
Turning Ploughshares into Swords

An Ethnohistory of Violence

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This paper explores the impact that the transformation of Indigenous landscapes by settler societies had upon the Indigenous communities who inhabited these landscapes. It broadens the scope of violence committed against humans to encompass destruction inflicted upon any aspect of the landscape as an act of direct violence. Typical models of violence concentrate on harms inflicted upon the physical, emotional, or psychological well-being of an individual or group of people. With those limits on violence, the displacement of Native communities is relegated to the realm of dispossession or destruction of property. Well-intended apologies from contemporary settlers that ignore the deeper epistemological and ontological relations humans develop over time with land serve only to extend settler colonialism, since such apologies perpetuate their own objectification of the land.

Recent scholarship addressing the encounter between governments rooted in European power structures and lands inhabited by Indigenous peoples has focused on a lineage of legal decrees set forth by ecclesiastical and political entities, known as the Doctrine of Discovery. Though the modern iteration of this series of legal pronouncements can be traced back to fifteenth-century papal bulls,¹ these orders parallel the conquest of the land of Canaan by Abraham and his descendants, found in the Hebrew scriptures. The focus of this paper is not meant to diminish the thoughtful work of those bringing attention to the Doctrine of Discovery's influence on the settlement of Indigenous lands; rather, it is an effort to create greater understanding of what the Doctrine of Discovery looked like on the ground. I contend that US settlers, including Anabaptist set-

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1 Francis Gardiner Davenport, ed., *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1648* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917). This volume includes the papal bulls and other treaties that influenced and shaped early conceptions of the Doctrine of Discovery.

tlers, had little, if any, awareness of the formal theological and political decrees associated with the Doctrine of Discovery that drove settlement. Yet, it was the actions and everyday lives of these same settlers that brought the formal decrees issued by religious and political authorities into full maturity.

Key to this present research is the work of Tim Ingold,² a social anthropologist who challenges objective perspectives of landscape through a phenomenological approach he terms the “dwelling perspective.” In the dwelling perspective, ontological conceptions of what it means to be human extend beyond the limits of the physical body to include non-human beings and places that humans interact with and inhabit. Using evidence from treaty negotiations between the US government and various Native American voices, I demonstrate the way in which the transformation of landscapes by settlers during the settlement period constituted acts of violence against Indigenous communities whose human ontologies were embedded within the landscape. This becomes an important consideration for contemporary Anabaptists when considering the role their ancestors played as key figures in the transformation of Indigenous landscapes, as well as what authentic reconciliation might look like.

Background

Between the years 1789 and 1868, the Potawatomi Indians of the Great Lakes Region were party to an excess of forty treaties—far exceeding that of any tribe—by which they ceded much of their land to the United States government. The ratified terms of these treaties are readily available through various sources.³ In retrospect, these documents appear to tell a story in which the Potawatomi either unwittingly gave up their land to the US government or were hoodwinked into doing so. Read this way, even with our best intentions in mind, the meta-narrative of the treaty-making process becomes one of commodification, greed, and thievery.

Plenty of evidence exists to support such views and is reinforced by the abstract language in which the treaties were written. For example, the 1821 Treaty of Chicago opens with this simple statement: “The Ottawa, Chippewa, and Pottawatomie, Nations of Indians cede to the United States government all the Land comprehended within the following boundaries.”⁴ The document

² Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

³ George Emory Fay, *Treaties between the Potawatomi Tribes of Indians and the United States of America, 1789–1867* (Greely: Museum of Anthropology, University of Colorado, 1969); Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778–1883* (New York: Interland, 1972); and United States, *United States Statutes at Large 7* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1848).

⁴ United States, “Articles of a Treaty Made and concluded at Chicago,” August 29, 1821, *United States Statutes at Large 7* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1848): 218–21.

then proceeds to lay out the boundaries of the treaty, which encompass all of Southwest Michigan and a strip of land along the northeast border of Indiana, allowing certain reservations to be set aside for continued habitation by the Indians and for annual payments to be made to them. The treaty documents make no mention of the groundwork necessary to conclude the treaties, leaving the impression of a simple transfer of property.⁵

Such an assumption, however, leaves little room for the agency displayed in the negotiation of these treaties. Fortunately, other existing documents add texture to this story, and, at least in part, lend agency to the Indigenous communities involved in these treaty processes. Foremost among these documents are a collection referred to as *Documents relating to the negotiation of ratified and unratified treaties with various Indian Tribes*, held by the National Archives and Records Administration.⁶ These documents contain the commissioners' journals of the proceedings, their reports to the war department, and other communication between the commissioners and other government officials detailing the negotiations of the treaties. Most importantly, for the purpose of this article, the journals contain speeches given by tribal leaders expressing their understanding of and desires for the land in question. It should be noted that these speeches have been filtered through the lenses of translators and the secretaries who acted as scribes. Nevertheless, they constitute a rich body of materials that are helpful in understanding the perspective of Indigenous peoples during the negotiations in which they ceded their lands.

