INTRODUCTION

I am a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma but with a patchwork mosaic of Native relationality that goes from the place of my birth and childhood in the Navajo Nation in Arizona to the hills of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota and many places in-between and beyond. This identity is not a "world" traveler self as Ortega (following Lugones) calls it (Ortega 2001; Lugones 1989). While the self of this book is not monolithic or nonpluralistic, it is also not an in-between in the sense of "new mestiza" (Anzaldúa 1987), not a "multiplicitious self caught in between the norms and practices of different cultures, classes, races, or 'worlds'" (Ortega 2001, 4). There are often feelings of despair or insecurity in growing up away from one's tribal community, in a big city or on another reservation, as I did, but these feelings and the ambiguities that come with an identity that is separated in some sense from one's tribal home, tribal homeland, organic connection to one's language and ceremonies, and so on do not give rise to a "mestiza consciousness"

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(Anzaldúa 1987, 77). The self of this book is not caught between the city and the reservation or between one tribe or several and the people and the place of his Cherokee citizenship, because these ambiguities might give rise as they have for me to a consciousness of locality, both as a place that one is from but also a place that one can travel to but only through the land. This traveling is not a "world" traveling, at least not in an abstract sense; it is literally and figuratively a moving or traveling on the land and through the land as the very foundation of locality and Indigeneity itself.

Indigeneity has important ties to one's people and one's nation but cannot be reduced to these since Indigeneity, as I try to clarify in this book, is more importantly tied quite literally to land. Native identity insofar as it has a rooted in the land has no access to a single voice of culture or nation. My voice, as an author, is layered by the dynamic experiences of my identity in its locality (through the land). Native-ness, like all identity, is lived (in locality), while the concepts of Native culture and Native nationhood are abstractions that are constructed through delocality; they float free from the land. Native culture and Native nationhood, as concepts that float free from the land, have political and normative features that are not always functions of lived Indigenous experience as rooted and localized in the land. My effort to decolonize or localize my identity back through the land, to work through the layers of my identity as manifestations of coloniality, must follow the physical and conceptual layering of my locality and its geography and history. In other words, I cannot simply jump out of my skin (my locality and its geography and history) to abstractly identify with my Cherokee ancestors and my tribal citizenship. If that is my goal, I can only accomplish that goal in a step-by-step process from

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where I stand and have stood—my current locality that includes all of the dynamic layering of where I am and where I have been. This is why my journey back to the locality of the Cherokee Nation both in Georgia and Oklahoma (where my mother, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather were born) is wrapped in the webs of the Lakota trickster-philosopher Iktomi, and has been wrapped in the wanderings of the Diné trickster-philosopher Ma'ii.

The journey through locality back to one's land is also why this book is in part about Vine Deloria Jr., but not about him in the traditional sense that one writes a book about a philosopher. I write about Deloria in this book in order to follow traces of my relationship with him as a mentor as they lead me toward the Cherokee homeland and however they carry me toward that goal. I met Leksi Deloria in April 2000 at the seventy-fourth annual meeting of the Pacific American Philosophical Association (APA) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I was a new philosophy graduate student, and he was the elder/mentor of the newly formed groups of the American Indian Philosophy Association and the APA Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy. In my first conversation with him, I was talking about John Rawl's *Theory of Justice*, which I had just read in a graduate seminar. He told me that Rawls had it all wrong. He did not understand kinship. The kinship relationship a child has with an elder grandparent is different than the kinship relationship an elder grandparent has with a child. There are different responsibilities one has based on who one is and how one is related, and these change over time, he said. Rawl's veil of ignorance cannot account for this difference, he chimed. This conversation at the APA conference in New Mexico was perhaps more important than any other in setting me on the road across the land to this particular place

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from which I currently am trying to speak and write in this book. Leksi Deloria became the outside adviser for my philosophy dissertation at Indiana University, and I worked with him on the possibilities and methods of Native American philosophy until he passed. This book is an attempt to situate myself in relationship to my elder as an expressive and creative rather than critical act. In order to complete this kinship relationship, I must now give something back from my own thoughts as a continuation of the teachings I received from Leksi.

