

# Decolonized Research-Storying: Bringing Indigenous Ontologies and Care into the Practices of Research Writing

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## Abstract

In this chapter we want to bring Indigenous ontologies and ways of knowing into the practices of decolonized research-storying. One implication about that is bringing Eana, Earth in North Sámi, as a narrator into the text. This text is a collaborative endeavour, where we write about and with our encountering and living with/in Indigenous societies and ontologies. Care becomes present both in creating space for Indigenous ontologies in research-storying and in sharing and inviting other researchers to share their stories of friction in order to make the ontological change more likely to happen.

## Keywords

research-storying – decolonizing academia – Indigenous ontologies – non-human – care

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Our new storytellers have a big job. They must understand their sacred place and they must also understand the new language and use it to express their stories without losing the thoughts and images that are culturally unique to them. This new storyteller must also be a translator of the old way, so that it will not be lost to a new generation. And all of this must be done on paper, for that is the new way[i].

MARIA CAMPBELL, CREE MÉTIS (1985)

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## 1 Introduction: Writing with Eana

Solveig Joks, Liv Østmo (both Sámi) and John Law (2020, 316) end their article on verbing the Sámi concept *meahcci* with Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's words:

‘I have no beginning, no end, and there is also no beginning, no end in the work I do’ (Helander & Kailo 1998, 87). Quite so. In this way of thinking we are where we are, we do what we can do, we attend to it, and we try to care for it. No beginning, no end.

That's how we think too. This chapter is not a final end product of a collaborative endeavour but is more written on the path of searching other ways to write and of pondering over questions on how to make Indigenous ontologies present in research writing and whether there is space for that in academia. And how frustrated we sometimes become with academic writing standards. With those questions we write. The question about how to be truthful to the Indigenous ontologies (as we have learned to know them) also in the writing itself comes back time and again. Is it possible at all? To change the academic writing implies addressing what can be regarded as an academic text: to hear the Earth, to feel the Moon, to think like the forest, and to write with these ontologically different epistemologies, where do the non-words<sup>1</sup> get translated into words in our writing process? To feel the gratitude, to struggle with the academic writing practices? ‘We do what we can do, we attend to it, and we try to care for it’. Yes, there we still are, there in the middle of that path. There we, four academics, entangled in different ways with Indigenous studies and ontologies, write again and again. While doing so we are happy to follow e.g. Shawn Wilson (2009), who writes evocatively with and about multiple relationalities, and Robin Wall Kimmerer (2020), who listens to and writes with plants, while connecting their knowledge with scientific and Indigenous knowledge. Our questions in this chapter move freely from academic writing to sacredness and reciprocity, as well as connectedness with the Moon.

### 1.1 *Inviting Eana to Become the Narrator in Our Text*

While wanting to put Indigenous ontologies of understanding non-humans as actors, care-takers, and life-givers to work both in our thinking and writing practices, we undertake this writing as a joint process involving four storytellers: two Indigenous and two non-Indigenous academics, who met through the network of Nordic Indigenous methodologies. In addition, we invite *Eana*, the Earth in North Sámi, as the narrator in the text: We bring *Eana* into the text, both to honour her importance as the creator of the world and to trust her being here for guiding and participating in our sharing of experiences.

Many Indigenous teachers (see e.g. Valkeapää 2001) tell us that Earth comforts us in the moments of sorrow and mourning and advises us when we are faced with difficult decisions. In Wixárika communities, on the Western Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico, where Lea has collaborated for years, the deified ancestors are present in everyday life and they comfort humans in the moments of sorrow, and they advise people in making decisions. People ask for their opinion when they need to make an important decision in their lives, for example the choice of a career. They can read, listen to music and see videos, so people sometimes leave letters and virtual files for them in sacred places (Hirvonen-Nurmi et al. 2018). In this chapter we think that Eana sees and follows what we (the authors of this chapter, but also other Earth beings) do and that's why she is able to narrate what happens.

In North Sámi, Eana refers to the land, the planet, the globe and even the soil. Eana is also closely connected with the Sámi word for mother, Eadni. In Indigenous languages, she has many names, including Tatei Yurianaka – a deified ancestor associated with the Earth and subterranean waters amongst the Wixaritari; or, as the Kogui call her, Jaba Sénenuang, the essence or energy from which the entire world was created. In this piece, we refer to her as Eana, in order for her to be present as a locally embedded, understood and worded figure, as it is here in Sápmi where we write this. We four academic scholars imagine what Eana could be 'thinking' or 'speaking', recognizing (and reminding the reader) that these notions of thinking and speaking are highly anthropocentric in themselves.

All four authors here are differently and partially connected to Indigenous spaces/places and their ontologies. These positions help us to understand Earth as our ancestor: created before us, giving us all we need, being our common ground and always there, seeing everything, loving and caring. And like many Indigenous writers and thinkers, we can see ourselves in other entities (see e.g. Kealiikanakaoleohaililani & Giardina 2016), as now in Eana, part of her. Eana knows, sees, listens, tastes, even reads theory, and as our collaborator, makes space to think how she would respond to all of this. Thus, we have asked her to be a narrator with us, not as if we were putting words into her mouth, but as we love her and feel her power in us and with us during the process of thinking and writing. We feel her support and imagine (that is, write ourselves) her loving and caring words.

## 1.2 *Eana Reaching out a Hand; An Invitation to the Reader (19 June 2018)*

Eana, or, the narrator: You, who write and/or read this, are all earthlings, Earth beings, people living on me – connected in ways that are partly unknown even to you. Not only humans are earthlings; even texts need to

be considered as contributing to the makings of world practices. We also know that readers read their own locally and culturally embedded stories into a text. A text is given to others to explore, to inspire other stories, and for you, the reader, to become a skilled storyteller in worlding practices of your own.

We are many storytellers here, these four women and me. We are a multitude. All the millions of microbiotas that inhabit their bodies together with all the voices that whisper in their ears and that write in and through them: their ancestors, their teachers, their contemporaries.

They have some work to do. They have stories to tell and stories to share, but they want to be cautious. They want to write carefully. They know they have to breathe and linger. They know they need to take their time, and to listen to their abilities to respond to the assemblage of texts and lives. These cannot be rushed or forced. They reach out their hands to the reader and they invite the reader in. They are thinking and writing of what it means to do research, to write in the world, to walk on my skin, my surface, to encounter each other and the more-than-human in and around us. They do not yet know where this is going to take them – let alone you, the reader.

