COMPOSITION, LITERACY, AND CULTURE

David Bartholomae and Jean Ferguson Carr, Editors

UNRULY RHETORICS

PROTEST, PERSUASION, AND PUBLICS

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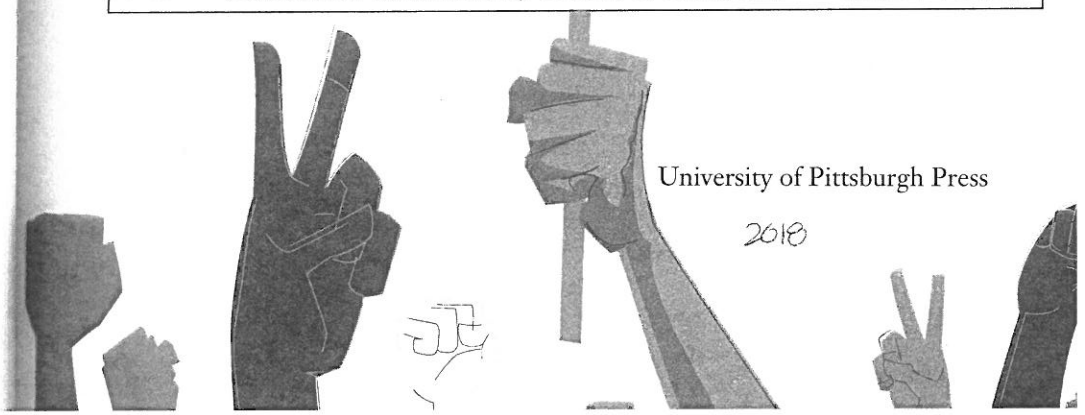

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WALKING WITH RELATIVES

INDIGENOUS BODIES OF PROTEST

JOYCE RAIN ANDERSON

We are protectors, not protesters.

—Honor the Earth

One thing our people could not surrender was the meaning of land. In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, connection to our ancestors, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us. Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground.

—Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Bodies carry stories; bodies tell stories. This is a story among the many stories we hold close.

In spring 2016, there were about two hundred people; later the number camped along the Mnisose or Great Swirling River (known as the Missouri), on treaty lands of the Hunkpapa Oceti or Standing Rock Sioux, grew to more than ten thousand, becoming the tenth largest community in North Dakota. The water protectors came to the Red Warrior Camp, Sacred Stone

Camp, and other camps to stop the Black Snake or Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) from being constructed through their territory, under the riverbed. The pipeline threatens sacred sites and access to clean water. The protectors' tactics are nonviolent, taping their bodies to heavy machinery and standing strong in the way of authorities to hold a nation to its promises to its Indigenous peoples.

While the more well-known Keystone XL pipeline had been shut down by the federal government, until recently DAPL was "fast-tracked," as Standing Rock Chairman Archambault relates in a *New York Times* article. He explains that DAPL used "the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemptions from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and Environmental Policy Act by treating the Pipeline as a series of small construction sites" (cited in LaDuke, "Winona LaDuke"). The now completed pipeline spans 1,172 miles through four states (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois), and the plans are for it to transport over 550,000 barrels daily (Heim). The potential for leaks and spills likely compromises the Missouri River and clean water for all those who get their water from the river. DAPL disregarded Native American rights from the start, and once the gathering grew, hired an out-of-state private security company to come in with dogs. More recently released documents reveal that Energy Transfer Partners worked with a private security firm, Tiger Swan, to portray the water protectors as "potential terrorists" (*Lakota Country Times*). According to the *Lakota Country Times* on June 1, 2017, recently leaked documents "provide a glimpse into the extreme measures that were taken by law enforcement, Big Oil, and state and federal enforcement agencies to undermine the efforts of water protectors who sought to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline." North Dakota officials were not supportive of the "protest."[1] The governor declared a state of emergency, prompting the National Guard to be on call. Further, roadblocks were set up to discourage more people from joining. However, over 280 Native Nations and non-Native groups across the country and globally sent representatives, supplies, and support for Standing Rock.