Locality

Locality is being-from-the-land and knowing-from-the-land. I use "locality" as a term of art in this book as a way to reference the manner in which being, meaning, and knowing are rooted in the land. Locality as a root of being is a part of each of us and speaks through us and from our historical and geographical place in the world regardless of how our identity is constructed in relation to culture or nation. In that way, no one speaks with cultural or national authority even if he or she was born and raised in a vacuum of a single cultural reality. Cultures and nations do not speak, except as through the power of locality—or this book will try to show. No voice can truly be a voice of cultural or national authority—this is a transcendental notion or a notion born out of delocality itself. When my voice, as with any voice, is understood as a voice of cultural or national authority, either I am speaking for a people (I am taking their voice—at least unless I have been given the particular right and responsibility to speak for a people) or I am speaking abstractly about a people (I am removing their agency to speak). In addition, some voices (Indigenous

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ones in particular) are understood as only speaking ethnographically, that is, for their people. This contrast between the universal Euro-American voice and the ethnographical specific and collective Indigenous voice is a double-sided sword of coloniality. The reality is that cultural or national authorities of Native-ness, white-ness, or American-ness can only really be speaking from their own particular experiences of being human in the world, from their own locality in its present place. What we call cultural or national authority in the abstracted sense might arise from a cluster of experiences around a particular locality that is used to construct concepts of culture or nationhood, but to reify the cultural or national authority is to reify culture and nation beyond their social and political underpinnings. What allows us to conceptualize this reification of culture and nationhood is the delocalization of locality, which is the attempted unmooring of the roots of being, meaning, and knowing from out of the land itself, or the attempted breaking apart of being-from-the-land and knowing-from-the-land.

The attempt to turn words into being, to reify what we speak of into essences, is something that Ludwig Wittgenstein famously, or infamously perhaps, claims arises from "the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (1953, §109). Language lays traps for us when we stop using it and start looking back at it from a perspective of delocality. Wittgenstein says these "confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work" (1953, §132). For example, we see that a single word or metaphor is used across multiple contexts and begin to suppose that there must be something underneath that word or metaphor that is also carried across all of these contexts, something like the essence or actual meaning of the word or metaphor. Wittgenstein thinks it is something about language

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itself that sets these delocalized, essence-seeking traps. In the context of locality, this “bewitchment” happens in part with the forgetting of our voice as a manifestation of being-from-the-land. Because language becomes associated with symbols, we forget the originary manifestation of language in the physical voice, in the speaking of words. We forget that our being is not human being in the sense that we understand that term as a delocalized, planetary humanness that floats free from the land. Our being is always first and foremost an originary and continual manifestation out of the land, being-from-the-land. Words, understood in the context of locality, are fundamentally not symbols but physically voiced manifestations of locality. Words are made with breath and have power in that movement of breath. It is through this physical voicing of locality that words are understood, in an Indigenous context, to have power and to arise, in the Diné landscape, for example, from a originary manifestation of language that is literally of the land, which is called *saad la’i*, where the first word and the capacity of speech are originary and continual manifestations of *nílch’i*, which is the air that is in motion or the wind that gives life to the *diyin dine’*é as well as the wind that carries their instruction on how to live to the people.

Locality is more than just the personalized human voicing of meaning. Locality is the way the human voice as the conveyer of human meaning arises from the voice of the land (knowing-from-the-land or meaning-from-the-land)—as in the manner of the Diné landscape whereby the wind gives rise to breath and makes the human voice quite literally an extension of the voice of the land. Locality is a way of conceptualizing place in Indigenous philosophy. It is more than place in the abstract, however. It is place as land. It is more than a concept; it is a materiality, but it is also a reconceptualization of materiality itself

