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‘These ones will learn it too’: transforming relationships with Chelsea Vowel’s ‘kitaskînaw 2350’

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ABSTRACT

Reading representations of relationships in Chelsea Vowel’s story ‘kitaskînaw 2350’ from the graphic anthology *This Place: 150 Years Retold*, I consider how portrayals of expanded relationships are a call to action – a generative lens through which settler-colonial studies may engage with anticolonial teachings. I aim to demonstrate how reading Indigenous literatures can expand and transform the settler-colonial imagination that has been taught to understand the world through a lens of exclusive ideologies like white supremacy and, broadly, the linear and the binary in relation to gender, time, and ways of being. Looking to Vowel’s story as an example, I contend that such work is of particular significance to the ongoing surge of Indigenous literary and creative production and to the dismantling of settler-colonial teachings in so-called Canada. This analysis of ‘kitaskînaw 2350’ underlines complex connections between settler-colonialism, knowledge creation, language, imagination, power, and Indigenous literatures. Joining many other scholars who are showing how Indigenous literatures generate new imaginaries that can transform colonial behaviors and systems, I read representations of Indigenous-led worlds and anticolonial teachings as an urgent call to action to heal.

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Chelsea Vowel’s short story ‘kitaskînaw 2350’, from the graphic anthology *This Place: 150 Years Retold*,[1] is a work of literary and visual art that affirms Indigenous permanence; it is also a call to action to which the twenty-first-century settler reader may respond by witnessing, listening, and enacting responsibility in their own world through transforming relationships. My essay meditates on the ways in which Vowel’s story makes known anticolonial ways of thinking and being, illuminating the necessity of Indigenous futurity while also emphasizing the urgency to consider our responsibilities in relation to colonial teachings and anticolonial actions. Indigenous literatures like the graphic anthology *This Place* containing Vowel’s imagined future expose the multifaceted dynamics of settler-colonialism in Canada that perpetuate harmful relationships. Vowel’s story depicts anticolonial ways of being through the time-traveling journey of protagonist wâpanacâhkos, the teenage hero who has been ‘raised to tell these ancient stories – it is [their] gift’.[2] Their journey through time activates in preparation for the ‘returners’ – the story’s version of

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settler-colonial peoples who are returning after having abandoned kitaskînaw (earth) centuries earlier in response to 'the great-truth telling' or 'kihci-tâpwêwin'. Following wâpanacâhkos, readers encounter more Cree concepts including wâhkôhtowin, wîtaskêwin, and miyo-wicêhtowin, as Vowel emphasizes ongoing Indigenous resistance and resurgence across generations and lays out an anticolonial future in a way that readers may also envision and enact fundamentally transformed ways of being in relationship.[3]

Vowel's many creative works – including an Indigenous-feminist science-fiction podcast, *Métis in Space* co-created with Molly Swain, and her collection of short stories *Buffalo is the New Buffalo* – portray Indigenous presence from a Métis perspective and expose settler-colonial violence in its many forms while prioritizing space for Indigenous-led worldviews.[4] Her works often include non-binary, queer, and feminist representations that prompt readers to think about the complexities between ideas of gender, naming, law, language, land, and culture that 'remind us that there are other ways of being in the world than those we've been trained to accept as normal'.[5] Work that envisions a time and place free of colonial influence is of particular significance to the ongoing surge of Indigenous literary and creative production and to the dismantling of settler-colonial teachings in so-called Canada. Representations of kinship and responsible relationships that develop in this story *over time* encourage readers to imagine a reality seven generations beyond the twenty-first century and to consider the present day as part of an intergenerational time scale. Many scholars show how Indigenous literatures generate new imaginaries that can transform colonial behaviors and systems.[6] So, too, Vowel's story works to expand imaginations with both visual and textual depictions of an Indigenous-led future, effectively portraying in the panels of the graphic novel form fundamental distinctions between settler-colonial and Indigenous-informed relationships that readers may access and learn from.

Drawing readerly attention to connections between story, Indigenous resurgence, and transforming settler-colonial relationships in Canada is of increasing scholarly interest.[7] For instance, in his article titled 'We Need a New Story: Walking and the wâhkôhtowin Imagination', Cree scholar Dwayne Donald argues that 'Indigenous-Canadian relations today continue to be heavily influenced by colonial teachings that emphasize relationship denial.'[8] Donald also refers to the deeply engrained institutional and socio-cultural 'colonial logics' that train Canadians to disregard Indigenous peoples as human beings and how this disregard 'manifests as cognitive blockages … that undermine the possibility for improved relations'.[9] So, Donald argues that one important way to work against this denial is by imagining and telling new stories that do not deny but affirm relationships of which we are all enmeshed.

Donald's essay and Vowel's story both prioritize the concept of wâhkôhtowin in different if related ways: Donald's use of the term in the place of an adjective to describe the 'wâhkôhtowin imagination' nurtured by a relational walking practice seems distinct from Vowel's use of the term as a noun and as something in need of restoration. Vowel explains the concept as 'expanded kinship with human and non-human beings'.[10] The word 'expanded' suggests that there exists another version of kinship that has been *reduced* or *condensed* or *limited* or *restricted* in some way – denied, to borrow Donald's phrasing of colonial 'relationship denial'.[11] In 'kitaskînaw 2350', an elder first mentions wâhkôhtowin in relation to the anti-Indigenous racism that wâpanacâhkos faces when they time travel to 2012: 'We knew we were sending you to before the ancestors restored wâhkôhtowin, but … I am sorry, câpân … he doesn't see you as kin – he sees you as other.'[12] While no two representations are the same, descriptions of wâhkôhtowin written in English rely on the words 'relationship' and 'kin' in contexts that gesture beyond colonial relationships that are built on ideologies of white supremacy, patriarchy, the nuclear family, and binary identities.[13]

Likewise, in their renowned essay, 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', critical race scholars Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) and K. Wayne Yang draw attention to the ongoing urgency for settlers to act in new ways: 'The disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation.'[14] Elsewhere, Tuck argues for the refusal of colonial-centered research methods and for writing approaches through 'desire-based frameworks'.[15] Vowel's chapter, which she describes as a 'love letter to my ancestors and my descendants',[16] can be read as a desire-based framework. 'kitaskînaw 2350' centers Indigenous representations of gender, language, and history. Colonial teachings that aim to contain imaginations to an exclusive binary and individualist ways of relating to the world that harm us all, albeit differently, do not exist in 2350.

