THE GRAMMAR OF *RE*-SURGENCE. MAPPING *INDIGENOUS* CONCEPTS IN MOTION

Author's note: This essay was written and submitted for publication prior to recent public discussions regarding Thomas King's Indigenous self-identification. References to King as a Cherokee writer reflect the scholarly context at the time of writing and do not affect the argument of the essay.

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Abstract – The Resurgence of Indigenous movements across Turtle Island and around the world invites renewed reflection on the key-terms of the field. Concepts such as *Indigenous, pan-Indigenous, trans-Indigenous* (Allen 2012), and *Indigenous internationalism* (Simpson 2017a) are widely used in contemporary discourse. Yet we often remain at an impasse. Each time these topics are addressed, we must ask: who is *Indigenous*? (Clifford 2013) Which peoples worldwide can claim Indigeneity, while others are positioned as *settlers*? Is Indigeneity a matter of birthright, migration, mobility (or lack thereof), or ethnic identity? These ontological questions are, at least in part, a consequence of the highly interdisciplinary nature of Indigenous/Native studies, shaped since the late 1960s by the dominance of anthropology (Deloria 1969) and its entanglement with Red Power movements. The simultaneous upspring of the so-called Native American Renaissance – marked by the publication of N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning *House Made of Dawn* (1968) – added another critical layer by conceptualizing the canonization of a literary and scholarly tradition in which Native authors read, commented on, and were inspired by one another. Writers like Momaday (Kiowa/Cherokee), Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna), James Welch (Blackfeet), Gerald Vizenor (Chippewa), Louise Erdrich (Chippewa), and Thomas King (Cherokee) – among others – added nuance to an already intricate discussion, often addressing violence with humor and, above all, with irony – the true weapon of the *postindian warrior* (Vizenor 1999). Given these premises, this study examines the central terms of Resurgence along with the related influential theories that have emerged from the late 1960s to the present. Without claiming to resolve existing debates, this essay retraces the development of such ideas from the tumultuous years of the American Indian Movement – including episodes like the occupation of Alcatraz (1969-1971) and of the Wounded Knee site (1973), moving through the Native American Renaissance, the age of separatism (Womack 1999), and finally reaching to broader conversations on Resurgence. This approach allows us to read Resurgence(s) not as exceptional phenomena, but as the *longue durée* of Indigenous resistance against (neo)colonialism – both within the academy and in the streets. By grounding Resurgence in this broader historical arc, this study hopes to recenter the ongoing nature of ideas that did not arise in the past decade, but that are deeply rooted and cyclical in Indigenous thought and activism.

Keywords: Indigenous; pan-Indigenous; trans-Indigenous; sovereignty; resurgence.

1. Introduction: *Re*-naissances, *Re*-surgences, *Re*-turns

One of the central tropes of Indigenous Resurgence is Indigenous temporalities. Those who have been engaging with Resurgence for some time, particularly through the lucid voice of

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg), are familiar with her concept of biskaabiiyang (Simpson 2011) – later also spelled biiskabiyang (Simpson 2017a) – as "the process of returning to ourselves", "a re-engagement with the things we left behind", "a reemergence" (ivi, p. 17). The underlying impulse of biskaabiiyang, as the often-invoked prefix *re*-suggests, is purposeful return: recovering teachings and traditions in order to carry them forward into the present and envision livable, decolonial futures. Notably, this desire to go back does not translate into a nostalgic take on the precolonial past; rather, it is about understanding where one comes from in order to move forward on one's own terms, in everyday refusal of neocolonial oppression. Simpson emphasizes this cyclical movement with clarity and urgency in her political manifesto, ultimately encapsulating its meaning in a powerful image: "you can't go anywhere if your canoe is tied to the dock" (ivi, p. 193).

The playfulness of this potentially stereotypical image, which Simpson employs seriously and without irony, suggests a central idea not only of Resurgence, but of Indigenous resistance as a whole: cyclicity. As a close examination of the key terms in current scholarship will highlight, there is rarely creation ex novo, but rather a *re*-turn, a *re*-emergence – or, a "re-creation", in Simpson's term (Simpson 2011) – and a *Re*-surgence. This desire for cyclicity is not new, either. In the late 1960s, as Native American peoples were struggling with the catastrophic consequences of the falsely benevolent Reorganization Act[1] and as Red Power movements[2] raged across the country, a young N. (Navarro) Scott Momaday (Kiowa) won the Pulitzer Prize with his debut novel, *House Made of Dawn* (Momaday 1968), thus inaugurating the so-called Native American *Re*-naissance. Coined by American scholar Kenneth Lincoln (1983), the term has often left a bittersweet taste. Indeed, as many have asked, if this is the *re*-naissance, then when was the initial birth? (Ruppert 2005, p. 173), And although Native writers had been publishing – albeit unnoticed – since the early 19th century, the works of Mourning Dove, John Rollin Ridge, S. Alice Callahan, among others, have not been deemed to represent the much-desired big bang[3].

