# let’s conjure some ghosts

### Part One is… I’m exhausted.

And not because I had to work full-time while also going to class full-time this semester in order to pay the fees to be here, but because the space of debate is exhausting for people like me; people who don’t fit the mold.

#### Spaces like debate are oriented around the bodies that inhabit them. A chair becomes molded around a body’s shape if that body constantly sits in it. When I sink into a chair, if I fit the mold, I do not notice the points of tension between my body and the chair.

Bodies sink into chairs the same way bodies sink into institutions – whiteness coheres spaces in certain shapes. Bodies that fit in the space’s orientation do not notice friction, while bodies that don’t fit, experience extreme amounts of tension.

This is why I am so psychologically tired; this space and this topic.

Affirming or negating this topic is psychologically easier for white people – when they affirm the resolution, they don’t have to ask questions about whether or not they are included in the public sphere. They don’t have to confront the mechanism or system that controls and punishes people of color for being black or brown, not for doing drugs. They don’t have to question how they can ethically exist in this space knowing that “negating” condemns their people to more suffering. They don’t read these articles about torture and pain and see themselves in the literature. They don’t cry in fear wondering out of them and their two friends, who will be the unlucky Indian girl to be assaulted, stolen, or worse. The thought doesn’t even cross their mind.

This inequality makes debate impossible – unconscious and informal mechanisms of exclusion mean that participants aren’t on an even playing field.  Even when black or brown subjects do speak, they are not heard –

#### Boundaries of discussion are put in place through things like the resolution- I’m not calling NSDA anti-indigenous in totality, but these boundaries do seek to further antagonize bodies whiteness would deem as out of place.

Tuck and Ree 13[Eve, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations and Coordinator of the Native American Studies Program at the State University of New York at New Paltz. C. Ree holds an MFA from the University of California, Irvine; she works in multiple genres, overlapping public performance, architecture, photography, video, and sculpture. “A Glossary of Haunting.” Handbook of Autoethnography, 2013 These ceilings haunt my work. The ceilings I’m thinking about—the ones with acoustic tiles that slowly brown with leaky stain marks—always everywhere but in their own nowhere space. School buildings, grocery stores, office spaces, police stations, libraries, converted basements, temples, sometimes galleries and high-end boutiques. I never see them, but rather, I sense them. I can walk into a space and know without looking if the ceiling, that ceiling, is there. Designed to look like a reassuring solid plane, they are in fact an aluminum grid filled with lightweight tiles, suspended by wires here and there. Nothing holds the tiles in place but gravity and the grid. Their cheap, disposable, modular, flexible design was a breakthrough and ensured their spread throughout buildings today, and in many ways, their invisibility. “The building and rebuilding suggest that space is almost like a kind of very expensive magnetic tape which can be erased and reused.…What is erased are cultural memories; what is rebuilt are more profitable buildings” (Abbas, 1994, p. 452). The tiles’ swappable nature is also touted as a low-cost strategy for hiding leaks. Simply replace evidence of water damage with a new clean tile. Yet, every time I glance overhead, a brown rusty stain looks back, unattended to and forgotten, hinting at leaks which threaten to press through in the next rain. “The ruins look back” (Caws, 1997, p. 303). I hear the downpour and wonder if I will see clear water seeping through from overhead. Maybe next to the brown circle from the last leak. Will I see the water or feel it first? Which bucket will I throw underneath? Maybe the leak got fixed. Maybe it got fixed, but the fixing won’t hold. This anxiety about leaks is what I dwell on—their source, our inability to keep up with them, the rot they produce, the dysfunction of our ceilings, how they unsettle our sense of space—as well as how unnoticed they can go, how water stains dot most of our institutions. I think of Hurricane Katrina and horror movies, toxic schools, and suburban decay. The leak to me is a sort of sign, the ghost’s memento mori, that we are always in a process of ruin, a state of ruining. Our ruins are not crumbled Roman columns, or ivy covered abandoned lots. Our ruins lie within the quick turnover of buildings, disappearing landmarks, and disposable homes, layered upon each other and over again. And in the tradition of the symbolism of horror, the ruin always points to the scene of ghost-producing violence. The ruin is not only the physical imprint of the supernatural onto architecture, but also the possessed or deluded people wandering amidst the ruin who fail to see its ruinous aspect. The idealistic homeowners who move into the haunted home; the humans who do not recognize the living dead until it is too late. In these layered always-ruining places, our ghosts haunt, and we are blind to it. They are ghosts birthed from empire’s original violence, the ghosts hidden inside law’s creation myth (Benjamin, 1986 p. 287), and the new ghosts on the way as our ruins refresh and mutate. They are specters that collapse time, rendering empire’s foundational past impossible to erase from the national present. They are a source of persistent unease. This is what suspended ceilings try to hide but only uncover.

