"Reviewer 2 must be stopped"; Settler Colonialism and Epistemic Domination in political science

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Abstract: In 2016, Kennan Ferguson published "Why Does Political Science Hate American Indians?" Ferguson described structural features of contemporary political science to explain the exclusion of Indigenous peoples and knowledges from the discipline. Today, there is a different context. In universities, Indigenous knowledges are no longer ignored or disqualified, rather there are aims to diversify and deparochialize the curriculum, while opening space for Indigenous scholarship. Despite good intentions, however, there are still structural obstacles to taking up Indigenous knowledges in the university generally and political science specifically. We evoke a stylized Reviewer 2 to describe dynamics within the peer review process that tend to limit or exclude interventions that engage with Indigenous knowledges: 1) the disciplining effects of disciplines; (2) the reproduction of eurocentrism; (3) the demand for essentialism or romanticization – or the challenge to both; and (4) the unfair politicization of the "good" argument. We identify a fifth (5) dynamic related to the continued underrepresentation of Indigenous scholars. We conclude by indicating ways that reviewers and editors committed to pluralism can rigorously carry out peer review while opening up political science to Indigenous knowledges.

[1] This article reflects equal contributions by both authors and draws on shared insights, developed in conversation and in writing.

What does it mean to be a stranger, an outsider to academia? We take up this question by exploring the reception of the social and political thought of First Nations, Métis, and American Indians in political science. We seek to shed light on the relationships and dynamics between the academic discipline of political science and the knowledges of Indigenous peoples, especially those situated in English-speaking settler-colonial nations, like Canada, where we write from, as well as Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and the United States of America. These settler colonial states are among the world's most powerful nations, and universities in these countries still attract many of the world's people to pursue their education. They therefore exercise a disproportionate influence on what counts as knowledge in academic settings (Collyer 2018), including within political science. Our focus is dynamics present in the peer review process in political science in English-speaking settler colonial contexts. To explore these dynamics, we invoke a stylized "Reviewer 2" and explain how peer evaluations routinely reproduce the marginalization of Indigenous social and political thought in political science.

A critical context to our argument is that long before the first universities were established, the lands of what are now settler colonial nations were already settled by diverse Indigenous peoples. They had their own histories, politics, cultures and languages as Nuu-chah-nulth, Cree, Saulteaux and Inuit peoples, among many hundred others. These self-determining original peoples had their ways of life brutally interrupted by the European invasion, beginning in the 16th century. The dispossession of Indigenous peoples by colonial states and the forcible imposition of European languages and lifeways are now increasingly recognized as genocidal (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015; MacDonald 2019; Starblanket 2018; Wolfe 2006). The fraught relationship between political science and Indigenous social and political thought is thus embedded

within settler colonial contexts that have violently sought the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples, their lifeways, and knowledges.

For those less familiar with settler colonialism and its relationships to Indigenous peoples and knowledges, we begin by briefly reviewing the relationship between settler colonialism and epistemic domination. Next, we show how traditional academic disciplines are products of Eurocentric intellectual divisions of labour by describing and analyzing the exclusion of Indigenous knowledges from the discipline of political science. We explore five ways that routine peer review operates in political science to exclude Indigenous ways of knowing, especially on their own distinctive terms. In arguing that "Reviewer 2 must be stopped," we take up the widely used social media meme about harsh peer reviewers with unreasonable expectations, to investigate how Indigenous exclusions are repeated in political science – but with lessons for the social sciences more generally. Despite a growing interest and real efforts to bring Indigenous knowledges into the academy generally, and political science, specifically, peer review dynamics mitigate against meaningful critical engagement. This is a loss for Indigenous scholars and for disciplines, including political science, that have much to gain from a critical uptake of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Settler Colonialism and Epistemic Domination

In settler colonial societies, "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event," as Patrick Wolfe famously put it (2006, 388). The invasion and colonization of what became the Americas began more than 500 years ago, but settler colonial studies invites us to appreciate the persistence of colonial social, political, and epistemic features of domination. If the lands now known as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States were supposedly "discovered"

by Europeans, in fact, they were already inhabited and settled by diverse Indigenous peoples. The population of settler colonial societies is thus differentiated between the descendants of the first occupants who claim an original right to the land—Indigenous peoples—and the collective constituted by the descendants of the settlers, usually of European origins, but not exclusively.[2] The qualifiers 'Indigenous' and 'settlers' are thus markers of this social structure and associated dynamics between the original peoples and those who invaded, who claim the right to the land, supposedly as the first improvers (Sharma 2020; Veracini 2010).

Settler colonialism is fundamentally characterized by the drive to eliminate Indigenous peoples, to dispossess them and legitimate settler occupation. This objective is pursued through diverse processes, including genocide and forcible assimilation, and legitimated by a range of ideological constructions, like the myth that Indigenous peoples are doomed, due to their primitive race, civilization or culture, so leaving the future open for settler occupation alone (Veracini 2015; Allard-Tremblay and Coburn 2021). These ideological constructions disqualify Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing, denying their contemporary and future salience to their own lands. Indigenous peoples are framed as belonging to the past, as inevitably superseded by more "advanced" lifeways and so as necessarily making way for progress and civilization, identified with European settler traditions. Framed as such, Indigenous lifeways are suppressed, or ignored and their significance – and especially their contemporary, ongoing and future significance –

[2] Enslaved peoples, those brought in indentured servitude, and those, like migrant farm workers, who today are invited to labour on settler colonial lands but without any rights to stay, complicate this binary. Jodi Byrd (2011) has called these peoples, forcibly brought and only precariously incorporated, "arrivants" to differentiate them from settlers.

disavowed. Other theorists of the world inaugurated by colonialism refer to this disqualification and destitution of Indigenous lifeways as coloniality, the direct correlative of the enunciation of European lifeways as universal standards (Quijano and Ennis 2000; Mignolo 2011; Mignolo and Walsh 2018). Colonialism is thus deeply unjust and this injustice extends to coloniality, the suppression of Indigenous lifeways in the name of European habits and norms seen as commensurate with the universally human.