With the explicit goal of transforming imaginations that have come to rely on colonial narratives, the creation of the anthology *This Place: 150 Years Retold* began in response to the 2017 government-sponsored event 'Canada 150' that celebrated the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation (the beginning of Canada according to Britain). Inspired by a conversation with Cree author David A. Robertson, who also contributes to the anthology, publishers at Highwater Press invited a group of Indigenous writers and illustrators to depict the last 150 years with their own voices via a collection of ten stories spanning 1867–2017 and beyond.[17] As Haudenosaunee author Alicia Elliot writes in the foreword to the anthology, the collection 'takes stories our people have been forced to pass down quietly, to whisper behind hands like secrets, and retells them loudly and unapologetically for our people today'. Elliott describes the anthology as telling 'tales of resistance, of leadership' and insists, 'it is our responsibility as readers to carry and nourish those seeds, letting them grow inside as we go on to create our own stories, live our own lives, and become our own heroes'.[18] Many of the authors express how the stories are for Indigenous peoples, first, *and* that the stories also include teachings for non-Indigenous readers or readers without cultural knowledge.

In the brief preface to 'kitaskînaw 2350', Vowel names her audience when describing the characters from scenes in the future who speak Plains Cree Y Dialect (nêhiyawêwin): 'For the 21st-century [*sic*] reader's convenience, most of this dialogue has been translated into English.'[19] Concerning her motivations for creating the final chapter for the anthology, in a CBC interview with Rosanna Deerchild, Vowel says:

> I wanted to lay it out that what you can do is create this future with us. It's not on Indigenous peoples to decolonize the planet, it's on all humans to decolonize their relationship with one another, with the planet, with all living beings … .[20]

The story is a call and a response: it responds to calls for decolonized representations and it is also a call to action to its readers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, interested in what they can do to decolonize their relationships and the world.

Calls to action/call and response

Informed by a Métis perspective and Vowel's experience as a lawyer, feminist, and activist, 'kitaskînaw 2350' is a series of visits between wâpanacâhkos, a Cree non-binary person from the future, and real-world moments of collective resistance by Indigenous peoples and their allies.[21] Enter: Wári,[22] an instant friend to wâpanacâhkos when they arrive in 2012. Wári is Mohawk and Ojibway, a former foster child or 'ward of the state' depicted with purple dreadlocks. She consistently shows up on several frontlines in 2013, 2016, and 2018 before wâpanacâhkos travels back to the future sometime around 2353. Acting as a kind of twenty-first-century guide, Wári gifts wâpanacâhkos (and readers) with an example of one person's path to cultural reconnection. We learn she is Turtle Clan, and we get to witness her traditional tattoo ceremony, a sacred act of cultural reclamation – a resurgence! – that has its own time and place; for Wári, it was only after a dream visit from her mother that she was ready. Through Wári's sharing, we learn how she grows up in the foster system after her mother dies young and her racialized father is in the U.S. Army and cannot take her overseas; she tells of Indigenous newborns being stolen today in Winnipeg and elsewhere in Canada by Child and Family Services; and we read of the intergenerational trauma manifested as embodied fear in Wári's lived experience – how colonizers stole her mother as a child during the 'Sixties Scoop', how she is afraid her future children will also be stolen. Wári's story, her friendship with wâpanacâhkos, and her recurring presence throughout the narrative underline long-standing intersectional solidarities between Indigenous, Black, and trans peoples targeted by white supremacy.[23]

Notably, the adapted text for the CBC podcast, *This Place*, modifies Vowel's story to explicitly mention 'allies' in reference to Wári. While Vowel's text never names the concept of 'ally' explicitly, the podcast links allyship with kinship: '[Wari's] kin will be your allies as we build a better future.'[24] Vowel's story, by comparison, shows the elders are hopeful to see through wâpanacâhkos's travels that the settlers who preceded the returners, 'learned that they are kin to us, to these lands, the animals, and the waters. Our responsibilities and our fates are linked. These ones will learn it too'. The common term between the two forms is not 'ally' but 'kin', and both emphasize a shared struggle and purpose that calls one to act.[25] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson puts it this way:

> If we recognize settler colonialism to be dispossession, capitalism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy, that recognition points us to our allies: not liberal white Canadians who uphold all four of these pillars but Black and brown individuals and communities on Turtle Island and beyond that are struggling in their own localities against these same forces, building movements that contain the alternatives. These are our allies …[26]

The returners – like settlers in our world – must still learn and are being called to act now; Wári and the peoples her character represents have already been acting, fighting their way through colonialism and speaking truth for generations.

Another collective rewriting of colonial history in Canada that defined the course of allyship shows up in Wári's story in the form of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a white man in a suit tosses the document in the trash. The timeline at the beginning of Vowel's story points to the TRC, too, beginning in 2008 and lasting until 2015 to document the impact of the Canadian residential school system. The ensuing publication of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action created an imperative for readers and participants to witness truth and respond with action.[27] *This Place* is calling readers to action, too, as Vowel's 'kitaskînaw 2350' directly references the great truth telling of the twenty-first century that scared the returners into fleeing kitaskînaw for the Red Planet.[28]

Facing the truths in the anthology, educators across several institutions and grade levels in Canada are turning toward the book and responding to its calls. The University of Winnipeg elected *This Place: 150 Years Retold* as their 'One Book' (1BUW) in 2019 – a university-wide program that encourages the entire school to read the same book and gather around events that focus on the text. On the university's website now – years on from the event – there are links to several pieces of student art and textual engagements with the anthology because of this program, serving as a powerful example of Indigenous literatures influencing relationships in collaborative and generative ways.[29]

Justin Rempel, an educator from the Winnipeg School District, describes the anthology for the *Prairie History* journal in 2021 as an exciting instructive text:

> Because they are such distinctive pieces, these stories function wonderfully as individual lessons, inside school and out … Reading this collection, one glimpses bits and pieces of a historical narrative largely untold. Curiosity is piqued; there is more to be discovered. As an educator, I am thrilled by the possibilities.[30]

An earlier review in *Publisher's Weekly* critiques 'kitaskînaw 2350' (as well as misspells Chelsea Vowel's name), claiming the story 'strikes a heavily didactic tone' that they say is 'pulling down the collection'.[31] Yet, the anonymous critic admits, 'the anthology's theme and authentically told stories make it a stand-out', leaving me to wonder what they read as didactic and how it is distinct from what they read as authentic in some way that, for them, worsens the collection? The collection, of course, would be incomplete without Vowel's story – and not just because wâpanacâhkos and kitaskînaw are the feature of the anthology's cover, but because imagining Indigenous futurity is crucial since colonialism persistently attempts to deny those same futures.