Dear reader, do you follow? Will you hold on to my hand? I will take you to different places. I will offer you the chance to meet specific stories and their people in order to elaborate on these claims. I promise that I will mobilize the care I have always had, and which is enacted in responsible Indigenous research practices in order to keep you as safe as I possibly can.

## 2 Responding to the Indigenous Ways of knowing

Marisol de la Cadena (2015), who writes about the Andean peoples, is amongst those (others being, for instance, Blaser 2009; Kramvig & Flemmen 2018; Verran 2013) who suggest that ‘culture’ is an insufficient notion to understand current Indigenous claims of recognition. Indigenous movements and scholars often propose that we should write about knowledge practices, ontologies, instead of ‘culture’. These practices and ontologies conjure non-humans as actors even in the political arena (de la Cadena 2010, 334). For example, the Wixaritari (sing. Wixárika) people include divine ancestors in their decision-making structures and practices (Kantonen & Kantonen 2017; Liffman 2011, 10).

Indigenous research methodologies are, in addition to many social and political concerns, concerned with avoiding redoing or re-evoking colonial

memories of scientific ignorance, while responding to the need for stories that reflect Indigenous knowledge and ways to represent it (Chilisa 2012; Kovach 2009; Kuokkanen 2010; Smith 1999/2012; Speed 2015). The notion of scientific ignorance reminds us that we still need to (re)consider how we engage with Indigenous communities and how we can improve our own thinking about how Indigenous ways of knowing can be respected and cared for by scholars. We, the authors of this chapter, are inspired by engaging in decolonized research-storying, with which we mean recognizing and bringing into the centre the Indigenous ontologies which have been colonized as well during the long period of colonizing the lands and the ways of life. It is a wish to experiment with more inclusive ways of research writing whilst engaging with Indigenous ontologies and methodologies and pondering with and about the possibilities of writing at the academy. In that sense this can also be seen as a soft resistance and rebellion against academically rigid conventional ways of thinking and writing, with which we struggle. In academia, we are often forced to write in a certain language, style and format. We may ourselves be used to certain ways of representing knowledge or arguments, but if we take both Indigenous storytelling practices and non-human entities seriously in academic writing, we can also help to undo the injustices of intellectual colonialism. Indigenous storytelling does not always go directly to the point, nor does the main message in decolonized research-storying need to be revealed outright.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in this chapter, and as the starting quote suggests, we try to interweave the Indigenous way with the (Western) academic way and make the latter more open to the different themes and writing styles – connected to different ontologies – that arise.

Decolonized research-storying means for us truly making space for Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and values while taking care of the vulnerability of those who are still not getting due recognition by mainstream societies. Even though the different ontologies and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples are often represented in academic texts and research reports, the way of knowing, coming to know and disseminating the knowledge may still get lost in the normalized formats and criteria of academia. We see that this loss keeps Indigenous ontologies vulnerable, as they never become accepted as such, but only through academic ‘polishing’ and conceptualizing. So, in this joint piece, not only do we discuss methods and methodologies, but we do so whilst living with and through Indigenous ontologies, values and practices, which are also becoming ours. By ‘ours’ we mean that we have needed much time and energy to struggle with theoretical concepts, methodological tools and our colonized minds embodied deep in us in order to be able to engage with, learn from and find the courage within ourselves to give space to indigenous ontologies and

to write with and through them. For us, e.g. the Moon and the Earth are real entities. They act in and affect our lives in multiple ways. Indigenous ontologies have changed our ways of seeing and understanding the world and life itself, thus also our academic lives and ways of writing. Here we lean on Rauna Kuokkanen (2006):

[N]ot a mere ‘translation’ of indigenous epistemologies into the language of Western theories, but it requires that we take seriously understandings and theorizing of the world by indigenous societies which may not necessarily be articulated in ways or forms that are conventionally considered as ‘theory’ of ‘philosophy’. (253)

Here we could also add the word and practice of ‘methodology’. Also, according to Campbell (1985), the new generations of writers must learn how to move in-between languages and cultures, and use ‘the new language’ to negotiate other codes that can carry the sacredness of Indigenous stories.

We truly think that the complicated nature and subsequent challenges of the encounters between Indigenous societies and academia need to be taken more seriously. We regard revisiting ontologies of the specific world of the people, land and practices also helpful in order to formulate the claim of self-determination better (see e.g. Smith 1999/2012). Rethinking what an academic text is and can be is part of indigenizing the academy. Doing that though has not been at all easy and smooth, but on the way we have met different tensions, which we also write about.

Care, then, becomes present, and makes us careful with what and how we (can) write. How do we care for the different ontologies and how does our writing change when those ontologies become true and real for us? If and when a researcher who wrote with Christian ontology, on or with God, would not be seen as a serious academic, how does it then become possible to write with an ontology and world, where Earth, Moon and Sun become acting and powerful entities – as they actually always already were – and life-giving and life-enabling elements? Can a serious academic retain credibility if deciding to see these as actors, and even care for them? Even hear them speak?

For Joan Tronto (1993) care includes everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair “our world” so that we can live in it as well as possible. “The world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environments; all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining we” (Tronto 1993, 103). Care can therefore be connected to the engagement with Indigenous worlds and it emerges already early on in the process of research. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) contests the view that care is something only humans do and argues for

extending the consideration of agencies and communities that compose the living web of care also to non-humans. This extension can start simply by considering how care circulates in the natural world. Aryn Martin, Natasha Myers, and Ana Viseu (2015) conclude that care is multifaceted and contextual, and they suggest a set of different political commitments, ethics and forms of intervention. Hence “there can be no singular vision of what care is or what it might become” (Martin et al. 2015, 634).

This gift of interconnectedness urges academics to address what Donna Haraway (2016) calls the response-ability needed in living on a damaged planet. Haraway tells us that projects that enact multiple worldings<sup>3</sup> are projects committed to “becoming involved in one another’s lives” (Haraway 2016, 71). The undeniable interconnectivity in which we are embedded calls for other kinds of stories that also include the voices of non-humans, here thus also Earth, Eana. Often, there is not much space left for non-human entities in the language-based scientific texts, even though their existence were described or analysed.

Isabelle Stengers (2005) writes about the ecology of practices, encouraging us to be diplomatic in our collaborations and to recognize our diverging attachments and belongings. When we come together, we always come from somewhere and we need to be able to bring something back to the communities that we belong to and go back to. Everybody brings back a slightly different story than the others (Stengers 2005).