The Stand at Standing Rock is by no means the first time Indigenous peoples, as protectors for Mother Earth and our relations, have risen up and protested against colonization. In discussing other recent protests, Jeremy Wood asserts, "It's important to dispel a misconception that's been too common in the media that this came out of nowhere. Settlers like to believe that colonialism, sad as it was, has ended, and that Indians are, at best, part of the great tapestry of America. We've resisted from the start. This is the continuation of a long history" (Sandalow-Ash). Indeed we have been resisting since 1492 and even before. We honor names like Metacom, Weetamoo, Little Turtle, Tecumsah, Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Geronimo, and many more who laid their lives on the line to fight the onslaught of colonial terrorism. From the earliest treaty in 1613, the Guswanta or Two Row Wampum, Native peoples have made attempts to live alongside the settler colonials, but because the latter continually violate treaties, Native peoples have found themselves in situations where they are consistently forced to rise up. For example, in the late 1800s the Ghost Dance became a nonviolent protest, which ultimately resulted in a massacre by the US Army at Wounded Knee in 1890. A resurgence of Native resistance took place during the 1960s and 1970s. This "campaign of resistance" (Smith and Warrior) included the taking over of Alcatraz Island in 1969, the Trail of Broken Treaties march, the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington, DC, the second siege of Wounded Knee, covering Plymouth Rock in sand and boarding the *Mayflower* and throwing a replica pilgrim overboard, and many others, some enacted through the American Indian Movement (AIM) and some through individual nations protecting their lands and rights. Yet as Native American peoples continue to resist a historical legacy that threatens their sovereignty, few of these movements gain the attention of the world.

(IN)VISIBLE INDIGENOUS BODIES

In the Americas and elsewhere, Indigenous bodies have endured much. Knowing ourselves to be inextricably connected to the earth, we, as Native peoples, have resisted an ideology that would sever that connection. In this and other work, I align with Julie Nagan's research in (re)mapping the colonial body. Further, I consider the Indigenous body as deeply rooted to place. As an example, the Wampanoag word for land was "akeem," with an "m" indicating the inseparable connection of the land to the body. In speaking, people used "nutakeem" as in "I am the land." Following contact and particularly written into the religious tracts in the Wampanoag language, the "m" was dropped from the word (Baird). Disconnecting the body from the land is directly connected to the way maps of the "new world" were constructed showing vacant spaces. Julie Nagam points out, "Colonial maps describe the ['new world'] space as void or *terra nullis* by the lack of bodies and their focus on the vast 'empty' space. In these land surveys, the purported lack of bodies denies the embodied or living knowledge situated in the land and the indigenous bodies" (149). I argue this change in language is equal to a change in mindset: a conversion narrative. Equally, the idea of land as vacant still persists in colonial discourse and threatens Native territories today. Settler colonialism mentality has always been incongruous with an Indigenous worldview. Settler colonials in order

to justify their lust for land and its resources claim Indigenous bodies to be inferior to their own; colonial texts often liken Indigenous bodies to beasts and heathens in a savage state. Zillah Einstein argues in *Hatreds* that "'Otherness' is constructed on bodies. Racism uses the physicality of bodies to punish, expunge, and isolate certain bodies and construct them as others" (210). Because settler colonialists view themselves as superior, Native bodies have endured forced conversion, imprisonment, theft, relocation, abuse, violence, and restrictions. From praying towns to residential boarding schools, Native peoples were taken from their homes, forced into servitude, imprisoned in institutions, and interred in camps. Historically, strikes against the Native body continued as the settlers deliberately removed bodies from their homelands through government policies. This removal was done through relocation, setting up reservations, breaking up their lands into allotments, placing them in boarding schools, relocating them to cities, and denying Native peoples their religious and spiritual practices. Further, government policies of the United States and Canada still determine who can be recognized as Indian and how Indigenous nations exist within these nations. In response, Native peoples then use their bodies as vehicles by which to speak back to the settler colonial regime. While most label these actions as protests, Native peoples call themselves protectors. In most Native nations, the people see themselves as caretakers of Mother Earth, enacting that inseparable link between land and body. In other words, we are relatives, and that relationship calls for responsibility. Winona LaDuke explains that for land-based peoples, "Teachings, ancient as the people who have lived on a land for five millennia, speak of a set of relationships to all that is around, predicated on respect, recognition of the interdependency of all beings, an understanding of humans' absolute need to be reverent and to manage our behavior, and an understanding that those relationships must be reaffirmed through lifeways and through acknowledgement of the sacred" (LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred* 64). Indian peoples see a responsibility for those who came before, are here now, and are yet to live, and this means taking care of our mother who sustains us all. The continued digging of fossil fuels has already caused destruction and endangers the future. It is a responsibility to stand and protect.