Just to clarify, I’m not trying to shit on the NSDA topic committee, like they’ve given me a good topic or two, but they greatly fucked up with this one… We shouldn’t be having this conversation in this space; I know most of you like to roll your eyes when poc’s complain about things not being fair, but this really isn’t fair. If I can’t even read the literature in a private space without shaking, I shouldn’t have to cut the cards to potentially negate it, or affirm it in some cases.

So Imma address this social inequality the way I want to, by conjuring some spirits to make me feel like I’m not the only/one of the only rez heads here.

If you, as the judge, feel like you no longer want to vote for me because I didn’t follow the arbitrary rules, give me a 30 so there can be \*for the first time (of my knowledge)\* a native on your stage- that’s all I ever wanted to prove in debate.

### Part Two is Framing

#### Discussions of indigeneity in debate has relegated it as an object of the past; we are spoken about and discussed by people who do not know our pain, remain on our land, and continue to remain complacent to our suffering. You leave tournaments feeling good because of your dubs, I leave tournaments feeling shitty because I’m one day closer to no AC or running water. First world problems tho, amirite?

#### But don’t kid yourself, the settler did not forget about it’s crimes, but rather wrote it’s actions, into the analogue script of western history- that’s why nonnatives feel good reading my stuff.

Indigenous history and culture has become all just a spectacle of the past. This process of spectatorship isolates indigenous culture as a historical artifact to be examined, while further justifying the move to innocence and the ongoing desire to become the “super native”.

#### This process of strategic disavowment is enigmatic of the way that indigenous tribes were eliminated from this stolen land. The only ethical orientation is the process of spectrality, a framework of constant haunting to render visible the invisible.

