

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: GLUSKABE'S ENCOUNTERS WITH EPISTEMICIDE

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ABSTRACT Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM) and its embedded engagement with Indigenous Epistemology rises above and lives beyond the reach of the subjugating colonial project of epistemicide, the colonial intention to eradicate Indigenous ways of knowing and being, or epistemologies and ontologies. This paper offers a lens through which I make visible where, when and how particularly situated Indigenous epistemologies continue to thrive. I have selected two documents to provide critical context for the colonial and genocidal intentions of epistemicide, and to purposefully demonstrate the endurance of Waponahki epistemology, and through such evidence of presence, deliberately point out its critical relevance in contemporary schooling. Waponahki refers to the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq and Abenaki peoples who live in Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada and have formed a post-contact political alliance, the Wabanaki Confederacy. In this work I discuss the concept of epistemicide from a lived understanding of Indigenous research as a way of life; a way of knowing derived from many years of accumulated experiential knowledge. In an embodied and material way, I am a part of that thread of intergenerational knowledge and both benefit from and contribute to that knowledge and empirical process. My poetic renditions appear in the paper and attempt to provide further insight into the discussion. Given the Waponahki people's continued engagement with the living Gluskabe, a spirit being and teacher in Penobscot culture, epistemicide remains an incomplete colonial project. Gluskabe's encounters with epistemicide are those very places wherein I identify or bring to light the ongoing vitality of Indigenous epistemology, which I identify as *Red Hope*.

Keywords Indigenous, Indigenous Research Methodology, Epistemology, Decolonization, Epistemicide, Red Hope

Epistemicide
The intention to eradicate our people's way of knowing & being
It is not complete
We are still here
We are still praying
We are still being
Who our ancestors
prayed for us to be
Indigenous knowledge belongs wherever Indigenous people are
We are our Indigenous communities
We love our people and hold them in our souls
We have the right to participate
in the academy
where knowledge is created, remembered, revitalized & mobilized
Engagement with the epistemologies that are ancestral to us
is a fundamental human right
Red Hope is a call for the practice of this right
Where Gluskabe thrives...
-Rebecca Sockbeson

Gluskabe in Penobscot culture is a spirit being, one who is also identified as a teacher (ssipsis, 2007). Numerous Gluskabe stories explain the creation of our people and tell how Gluskabe saves the people from drought and starvation. These stories remind us of our intricate relationship to the land, the cosmos, our ancestors, and to ourselves. Gluskabe's encounters with epistemicide occur in those very places wherein I bring to light the ongoing vitality of Indigenous epistemology, and hence the *Red Hope*. Given the Waponahki people's continued engagement with the living Gluskabe, epistemicide remains an incomplete colonial project. While the people's engagement in Red Hope is a force that is saving them from the threat of their own eradication, today the killing of Gluskabe, or the processes of epistemicide, happens in subtle, and perhaps more devastating ways when compared to those of previous epochs in Indigenous history.

Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM) and its rootedness in Indigenous epistemology, challenges the ongoing colonial project of epistemicide, the intention to eradicate Indigenous

ways of knowing and being (Santos, 2007). The original Cartesian violence separating knowing from being helped legitimate the denigration and thus erasure of Indigenous onto-epistemology. Yet, Indigenous epistemologies have survived. Through an IRM framework, I offer a lens through which processes and experiences of epistemological survival can be identified, and in some ways, understood to show that epistemicide is not complete.

The ideas and findings shared in this paper are based on a larger body of research conducted during my graduate studies as a research assistant on a Community University Research Alliance (CURA) research project entitled, “Healing through Culture and Language: Research with Aboriginal peoples in Northwestern Canada.” My ongoing scholarship seeks to unearth knowledge about ancient Indigenous systems and policy-making processes, to contribute significantly to existing knowledge about incorporating Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies into educational policy-making in general, and to fuel the awakening of Waponahki knowledge into contemporary actualization and embodiment. In fulfilling these purposes in this work, policy and policy-development are shown as outcomes of Waponahki knowledge mobilization. The intersections of my personal experiences as policymaker, mother, and researcher have come together to motivate me in developing this work. This process of analysis includes interviews of tribal leaders and Elders. Their stories are based on formal interviews I conducted as well as informal conversations. I selected these tribal leaders as sources of Waponahki/Indigenous knowledge because of their integrity in important political work and their leadership roles in translating the hopes of our people into formal legislated policy.

In what is now known as the state of Maine, in the USA, the Waponahki¹ people, my people, are maintaining traditions that determine and ensure the capacity of our culture to thrive in those very spaces identified as Red Hope. Thus, my illustration

¹ Waponahki (also written as Wabanaki) means “people of the dawn” and refers to the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Mi’kmaq and Abenaki peoples who live in Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada and have formed a post-contact political alliance, the Wabanaki Confederacy.

of the distinctive nature of IRM demonstrates how such analytic processes underlie the activities and events of our everyday Indigenous lives. IRM does not live because of, or in relation to, epistemicide; this recent term identifies an ancient process of knowledge acquisition and knowledge understanding (Santos, 2007). We understand and live Waponahki IRM as the foundation and source of Indigenous knowledge preservation, intrinsic to our vitality as Indigenous people. IRM lives without time/space disjuncture, just as Waponahki onto-epistemology is lived as one wholeness, individually and collectively. Understanding the wholeness of Waponahki to be both knowing and being has enabled the survival of core Waponahki teachings.