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from the present perspective of delocality. Locality in this way is more than a backdrop or background context for being and knowing. Locality is the originary and continual manifestation of being, of knowing, of meaning. Locality is being-from-the-land, knowing-from-the-land, and meaning-from-the-land. Epistemic locality is more than the manifestations of knowing and meaning through locality because Indigenous locality is operated on by coloniality, which serves to laminate one locality (European) that has been delocalized onto another (Indigenous). The goal of coloniality in the first place is to erase the actual locality through delocality, which is to say the injecting of the unmoored European locality into the Indigenous land, and that can only be accomplished by removing the original Indigenous locality from the land itself. Epistemic locality is a framework of normative epistemology that creates an opening through which Indigenous locality can be freed from the blanket of European delocalized locality that attempts to hide and deny it as the original and true locality of this land. The problem with the colonial attempt to inject itself into the Indigenous land is that one delocalized locality (the abstracted European cultural reality) can never completely replace the locality it is laminated upon. Coloniality can never actually remove locality, so in the process of colonialism through delocality there always is left a remainder of locality—the Indigenous locality that coloniality operates upon through the force of delocality. Indigenous locality can never actually be removed; it can only be obscured. Indigenous being-from-the-land can never be completely erased as long as Indigenous people exist and as long as Indigenous land exists (there exists a remainder of being-in-the-land itself that survives the delocality of coloniality (being-in-the-land). Locality can only be hidden. Epistemic locality is then the framework of normative epistemology that opens a space for

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the original Indigenous locality to become known. This re-revelation of Indigenous being-in-the-land and Indigenous being-from-the-land opens a space for Indigenous liberation from the delocalized blanket of European delocalized locality.

To maintain the false locality of European coloniality in its attempt to obscure the Indigenous locality of the land, the narrative of colonial difference arises as a feature of the structure of coloniality. This narrative serves to create an Indigenous alterity that serves the European delocalized coloniality because it is not an alterity at all but rather a projection of difference from within the isolated (because delocalized) European locality. The narrative of colonial difference functions through and in service of delocality. The narrative creates a mirror of identity that only reflects coloniality (the abstracted European cultural reality). Seen through the reflection of this mirror of coloniality, Indigenous people can only be seen as either anticolonist or protocolonist. Indigenous people are either in binary opposition to the colonist (savage versus civilized) or they are backward versions of the civilized in the process of trying to reach the status of the civilized colonist. Epistemic locality, in the process of reconfiguring the obscured locality, must mark the divide of delocality that is laminated on top of the actual locality. The marking of this divide is, in Walter Mignolo's words, "the fact of colonial difference." He writes, "the limit of Western philosophy is the border where the colonial difference emerges, making visible the variety of local histories that Western thought, from the right and the left, hid and suppressed" (2002, 64). Epistemic locality, the process discussed and used in this book to, in part, mark the fact of colonial difference, makes clear that the relationship between locality and delocality through coloniality is ill-fitted, and not accidently so. The lack of fit of locality

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and delocality is a metaphysical fact, but the lamination of delocality onto locality is a colonial fact. Marking off the areas of ill-fittedness is an essential step in the methodology of epistemic locality. The narrative of colonial difference functions through delocality while the fact of colonial difference as revealed in the ill-fittedness of colonial lamination operates to uncover the locality obscured by coloniality. Epistemic locality is then the process of revealing the obscured Indigenous locality that is continually fracturing and seeping through the colonial mask that attempts to cover it.

The manifestation of the delocalizing force of coloniality in the narrative of colonial difference attempts to silence the Indigenous philosophical voice. Speaking with authority or questioning the authority of a voice in relation to a culture treats cultures as artifacts. But only Indigenous voices and cultures are treated as artifacts under the narrative of colonial difference. Andrea Smith points out that Indigenous voices "can only be read for their truth." We do not ask French philosopher Michel Foucault, she continues, "if he is authentically French" and if his philosophy authentically reflects French culture and nationhood. Smith points out that only Western philosophers "are granted rhetorical agency, analysis, and theory" (Smith 2014, 210). Foucault is understood as capable of speaking *the* truth rather than merely a cultural or national truth that can only be judged as an authentic or inauthentic expression of that culture or nationality. To see how strange this way of understanding Indigenous voices is, look at talk about science. Even though there is a vast diversity in science, no one speaks about different sciences or different cultural or national sciences. Even though the conceptualization of what science is within the field of biology as opposed to theoretical physics, we do not speak of the science of biology as distinct from the science of

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theoretical physics. We do not speak of diversity and authenticity in relation to the broad spectrum of voices of scientists because we understand science as arising out of something real, whereas we understand culture, religion, faith, spirituality (particularly as these relate to Indigenous peoples) as arising out of something fictional. One of the objects of this book is to reconfigure through locality the way we talk about is real and is fictional and so, by extension, how we talk about Indian voices and scientific voices as well.