The didactic elements of Vowel's story, moreover, do work that many settlers demand of Indigenous peoples. Colonial systems and ways of being wear people down to the point of encouraging us to seek out the path of least resistance, which in many cases looks like getting someone else to tell us what to do or to do something for us. Settlers persistently demand that Indigenous peoples tell us, 'what can we do now?' The implication is that, if someone would just lay it out for us, we would do better. Vowel's 'kitaskînaw 2350', among her other works of non-fiction like *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Issues in Canada* are doing that – clearly showing with multiple examples how we all can fundamentally transform the ways we relate to one another and the world around us right now and into the future.[32]

In another 2019 review in *Quill and Quire*, Cree author Wayne Arthurson notes that he does not see the instructive elements of the stories as a fault in the anthology: 'A few stray slightly into didactic territory', he says, 'but the teaching moments don't overwhelm the stories'.[33] Note Arthurson's use of 'slightly' versus anonymous's use of the adjective 'heavily' to describe the didactic elements suggesting the ways the stories may seem more or less prescriptive depending on the position of the reader. For instance, Colette Poitras, a Métis librarian reviewing for *Canadian Children's Book News* in 2019, speaks to the generative ways the collection creates relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers: 'With powerful text and stunning artwork, this anthology empowers

Indigenous peoples to lift our voices, reclaim our stories and share our history, so that all Canadians can hear us. Highly recommended for home, school and public libraries'.[34] Arthurson too, recommends the text as a 'fantastic teaching tool … and a great read for any age' supporting the intergenerational appeal of the collection.[35]

By leaning into what might seem didactic and, instead, reading 'kitaskînaw 2350' as a call to action and as one part of a 'great truth telling', readers get the chance to relate to history in new ways that set up greater potential for those same readers to imagine new futures and different ways of being in relationships right now.[36] Fear is the great motivator for the returners to abandon kitaskînaw and fear persists in 2350; a holographic messenger warns wâpanacâhkos that 'the situation continues to deteriorate' between the incoming returners and the Indigenous peoples loyal to kitaskînaw, and that it is because 'we have become as unfamiliar to them as they are to us' after three centuries living in literal different worlds.[37] I wonder what might it mean to approach a reading of a text with the intent to become familiar with a new story – to read as a form of listening for calls to action, to consider our response-abilities and to allow that story to guide transformation in the real world?

Empowering in its representation of expanded kinship, Vowel's story emphasizes anticolonial ways of being in relationship that are not limited to colonial binaries nor guided by human supremacy or capitalism. In this way, Vowel's story reads like a response to Eve Tuck's epistolary call to suspend damage-focused readings of Indigenous narratives and to other writers like Daniel Heath Justice urging readers to 'imagine otherwise' and Donald's call to tell and seek out new stories.[38] Vowel's work directly contests the treatment of water protectors, land defenders, and activists by colonial forces in Canada like the police. By depicting intergenerational and kin-based communities coming together to refuse anti-Indigenous violence often committed by police, media, and government, Vowel also contests the colonial stereotype of criminality into which Indigenous peoples and activists in Canada are cast by these same groups. Furthermore, Vowel's text makes its own calls to action to imagine beyond colonial teachings about land, family, gender, criminality, animals, and more. Vowel's story imagines otherwise, tells a new a story, and suspends damage-based narratives, setting an example for readers from many positions, but especially empowering Indigenous readership and readers who experience the effects of colonialism and white supremacy, acutely.

In this new world, readers witness the wonder of intergalactic time-travel through a shaking tent ship that condenses itself to compact size when not in use, hover-chairs-and-couches, a fire that doubles as a storytelling portal, hologram-knowledge keepers, floating computer screens programmed in Cree syllabics, a genderless way of relating to animals and humans, a multiplicity of Indigenous languages with and without English translations, and representations of transformational Indigenous concepts like wâhkôhtowin and miyo-wicêhtowin. By having her protagonist travel from a decolonial future back into our current reality of the twenty-first century, Vowel exposes the ways that settler-colonialism here and now is a dystopian future; the genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada through the 'Sixties Scoop', mass sterilization of Indigenous women, the prison and foster systems, the unsolved cases for missing and murdered Indigenous peoples, the Canadian Indian Residential school system are world-changing apocalypses.[39]

Still, 'kitaskînaw 2350' envisions an Indigenous-led future rather than taking a deficit-centered position that focuses on pan-Indigenous suffering from settler-colonialism. In Tuck's research for 'Suspending Damage' that builds on a long history of desire-based texts,[40] she critiques a damage-based approach through the example of a General Education Development (GED) test versus a conventional high school diploma. Tuck notes a damage-based interpretation sees the 'value of the GED [as] depleted' whereas a desire-based interpretation sees 'the value of the GED relate[s] to its role as an emergency exit from negative … experiences'.[41] In the world of 'kitaskînaw 2350', wâpanacâhkos is more capable of a desire-based perspective than Wári and their friends from the twenty-first century because wâpanacâhkos was raised in the decolonial future and they can see beyond the current time in which they are the targets of settler violence:

> wâpanacâhkos: They can stop. They do stop. They can be restored. They just have to remember how to live.
> Wári: Who's going to teach them that? They aren't listening, wâpanacâhkos.
> wâpanacâhkos: It's already happening.[42]

The podcast adaptation phrases the last line this way: 'Things are changing already; look at this place.'[43] Both texts gesture toward the community of land defenders and their allies gathered at Standing Rock resisting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline in proximity to the Sioux Reservation and a vital water source in Lake Oahe for dozens of Lakota tribes. Considering this is the site where private military forces were deployed acting on behalf of oil corporations, it is no wonder Wári and her friend Dawnis show signs of skepticism and fatigue in the face of wâpanacâhkos's hope.[44] They have been active in embodied resistance for a long time at this point in the story. wâpanacâhkos, though, is visiting from a place and time where they know what else is possible. Their memory and lived experience and their decolonial imagination empowers them to continue.

However, by two pages and two years later, even wâpanacâhkos can relate to the anticolonial activist fatigue that drains capacities and they tell Wári, 'I can't do this anymore. I need to go home' which Wári agrees is for the best.[45] When wâpanacâhkos returns home in the Indigenous-led future of 'kitaskînaw 2350', readers see the council of elders help them process the violence of their experience and participate in cultural ceremonies that enable wâpanacâhkos to heal and ultimately lead the welcoming home of the returners. In a companion interview to the CBC podcast adaptation of the text, Vowel notes the amount of trauma-related content in the anthology and that she created the world of 'kitaskînaw 2350' because she 'wanted to create a story of hope … It's important for people to imagine how the world *could* be'.[46] Vowel intimates how bringing something first into the imaginary is a necessary step to making it a reality.