IRM provides a framework through which I study, and make sense of the epistemicide and articulate those understandings as acts of remembering and mobilizing Waponahki knowledge. My approach in carrying out this research has been informed by the work of Cree/Metis scholar Cora Weber-Pillwax, who speaks about understandings and intention with respect to the construction of an Indigenous research methodology. She offers the following principles to consider when developing such a methodology:

- (a) the interconnectedness of all living things, (b) the impact of motives and intentions on person and community, (c) the foundation of research as lived indigenous experience, (d) the groundedness of theories in indigenous epistemology, (e) the transformative nature of research, (f) the sacredness and responsibility of maintaining person and community integrity, and (g) the recognition of languages and cultures as living processes (1999, p. 31)

I agree with Weber-Pillwax's summary and I use these principles in the IRM that frames my work. In particular, "the impact of motives and intentions on person and community" is a guiding value in ensuring that my research contributes to Indigenous knowledge mobilization and the community as a whole. The significance of the term "knowledge mobilization" strikes me in the way it intimately reflects the Indigenous research principle that knowledge is to be sought primarily as a means of benefit to the people or to the collective whole from which such knowledge originates (Brown & Strega, 2005;

Kovach, 2010, Weber-Pillwax, 1999). The fact that the term has been adopted by the Canadian funding agencies to replace “knowledge dissemination” indicates that Canadian research criteria itself might be adjusting its standards towards more sophisticated and ancient ways of defining and talking about knowledge and its applications in ordinary lives. “Knowledge mobilization” has always been the perspective within the ways of the Waponahki peoples and also appears within the ways of other Indigenous peoples (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Brown & Strega, 2005).

IRM reconnects me with my ancestors, who are present in my research. Thus, I do not see myself as the creator of knowledge, however, I can help remember and mobilize Waponahki knowledge. Like many other Indigenous people, I understand that knowledge evolves, is transformed and evidenced through peoples’ experience. Our Elders, through their extensive experiences, hold much of our knowledge, but even they often recognize explicitly that they are still learning (Cardinal, 1977; Ermine, 1995; Penobscot Nation Oral History Project, 1993). As Passamaquoddy Elder Wayne Newell commented, he does not see his contributions to my research as wisdom, but as energy generated during our time together. This is the source and sustaining characteristic of Waponahki knowledge, and where I understand our knowledge to be rooted in (Sockbeson, 2011).

Because I am deeply biographically implicated, my analysis is presented in first person, and necessitates that voice as I am intricately connected to the data and the related experiences I will articulate. This inhabiting of the story corresponds to Indigenous ways of situating knowledges, and prevents my removal or distancing from the research. This locating of my voice also prevents the placing of my analysis in a position of vulnerability wherein challenges of validity and credibility could arise based on the reader’s misunderstanding of the significance of writer’s voice in relation to the form of Indigenous academic argument and reasoning presented and represented here. I am simultaneously a part of the data and the analysis of the topics about which I am writing. However, the data must be heard and considered as data, else the analysis is nullified. Ermine (1995), a Cree scholar, connects Aboriginal epistemology deeply to the self, believing that, as Aboriginal people, we do not

need to look beyond ourselves to find our ways of knowing or epistemology. As researchers, we need to understand deeply our own relationship to our study and our own location within our research (Weber-Pillwax, 1999) – that is, we must ask and answer the question, “Where is the ‘I’ in my research?”

We are the data we collect and analyze

As Indigenous scholars, we are very few and relatively new to the academy, so that it becomes necessary for us to critique the dominant Western intellectual responses to our theoretical positionings, which say we are sharing only “perspectives.” At the same time, I do not individually claim to be the creator of knowledge, or to be presenting an absolute Truth. The understanding within the academy that Indigenous scholars are merely offering a “perspective” serves to reduce their critical intellectual analyses to the status of an opinion and devalues their intellectual contributions. Ahenakew (2016) points out that until “deep rooted and ongoing (neo) colonial thinking” within western institutions is challenged Indigenous research methodologies exist within a very uneven playing field (p.1).

The intellectual contributions of Indigenous scholars must transcend the valuing ascribed by the academic mainstream as individual perspectives. As Indigenous scholars, we are often asked to share our “perspectives” on a particular issue; in fact, we have rightfully earned our expertise on such topics or issues through lengthy, rigorous and disciplined intellectual study. As Indigenous scholars, we have a distinct responsibility to share and mobilize such truths also identified as our findings (Deloria, 1998). In other words, we are often the very data we collect and analyze. In many ways, we are all living out the painful legacy of colonialism, and often we are intergenerational survivors of residential schools. As a consequence of colonial dispossession and its immense unresolved historical trauma, our hearts are heavy with the violent deaths of our families and loved ones. Our scholarship is carried out under the shadow of tragedies associated with the disproportionately high levels of our own constant socioeconomic distresses.