We authors – the four of us – each come from different intellectual backgrounds: arts, education, environmental sciences, development studies, and science and technology studies, all within which we have addressed Indigenous issues and methodologies in and through our own research. Each one of us is also differently and partially connected to Indigenous spaces/places and their ontologies. We have long been interested in research methods that challenge the traditional<sup>4</sup> Western scientific method, as well as ways of knowing and representing. We see that different, including Western, theories and methodologies challenging dichotomic understandings, can be seen as further strengthening of Indigenous ontologies and methodologies, emphasizing the locally embedded stories, materially and discursively entangled practices, and different categorizations (even non-categorization, but rather seeing the relational and interconnected nature) of values. Kuokkanen (2009, 39–42) also refers to Derrida’s conceptual practice of deconstruction, as well as postmodernist and feminist critiques when stating that “[b]ringing Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, philosophies and ways of thinking into the academic world and research does not mean abandoning all the Western, European or mainstream theories or analytical models” (Kuokkanen 2009,

38–39, translation by HG). Similarly, she also states that Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and ways of thinking should not only “get applied into Western theories or categorized through Western categories. That kind of application only breaks the holisticness and structure of Indigenous methodologies (Kuokkanen 2009, 38, translation by HG). Thus, we see Indigenous ontologies and Western critical theories working well together in challenging traditional Western<sup>5</sup> power/knowledge systems as well as institutional and disciplinary habits.

Indigenous methodologies (e.g. Battiste 2017; Kuokkanen 2010; Porsanger 2004; Bishop 1996; Seurujärvi-Kari 2012; Smith 1999/2012) have the potential to enrich all our disciplinary fields (and even entire university programmes and curricula) in a multitude of ways, allowing for an expansion and inclusion into academia of other worldviews, wordings, and ways of knowing differently. We think that some of the scientific practices can be both undone and/or done differently. This, in turn, requires creating new and alternative spaces to the knowing and writing practices.

### 2.1 *The Slippery Way of Decolonizing Writing in Practice*

The challenge lies in embarking on a practice of recognition of the reality that incorporates the multiple Indigenous practices – and the ontologies they come with – as the starting point. In order to write, the realness of the world of the writer – and those worlds that the writer tries to write into being – rests on the support of certain concepts and theories that support the possibility for otherness to become present. This can accomplish a struggle with words, authorities, structures, norms, and regulations – a need to attend to the working of the language and the need to tell new stories. We use words to tell stories, but they do not always succeed in depicting that which we yearn to say. In many cases this requires translation between different vocabularies and languages, which are not directly translatable, as they include the different knowledge systems. Yet, to make ourselves understood, we also need to recognize the world as messy and vague (Law 2006) and thus search for ways in which the multiplicities can be made present. Writing as a decolonizing practice can thus become messy and slippery.

Helen Verran (2018, 8) has commented upon the respect for and struggle with translation in the following way:

I recognize that such respect comes of struggle, with and through words, to partially inhabit the particular worlds that others' languages help to conjure up as 'experienced here-and-nows'. The subtleties of others' experienced worlds remain elusive when one trips over word.



We need to slow down in order to recognize that the worlds of others are by no means easily translated by the academic scholar, Indigenous or not (see also Guttorm 2014; Kantonen & Kantonen 2019). Verran (2013, 2018) argues that we need to attend to moments of epistemic disconcertment in order to avoid inflicting epistemic harm through epistemic ignorance. Similarly, Kuokkanen (2010) argues that academics have too often neglected Indigenous epistemic practices and should start attending to ‘doing their homework’.

Texts like the one we are co-writing here can thus be regarded as homework for readers, as it involves puzzling about the particularities and peculiarities of epistemic practices that bring forth relevant historical, cultural, political, social, or even linguistic structures and meanings. This homework takes us to places where we can continue asking questions about epistemic injustice (Santos 2007) concerning ontologies and offer the reader the opportunity to imagine possibilities for decolonizing research and writing. Russell Bishop (1996, cited in Porsanger 2004) emphasizes that this relationship between the reader and the writer must be interconnected and reciprocal, as in “a family”. We see this applicable also to the style of writing academic texts. A decolonized and decolonizing writing practice can cross the borders between different writing and representational styles and categories, like e.g. storytelling and academic writing (see also Chapter 2). In other words, by starting to incorporate different formats, such as storytelling, into scientific practice, we challenge academics and academic institutions to open up to and accept new modalities of knowledge and dissemination.

### 3 Storying, Sharing and Thinking Together

#### 3.1 *How to Read Further*

Here below we offer you stories of friction (Tsing 2005). Friction, as Anna Tsing defines it, is the collaboration between disparate partners that underpin endeavours. Friction opens the different ontologies to become visible, as well as a demand for them to be recognized. Friction draws attention to the formation of new cultural and political configurations that change, rather than repeat, old contests. Verran (2013) highlights that friction can be experienced as an embodied discomfort, and that we should stay with this discomfort as this can expand our ways of knowing the world (and ourselves). This is our analytical approach. We do not consider there to be different perspectives from where we make meaning of the same. We are on the same planet, yet there are multiple ways that we live with and on her, as well as tell and write stories about being an earthling. There are real differences. One way cannot easily be translated into another way, not even with the help of theoretical

or methodological tools. These tools, we claim, do not become disconnected from the social, political, or cultural. We need to make these tools – and text – resemble us, which in turn plays a role in the world-making practice in which we all participate. As a result, what follows in this chapter may come across to some readers as strange and unconventional. Our frictional stories, happening and becoming told on and with our experiences in the contexts of Indigenous communities, take us to discussions and themes which were not-yet-known, nor planned in the beginning of this joint writing process.

Thus, as a short guideline for reading: In what follows in this chapter, we let individual texts, theoretical reflections and the imagined contributions of Eana (the Earth) get involved in what emerges. Actually, we do not want to make a remarkable difference between theoretical or empirical, individual or collaboratively written, ‘own’ or borrowed, especially as there is nothing which would in any case be solely owned by the writer. The writer is always entangled in multiple discourses and communities, which become visible and come to life in her text. So, it means that the following is not only personal or individual stories but is also entangled in theoretical discussions. There is no difference between the story and the message, so to speak, or between the data and analysis or results, as we tend to say in scientific language.

14 December 2017

Eana, the narrator: The four women meet for the first time at the Think Corner of the University of Helsinki, on a cold winter evening. There, in a dark, quiet corner, on a comfortable black sofa, they open their emotional spaces, sharing their confusions, disconcertments, and any other feelings that were clearly keen to surface and be heard. They did not intentionally decide to work together. I let that happen.