'kistaskînaw' brings into focus Indigenous futurity through the illustrated interweaving of traditional Indigenous structures like tipis and igloos surrounded by trees and a contemporary post-Industrial landscape of skyscrapers and post-digital imagery of a hologram in the palm of wâpanacâhkos's hand. This future, like Vowel's collection of Métis futurisms in *Buffalo is the New Buffalo*, refuses the idea that mastering colonial ways is necessary for Indigenous survival in a settler-colonial context. Again, Leanne Simpson puts this into perspective:

> Western education does not produce in us the kinds of effects we like to think it does when we say things like *education is the new buffalo*. We learn how to type and how to write. We learn how to think within the confines of Western thought … But postsecondary education provides few useful skillsets to those of us who want to fundamentally change the relationship between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples, because that requires a sustained, collective, strategic long-term movement, a movement the Canadian state has a vested interest in preventing, destroying, and dividing.

Simpson echoes Audre Lorde's renowned argument that 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'; however, here, the master's tools – such as the English language, especially in its written form – are taken up by Vowel out of necessity, and yet the teachings and stories she creates – Métis futurisms, emerge as their own kind of tools. They not only work toward the dismantling of the 'Master's House' – in this case colonialism in Canada – but also rebuild Indigenous-led ways of knowing and being in relationship that affirm the ways we are all enmeshed across time and place. Vowel's story, and the anthology, recreate the historical archive of Canada, restorying this place in a way that dismantles misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous activism.[47]

In their article titled 'Visual Cultures of Indigenous Futurisms' published with GUTS magazine in 2016, Jas M. Morgan (Cree Métis and Saulteaux) describes Indigenous presence in the twenty-first century as an imagining of the future come to life:

> Armed with spirit and the teachings of our ancestors, all our relations behind us, we are living the Indigenous future. We are the descendants of a future imaginary that has already passed; the outcome of the intentions, resistance, and survivance of our ancestors.[48]

Morgan's words encapsulate the power of Vowel's story that continues the legacy of Indigenous survival by refusing damage-based imaginings of world-ending apocalypses and instead creates space where readers get a chance to imagine alongside Indigenous worldbuilding.

Prefacing her story, Vowel affirms 'dystopian and apocalyptic writing occupies an enormous amount of space in contemporary storytelling and in our social consciousness' encouraging the belief that we are always on the precipice of some mass destruction that actively discourages all of us from dreaming up alternatives.[49] Vowel specifies that 'kitaskînaw 2350' takes a similar approach to her and Swain's *Métis in Space* podcast in which the hosts explicitly reject the idea that liberation necessarily proceeds from a period of even more oppression, of apocalypse as a catalyst for decolonization. Instead, the hosts, 'envisioned a future shaped by Indigenous peoples; a future in which the ways we relate to one another are fundamentally transformed'.[50] Elsewhere, Vowel notes how Métis futurisms insist 'that imagining potential futures or alternative worlds in any time is not enough; what we do with these imaginings is what creates new realities'.[51] So, the writer helps readers imagine otherwise, but it is up to the reader what they do with that imagining; now that we know a new story, how will we respond?

By considering how settler-colonial imaginations relate with the anticolonial teachings of 'kitaskînaw 2350' through its representations of wâhkôhtowin, non-linearity (in form, time, and gender), and Indigenous languages, we may reconsider what we, as settlers and potential allies, know about this place and how we imagine. Through both text and images, readers are tasked with reconsidering the ways we relate to trauma and healing, to language, to each other, and more: How do we learn in a settler-colonial state through colonial teachings to relate to story? How do we learn to relate to the unknown? And how do we learn to relate to the idea of linear and forward-focused time? What do these ideas say about this place and what we mean to each other? How might thinking about anticolonial teachings fundamentally transform the way we relate to one another and to collective liberation?

Broadly, three recurring calls to action emerge in Vowel's story as teachings around relationships, non-linearity, and the power of language in shaping our worlds. Despite my efforts to distinguish these calls in the following pages, each call echoes and interweaves with the next, indivisible and always only existing in relationship.

Restore wâhkôhtowin

Vowel's story and Donald's essay both advocate for the reactivation of the Cree concept of wâhkôhtowin and in doing so they also draw attention to the need for new relationships between settler-colonial Canadians and Indigenous peoples in Canada. Vowel's story begins in the year 2350 and depicts wâpanacâhkos receiving a holographic message about the 1.5 million 'returners' of 6.5 million people who 'left kitaskînaw for the Red Planet and cut off all contact'.[52] The elders, named 'câpânak' and 'câpân' – a Cree ancestral concept signifying the great-grandchild and great-grandparent relationship – describe the returners as people with 'colonial motivations' who abandoned kitaskînaw (Earth) because 'they were afraid of [the] great truth-telling'. They explain that the returners 'believed we would harm them'.[53] Borrowing Donald's language of 'relationship denial', the departure of the returners in Vowel's story is both a denial of their relationship with Indigenous peoples and their relationship with the planet.

When called to confront the deeply uncomfortable truths of their existence and history, the returners turn their backs on the truth out of fear of being treated the same way they have come to understand relationships through colonial teachings and actions. The returners' relationship denial with kitaskînaw (land) juxtaposed by wâpanacâhkos's embodied curiosity and sense of responsibility shows how each community respectively responds to fear and the unfamiliar, through methods of abandonment and isolation or else through the pursuit of a collective curiosity toward sustainable relationships. To begin to restore wâhkôhtowin, both Vowel and Donald suggest an active embodied approach through immersion in community. Donald recommends a relational walking practice that brings our body physically and sensorily closer to all the relationships we are enmeshed in as our nervous system regulates with our surroundings in nature. Vowel sends her protagonist traveling through time to immerse themselves in settler-colonial places and America three-and-a-half centuries earlier to better understand colonial motivations and behaviors. Both emphasize the need for curiosity and embodied relational research to create new stories since, historically, the written word has proven inconsistent and unreliable. As an elder explains to wâpanacâhkos: 'we didn't know [the settlers were so violent]. The archives said the warriors you were with started it'.[54] The council of elders in 'kitaskînaw 2350' join a chorus of Indigenous writers who argue for moving beyond the colonial archive. Vowel and her collaborators of *This Place* have created a new one.

As we encounter the semi-fictional world of 'kitaskînaw 2350', we become familiar with the complexity of settler-colonial and Indigenous relationships through our own kind of visiting and getting to know a time and place of which we are already somewhat familiar. West Edmonton Mall in the context of Vowel's story, for instance, locates an act of anti-Indigenous racism that an elder explains as the person 'see'-ing them as 'other' and not as 'kin'.[55] The anti-Indigenous racist is unfamiliar, depicted as a shadow, implying the less we see one another, the more able we are to harm one another. Powerfully, Vowel cushions this act of violence in a moment where Indigenous presence is at the center of the action and visually on the page, and Wári is shown shoving her middle finger in the air. While Wári asserts her own power here, the gesture also reveals the ramifications of not treating one another as kin flow both ways, heightening aggressive relations and making collaborative ones less possible. By placing fictional characters in real-world settings and historical moments in the not-so-distant past (2012 here), Vowel effectively blurs the lines of fiction and reality and resists attempts at colonial categorizations while also drawing the reader in through the appeal of the familiar.