This survival space of intellectual engagement requires meta-emotional intelligence to engage in thinking that supports

us to transcend and navigate the multiple needs and crises surrounding us (Gardner, 2006; Helding, 2009). Another one of our primary responsibilities as Indigenous scholars in the academy is theorizing the experiences; often, as Linda Smith (1999) points out, we experience the theory distinctly, rather than researching in areas of intellectual interest, or outside personal experience. Smith explains that as Indigenous peoples, we have been historically and heavily researched; she asks what happens when those who have been researched are doing the research (Smith, 1999). To expand on this, I ask what happens to the research when we engage with it using our own ancestral Indigenous ways of knowing and being as we collect data and carry out analyses? My analysis is empirically grounded, the majority of what I share here is derived from my primary sensory organs; I have felt, touched, smelled and seen what I share. Additionally, I further qualify my assertions with the literature. I write for the sake of my people, the ancestors and our people to come. This work is much like a prayer; I hold my people with me as I write, and I treat my words with the utmost care and thought. I refer to this work as part of processes of social and political change.

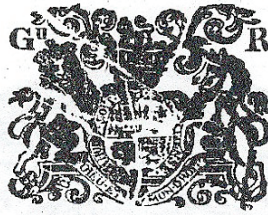
I recognize that what we have learned through experiencing colonization heavily impacts our way of being in the world. The ways in which we come to know these truths are Waponahki epistemology, rooted in both individual and collective experiential knowledge. We use our ways of being and knowing to address epistemicide, moving us through and beyond decolonization.

Although onto-epistemologies are central to understanding Indigenous knowledge systems as ancient concepts, they are also English words used in the English dominated context of Western academia (Meyer, 2001). Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald explains the necessary separation of epistemology from ontology was key in the colonial project (2009). The discipline of epistemology, in its inception during the Enlightenment, was motivated to define a universal “Truth” through empirical or analytical methods. “Objectivity is viewed as a necessary mindset for success in this endeavor...this epistemological turn discounts the spiritual and metaphysical realms as too subjective and irrational to garner serious scholarly consideration” (Donald, pp. 402-403). However, onto-epistemology within Indigenous knowledge systems center on interconnectedness. Donald

believes that delinking ontology and epistemology served to privilege Eurowestern ways of knowing:

The relationships between knowing and being were confused-the distinctions became less clear-as ways of being were increasingly defined based on Eurowestern ways of knowing. This was translated into a declaration that Eurowestern ways of knowing were the only way to be. This declaration was a major principle guiding Eurowestern impetuses during the colonial era that maintained its influential power in the world to the present. (2009, p. 403)

The deep enjoinder of Waponahki epistemology and ontology is also present in our Waponahki languages (as in many other Indigenous languages), where ontology and epistemology are represented by action-oriented words. Thus, epistemology and ontology are performative, they imply a dynamic force of action, movement, energy, transformation and change. To sustain this capacity for holding and carrying energy, neither epistemology nor ontology can be separated. This state of enjoinder is central to comprehending how Indigenous philosophies and people do not conceive of themselves as separate from the land. The life of the land and its elements are central to Waponahki onto-epistemology; it is the basis of the relationship of inseparability between humans and the land.



By His HONOUR

S P E N C E R P H I P S, Esq;

Lieutenant-Governour and Commander in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*.

A P R O C L A M A T I O N.

WHIEREAS the Tribe of *Penobscot* Indians have repeatedly in a perfidious Manner acted contrary to their solemn Submission unto His Majesty long since made and frequently renewed;

I have therefore, at the Desire of the house of Representatives, with the Advice of His Majesty's Council, thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and to declare the *Penobscot* Tribe of Indians to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to His Majesty King *GEORGE* the Second: And I do hereby require His Majesty's Subjects of this Province to embrace all Opportunities of pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and every of the aforesaid Indians.

AND WHEREAS the General Court of this Province have voted that a Bounty or Encouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick Treasury, to the marching Forces that shall have been employed for the Defence of the *Eastern* and *Western* Frontiers, from the *First* to the *Twenty-fifth* of this Instant *November*;

I have thought fit to publish the same; and I do hereby promise, That there shall be paid out of the Province-Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Fulfillment, their Wages and Subsistence, the Premiums or Bounty following, viz.

For every Male *Penobscot* Indian above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken within the Time aforesaid and brought to *Boston*, *Fifty Pounds*.

For every Scalp of a Male *Penobscot* Indian above the Age aforesaid, brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, *Forty Pounds*.

For every Female *Penobscot* Indian taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, *Twenty-five Pounds*.

For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be killed and brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, *Twenty Pounds*.

Given at the Council-Chamber in *Boston*, this Third Day of *November* 1755, and in the Twenty-ninth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *GEORGE* the Second, by the Grace of GOD of *Great-Britain*, *France* and *Ireland*, KING, Defender of the Faith, &c.

By His Honour's Command,
J. Willard, Secr.

S. Phips.

G O D Save the KING.