This chapter is born from the recent resistance strategies of Indigenous peoples and in recognition and honor of the ancestors who also resisted. This is a story of embodied rhetorics—that is, rhetorics located within and in Indigenous bodies and generated for Indigenous bodies. Judith Butler has considered bodies in relationship to limitations set on them; she states, "not only [do] bodies tend to indicate a world beyond themselves, but this movement beyond their own boundaries, a movement of boundary in itself, appeared to be central

to what bodies 'are'" (viii). Indigenous bodies have been continually responding to limitations put on their sovereignty through, as de Certeau might argue, "disquieting [the] familiarity" of colonial discourse. Through "tactics" of dance protests, hunger strikes, and human blockades, a resurgence of Indian protests "navigate[s] the strategies of institutions and power structures," bringing renewed attention to environmental concerns, treaty rights, and sovereignty (de Certeau 96). Protest or protection is a way of disseminating embodied rhetoric.

JOINING THE ROUND DANCE

In November 2012, there were whispers of Indigenous uprisings, stories and discussions of Indigenous peoples and environmental issues. By December, drumbeats called us to malls and plazas and street corners. Simultaneously hunger strikes, roadblocks, and marches were undertaken; at this moment Indigenous bodies gathered to protest Canada's passage of Bill C-45, which threatens Canadian environmental protection and violates treaties. And, as Thomas King wrote in *The Inconvenient Indian*, "Now I don't want to give anyone the impression that I think treaties are a bad idea. Treaties aren't the problem. Keeping the promises made in the treaties is a different matter" (225). Like our ancestors before us, Indigenous people turned to story, to dance, to the body as a vehicle for protest and protection to let governments know that we continue to be idle no more.

Started by four Canadian women—Jessica Gordon, Sheelah McLean, Sylvia McAdams, and Nina Wilsonfeld—the most recent movement Idle No More (INM) began as "a national [international] grassroots movement through its first day of action" (Inman, Smis, and Cambou 254). Its platform was started to discuss the issues surrounding Bill C-45 including the Indian Act and Navigable Waters Act, which infringe on both environmental protections and Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The women used Facebook, Twitter, and a website to disseminate information; other social media also spread the word. The website provides the vision and story for the movement, along with a manifesto and notices of events as they occur. The purpose is simple: to resist settler colonization as it still occurs today, "The impetus for the recent Idle No More events lies in a centuries old resistance as Indigenous nations and their lands suffered the impacts of exploration, invasion and colonization. Idle No More seeks to assert Indigenous inherent rights to sovereignty and reinstitute traditional laws and Nation to Nation Treaties by protecting the lands and waters from corporate destruction. Each day that Indigenous rights are not honored or fulfilled, inequality between Indigenous peoples and the settler society grows" (INM website).