Consequently, another aspect of the story emerges in which Indigenous peoples demonstrate their own agency, influencing the outcome of these negotiations. Out of these voices, it becomes evident that Indigenous leaders were aware of other factors at play in these negotiations besides the simple transfer of ownership, however fraudulent the treaties may have been.⁷

5 Though beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that the interests, understandings, and strategies surrounding the treaties varied as greatly as the number of parties involved, both Native and non-Native. See Mark R. Schurr, "Archaeological Indices of Resistance: Diversity in the Removal Period Potawatomi of the Western Great Lakes," *American Antiquity* 75, no. 1 (2010): 44–60, and James M. McClurken, "Ottawa Adaptive Strategies to Indian Removal," *Michigan Historical Review* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1996): 29–55.

6 National Record Service, National Archives Microcopy T 494 (Record Group 75), *Documents Related to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Tribes of Indians, 1801–1869* (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1801/1869), Roll 1.

7 The journals of these negotiations were transcribed from the National Archives Microcopy films while I was working as an ethnohistorical assistant for a firm, researching content related to the Forest County Potawatomi of Crandon, Wisconsin.

Again, I refer to the 1821 Treaty of Chicago, in which a large portion of Potawatomi lands in Southwest Michigan was ceded to the US government. The report, submitted by Commissioners Lewis Cass and Solomon Sibley, records the words of Metea, a leading spokesperson of the Potawatomi tribe, in the following manner:

“Father [speaking to Cass],—Our country was given to us by the great spirit, who gave it to us to hunt upon—to make our cornfields upon—to dwell upon, and to make down our beds upon, when we die; and he would never forgive us should we now bargain it away. . . . We have given you a great tract of land already, but it is not enough to satisfy you. We sold it to you for the benefit of your white children, to farm, and to live upon. We have now but little left. We shall want it all ourselves. We know not how long we will live and we wish to leave some land for our children to hunt upon. You are gradually taking away the country which is our only inheritance. Treaty after treaty is called, and piece after piece is cut off from it. Neither are your children slow in taking possession of it. The ploughshare is driven through our tents before we have time to carry out our goods, and seek another habitation. We are growing uneasy. . . . I am an Indian—a red-skin, and live by hunting and by fishing, but my country is already too small, and I do not know how I shall bring up my children if I give it all away.”⁸

For now, I want to focus on Metea’s statement “The ploughshare is driven through our tents before we have time to carry out our goods, and seek another habitation.” I will return to the rest of Metea’s speech later on.

Raymond DeMallie,⁹ an ethnohistorian of the Plains Sioux, warned scholars to be aware that when reading texts originating in unwritten languages, the temptation exists to understand them from within the reader’s own context. Such a temptation presents itself when reading Metea’s speech. Understood in Eurocentric terms, Metea expressed concern for the swiftness in which settlers were moving across the land, displacing the Potawatomi from their traditional homelands. However, Metea’s earlier references to “dwell upon” and “habitation” indicate a deeper attachment to the land than can be explained by settler notions of property. Competing perceptions of the landscape persist into present-day society, perpetuating misunderstandings that give in to dominant Euro-American settler views, even in our attempts to reconcile.

⁸ “Journal of the Negotiations of the Treaty of August 29, 1821,” National Archives Record Service, National Archives Microcopy T 494 (Record Group 75), *Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Tribes of Indians, 1801–1869* (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1801/1869): Roll 1.

⁹ Raymond J. DeMallie, “‘These Have No Ears’: Narrative and the Ethnohistorical Method,” *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 515–38.

This paper contributes to the project of narrowing the gap between current understandings of the impact Euro-American settlers inflicted upon the Indigenous peoples and lands, and what actually happened.

Violence

In 1969, Johan Galtung,¹⁰ in laying out a roadmap to peace, took on the task of coming up with a clear definition of violence, since one aspect of defining peace included the absence of violence. Galtung defined violence as being “present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.”¹¹ This definition was further characterized by the following distinctions: 1) physical versus psychological violence; 2) negative versus positive influences; 3) if there was an object that was harmed, causing indirect violence; 4) if there was an actor involved, leaving room for the possibility of structural violence; 5) whether the actions that caused the harm were intentional or not; and 6) manifest and latent, or unobservable violence.¹² According to Galtung’s model, violence may be direct or indirect; it may be observable or unobservable; and it may be intended or unintended. These distinctions are helpful in understanding that violence may show up in unlikely places, especially when competing views of the world are at stake.