B O S T O N: Printed by *John Draper*, Printer to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governour and Council. 1755.

Figure 1. British 1755 proclamation offering 40 pounds for an adult Penobscot male, 20 pounds for the scalp of Penobscot woman or child. Copyright 2011 by Rebecca Sockbeson. Reprinted with permission (Sockbeson, 2011, p. 17)²

2 40 pounds in 1755 is approximately \$8,869 US in 2016 dollars; 'Pounds to Sterling Dollars, Historical Conversion of Currency', Dr. Eric Nye, U. of Wyoming, <https://www.uwyo.edu/numimage/currency.htm>

Waponahki historical context

To find the “I” it is important to understand some of the salient historical information. The Waponahki people before European invasion numbered over twenty tribes throughout what is now called Maine in the USA and in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Easternmost Canada. Over fifteen tribes were annihilated through genocidal bounties and germ warfare; they faced 97% population depletion (Paul, 2000; Thornton, 1987). As peoples of oral tradition, the ways of knowing and being have been passed down from generation to generation of people since the history of the people began long before any European invasion; since time immemorial.

Much of the documented history has been taken up by non-Waponahki, predominantly Anglo-European anthropologists and historians, and is considered by many Waponahki to be inaccurate and biased (Paul, 2000; Penobscot Nation Oral History Project, 1993). The following dates and accounts are significant as markers that set context for my discussion of IRM as a significant means by which to address epistemicide.

According to our oral history, the Waponahki taught the early European colonials how to survive and thrive on the land and initially served as guides and hosts to the Europeans. The Waponahki values of generosity and hospitality were taken advantage of by the Europeans, who began their abusive treatment of the Waponahki as early as the mid 1500s (Prins, 1995). However, as the Europeans began taking land, kidnapping people and murdering them, the Waponahki began to defend themselves and fight back.

In an attempt to halt the decimation of the Penobscots from the scalping bounties, in 1775, Penobscot Chief Joseph Orono, accompanied by a delegation of Penobscots, pledged an alliance with the English in Watertown, Massachusetts (American Friends Service Committee, 1989). A treaty was signed by the Waponahki and Massachusetts establishing and allocating reservation lands in 1818 (AFSC, 1989). In 1820, Maine became a state, no longer a part of Massachusetts and the tribes negotiated for a representative to engage diplomatically with the State of Maine. At that time, the Waponahki of Maine were considered by the English as wards of the state (Loring, 2008).

From the early 1880s until the early 1900s, Waponahki children were sent to federally operated residential schools, primarily the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. There, the students were not permitted to speak any Native language (Francis, Leavitt & Apt, 2008). During this time, the Waponahki way of life and the traditional economic system was disrupted with the imposition of reservation life, and the people were no longer able to move throughout the region and live off the land. The dramatic shift in work and economic subsistence caused the people to move from traditional hunting and fishing to a heavier reliance on making and selling baskets, construction work, and guiding and logging (AFSC, 1989).

In 1972, the Passamaquoddy tribe and Penobscot Nation filed a lawsuit claiming two-thirds of the State of Maine (AFSC, 1989). The claim included 12.5 million acres of land granted to Maine in treaties not ratified by Congress, making them illegitimate. The lands in question thereby would fall under the continued ownership of the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot. The Indian Nonintercourse Act of 1790 dictates that Indian lands can only be acquired with the approval of the United States Congress (Francis, Leavitt & Apt, 2008) and this law was being called into effect by the Penobscot and the Passamaquoddy. In 1980, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act was passed, recognizing the illegitimate treaties not ratified by Congress. The law did not award the tribes ownership of their previous landholdings, but monetary compensation was granted so that they could buy back certain lands within their traditional territories (Ranco, 2000). Within this specific historical context, the Waponahki people began to return to their own ways of thinking/being, and to dismantle the frame of colonization that had held them tightly within institutions and systems that were crushing and overpowering them. My own story as a Waponahki woman and researcher is only one of many tributaries in a larger flow moving our people towards our own renewal.

Contemporary genocide and epistemicide at school

The intellectual gaze from deep within my experiences and soul has driven my scholarship. As a Waponahki mother of three, my children's experiences and insights have been central in conceptualizing and mobilizing my research. Sharing personal information about my child's experience with genocide and epistemicide at school is foundational to engaging in an

alternative through identifying, naming and then addressing these forms of oppression. Also, knowing about children's experiences may encourage teacher education leaders and planners to incorporate anti-racism and decolonization into their curricula. In 2005, my daughter, then in kindergarten, reported that children were playing "kill the Indians" at recess at her school in Maine, and that she had chosen not to participate. In the game, the preschool children were Indians and the children in kindergarten and Grade 1 were pirates who chased and killed the Indians.

As a kindergartener, my daughter could have been a pirate. However, she refused because, as she explained, she was a "for real" Indian, and that game was "not okay because it liked to kill Indians." Note that the younger children – those with the smallest bodies and the least power - played the Indians. Around the same time, my daughter received a card from her fourth grade-reading buddy (see Figures 2 & 3). On the front of the card was an intricately drawn picture of a ship from which light peach colored figures with yellow hair shot at a group of brown, black haired figures on the shore. Immediately in front of the brown skin people was a large bomb-like fire.