Among other issues, Bill C-45 imperils streams and lakes and amends the

1867 Indian Act without having consulted First Nations peoples. According to Inman, Smis, and Cambou, Canada also may have violated its "duty to consult with indigenous populations prior to action that would, directly or indirectly, impact them on their lands" (254). Moreover, it violates articles 18, 19, and 20 of the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was passed in September 2007. The four countries initially opposed to the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples are (not surprisingly) Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. While these countries have since announced their support (the United States being the last in 2010), policies and actions continue to threaten lands of Indigenous peoples. In Canada, Bill C-45, which has been renamed as the Jobs and Growth Act 2012, is linked to other pieces of legislation that include S-6, the First Nations Education Act. In the United States, Congress voted in December 2014 on the National Defense Bill, which included a provision to sell twenty-four hundred acres of sacred Apache land to a copper mining company (McAuliff). These and other pieces of legislation have a massive impact on Indigenous sovereignty. The United States and Canada continue to promote policies and plans that directly violate rights found in UNDRIP. The Keystone XL Pipeline, the Northern Gate Pipeline, unlimited fracking, and changing regulations that protect waterways are merely a few examples. These issues have been exacerbated following the election of Donald Trump in 2016 because of his close ties to companies directly related to the fossil fuel industry. Not only did Trump sign an executive order on January 24, 2017, to restart Keystone and DAPL, he has selected cabinet members who deny climate change and promote dirty energy such as coal and oil.

New Year's Eve 2012 sparked many flash mob round dances. From the Mall of America in Minnesota to Boston's Faneuil Hall to places all over Canada and the United States, Indigenous peoples gathered in circles and invited supporters to join them. As one media pundit suggested, What can be more unsettling than a crowd of people dancing in the face of authority? (David). Yet for Indigenous peoples, dance has always been a tactic for protest and embodies who we are as Native peoples. In *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing*, Jaqueline Shea Murphy explains, "indigenous dance practices embodied ideologies counter to those the governments were corporeally enforcing. Dance practices and gatherings . . . affirmed the importance of history told not in writing or even words but bodily" (31). And globally, dancing as protest has indeed been a symbol of resistance to oppression. Take for example in Brazil where capoeira, a form of martial arts, was disguised as dance so that slaves could practice their skills without punishment. Or in Africa where the *toyi-toyi* was used—beginning with the MauMau in Kenya resisting English colonists to South Africa in the fight against apartheid. It is a marching foot movement,

with hands held skyward motioning back and forth, and leaders call "awadla" (power) and are answered with "awethu" (to us; to the people). Crowds pour into the streets joining each other, rising up to impossible circumstances and confronting those who held the real guns (Nevit). Among Native peoples, resisting through dance is peaceful protest. Paiute Wo-vo-ka began to promote the Ghost Dance in the late 1880s to reinforce help and cultural survival for Indian peoples who were facing starvation, dislocation, and death from settlers and even agents of the US government. He encouraged people to bring back traditional knowledge that they needed to sustain themselves and to dance in prayer. It was the US government who turned violent and massacred the dancing people at Wounded Knee in 1890.

Round dancing is said to originate with the Cree people, and it is considered a healing dance. Although it is now commonly a pan tribal social dance, it is still used in ceremony. As a social dance, it encourages more people to join the dance while it fosters a sense of identity within Native communities. To dance, one clasps hands with the people on either side and engages in a counter-clockwise step then shifts the other way moving around the circle; a symbol of equality, kinship, harmony, the circle reconnects us with the earth. The dance creates relationships and helps us remember how we are all connected. It carries memories of our ancestors who have passed and those who are yet to come. Dance, too, is ceremony.

The Idle No More movement encouraged people to gather in public spaces and hold flash-mob round dances. The flash mob became a way to enact free assembly (Salmond 95). Howard Rheingold refers to these as Smart Mobs, as they have a definite cause as social protests while using contemporary media to organize (95). Messages are sent out via social media, and potential participants provide contact information; they go to an agreed-upon place at an agreed-upon time and wait for a text message. Drums start beating and dancers emerge joining hands. Some may carry signs to indicate the cause, and others in the watching crowd are invited to join in the round dance. Shea Murphy contends that "this relationship of dance and memory carries not only the physical sense of dance as something that is learned from others and held and remembered in one's body. It also carries a spiritual sense in which learning to dance, and the act of dancing, enact a spiritual physical connection to other beings, including those who passed on, as well as those who will come later" (220–21). Bodies enact these dances at malls, city plazas, and other places that have significant meaning; the drums and dancing bodies reinvent and reconstruct the meaning of the space, reclaiming it as Native space (Endres and Sendra-Cook 258–59). We can understand the significance of reclaiming space through thinking about how the Alcatraz takeover literally marked the island