What is happening in contemporary universities, and academic disciplines, including political science, must be read against the erasure, disqualification, and destitution of Indigenous lifeways in settler colonial contexts. Indigenous peoples and scholars, and other critical academics have challenged and sought to remedy these erasures by recentering Indigenous lifeways. The project of decolonizing disciplines and knowledges directly challenges the destitution of Indigenous knowledges at the heart of the settler colonial project. This article contributes to a growing field of scholarship and political movements to decolonize knowledges (Mignolo and Walsh 2018); we investigate how Indigenous contributions face obstacles to full participation in traditional academic disciplines, focusing on political science. These obstacles persist despite contemporary efforts to bring Indigenous knowledges back into the academy.

Disciplinary Knowledge, Political Science, and Indigenous Scholarship

We are not the first to explore epistemic oppression in political science. In 2016, a prominent American peer-reviewed journal in political science, *Perspectives in Politics*, published a symposium on Kennan Ferguson's article "Why Does Political Science Hate American Indians?" (2016). While Indigenous scholars have long theorized their disqualification and erasure by

dominant academic disciplines (L. T. Smith 2012), Ferguson analysed how political science, specifically, limits the uptake of Indigenous scholarship.[3]

After establishing that there are few Indigenous political scientists in the university,[4] Ferguson (2016) explains that several features aggravate the discipline's lack of engagement with Indigenous politics and knowledges.

Political science is present and future oriented, he observes, such that it fails to appreciate the historical processes and injustices that inform contemporary Indigenous peoples' claims against the settler state (1032). Moreover, the present is often conflated with what is desirable, especially insofar as politics is institutionalized in law and law is conflated with legitimate rule. What "is" politically and legally becomes synonymous with what "ought" to be in politics and jurisprudence (1032). The focus on the state, as *the* political form – empirically and often construed as normatively desirable – squeezes out analytical space to critically engage with the alternative political forms and normative traditions that Indigenous worldviews offer, such as for instance, the Haudenosaunee's Great Law of Peace (Alfred 2009; Williams 2018).

[3] We will use Indigenous to refer specifically to First Nations and American Indians in what are now Canada and the United States of America. Our discussion is relevant to other Indigenous peoples, but our focus and claims are more limited.

[4] This underrepresentation persists. In Canada, from where we write, "Aboriginal academics remain significantly underrepresented in the academy, making up just 1.4% of all university professors and 3% of college instructors in 2016" (Canadian Association of University Teachers 2018, 2).

Relatedly, Ferguson (2016, 1032) observes that political science is marked by Eurocentrism and so theorizes politics in ways that matter to European political traditions. Texts are privileged over other kinds of material records, like wampum belts, for instance, that matter to Indigenous political histories and relationships. Further, Eurocentric conceptual categories like "sovereignty" translate badly into distinctive Indigenous political and social thought, since sovereignty is often read as commensurate with the bounded nation-state, while for Indigenous peoples, sovereignty is interpreted as self-determination oriented to fulfilling responsibilities to lands and life, both human and other-than-human (Ferguson 2016, 1032; Alfred 2005; Stark 2013). Indigenous politics on their own terms, like this distinctive understanding of sovereignty, do not register within dominant understandings of the field.

Another consequence of the discipline's focus on the colonial state, is that political scientists tend to subsume Indigenous peoples as an "interest group" under the authority of the federal government (Ferguson 2016, 1032).

Finally, Eurocentric political science traditions focus on the liberal individual, rather than political communities, so invisibilizing Indigenous collective claims and their emphasis on relationships, both with other peoples and with the natural world (Ferguson 2016, 1033). Since individualism also structures the academy, participating in universities mitigates against relationships, including to the land, that inform Indigenous scholarship and the positionality of Indigenous academics as members of Indigenous nations (1033). These are all obstacles to the meaningful uptake of Indigenous knowledges in political science.

In the seven years since Ferguson's publication and the accompanying symposium, dynamics have shifted, at least on the surface. Across universities in settler colonial contexts, Indigenous politics and Indigenous knowledges are increasingly understood as essential to the

scientific inquiry of politics, especially within settler-colonial nations. In the Canadian context, for instance, *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2015) investigated the residential school system, in which thousands of Indigenous children died, many were subject to physical and sexual abuse and all were purposefully separated from their communities, families, language, and culture (MacDonald 2019; Starblanket 2018).[5] Since the TRC, many Canadian universities have heeded the Final Report and its calls to actions, which demand a greater space for Indigenous knowledges and languages across educational institutions. University administrators joined scholars in recognizing the urgent need for new relationships with Indigenous peoples and knowledges. Accordingly, universities have put in place frameworks and initiatives,[6] including commitments to Indigenous faculty hires, teaching Indigenous knowledges in university classrooms and supporting research by and for Indigenous peoples. These efforts seek to support Indigenous ways of knowing in the university. This connects with broader efforts to decolonize and Indigenize the academy, ranging from more tokenistic to more thoroughgoing transformations (Gaudry and Lorenz 2018).