Respect the non-linear and non-binary

The form of the story re-presents familiar locations in new ways with its spectacular full-colour illustrations and panel work that both tell and *show* a story distinct from conventional English literatures. Literary theorists have long acknowledged the ways fiction can both effectively show and tell story and rhetorically persuade its reader.[56] Similarly, the graphic form enables author and reader to relate in a distinct way, with the page arguably delivering its most impactful messages without any language at all – a powerful tool toward refusing colonial languages like English. Graphic novelist Scott McCloud explains, too, how 'each successive frame of a movie is projected on exactly the same space – the screen – while each frame of comics must occupy different space. Space does for comics what time does for film'.[57] In this way, as readers move between the borders of each illustrated panel, we are simultaneously moving through time alongside the hero of the story – emphasized by the fuchsia flashes that carry wâpanacâhkos across the panels of the page and through the centuries. Readers of 'kitaskînaw 2350' travel alongside wâpanacâhkos and with each return reading, we become more familiar with the history of this place, its present-day realities, and future potentialities.

The story begins and ends in a future time and place, but Vowel uses the narrative device of time travel to interweave past, present, and future to imagine a full cycle of Indigenous resistance, revolution, resurgence, and restoration. The repetition of images throughout the story rhetorically engages the reader to draw immediate comparisons between them. For instance, the image of an eagle first appears as a co-opted colonial symbol on the fabric of a ship's sails as wâpanacâhkos finds themselves aboard the replica Santa Maria in West Edmonton Mall. The image of the Eagle in this scene is at first distorted as wâpanacâhkos's vision adjusts to their surroundings; this eagle has two heads, a flag for a body and wings spread upright with claws open. The way the panel blurs then focuses in on this symbol prompts readers to take note when an eagle returns in the last panel of the story 22 pages later as a free bird, wings open flying in the sky above wâpanacâhkos.[58]

Another repeated image with meaningful distinction is a small panel with two gloved hands exchanging a red bundle no bigger than a badminton birdie, and similar in shape: a tobacco tie.[59] According to Sylvia McAdam's book *Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies*, one of tobacco's sacred purposes is that it 'establishes a direct communication link between the person and the spiritual world', which could explain how wâpanacâhkos consults with the elders throughout their travels across time. The image first appears as wâpanacâhkos begins their trip and then reappears when they return home. A key distinction between the images is the condition of one of the gloved hands upon return home. The latter image shows one glove with clear wear next to another gloved hand still in pristine condition visually juxtaposing the wear of settler-colonialism on wâpanacâhkos with the care and protection of life in 2350.

The return images of the eagle and the tobacco tie coincide with the growth of the protagonist after spending an extended time immersed in a settler-colonial world. In a way, reading wâpanacâhkos's journey as a kind of relational bildungsroman makes sense as the protagonist experiences a great transformation; so too might the twenty-first-century reader come-of-age alongside an Indigenous-led era of expanded kinship. As readers, and potential ancestors to the returners of Vowel's imagined future, we are being called to return, to circle back, to consider the ongoing flow of story in which we are all enmeshed and through which transformation is always possible. Vowel's repeat imagery functions like an echo, calling on readers to consider a different beginning-middle-and-end through a collective returning.

The form of the text with its non-linearity and Indigenous-centered symbolism presents several opportunities for readerly visits while also maintaining distance between Indigenous knowledge and extractive settler reading practices.[60] Considering the long history of settler-colonial literary practices, 'kitaskînaw 2350' finds a way to build up its own intergenerational references – like in the panels with no language and the tobacco tie appearing twice bookending the story.[61] Responding to the ways colonial literatures build up allusions to the bible and expect readers to make those connections, Vowel refers to specific Cree and Métis references as a kind of 'Easter-egg symbolism'.[62] Justice calls stories like these, 'wonderworks', a genre of Indigenous literatures that,

> offer Indigenous writers and storytellers something very different [from narratives that rely on Christian symbolism], and something more in keeping with our own epistemologies, politics, and relationships – in English, admittedly, and limited by its generic applicability, but no less useful, I think, for that. It's a term that gestures, imperfectly, to other ways of being in the world, and it reminds us that the way things are is not how they have always been, nor is it how they must be. It's in Indigenous wonderworks that some of the best models of different, better relationships are being realized, and it's these stories that give me hope for a better future even in these scary times.[63]

As Vowel's dynamic characters and scene-setting entice readers with a sense of familiarity and wonder, and the calls to action for expanded kinship and sustainable relationships make a rhetorical appeal, the images of an Indigenous-led future act like a shortcut for the weary colonized mind, offering hope by *showing* readers what is possible.

Vowel's depictions of circularity challenge colonial teachings that attempt to maintain distinct linear ideas about past, present, and future and the linguistic binaries that overlook the intricate connections between people and nature and beyond. McCloud (the graphic novelist) cleverly depicts how words are abstract icons that bear no resemblance to the thing itself through the cartoon image of a human face with the word ‘eye’ in the space where an eyeball would usually appear.[64] Vowel’s ‘21st-century readers’ in Canada have been taught the colonial English language, and the binary concepts of gender in English are also abstract icons. Importantly, there are no gendered pronouns in nêhiyawêwin Cree.[65] For this reason, it is not insignificant that the author and illustrators focus three panels on the distinct ways wâpanacâhkos and Wári understand the use of gendered pronouns through a brief dialogue about tapasîw, the animal accompanying wâpanacâhkos through time and space:

> Wári: woah, is that a puppy?!
> wâpanacâhkos: they are … um … tapasîw.* **s/he runs away*
> Wári: who are, what?
> wâpanacâhkos: They! I call them Tapasîw.*
> Wári: That’s his name? Cute, is that Cree?
> wâpanacâhkos: He, yes.[66]

This last line appears in its own isolated panel featuring a close-up of wâpanacâhkos’s face, their gaze looking up, implying feigned agreement. wâpanacâhkos does not correct Wári. Readers might consider how, as a visitor, wâpanacâhkos is being respectful and immersing themselves in community, first, without declaring their own ways of being.

