedagogy is imagined as much more than just a practice of teaching, it too endures as a part of a complex network of relationships with learners. Pedagogy at its heart *is* foundationally relational. Treaty wisdom and the Treaty teachings are at their heart, foundationally pedagogical. Bringing the Treaty relationships to life through the classroom signifies participating in a Treaty sensibility and honouring the Treaties as an important partnership of our present. Treaty teachings comprising such principles as adopting one another as relatives, the sharing of gifts, the practicing of mutual and ethical respect, participating in thoughtful and effective cross-cultural communication, being responsible for the ongoing renewal of a connection, these are conceptual examples of honouring the sacredness of the Treaty relationships. Further, they exemplify participating in the processes of renewal and resurgence of the Treaties, as a conversation of our present, and an urgent undertaking necessary within education in Alberta today. This, I believe, is what is being asked of educators as they endeavour to take up the responsibilities of being a part of a Treaty relationship and engage with Indigenous perspectives in curriculum.

Chapter Six

Circling Back

We are just at a temporary resting place on our journey to deeper understanding.

Chambers, 2003, p. 228

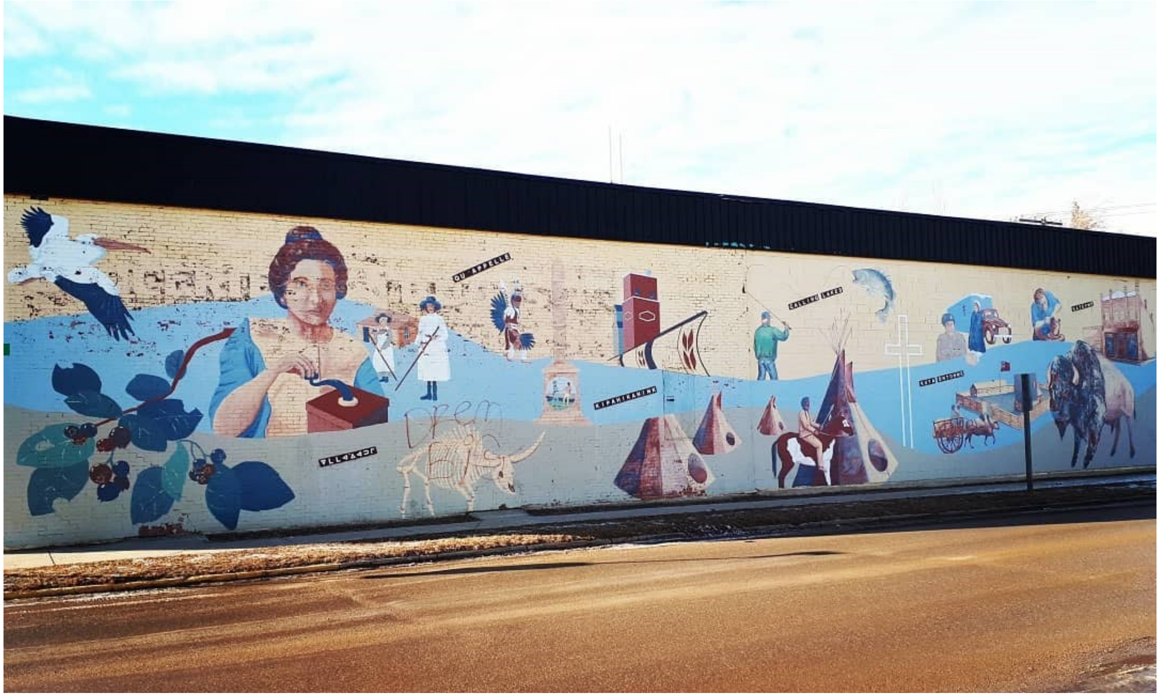

Figure 3. “Signatures of Time" Mural. Moffat, E., Labatt, S., Irving, S., Malo, M., & Parker, D. (Artists). (1996). Saskatchewan Arts Council & Saskatchewan Arts Board Collaborative.
Burns, R. (Photograph). 2018. Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.