As part of political science's decolonial impulse we note the multiplication of efforts to bring Indigenous voices into the discipline. The Canadian Political Science Association, for instance, has developed readings lists of Indigenous scholarship to help political scientists bring this work into their research and course syllabi (CPSA Reconciliation Committee 2022). Some political science departments are revising their comprehensive exams to include marginalized

[5] The residential schools existed for over one hundred years in Canada. The last one closed in 1996.

[6] See two examples: (York University 2017; McGill University 2017).

voices and thus remake the canon[7] (Wallace 2022). In the Canadian context, Indigenous scholars, like Glen Coulthard (2014), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017), and John Borrows (2017) have become unavoidable in some areas of political science. Familiarity with their work is expected and not considered a "specialized" interest. In response to the TRC and this new interest in Indigenous scholarship, many universities have created faculty positions through cluster hires. In contrast to the nearly totalizing exclusions described by Ferguson, only recently, there is now a strong desire to remedy the marginalization of Indigenous people and knowledges in the university generally and in political science, specifically.

Peer Review and Epistemic Domination

Despite these efforts, important obstacles continue to limit the uptake of Indigenous contributions.[8] We focus on the publishing and reviewing process as a significant juncture in the conduct of academic disciplines, at a moment when Indigenous contributions are simultaneously recognized and marginalized in political science. We identify five problematic dynamics, sometimes

[7] Many universities in the USA and Canada subject their PhD candidates to a comprehensive exam that requires them to master a significant list of texts considered central to the discipline. As such, a comprehensive exam reading list can be regarded as what the department assigning it considers canonical to the discipline or at least essential knowledge.

[8] From this point on, we will use "Indigenous contributions" to refer to any putative contribution to academic discourses that engages with Indigenous politics, knowledges, issues, or that is grounded in Indigenous knowledges.

overlapping and mutually reinforcing, that impede Indigenous contributions, wherein a stylized Reviewer 2:

(1) exercises the disciplining effects of disciplines;

(2) reproduces Eurocentrism;

(3) either demands essentialism or romanticization – or challenges both; and

(4) unfairly politicizes the "good" argument.

We identify a fifth (5) systemic dynamic associated with the still-limited representation of experts in Indigenous scholarship.

Grounding ourselves in more than 15 years of experience, we explore how these five dynamics work independently and together to create obstacles to the critical engagement with Indigenous knowledges in political science. Our objective is to open up space for a greater diversity of standards and to call for reviewers and editors to exercise prudence so as to allow for a fuller engagement with Indigenous knowledges.

Finally, we seek to differentiate genuine critical engagements with Indigenous scholarship from problematic assessments. Ironically, they do not appear "problematic," but rather as routine peer reviewing practices, in keeping with widespread professional understandings and norms. To explore institutionalized epistemic oppression, we turn our experiences into stylized examples, represented by a metaphorical "Reviewer 2" and relate them to broader disciplinary dynamics that marginalize and exclude Indigenous contributions. Our experiences guide the analysis and interpretation.

1) the disciplining effects of disciplines

All disciplines have a substantive focus and dominant approaches to central questions, and all disciplines foreground some intellectual figures as "canonical." Indeed, disciplines cohere because there is broad agreement about what matters substantively, theoretically, and methodologically, even if the field remains pluralistic. Such broad agreement constitutes a given discipline as a distinctive field of inquiry. Professional competence, developed through undergraduate and graduate training and sustained through ongoing involvement in the discipline, demands familiarity with major empirical concerns, theories, and concepts. In short, political science may be pluralistic, but, like other disciplines, it has a shared core of knowledge that defines the discipline. Accordingly, the well-trained political scientist, Reviewer 2, knows that states matter in political science, as do concepts like power, citizenship, justice, equality, and freedom. They are aware that historical figures like John Locke and Thomas Hobbes provide the theoretical basis of the discipline. Even if Reviewer 2's own approach is not centrally concerned with states, citizenship or freedom, or these historical authors, they understand that it is their professional duty to be familiar with them.

Reviewer 2 thus acts in professionally expected ways in drawing on necessarily bounded disciplinary knowledge to review Indigenous scholarship. We explore three ways routine peer evaluation of Indigenous scholarship may be professionally warranted but problematic for Indigenous political thought.

First, as noted by Ferguson, political science has historically centered on the state. Reviewer 2 presumes this familiar ground in their critical assessment of Indigenous contributions. Asked to review an article about the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, for instance, Reviewer 2 may argue that the article falls outside of the scope of a mainstream political science journal, because

it is not engaged with the state. Skeptical of its relevance, Reviewer 2 may suggest, instead, submission to a "specialized" political science journal or to an Indigenous Studies publication. From a disciplinary perspective, an engagement with Indigenous political formations requires special justification. Insofar as Reviewer 2 remains unconvinced about the need to expand the focus of mainstream political science beyond the state and the journal editor agrees, the Indigenous contribution will be rejected. In this way, discussions concerned with sui generis Indigenous political forms, like the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, are redirected away from and so excluded from mainstream political science journals.

Alternatively, when asked to evaluate a paper about the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Reviewer 2 may ask for clarifications and revisions that presume that the state is the default, normal and normative political authority. Reviewer 2 may ask the author to locate the Haudenosaunee Confederacy – which sees itself as an independent, sovereign polity that pre-exists the Canadian state – within the domain and under the de facto sovereignty of the Canadian Crown.[9] In so doing, Reviewer 2 theoretically moves to incorporate Indigenous political formations under the state, but in reasserting the disciplinary focus on the state Reviewer 2 distorts the distinctiveness of Indigenous political forms. Worse, such an approach comforts colonial ideologies that construe Indigenous political forms as existing under colonial state authority.