The cyclicity of ideas, sentiments, and tropes of Resurgence compels us to take a step back and revisit the earliest theories on the matter. The selected beginning point is the 1960s because, although Indigenous resistance began in the so-called Colonial Age[4], it is the second half of the 20th century that marks the burst of an academic conversation on Indigenous themes. The emergence of a comprehensive scholarship by Indigenous authors debating these questions from within – beginning with Vine Deloria, Jr.'s (Sioux) provocative *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969) in the US and Harold Cardinal's (Cree) *The Unjust Society* (1969) in Canada – set in motion a conversation that continues today. Although the context has changed, the foundational terms remain, marked by minor shifts.

The aim of this paper is, thus, to reflect on a few ontological questions that continue to challenge scholars in Indigenous studies – especially in the midst of the present, as sociopolitical discourses grow increasingly polarized, leaving little room for negotiation. Aware that the questions posed here are too big in scope and nature, this essay nevertheless

[1] Established in 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act ended direct federal responsibility on Indian Affairs, leaving Native peoples struggling. This situation was further complicated by the 1956 Relocation Act, which incentivized individuals to relocate to the cities.

[2] The expression "Red Power" is often attributed to Sioux scholar and activist Vine Deloria, Jr., and indicates the set of social movements that emerged in the late 1960s as a reaction to the overwhelming poverty among Native peoples following a series of catastrophic policies on Indian Affairs. Led by Indigenous youths, Red Power foregrounded a sense of pan-Indigenous pride and strength, often culminating in violent clashes with the police and casualties on both sides. Active throughout the 1970s, Red Power also coordinated other minor organs, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC), and the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) in Canada.

[3] For a comprehensive discussion of pre-1968 Native American literature, see Louis Owens's *Other Destinies* (1992), the first book-length analysis of all Native American novels published between 1854 and 1992.

[4] See, for instance, Deloria (1969), Welch (1990), Dunbar-Ortiz (2014).

seeks to participate in the existing debate through reflection on key terms such as *Indigenous, pan-Indigenous*, *trans-Indigenous,* and *Indigenous internationalism*. It pursues this aim by tracing the earliest available theories produced by authoritative Indigenous voices of the late 1960s, moving through the Native American Renaissance, the age of separatism, and arriving at Resurgence. By these means, Resurgence emerges not as a detached or exceptional phenomenon, but rather as a part of a broader continuum: the *longue durée* of Indigenous resistances in North America. The discussion of such key terms in light of both past and present sheds light on the cyclicity of ideas and sentiments that are never entirely new, but always already there, bound to return in different and often unexpected forms.

2. On *Indigenous* and Friends: *Indian, Tribal, Primitive*

Among the terms circulating in contemporary scholarship, *Indigenous* is perhaps the most overused and the most ambiguous. We nod in agreement when Leanne Betasamosake Simpson asserts that she addresses her work first and foremost to her own people (Simpson 2017a, p. 35) – meaning the Nishnaabeg, but arguably also Indigenous peoples more broadly. Similarly, it feels appropriate when Canadian institutions open events with land acknowledgements that recognize they are on Indigenous land. And yet, the concept itself remains strikingly elusive, difficult to grasp, often taken for granted.

Using *Indigenous* as a term is always, and inevitably, political. There is no way around it. It is impossible to speak of Indigeneity while remaining neutral in the face of the global array of Indigenous struggles and Resurgences. The belief that we, as non-Indigenous scholars, can position ourselves as detached observers, and not as potential allies, stems from the banalization of *Indigenous* as a politically-correct alternative to those epithets used until not so long ago – *Indian*, *tribal*, and *primitive*. "Forget Columbus", Thomas King ironically suggested in his *The Inconvenient Indian* (King 2012, p. 3): he was just trying to find India and he thought he had, it was a genuine mistake. But like all mistakes, genuine or not, this one came with profound consequences. A vast network of colonial institutions was imposed across the continent, administered by the Bureau of *Indian* Affairs (BIA) alongside deeply problematic legislation such as the U.S. *Indian* Act that, despite minor changes, still governs First Nations in Canada[5]. Following the gradual dispossession of Indigenous lands across Turtle Island through the institution of reserves (in Canada) and reservations (in the US), the *Indian* Agent was created as a figure charged with the delicate task of maintaining order and suppressing any reaction – he was, of course, a white settler.