They come into this world with many differences. They work differently, within different languages as well as in different disciplines and research fields. The possibility for them to become this one partly connected body of writing gave them the energy of trust, so they would speak honestly among themselves about the suffering that comes with bringing into the academic space both new and different stories. What they do have in common is that they have not given up in this process, nor have they fully given in to the mainstreaming of the Western academic writing practices. They also soon realized that they all care deeply for me and my future–past–present. These four academic women have also shared amongst them many of their feelings and a sense of urgency they feel in reframing what they consider an outdated, conventional, partly irrelevant, somewhat pathetic, counter-productively competitive, largely

redundant, and therefore far too ineffective academic structure to meet the desperate calls of me and many of my earthlings, both human and non-human. Now I give them the care that I can give in this moment of many dramatic calls from other earthlings.

12 April 2018

Eana: In Kárašjohka, these four women start to share their personal stories on struggles with academic writing. I am with them, as Lea and Hanna are sitting on Lea's bed in a lovely cabin in Engholm Husky Farm, whilst Britt and Aili are connected through Skype. Immediately they also start to write between each other's stories, and to let those stories weave into other stories.

19 June 2018

Eana: I am, again, present with the four women at a workshop in Umeå. It is a dark room with wooden panels and a fireplace without a fire. They are supposed to write, but instead their souls need to cry. They are mourning their late loved colleagues and I want to console them. They write with me, in order to continue their task:

We need to come back into this room.

Put our hands here on the log and feel the material.

Put the log on the floor and feel the gravity towards the Earth

Feel the gravity that pulls the log towards the Earth.

See the people around us, looking at us.

We shall go back and write in the empty space between us, write together with the spirit of Grandmother Earth, with the spirit of our students and colleagues who passed to the Otherworld.

Now we start to write.

### 3.2 *Reconnecting the Moon: Making Room for New Arts of Noticing and Being*

Britt: I was learning about and practising ethnography in Småfjord, this Sea-Sámi community on the coast of Finnmark. I came here for multiple reasons, among them that the ethnographer Kolsrud in the 1950s claimed that all distinct Sámi cultural trails were long gone. Just a few people still spoke the Sámi language. One of these Sámi, Ingmar, should be my best friend and teacher. I am a first-generation academic and did not know of

the rules and regulations of academia. My idea was that you just had to be as fair and honest as possible. To tell the stories just as they happen, using your own compassion and imagination to do so. I learned a multitude of knowledges over the years, moving in and out of the community. Knowledge that had to do with the way people related to nature, with how they respected others, their destiny, the stories, themselves, among these – my noticing of the moon. All of my new friends in the community were living with the rhythm of the moon. When to set the nets in the ocean, when to slaughter the lambs, when to cut wood, to fish halibut – or even to cut your own hair. There were no streetlights in the village, so while walking down the road in the evening, the presence of the moon was real and powerful. I could feel it in my body, and over time I started to embody the rhythm of the moon and the rhythm of my period changed and I started menstruation on the full moon. For me this rhythm very much became a sign of taking seriously the worlding done by some of my Sámi teachers in the village.

My first draft of an article stayed true to this experience of how the moon influenced the circle of life to human and non-human being in the village. I sent it to an academic journal, where it was rejected. The review did not accept the premises of my experience. The editor did not consider it to be relevant that I wrote about how my body reacted to being part of a community where the moon was a central actor in relation to other enactments. That I emphasized dreaming as part of how life was lived and a decision regarding life and death was made. The story of my changing bodily rhythm was ridiculed, and this was before nature became fashionable also for social scientists, and I did not manage to argue that my ethnography on the assemblage between people and nature could be a research object of social science. The story of the community, the moon and the fieldworker, was never published. I lacked the writing skills to make these stories come alive within an academic language. Later – also thanks to all my rehearsals on how to tell some of these stories in acceptable ways – it was finally published in a modified form.

Aili: I was recently told a story – one of the most impactful stories I have heard in years – of a greatly respected Master Shaman from the Indigenous peoples of the Vaupés in Colombia, whom my medical practitioner friends worked with as apprentices. This Master Shaman told them (and here in my words, summarizing what I recall of this account) that we are all mistaken if we think we can save the world from its current turmoil with our mere activism and individual efforts, no matter how great and successful. He continued that we are also mistaken if we think that influencing politics (including national governments and powerful

decision-makers) can save the world. At this point, with all my suspense and curiosity arisen, the Master Shaman shared his deepest insight and revelation as to what – and only what – is needed to save our world. And it is this: the day when women are finally allowed (and allow themselves) to positively reconnect with and revere their own menstruation, and the moon cycle. And this reconnection means not only physical, but also emotional, social, cultural and spiritual, including revitalizing those associated rites of passage, initiation rites, and other traditions with immense significance to womanhood. My friends later returned to the same Amazonian community to study this phenomenon in more depth and were astonished to find that what the Shaman had told them seemed, in fact, to hold true. Their intriguing preliminary findings reveal this fundamental link between a woman's relationship to her menstrual cycle and in this case her health (Zuluaga & Andersson 2013).

Some months later, I mentioned this to another Shaman friend of mine, Hushahu, a strong female *curandera* of the Yawanawa people living in Brazilian Amazonia, and with whom I had the fortune to spend an entire day alone. I asked her how she interpreted the above story. She was as clear as day, as if I had asked the most obvious mundane question: of course, we need to reconnect with the moon and her cycle.

With these research stories we want to make room for another kind of thought, more of a feeling that arises from the knowing of being deeply attuned with the Moon, the Earth, the Sun and forest, as we already inevitably are, even though it is not much written in human sciences. Our bodies and lives are inextricably connected with and part of Eana, as she is a part of us, and her energy is circling around and within us all. With that we really need to ask how will that understanding change our writing practices? As many Indigenous writers have voiced (see e.g. Kealiikanakaoleohaililani & Giardina 2016, 60), we also think that our lost connection with the land on which we depend in so many ways, has made – and is making – us not only unsustainable in our choices, but also unhappy, distressed, scared, lonely, and cynical. This we have sometimes felt under the pressure of academic writing norms and demands.