[9] Hence the proliferation of approaches seeking to situate Indigenous people with respect to the Canadian state, whether they are understood as "citizens minus" suffering from less rights than other citizens, "citizens plus" who ought to have special, additional rights or as "citizens plural" within a multicultural Canada (Jamieson 1978; Cairns 2000; Chartrand 2009).

Second, Reviewer 2 may request a re-centering of existing disciplinary conversations and thus shift the original argument away from a detailed, nuanced exploration of Indigenous political practices on their own terms. In reviewing a contribution about the negotiation of political and cultural differences within Indigenous political traditions, for instance, through the ethic of non-interference,[10] Reviewer 2 may request engagement with established contributions about multiculturalism, as the mainstream entry point for taking up questions of political and cultural difference within the state. In doing so, Reviewer 2 seeks to resituate the Indigenous contribution as part of a disciplinary conversation – here established political science debates about multiculturalism – but this recentering forecloses a deeper engagement with the distinct alternatives offered by Indigenous political principles. This conscientious disciplinary approach by Reviewer 2 marginalizes Indigenous political theory and concepts like the ethic of non-interference by re-constituting existing conversations in political science, and associated concepts and theoretical frameworks, like multiculturalism, as the default approach. This limits or even eliminates the possibility of discussing Indigenous political thought and practices on their own terms.

Third, political science, as a discipline, is constituted by key conceptualizations and theoretical frameworks, associated with relatively enduring intellectual figures. The well-schooled Reviewer 2 is thus likely to read ideas through key intellectuals and concepts, so misreading the distinctive contributions of Indigenous political and social thought. If Reviewer 2 is asked to take up Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall's *Warrior Manifesto*, from 1979, they may note that Hall emphasizes his commitment to rights, including "the right to live and be free" (A. Simpson 2014, 27). Reviewer

[10] See, for example, Wilson (1996, 307, 310).

2 may learn that for Hall, these concerns are bound up with his plea for righteous leadership as part of his critique of hereditary governance practices, within a broader discussion of the Great Law of Peace. Well-trained in the discipline, Reviewer 2 may then naturally resort to their acquired interpretative scheme and recode[11] Hall's politics into familiar disciplinary terms. Thus, Reviewer 2 may interpret Hall's arguments informed by Locke's well-known discussion of natural rights and accordingly demand revisions, perhaps offering the apparently constructive suggestion that Hall's rights be understood as a sub-genre of Lockean natural rights.

In reading a contribution from Indigenous social and political thought through the discipline's canonical intellectuals – here Locke and his conceptualization of natural rights – Reviewer 2 asserts and reaffirms the disciplinary canon. Effectively, they assert that Hall's discussion is and should *really* be about natural rights as they have been conceptualized by and following Locke. In so doing, Reviewer 2 displaces or erases Hall's discussion about rights and leadership in relation to the Great Law of Peace. Whatever Reviewer 2's intention, their intervention refuses disciplinary space for Hall's distinctive critique and contribution to specifically Mohawk political thought and practice. Similar "recoding" include linking Indigenous sui generis conceptions of sovereignty, recognition, democracy and justice to Hobbes, Friedrich Hegel, Robert Dahl, or Rawls.

The dynamic identified here limits the capacity of Indigenous contributions to reshape the terms of the academic conversation because they are either read as fundamentally incoherent with dominant approaches or as being improved by their rearticulation within dominant paradigms. This form of epistemic domination has been discussed by decolonial scholars, notably by Brian

[11] On recoding, see: (Aguirre Turner 2018, pt. two; Tuck and Yang 2014).

Burkhart who explains that "In the context of settler philosophy," but with relevance for the context of settler political science:

> articulations of Indigenous philosophy often trigger the operations of philosophical guardianship that force Indigenous philosophical articulations into appropriate guardianship forms, or forms that are assimilated to the dominant paradigm or at least translatable to or consistent with views of knowledge, morality, and the like that are generally acceptable within the dominant paradigm. This is often done, as with guardianship in general, with good intentions. The purpose of guardianship in the context of philosophy is to bring Indigenous philosophy into the realm of proper civilized philosophy in contrast to what is seen as mere religious thought or mythopoetics (Burkhart 2020, 42).

In this way, Reviewer 2 participates in the marginalization of Indigenous thought in political science by misreading and recoding Indigenous social and political thought to assert the primacy of canonical political science figure and associated concepts (relatedly, see our discussion of Eurocentrism, below).

Importantly, in articulating the disciplining dynamics of the discipline, Reviewer 2 is not purposefully and willfully refusing to hear Indigenous social and political thought. Rather, Reviewer 2 is reflecting deeply rooted institutional divisions of labour that separate political science from other disciplines, including Indigenous Studies. Yet in constituting and reproducing the discipline following the dominant concerns, conversations, and conceptualizations and intellectual figures, Reviewer 2 acts to simultaneously destitute and marginalize Indigenous

intellectual traditions (Mignolo 2021).[12] If Reviewer 2 proposes that Indigenous political thought is out of place in "mainstream" political science journals, then that knowledge is thereby excluded from mainstream political science debate. If Reviewer 2 suggests that Indigenous political practice can only be understood in reference to the state or dominant concepts, then the sui generis nature of Indigenous political forms, on their own terms, is marginalized or eliminated from discussions in the discipline. If Reviewer 2 seeks to reposition Indigenous thinkers within conversations and frameworks developed by canonical Western political theorists, then Indigenous ideas are distorted into a response or reaction to those theorists – rather than being taken up as distinctive, rich political imaginaries and practices in the field of political science. The overall consequence of Reviewer 2's conscientious reproduction of disciplinary norms is to exclude or marginalize Indigenous thought in mainstream disciplines, especially on its own terms, so failing to enrich political science debates.[13]

[12] Following Mignolo, to constitute is to also destitute other options. To define political science is also to trace a border and exclude.