Later, Galtung added an additional element to his model of violence, which he called “cultural violence.”¹³ By this, he meant not violence inflicted against a culture but the way in which a culture legitimizes either personal or structural violence.

For Galtung, “ecological balance,” which can be disrupted through “ecological degradation,” is an important aspect of human existence.¹⁴ Yet, even in Galtung’s ecological degradation, there remains a dichotomy between humans and the environment, which stems from the Cartesian split between the mind and the body—a split that dominates Western ontologies of the human body. In such conceptions of the body, degradation of the environment affects humans only in an indirect and objective sense when the harm inflicted upon the environment impinges upon the physical, psychological, or social potential of an individual or group.

10 Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91.

11 Galtung, 168.

12 Galtung, 160–72.

13 Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (August 1990): 291–305.

14 Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” 292.

Thus, we are left asking how Galtung's definition of violence would stack up against the claims made in Metea's speech. Would driving the plowshare through the tent be considered an act of violence? According to Galtung's definition, the act of plowing up Indigenous lands would be considered an indirect act of violence in that the object being harmed impinges upon Metea's potential realizations.

There is something lacking in this definition, however, that privileges Eurocentric understandings of the environment. In this dichotomy between humans and the environment, humans are only affected by the environment in an objective, indirect sense: when the environment is acted upon, the consequences affect the humans who live therein. In this view, land possesses spatial qualities, something that can be measured in terms of acres, sectioned off into neat geographical boundaries, and sold as private property, independent of human habitation. In Indigenous ways of thinking, however, human relationship is much more embedded in the environment than this. This is where Tim Ingold's¹⁵ work becomes useful in considering the violent impact that settler agricultural practices had on Indigenous inhabitants.

Dwelling Perspective

When Ingold conducted his research among hunter-gatherers of the circumpolar regions of Europe and North America, he noticed the interdependence of human and non-human beings' relationships within their environment. Consequently, he developed what he termed "a dwelling perspective"¹⁶ of the way humans inhabit the world they live in. In this perspective, rather than simply residing in and building upon the environment that they live in, humans are continually shaped by and part of an ongoing story unfolding in a particular place. The landscape emerges through reciprocity between humans and their environment rather than simply as a result of the imposition of the human imagination upon the raw materials of nature. This differs from theories that see culture simply as a matter of the mind performed in thin air,¹⁷ or which see culture inscribed upon the symbolic landscape that can be read as cultural texts.¹⁸ In the dwelling perspective, culture becomes emplaced within a partic-

15 Ingold, *Perception of the Environment*.

16 Ingold, 5.

17 Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, "Locating Culture," in *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, eds. Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 1–47.

18 Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Deryck W. Holdsworth, "Landscape and Archives as Texts," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, eds. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi

ular landscape so that over time humans embody specific ways of engaging the world in which they live, based on their environment.

The dwelling perspective departs from objective understandings of landscape that view the forms created by humans as symbols of the imagination growing out of Descartes's maxim "I think, therefore I am." According to Ingold, humans are always somewhere; they are never nowhere: "The landscape becomes part of us, just as we become part of the landscape."¹⁹ In a sense, humans are clothed with their environment. The reciprocity between humans and the landscape is such that each is shaped by the other in an ongoing process of embodiment.

The primary concern for Ingold in favoring the process of embodiment over what he referred to as the "movement of *inscription*"²⁰ lies in the importance that Western thought has placed on form rather than process. The dwelling perspective focuses not on the forms within the landscape but on the processes through which forms emerge through the activities of dwelling. This process of embodiment that Ingold has in mind is rooted in and inspired by the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger, pushing back against the distinctions and limits created by traditional Western philosophy between not only the mind and body but also between the body and world, or nature.

By emphasizing processes and activities, Ingold added temporality to the spatial dimensions of landscape, but not in the abstract, quantitative sense. Instead, the dwelling perspective sees human activity in a particular place as the ongoing reciprocal exchange guided by the rhythms within the landscape through which the landscape is constantly being transformed and meaning is being generated. Such understandings of the relationship between humans and land are much more dynamic than the abstract conception of Eurocentric thought in which land is measured in terms of miles, sections, and acres and time is measured in terms of hours, days, months, and years. The body experiences the landscape in the rhythms and cycles of the landscape so that the younger generation is gradually incorporated into society, embodying the skills and knowledge needed to interact with the landscape. The body is continually between the past and the future, and the past informs the body how to behave in the future. Phenomenologists refer to this dance between the past and the future as "retention" and "protention."²¹

(New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 44–55; Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).