We wonder how many readers have not experienced communication with non-human beings, like, for instance, the forest and its beings? As Eduardo Kohn (2013) shares with us, “to engage with the forest on its terms, to enter its relational logic, to think with its thoughts, one must become attuned to these”. Having carried out deep anthropological and ethnographic work amongst the Runa of the Upper Napo (Ecuadorian Amazonia), Kohn (2013) learned how communicating with the non-human requires:

... a real feat of defamiliarizing the human. That is, it requires us to undertake an arduous process of decolonizing our thinking ... to make room for another kind of thought – a kind of thought that is more capacious ... This other kind of thinking is the one that forests do, the kind of thinking that thinks its way through the lives of people, like the Runa (and others), who engage intimately with the forest's living beings in ways that amplify life's distinctive logics. (223–224)

To learn from the Runa, and many other Indigenous peoples who also connect and communicate with non-human beings, we dream of what this could do to help even us urbanites reconnect with our own bodies and rekindle our relationship with the Moon, the Sun, the stars, all the elements, and then speak from experience – perhaps the deepest and truest knowledge of all. This is something we are smoothly wanting to do. And that truly is and can be something else than rational academic readers may be used to. To think (and write) as forest (would) do. To listen to the wisdom of plants and other non-humans is not supernatural, but natural, and by learning their languages we can be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and our moral responsibility for reciprocity, as well as telling stories that go beyond the scientific conventions (Kimmerer 2020). This, nevertheless, is something where we need attuning and imagination and where the traditions of rationality-based writing follow us; it is not easy to get rid of them. Anyway, we have tried to write with the Earth and we accept that it is just an attempt, even though it has been a deeply experienced feeling in us of having her working with us.

Similarly, Herman Melville (2003) wrote in *Moby Dick* (1851) that “It is not down in any map; true places never are”. Those words guide us. We all have to learn more, read more, and practice more in order to find new and more true – true and truthful for our ontologically and epistemologically Indigenous/Indigenized ways of experiencing and living things – to write and tell stories so that the wisdom of the places and entities that we care for and that care for us can become visible to us, and through our texts also to others. We also always need to question what is not seen or told, or what is not written down on the new maps made. What we need according to Tsing (2015) is new arts of noticing. Noticing moments of harmony and dissonance that were created together. The kind of noticing that is needed to appreciate the multiple temporal rhythms and trajectories of the assemblage (Tsing 2015, 24). The multiple (female) stories of/in this text. Different – but all written with care.

### 3.3 *Reciprocity and Sacredness*

The significance of offerings, or reciprocal practice of giving gifts (Kuokkanen 2006), is something we have learned from those Indigenous peoples and traditions

which we have had the fortune to come to know. Offerings are indeed a universal and ancient practice of reciprocity and thankfulness. We have been pondering why it is that the modern world has forgotten this practice, and tend to think that Western civilization would somehow be ‘dominant’ – and that the rest of the world (all species included) were somehow there only to serve and satisfy us? How have we in the Western world come to think that we can just keep taking from the Earth and the Sea and the Mountains and the Rivers, and not give anything back? Why is it that we have lost the practice of weaving gratitude, appreciation, and reciprocity into all our actions, material and immaterial, leaving offerings to the elements, to the sources of life, to sacred sites, to springs, mountain tops, the fire, the rain? What does this shift to one-way selfish consumerism and commodification say about us? Do we somehow consider ourselves ‘outside’ of and ‘more important than’ this intricate web of universal life of which we are a part and upon which we fully depend? What does it say about our relationship with all that we live in and with, and especially, with that which we consume, with that on which we depend? This perplexes us more and more, this sheer hypocrisy and contradiction. Not to mention being way off track on anything resembling a healthy, balanced, sustainable life that could be foreseen to be equally healthy at least seven generations into the future (as some North American Native Americans used to think-plan-live).

Also, we want to speak about sacredness (as already alluded to by Fikret Berkes 2018). Why is it that, in the diverging paths of science and religion, many of us, the ‘Western’ or ‘Westernized’ us, have lost our sense of the sacred (Mander 1992)? Or, could it be that we have lost a space where the sacred can be present and publicly respected? Could we become convinced that it is this degradation of relationship and sacredness that is enabling us to (even consciously!) continue destroying our planet, cutting one snip at a time out of our very own life line?

Lea: The people in Wixárika villages in the Sierra Madre Mountains are always moving somewhere: to their cornfields, to the fields of some family member they have promised to help, to a pilgrimage, to a ceremony of the neighbouring community, to sell their crafts in the nearest town. They are constantly negotiating with the other community members, with the deified ancestors and even with foreigners. They bring new ideas and influences from other places. All my friends seem to be always leaving for a journey or a pilgrimage or just coming from somewhere. They are busy preparing offerings, small cups and decorated arrows, to be left on the sacred places. The Wixaritari leave offerings when somebody is sick or has to make a difficult decision, for example going to study or work in another community or town (Hirvonen-Nurmi et al. 2018). Young people

sometimes leave digital offerings, like CDs and printed writings, instead of or together with traditional cups and arrows (L. Kantonen 2017, 154). They are sure that the ancestors are able to read them, as well. For many Wixaritari the offerings are “texts” that they write with the ancestors. Maestro Alfredo, one of the teachers, said: “We should not think that our ancestors are ignorant. They can write!”

Aili: This is what drew me to work with the Kogui, who, to my knowledge, are show-casing some of the strongest examples of how to live responsibly, humbly, wisely, and harmoniously: prioritizing their wellbeing and balance with the natural environment and the spiritual world, still to this day, despite the ever-encroaching pressures and temptations of Western civilization and “development” (Pyhälä, 2020). I was intrigued about better understanding, what it is that enables the Kogui to maintain such a strong culture and identity, in harmony with their natural environment, whilst resisting acculturation in the face of accelerating change. And this is what I’ve come to: the criticality of the Sacred and of the Law of Nature. Of recognizing that life is most harmoniously governed if done so according to the Law of Nature, and life happens not only here in the material world, but also in what the Kogui refer to as the Aluna (the spiritual dimension). According to the Kogui, paying attention to the relationships and occurrences in the Aluna is just as significant and important as acknowledging and caring for that which takes place here in the material world.

Hanna: In Sámi society the Sámi people themselves have come to feel ashamed about their sacred customs, feelings and acts. They have not been talked about out loud or in public for a long time. At the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, it was not until 25 years after its establishment that two young thinkers, scholar Lovisa Mienna Sjöberg and artist Elle Sofé Henriksen, organized a seminar on spirituality, *Vuoiijjalaš vierut*, in the fall of 2017. The lecture hall was full of students and faculty members who all shared the feeling of coming home when the humble Elders, reindeer herders and other traditional knowledge holders were telling about high respect and loyalty to the sacredness of more-than-humans. The humility stayed in my mind (and body) as a longing to get to experience this even closer, within my own body.

I have felt the sacredness in the Laestadian movement, but I understand that that sacredness was disconnected from the body and the Earth and located somewhere outside/above, while the body and Earth are seen as sinful (flesh/body) or as mere resource (land). And still, also here, in order (not) to create too much friction, as I know how important



Laestadianism and Christianity are even today also for many Sámi people, I would like to continue that I myself see sacredness everywhere now ...