In 1996, the town of Fort Qu’ Appelle commissioned a large mural to be painted on the corner of the major intersection of Main and Broad Street. I lived with my parents only a few blocks from this mural further along on Broad street. Since 1996, I must have driven, walked or rode my bike passed this mural a thousand times over. I would have been about 14 years old when it was first commissioned. I recall that my friends (myself included) didn’t think the mural was *very cool* because of its historical symbolism and well, history is not particularly *cool* when you’re 14. But I also remember inquiring around as to why the artists had purposefully left certain imagery unfinished. For example, the top of the tipi and the front of the train car. Someone told me, or perhaps I read it in the local newspaper, that the artists were trying to convey connections between the past and present of local history, culture, identity and community. The cutting off of the tipi represented the disruptions that came to the Indigenous peoples when newcomers arrived. The layered cream, blue and green backgrounds seemed fairly self-explanatory within the topography of the prairies. Now, I look again and I see depictions of pioneer cultures and Indigenous cultures; they are there together, although not necessarily working *together*. Colonial representations are abundant, found within the Fort and its fortified walls and the Hudson Bay Company store and even perhaps, the ‘modernizing’ technologies of the railroad and the ambulance. Saskatoon berries, a man fly-fishing, a pelican and a horse signify local flora and fauna. And there are some darker aspects—the buffalo and its mirrored skeleton, depicting the destruction of the buffalo.

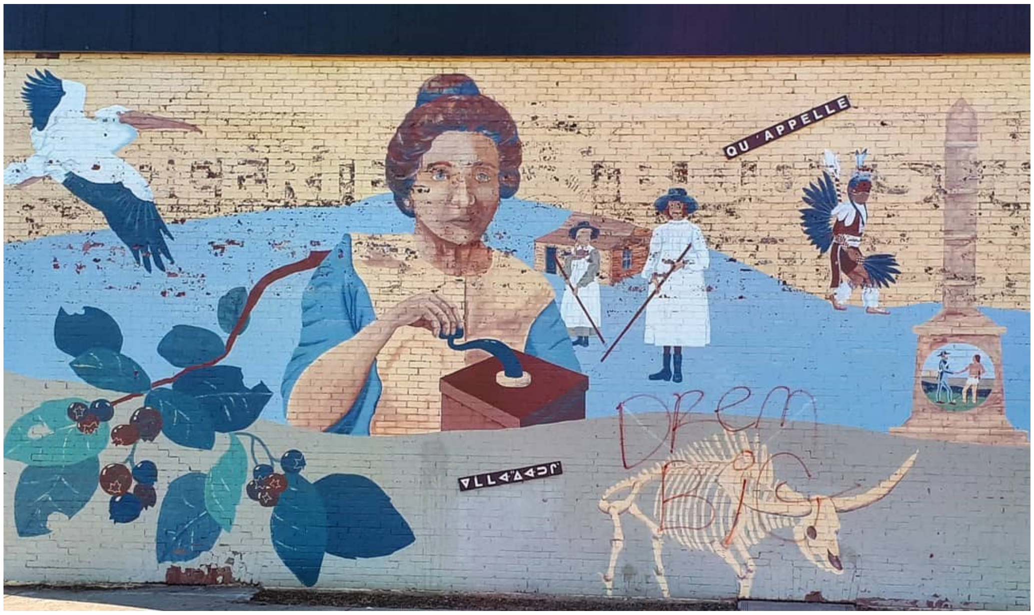

Figure 4. Burns, R. (Photograph). 2018. Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.