Baloy 2014 (Nicole J.K., B.A. Honours, Eastern Michigan University, 2006 M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2008; SPECTACLE, SPECTRALITY, AND THE EVERYDAY: SETTLER COLONIALISM, ABORIGINAL ALTERITY, AND INCLUSION IN VANCOUVER, [https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0166915)(26)//SP](https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0166915%29%2826%29//SP) Among settlers in contemporary Vancouver, there is much that goes unseen, unheard, and unsaid in relation to the ongoing colonial project. Open dialogue about race and racism is rare, for example, and anxieties about historical Coast Salish dispossession and future repossession of unceded territories are only occasionally expressed. but often hidden or repressed, concerns about an unjust past, unequal present, and an uncertain future haunt the everyday. Spectrality is a state or condition of haunting; spectre is another word for ghost or apparition. I argue that Aboriginal alterity and the unfinished and ever-emergent business of settler colonialism produce spectral effects that influence non-Aboriginal residents’ experiences, affective knowledges, and spatio- temporal imaginaries of their city. I also suggest that analytically attending to ghosts and hauntings opens opportunities to make visible what is often hidden from view, silenced, and/or revenant: disappearing and returning. As geographer Emilie Cameron observes, spectrality has emerged as a “compelling metaphor” for critical scholars who “aim to trouble, uncover, and interrogate the play of the colonial past in this ongoing colonial present” (2008:383–384). Although Cameron critiques the spectral turn, she acknowledges that stories of ghosts enable analysts to unsettle and critique colonial conceptions of time and space, and to interrogate the “mismatch between the ideal and the real, the present and the absent” (383). Attention to ghosts allows critical scholars and social actors to consider and convey the traces, impacts, and a/effects of systemic processes and systems of power that are not always immediately tangible or blatantly visible. In her influential book Ghostly Matters (2008), sociologist Avery Gordon persuasively argues that attending to ghosts is a critical political project. She suggests that ghosts are part of material and social reality and have socio-political effects. For my analytical purposes, spectrality provides a critical frame to investigate how my non-Aboriginal research participants affectively relate to the spatio- temporalities of Indigenous visibility/erasure, presence/absence, and marginality/reinscription. Theorizing Indigeneity as spectral also enables me to explain how Aboriginal alterity and Indigeneity function almost holographically: apparent and visible in some contexts, but erased or minimized in others.14 I am interested in how and why Aboriginal alterity – cultural, racial, and social difference – is sometimes emphasized and other times is ignored or mitigated. As well, I suggest that Indigeneity is revenant: it seems to disappear and return, thereby haunting contemporary social relations. For example, sometimes attention to Aboriginal racial alterity eclipses Indigenous political distinction, rendering Indigeneity invisible. Other times, efforts toward universalized, liberal forms of equality erase Aboriginal alterities and Indigenous distinctions. Sometimes Indigeneity is called forth and summoned – through spectacles of recognition, for instance – and then retreats from view as the event continues or attention switches to other concerns. Narratives of city history offer another example: local Coast Salish people appear at the start of the story, then disappear as the focus turns to stories of the railways and ports and other processes of city development, only to return again in descriptions of the multicultural, colourful cultures represented in the city today. This revenant form of Indigenous spectrality is the enabling force fuelling both Aboriginal spectacle and marginality in Vancouver, thereby shaping the conditions of encounter for non- Aboriginal residents. It is important to note that I evoke and articulate a very specific interpretation of spectrality in ways that sometimes do and sometimes do not correspond with beliefs about ghosts in local and regional Indigenous communities. For example, Musqueam people believe their ancestors are real, not ghosts; they have a contemporary presence that requires certain protocols. Maintaining the metaphor of “ghosts,” I also suggest that people and processes from the past are present in spaces of the city today, but I do not use the language or conception of ancestors, nor do I directly discuss protocols. I do, however, contend that we should acknowledge ghostliness in the city and, using Gordon’s language, be “hospitable” to spectres that haunt city spaces rather than exorcise or ignore them. I specifically draw on Gordon’s analysis of spectres to develop my own theorizing about the spectral qualities of settler colonial life in the city. In doing so, I do not significantly engage with other versions of spectrality and ghostliness as imagined, for example, in Indigenous communities on the Northwest Coast or in the “ghost stories” told about “Indian graveyards” and other forms of North American haunting, as collected and discussed in Colleen Boyd and Coll Thrush’s recent edited volume (2011). Instead, I develop a distinct conceptual and critical analysis of haunting, not to repeat or interpret others’ ghost stories but to consider how the city is haunted by the unfinished business of colonialism and the ongoing production and management of alterity.15 Like spectacle, I suggest that spectrality involves sight and seeing; yet spectres play tricks on sight and also activate other senses. I agree with Gordon when she explains that “haunting is not about invisibility or unknowability per se”; instead, she argues, haunting “refers us to what’s living and breathing in the place hidden from view: people, places, histories, knowledge, memories, ways of life, ideas” (2011:3). To conjure up and acknowledge ghosts involves making visible what has been repressed or concealed but never fully banished or disappeared. It also involves examining the processes that repress and conceal. For example, in 2012 a construction project in the Marpole neighbourhood of Vancouver uncovered a Coast Salish burial site, part of the vast Marpole Midden, a National Heritage Site on the Fraser River (see Chapter 8). The Musqueam community mobilized to protest the construction project, reclaim the property, and lay their ancestors to rest. It is not the dead and buried I consider as ghosts here, but the ways that Musqueam claims to place and history were covered up (quite literally, by concrete and tar) through colonial processes and urban development only to be made visible again through the Musqueam community’s contemporary acts of resistance and remembering. In my conceptual schema, the space became haunted not by the spirits of ancestors, but by buried histories forgotten and unknown among the broader public. Gordon argues that ghosts take up space. Exploring their spatialized existence is a form of unmapping, which Sherene Razack (2002) advocates as a strategy to dislodge naturalized racialization and spatialization processes to reveal the settler mythologies that underpin them. This spatial project involves interrogating and contesting discursive erasures and refusing to take absence for granted. As the Musqueam example above and the case of Stanley Park in Chapter 3 illustrate, I understand Vancouver’s spaces to be haunted, not necessarily by supernatural beings, but by processes of dispossession that have displaced local Coast Salish peoples and their histories from common urban narratives and imaginaries. When familiar places become haunted by unfamiliar stories, spectrality can operate as a potentially generative or transformative process, creating new meanings and senses of place. In this way, spectrality can produce uncanny feelings, as Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs argue: a strange sensation of seeing something or being somewhere familiar and unfamiliar at once (1998:23). The revenant quality of Indigenous spectrality can enhance this feeling of uncanniness. Unmapping familiar terrain to make space for the erased and marginalized – the ghosted – opens opportunities to experience the uncanny. Same spaces are made different, and sameness and difference are felt simultaneously.

#### Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who best uncovers some ghosts.

\*\*\*I will gladly clarify what this means and what this looks like for nonnatives in CX, not trying to be self-serving, just trying to be true to my heart- obviously.

### Part Three is the Vibe

#### I affirm the process of a genealogical haunting of the settler scripting of the resolution itself.

**Tuck and Ree 13** [Eve, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations and Coordinator of the Native American Studies Program at the State University of New York at New Paltz. C. Ree holds an MFA from the University of California, Irvine; she works in multiple genres, overlapping public performance, architecture, photography, video, and sculpture. “A Glossary of Haunting.” Handbook of Autoethnography, 2013. Pgs. 640-641. Accessed 3/2/16 here at: [http://static1.squarespace.com/static/557744ffe4b013bae3b7af63/t/557f2d6ce4b029eb4288a2f8/1434398060958/Tuck+%26+Ree%2C+A+Glossary+of+Haunting.pdf](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/557744ffe4b013bae3b7af63/t/557f2d6ce4b029eb4288a2f8/1434398060958/Tuck%2B%26%2BRee%2C%2BA%2BGlossary%2Bof%2BHaunting.pdf)]

Colonization is as horrific as humanity gets: genocide, desecration, poxed blankets, rape, humiliation. Settler colonialism, then, because it is a structure and not just the nefarious way nations are born (Wolfe, 1999), is an ongoing horror made invisible by its persistence—the snake in the flooded basement. Settler colonial relations are comprised by a triad, including a) the Indigenous inhabitant, present only because of her erasure; b) the chattel slave, whose body is property and murderable; and c) the inventive settler, whose memory becomes history, and whose ideology becomes reason. Settler colonialism is the management of those who have been made killable, once and future ghosts—those that had been destroyed, but also those that are generated in every generation. “In the United States, the Indian is the original enemy combatant who cannot be grieved” (Byrd, 2011, p. xviii). Settler horror, then, comes about as part of this management, of the anxiety, the looming but never arriving guilt, the impossibility of forgiveness, the inescapability of retribution. Haunting, by contrast, is the relentless remembering and reminding that will not be appeased by settler society’s assurances of innocence and reconciliation. Haunting is both acute and general; individuals are haunted, but so are societies. The United States is permanently haunted by the slavery, genocide, and violence entwined in its first, present and future days. Haunting doesn’t hope to change people’s perceptions, nor does it hope for reconciliation. Haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop. Alien (to settlers) and generative for (ghosts), this refusal to stop is its own form of resolving. For ghosts, the haunting is the resolving, it is not what needs to be resolved. Haunting aims to wrong the wrongs, a confrontation that settler horror hopes to evade. Avery Gordon observes, Haunting is a constituent element of modern social life. It is neither premodern superstition nor individual psychosis; it is a generalizable social phenomenon of great import. To study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it. This confrontation requires (or produces) a fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge, in our mode of production. (1997, p. 7) Social life, settler colonialism, and haunting are inextricably bound; each ensures there are always more ghosts to return. B Beloved As a young child, Beloved was killed by a mother determined to free her from slavery. Now grown, she returns to haunt the broken bits of her family, first as an angry house spirit, then later as a stranded young woman, whom they take in, drawn by a strange attraction to her. Furious, plaintive, consuming, wheedling, childlike, clever, Beloved’s haunting is no ordinary rattling. Hers is a familial possession, a cleaving of her hungry violent soul to theirs. As Beloved’s insatiability grows, her mother wastes away to feed the lost child she finally recognizes with gifts, food and attention. Beloved seduces her stepfather who can no longer stop his nightmares of slavery from crashing into his waking thoughts. They are avoided by the rest of town who know about the monstrous mother and her ghost child. As Toni Morrison’s (1987) novel layers fragments of voices, memories, and dreams, the violent past and the haunted present seep into the narrative until it is slavery itself in its multiplying psychic forms that haunts the family and readers, the horror and haunting of today. Beloved is not a ghost appeased by remembering, nor a ghost to erase. In the end, a now pregnant Beloved disappears amidst the confusion of a visit from a group of concerned women and her mother’s flashback of a slave owner’s return. Morrison ends her story with a note on circulation and silence: “This is not a story to pass on” (1987, pp. 274–275). But why haunting? Haunting is the cost of subjugation. It is the price paid for violence, for genocide. Horror films in the United States have done viewers a disservice in teaching them that heroes are innocent, and that the ghouls are the trespassers. In the context of the settler colonial nation-state, the settler hero has inherited the debts of his forefathers. This is difficult, even annoying to those who just wish to go about their day. Radio ads and quips from public speakers reveal the resentment some settlers hold for tribal communities that assert claims to land and tribal sovereignty. This resentment seems to say, “Aren’t you dead already? Didn’t you die out long ago? You can’t really be an