Confusion regarding the distinction between the narrative of colonial difference and the fact of colonial difference through locality mires much of the efforts to decolonize academia, including Andrea Smith's controversial representation of herself as Cherokee. The result is that many efforts to decolonize through the rejection of the narrative of colonial difference only serve to further reify this narrative because the rejection is ultimately framed within that narrative because it does not recognize the fact of colonial difference through locality. Smith, in critiquing the manner in which Indigenous voices are only read for authenticity under the narrative of colonial difference, describes this containment of Indigenous truth as being "contained in their bodies." Given the particular operations of the narrative of colonial difference to create a mere material facticity for Indigenous peoples, it seems reasonable to disembody Indigenous peoples and reality as a rejection of the narrative of colonial difference. However, this obfuscates the manner in which delocality is maintained and so obfuscates the coloniality of the critique itself. While Smith is able to challenge the containment of Indigenous truth in Indigenous bodies, she is not able to see that a disembodied Indigeneity is a further operation of the narrative of colonial difference, which in this case serves to remove the being-in-kinship as

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an essential feature of Indigeneity in the context of locality. As Carol Cornsilk points out in the context of Smith's claims to be Cherokee, "Cherokee people . . . have always recognized their tribal members by their kinship" ("Cherokee Women" 2015). Kinship as understood in the framework of being-in-kinship is a function of locality and extension of the meaning of being-from-the-land. Marking the fact of colonial difference through locality can remove kinship from delocality and the narrative of colonial difference and reframe kinship as a function of being-from-the-land.

To break free of the delocal and colonial containment of Indigenous voices as authentic ethnography, I choose to reflect on those Native voices that are most contained in this way. I choose to listen to the words of Black Elk, Lame Deer, Chief Seattle, and others exactly because questions have been raised as to the authenticity of these words and their speakers. I choose to not allow the space for the authenticity of their words to be questioned. I choose to close that space in this text through a kind of extension of Audra Simpson's ethnographic refusal (2014). I am refusing to allow the space for the question whether these are authentic Indigenous words to even be asked. This is a form of ethnographic refusal because what it is refusing is ethnographic containment: Indigenous voices only have meaning as a form of ethnography, which would mean that the truth or value of their words is determined by the ethnographic authenticity of their words rather than truth or value in a broader sense. Perhaps only through this form of ethnographic refusal can the meaning of the words spoken by these Native thinkers be revealed in their locality.

Epistemic locality, as a process that reveals locality and coloniality as a function of delocality, is exceedingly challenging because of the fundamental normalization of delocality in Western language and thought. The

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semantics of delocality articulates any expression of locality through the lens of the narrative of colonial difference and the general delocalized structures of meaning. Thus, in what appears to be the normal understanding of a word, but is truly a function of the semantics of delocality, actual expressions of locality appear meaningless or nonsensical. This is because expressions of locality are almost always interpreted under the semantics of delocality as a generality floating free from the land, perhaps even a universal or an essence. Thus, insofar as the semantics of delocality frame the meaning of any word, there will always be a lack of clarity to any expression of locality. This is why I understand Western epistemology, in my essay "What Coyote and Thales Can Teach Us: An Outline of American Indian Epistemology," as an analogy to Coyote's trickster way of thinking and being. Just as Thales falls in a hole because he is not connected to the land upon which he is walking and instead is trying to grasp the nature of the stars in the abstract, so Coyote often forgets the locality of his relationships so that he can achieve an immediate and often selfish or petty end. Trickster methodology, as exemplified by Coyote, Jisdu (the Cherokee Rabbit Trickster), Raven, Iktomi (the Lakota Spider Trickster), and many other Indigenous tricksters, is a process that is much more than the naive reaching beyond locality as exemplified by Thales. Indigenous tricksters teach their relatives how not to act like Thales. Indigenous tricksters teach their relatives about the contours of locality and so help them put their feet back on the ground so that they do not continue to fall into the holes. Indigenous tricksters walk both sides of locality and delocality. Through humorous and creative failings Indigenous tricksters, like Coyote, Jisdu, Raven, and Iktomi, are able to deconstruct the epistemology and ontology of delocality from the inside. More simply, a trickster like Iktomi can lead you to spin and wrap yourself

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in the same webs that he spins around himself. As the Spider Trickster, however, he can do this in such a way that he will show you how you wrapped this web around yourself in the first place. This creates the space for you to be able to see how to get out of the web of your own making. In other words, the Spider Trickster's methodology is one of epistemic locality. Iktomi can mark off the fact of colonial difference in such a way that those who he works his trickster medicine upon are able to see the conflict between locality and delocality in a useful and meaningful way.