as Indian Land, a marking that still exists, or about Chief Spence marking her space by setting up a tipi in Ottawa challenging the position of Parliament Hill. Likewise, the round dances took place in public spaces like city plazas in Toronto, Sacramento, Boston, and many other major cities, or in shopping plazas. Over one thousand people participated in the 2012 New Year's Eve round dance in the Mall of America, a space that marks boundless consumerism. Interestingly on New Year's Eve 2013 (the following year), Patricia Shepard and Reyna Crow were arrested upon entering the Mall of America and were told that drums were not allowed in the mall. On New Year's Eve 2012 in Boston, we gathered at Faneuil Hall, which was built in 1742 and known as the Cradle of Liberty. Even briefly reconstructing the meaning of these places makes them Native space, and bodies dance to bring about justice.

STARVING INDIGENOUS BODIES

Coinciding with the actions of Idle No More, Teresa Spence, chief of the Attawapiskat Reserve in northern Ontario, began a hunger strike. She did so in direct response to C-45 when she and other First Nation Chiefs were barred from entering the House of Commons on December 4, 2012. Other elders also engaged in hunger strikes including Grand Elder Raymond Robinson. However, Chief Spence was also responding to "concerns she had raised in 2011" regarding substandard housing and health conditions on her reserve. Despite an officially declared state of emergency, the Canadian government issued no response (see Ornelas). Setting up a tipi on Victoria Island in Ottawa, Chief Spence began her hunger strike on December 11, 2012; she made it clear that she would end her strike when Prime Minister Harper and Governor General David Johnston convened a meeting with a First Nation chief and recommit to Canada's and the Crown's treaty obligations. She declared, "We need to reignite a nation to nation relationship based on our inherent and constitutionality protected rights as a sovereign nation. We are demanding our rightful place back here in our homeland that we call Canada" (McCarthy and Bradshaw). In her protest, Chief Spence used her own body by denying her own body and exercising sovereignty over her body.

Historically, many have used the hunger strike as a protest tactic. Scholars agree that the hunger strike is used as a method of nonviolent action where the powerless struggle to create political opportunities out of nothing to correct a perceived injustice (Scanlan et al. 276). We have heard of hunger strikes in prisons such as Guantanamo, yet Indigenous groups have seen this tactic, Macarena Gómez-Barris notes, as "bodily performances of self-starvation [which] enact what it means to live in a barely livable state of colonial difference" (Gómez-Barris 121). In another example, Jennifer Shirmer discusses the protests of women in Guatemala and Chile in the 1970s and 1980s who persisted in seeking answers about their missing family members. They took over public spaces and called on the government to investigate disappearances and murders. In 1978, one hundred of these women engaged in the Long Hunger Strike with the support of Chilean society. Likewise, in her study, Gómez-Barris shows the Mapuche in Chile have used hunger strikes since 2004 as "a dominant form of political expression and of embodied cultural politics" to demonstrate that "the starving body of the hunger striker has become the site of resistance against the modern nation state's continued practice of colonial subjugation" (120).

As a protest tactic, hunger strikes mean that the striker undertakes great risks and thus must be willing to die for a cause. This tactic involves potential self-destruction of the body. Hunger strikes become dangerous to the body in only a few days when the body begins to break down fat in order to produce energy and ends up consuming itself from within to survive (Scanlan et al. 277). And while the idea is to call attention to a cause, a striker must also endure the emotions of the public.