In an online video as part of 1BUW, Vowel speaks to the representation of the nonbinary as significant to decolonial transformation: ‘I imagine in 2350 living in a completely decolonized world; So, I want to have solved the oppressions of today; I want trans and two-spirit and nonbinary peoples to be integrated into every aspect of our society.’[67] Through the conversation between wâpanacâhkos and Wári, Vowel highlights the way English language learning imposes gender to the extent that it becomes habitual. In the podcast adaptation of the story, Deerchild refers to wâpanacâhkos as she/her.[68] Deerchild follows other characters in Vowel’s story who also relate with wâpanacâhkos through she/her pronouns; the dissimilarity between the gender they assign wâpanacâhkos versus how wâpanacâhkos speaks of tapasîw shows the pervasiveness of colonial teachings and how the words we use to identify ourselves can fundamentally change an entire culture over time.[69] Notably, wâpanacâhkos never once claims themselves to be a specific gender.

Revitalize Indigenous languages

Thinking across generations and timelines, Vowel engages multiple Indigenous worldviews and languages through which she also emphasizes the non-linear relationships between human activity, culture, and the land. For instance, Vowel gifts readers with the word ‘câpân’, a nêhiyawêwin Plains Cree Y dialect term for both great-grandparents and great-grandchildren. Vowel emphasizes the circularity of this concept through its return when an elder refers to wâpanacâhkos as câpân and later wâpanacâhkos refers to the elder by the same name. From this small insight into the Cree language, there is a sense of both the beginning and end of human life as being connected. Fortifying this sense of inter-generational connection, the elders also refer to consulting, ‘kikihciâniskotâpâninawak’ meaning ‘our ancestors, but also our distant descendants’.[70] Elsewhere, Vowel describes ‘câpân’ as a ‘kinship term … it’s a generational term, it’s not linear; time is not linear; in a Métis Cree worldview, time is not linear'.[71] These terms do not translate directly to English because they encapsulate meaning that the colonial language finds itself incapable of re-presenting, exposing the limitations of settler-colonial ways of seeing the world.

Vowel's use of multiple languages from Cree syllabics to brief insights into Anishinaabe and Mohawk establish 'kitaskînaw 2350' as a vital part of a collection of stories revitalizing Indigenous languages. As we know by now, words like 'tapasîw', 'wâhkôhtowin' and 'câpân' appear in meaningful narrative moments representing important Cree worldviews; the title of the story, too, is a nêhiyawêwin word: 'kitaskînaw' means earth and our land. Many character's names are also an act of Indigenous language reclamation as Vowel names the protagonist after one of her own children: wâpanacâhkos means something like Dawn Star or morning star, Wári (pronounced Walee) is a Kanien'kehá:ka version of the name Mary, and Dawnis is Ojibway for 'my daughter'.[72] Vowel includes footnotes in the chapter with some pronunciation prompts and general translations in English for many of the nêhiyawêwin terms as one way of relating with readers who are unfamiliar with the language while ensuring its regeneration.

Moreover, 'kitaskînaw 2350' contributes to a growing archive of Indigenous literary references that rival euro-Canadian literary references to the bible to build up Indigenous literary representations for the next generations. This is particularly powerful, since Vowel herself felt like an outsider growing up 'not knowing bible references' and, of course, because the Christian Church in Canada has worked persistently to erase Indigenous languages and worldviews over, at least, the last 150 years in favor of white Christian supremacy. Against the backdrop of anti-Indigenous violence, the multi-lingual dialogues in Vowel's story re-present whiteness as dangerous and unnecessary.

Recognize and refuse whiteness

Considering the disproportionately negative stereotypes of Indigenous peoples in the history-making of Canada, in whitestream media and Hollywood, the stakes of representation are great for Indigenous activists and anticolonial allies, making the portrayal of their experiences in Vowel's story even more important.[73] The desire-based representation of the future side-by-side with the violence of the twenty-first century repeatedly expose how Indigenous communities living alongside white settler societies are subject to colonial violence. McCloud's theories about the artform of the graphic novel suggest that the more successful a narrator is in presenting a character as abstract (that is, a simple cartoon instead of realism), the more able the reader is to project their own identity into the narrative. Notably, Vowel does not give any of the white characters distinct features or voices, apart from the one racist shadow of a man yelling at people gathered in the round dance at West Edmonton Mall in 2012 – even then, the expletive he uses is censored by classic comic book symbols ensuring only one word exists, poignantly, in the panel: 'INDIANS!'[74] While the assault by the man does not go unnoticed by wâpanacâhkos who declares, 'I don't understand … he hates us', the textual representation of this figure as singular and yet indistinguishable increases the potential for the reader to project many faces onto the blank one presented. We may consider what we find familiar about this figure and his actions – gendering him, for example, is consistent with the reality that the majority of anti-Indigenous hate crimes are committed by white men.[75]

Furthermore, Vowel's representations of Indigenous kinship interspersed with portrayals of white supremacy in action draw readerly attention repeatedly toward distinct expanded ways of relating to one another and to the world. As we see indistinct people carrying out more acts of anti-Indigenous violence throughout the text, settler colonial readers encounter their own moment of facing truth through story, like the TRC, though arguably more endurable somehow in comic-book form. Whiteness takes shape in 'kitaskînaw 2350' similar to what Aileen Moreton-Robinson describes in *The White Possessive*, which traces the long history between white supremacy and the desire to possess everything from property to resources to bodies.[76] Whiteness shows up in Vowel's chapter as fully geared-up police, mall security chasing Wári, men and women in business attire treating the TRC as trash, more masked uniformed officers shooting rubber bullets and tear gas at Indigenous elders, at land defenders, at water protectors, and at medics. Whiteness takes shape in the white settler-colonial men acquitted of the murders of Tina Fontaine and Colten Boushie, through the surveillance and policing of Project Sitka, through excessive land extraction by violent force. White consumers feature, too, as passers-by who may be read as willfully or otherwise ignorant to the great truth telling.

Vowel offers an alternative to the white possessive as she presents one white man in the narrative through his action of returning a tipi. Furthermore, the man does not need to be seen nor heard by the reader for us to understand that his choices make an impact and the ensuing dialogue between wâpanacâhkos, Dawnis, and Wári reveal that his position as a 'white dude' can and does transform over many generations:

Dawnis:	some zhaganaash donated [a tipi] …
wâpanacâhkos:	zhaganaash?
Wári:	Yeah, you know, kanatién, white dude. Dawnis here is Anishinaabe, so she says zhaganaash. I think they say wasícu here, um, what's the Cree word … môniyâw!
wâpanacâhkos:	Oh no, we don't use those words. For us, it's just nitôtem, my friend or niwâhkômâkan, my relation.
Dawnis:	Yeah well, I'm gonna need my so-called friends to stop killing us before they stop being zhaganaash to me.[77]

Vowel and co-illustrators Audibert and Yaciuk represent white people broadly as indistinguishable from one another simultaneously casting into relief the dynamism, complexity, and spectrum of identities, expressions and kinships represented by wâpanacâhkos, Wári, Dawnis and their Elders, ancestors, and more-than-human kin like tapasîw. As Vowel has the characters of 'kitaskînaw 2350' name whiteness explicitly, she reactivates multiple Indigenous languages while also pointing to a cultural shift in which racial distinctions are no longer necessary; what matters in the future is that we are friends.