[13] As we have noted, this idea is extensively developed in Ferguson's (2016) discussion of the disciplinary assumptions that foreclose Indigenous contributions in political science. Political science is already a diverse discipline without a uniting paradigm: normative political theory, critical theory, the history of political ideas, comparative political science, Marxist international theory, and many other disciplinary variations can all be considered of interest to a wide audience of political scientists and published in generalist journals. We contest the practice of drawing the disciplinary boundary in ways that exclude Indigenous contributions despite their shared concerns for politics and empirical considerations.

2) Reproducing eurocentrism

Political science is Eurocentric. This is neither unique to the discipline nor particularly surprising given that political science was developed within European universities and by settler-colonial states who built their universities in imitation of European metropolitan models. Eurocentrism can be broadly defined as the enunciation of European ways of doing, knowing, and being as standards according to which all other lifeways should be measured and assessed (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). Europeans' lifeways are constituted as norms; and the lifeways of other peoples are represented as lacking and as having to be improved, or superseded and replaced, by European lifeways. Eurocentrism is therefore often associated with progress and diffusionism (Battiste and Henderson 2000, 21), the idea from Blaut (1993, 1) that the "natural, normal, logical and ethical flow" of culture and knowledge is from the superior, innovative European "Inside" to the inferior, primitive and backwards "Outside." The fundamental assumption is that all lifeways should progress towards or be superseded by European lifeways. Difference is not apprehended as a distinct, unique, and valuable perspective, but as a bygone, outdated, superstitious and even primitive lifeway.

Reviewer 2 may explicitly reject Eurocentric assumptions, as expressed in this direct and dehumanizing way, but they may nonetheless reproduce them as they manifest, less directly, in disciplinary institutional practices. We identify three routine ways this occurs.

First, Reviewer 2 is trained within an academy and discipline that unevenly grants symbolic capital to different forms of knowledges. In keeping with the discipline's Eurocentric origins, political science generally accords greater prestige to Eurocentric knowledges and relatively less prestige to Indigenous knowledges. Consequently, as a professionally competent political scientist, Reviewer 2 must know European intellectuals and traditions but familiarity with Indigenous

political thought is professionally optional, rather than necessary. A political theorist Reviewer 2 will be embarrassed to admit that they have not read Plato, John Stuart Mill or Rawls, or that they are unfamiliar with concepts like justice, the separation of powers, and democracy. In contrast, Reviewer 2 will feel no special shame at their unfamiliarity with Indigenous political intellectuals, like Vine Deloria Jr. or Viola Cordova, and traditions of political thought like the Two Row Wampum or the Dish With One Spoon.

Secure in their ignorance of Indigenous knowledges and histories, Reviewer 2 may ask the author of an Indigenous political contribution to explain basic facts, like the meaning of "Indian Status" under colonial law in Canada; or Reviewer 2 may feel entitled to ask for an extensive review of contemporary Indigenous feminisms in a paper foregrounding a particular Indigenous feminist author, given their unfamiliarity with the field. Reviewer 2 makes these demands comfortable in the knowledge that there is no professional requirement to demonstrate familiarity with Indigenous political knowledges. Correspondingly, they can demand that Indigenous contributions palliate the expected ignorance of their political science audience. The consequence of such requests is an extra burden for Indigenous scholars who are now expected to make a convincing case for their contributions *and* to surmount the allowable ignorance of their disciplinary audience. Eurocentrism manifests here in the attention and prestige granted to Euro-Western political traditions over Indigenous traditions in political science, and attendant, additional explanatory burdens that Reviewer 2 places on Indigenous-centered political scholarship that is outside of these traditions.

Relatedly, since Reviewer 2 is both relatively unschooled in Indigenous political thought and relatively comfortable admitting their ignorance in this area, they may demand extensive justifications for broadly accepted arguments within Indigenous scholarship. Confronted with the

claim that the residential schools in Canada constitute genocide, for instance, Reviewer 2 may ask for documentation and arguments to support this position. Yet residential schools have been denounced as "a national crime" in reports and newspapers since at least 1922, notably by Peter Bryce (Blackstock 2021, xiii). Moreover, the vast majority of Indigenous and settler colonial studies' scholars recognize the schools as genocidal, since they were explicitly created to "kill the Indian in the child" (Starblanket 2018; MacDonald 2019; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Reviewer 2's Eurocentric training, however, means that they can be ignorant of such broadly agreed upon facts and interpretations.[14] If some knowledge asymmetries are inevitable between established disciplines and newer areas of scholarship, including Indigenous knowledges, Reviewer 2's requests that well-known facts be established or debated, at length, make it difficult to advance more complex arguments. Reviewer 2 thus contributes to the reproduction of Eurocentric dynamics and to the truncation of Indigenous political thought, which must perpetually re-establish foundational knowledges with little space to engage in more nuanced argument.