19 Ingold, *Perception of the Environment*, 191.

20 Ingold, 193.

21 David R. Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 2006).

Although I use the term “dance” somewhat metaphorically, in reality retention and protention are much like a dance. Dancers, if they have danced the dance before, get their cue from the music and their previous experience—retention—to know what their next step will be and where to place their foot—protention. Merleau-Ponty would credit this series of movements to the “habitual body,”²² so that little thought is given to where one would step while being engaged with their partner. If the band suddenly disrupts the expected sequence of notes with the insertion of an unfamiliar line, the dancer likewise suddenly shifts to what Merleau-Ponty refers to as the “body of the moment.”²³

The body is suddenly brought back into focus, needing to improvise by interpreting the new lines in terms of its previous knowledge and experience. This awareness, or lack thereof, of the body in the world is what Merleau-Ponty calls “body schema”—that “bundle of skills and capacities that constitute the body’s precognitive familiarity with itself and the world it inhabits.”²⁴ Embodying relevant skills is necessary when navigating the world in which we live.

Merleau-Ponty was more interested in extending the body’s experience to its surroundings than in prescribing its limits to the mind.²⁵ Western models of the body experience focus on stimuli entering the body through the nose, eyes, ears, mouth, or skin; these stimuli are then processed by the brain, giving the body a sense of its surroundings, which are completely separate from the body. To the contrary, Merleau-Ponty believed that the body was continually reaching out to and dependent on its surroundings. He argued that the body is continually taking its cue from the world and that those responses become a habitual part of the body’s way of being-in-the-world.

To illustrate his point, Merleau-Ponty used the example of a blind person with a cane. The cane becomes an extension of the person, orienting them within the world in which they move, much like a baseball player’s glove or an accomplished pianist’s piano. In each case, the object becomes an extension of the person such that the person and object become entangled with each other, or the person is clothed with the object. The object becomes an essential part of the person’s being. To strip away the cane, ball glove, or piano is to tear away the personhood of the blind person, the baseball player, or the pianist, respectively. Merleau-Ponty argued that humans are constantly engaged in similar ways with their entire environment.

22 Taylor Carman, “Merleau-Ponty and the Mystery of Perception,” *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 4 (2009): 220.

23 Carman, 220.

24 Carman, 200.

25 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962).

Ingold derived further inspiration for the dwelling perspective from Heidegger's essay "Building Dwelling Thinking,"²⁶ in which Heidegger set out to inquire into the nature of the housing crisis in Germany after World War II. Heidegger noticed that a dwelling had simply become a structure in which people lived. It did not necessarily mean that these dwellings were homes or that dwelling was taking place in them. The connection Heidegger was making between houses and homes is the connection Ingold is making between forms and processes and that Metea made between tent and habitation. In one, pre-eminence is given to houses and, in the other, to the process of making a home. All houses are forms, but not all houses are homes.

Heidegger attempted to breach this dichotomy by exploring the etymology of the words "dwelling" and "building." Understanding the philosophical difference Heidegger draws between dwelling and building is essential to understanding Ingold's dwelling perspective and is worth a foray into the etymological origins at this point.

The German words for building and dwelling are, respectively, *bauen* and *wohnen*. Heidegger explained that the Old High German word for *bauen* was *buon*, which meant *wohnen*—to remain or stay in a place, the same as the English word "dwelling." According to Heidegger, the original meaning of *bauen*, which was equivalent to *wohnen*, has been lost in the German language, but traces of it can be seen in words such as *Nachbar*, which, in English, is "neighbor"—literally "near dweller." The word *bauen* is the root for the German imperative word *bis*, or "to be," as in *ich bin*, or "I am," and *du bist*, or "you are," so that, in essence, when someone says "I am" or "you are," they are really saying *ich wohne* and *du wohnst*, or "I dwell" and "you dwell." Thus, when Metea stated, "I am an Indian . . . I live by hunting and fishing," he was saying what it meant to be a Potawatomi Indian. To take those things away from him is to destroy his being.

In its current use, the word *bauen* still means "to build" and "to cultivate"—activities performed, as Heidegger suggested, not alongside of *wohnen* but comprising *wohnen*. So, "to build" and "to cultivate" is "to dwell" or "to be," which gets us to what philosophers, and, of late, anthropologists, refer to as being-in-the-world. But before I go there, I want to back up and address the other half of Heidegger's etymological endeavor, which, unfortunately, Ingold neglected to pursue but which reflects heavily on the idea of dwelling and of culture in general.