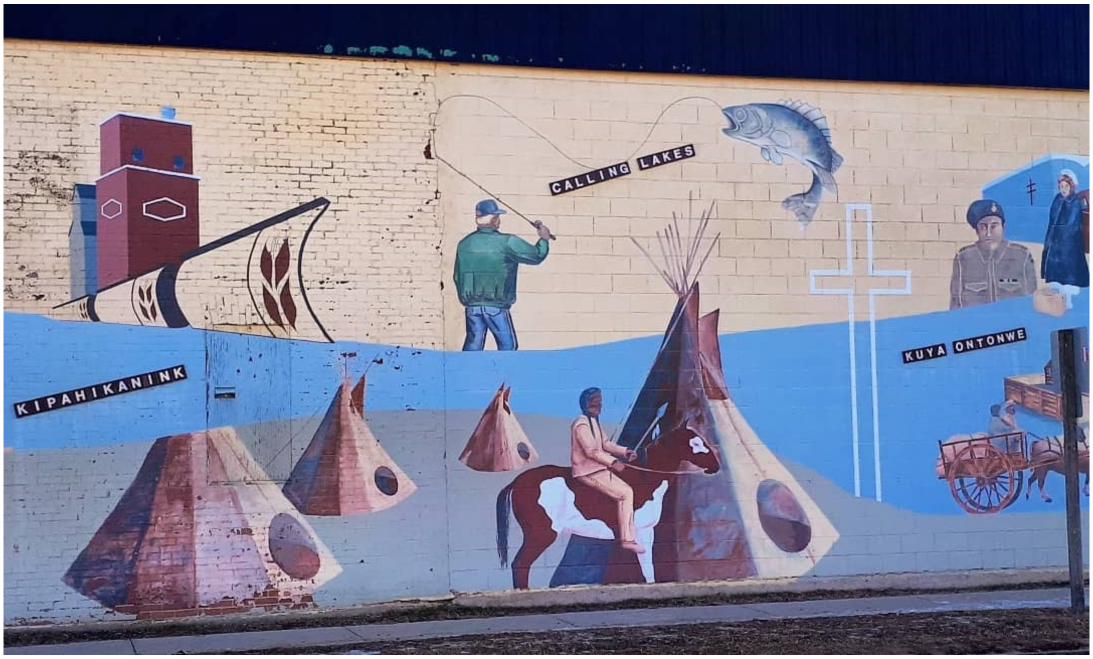
CALLING LAKES
KIPAHIKANINK
KUYA ONTONWE

Figure 5. Burns, R. (Photograph). 2018. Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.