Third, Reviewer 2 may judge Indigenous political thought superfluous when a contribution is not entirely distinct from European traditions. Asked to evaluate a contribution by an Indigenous scholar who offers, for instance, a critique of the contemporary exploitation of nature and of other-than-human kin, Reviewer 2 may respond by turning to their own Eurocentric training. They will observe that environmental and ecological political scientists operating from heterodox schools

[14] This is importantly distinct from racist denials of this genocide masquerading as careful requests for evidence; no amount of evidence would suffice to convince those who ideologically deny that violence against Indigenous peoples constitutes genocide.

have already critiqued the historical and contemporary exploitation of nature by human beings. Reviewer 2 thus reproduces the Eurocentric valuing of European over Indigenous theorizing, because they assume that if an element of critique is present within European traditions, then it is superfluous to engage with Indigenous approaches. The consequence of Reviewer 2's response is that critical Indigenous perspectives are set aside as redundant and therefore irrelevant to political thought—or at least unworthy of publication, because insufficiently original—once again marginalizing Indigenous approaches on their own terms.[15]

In short, Eurocentrism is reproduced in Reviewer 2's allowable ignorance about Indigenous knowledges and experiences, which carry relatively less prestige within political science and the academy. Reviewer 2's allowable or expectable ignorance then places additional explanatory burdens on Indigenous-focussed contributions to political sciences. In other instances, Reviewer 2 may deem Indigenous thought superfluous, because there are some shared elements with heterodox traditions within European political science, so that Eurocentric traditions are reconstituted as the universe of political possibility.

3) Demanding and challenging essentialism and romanticism.

Demands that Indigenous peoples be different, in essentializing and romanticizing ways, are not unique to scholarship but manifest in specific ways within it. Indigenous differences are essentialized when Indigenous lifeways are understood as unchanging, such that deviations from

[15] Imagine declaring Western feminisms superfluous, as distinctive intellectual traditions, because Indigenous feminists had previously emphasized the critical importance of equality for men and women.

their expected descriptions are considered disqualifying. Indigenous lifeways are romanticized when they are understood according to idealizing stereotypes, often referring to some pristine pre-contact historical and cultural fiction (P. Chaat. Smith 2009).

The essentializing and romanticizing engagement with Indigenous lifeways has a long history, going back to Voltaire and Montaigne, where the noble savage is a "device" (De Lutri 1975, 206) to condemn or parochialize and facilitate critique of European traditions, rather than accurately describe what is distinctive about Indigenous lifeways. As LaRocque explains: "The European idea of the noble savage was abstract; it was meant as a tool for social criticism" (LaRocque 2010, 128). At worst, in popular culture, this manifests as a demand for a crude caricature that LaRocque summarizes as a series of contrasts, 'Whites are materialistic, Reds spiritual; Whites are linear, Reds circular; Whites are individualistic, Reds tribal. Whites are patriarchal, Reds blur with "Mother Earth"' (2010, 139). In contemporary scholarship, essentialism is manifest in the demand that Indigenous political thought sharply contrast with and be 'uncontaminated' by mainstream (but also heterodox) Western traditions. On the other hand, the romantic tendency is manifest in the need for Indigenous knowledges to stand as an idealized normative standard – where only the good remains and from which the bad and the ugly are expunged – by which contemporary Western political configurations can be condemned.

Insofar as Reviewer 2 is socialized into essentialized and/or romantic stereotypes – very likely given their prevalence in popular culture and the established tradition of social critique drawing on the figure of the noble savage – then they reproduce these schemas. When Reviewer 2 is drawn by essentialism, then where Western political theory centres on the individual, Reviewer 2 will expect Indigenous political norms to centre the community, and if Western political thought is secular, then Reviewer 2 will expect Indigenous political thought to necessarily be spiritual.

When Reviewer 2 is drawn by romantism, if Western ways of governing are problematically hierarchal then Reviewer 2 will expect Indigenous politics to emphasize desirable forms of horizontal decision-making, and so on. For Reviewer 2, an Indigenous contribution that does not reflect such normatively loaded binaries may be critiqued as failing to genuinely reflect what matters in Indigenous lifeways. In short, Reviewer 2 demands what Andersen calls "*Indigeneity-as-different*" ((Andersen 2009, 88) emphasis in the original), the expectation that Indigenous contributions focus on "elements which supposedly render Indigenous communities and cultures different from" – and for romantics, necessarily better than – "settler society and its communities" (Andersen 2009, 89).[16]

When Reviewer 2 is attracted to essentialist ideas, they assess Indigenous political thought and practices in terms of "authenticity." Reviewer 2 may demand the kinds of stereotypical and romantic differences that LaRocque enumerates above, for instance, insisting on Indigenous spirituality, even in cases where that may not be relevant, either to the author or to the question at hand. At worst, Reviewer 2's essentialist demand for authenticity can lead to a reification of aspects of Indigenous cultures, real or imagined, that then serve to disqualify contributions as inauthentic and even Indigenous scholars themselves as insufficiently authentic (Aikau 2023).

[16] As with the Reviewer 2 who sees Indigenous theorizing as superfluous if a critique from an Indigenous standpoint has already been made from a Western standpoint, the essentialist Reviewer 2 demands absolute difference. Their motivations differ, however, since the former seeks proof of new insights beyond the universe of Eurocentric theorizing that is their frame of reference, while the latter demands difference in a colonial/Indigenous binary, as proof of Indigenous "authenticity."