Figure 2. Front view of card. Copyright 2011 by Rebecca Sockbeson. Reprinted with permission (Sockbeson, 2011, p. 15).



Figure 3. Closer view of card. Copyright 2011 by Rebecca Sockbeson. Reprinted with permission (Sockbeson, 2011, p. 15).

The peach colored figures were clearly winning this violent battle. On the inside of the card was a thank you note from a white fourth grade student expressing gratitude for a great year as reading buddies. I asked my daughter what the picture meant to her. She said it was a picture of bad pirates killing the Indians, and that not all pirates were bad. I asked her why they were killing the Indians, and she responded by saying, “Mumma, I don’t know why they want to kill us...I think it is because they do not know enough about us.”

The next day, I presented the card, along with a complaint about the recess game, to the headmaster of the school. He replied by explaining that the boy was a very kind child and his family was, too. I explained in turn that I was not concerned about nor did I question the kindness of the boy and his family. I demanded that the school administrator look closely at the picture. The imagery on the card had much in common with pictures of Nazi figures putting Jews in incinerators, or men in white robes and hoods hanging black people by the necks on trees and placing them on fire. I further contextualize this story in relation to mandating anti-racist policy to teachers in my 2009 text, “Waponahki Tradition of Weaving Educational Policy” (Sockbeson, pp. 353-354).

The innocently crafted card reminded me of the painful history of genocide that my people have survived. A notice of the 1755 British bounty proclamation (Figure 1) is posted on the wall of our tribal government office, declaring a genocidal bounty on Penobscot scalps and live prisoners. The photograph (Figure 4) of my daughter’s great-great-grandmother, Elizabeth Andrews portrays the humanity of the bounty document’s

intended victim. Our grandmother's generation was one of the first to survive the genocidal bounty enacted over 250 years ago; amidst this legacy of attempted annihilation and Waponahki resiliency, my daughter positions herself as an Indian targeted in the recess game, "kill the Indian."

I spoke with the children in her kindergarten and first grade classes to explain that at one time this recess game was a for real game and it is hurtful to play in this way. The teacher had expressed concern about protecting children from hearing such historical facts because they might feel guilty. The adult educators wanted to erase historical facts in order to protect some students, but seemed less concerned about the feelings and experiences of my "Indian" or Penobscot daughter.

While the intention of colonialism was to wipe out the Waponahki, we are still here. The genocidal bounty on Penobscot people and scalps (Figure 1) is only one of numerous bounties placed on American Indian peoples (Martin, 1998). Before colonial invasion, there were over twenty Waponahki tribes, today there are only five (AFSC, 1989).



Figure 4. Late Elizabeth Andrews, descendant of some of the first generations to survive the genocidal bounty. Copyright 2011 by Rebecca Sockbeson. Reprinted with permission (Sockbeson, 2011 p. 18).

During the same time as I was addressing the genocidal recess game, I had the opportunity to work with other Waponahki people to define what state citizens would be required through law to learn about our people through my development of curricular resources related to the Waponahki History and Culture Law, also known as LD 291: An Act to Require Teaching of Maine Native American History. In addition to incorporating the bounty into the curricular expectations, we decided that our creation story would be shared to help others understand what is embodied in our worldview. At the same time, Indigenous knowledge mobilization was manifesting itself within my family and myself. I had explained to my daughter the previous year the story of our creation and she had accepted it without question, responding with total engagement and belief. A year passed and she reported to me that her peers in her kindergarten class (off-reservation in a predominantly white school) did not believe that we could come from the ash tree. She questioned whether or not this was really true. I let her know it was our truth, and many people have different beliefs about their origins. This story shows how our people are surviving the epistemicide and the intended eradication of our ways of knowing and being is not complete (Santos, 2007).

While the necessity for Waponahki worldview to be included in the state-mandated curricula is clear, our children need to learn something even more profound before they are able to grasp the notion that people can come from trees or other elements of the earth and cosmos. We need to understand, and teach, the power and dominance of Euro-western knowledge systems in existing curricula. Children have the critical thinking capabilities to grasp that there are multiple creation stories, all valuable and legitimate. Our own Waponahki children should understand our creation stories not as a myth or legend but as an explanation of our origins, yet another encounter Gluskabe has with epistemicide. My child's doubts about the Waponahki creation story points to the impact of systemic racism prohibiting the transfer of our knowledges, the same systemic racism that perpetuates the transfer of Western knowledge as-if superior to Indigenous knowledge, if it is even recognized as knowledge. Santos calls for the academy to value local knowledge and traditional western knowledge equally. A "monoculture of scientific knowledge" is responsible for the epistemicidal experiences of Indigenous populations (Santos, 2007, pp. 28-29).