While Ingold spent a great deal of time aligning himself with the notion that building is at the same time dwelling, he skipped over the second part of the

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon, 2001), 201–30.

bauen and *wohnen* duo. What Heidegger meant by “to build, is really to dwell”²⁷ makes sense only when understanding what he meant by *wohnen*. And he did not disappoint in this regard as he embarked on a separate but less familiar etymology of the word. Heidegger pointed out that while both *bauen* and *wohnen* have the sense of staying in a place, or remaining—similar to the English word “dwelling”—*wohnen* adds more clearly the experience of remaining in a place. The origins of the German word *wohnen* trace back to the Gothic word *wunian*, which, according to Heidegger, means “to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace.”²⁸ It is worth quoting Heidegger in this regard to get the full sense of what he understands dwelling to consist of:

The word for peace, *Friede*, means the free, *das Freye*; and *fry* means preserved from harm and danger, preserved from something, safeguarded. To free actually means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something *positive* and it takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own essence, when we return it specifically to its essential being, when we “free” it in the proper sense of the word into a preserve of peace. To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing.* It pervades dwelling in its whole range. That range reveals itself to us as soon as we recall that human being consists in dwelling and, indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth.²⁹

I return to Heidegger’s being-in-the-world, which he intended to be descriptive of human existence. In his earlier work “Being and Time,”³⁰ Heidegger parsed out what human existence on earth consists of based on his understanding of the German word *Dasien*, or “being there.”³¹ In brief, for humans to be on earth they need to be somewhere, and they arrange their world according to their way of being-in-the-world, whether as a farmer, scholar, shopkeeper, seamstress, hunter, or fisherman. Yet being-in-the-world is not just about the activities such as the cultivation and building in *bauen*; it is the caring as shown in the *wohnen* of Heidegger’s being. Some have suggested that the phrase term “being-in-the-world” could be more accurately expressed as “being-well-in-the-

27 Heidegger, 349.

28 Heidegger, 351.

29 Heidegger, 351. Italics in original.

30 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996).

31 Heidegger, 13.

world.”³² In this way, the focus goes beyond the activity to include the quality of human existence in relation to the surrounding world—that is, other people, the land, plants, animals, and other ontological distinctions made by individuals or groups.

Although Indigenous scholars and theorists have not always expressed their work in these terms, they have brought increased awareness of their relationship to the world in ways that align with Ingold’s dwelling perspective. A leading proponent in this regard has been the Potawatomi biologist Robin Kimmerer.³³ Kimmerer’s popular work brings attention to human beings’ relationship with non-human beings, such as soil, bees, plants, birds, the sky, and animals. She calls for reciprocity between humans and their non-human relatives, knowing that disruption of the cycles of giving and receiving, brought on by settler colonialism, leads to human and ecological harms.

In their article “Muskrat Theories, Tobacco in the Streets, and Living Chicago as Indigenous Land,” Megan Bang et al.,³⁴ Indigenous scholars working in Chicago, root Indigenous knowledge in the land. In other words, the land teaches the people how to be in the world. Bang et al.’s Indigenous reimagination turned Descartes’s ontological “I think, therefore I am” upside down to become “Land is, therefore we are.”³⁵ The land becomes the basis for knowing how to live in the world and informs the people as a whole, not just the individual. Such processes help incorporate the younger generation into society, as Ingold has in mind.

Kyle Whyte, a Citizen Potawatomi environmental philosopher, refers to this transference of knowledge as “collective continuance.”³⁶ Whyte argues that rather than being distinct from each other, human institutions such as politics, religion, food systems, kinship, and so forth are interrelated and that disrupting one of them adversely affects each of the others. Using the example of the Karuk

32 Jonas Holst, “Rethinking Dwelling and Building: On Heidegger’s Conception of Being as Dwelling and Jørn Utzon’s Architecture of Well-being,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Architecture and Urbanism* 2 (2013): 52–60.

33 See, for example, Robin Kimmerer, “Returning the Gift,” *Minding Nature* 7, no. 2 (2014): 18–24.

34 Megan Bang et al., “Muskrat Theories, Tobacco in the Streets, and Living Chicago as Indigenous Land,” *Environmental Education Research* 20, no. 1 (2014): 37–55.

35 Bang et al., 46.

36 See Kyle Powys Whyte, “Indigenous Food Systems, Environmental Justice, and Settler-Industrial States,” in *Global Food, Global Justice: Essays on Eating under Globalization*, eds. Mary C. Rawlinson and Caleb Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015); and Kyle Powys Whyte, “Food Sovereignty, Justice, and Indigenous Peoples: An Essay on Settler Colonialism and Collective Continuance,” in *Oxford Handbook on Food Ethics*, eds. Anne Barnhill et. al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 345–66.

of the Pacific Northwest, whose society is centered around and depends on the salmon, Whyte spells out the effect that colonialism has upon such societies when the salmon population becomes decimated, adversely affecting their food system. The salmon clothes the relationships of those societies, and when the salmon is stripped away by dominant settler colonial actions, collective continuance is disrupted and relationships of trust between people and their environment are destroyed.