### 3.4 *Privilege – and Burden – to Write*

Britt: I am so humbled to be able to spend my days doing research and given the possibility to write. It is truly a gift. I just need to find ways in which this gift can be used in a responsible way. The research tools offer me the possibility to open up the landscape that I belong to. But within that landscape are also things forgotten, violence and many acts of brutality. It took years before I learned (and I'm still learning) about the landscape as a Sámi haunted landscape. I want to become a researcher that is learning the art of letting myself be affected by past and present social and ecological devastation and destruction in order to become able to stay with the trouble; to refuse analytical understanding of its power to distance. I want to remember what was done to this country and to tell new productive academic stories that can also be helpful for others.

Hanna: I feel so privileged, so privileged, again and again, to have the possibility to think and write and get paid for that as a researcher. So privileged that I sometimes feel guilty about this privilege. But, as we all know, writing is not always easy. You can choose an easier or more difficult way to write. And/or you can choose a more or less honest way to write.

Such humble honesty, so honest that it hurts. It hurts me and it may also sometimes hurt my nearest ones. I don't like to, or can't play any roles or positions or institutions, it's this thinking-moving-becoming-feeling body (bones and blood and heart, you know how they work in and affect our bodies) which searches its way out through the ceiling/surface of being an academic. It's this inseparable life, personal and academic, inseparably interconnected.

In my academic writing I always want – or have the compelling need – to write in and with the struggling I go through, while doing different things: while writing a PhD report, while working as a teacher or an educator, while participating in the different academic happenings (see e. g. Guttorm 2018). In my head I always remember a dialogue between Foucault and Deleuze (1977, 207–208), where Foucault says that “the intellectual's role is no longer to place himself ‘somewhat ahead and to the side’ in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of ‘knowledge’, ‘truth’, ‘consciousness’, and ‘discourse’”.

I write in order for more differences to become possible, lovable and cared for. I write because of Eana – so that we all could see and take ownership of our responsibility for her. And I write as I feel I have been colonized and modernized by living in the South ...

Today 7 January 2019, I continue shortly: How do personal losses, which I happen to be going through just now in my life, connect with the research? Is this the reason I in my current research am desperately searching for the connection with Eana, or the Earth? And through the Earth, connections and connectivity to others too? Just now I feel so lonely, so sad. So disconnected. Can these kinds of feelings be part of research? What do we mean when we say that academic life is embedded in personal life and vice versa? How do we carry on in grief and loss? How on Earth do I reconnect?

Many months later I continue again: And if and when I start to feel more connected, how do I stand with the fact that this connection needs to be presented with words put into a certain order in order to become accepted in academic worlds? What may get lost in that process?

Aili: On many working days I feel like I am in a prolonged contradiction with myself, and with my innermost values, morals, ethics, conscious awareness and even (em)body(ment) of my place here in this world at this time. I never got a kick out of reading and writing academic texts. In fact, I still don't! I don't even get a kick from teaching unless the format is such that the students are teaching me as much as I them. Co-learning and co-creating is what it is all about for me. On so many days, I dream of being outdoors, working with my hands, planting trees, harvesting wild food, regenerating the Earth, doing my bit to fix the immense damage we've done, communicating with native plants and animals, hearing what they have to say. What a dream! My heart lies in the body (action), not mind (theory). My passion ignites with mutual exchange and sharing, through emotions and senses we have yet to even realize we have, not just one-way rational communication or reception. I feel at my best in moments of physical contact and connection, not through various interpretations across filtered media.

I have so many dilemmas with academic requirements and culture. What is "methodology"? Why on earth do we spend so much time trying to define and re-define and debate and argue and justify certain terms and approaches and theories when we could simply just put that time and energy into listening deeply to the calling – what is it that is most needed right now? Who and what is calling us? What are they saying? What action is called of us? I dream of a world where we can come to

have genuine interest in each and every being, and curiosity about where they are coming from, even if we do not understand them, and to build mutual relationships of trust, respect, and reciprocity, breaking prejudices and boundaries, whilst also accepting non-understanding and even agreeing to disagree. Worshiping diversity in all its forms.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not intending to criticize or undermine anyone, nor do I want to preach or claim to know the way or have any answers to even my own dilemmas. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, we each have our roles to play and places to be and personal callings in this undirected theatre unfolding in and around us on this vast stage. We each have our own unique ways of contributing to, and expressing ourselves, in this world. Why, then, does academia try to stamp that into a mono-form? I wonder how much wisdom and insight is lost in the process?

Lea: We truly need to listen and act passionately, whatever calling we follow! While listening to you, I feel my privilege of working in the context of art and artistic research. Artistic research is very tolerant of emotional, practical and embodied writing – it feels quite natural to do practical things with your hands and simultaneously reflect on the process theoretically. However, we artists and artist-researchers have many other things to learn from Indigenous methodologies. We have not, for example, been educated into a culture of reciprocity and thankfulness. We have felt free to go anywhere and get inspiration and influences from anywhere without feeling the obligation to give anything back to the human or non-human sources and networks. Working with Indigenous communities in Mexico has made me rethink about the authorship in research writing.

I go back to the Wixárika villages. I hear news about drug cartels, shootings and killings happening in the neighbouring communities. Many of my friends seem to be afraid of something. When asked, they never tell exactly what it is. It is more and more difficult and dangerous to travel to the communities. When we were having a video workshop in a nearby town, and whilst walking on the street, there was suddenly gunfire around us.

I am struggling with my writing. How to write in a way that really cares for the community, the land, and the research data collected so far? Should I write about being afraid? Should I write about the hope? Or should I just stop working with the community? I feel a responsibility for the research data: videos, photographs, stories and for many unfinished collaborations. Could I just run away after working in the communities

for 20 years? It is really frightening to feel threatened by violence and not be able to speak about it. When I came back from Mexico, I lost my ability to write, for the first time in my life. Every time I opened my laptop and started writing field notes, I started shaking.

On the other hand, I feel very privileged to be able to travel to the Sierra Madre Mountains. I can always avoid the most difficult/dangerous routes and I can afford to take a small airplane to the communities. Many people do not have the luxury of that choice.

Hanna: Exactly. How many things to think and write and feel about. Modernization, urbanization, getting lost, losing connection(s), the privileges, the different feelings. And the question of how to do that.