Tribal was yet another term produced by the colonial machinery – as evident, for instance, in the creation of *Tribal* Councils under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. The term reflected the biased belief that long-standing nations with complex political systems were merely *primitive* tribes. Following Edward Said's theories (Said 1978), there was no alternative available within the colonial imagination: how else could the European settlers frame themselves as advanced, progressive, and civilized if not by undermining the Other, casting her adrift with her knowledge, while appropriating her land? (ivi, p. 7). Claude Lévi-Strauss's categorization the bricoleur (Lévi-Strauss 1966) – who fishes from a repertoire of ancient wisdom to contribute to knowledge – reinforced the colonial view of Indigenous peoples as

[5] Instituted in 1876, the Indian Act is a piece of colonial legislation that defined "Indian" identity and regulated the establishment of reserves and residential schools. Tied to the original Treaties signed with the British Crown in 1763 and later agreements with Canada throughout the 19th century, the Indian Act also plays a complex role as a legal instrument in ongoing struggles for Indigenous sovereignty. Efforts to abolish the Act – most notably in 1969 – were widely criticized as attempts at cultural assimilation. Because the Act cannot be fully abolished until treaty obligations are met, it has been amended several times, primarily to address its most overly gender-discriminatory sections: in 1985 (Bill C-31), 2011 (Bill C-3), and 2019 (Bill S-3).

primitive by countering the bricoleur with the engineer, a synecdoche of the West (ivi, pp. 16-22). And although in Lévi-Strauss's vision there was no intended hierarchy, his theories contributed to cognitive colonialism.

Although *Indian* was imposed upon the colonized subject as an umbrella term overshadowing specificity and compressing thousands of nations with highly diverse epistemologies, it soon became normalized in the scholarship. Nonetheless, the ambiguity of the term inevitably surfaces, as it problematizes the true ontological status of the subject in question. This issue is clearly addressed in two foundational texts published in 1969: Deloria's *Custer Died for Your Sins* and Cardinal's *The Unjust Society*, respectively in the US and Canada, both written as accounts of the *Indian* in mainstream society. Addressing with provocative irony the Civil Rights Movement – which, as the author argues, had left Indigenous peoples behind – Deloria foregrounds Native struggles for sovereignty within the oppressive system of America. His viewpoint captures an important transitional moment: the early stirrings of Red Power and the institutionalization of Native American Studies in the academy. North of the border, Cardinal writes in opposition to Pierre Elliott Trudeau's White Paper of 1969, in which the federal government sought to abolish the Indian Act and lead Indigenous peoples toward inevitable cultural assimilation. Refusing to be invisibilized within mainstream society, Cardinal concludes that Native peoples wish to enter the Canadian mosaic – but as the "colourful red tiles (...) where red is both needed and appreciated" (Cardinal 1969, p. 13).

The US and Canada follow two distinct systems to determine who is an *Indian*. In the US, Indian identity is still regulated through the so-called "blood quantum system", referring to the percentage of an individual's ancestry that can be traced to a specific nation. It is still used in some cases to determine who has the right to tribal enrollment and citizenship, as well as access to benefits and resources. The blood quantum system has its roots in colonial policy, as it was first introduced by settlers to limit Native American rights and land ownership, and, despite its controversies, it is still used today by some Indigenous nations such as the Navajo and the Mountain Turtle Band of Chippewas. Native intellectuals have often criticized blood quantum for reinforcing internal divisions and forms of discrimination against the "mixedblood" or, in Vizenor's term (Vizenor 1991), "crossblood" – a person of mixed European and Native descent.

In Canada, blood quantum is less relevant, mainly because Indigenous identity is not self- determined but rather assigned by the federal administration through the Indian Act in accordance with the original Treaties signed with the British Crown and the settlers. When the Treaties were signed, those individuals who were physically present had a choice: either declare themselves *Indians*, thus obtaining land on a reserve along with hunting and fishing rights, while renouncing voting rights and access to alcohol; or else enfranchise, thereby gaining access to general citizenship rights, including vote and alcohol. Enfranchisement was irreversible: once a person opted out of tribal identity, they could never reclaim status. The children of those who were enfranchised were also barred from claiming status for themselves. Those who were not there when the Treaties were signed fell automatically under the *non-Status Indian* category (Cardinal 1969, pp. 17-18). Other means of depriving individuals of Indian status were rooted in patriarchal gender norms: if a Native woman married outside the community, she lost her status; if a Native man married a white woman, she acquired Indian status and the right to live on the reserve (*ibidem*; Simpson 2017a, p. 105)[6]. Regardless of the system used, the underlying issue remains the same: the *Indian* is a colonial invention and a monolithic category. This paradox was never solved by shifting toward *Indigenous*.