Indigenous knowledge mobilization

IRM, with its unfolding and re-interpreting cycles, begins with creation stories as the sources of our beings and the energy sustaining our knowledge. As mentioned, in light of the vast amounts of subjugated Indigenous knowledges, the concept of Indigenous knowledge mobilization is particularly empowering. It speaks to the sense of immobility and paralysis that pervades Indigenous communities, and offers hope of movement from within ancient systems of knowledge.

Instilling this hope through such Indigenous knowledge mobilization within peoples who have lived generations of oppression and attempts to eradicate their Indigenous ways of knowing is especially meaningful. The ongoing practice of telling Indigenous stories through generations of Indigenous peoples in communities is an example of the ancient practice of knowledge mobilization where new forms of knowledge are brought to life from ancient knowledge and remembered and re-applied in new forms and contexts. Such new knowledge is not separate from the significant process of mobilization of that ancient knowledge. The Waponahki creation story as a primary source has led me back to myself, because the creation story is the source of every Waponahki.

This creation story of Gluskabe is taught in reservation schools to our young people:

*Gluskabe came first of all into this country....
Into the land of the Waponahki, next to sunrise, There were
no Indians here then...
And in this way, he made man and woman:
He took his bow and arrows and shot at trees, The basket-
trees, the Ash
Then Indians came out of the bark
Of the Ash-trees.
(AFSC, 1989)*

The creation story tells us that Gluskabe is a spirit being responsible for our creation and saving the people; there are numerous Gluskabe teachings or stories, and late Penobscot Elder ssipsis, (Writer & Scholar), identifies Gluskabe as a Penobscot teacher. I first heard this at home as a young girl of seven or eight years. I was attending a Catholic school. As

one of only nine Native children in the school, I was exposed to the Catholic worldview for at least two hours each school day. I was taught both the biblical story of Adam and Eve, as well as Darwin's theory of evolution (offered as a secondary way to understand creation).

I also learned that "Indians" had legends and myths (which were presented as fictional) about creation. When I heard the Waponahki creation story I enjoyed it, but my Catholic indoctrination made it impossible for me to believe it as truth. I did not think much about it again until my university years, when I heard other Native peoples relating their creation stories. I sensed their deep belief in their origins. During this time, I was also introduced to critical theory in a feminist context and, for the first time, exposed to Native scholarship in an educational context. I learned about the colonial oppression my people had survived and continue to experience. I remember not understanding the sources of our socioeconomic stresses, reductively attributing our troubles to lack of motivation and perhaps even alcoholism. Slowly, though, I learned about our history and the legacies of colonization, genocide and racism. I became aware that not everything I read in the Bible was literally true and that Waponahki ways of knowing and identifying had been disrupted through colonization. Research consistently identifies the detrimental affects of colonization through laws and policies of domination and subordination, and I lived these effects. These effects include the highest levels of socioeconomic distress of any other racial/ethnic group in the Americas (Deloria, 1998; Grande, 2004; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

Grande (2000) problematizes western theory's dominance as a "choke-hold" on Indigenous scholars, calling instead for a *Red Pedagogy* - creating intellectual space that both benefits our communities while meeting the pressures of universities. IRM moves closer toward her articulation of a *Red Pedagogy* where the scholarly mind of Indigenous academics can intellectually breathe within our own ways of knowing and being.

We are intimidated so much into becoming their scholars rather than just using the richness of who we are; and we have something very important to say and we need to say it in the context of the way we were brought up and culturally influenced. If we

stray from that, we get caught in a trap...we need to be careful and always be ourselves...institutions and systems of higher education are not set up for us...sometimes they are too arrogant to listen to us in a welcoming way, so we really do need to have an academic revolution.

-Passamaquoddy Elder Wayne Newell (Sockbeson, 2011)

Passamaquoddy Elder Wayne Newell speaks to the validity of Indigenous Knowledge and the importance of Waponahki expression in opposition to western theory's suffocating dominance. Furthermore, we also need to be reminded that we are so much more than the manifestations of continued oppression (Sockbeson, 2011). Oftentimes modern Waponahki life embodies the socio-economic distress impacts from colonization. The resulting culture of oppression and its associated ills, i.e. high suicide rates, addictions, poor health, low life expectancy et cetera, are alluded to by Late Sioux Elder Lionel Kinunwa, "*Our culture [of oppression] is killing us...we need our traditions back...*" (personal communication, Dr. Eber Hampton, 2015). Forgetting that the culture of oppression is rooted in colonization and not our traditions allows victimization to subjugate our ways of knowing and being, and to take us further away from the people our ancestors prayed for us to be. While engaging with knowledge about oppression, we as Indigenous people are called by our ancestors and our contemporary Indigenous knowledge teachers to engage from within our own intellectual traditions, within ancient knowledge ways. Otherwise, the possibility of oppression defining who we are increases significantly.