The same could be said about the extermination of buffalo on the Great Plains. Danielle Taschereau Mamers³⁷ reasons that the extermination of buffalo herds led to the collapse of entire societies that depended on their relationship with the buffalo for survival. In many cases, such societies were literally clothed with the buffalo. Indeed, much of their material culture was derived from their relationship of trust with the buffalo. Taschereau Mamers argues that such processes that reordered relationships between humans and the non-human world are sites of violence to be reckoned with within the settler colonial project.

The works of these contemporary scholars demonstrate the differences between Indigenous and settler perspectives of human relationships with the non-human world. The views of these Indigenous scholars echo Ingold's dwelling perspective in which humans live in and are dependent on a world of reciprocal relations with land and beings around them. Yet, one may ask, are these simply responses or reactions to the current political climate, or are these the result of collective continuance being upheld by Indigenous communities? Fortunately, we have access to the words of Indigenous leaders during the settlement period and how they viewed their relationship with the land.

The speech Metea made to Commissioners Cass and Sibley, mentioned earlier in this article, is one example. Metea addressed the commissioners with what it meant for his people to "dwell upon" the land. The land was not something to be sold; it was where his people were born, where they hunted, where they fished, where they farmed, and where they would die and be buried. It was given to them by the Great Spirit, who left them to care for it. Without the land, they would not even know how to bring up their children. The tent destroyed by the plowshare was more than just a house; it was a form that had emerged from the process of being "an Indian—a red-skin [who] lives by hunting and fishing."³⁸ Disrupting even one of these relationships of what it meant for the Potawatomi to dwell in this particular place violently disrupted all aspects of Potawatomi life.

37 Danielle Taschereau Mamers, "Human-Bison Relations as Sites of Settler Colonial Violence and Decolonial Resurgence," *Humanimalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies* 10, no. 2 (Spring 2019): 10–41.

38 "Negotiations of the Treaty of August 29, 1821."

Elsewhere I have written about a speech made by Largo,³⁹ a Miami headman, to Lewis Cass during the negotiations of the 1826 Treaty of Mississinewa.⁴⁰ I bring his speech up here again because of the awareness Largo expressed in terms of his people's relationship to the land and the soil. Largo, in response to the commissioner's promise that the Miami and Potawatomi would have access to better lands in Kansas if they agreed to sell and move from their lands in Northern Indiana, told the commissioner:

"Father, when you collected us here, you pointed to us a country, which you said would be better for us where we could live. You said we could not stay here. We would perish. But what will destroy us? It is yourselves destroying us for you make the spiritous liquor. You speak to us with deceitful lips, and not from your hearts. It seems to me. You trampled on our soil and drove it away. Before you came, the game was plenty, but you drove it away. The Great Spirit made us red skins, and the soil he put us on is red, the color of our skins. You came from a country where the soil is white, the color of your skin. You point to a country for us in the west, where there is game. We saw there is game, but the Great Spirit made and put men there who have a right to that game and it is not ours."⁴¹

Largo mentioned three things that would harm his people: 1) deceitful promises, 2) spiritous liquor, and 3) trampling their land and driving away the game. According to Galtung's definition, only one of these destructive forces, liquor, would fall into the category of somatic harm. The deceitful lips would be a breach of trust and relationship. The third involved the Miami's relationship with the land. More than simply a pattern of subsistence, though that is certainly part of it, the people's relationship with the land, as Largo understood it, was being entangled and clothed in the soil. Their very being grew out of the land. He expressed this as their skin being the color of the soil. To read Lar-

39 The original article that this quote appeared in credited this quote, which spanned two pages, to Awbenawben, a Potawatomi headman. In that article, the author followed the numbered sequencing of the pages as found in the microfilm from which the notes to the negotiations were transcribed. Upon closer reading, it was discovered that the pages had been numbered out of sequence, and when placed in their proper order, the quote actually belonged to Largo.

40 D. Ezra Miller, "'But It Is Nothing Except Woods': Amish Mennonites on a Northern Indiana Settlerscape," in *Rooted and Grounded: Essays on Land and Christian Discipleship*, eds. Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Ryan Dallas Harker (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 208–17.

41 "Journals of the Negotiations of the Treaty of October 23, 1826," National Archives Record Service, National Archives microcopy T 494 (record group 75), *Documents Relating to the Negotiations of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Tribes of Indians, 1801–1869*, (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1801/1869), Roll 1.

go's comments as though he were addressing matters of race would be to read his words from within a Western context, overlooking his people's relationship with the land, the responsibilities they felt toward it, and the rights they claimed in connection with it.