While reclaiming Indigenous identity is an act of self-determination and pride, it does

[6] As stated earlier, the Indian Act was amended on several occasions. In particular, the 1985 Bill C-31 and the 2019 Bill S-3 attempted to solve gender inequalities by restoring Indigenous women's status.

not come without implications. Adopted as an alternative to earlier definitions, *Indigenous* represents an effort to subvert the narrative, to remove Native peoples from colonial hegemonic discourses whereby *the Indian* was invented as a racialized Other, the enemy hindering European imperialistic designs. It is, simultaneously, a conscious reminder that Indigenous peoples existed long before first contact with settlers – and, provocatively, even long before white people in general. This idea is often expressed in fiction, as in Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* (Silko 1978), in which mixed-blood Medicine Man Betonie reveals to Tayo that white people were vengefully invented by ancient Laguna witches: "...I tell you, we can deal with white people, with their machines and their beliefs. We can because we invented white people; it was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place" (ivi, p. 132).

Incidentally, *Indigenous* suggests by its very definition both ancestry and entitlement, implying that these peoples are as old as the land on which they were born. Derived from Latin, *Indigenous* means "born or produced from within", intrinsically part of the land; it was originally used to describe the flora and fauna of a particular habitat or landscape (Clifford 2013, p. 13). To call a people *Indigenous* entails recognizing that they cannot be separated from the land from which they are tied, for that people constitutes a single being with that land and with the spirituality that derives from it. At the same time, it implies excluding from this ancestral relation all those who do not belong yet still inhabit the land: the occupiers. In settler colonial contexts, claiming Indigeneity inevitably exposes histories of colonial displacement, disconnection, and genocide as criminal acts, not only in canonical legal terms, but also as disruptors of an ancient order and ways of being.

The idea that only those who are Indigenous to a given land can truly care for it has increasingly been employed to frame climate change as a neo-colonial phenomenon. This suggestion is also prominent in fiction: in her short story *Big Water*, Simpson centers Chi'Niibish (Lake Ontario) as a being[7] experiencing "an existential crisis", negotiating whether she – the lake – must overflow to make everyone aware of her pain due to ongoing pollution (Simpson 2017b). Some twenty years earlier, Lee Maracle had explicitly suggested this connection in her novel *Ravensong* (Maracle 1993), setting the story against a colonized land afflicted by poverty and recurring disease. However, the bond between Indigenous peoples and land is often addressed with skepticism, especially when proposed by white scholars, as it risks perpetuating simplistic notions such as *the ecological Indian* trope, or the idea that Indigenous peoples are fated to vanish along with the land. Still, since the term *Indigenous* is semantically tied to land, this bond is inescapable; rather than leading to collective erasure, though, it can inspire reclamation and Resurgence.

Clifford defines *Indigenous* as a practice, "a work in progress" (Clifford 2013, p. 13). The true scope of Resurgence as a global movement reveals its strategic premises. *Indigenous* is, just like Resurgence, simultaneously local (tied to ancestral land) and global (applicable to multiple peoples worldwide). It conveys unity and cohesion, the same solidarity both Deloria and Cardinal envisioned in the late 1960s, a solidarity that today is materially evident. Despite being another monolith, *Indigenous* withdraws the narrative from settler discourses by being self-determined – the fact that we, non-Indigenous scholars, are now discussing these phenomena comes afterward, not as a starting point. The etymology of the term itself is tied to ancestry and land, just like Indigenous peoples. Its global resonance creates and re-creates Simpson's striking vision of specific systems working individually but cooperating through invisible ties: like "islands of radical resurgence" (Simpson 2017a, p. 194).

[7] In *Big Water*, Chi'Niibish is the narrator's friend who texts her incessantly to lament her inner crisis. More than an allegorical personification of Lake Ontario, Chi'Niibish is considered a person within Anishinaabe philosophy, despite possessing other-than-human qualities. Beyond fiction, the practice of granting personhood rights to bodies of water is already a reality, as seen with the Klamath River in California in 2019 and the Magpie River in Northeastern Ontario in 2021.