#### But don’t be flattered it’s not \*really\* for you. We haunt as a method of revenge. It’s our justice, and it’s what we crave and how we feel a sense of resolve.

Tuck and Ree 13[Eve, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations and Coordinator of the Native American Studies Program at the State University of New York at New Paltz. C. Ree holds an MFA from the University of California, Irvine; she works in multiple genres, overlapping public performance, architecture, photography, video, and sculpture. “A Glossary of Haunting.” Handbook of Autoethnography, 2013 Unruly, full of desire, unsettling, around the edges of haunting whispers revenge. The rage of the dead, a broken promise, a violent ruin, the seeds of haunting, an engine for curses. It can and cannot be tolerated. Not like justice. Everyone nods their head to justice. Who can disagree with justice? Revenge on the other hand... Revenge is necessarily unspeakable to justice. We have better ways to deal with revenge now. But revenge and justice overlap, feed and deplete the other. In heroic films, justice and revenge slip and slide, exchanging names. Revenge goes drag as justice, or justice reveals its heat from revenge—the renegade civilian, the passionate lawyer, the rogue cop, the violated mother with shotgun on her hip. In ghostly horror films like The Shining (Kubrick, 1980) and Poltergeist (Hooper, 1982), the site of spectral terror, the terrible place, is often a cemetery buried underneath a contemporary mansion; the injustice is literally in the foundation and produces a haunting based on revenge (Clover, 1992, p. 30). The outlines of wrong and right, usually so Hollywood clear, shift out of focus the crime of history, the crime of fact (building over the dead) and instead assert the larger crime of desire that spills outside norms (vengeance). Justice and revenge—both invoke and refuse the other. Revenge is one head of the many-headed creature of justice. Resolution Last winter, when I was pregnant but hadn’t told anyone yet, I went to an event featuring Maxine Hong Kingston, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Toni Morrison, at the 92nd Street Y. Kingston’s work (1989) is meaningful to me because my mother tugged my ears to return from bad dreams, too. Kingston’s work (2004) is meaningful to me because our family home burned in the same fire, too. Morrison opened the night by talking about the friendship shared by the three of them. Silko and Kingston read from their recent memoirs, which were both in many ways about making wrong right again. Kingston stood on a box to read at the podium. Silko’s hair kept falling on her pages. Speaking of their long friendship, Kingston said that Silko taught her that ceremony is the only resolution.

### Part Four is the Effect of the Vibe

#### Our process of haunting is an ongoing continuum, sending ripples across the plateau of the settler psyche to upset the drawn maps of the settler- physically and metaphorically.