Doing and writing research is a complicated act of getting and giving. There are times when it feels like a privilege, but sometimes the privilege turns to frustration when not finding the ways to share what you feel are most important and true to your experience and learning within Indigenous societies.

Decolonized research stories can be stories of friction (Tsing 2005). Friction that draws attention to the formation of new cultural and political configurations that change, rather than repeat, old contests. We have felt, as Verran (2013) suggests, that friction can be identified through bodily disconcertment and understood as an expression of metaphysical disjuncture. We have taken advantage of knowing that disconcertments felt in the body are crucial potential detectors of difference and some specific significance. We have not had other possibilities than staying with the moments of disconcertment in writing practices.

### 3.5 *Thanksgiving*

Are there other writers than us? Do we have loyalties and love, shame or fear, that enact with us and that we should pay tribute to? We need to expand our way of thinking about storying, as moments that can inform an emergent politics of memory and enact landscapes of remembrance. The concern needs not only be with the substance of the stories, but also with the very act of participating in a shared event – and how this event brings our attention to our sense of being-with-others that offer relation-weaving and world-making where the past and the future are recalled as well as remade (Kramvig & Verran 2019). Telling stories is caring for those that are within the event of the stories, and that are recalled into being.

The event of mourning that took place in Umeå can be regarded as productive, as Sara Ahmed (2014) reminds us. Grief can be seen as productive when it expresses itself through melancholy. She writes:

To lose another is not to lose one's impressions, not all which are even conscious. To preserve an attachment is not to make an external other internal, but to keep one's impressions alive, as aspects of one's self that are both oneself and more than oneself, as a sign of one's debt to others. One can let go of another as an outsider, but maintain one's attachments, by keeping alive one's impressions of the lost other. [...] To grieve for others is to keep their impressions alive in the midst of their death. (Ahmed 2014, 160)

Keeping these impressions alive is both a non-transcendence of queerness, according to Ahmed, as well as acts of resistance. Some could consider that a project meeting which turns into collective mourning over colleagues who died young would be academically unproductive and too sentimental. But we think on the contrary: without that, even this text would not have come into being the way it has.

Lea: We really need to acknowledge the ones that have helped us. First of all, I would like to thank my Wixárika friend and artist colleague Rosita. I have asked her and my other Wixárika teachers and colleagues what kinds of stories they like being told in writings and in documentary videos. They answered that they like stories that make us more conscious of the struggles and processes taking place in the community. The stories should be connected to the earth, agriculture and the ancestors and they should give thanks to humans, ancestors and places. They should defend "every tree and every drop of water" of the sacred places. The processes should be told in their length and complexity, not just as beautiful fragments. Every detail should be true and in its proper place. The storyteller should be humble, not thinking that she is somebody more important than others (L. Kantonen 2017, 157–164).

When I have a problem, my partner Pekka sometimes asks: What would Rosita say? So, I thank her for being present in my research and everyday life, even if I don't have a possibility to communicate with her. When I write I also remember the discussions with my co-researchers and kin in the CRASH NGO collective.

Indigenous methodologies have changed my way of thinking about both art and artistic research. I have needed to let go of the traditional idea of a solitary or detached artist-researcher and let myself be woven into a network of relations that I can only partially understand.

I have also learned a lot from my Mexican colleague Xochitl Leyva Solano (Leyva 2011, 2014). Her grandmother is Mixtec, and she works with

the Tzotzil Maya, and with the civilian Zapatista movement in the jungles of southern Mexico, as well as in the city of San Cristobal de las Casas. Like Aili, she has always felt the urgent need to work practically, in this case with the Tzotzil, not only in writing research, and she has written about that experience. I think that the discontent of academic practice has, in her case, led to valuable insights in academic writing. Together with her partner Axel Köhler she has found ways of co-theorizing with rural and urban Indigenous communities. They speak about *corazón* and *co-razón* (heart and co-reason); they seek to co-reason with their hearts together and that has led to collaborative artistic experiments (Köhler 2015).

This is how I want to continue co-writing with you, my friends, with heart and reason. During this year that we have been writing together my fear has gradually vanished. I can write again, maybe differently than before.

Hanna: Oh, I would have so many human and non-human beings to thank. My uncle Piera, *eahkki*, the older brother of my father, who still continues telling me stories; my aunt Sofe, *siessá*, the younger sister of my father, whose hospitality I am still honoured to take pleasure in always and always; my late father, *áhčči*; my late uncles and aunts; my Sámi Elders, like Irja; the land, the mountains, the cloudberries in the mire, the river, *Deatnu*. Many Sámi and other Indigenous authors have moved and cared for my soul, given it the strength to continue, to believe, to trust in life and hope. Many other authors, many theorists, have given me concepts to challenge academicity as culturally and historically constructed and thus enabled my dreaming of something else being possible. My thankfulness goes to them all.

Britt: One of the ways I bring what I learned into my academic practice is to relate to the lunar phase when writing. In addition, I offer the same practice to my students. To open a new document when the moon is rising. To take advantage of the energy of the rising moon also in the becoming of a text. Reclaiming means reacquainting oneself with generative resources, resources that sustain and inspire (Green 2020). Can we learn to remember to trust in the possibility of weaving together different voices and ways of living together which colonization has cut people off from?

### 3.6 *Letting These Stories Go*

This reaching out of an article

In order for students to get some help in relation to their projects

In a sense that we cannot tell them what to do

But we can tell them what we did  
 That can serve as an inspiration, or not  
 Some students can get punished for using our ideas ...  
 Or they can get lost by using them ...

We need to be very careful  
 We cannot protect them either  
 We cannot work all the way to the end with them  
 We can secure some part of the route of their ways with this  
 There are soldiers and warriors on the way

Waiting, as many Indigenous researchers or researchers working with  
 Indigenous methodologies know, is inevitable in Indigenous methodolo-  
 gies  
 You need to have time  
 You don't need to hurry  
 You cannot hurry  
 You need to be patient and wait  
 And it will come out  
 You will get a story  
 Or you will find the path, a path  
 Your path, the path of your "family"

#### 4 Some Closing and Re-opening Words

We want to argue that Indigenous ontologies both allow and demand openness for multiple research-storying. As we have already learned, Indigenous methods emphasize stories, traditional knowledge, and different artistic and experimental ways of knowing (e.g. Leyva 2011; Kovach 2009; Wilson 2009). In our decolonized research-storying, we have wanted to put these methods to work in the process of writing and not only use these different ways of knowing as research data, which we later turn into "scientific" text. In these decolonized research stories, we have constructed the story around the evolving relationships with our human and non-human research participants. These evolving relationships include both the encounter with academic demands, and with places, and with Indigenous ontologies, and with those ontologies becoming true. Decolonial writing in practice brings the Indigenous onto-epistemologies into scientific text and thus makes space for different ways of knowing and representing knowledge.