3. *Pan-Indigenous* Strategies: Organizing the Advocacy

In Resurgence, *pan-Indigeneity* immediately points to Idle No More. Established in December 2012 by three Indigenous women and a non-Indigenous ally in Saskatchewan, Idle No More is a women-led sociopolitical movement primarily known for its online activity. Although it originated in Canada, Idle No More rapidly gained international resonance following the publication of its political manifesto *The Winter We Danced* (2014), thus acquiring, albeit not deliberately, the *pan-Indigenous* signifier. Since its appearance in the 1960s, *pan-Indigenous* (or *pan-Indian*) has always been associated with political advocacy and, although initially rejected, the term was eventually re-appropriated.

Following the previous discussion, *pan-Indigenous* sounds somewhat redundant: if *Indigenous* (or *Indian*) is a recognized monolith, why include the prefix *pan-,* from Greek meaning "all", "whole", or "total"? For Deloria, "the anthros" (white anthropologists) are responsible: they belittled the political awakening of Native Americans as *pan-Indianism*, as if single nations were willing to give up their individual identities to settle for another invention (Deloria 1969, p. 246). Their mission, instead, was what Deloria describes as "tribalization" – a form of cooperation and allyship opposed to individualism that still values inherent specificity (ivi, p. 228).

Throughout the 1960s, anthropologists witnessed the rise of Native political organizations in the US. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), founded in 1944, was the oldest association active in those years. In 1961, inspired by the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) of the Civil Right Movement, some Indigenous youths established the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC). Led by Native college students and alumni, NIYC was the hotheaded, enthusiastic, goal-oriented organization that demanded change in the short term. Methodological differences between NCAI and NIYC often resulted in opposition and rivalry (Deloria 1969, p. 18). Both associations still exist today, although they are less prominent. Meanwhile, more and more Indigenous nations were gathering in bands such as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, a political league of six distinct Iroquoian nations including Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora.

The *pan-Indianism* phenomenon was also gathering pace in Canada, where the political situation of Indigenous peoples was even more sensitive, complicated by the true legal definition of *Indian* in the Indian Act. As discussed above, the 1876 Indian Act determined who could be registered as *Indian* and live on reserve, thereby excluding "250,000 native people who, under the American system, would be recognized as Indian" (Cardinal 1969, p. 16). The divisions created by the Indian Act were not solely conceptual but resulted in distinct struggles and missions. On the one hand, *Treaty Indians* (First Nations) were dispossessed of their ancestral lands and allotted random reserves in the north, often deprived of natural resources and traditional food. Poverty, starvation, and diseases circulated undisturbed, together with priests and Indian Agents who apprehended children and transferred them to residential schools. On the other hand, *non-Status Indians* (including enfranchised individuals and the Métis population) fell into incomparable poverty. Living in temporary settlements where alcohol consumption was often prevalent, these families were often the target of social workers who would remove children and place them in foster care, sometimes even outside Canada – a phenomenon later known as the Sixties Scoop[8].

[8] Between 1951 and the 1980s, as residential schools were gradually closing across Canada, Indigenous children were removed from their families and placed in white households. Stemming from paternalistic policies and biases toward Indigeneity, this practice resulted in generations of displaced children on a large scale. The term Sixties Scoop was coined by Canadian researcher Patrick Johnson (1983). Exact numbers are still unknown but are estimated to amount to approximately 20,000 "scooped" children (Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre).

After World War II, a group of Indigenous youths created the National Indian Council to represent the needs of both *Status* and *non-Status Indians*. Like the NYIC in the US, they were young, determined, and focused on short-term results, but internal divisions ran too deep to be resolved. Governed by provincial authorities, the Métis were generally more willing to push for advocacy at all costs; Treaty Indians, however, began to fear that association with the Métis would jeopardize their already fragile relationship with the federal government (Cardinal 1969, p. 92; Campbell 1973, p. 155). As a result, the Council dissolved in 1967, and two distinct organizations were formed the following year: the National Indian Brotherhood (Cardinal 1969, p. 93) – now known as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) – and the Métis Association of Alberta, originally founded in 1928 and reorganized on this occasion (Campbell 1973, p. 155). The Inuit – long targeted by the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, founded in 1960 by white people in Toronto – eventually formed their own representative body in 1977: the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), an international organization involving Inuit people from Canada, Alaska, Greenland, and the Chukchi Peninsula (Watt-Cloutier 2017).