Iktomi brings a level of irony and frivolity that is often unwelcomed in an academic text though. Part of the reason that these acts of "play" are off limits in "serious" texts is that in "serious" texts the words themselves are supposed to convey a delocalized generic meaning, perhaps even universal meaning or essence. Indigenous philosophy, in my version, rejects this sense of meaning and seriousness of texts because meaning in locality is originary, is continually shaped by being-in-the-land and being-from-the-land. Meaning does not happen in disembodied, delocalized texts. Meaning is active and dynamic and carries all of the layers of the epistemic and ontological kinship of people and the land. Humor is perhaps the most powerful in creating and maintaining kinship, which means it is more important perhaps that the so-called "serious" language required in academic texts. Iktomi's stories are particularly poignant in this regard as they do not contain meaning in a mere delocalized arraignment of symbols. It is the act of being drawn into or putting myself into Iktomi's place—his attempts to find meaning—that allows me to create an intimate knowing kinship relationship to Iktomi and his stories. Seeing myself as Iktomi in his stories and in attempts to find meaning in my own life opens up a space for me to find the meaning that he could not as I am able to see in a deconstructive and first-personal

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way just what I/Iktomi have been missing in our search for meaning and understanding.

In a serious academic text, language must always be declarative and proclamatory. It must always proceed forward and directly to what we call truth and knowledge. Language in the trickster modality is seen, then, as frivolous and nonproductive because it moves backward and in circles in order to create a space for liberation, for creating new and maintaining or completing existing kinship relationships rather than simply spinning more webs around oneself and further removing oneself from the possibility of kinship. The framing of the academic enterprise within the boundaries of what can be taken seriously helps to maintain the existing, normative knowledge paradigms, which serves to block the entrance of decolonial philosophy from the academic enterprise. Often the criticism that one is not speaking seriously enough is another way of saying that one is not taking seriously the existing norms of what counts for knowledge and what counts as a method for producing such knowledge. The limiting of academic language to serious declarative proclamations is one way of removing the possibility of reflecting critically on the structures of truth and knowledge such declarative statements portend. What the trickster modality does that irritates the disciplinary structures of existing knowledge paradigms is to come to knowledge more freely, spontaneously, and creatively. Iktomi often creates knowledge unwittingly through his attempts to trick his relatives. This way of creating knowledge undermines the declarative power of an individual statement since Iktomi can create knowledge without even the intention to do so, much less a declarative and willful statement to that effect. The trickster modality is a real power and is a manifesting of knowing and meaning out of the land. The trickster

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modality is something that is often attempted for the sake of irony by what might be called hipsters, Bohemians, alternatives, or the like, but this modality is a manifestation of something real and powerful in Indigenous cultural epistemologies and so cannot be truly imitated. Tricksters are capable, in Indigenous story and history, of expressing the limits of existing knowledge paradigms and exposing the limits of those paradigms through creative and playful manifestations of knowing and meaning in locality. In this way, the trickster modality can undercut the coloniality and guardianship of Western academic philosophy as well as expose Western philosophy to itself. A trickster modality might reveal, for example, the contradiction in the story of Western philosophy: a tradition that now espouses only using written declarative statements when one of its supposed founders (Plato) writes in dialogue for the express purpose of never saying anything declarative and his most famous student (Aristotle) never wrote anything that we know of—his writings are nothing more than students' notes from his lectures.