LaRocque (2011) and Andersen and Hokowhitu (2007) warn that such essentialist temptations risk freezing Indigenous knowledge at an imagined pre-colonial point of purity.[17] The essentialist Reviewer 2 thus excludes the right to diverse changing, and transformative intellectual understandings of Indigenous political traditions, instead demanding essentialist, unchanging, uniform or even romanticized expressions of "authentic" indigeneity.

Conversely, Reviewer 2 may forcefully reject essentialist and romantic ideas, precisely because they are aware of their problematic histories. This leads Reviewer 2 to critique *any* comparison of Western and Indigenous social and political thought as an essentializing binary, even when there may be relevant distinctions to be made (Sioui 1992, chap. 5; Wolfe 2013). Despite their diversity, for instance, many Indigenous political traditions centre relationships with land and with other-than-humans understood as kin, to whom human beings hold very strong responsibilities, different from the ways many Western traditions understand land, that is as space to be possessed, often as private property. In their fear of essential or romantic binaries, Reviewer 2 limits the possibilities for examining any commonalities across otherwise diverse Euro-Western traditions and similarly excludes analyses that point to commonalities among otherwise distinctive Indigenous ways of knowing. If all analyses depend on schematics, hence simplifications, the anti-essentialist Reviewer 2 refuses them as inevitably essentializing (Andersen 2009, 96). The issue

[17] On 'freezing' Indigenous peoples, see also: (Craft 2023). At a seminar with leading Indigenous intellectuals from Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere, held in Paris, France, in 2013, Elaine recalls that a French colleague commented that the participants could not really be Indigenous because they were university professors. This kind of disqualification is typical of essentialist and romantic demands for "authenticity."

here is not Reviewer 2's appropriate scrutiny of claims to difference or their engagement with the specificities of Indigenous traditions, but Reviewer 2's pre-emptive denials of any synthetic and comparative engagement with distinctive features of Euro-Western and Indigenous traditions.

In sum, the Reviewer 2 who reproduces essentialist and romantic ideas demands Indigenous difference, especially difference from mainstream political scientific traditions and practices. In contrast, the Reviewer 2 who is concerned with rejecting essentialist and romanticizing approaches refuses arguments that find common ground among otherwise diverse Indigenous political traditions or among diverse Western intellectual traditions. In these cases, Reviewer 2 forecloses a rich discussion of Indigenous contributions as a pluralistic intellectual field of debate that reflects complex and contradictory living and lived traditions, or what Andersen (2009) describes as the "density" of Indigenous lifeways.

4) Unfairly politicizing the "good" argument

Indigenous studies and contributions are often guided by an ethical impulse to defend and sustain self-determination against colonial dynamics of dispossession, erasure, and disqualification.[18] Many Indigenous studies' scholars, moreover, challenge positivist epistemologies, arguing that it is more realistic and rigorous to recognize the necessarily political nature of all knowledge, produced by fallible human beings in unequal circumstances. Thus, many Indigenous scholars reject, as false pretense, the suggestion that scholarship is or can aspire to be apolitical (LaRocque 2015). Accordingly, Indigenous contributions generally embrace and make explicit their political commitments, not least their efforts to challenge ongoing colonial injustices. Unlike other political

[18] See Smith (2012) and LaRocque (2015).

theorists who take up theory to normative ends, however, the Indigenous scholars' distinctive contribution is to explore right relationships through a commitment to the revitalization and resurgence of specific Indigenous lifeways. Indigenous contributions performatively and "contrapuntally" recentre Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing (LaRocque 2010, 11–12), in contrast to an ethical impulse towards disalienation or critical enlightenment, seen as universal goods.

Despite such established academic practices, Reviewer 2 may unfairly disqualify explicitly politicized arguments in Indigenous contributions on three related but distinct bases.

First, when committed to neutrality and objectivity as central to political science, Reviewer 2 may reject any Indigenous contribution that makes explicit their normative and political aims. Reviewer 2 will then argue that a contribution is too "editorial," an "opinion piece" rather than a scholarly article. The consequence is to exclude much of the field of Indigenous scholarship and normative contributions by Indigenous scholars from mainstream journals, given overt political commitments in many of these contributions. For Reviewer 2, any political commitment is the enemy of the "good"—neutral, objective, scientific and thus apolitical—argument.

Second, Reviewer 2 may dismiss an Indigenous contribution out of a desire to protect *their* discipline – and their own investments in it – from critique. If Reviewer 2 is faced with a contribution that points out systemic exclusions within political science – like Ferguson's essay, or this one – then Reviewer 2 may raise multiple objections whose main function is to defend the discipline and Reviewer 2's role in it. For instance, when confronted with a critique that Western political science naturalizes the oppressive colonial state, Reviewer 2 may observe that some critical Western political scientists have long pointed to the historically contingent and even oppressive nature of the state. Reviewer 2's observation might be accurate but diverts critique

away from the Indigenous scholar's systemic concerns. In such cases, Reviewer 2's unavowed aim is to protect their own scholarly and professional investments in political science. In a sense, this is a settler move to innocence (Tuck and Yang 2012; Ravecca and Dauphinee 2022) whereby Reviewer 2 denies that the discipline they have invested in—often with the hope of making the world a better place—may be oppressive towards Indigenous peoples. In short, Reviewer 2 does not want to be one of the 'bad guys.'[19] Here, Reviewer 2 demands that the "good" argument not counter their own politicized but ostensibly merely professionally rigorous defense of disciplinary commitments.[20]

Third, when Reviewer 2 is engaged in Indigenous scholarship, they may also review in problematic ways. Given underlying political disagreements, they may subject sound and valid contributions to excessive critique. Editors little versed in Indigenous scholarship may understand such critiques as fundamentally about soundness of argument, when they are actually a defense of

[19] In developing this argument, we are indebted to John McGuire, University of Dublin, School of Philosophy. He calls this the "squid ink defense," in which arguments or objections are offered as distractions. These distractions allow Reviewer 2 to avoid acknowledging an explicit or implicit critique of their own professional and intellectual commitments.