Another example of the differences between Indigenous and settler perspectives of human relationships with the non-human world, and perhaps even clearer, appears in a context geographically removed from the Potawatomi and Miami of the 1820s. During the 1870s, as the US government was trying to gather the Nez Perce onto reservations in the Pacific Northwest, the US General O. O. Howard met with headmen from the Nez Perce—including Chief Joseph, Ollokot, and Toohoolhoolzote—on several occasions to try to convince them to move their people, horses, and cattle onto the Nez Perce reservation. When Howard asked Joseph to give up his people's lands, he was impressed with the depth of Joseph's answer: "The Creative Power, when he made the earth, made no marks, no lines of division or separation. The earth was his mother. He was made of the earth and grew up on its bosom."⁴²

The Nez Perce's response to Howard's request to give up their land is full of such replies. It was unthinkable that the belly of their mother, the Earth, should be ripped open by the hoe and plow. Such violence would only lead to the Nez Perce being separated from the lands they had inherited from their fathers. Howard told the Nez Perce leaders that calling the earth their mother was nonsense. No words are more poignant than those of the old headman Toohoolhoolzote in response to Howard's insult: "You white people get together, measure the earth, and then divide it . . . Part of the Indians gave up their land. I never did. The earth is part of my body, and I will never give up the earth."⁴³

Even though such statements of various Indigenous peoples are separated by time, distance, and culture, when pieced together they begin to paint a picture of an Indigenous ontology that is distinct from that of Euro-Americans wishing to settle on Native lands. A letter from the same time period, written by an Anabaptist settler eying land to settle upon, helps draw those distinctions even more clearly.

Writing to kin back in Europe in 1839, Friedrich Hage, an Amish elder, provided a spatialized description of the land to the west of his home in Holmes County, Ohio, in anticipation of further settlement by Amish Mennonites. In his letter,⁴⁴ Hage gauged the land in terms of "two to three hundred hours dis-

42 Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 487–88.

43 Josephy, 503.

44 Friedrich Hage Collection, HM1-919SC, Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen (Goshen, Indiana, 1819–1997), File 7.

tance in one piece,⁴⁵ an hour being the distance a man could walk in one hour, considered to be approximately three miles. According to this formula, the land Hage was describing included the balance of Ohio, the entire states of Illinois and Indiana, and parts of Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin—in essence, what had earlier made up the Old Northwest. The land, as Hage put it, had been “purchased from the Indians or wild people”⁴⁶ by the US government. By the time Hage wrote his letter, the land had undergone the scrutiny of the chains and links of the deputy surveyors and could be purchased “cheaply from [the US] government, a dollar and a quarter or two florins, fifty-seven kroners an acre.”⁴⁷ The land was further gutted of any meaning through Hage’s spatialized representation of these vast lands as being “nothing but woods.”⁴⁸

Discussion

The plowshare has long been a symbol of peace for Anabaptist groups. Tilling the soil in the hinterlands of North America far removed from threats of political involvement was seen as an opportunity for Anabaptists to live out God’s mandate for humans, peacefully and undisturbed. Such views are based on passages found in Isaiah’s vision of a kingdom in which God’s reign will cover the earth and people will “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (Is 2:4, NRSV). Unwittingly, the very object thought to bring peace inflicted violence upon the people of the land. The plowshare became the preferred weapon of settler colonialism.

Any attempts of reconciliation or decolonization by settlers that deal solely with the return of land to Indigenous communities serve only to perpetuate the settler colonial project. One way of working at this, as Bang et al. suggest, is through “the role of naming in learning and the ways in which naming is a site at which issues with reference between Western and Indigenous epistemologies unfold.”⁴⁹ When the wrongs of settler colonialism are addressed by settler societies, for instance, even by those who wish to repair those wrongs, the harm is often spoken of in terms of land that was taken from Indigenous people and that needs to be returned. Such language perpetuates Western spatialized notions about the land. Decolonizing requires a decolonizing of the language used to discuss matters regarding reconciliation and reparations. The harms caused by the intrusion of settlers upon Native lands involved much more than deception and theft of property. When seen through the lenses of Ingold’s dwelling

45 Hage Collection.

46 Hage Collection.

47 Hage Collection.

48 Hage Collection.

49 Bang et al., “Muskrat Theories,” 13.

perspective and Native peoples' own understanding of their relationship with the land, plowing lands inhabited by Indigenous peoples must be understood as a violent act against Native personhood.