Baloy 14 (Nicole J.K., B.A. Honours, Eastern Michigan University, 2006 M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2008; SPECTACLE, SPECTRALITY, AND THE EVERYDAY: SETTLER COLONIALISM, ABORIGINAL ALTERITY, AND INCLUSION IN VANCOUVER, https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0166915)(31)//SP

To further consider the temporalities of haunting, it is useful to compare spectrality to spectacle. While spectators recognize spectacles as discreet and distinct temporal moments and spatial sites (even if sites of spectacle become mundane), spectrality as a condition or state of haunting is difficult to delimit temporally. Although a feeling of haunting can be fleeting, ghosts often linger and can continue to haunt even after they have been acknowledged or exorcised. If their presence is a reminder or signal of something amiss or previously repressed, even if this is righted or otherwise addressed, ghosts can leave a mark – traces and residues of injustice and trauma. Seemingly apart and even otherworldly, spectres populate the spaces of the quotidian present. Spectrality is thus a constitutive feature of everyday life in the settler colonial city. It produces a “structure of feeling” in Vancouver, to borrow from Raymond Williams (1977). Processes and policies of colonialism, for example, leave tangible traces on the built environment and contemporary materialities but also haunt in more subtle ways, shaping affective knowledges and personal encounters and disrupting illusions of post-coloniality: “the over and done with comes alive” (Gordon 2011:2). Haunting, writes Gordon, “alters the experience of being in linear time, alters the way we normally separate and sequence the past, the present, and the future” (2). Long histories and embodied practices of silencing, management, erasure, and marginality can be illuminated and made visible through analyses that recognize these processes as spectrally present. Similarly, affects and emotions that influence action and perception but are “hidden from view” and seldom expressed can be brought into the open for discussion when understood as ghostly dimensions of everyday life. This can be especially useful when addressing issues of race, racialization, and racism, which continue to shape everyday encounters and material conditions even as historical and biological conceptions of race are increasingly recognized as defunct, inaccurate, and scientifically and morally wrong. Reflecting on the potentialities of affective analyses to enhance critical geographies and race studies, geographer Anoop Nayak writes, with spectral connotations, “Although race may be a ‘floating signifier,’ we must ask under what conditions it is summoned-to-life and allowed to materialise within time and place” (2010:554). Race effects a spectral force on contemporary social relations in ways that only occasionally come into full view. Attention to haunting thus offers a theoretical and methodological tool to give voice, shape, and animacy to affects and other immaterialities that shape everyday conditions (see Chapter 7).

#### **To be unapologetically loud or even pissed off on this stolen land conjures the queer native poltergeists of the past. This debate is a séance that demands the return of lost Native bodies by decolonizing the static place the settler state places indigenous people. Only the constant haunting of the resolution can disrupt the settler’s notion of temporality.**

Belcourt 2016 (Billy-Ray, Driftpile Cree Nation, 2016 Rhodes Scholar, Reading for an M.St. in Women's Studies at the University of Oxford and Wadham College A POLTERGEIST MANIFESTO, <http://www.feralfeminisms.com/a-poltergeist-manifesto/>)