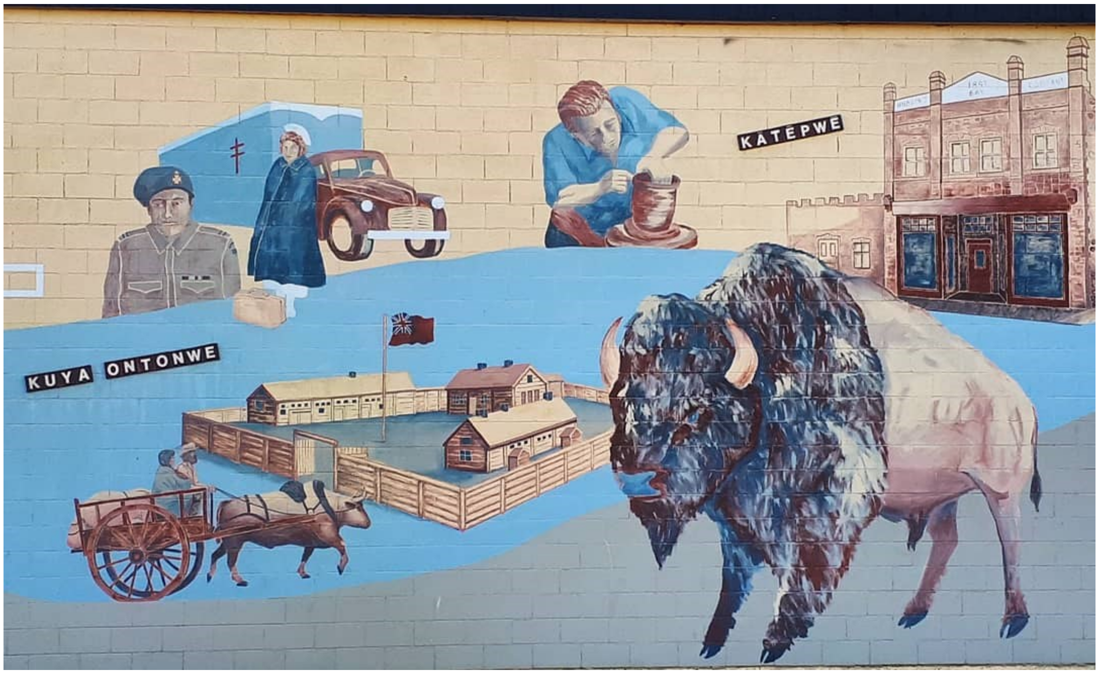
KATEPWE
KUYA ONTONWE

Figure 6. Burns, R. (Photograph). 2018. Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.

In the centre of the mural is an image of the Treaty monument (and Treaty medallion) that was erected in 1915 and still stands today. I played tag, ate peanut butter sandwiches and ran around willy-nilly on that Treaty monument quite frequently as a child. It stood in the middle of this small grassed, tree-lined park with planted flowers all around in the summer. At the south end was an historic artillery cannon. I played on that too, despite the risk of metal and chipping paint splinters. To us children, that place was known as “Cannon-ball Park.” And I’m pretty sure that ‘cannon-ball’ was pointed *straight at* the Treaty monument, not that I gave it much thought back then. The thing is, because of that ‘cannon-ball’ and because the history and ceremony of Remembrance Day was so prominent in the Programs of Study at my school, I was certain growing up that that monument was for war veterans. It was only a decade ago that I shockingly realized the truth of my misrecognition. A few years back, the artillery cannon was relocated to the yard of the local Royal Canadian Legion. In its previous location, it *was* pointing at the Treaty monument. A brown heritage sign on the street-side reads “Treaty Park,” part of a self-guided Treaty walking trail that can be taken in town.

Treaty representations abound in Fort Qu’ Appelle. In many ways, the stories of Treaty have always been entangled in my life. Only the limitations of colonial mentalities prevented me from consciously engaging with them as a story of my own when I was young. Yet, I wonder how the act of walking past that mural has shaped the ways in which I considered my community in later life. It seems as though the Treaties have always been there for me, guiding me, waiting patiently for me to pay attention. The experiences of growing up in Fort Qu’ Appelle are complex and dynamic and exemplify the daily practices of differing peoples living together in a valley that has been here longer than any of us. I did not experience an absence of Indigenous presence like some of the participants remarked in the research component, and which, I have heard many educators and students in Alberta remark as well. My community was not a homogenous place of whiteness though whiteness still holds political and economic power. Racism, discrimination and prejudice against Indigenous peoples still remain formidable across the prairies. But it is more productively understood as a network of complicated entanglements than it is as a binary of white-Native relations. The linguistic representations found within the mural represent the Cree, Dakota, French and English translations of the phrase "Gathering Place" (S. Labatt, personal communication, February, 2018). The Qu' Appelle valley has long been a place of gathering and it continues to be so. This coming together signifies an ethical engagement—that the Qu' Appelle valley is still calling for its people to engage and gather in ethically relational ways.