The rise of pan-Indigeneity throughout the 1960s and 1970s across North America was partly facilitated by external circumstances. Although often addressed ironically, the Civil Rights Movement inspired Native American youths and helped raise public awareness about other marginalized groups in the US. Urbanization, driven at the time by the 1956 Relocation Program, forced Native people from highly diverse backgrounds closer together in major cities, where they ended up isolated and racialized. N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968) captures the experiences of displaced Native Americans during this time. When Abel (Jemez Pueblo) is accused of murder, he is sentenced to prison and then relocated to Los Angeles alongside other Native Americans. Alone and grappling with post-traumatic stress disorder and alcoholism, Abel finds solace in the stories shared by Ben, a fellow displaced Native American who teaches him the Navajo Night Chant, a powerful healing prayer from his own tradition. It is through this connection that Abel eventually reclaims his Jemez identity. In this sense, Thomas proved correct that "pan-Indianism" was facilitated by the pressures of assimilation (Thomas 1965, p. 77). Disconnected from their home communities and adrift in the city, Abel and Ben remain conscious of their cultural differences – Jemez Pueblo and Navajo, not simply *Indians* – yet they find common ground by placing their specific traditions in conversation. It was through dialogue, not due to some presumed sameness, that pan-Indigeneity emerged as a sentiment of solidarity toward shared experiences of oppression and resistance.

Ironically, English – the language of the oppressor – enabled inter-Indigenous dialogue among peoples who otherwise could not have communicated (Cardinal 1969, p. 84). Relocation, originally intended to weaken individuals through displacement and discourage any form of association, backfired. The city soon became a hub of militant resistance, with Red Power movements igniting protests across the continent. In Vancouver, the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) was established in 1967 to address gender violence and soon evolved into a national militant movement. In their autobiographies (or fictional memoirs), Jeannette Armstrong (1985) and Lee Maracle (1991) offer vivid accounts of the separatist sentiments of those years as they became involved in the advocacy. The militant ethos of NARP is encapsulated in the statement "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" (Maracle 1991, p. 134) – one of their mantras, alongside quotes from Mao II and other freely adapted Marxist slogans. In the US, the American Indian Movement (AIM), founded by Native American youth in Minneapolis in 1968, gained momentum with the occupation of Alcatraz between 1969 and 1971. A pan-Indigenous organization prioritizing land claims and sovereignty, AIM soon became known for its militant methods. Their 1972 siege of the BIA offices in Washington, D.C., and the 1973 occupation of the Wounded Knee site culminating in a deadly gun battle with the police were broadcast on national television and immediately polarized public opinion.

Indigenous writers have often questioned the methods used by Red Power with irony and humor. In *Love Medicine* (1984), Louise Erdrich addresses AIM directly through the figure

of Gerry Nanapush, the proud firstborn of the matriarch Lulu, who also bears an important name – a clear tribute to the Anishinaabe trickster Nanabozhoo[9]. Gerry is a militant AIM activist, and his talent for breaking out of prison is matched only by his talent for getting caught immediately afterwards. A humorous figure with trickster qualities, Gerry is inspired by the AIM activist Leonard Peltier – who was arrested for murdering two FBI agents in a fire confrontation in 1975 and was released in early 2025. At the same time, his portrait satirizes the solemnity of AIM and calls for a shedding of violence and excessive seriousness. This call for irony is echoed by Vizenor (1999) who invites true "postindian warrior" to wield trickster irony against "manifest manners", the suite of biases and injustices imposed on Native Americans.

In conclusion, *pan-Indigenous* represents another example of a label initially imposed by the oppressor and ultimately strategically reappropriated by Indigenous advocacy. Anthropologists could hardly have predicted the consequences of their terminology, but that misunderstanding grew into a catalyst for nationalist and separatist sentiments that influenced the resistance for decades. In many cases, pan-Indigeneity evolved into a political discourse uniting all Native peoples on one side and casting whites as the common enemy (Campbell 1973; Womack 1999) – an argument that inevitably revives the longstanding colonial "us and them" binary. And, although this radicalism has shaped aspects of Resurgence, the conversation on allyship has been reopened, further complicating debates.

4. *Trans-Indigenous* and *Indigenous Internationalism*: Connecting the Dots

If *pan-Indigenous* initially described the early political mobilization of the 1960s, *trans-Indigenous* in turn seeks to challenge its most monolithic implications. Coined by Chadwick Allen (Chickasaw), *trans-Indigenous* emphasizes more than any *pan-* the idea of being "together (yet) distinct" (Allen 2012, pp. XIII). Conceptualized within global literary studies, *trans-Indigenous* moves beyond the comparative into the transdisciplinary "to acknowledge the mobility and multiple interactions of Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and texts" (ivi, p. XIV).