Queer indigeneity, to borrow Fred Moten’s description of blackness, might “come most clearly into relief, by way of its negation” (2014). Perhaps decolonization needs to be a sort of séance: an attempt to communicate with the dead, a collective rising-up from the reserve’s necropolis, a feral becoming-undead. Boyd and Thrush’s Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence thinks indigeneity and its shaky histories vis-à-vis the language of haunting, where haunting is an endurant facet of “the experience of colonialism” (Bodinger de Uriarte 2012, 303). But, for me, ghostliness is differentially distributed: some more than others will be wrenched into the domain of the dead and forced to will their own ontologies into the now. Perhaps the universalist notion that haunting is a metonym for indigeneity repudiates the very life-forms that it claims to include: those who are differently queered and gendered, and, because of this, haunt waywardly and in ways that cannot be easily predicted (Ahmed 2015). This paper thus takes an imaginative turn and proceeds with something of an incantation to summon the figure of the queer Indigenous poltergeist—the feral monster in the horror story of decolonization. Queer Indigenous poltergeists do not linger inaudibly in the background; we are beside ourselves with anger, we make loud noises and throw objects around because we are demanding retribution for homicide, unloved love, and cold shoulders. We do not reconcile; we escape the reserve, pillage and mangle the settler-colonial episteme. Our arrival is both uneventful and apocalyptic, a point of departure and an entry point for an ontology that corresponds with a future that has yet to come. Sometimes all we have is the promise of the future. For the queer Indigenous poltergeist, resurrection is its own form of decolonial love. The poltergeist is an ontological anomaly: a fusion of human, object, and ghost, a “creature of social reality” and a “creature of fiction” (Haraway 1991, 149). From the German poltern meaning “[to] make noise, [to] rattle” and Geist or “ghost,” it literally means “noisy ghost,” speaking into existence an anti-subjectivity that emerges in the aftermath of death or murder (“Poltergeist”). It is the subject of Tobe Hooper’s 1982 film Poltergeist, which tells a story of “a haunting based on revenge” (Tuck and Ree 2013, 652). The film’s haunting is a wronging premised on an initial wrong: the eponymous poltergeist materializes when a mansion is constructed on a cemetery—a disturbing of spirits, if you will. José Esteban Muñoz argues that “The double ontology of ghosts and ghostliness, the manner in which ghosts exist inside and out and traverse categorical distinctions, seems especially useful for... queer criticism” (2009, 46). In this paper, the poltergeist names the form which indigeneity takes when it brings queer matter into its folds. In other words, this essay evokes haunting as a metaphor to hint at the ways in which queerness was murderously absorbed into the past and prematurely expected to stay there as an effect of colonialism’s drive to eliminate all traces of sexualities and genders that wandered astray. The poltergeist conceptualizes the work of queer indigeneity in the present insofar as it does not presuppose the mysterious intentions of the ghost—an otherworldly force that is bad, good, and undetectable all at once. Instead, the poltergeist is melancholic in its grief, but also pissed off. It refuses to remain in the spiritual, a space cheapened in relation to the staunch materiality of the real, and one that, though housing our conditions of possibility, cannot contain all of us. We protest forms of cruel nostalgia that tether ghosts to a discarded past within which queer Indigenous life once flourished because we know that we will never get it back and that most of us likely never experienced it in the first place. We long for that kind of love, but we know it is hard to come by. I turn to the poltergeist because I don’t have anywhere else to go. Help me, I could say. But I won’t. Queer indigeneity, then, is neither here nor there, neither dead nor alive but, to use Judith Butler’s language, interminably spectral (2006, 33). We are ghosts that haunt the reserve in the event of resurrection. According to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, a reserve is a “tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for the use and benefit of an Indian band” (“Terminology”). The “reserve system” is part of the dispossessory ethos through which the settler state reifies land as the sign of sovereignty itself, and thus effects the political death of indigeneity, decomposing it into nothingness, into contaminated dirt. Reserves are the products of imaginations gone wild; they are ruins that bear “the physical imprint of the supernatural” on arid land, on decaying trailers arranged like weathered tombstones (Tuck and Ree 2013, 653). They are borderlands that connote simultaneous possession and dispossession: they represent the collision between settler sovereignty (insofar as the Crown holds the legal title to the land) and indigeneity (pointing to a genre of life that is distinctly Indigenous). Reserves were—some might say they still are—zones of death that regulated and regulate the movements of Indigenous bodies, quarantining their putatively contaminated flesh outside modern life in order to preserve settler-colonial futurities. It is as if the reserve were a site of complete atrophy, where indigeneity is supposed to waste away or degenerate, where queerness has already bled out. Look at the blood on your hands!

### Underview:

#### 1] The 1AC isn’t supposed to make perfect sense to nonnatives… and that’s okay. Just listen and attempt to conceptualize, it’ll get clearer as you feel the feral presence.