Moules (2002) asserts that "Hermeneutics demands that we proceed delicately and yet wholeheartedly, and as a result of what we study, we carry ourselves differently, and we live differently" (p. 12). In Chapter One, I contended that I came to graduate school to find something about the education world *out there* but what has ensued has been a far more personal journey to finding out things *from within*. The personal narratives of this study have traced my journey through different Treaty territories. In many ways, I was learning about the education world out there, about the curricular and pedagogical world, and the structures of higher learning, but more importantly, I have been journeying home, to Treaty 4, to *kahtapwao sepe*. And a journey home represents a journey inward. It is a journey to the heart. It is an ontological journey of understanding the nature of being-in-the-world (Gadamer, 2004, p. 440)—the nature of who I am in relation to this place of the Qu' Appelle valley. And more generally applied, it is a journey of coming to understand who I am in relation to this place of the prairies, of and within prairie history and prairie peoples. As a result of situating my life as a site of inquiry, engaging wholeheartedly *from* and *through* Treaty wisdom and Treaty teachings, I have come to understand myself as belonging to a complex network of interrelationships between differing peoples and the ecology of the land. It is an inherited relationship and one that I am wholly responsible for. I am working to honour a sensibility where we are different and yet simultaneously related (Donald, 2011). I am a Treaty partner and as such, I am a part of a process unfolding. Much work remains to be done.

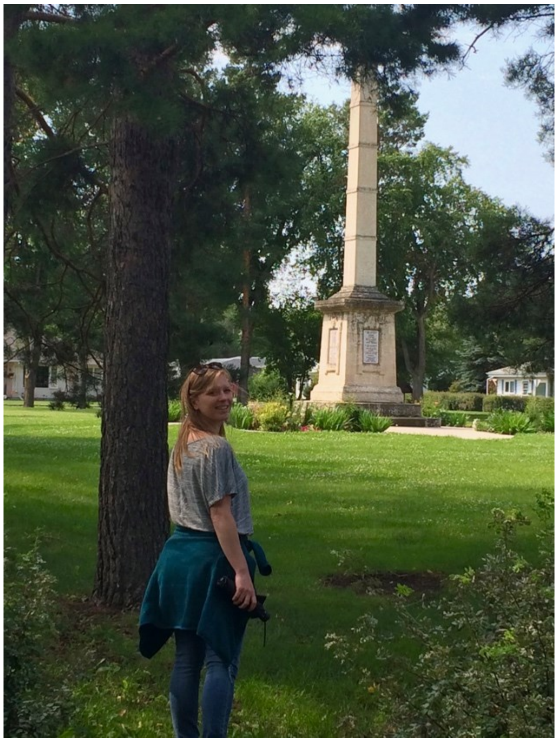

Figure 7. Treaty Monument and Self.
Koops, S. (Photograph). 2017. Fort Qu'Appelle, SK.

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Appendix A

Information Sheet and Consent Form

Study Title: Treaty Canadians: An examination of the educational significance of Treaty understandings among Alberta pre-service teachers

Research Investigator:	**Supervisor:**
Sara Solvey	Dr. Dwayne Donald
Master's Student	Secondary Education
Secondary Education	445 Education South
551 Education South, University of Alberta	University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2G5	780-492-5639
403-370-7729	dwayne.donald@ualberta.ca
solvey@ualberta.ca	

Date:

Dear:

Background

You are invited to participate in a research study involving Treaty understandings and Treaty relationships in Canada. As a pre-service teacher in the teacher education program at the University of Alberta, you have been identified as a potential participant based on your prior participation in the courses EDU 211 and/or EDES 409 and the strong interest you showed in engaging with Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom. The results of this study will be used in support of a graduate thesis.

Purpose

Over the past decade and a half, Alberta Education has put forth a variety of new curriculum initiatives that ask teachers to engage with Aboriginal perspectives in their programs of study. These directions however, pose challenges to teachers as they consider how to engage with multiple and diverse perspectives by eliciting a variety of reactions and emotions, namely, apprehension, resistance, and misunderstanding. In an effort to move through these difficult emotions, this study will explore Treaty relationships and Treaty-making processes in Canada as a possibility for facilitating shifts in the ways educators engage with Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom.

The format for this study will be small group discussions involving between 4 and 8 other pre-service teachers from the Faculty of Education. Facilitated by the researcher, you will meet together to discuss the learning outcomes of engaging with multiple perspectives of the Treaty negotiations and the implications of coming to understand yourselves as Treaty people. Discussions will center on considerations of what Treaties can teach us today about our world and our relationships within it. In order to draw upon the varying historical and contemporary interpretations of Treaty deliberations in Canada, the study will utilize various Treaty-related artifacts for engagement within the discussion groups.