Allen suggests that *trans-* "could be the next *post-*" (*ibidem*). Notably, the shift from *post-* to *trans-* in the humanities extends beyond Indigenous studies and indicates, more broadly, a philosophical turning point. Dominating literary and critical discourses from the late 1960s until the 2010s, *post-* signaled the desire to move forward by breaking with the past – poststructuralism built upon structuralism by challenging its rigid norms and fixed meanings, along with the very notion of "truth" (Derrida 1967); postmodernism mocked the grand narratives of its predecessor and undermined the boundaries of modernism by casting its multiple narrators and entangled plots into chaos (Lyotard 1984/1991); postcolonialism developed a set of sociological, literary, and political critiques of colonialism, treating it not merely as a historical event but as an ongoing structure and interpretive lens (Wolfe 2006). Similarly, the *posthuman* (Braidotti 2013) sought to challenge Eurocentric and phallogocentric constructions of *Man* – first formulated by Protagoras as "the measure of all things" and then reinstated during the Italian Renaissance as a universal model of morality and rationality (ivi, p. 18).

[9] Prominent in several Indigenous traditions, the trickster is a spirit, sometimes anthropomorphic – as in the case of Nanabozhoo, the original human being – or an animal such as Coyote, Rabbit, Raven, or Turtle. Radin describes the trickster as simultaneously "creator and destroyer, giver and negator" (Radin 1956, p. XXIII). Although there is no single archetype, Hynes and Doty identify six main trickster qualities as a common ground, describing the trickster as a border crosser, a shapeshifter, a sexual clown, a transgressor or disruptor of order, a co-creator, and a mediator (Hynes and Doty 1993, pp. 33-42). Toelken and Scott (1997), as well as Erdrich (2003), focus on the trickster's functions, emphasizing humor, survival, and transformation. For Vizenor (1990), the trickster can also be understood as a narrative force that challenges fixed forms and stable categories.

By contrast, *trans-* seeks to overcome binaries (post-structuralism vs. structuralism; postmodernism vs. modernism; etc.) by suggesting movement, transition, and fluidity (from Latin, *transire*, "to cross"). *Trans-* resists closure and finality, emphasizing instead transformation and hybridity. Unsurprisingly, *trans-* has gained popularity in fields that center around crossing boundaries and challenging normative frameworks, such as mobility studies, queer studies, and, more recently, Resurgence. The turn toward *transnationalism* – which highlights the migrant's social ties and lived experience across borders (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007) – likewise reflects a renewed interest in the *in-between*, the *cross-,* the *trans-*. Border-crossing is also central to Resurgence in North America, as Indigenous sovereignty disrupts the ontological status of national borders and nation-states, viewed as colonial constructions that divide Indigenous nations and complicate mobility, especially for those who refuse to identify as either American or Canadian (Simpson A. 2014).

The "together (yet) distinct" paradigm suggested through *trans-Indigenous* closely aligns with Resurgence, a global movement that connects Indigenous nations while honoring their specificity. For Simpson, this ethical relationality takes the form of "constellations of co-resistance" (Simpson 2017a, p. 9) or of "islands of decolonial love" (Simpson 2015), where each island exists independently but cooperates within an archipelago[10]. A similar term is *Indigenous internationalism*, which Simpson describes as a global network that boosts ethical relations among Indigenous peoples and "with plant nations, animal nations, insects, bodies of water, air, soil, and spiritual beings" (ivi, p. 58). More recently, Simpson has proposed *Nibi* ("water") "as a theory, or a mapping of life and affiliation and global connection - in other words, as a form of Indigenous internationalism" (Simpson 2025, p. 2). Resisting the violence of colonial engineering and pollution, Nibi is a resurgent being that binds together Indigenous peoples, animals, and plants on a global scale. In other words, the goal of Indigenous Resurgences extends beyond humanity to include the other-than-human dimension, in a relationality that seeks to heal the whole world. Already in the 1990s, some authors called for a form of *tribal* internationalism through fiction – most notably *The Almanac of the Dead* (1991), Silko's monumental novel connecting Indigenous peoples across the Americas, Africa, and Oceania under the banner "one world, many tribes"; or King's *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), in which Indigenous revitalization is strategically projected onto a "Map" composed of many screens arranged to recreate North America (Silko 1993, pp. 263-268). Although the idea of an interconnected globe reflects a renewed optimism characteristic of the 1990s, it nonetheless offers evidence of sentiments that return in cycles.