There was both support and outrage regarding Spence's decision to go on a hunger strike. These came from both sides. In the mainstream media, the fifty-year-old Spence was often ridiculed and attempts were made to undermine her leadership. In fact, Patrick Brazeau (Algonquin) in Harper's Conservative Party claimed that Spence's action set "a bad example for First Nation youth" (McCarthy and Bradshaw). One of the most telling aspects of the media attack came when it was revealed that Spence was drinking lemon water, medicinal teas, and fish broth. Fish broth was characterized as "the cheat." And in media accounts, the words "hunger strike" became "liquid diet," thus tempering the phrase. Anishinabe writer Leeanne Simpson replied, "it's as if a liquid diet doesn't take substantial physical, mental, and emotional toll or substantial physical, mental, and emotional strength to accomplish" (Simpson).

Fish broth can be what Norma Alacón calls tropography or the interanimating relationships between metaphor and places (Brady 138). Spence was embodying cultural tradition. Her fast incorporated her peoples' cultural traditions of eating fish broth, which would be used traditionally to sustain communities when there was no food. According to Simpson, "Spence is eating fish broth because metaphorically colonialism has Indian people on a fish broth diet for generation upon generation" (Simpson).

As Simpson reasons, Chief Spence was in ceremony, and fasting as a ceremony is difficult. Roxanne Ornela, who visited Chief Spence during her strike, wrote, "I can relay with certainty that I know what bravery looks like while standing on the edge of life. I saw unwavering determination and courage in

Chief Spence's face while she held to her conviction in calling for changes to the government's apparent arrogance and mistreatment of First Nations" (6). Chief Spence and Grand Elder Robinson ended their strikes after forty-four days when the government and the Assembly of First Nations developed a plan agreeing on intergovernmental cooperation over the next five years ("First Nations: Working for Fundamental Change").

DIS/EMBODIED INDIGENOUS BODIES

Among the recent events to bring attention to issues in Indian country are displays and physical actions. During The Longest Walk, which took place in 1978, Indigenous bodies marched from San Francisco to Washington, DC, to bring attention to Native rights. While the 1978 walk is called the last of the Red Power Movement's activities (see the National Library of Medicine's "Native Voices" timeline), there have been a few more gatherings over the years, and most recently in July 2016 (called The Longest Walk 5). Other walkers include women who, since 2003, take on Mother Earth Water Walks carrying water from one end of the river to the others. In 2016, the women walked the Mississippi River from the gulf to her beginnings to bring water to her source. Most who are elders stop at sacred places along the way to do ceremony and ask healing for the river (Rendon).

To raise awareness of the missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW), the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation held a Walk a Mile in Her Shoes march. Men squeezed their feet into red high heels to walk and raise money for a domestic violence shelter in addition to raising awareness. This event and the other activities above are all done in prayer for the sacredness of life, demonstrating the use of Indigenous bodies to honor and connect to all our relations.

However, the domestic abuse and violence against Indigenous women is both visible and invisible due to the lack of attention brought to this crisis. Thus, a form of disembodied display and awareness has emerged. In 2000, Jaime Black, a Metís artist, asked people to donate red dresses and hang them outside to bring awareness to the missing and murdered Indigenous women (Rieger). In a similar disembodied installation, *Walking with Our Sisters* is a commemorative traveling display of moccasin vamps placed on created red cloth pathways to honor the unfinished lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Through social media Christi Belcourt invited artists to make and donate the vamps, which now total over seventeen hundred (*Walking with Our Sisters*). The first installment opened on September 20, 2013, and is booked through 2018. Visitors are asked to remove their shoes and "walk with these women" to honor them.

Thus, Indigenous protectors seek various ways to bring justice to their

causes. The physicality of movements uses endurance as a tactic to raise awareness. We must not, however, see the disembodied displays as separate from the others. The *bodies* of these missing and murdered women are just as present in these displays. Red dresses move with the elements to help us remember the women. In the same way, the making of the moccasin vamps and the vamps themselves call back to our memory loved ones whose lives were unfinished. As Indigenous people, we know our relatives and ancestors still walk among us, and we are responsible to honor them.