Belcourt 2016 (Billy-Ray, Driftpile Cree Nation, 2016 Rhodes Scholar, Reading for an M.St. in Women's Studies at the University of Oxford and Wadham College A POLTERGEIST MANIFESTO, <http://www.feralfeminisms.com/a-poltergeist-manifesto/> The poltergeist is an ontological anomaly: a fusion of human, object, and ghost, a “creature of social reality” and a “creature of fiction” (Haraway 1991, 149). From the German *poltern*meaning “[to] make noise, [to] rattle” and *Geist* or “ghost,” it literally means “noisy ghost,” speaking into existence an anti-subjectivity that emerges in the aftermath of death or murder (“Poltergeist”). It is the subject of Tobe Hooper’s 1982 film *Poltergeist*, which tells a story of “a haunting based on revenge” (Tuck and Ree 2013, 652). The film’s haunting is a wronging premised on an initial wrong: the eponymous poltergeist materializes when a mansion is constructed on a cemetery—a disturbing of spirits, if you will. José Esteban Muñoz argues that “The double ontology of ghosts and ghostliness, the manner in which ghosts exist inside and out and traverse categorical distinctions, seems especially useful for… queer criticism” (2009, 46). In this paper, the poltergeist names the form which indigeneity takes when it brings queer matter into its folds. In other words, this essay evokes haunting as a metaphor to hint at the ways in which queerness was murderously absorbed into the past and prematurely expected to stay there as an effect of colonialism’s drive to eliminate all traces of sexualities and genders that wandered astray. The poltergeist conceptualizes the work of queer indigeneity in the present insofar as it does not presuppose the mysterious intentions of the ghost—an otherworldly force that is bad, good, and undetectable all at once. Instead, the poltergeist is melancholic in its grief, but also pissed off. It refuses to remain in the spiritual, a space cheapened in relation to the staunch materiality of the real, and one that, though housing our conditions of possibility, cannot contain all of us. We protest forms of cruel nostalgia that tether ghosts to a discarded past within which queer Indigenous life once flourished because we know that we will never get it back and that most of us likely never experienced it in the first place. We long for that kind of love, but we know it is hard to come by. I turn to the poltergeist because I don’t have anywhere else to go. Help me, I could say. But I won’t

#### 2] When you vote me down, you do more than make me sad and potentially damage my ability to continue decolonizing educational spaces, you grant a temporary pause in the haunting of settlers; you do not free them of their crime forever, but temporarily you do, in addition to taking our power.

Tuck and Ree 13[Eve, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations and Coordinator of the Native American Studies Program at the State University of New York at New Paltz. C. Ree holds an MFA from the University of California, Irvine; she works in multiple genres, overlapping public performance, architecture, photography, video, and sculpture. “A Glossary of Haunting.” Handbook of Autoethnography, 2013 Mercy is a temporary pause in haunting, requiring a giver and a receiver. The house goes quiet again, but only for a time. Mercy is a gift only ghosts can grant the living, and a gift ghosts cannot be forced, extorted, seduced, or tricked into giving. Even then, the fantasy of relief is deciduous. The gift is an illusion of relief and closure. Haunting can be deferred, delayed, and disseminated, but with some crimes of humanity—the violence of colonization—there is no putting to rest. Decolonization is not an exorcism of ghosts, nor is it charity, parity, balance, or forgiveness. Mercy is not freeing the settler from his crimes, nor is it therapy for the ghosts. Mercy is the power to give (and take). Mercy is a tactic.4 Mercy is ongoing, temporary, and in constant need of regeneration. Social justice may want to put things to rest, may believe in the repair in reparations, may consider itself an architect or a destination, may believe in utopic building materials which are bound to leak, may even believe in peace. Mercy is not any of that. Mercy is just a reprieve; mercy does not resolve or absolve. Mercy is a sort of power granted over another. Mercy can be merciless.

#### 3] Kati why would you actively chose to conjure ghosts? Aren’t ghosts \*evil\*?

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But why haunting? Haunting is the cost of subjugation. It is the price paid for violence, for genocide. Horror films in the United States have done viewers a disservice in teaching them that heroes are innocent, and that the ghouls are the trespassers. In the context of the settler colonial nation-state, the settler hero has inherited the debts of his forefathers. This is difficult, even annoying to those who just wish to go about their day. Radio ads and quips from public speakers reveal the resentment some settlers hold for tribal communities that assert claims to land and tribal sovereignty. This resentment seems to say, “Aren’t you dead already? Didn’t you die out long ago? You can’t really be an Indian because all of the Indians are dead. Hell, I’m probably more Indian than you are.” Sherman Alexie (1996) warns, “In the Great American Indian novel, when it is finally written, all of the white people will be Indians and all of the Indians will be ghosts” (p. 95). Erasure and defacement concoct ghosts; I don’t want to haunt you, but I will.