Study Procedures

- The research study will take place at the Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta in a pre-arranged classroom fit for small group discussions.

- The population for this study will be between 4 and 8 participants. You, along with the other participants and the researcher will meet together three times as a group beginning in the month of May 2016 and ending in the month of June 2016. These group discussions will last between 3 and 4 hours in duration.
- Each group discussion will be framed by a focus question pertinent to the overall central research question. Guided by the artifacts of engagement and the focus question, you will share your thoughts and reflections with the group regarding Treaty understandings and Treaty relationships.
- Data to be collected will be in the form of audio recordings from the group discussions, which will then be transcribed and used in support of a graduate thesis paper.
- After the final group discussion, you will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the researcher in order to clarify and deepen any thoughts and understandings coming from the group discussions and/or to verify information coming from the data analysis process.
- As a participant, you will be responsible for your attendance at the three group discussions and the quality of your contributions to group discussions. In total, between 12-15 hours time commitment will be necessary spanning a period of two months.

Benefits

As a participant in this study, you will have a direct opportunity to discuss, alongside your peers, how you might engage in a meaningful way with Alberta Education's mandate to take up Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom. This opportunity will allow you the chance to flesh out the difficulties involved with bringing in diverse and complex perspectives into your classroom, via an intimate setting and before you arrive in the classroom. This study will involve considerations of yourself as a Canadian and a teacher in relation to Treaties and what Treaties can teach us today. You may find that you consider yourself differently upon participating in this study and that you understand yourself better in terms of your relationships in this world. The benefits of participating in this study are dependent upon the contributions that yourself and other participants make to group discussions. There is however, always the chance that as a participant, you will not benefit from this study.

It is hoped that the scholarly benefits to the proposed research will be that your contributions shed light on the ways in which educators can confront and move through difficult knowledge that often becomes evident when taking up a multiplicity of diverse perspectives in the classroom. In addition, your understandings and considerations of the importance of Treaties today can lend themselves to strengthening Aboriginal-Canadian relations through the classroom.

There are no costs involved in participating in this research and no compensation will be provided for your participation (besides yummy snacks and drinks at the discussion groups ☺)

Risk

Past studies have identified that difficult emotions arise when educators begin to take up diverse and varying perspectives that are different from the western educational perspectives that dominate the educational landscape in Canada. Thus it is necessary that as educators, we begin to confront and work through these difficult emotions so that we are able to understand how it is that we locate ourselves within these perspectives and how we might go about engaging with them in the classroom.

The nature of the topics under discussion in this study may cause you as a participant to feel varying levels of emotional discomfort. These discomforts might come in the form of feelings of denial, blame, guilt, and apprehension during and after discussions however you are encouraged to work through these discomforts within the group and one-on-one discussions. The focal purpose of this study is to move through and beyond these types of discomforts that exist both outside the sphere of this study and within it, in order to come to a place of understanding of those emotions. In addition, because you have already participated in the courses EDU 211 and/or EDES 409, you will already have been exposed to the types of topics that will come under discussion in this study.

Voluntary Participation

- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. The participation is completely voluntary and you are not obliged to answer any specific questions even if participating in the study.
- As a participant, you are free to withdraw, end or modify your participation at any time prior to the point that the final synthesis of data analysis begins and by requesting to do so with the researcher. The date for the final synthesis of data analysis will be indicated to you two weeks following the final group discussion.

Confidentiality & Anonymity

The intended use of this study is in support of a graduate thesis paper. However, there is potential that the data could be shared publicly in the form of a presentation or article. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to be used in the dissemination of the research. Upon completion of transcription, all possible identifying markers on any material will be removed, deleted, or covered up to help retain anonymity of the participants. Within the group contexts, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. The other participants in the study will know your first name, educational history and family history in so far as you decide to share this information. As a participant, you will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement agreeing to the following:

- I will keep all the research information shared with me, including other participant's contributions to discussion, name, family history, and educational history confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., in conversation with someone outside the study, social media, e-mail) with anyone other than the researcher. Form attached.