PROTECTING INDIGENOUS BODIES

Occupying tactics have been used by Indigenous peoples in many situations, yet there is an argument to be made that these lands have always been Indian lands, thus Indian peoples are reclaiming and maintaining rather than occupying them. In 1969 a small, quiet group reclaimed Alcatraz Island and were joined by others in their stay of nineteen months. During the American Indian Movement (AIM), Indigenous bodies took over Wounded Knee and the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Washington and, most recently, have been reclaiming and maintaining spaces to prevent endangering Mother Earth or to reassert their rights to hunt and fish. As Adam Barker clarifies, these Indigenous occupations differ from the recent Occupy Movement in that Native peoples "have sought to reclaim and reassert relationships to land and place submerged beneath the settler colonial world. Their occupations do not question simply the divisions of wealth and power . . . they question the very existence of settler colonial states" (329). Unlike the 99 percent as those in the Occupy Movement called themselves, Indigenous peoples address decolonization from their relationships to land and their role as protectors.

Indigenous bodies continue to place themselves at the forefront of protecting Mother Earth from the onslaught of greedy developers who try to extract every resource from her body. These developers don't consider the consequences of their greed. For example, Oklahoma is experiencing daily earthquakes attributed by experts to the disposal of wastewater from fracking. Oil spills from fracking are happening everywhere, contaminating water supplies and land. In 2006 the Alberta pipeline "broke and spilled one million litres of oil" (Laboucan-Massimo 116), contaminating waters in traditional territories. The Keystone XL, DAPL, and other pipelines still loom as threats to Indigenous nations in North and South Dakota and Canada. Laboucan-Massimo writes that multiple spills have occurred "in other parts of North America, from Kalamazoo, Michigan to the Kinder Morgan spill along the west coast as well as spills . . . along the Keystone XL pipeline" (116). Despite the environmental concerns, hundreds of millions of dollars are being poured into getting crude

oil out of Alberta into pipelines. Tribes like the Miq' maq of Els-i-potg engaged in protests, holding a roadblock on October 13, 2013. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police responded with teargas and rubber bullets. Other tribes have joined to develop Moccasins on the Ground training by Owe Aku's Sacred Water Protection Project; many of these people have joined the Sacred Stone Camp. The organization Owe Aku's focus on skills, tactics, and techniques of nonviolent direct action in three-day training camps. They demonstrate how to blockade heavy equipment, and they hold workshops on strategic media, street medic training, and knowing legal rights with respect to civil disobedience (Owe Aku). Indigenous bodies continue to protect the future for generations to come.

Threats to the environment and land are directly connected to the health of the body. Indigenous peoples argue that these threats also assault their cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices and endanger future generations. As Schlosberg and Carruthers agree, "The emphasis is on the health of the environment, and the protection of local economies, and the preservation of local and traditional cultures and practices. Specific demands focus not only on religious, cultural, and traditional abilities, but also on the political freedoms and the self-determination and community functioning" (18). Thus it is imperative to have a rhetorical and historical understanding of the issues in Indian county. Gloria Anzaldúa notes, "for images, words, stories to have . . . transformative power, they must arise from the human body—flesh and bone" (97).

It is our responsibility as Native peoples to care for our lands and our peoples: to walk with our relatives who came before us and with those who will come in the future. We understand our interconnectedness to all our relations and hold them in reverence. While the protectors at Standing Rock and Idle No More have brought renewed attention to the issues, longtime activist and musician Buffy Sainte-Marie emphasizes, "We've had an indigenous peoples grassroots movement all long. It didn't show up because we didn't have anything to do that day" (Ostroff). While our issues and lives are often kept in the shadows, our peoples have never been idle; we have indeed laid our bodies on the line over and over again.

We will continue to do so.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the editors of *Unruly Rhetorics* for asking me to participate in this conversation. As well, I wish to thank and honor all the Indigenous peoples who have participated in and supported these movements to bring rights to our peoples.

Kutâputamunuw.

NOTES

1. I use "protest" here to indicate the non–Native American view of the camp. People participating and Native Americans in general refer to themselves as protectors, not protestors.

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