Create space and time to heal/a conclusion

Perhaps the loudest call to action in Vowel's story uses no words at all to represent the necessity of healing following exposure to settler-colonial violence and colonial ways of relating to one another in for-now-called-Canada. After traveling for years and being immersed in distinct activist spaces at WEM, Elsipogtog, and Standing Rock, wâpanacâhkos is at the center of three healing rituals: a sweat ceremony, a sacred tattoo ceremony, and a blanket-gifting ceremony.[78] Appearing in between the emotionally charged scene of wâpanacâhkos arriving home and the final scene of them leading their kin to welcome the returners back, the tri-panel spread focuses on the power of healing in community – not just any form of healing either: as Rempel says in his review of the story, 'the path to Indigenous healing lies in Indigenous values'.[79] The last three pages of the story capture many of the nêhiyawêwin concepts and values we have seen earlier in the text: wâpanacâhkos is held by the elders, openly grieving as they all make sense of what they have witnessed. They conclude that the returners 'need to be restored to wâhkôhtowin', something we are told their ancestors eventually achieved, and they must be shown miyo-wicêhtowin – the returners must learn to live together on the land without domination; they need to be in good relationship with Indigenous peoples and one another.[80]

Robin Wall Kimmerer's innovative work of science and poetry, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, makes a similar call: 'we need acts of restoration, not only for polluted waters and degraded Lands, but also for our relationship with the world'.[81] When wâpanacâhkos returns home – having fought and been harmed on frontlines for the protection of water and land – they do not file a police report or enter a rehabilitation facility or go to a hospital as so many colonial teachings would have us do when in need of recovery or support; instead, they heal in Indigenous-led ceremony and among community. First, they openly weep and release their emotion while sharing all they have witnessed, then they attend sweat lodge, receive their sacred tattoo, and, finally, wâpanacâhkos is pictured being wrapped in a blanket, a Métis symbol of honor, respect, and celebration.[82] Considering the pervasiveness of colonial violence against Indigenous communities, the fact that Vowel's 'kitaskînaw 2350' makes space for Indigenous-led healing is all the more important.

A curious visualization occurs, too, across these three panels depicting the ceremonies: in the first two images, readerly perspective is set up in a way that includes the reader as part of the circle of participants; however, in the third panel, the circle is closed off as the joined hands of what appears to be a round dance intersect our view and gently remind us that Indigenous healing practices are not for everyone. As we are invited to witness, we are reminded to think about how this witnessing may guide and transform our actions. What does it look like here and now to restore wâhkôhtowin through relational immersion (walking, visiting), to embrace the non-linear and non-binary, to refuse whiteness, to create time and space for healing, especially Indigenous-led, Black-allied, trans-centered, trauma-informed healing?

According to 'kitaskînaw 2350', white settlers can literally stop stealing Indigenous children, give back land, return cultural items like tipis – no questions asked, no credit necessary. Allies can show up as bodies on frontlines alongside water protectors and land defenders. Readers can get to know the land we are living on and the peoples we are living in proximity to and what our responsibilities are to ensure sustainable relationships. We can reconnect with our culture even though it is hard work – harder for some. We can protect human life over perceived property. We can pursue anticolonial teachings and methodologies. We can read Indigenous literatures and buy Indigenous art and share them with students, friends, and in love letters to our ancestors and descendants as Vowel does. Transformation is the work of generations and may take centuries, but things are changing already; look at this place.

Notes

1. Chelsea Vowel, ‘kitaskînaw 2350’, Akiwenzie-Damm, Kateri et al., *This Place: 150 Years Retold* (Highwater Press, 2019), 246–76.
2. Vowel, ‘kitaskînaw 2350’, 251.
3. Ibid., 256, 261, 274.
4. Chelsea Vowel, *Buffalo is the New Buffalo: Stories* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2022); and *Métis in Space*, produced by Chelsea Vowel and Molly Swain, podcast, https://podcasts.apple.com/zw/podcast/m%C3%A9tis-in-space/id921685195; and *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Issues in Canada* (Highwater Press, 2016); Vowel’s website www.apihtawikosisan.com specifies: ‘she is writing from a Métis perspective’.
5. Daniel Heath Justice, ‘Indigenous Wonderworks and the Settler-Colonial Imaginary’ (APEX Magazine, 2017).
6. Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*; Keavy Martin and Dylan Robinson, *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Wilfird Laurier Press, 2016); Sam McKegney, ‘Strategies for Ethical Engagement: An Open Letter Concerning Non-Native Scholars of Native Literatures’, *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 20, no. 4 (2008): 56–67.
7. See Dwayne Donald, ‘Forts, Colonial Frontier Logics, and Aboriginal-Canadian Relations: Imagining Decolonizing Educational Philosophies in Canadian Contexts’, in *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education*, ed. A.A. Abdi (Sense Publishers, 2012), 91–111; and ‘From What Does Ethical Relationality Flow? An “Indian” Act in Three Artifacts’, *The Ecological Heart of Teaching: Radical Tales of Refuge and Renewal for Classrooms and Communities,* 478 (2016): 10–16; and ‘We Need a New Story: Walking and the wâhkôhtowin Imagination’, *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 18, no. 2 (2021): 53–63; Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke University Press, 2014); J. Adamson, *Reading for the Planet: Environmental Justice and Indigenous Literatures* (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature, 2018); jaye simpson, ‘Land Back Means Protecting Black and Indigenous Trans Women’ *Briarpatch Magazine,* 2020; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Justice, ‘Conjuring Marks: Furthering Indigenous Empowerment through Literature’, *American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 1–2 (2004): 2–11; and *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, (Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2018).
8. Donald, ‘We Need a New Story’, 53.
9. Ibid., 56; I replace Donald’s language of ‘psychoses’ with an ellipsis in this essay’s quote out of respect for disability justice and neurodivergent advocacy; however, the cognitive effects of colonialism remain real and worthy of further consideration.
10. Ibid., 256.
11. Donald, ‘We Need a New Story’, 56.
12. Vowel, ‘kitaskînaw 2350’, 256.
13. Donald, ‘We Need a New Story’, cites métis author Maria Campbell: ‘wahkohtowin “meant honouring and respecting” relationships’; Sylvia McAdam, *Nationhood, Interrupted: Revitalizing nêhiyaw Legal Systems* (Purich, 2015); Matthew Wildcat, ‘Wahkohtowin in Action’, *Constitutional Forum* 27, no. 1 (2018): 13–24; Reuben Quinn, Personal teachings and conversations, 2016–2018; Angela D. Van Essen, *Pêyâhtik (giving something great thought; to walk softly): reading bilingual nêhiyaw-english poetry*, (University of Alberta, 2019), 1-239; Van Essen also quotes nêhiyaw poet Louise Halfe: ‘wâhkôhtowin is our crooked good and in essence we walk this path in a crooked bent over manner holding hands with every stranger we meet’ and connects this movement of body bending toward the land to many sacred ceremonies and practices (59).
14. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, ‘Decolonization Is not a Metaphor’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
15. Eve Tuck, ‘Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities’, *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 409–27.

16. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 246.
17. David A. Robertson, 'Meet the 20 Authors and Illustrators Who Made the Graphic Novel. *This Place: 150 Years Retold*' (CBC, 2021).
18. Alicia Elliott, 'Introduction', *This Place: 150 Years Retold* (Highwater Press, 2016), v–vi.
19. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 246.
20. Rosanna Deerchild, Chelsea Vowel Interview, *This Place: A CBC Podcast* (CBC, 2020), 24:24.
21. Alongside many others who critique the term 'ally,' my ongoing doctoral research traces the conceptualization of 'allyship' and looks to responsible engagement with Indigenous literatures as one way to embody or enact the essence of the concept as one of 'kinship' or the 'familial'; Consider a well-circulated zine from the Indigenous Action Organization released in 2014 titled 'Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex, An Indigenous Perspective and Provocation'.
22. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 255.
23. Ciann L. Wilson and Ann Marie Beals, 'Making Space for Afro-Indigenous Community', *Briarpatch Magazine*, 2024; simpson, 'Land Back Means Protecting Black and Indigenous Trans Women'; Simpson, *As We Have Always Done;* Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* (Fernwood, 2017); Desmond Cole, *The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power* (Doubleday, 2020).
24. Deerchild, Vowel, 12:30.
25. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 274; several writers discuss the relationship between wâhkôhtowin and kinship including: Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum), *Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies* (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre: Saskatoon, 2009); and *Nationhood Interrupted: Revitalizing* nêhiyaw *Legal Systems,* (Purich: Saskatoon, 2015); and 'The Pipe Laws', *YouTube* (YouTube, July 28, 2014); Van Essen, *Pêyâhtik*.
26. Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 'Constellations of Coresistance', 211.
27. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015); see also, The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, 2019.
28. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 251.
29. The 'One Book' movement began in 1998 out of the Seattle Public Library and several institutions across the world have followed their example. The University of Winnipeg's 2019 iteration, named 1BUW (One Book UWinnipeg) focused on the anthology *This Place*; 1BUW also included a traveling art exhibit *When Raven Became Spider* from September 19 to November 30 that featured art by Indigenous creators, exclusively, and explored popular culture like the superhero comic: https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/1b19/index.html
30. Justin Rempel, *Prairie History Journal* no. 4 (2021): 81.
31. Anonymous, 'This Place: 150 Years Retold', Review, (*Publisher's Weekly*, 2020), 89.
32. Vowel, *Indigenous Writes*; I have personally witnessed questions like this being asked by settlers at many events at which an Indigenous person speaks regarding truth and reconciliation; the ways we seek out information matter.
33. Wayne Arthurson, 'History Retold', *Quill & Quire* 85, no. 4 (May 2019): 30.
34. Collette Poitras, 'This Place: 150 Years Retold', Review, (Canadian Children's Book News, Fall 2019), 39.
35. Arthurson, 'History Retold', 30.
36. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 251.
37. Ibid., 250.
38. Tuck, 'Suspending Damage'; Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matters*; Donald, 'We Need a New Story'.
39. In an article from March 2016 for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives titled, 'Reconciling in the Apocalypse', Erica Violet Lee refers to, Anishinaabe scholar Lawrence Gross, who 'writes about 'Post Apocalypse Stress Syndrome', acknowledging that Indigenous people have already lived through multiple attempts at our mass destruction. As Gross writes, 'the

Anishinaabe have seen the end of our world', and we have lived through it, returning stronger than ever.' https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/reconciling-apocalypse; also, Julian Brave Noisecat, 'How Indigenous Peoples Are Fighting the Apocalypse', *Emergent Magazine*, 2021; also, Kyle Whyte, 'Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral Dystopias and Fantasies of Climate Change Crises', *Environmental & Planning E: Nature and Space* 1, no. 1–2 (2018): 224–42; to name only a few.

40. Tuck cites 'Sondra Perl (1980), Ann Anlin Cheng (2001), Julia Kristeva (1980), Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987), Joan Didion (2005), bell hooks (1990), Patricia Williams (1992), and Toni Morrison (1987), among others'.
41. Tuck, 'Suspending Damage', 421.
42. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 270.
43. 'kitaskînaw 2350', *This Place* (from CBC, 24 August 2021). https://www.cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/1020-this-place/episode/15862270-kitaskinaw-2350.
44. Ariadne S. Montare, 'Standing Rock: A Case Study in Civil Disobedience', *GPSolo: Civil Disobedience* 35, no. 3 (American Bar Association May/June, 2018).
45. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 273.
46. Vowel, *This Place*, 15:11.
47. Vowel, *Buffalo is the New Buffalo*; Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*; Audre Lorde, 'Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference', *Sister Outsider*: *Essays and Speeches*, (Random House, 1980), 114–23.
48. Jas M. Morgan, 'Visual Cultures of Indigenous Futurisms', *GUTS Magazine*, issue 6, 2016, http://gutsmagazine.ca/visual-cultures/.
49. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 246.
50. Ibid., 246.
51. Vowel, *Buffalo is the New Buffalo*, 122.
52. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 251.
53. Ibid., 250–1.
54. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 261.
55. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 256.
56. Aristotle, 'Rhetoric', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2nd ed., ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (W.W. Norton and Company, 2010), 749–78; Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction: Second Edition* (The University of Chicago Press, 1961).
57. McCloud, Scott, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (Paradox Press, 1993), 7.
58. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 254, 276; 'The Santa Maria' is a replica of one of Christopher Columbus's ships that sits in the middle of West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
59. McAdam, 'Tobacco'. *Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies*; I am indebted to my attentive reviewers for this reading – thank you, again!
60. Eve Tuck's 2017 Twitter as one example: 'To watch the white settlers sift through our work as they ask, "Isn't there more for me here? Isn't there more for me to get out of this?"' and 'I forgot that people read extractively, for discovery. I forgot that all these years of relation between settler and Indigenous people set up settlers to be terrible readers of Indigenous work'.
61. Vowel, 'kitaskînaw 2350', 253, 274.
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