Cree Elder John Crier indicates: "Our culture is a result of ritual ceremony and *how* we choose to look at our world, *how* we act from our belief of relationship to what we consider sacred, thus are our ceremonies" (personal communication, 2014). Crier is calling for the need to be aware of the relationships between the ritual/ceremony and the culture's future; distancing us from the oppressive understanding that the culture of colonization determines who we are. Within the space of dominant culture and epistemicide, we are being divorced from us. And yet, the traditions have not been "lost," we lose our keys or gloves not traditions (Simpson, 2004; Skutnabb-

Kangas, 2000; Sockbeson, 2009). The ancestral traditions and their respective rituals/ceremonies survive continued attempts of systematic dispossession, legislation, policy and government action and inaction, albeit with devastating impacts on our cultures (Deloria, 2003; Episkenew, 2009). Crier calls for the need to have ceremonies define the culture; we cannot afford to have colonization define who we are.

Epistemological habits of indigeneity

When we acknowledge that epistemicide is not complete in us, Gluskabe is present. Preserving these stories as teachings and as our truths helps the people to maintain our ways of knowing and being. When questioned by a peer, “What does Gluskabe have to do with oppression, genocide and racism?” I replied that Gluskabe is a central figure in any research related to the ways our people come to know and to be, and that our engagement with Gluskabe-associated traditional knowledge is the centrality from which all other knowledge spirals outward to help us understand our people’s survival.

The creation story is important to the survival of our people because it is reflective of both Waponahki epistemology and ontology simultaneously, like the woven threads in a traditional ash basket.

I presented this thinking to my home community where I was invited to speak about how socio-economic distress factors are a result of colonial oppression and I decided to explain onto-epistemology and epistemicide. Upon seeing a group of Wapohnaki teenagers, I initially worried that these concepts would be too complex to use in this context. I felt their eyes and focus as I paced in the front of the conference room. I was speaking to them, and made that clear that what I had been working on was intended to benefit them. I spoke about how the low language fluency was a systemic dispossession by the government through the education system, and that low fluency was not our fault yet our responsibility. I spoke similarly about the high levels of socio-economic distress, and the epistemicidal intention to eradicate our people’s ways of knowing and being.

I explained how not until very recently did I know that our people even had epistemologies. Ten years ago I would have said they did not exist. I unpacked the disruption of this

dispossession from our people and the harm that colonialism's legacy has caused, discussed its manifestation in the highest rates of suicide for our youth, drug/alcohol abuse, HIV rates, poverty rates, etc. I ended this talk with a call for Red Hope, *Cipenuk*, from the east where the sun rises first, where we come from, the reminder of all we have survived already, including 97% original population depletion. I reminded us that our ancestors prayed for us to be here, and that indeed we are still here.

After the talk, several white people approached me. I noticed in the background some youth waiting to talk with me. One non-Native woman was particularly persistent; as I explained to her I needed the washroom, she offered to walk along with me and talk. The youth at this point had shifted out to the hall, still waiting. I entered the washroom, the woman still explaining why she didn't agree with me. After I finished, even as I exited the door, she was still talking, and the Waponahki youth were still patiently waiting. I saw this behaviour as a mark of their own ancestral value of respecting those older than you and exercising patience, another reminder that epistemicide is not complete. I turned to the woman and politely asked if she could email me and excused myself so that I could talk with the youth. The epistemological habits of white supremacy can be at play during these times, as she used her privilege to assert herself and did not consider anyone else around her. I see this often after Indigenous scholars do public talks; the non-Native people are the first to assert their comments or introduce themselves. She reluctantly agreed, and I turned to the hope in front of me. There were three of them, I hugged each of them, thanked them for listening to my talk. They expressed gratitude to me and the one in the middle reached out both of his arms to me, pulled up his sleeves and showed me his cutting scars and said, "See these, thank you for what you said, these are not my fault...I understand these scars better now." He told me of the compelling family hardships he faced in his life, and that my talk helped him to realize his cutting was part of the intention to eradicate us. I often think of this interaction as evidence of our people's resistance to epistemicide, as that very space where Gluskabe is present and felt.

Our connection to our ancestors is deeply embedded in our language, and the survival of our language demonstrates the failure of the colonizing intent of epistemicide. Mi'kmaq

Elder Bernard Jerome explained to me the term for shadow, *N-jijagamij*: meaning the ones who come before us, our ancestors. Bernard explained, it is the visible reminder that we are never alone and that our ancestors are always caring for us. This meaning speaks distinctly to our worldview and cannot be replaced with the simple “shadow.” Knowing our ancestors are with us, and seeing their reflection in our shadows is significant to me. As a child, Elders told me not to step on my shadow, but the underlying reasons were not explained to me. This shadow story exemplifies linguistic genocide and its connection to the epistemicide we survived.

Concluding thoughts, CIPENUK: Red Hope

As I continue to look for evidence that epistemicide is not complete, I reflect on Red Hope and believe an articulation of love and its relationship to Indigenous knowledge transfer is the height of where Indigenous epistemology lives.

My second son, Iktome, 10 years old at the time, went for a walk with me where we discussed what he was learning in science at school where they were studying the planets and universe. I asked him in that moment, “What do you believe is the most powerful force in the universe?” Without hesitation, he replied, “Love.”