Indigenous philosophizing is much more than this trickster methodology. The active relational dynamic of Indigenous language and knowledge transforms what ordinarily goes by the noun "philosophy" in English into "philosophizing" in an Indigenous context. Indigenizing philosophy is then, in part, making it more active and dynamic. Indigenous philosophizing is a verb, a kind of movement and action that is creative and originary. In the context of Indigenous decolonial philosophizing, the context of this book, this philosophizing movement is a movement back to the land, regrounding our language, being, knowing, meaning, and so on back in the land. This movement back to the land is not merely material as it is prematerial, reconfiguring our concepts and ways of thinking and speaking out of the land, out of locality,

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including our Westernized concept of land itself as well as materiality itself. The prematerial movement back to the land is required in order to reconceptualize the way we think about materially being of the land. Indigenous philosophizing, in this specific decolonial sense as well as in the broader sense in which philosophizing has existed in cultures of Indigenous peoples since time immemorial, manifests creative and original, sometimes even playful, reflective expressions of knowledge. One can see the creative and often playful expressions of knowledge in both Indigenous trickster stories as well as Indigenous stories of creation. Understanding philosophy as an original and creative act rather than as an analysis of texts or ideas that are delocalized from the originary creative act presents significant challenges for Western philosophy and Western academia. Western philosophy has become centered on the analysis and interpretation of ideas, texts, sometimes even the thinkers and the writers themselves. Whether the analysis is of texts, the thinkers who produce those texts, or some combination of the two, the analysis is delocalized and distant. There is no focus on creative and original reflections. The absence of a focus on original reflective thought is in part a result of the delocalizing of philosophical reflection—a fact that also serves to maintain the colonial structure of philosophical reflection. Adding to the structural pressure to maintain the colonizing, delocal framework of Western philosophy is the pressure to produce constant philosophical commodities as the practice of philosophy becomes ever more institutionalized within a capitalistic economy.

Beyond the commercial and colonial context of the production of philosophical texts that maintains a model of standardization and a limit or containment of Indigenous philosophy, the originary or creative aspects of the production of philosophy texts is almost always

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limited to the thinker herself and the idea that originally produced philosophical ideas might have some originary and creative aspects—although it is quite common to believe that even originally produced philosophical ideas are socially or historically constructed apart from the thinker herself. Few have seen the study of philosophical ideas, texts, and the philosophers who produce them as an originary and creative relationship. One exception is Gilles Deleuze, whose single manuscript studies of Hume, Kant, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Leibniz, and Foucault are the opposite of what is expected in a twentieth-century study of a philosopher's ideas. Not quite in the context of the colonial containment of Indigenous philosophy, but in the general context of the history of philosophy in the Western academy, he sees this history as playing a "repressor's role" (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, 13). (Peter K. J. Park's *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism and the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1831* shows more clearly than ever the manner in which the creation and maintenance of the Eurocentric philosophical canon is a product of racism.) This most general containment of thought within Western philosophy that requires the reading of "Plato, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger, and so-and-so's book about them" creates "a formidable school of intimidation which manufactures specialists in thought—but which also makes those who stay outside conform all the more to this specialism which they despise" (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, 13). Deleuze saw the limitation of studying these Western thinkers and all of the texts written about them that try to articulate their thought abstractly and delocally (or apart from any relationship with the reader-thinker) as a historical shaping of "an image of thought called philosophy" that "effectively stops people from thinking" (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, 13).

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This work does not follow Deleuze with any particular effort. It is important from the perspective of locality to reject the transcendent, or for Deleuze "transcendent organization" that "has always been the disease of the West" that "carries of forms and strips them of their indications of speed, which dissolve subject and extract their hecceities, nothing left but longitudes and latitudes" (1987. 94). And it is also true that understanding the locality of the land first requires an understanding of immanence or ground itself that does not already presuppose a concept of locality or materiality that is abstract and transcendental. The concept of locality itself must be sought as the ground of thought but also must be approached as thought or in thought itself. The creativity of thought is what allows it to approach the immanent ground of itself, not as a transcendent realm of knowledge or being but as the ground itself or the land itself in a prematerial sense. The earth or the land then becomes both the ground and the limit of thought and of being. The land or the earth cannot be thought of just as the planet or the human being cannot be thought of except through the imitating forms of delocalized thought in which what is thought is an imitation earth or human being. Indigenous philosophizing approaches the immanent ground of thought and being through creativity, which itself is manifest most clearly in the creating of new relationships or kinships. Indigenous philosophizing, as I express it in this text, studies the work of Vine Deloria Jr., Lakota philosophy, and the trickster methodologies of Iktomi through the methodological approaching of the locality of Deloria, Black Elk, Lakota philosophy, and Iktomi as a creative expression of new intimate knowing kinship relationships, relationships that produced (and simultaneously remade) this text. The Iktomi trickster modality also creates a capacity in the context of locality to approach locality from the inside out or from the

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trickster point of view where Iktomi can approach but also express the ground and limit of knowing and being through the creative and playing manifestations of knowing and being in locality.