Throughout the study, your contributions to discussions will be collected as audio recordings. All audio recordings and transcriptions will be kept confidential on a password-protected computer and locked in a filing cabinet. Only the researcher, Sara Solvey, and her supervisor, Dr. Dwayne Donald, will have access to this data. At the University of Alberta, we keep data stored for 5 years after the end of the study, at which time it will be destroyed.

As a participant, you will have the opportunity to view your transcribed contributions to discussion in order to verify intended meaning. As this study is primarily an interpretive study, your contributions will be interpreted by the researcher and used in the analysis of the results. There is a chance that you will not agree with the interpretations of the researcher.

Additional Information

All of this information is provided in order for you to make an informed decision on whether or not you would like to participate in this study. Before you make a decision the researcher will go over this form with you. You are encouraged to ask questions if you feel anything needs to be made clearer. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

If you have any questions about the research now or later, please do not hesitate to contact Sara Solvey by telephone, (403) 370-7729 or via e-mail at solvey@ualberta.ca

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. This office has no affiliation with the study investigator.

One copy of the signed consent form will be for the researcher, and one will be provided to you for your records.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

____ ________________

Participant's Name (printed) and Signature Date

____ ________________

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

Sincerely,

Sara Solvey

Appendix B

Summaries of Scenes from the Making Treaty 7 production

- **"SMALLPOX"** (Joel Chief Moon, Cory Beaver, Cherish Violet Blood, Garret Smith & Imagyn Cardinal)
  The actors, with participation from the audience, bring to light the devastation and massive loss of lives caused by the smallpox epidemic that was launched on contact and led to population decimation, fear and succumbing to the Treaty.
- **"CHANGE 1 & 2"** (Michelle Thrush)
  Change 1: Set in 1877 at Blackfoot Crossing, a young Tsuu T'ina mother speaks to her newborn about the positive changes anticipated from the making of the Treaty.
  Change 2: Set today, the same woman begs for change highlighting the stereotypes and broken dreams 140 years later.
- **"WHITE DUST"** (Troy Emery Twigg & Cory Beaver)
  This comedic skit explores the story of creation and the impact of contact on indigenous people's diet and lifestyle.
- **"THE PITCH"** (Kris Demeanor & Andy Curtis)
  A satire on Colonel James Farqharson MacLeod and Governor, Chief Commissioner David Laird visioning the future of Western Canada and their "pitch" for Treaty to the participating Nations Chiefs, highlighting divergent worldviews and cultures and the barriers to cross-cultural communication.
- **"CONTEXT 5"** (Garret Smith)
  Declaration of Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Super-Intendant General, Department of Indian Affairs, 1920 on the intent to assimilate and subsequent impact of the Bill that enacted the Residential School System.
- **"LITTLE BROTHER"** (Cherish Violet Blood)
  This scene set in a Residential School explores the impact of the abuses on a pair of siblings.
- **"NOY 1.5"** (Pamela Tzeng & Joel Chief Moon)
  This dance movement scene exposes the human rights violations in Residential Schools and the acknowledgment of abuses by the Government of Canada and the Church.
- **"GARRET'S PIECE"** (Garret Smith & Indica Cardinal)
  A new father finds his identity by speaking to his newborn daughter about his anger and decades of oppression and racism, and finds in her inspiration for the future of his people.

- **“MR. C”** (the late Narcisse Blood)
  A Residential School survivor speaks to the degradation and racism he experienced as a child.

- **“NO HATE”** (Garret Smith & Kris Demeanor)
  Colonel James MacLeod and Chief Crowfoot rise from the grave to look back at the true spirit and intent of Treaty 7 – what have we learned?

(The Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society, 2015)