Another form in which meaningful and authentic reconciliation might take shape, keeping in mind that the land and culture are inextricably intertwined, may include collaboration with local Indigenous communities in caring for particular pieces of land. Let me explain.

In a fascinating essay called “Chief Williams v. the City of Chicago, et al: Making a Claim to the Chicago Lakefront,” John Low⁵⁰ argues the validity of “The Sandbar Case” that was brought before the Supreme Court in 1914. Low, a member of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi in Southwestern Michigan, has been a tribal lawyer for his band since the early 1980s. The case argued that all of the Chicago lakefront between the famous Michigan Avenue and the present lakeshore belonged to the Potawatomi. The reasoning behind this claim was that all that land was backfilled after the great Chicago fire. Furthermore, the Potawatomi never ceded the lakebed to the United States, so neither the City of Chicago nor the State of Illinois had a right to claim that land. In the end, though it must have made them squirm to do so, the Supreme Court rejected the argument, based on their claim that the Indians had “abandoned” the lake.

Low, not satisfied with the court's decision nearly one hundred years earlier, made it his project to discover the legal basis of the claim the Potawatomi had made. Using precedents derived from the Doctrine of Discovery, treaty laws set in place by the US government, and details from actual treaties between the United States and the Potawatomi, Low makes a compelling argument that Lake Michigan was never ceded to the United States. As part of his argument, he cites treaties in which portions of Lake Erie, Lake Superior, and the St. Clair River near Detroit were ceded by tribes to the United States. However, in all the treaties involving Chicago, the boundary specifically terminated at the lakeshore, which at that time was west of Michigan Avenue and the Gold Coast. Therefore, the valuable real estate along Chicago's lakeshore is built on sovereign Potawatomi territory.

Low is writing his article amid the debate of what should happen with the tiny airport known as Meig's Field, which is built into the lake; the question of whether water from Lake Michigan should be piped to regions in the country that lack water; and how to manage fishing rights on the lake. Recognizing the improbability of these lands being returned to the Potawatomi, he suggests ways that might offer imaginative courses of reconciliation for settler and Native communities moving forward—ways that would honor the dwelling perspec-

⁵⁰ John Low, “Chief Williams v. the City of Chicago, et al: Making a Claim to the Chicago Lakefront,” in *Native Chicago*, 2nd ed., ed. Terry Straus (Albatross, 2002), 383–98.

tive of landscape and culture put forth by Ingold. Low writes concerning the closing of places like Meig's Field and other resources:

One can imagine development for cultural opportunities, such as a Museum of Indigenous Peoples, set as an appropriate counterpart to the nearby Field Museum. Perhaps there would also be opportunity for some kind of development for recreation, consistent with the city's overall lakefront park system. Important too would be the inclusion of the Chicago American Indian community of today, now very intertribal, into any planning and development of Northerly Island and Meig's Field.

Just as important, if the Potawatomi were included in discussions about the management of Lake Michigan, one can imagine Tribal EPA's [sic] working alongside their non-Native counterparts to insure the proper regulations and use of these most precious liquid resources. One can easily assert that it is important and appropriate that the Potawatomi, whose traditions include a particular reverence and respect for the environment, be given a voice in the discussions about the future of Lake Michigan.⁵¹

In the end, Low resists insisting upon the Chicago lakefront being returned. Instead, he makes a plea that the Potawatomi's voice be heard in caring for the land and the lake, leaving room for imagination to take hold.

What if settlers possessing land would partner with local Native communities in managing those lands? What if farmers were to "tithe" a part of their land for the purpose of habitat restoration, managed in partnership with Native communities? Even settlers with small plots of land might explore ways to partner with Native communities to care for their land.

If Ingold's dwelling perspective is to hold any sway in broadening Galtung's definition of violence, then we are left with saying that the plowshares of Euro-American settlers were doing more than just tilling the land. Were they doing any less harm than the sword of the US government? Does it matter whether their intentions were malicious or not? If we listen to the voices of the leading spokesmen of the Miami, Potawatomi, Nez Perce, and contemporary Indigenous scholars, it is quite clear that the plowshare had chased their game away, supplanted their corn fields, and torn up the graves of their ancestors. Their way of being-in-the-world had been destroyed, or as Galtung might put it, the plowshare had become "the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is,"⁵² his very definition of violence.

However, the dwelling perspective does not stop at this naming of violence; it also offers us ways to think about reconciliation that go beyond the simple,

⁵¹ Low, 397.

⁵² Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," 169.

though perhaps impossible, return of land. Reconciliation, if it is to be authentic, will need to be built around partnerships and friendships, not simple economic exchange. Land that has been contested in the past might hold the means of bringing people together in the future, if we are willing.