This text focuses on Indigenizing philosophizing through epistemic locality. It reflects philosophically in a way that engages and critiques the delocalized epistemological structure of Western philosophy in both history and current practice and in the context of broader Indigenous philosophical practices. Some common Indigenous philosophical themes are these:

- Indigenous philosophizing works with and tells stories. See, for example, Shawn Wilson's *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods.*
- Indigenous philosophizing is original, innovative, creative, and active. Even basic human creation and creativity are on a continuum with creation and creativity on the most cosmic levels. Creation and Creator are power, movement, and energy in itself. See, for example, Gregory Cajete's *Native Science: The Natural Laws of Interdependence.*
- Indigenous philosophizing sees relationships as ontologically primary. One might see the nonbinary dualism of Indigenous logic as arising from the primacy of relationality.
- Indigenous philosophizing shows but does not present arguments *per se.* It opens up a space for readers/listeners to find meaning and understanding but does make or declare that meaning for them.
- Indigenous philosophizing respects the self-determination of all other living creatures and seeks to develop, in Jack Forbes's words,

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"an attitude of profound respect for individuality and right to self-realization of all living creatures" (1998, 12).

- Indigenous philosophizing reads and speaks language, even the English language, in the manner of Indigenous languages: dynamic, multiple layers of meaning for every word. Action, process, and transformation shape the layers of meaning in any given word.
- Indigenous philosophizing focuses on meaning and understanding (which are relational and dynamic) rather than truth or proof (which is static and delocalized).
- Indigenous philosophizing focuses on all aspects of human understanding through a process of circularity. See, for example, the circle of the four directions of being in Black Elk (the heart, mind, body, and spirit), where understanding is both a momentary aspect of this circle and a never-ending movement of the circle itself.
- Indigenous philosophizing adapts stories and lessons to the hearer. It purposefully transforms ideas into those that can best be understood and most easily related to by the hearer. See, for example, Black Elk's stories and lessons to John Neihardt (Neihardt 1932), the story told to James Walker that was deliberately altered when told to Walker (Jahner 1983, 20), the White Buffalo Calf Woman story that was altered when told to the Jesuit missionary Eugene Buechel (Buechel 1978, 238–241), among countless others.

In addition to incorporating these Indigenous philosophical practices in the context of epistemic locality, this work is a work of Indigenous decolonial philosophy, which means that it will not be distracted by a

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need to analyze or contextualize (even beyond the limits of such operations in the context of epistemic locality) just for its own sake. Indigenous decolonial philosophy is always directed and focused on the creation of philosophical tools for Indigenous liberation. It is from this place of Indigenous decolonial philosophy through epistemic locality that I wish to undertake creative and originary reflections on particular threads of Western thought and culture regarding the human relationship to the environment and the manner in which morality is constructed apart from the land in order to being the work of marking of morality from land that is a function of the fact of colonial difference. The layering of European delocality onto Indigenous locality obscures the ontological and epistemic relationship between morality and the land that arises in locality. The obscuring of locality not only leads to particular patterns of delocalized reflection that create Iktomi-like webs of confusion and illusion, classic trickster circles that turn in on themselves, but also to a disruption of earth morality, the creating and maintaining of kinship relations with and through the land or the morality of locality. These circles create a delocalized and imitation framework of reflection that results in what appears to be intractable ethical and environmental problems. Seen through an Iktomi modality, these intractable problems that limit reflection about morality and the environment are self-created through illusions of delocality. Confusions regarding locality or illusions of delocality give rise to the dualistic binaries of real/fictional, individual/collective. The process of untangling these Iktomi-like webs is not easy, particularly if attempted from inside of the web-making process. The misstep that often leads the internal attempt into its own entanglement is not recognizing the point at which locality becomes delocality or the context of coloniality, the point that the fact of colonial

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difference becomes the narrative of colonial difference. Iktomi's trickster methodology can reveal how these seemingly intractable problems come to be in the first place in the context of approaching locality and the fact of colonial difference. Iktomi can reveal how the webs of binary thinking that entangle the discussions of intrinsic/instrumental value, anthropocentrism/nonanthropocentrism, moral realism/moral fictionalism, and natural/unnatural always arise from a forked path and a first choice between locality and delocality. Iktomi can show us the way back to that choice and that if we take a different path, the path to locality, the questions posed and the answers given regarding the human relationship to nonhumans are manifestly different and avoid these binary entanglements.