My three children have names in our families’ Indigenous languages. All have deep meanings for us, and the names suit my children. In Stoney language, Iktome means the “medicine boss.” One of his grandfathers named him while I was pregnant. His great-grandmother says his name suits him. Even when he was still a toddler, she would say to him, “Iktome, use your powers and tell us some stories!” He would always respond with a smile for her. When I was 7 to 8 months pregnant with my third baby, I did not know my due date because of complications. Iktome’s older sister, Msahtawe, asked him when the baby was coming into this world. Iktome said, “August 8th.” On the morning of August 8, 2007, I woke up with labor pains and delivered Peter Cipenuk Cardinal. In labor, I was lifted by the knowledge that Iktome had “used his powers.” We gave Iktome three Stoney names and one Passamaquoddy name to choose from. Without hesitation, he named the baby, *Cipenuk*, meaning east, or wind from the east. Our belief in Iktome’s ability to name his brother speaks to the ways associated with Indigenous epistemology.

We did not question his responsibility, which represents the significance of retained Indigenous epistemology and ontology. In our daily Indigenous lives, we are reminded that epistemicide is not complete.

A year later, I asked Elder Wayne Newell and Brenda Dana, the Passamaquoddy Language teacher at Indian Township School, how I might say “Red Hope” in our language. Wayne looked at Brenda and said “Cipenuk, isn’t it, Brenda?” Brenda said, “Yes, Cipenuk.” He also told me the Red, which would refer to Native people, is embedded in the word Cipenuk. I exclaimed that that was the name we had given our third child. He laughed and suggested that that must be the name of the dissertation I was working on at the time.

I work with the word *Red* as a reference to Native people, because it is word of empowerment, because it means all of my people Indigenous to both the United States and Canada. As a younger Native woman, the stories of the American Indian Movement and friends involved in Wounded Knee fueled me. I organized a grassroots organization, IRATE, Indigenous Resistance Against Tribal Extinction. It was a time in my life I felt very alive; I was living on a Red Road. I remember hearing that there was a Native way of life, and that such a journey was a Red Road, and I knew I was included in that. What I know now is that since birth, I have been living on a Red Road, by the virtue of being an Indigenous person native to the territories where I was created. This research coupled with my life experiences has shown me that which *immobilizes* us as Native people and reminds me of the necessity to research what *mobilizes* us, and I discovered that it is inclusion in something greater than us: hope. bell hooks quotes Paulo Freire at the beginning of her text, *Teaching Community; A Pedagogy of Hope*: “It is imperative that we maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest the opposite” (2003, p. xiv). In my work, I readily committed myself to identifying what is mobilizing. The call for an articulation of love in relation to Indigenous knowledge transfer and mobilization is central to Indigenous epistemologies, which by nature are life-giving and uplifting of the spirit. Currently, Indigenous communities in North America are more fragile than ever, devastated with record high-rates of violent death and poverty, therefore long-term engagement with life-giving spaces is desperately needed. Love

is the height of anti-colonialism, and as Gandhi is attributed for saying, “Where there is love, there is life.” Given the depths of oppression we have experienced with racism and genocide, life can easily get hopeless. Craig Womack (1999) writes:

The process of decolonizing the mind is a first step before one can achieve a political consciousness and engage oneself in activism, this has to begin with the imagining of some alternative (p. 230).

The necessity to “imagine some alternative” led me to Indigenous Waponahki research methodologies, the methodological home of my scholarship and research, affording me opportunities to engage with data, and my life in new ways. The research process gives me a sense of hope central to our continued survival as Indigenous peoples. Without hope, we give up.

Through my Waponahki lens, Red Hope engages Gluskabe’s encounters with epistemicide, with my efforts to uncover the truth of the past, to make sense of the present, and to revitalize for the future. Late Penobscot Elder, writer and activist, ssipsis once told a group of my Waponahki female peers that, “as Native people we have to think about white people every day and white people don’t ever have to think about us.” Similarly, western intellectual traditions are not expected to honour or privilege local Indigenous knowledges, and as Indigenous scholars it is firmly and widely expected that we are deeply familiar with and draw on western research paradigms within our own scholarship. IRM counters epistemicide and speaks to the decolonization processes, to support the thriving of Waponahki onto-epistemology at the core of our survival. “Let us put our hearts and minds together and see what life we will make for our children” (attributed to Sitting Bull). My Stoney Sioux relatives explain that in the Stoney Sioux language, this saying has a profound meaning and identifies the heart and mind as one and the same. Therein lies the expression of that core onto-epistemological space of engagement.

The Indian Contest...
Beware my children
The people are racing out there
It's the Indian contest

*Best to not let the white people see this contest
They are likely to use it against us
Some call it crabs in a bucket
Climbing over each other
There's a big race to see who is more Indian
Reality is we are probably all going to Indian Hell
Not too many people are being authentic enough Indians
Some are readily pointing that out to each other
It's de-spiriting
I hope you always feel Indian enough
That your children feel Indian enough
That you pray when you feel loss
That you pray when you feel gratitude
That however you pray
You find time to pray
That you resist joining the Indian race
That you warmly
Invite others to join your liberation
From the immobility
Of the colonial project of dispossession
I Red Hope for you love, compassion and life-giving
moments...*
-Rebecca Sockbeson

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