5. Conclusion: Constellations of Sovereignty

[10] Glissant's theory of the *archipelago* – describing an interconnected world capable of resisting the homogenizing forces of globalization – partly aligns with Simpson's vision of Resurgence as a process creating "islands of coresistance" (Glissant 2017a, p. 9). Although both foreground a global, ethical, and non-hierarchical conversation among distinct cultures, they still present some overarching differences. For the archipelago to emerge, individual "islands" – or cultures – must undergo *creolization* by behaving as *rhizomes*, or "root[s] with a multiplicity of extensions, in all directions", thereby "establishing communication and relation" (Glissant 2008, p. 84). While creolization does not necessarily entail a loss of specificity – "[d]iversity is not dilution" (ivi, p. 82)" – as a process that "adds something new to the components that participate in it" (*ibidem*), it nevertheless implies transformation. In this sense, creolization differs from Resurgence: the former invites deep cultural change, envisioning cultures as open to assuming traits of others over time; the latter celebrates specificity and aims to build global solidarity among Indigenous nations. Moreover, Glissant envisioned the process of creolization as taking place among three distinct groups within a settler colonial context: "Meso-America" (Indigenous peoples), "Euro-America" (white settlers), and "Neo-America" (those born from intermarriage) (ivi, p. 83). In Glissant's archipelago, thus, Indigenous peoples are treated as a single category – rather than as distinct nations with individual cultures – who, ideally, were expected to *creolize* with the others, but were seen as unwilling to do so because they were "atavistic", that is, fixated on the past and unable to evolve (Glissant 1995/2020, p. 65).

As evidenced by the history of Indigenous resistance in North America, Resurgence does not unfold along a straight line. Like "collective constellations of disruptions" (Simpson 2017a, p. 198), the key terms of the scholarship around Resurgence – *Indigenous, pan-Indigenous, trans-Indigenous*, and *Indigenous internationalism* – have resurfaced across time, each time charged with renewed political force and meaning. Far from being merely descriptive, these terms highlight the tension between imposition and refusal, erasure and self-determination. Just like the ideas that have shaped Indigenous resistance in the US and Canada, these terms move in cycles: returning, transforming, and reemerging in moments of political necessity.

Initially produced within the context of colonial and neocolonial violence, these concepts have been reappropriated over time into instruments of sovereignty and relation. *Indigenous*, once imposed as a homogenizing category aimed at erasing specificity, has been reclaimed to articulate pride, ties to land, and solidarity on a global scale. *Pan-Indigenous*, a term introduced by anthropologists who misunderstood the implications of collective political awakening in the 1960s, has since been weaponized to forge alliances across neocolonial borders, and continues to describe, strategically, the mission of Idle No More. Emerging in the 2010s, *trans-Indigenous* pushes beyond solidarity to envision ethical relationships among distinct nations based on co-resistance, mutual recognition, and radical relationality – mirroring and amplifying the phenomenon of Indigenous Resurgences as "islands of decolonial love" (Simpson 2015).

These transformations, returns, and occasional shifts are not trivial. They reveal that language itself is a terrain of Resurgence – a space in which meanings are contested, reshaped, and mobilized toward sovereignty. A term like *Indigenous* does not merely describe identity: it activates both vertical and horizontal relationality – toward ancestors and future generations, and across the globe, with other Indigenous nations and with the other-than-human world. By transforming and returning in cycles, these terms refuse colonial temporality and make space for alternative futures. In that sense, Resurgence does not only occur in blockades, cultural revitalization, and political organizations: it also takes place in discourse, where the reoccupation of terminology mirrors the reappropriation of ancestral lands.

It makes sense, then, that Resurgence does not simply translate into going back. Quite the contrary, it is about going forward differently, foregrounding alternative methods from those framed within hegemonic society and history. If early thinkers like Deloria and Cardinal called for "tribal solidarity" (Deloria 1969, p. 21) or "Indian unity" (Cardinal 1969, p. 12) as a network fostering relation but respecting specificity, today's Resurgence responds by weaving "constellations of coresistance", as Simpson suggests (2017a, p. 9). Instead of flattening specificity into a monolithic category, these constellations illuminate difference, linking specific struggles into shared visions. They move in rhythms outside settler time, sustained by memory, land, and relation.

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