The patterns of delocalized thinking that arise in the context of the Western reflections on the relationship of humans to the land lead to these illusory binary entanglements: intrinsic/instrumental value, anthropocentrism/nonanthropocentrism, moral realism/moral fictionalism, and natural/unnatural. The dichotomy between what is real and what is fictional in the particular form of the opposition between moral realism and moral fictionalism arises out of delocality. Some write, as Joshua Green did in his work on moral realism, that moral realism sets the stage for a great deal of intolerance and so social and human ills. He suggests that a great deal of present and historical persecution and general human evils is founded on the idea that the moral beliefs of one's community, sect, self, or nation are as real and immutable as any scientific fact. He suggests that the rejection of moral realism and the taking up of a moral fictionalist position will result in more tolerance, less persecution, and fewer human evils (Green 2002). This appears to be false. Moral fictionalism seems to lead to the same sorts of ills, leaving

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us spun once again in a trickster web of our own making. The problem appears not to be moral realism or moral fictionalism but rather the way we think about reality apart from locality that leads us down a binary path between moral realism and moral fictionalism.

Another trickster entanglement that arises from delocality is found in the opposing dualism of anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric perspectives in ethics. Western environmental ethics arises through the attempt to deliberate morally using a nonanthropocentric perspective. Just like the discussion over the binary between moral realism and moral fictionalism, critics begin to raise problems with the possibility of deliberating nonanthropocentrically. The result is that moral deliberation pulls back to the pole of the anthropocentric perspective, resulting in moral deliberation only about humans, which reveals the self-centered core of human reason regarding reflection on the value of nonhumans.

Indigenous philosophizing through locality through a trickster modality will bring to light some important features of these ways of thinking about value and human perspective (about intrinsic versus instrumental value and anthropocentric versus nonanthropocentric perspective) that can be instructive in untangling from the delocalized thinking that gives rise to these binary entanglements in the first place. The creative and originary reflections of epistemic locality and the playful practices of the trickster modality can destabilize the binary entanglements of delocalized thinking and open a space for creating new ideas/relationships even without the removal of the delocalized framework in total. We can, through the injection of some locality back into the delocalized and colonialized framework, see the moral status of and our moral obligation to nonhumans realistically and nonanthropocentrically. This new way of seeing through the injection of locality can be useful even

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to Western philosophers who are immersed in the naturalized colonial attitude of delocality. Even a bit of locality injected into the conversation regarding morality and the land can create new ideas/relationships. It can begin to chip away at the naturalness of the colonial attitude of delocality. Through the perspective of locality, an understanding of morality and the land can be more comprehensive in the sense of the possibility of a general moral theory that is nonanthropocentric from the start and not an extension of a theory that primarily applies to humans, and more plausible in the sense that it does not require Western thinkers to accept the view that the nonhuman environment has intrinsic value. I do not intend to actually articulate any kind of Western moral theory in this text because, as will become clear, the basic framework of moral theorizing in Western philosophy is delocalized. As a decolonial philosophy text about moral locality in the land, I hope to provide, at minimum, a context for injecting locality into the epistemic and moral practices of Western environmental theorizing. Instead of providing just another delocalized Western environmental ethics, this trickster methodology opens a space for injecting bits of locality into the delocalized context of Western environmental ethics following the model of Iktomi where the injected locality provides a way of unseeing the naturalness of delocality but also of seeing how it becomes seen as natural in the first place. Some of these injected bits of locality are as follows:

- In locality, moral realism and moral fictionalism are not extremes and both true.
- In locality, nonanthropocentric moral theorizing does not require the claim that nonhumans have intrinsic value.

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- In locality, morality can be understood as a feature of relationships rather than as founded on the value of things.
- In locality, the idea that morality is natural can be understood as an extension of the idea that morality is a feature of relationships rather than the value of things.

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