So often we academic writers see ourselves (or at least come across) as those who “know”, or, as claiming knowledge or an objective truth about something. Open and vulnerable research stories, however, are not about something somewhere outside the researcher; they concern more the researcher and his/her/their situatedness. We feel that in order to be honest to the process of decolonizing research, we as researchers need to recognize and share openly where our stories and statements come from and how the different experiences resonate in us and make us think again and again. Knowing and coming to know happens in the in-betweenness and is thus related to the situations where even emotional tensions and discomfort are made and encountered. The stories with/of tensions reveal our connectedness and are most often not easy to tell. Still, these stories need to be written and shared. Thus, we want to encourage readers to share the research stories of friction and multiplicity with each other, and to reconnect in communities, be they smaller or wider ones, like here in academic societies.

Still, there is a time to speak up, and there is a time to remain silent. In Sámi and many other Indigenous cultures, you are looked down upon if you speak too loudly on behalf of others. So, there can be ruptures and holes in the stories. Sometimes what is needed is simply time. Lingering. Space. Waiting. Silence. We cannot be situated if we do not slow down. Slowing down not only counteracts the insensitivity and detachment that results from modern speed, but also really allows one to be more open. Open-eyed, open-eared, open-minded. Allowing for a whole world of possibilities to emerge and unfold.

Inspired by Kuokkanen (2010), one way forward for us academics is to start collectively fostering epistemic pluralism within our workplaces and institutions, as well as research networks and collaborations. It is timely that we allow such a paradigm shift to take place, in order for Indigenous worlding and previously held taboos, like sacredness and non-human entities, to appear also in academic texts. We strongly believe that the rewards extend far beyond conventional academic methodological practice: the implications are likely to reverberate across wider spectrums of relationship and respect, not only amongst scholars of different backgrounds, but also across all humans and non-humans, enabling our common purpose in finding collective solutions for common planetary challenges.

Here we come back to care, which is always different. No ethical guidelines or codes or consent forms – no matter how well filled in – can fix this. The process needs to be transparent, respectful, embedded, and embodied all along, in whatever time-space is right. And each case is different. Every sentence becomes bonded, a kind of materiality to become-with. In this chapter, care has especially been connected to the Indigenous ontologies and the meaning



and acting of non-human entities in them. Caring for Indigenous ontologies and taking them seriously in an academic text – which is also giving space, and even voice, for them – means caring for the Indigenous worlds and words and ways of knowing and making them relevant and serious in academic discourse. In this text, we have invited Eana to participate in the making of it, which can be seen as a real possibility in Indigenous worlds. We have felt the need to call upon her. Eana has participated in our work by giving us space to live, breath, think and write, as well as recalling our connectedness with her and through her with all the other earthlings. Earth, Eana, is a non-human actor, but highly connected to everything we do in this chapter and in life. Eana, in our text, is the embodiment of the non-human in Indigenous worlding. We do not speak on her behalf, but we think and write with her.

Last, but not least, perhaps we all would do well to ask ourselves more often what our intention is. Why, for whom, or for what purpose are we writing? It is timely that we pose these questions out loud, and in all our vulnerability attempt to openly and transparently answer them. We think that it is in our hands to decide what kind of an academic cultural legacy we want to leave for the next generation of young Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. It is time we invite the youth to take this space, in their way, with their clean and less-conditioned minds and spirits. What we hope to offer young scholars is a space where they can feel safe and heard. A space where they can feel comfortable being themselves: open, different, and unique. We hope for a future where they can have the clarity, creativity, courage, and energy to do so, to find and create the needed methodologies and ways to write. Now, we hope that this text can be one that inspires them to listen to themselves, to Eana, to the wind, to the elements, and to each other. Through that they can find their voice, in all its openness, and respect it with care and take all the time they want and need.

and from the blue tundras  
I hear the story of life  
Winds rivers forests  
joik

NILS-ASLAK VALKEAPÄÄ (1985)

## Notes

- 1 Earth, Moon, forests and their spirits do not have words to present themselves. Still they are actors and they have their own will and power. Indigenous authors and storytellers (e.g. Valkeapää 2001) write about and with them, but how can academics put these non-words, the acts, will and power into words?

- 2 Indigenous storytelling is for us the Indigenous practice of sharing and constructing knowledge through telling stories, while through calling research writing research storytelling emphasizes the story presented in academic contexts. Every research is also a story and writing it is a process of storytelling.
- 3 “It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties” (Haraway, 2016, 12). In a lecture she also says: “It matters what worlds world worlds” (Haraway 2017). And it matters, what words we use in wording the worlds. Thus, the using of both ‘wording’ and ‘worlding’ is not a spelling mistake.
- 4 ‘Traditional’ is a tricky word in this context, as we are not referring to ‘traditional knowledge’, known as something very different in Indigenous contexts, even though we are speaking about traditional (Western) knowledge-making practices. Those Western traditions have not been based on overgenerational wisdom that has been generated in near connection with the living environment, but more as creating a knowing cogito, which as objective and distanced from the world is capable of ‘observing’ and ‘representing’ from the outside. This view has been challenged from multiple perspectives in later Western research, for example through artistic research (see e.g. Arlander 2018; Arlander & Elo 2017; Kokkonen 2017; Vadén 2002), poststructuralist, post-humanist theorizations (Braidotti 2011, 2013; Barad 2007; Deleuze & Guattari 1987, to mention a few) and so-called post-methodological approaches (e.g. Koro-Ljungberg 2015; Lather 2013; St. Pierre 2013;). Each of us have experimented with alternative approaches in our own academic work: incorporating, for instance, bottom-up and inclusive approaches to research design; using experiential methods – such as those of Joanna Macy (see e.g. Macy & Brown 2014); dialogical and collaborative art methods (Kester 2004, 2011); artistic action research (Lehtonen & Pöyhönen 2018); autoethnographic and collaborative autobiographic methods (Gale & Wyatt 2009; Pelias 2004); methods of co-theorizing (Köhler 2015); generational filming (P. Kantonen 2017) in our teaching and group-work processes; and writing with collaborators rather than writing of or about them and their project (e.g. Kramvig & Methi 2018).
- 5 To use only ‘Western’ is tricky too. We do not want to create a dichotomy between Western and Indigenous, but would more like to emphasize neoliberalist, extractivist and capitalist Westernness.

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