[20] This dynamic is not unique to Indigenous contributions and can hardly be qualified of proper disciplinary conduct. Nevertheless, it remains a likely response from those invested in their professional practice, see Ravecca and Dauphinee (2022) for related reflections. Furthermore, precisely given the dynamics of epistemic oppression between Indigenous and dominant Euro-Western traditions, such attempts by Reviewer 2 to insulate themselves from indictment are likely to occur with Indigenous contributions.

a particular political solution. When Reviewer 2 is committed to a revolutionary emancipatory project, for instance, they may reject all reformist approaches as hopelessly *argumentatively* compromised. Conversely, the reformist Reviewer 2 may condemn more revolutionary contributions *as unsound arguments*. Even editors who suspect a political undercurrent to the evaluation may reject the contribution out of concern about controversially intervening in debates they are ill-equipped to navigate. Here Reviewer 2 unfairly maintains that a "good" argument, and the only sound reasoning, is the one that supports their own political line. Faced with such evaluations, editors may either fail to recognize the politics underlying the critique or reject the article to avoid becoming embroiled in unfamiliar and potentially contentious debates.

In sum, we refer to 'unfairly politicizing the "good" argument' in three circumstances: first, when Reviewer 2, committed to an objectivist or positivist stance, argues that *any* explicit political commitment contaminates the good argument; second, when Reviewer 2 seeks to defend political science and their own professional commitments from critique by imposing exonerative distractions; and third, when Reviewer 2 attacks the soundness of an argument because it supports a competing political conclusion, effectively maintaining that the only "good" argument is one that aligns with their own political stance. All three arguments may lead to the rejection of an Indigenous contribution to mainstream political science. In other cases, they may lead to the narrowing of the pluralistic contributions of Indigenous social and political thought to political science, as Reviewer 2 gatekeepers accept as "good" arguments only those in line with their own views.

5. The Underrepresentation of Experts in Indigenous Scholarship

For all academic articles, reviewers may have diverging views, but in our experience, contributions to political science from Indigenous scholarly perspectives are notable for the frequency and extent to which reviewers offer deeply opposing assessments.

Reviewer 2 is especially likely to disagree with Reviewer 1 because there are a relatively small numbers of Indigenous scholars and indeed, any scholars professionally competent to review Indigenous contributions. This reflects Indigenous studies relative younth as a discipline. In the 1970s, Indigenous scholarship was just emerging and largely seen as "remedial" rather than a field with broader intellectual value beyond educating Indigenous students (LaRocque 2015). This has changed, but only very recently, so that Hokowhitu documents the development and consolidation of the field over the last fifteen years, notably thanks to the work of the *North American Indigenous Studies Association,* incorporated in 2009 (Hokowhitu 2021). Despite the emergence of Indigenous Studies as a robust interdisciplinary field, specific disciplines like political science and sociology still have *very* few Indigenous scholars and even fewer established and tenured Indigenous scholars. Historical injustices are at play in this underrepresentation. For instance, status Indians in Canada could lose their status—be involuntarily "enfranchised"—for getting a university degree from 1876-1920 (Assembly of First Nations, n.d.). Further, non-Indigenous scholars working on Indigenous political traditions are not legion and they often approach Indigenous issues through a canonical disciplinary perspective rather than from an Indigenous-informed perspective.

In this context, few specialists can be asked to review Indigenous contributions. It is easier to find scholars who can engage with scholarship on Locke, Hobbes, Rawls, representative democracy and luck egalitarianism, for instance, than to find political scientists expertly conversant about the concept of Mino-Mnaamodzawin (McGregor 2018) or the Dish With One

Spoon (L. B. Simpson 2008). Moreover, since Indigenous scholarship is often trans- and interdisciplinary, political scientists without that interdisciplinary training are ill-equipped to critically review Indigenous contributions.

Reviewer 2 may thus be part of a very small pool of scholars who can expertly review Indigenous contributions. These scholars are often deeply invested in their understanding of Indigenous scholarship, its ethical commitments, and how to approach Indigenous issues and tradition – and they may vigorously disagree with experts who do not share their views. Scholars like Glen Coulthard, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Audra Simpson are associated with the politics of refusal and turning away from the state (Coulthard 2014; L. B. Simpson 2017; A. Simpson 2014). Others, like John Borrows, James Tully, and Dale Turner (Borrows and Tully 2018; Tully 2020; Turner 2006) are focused on a transformative dialogical engagement with the state. While these named scholars may perfectly be capable of abstracting their diverging views when reviewing, these are opposed views about how to pursue decolonization[21] – and Reviewer 2 may be less willing or able to strive for detachment.

While there are deep disagreements across political science, reviewing processes conventionally accept that a given contribution should not need to convince an ideological opponent; an historical materialist contribution, for instance, will not normally be reviewed by a neoliberal scholar. The underrepresentation of scholars conversant in Indigenous concerns simply makes it more likely that Reviewer 2 will fall on the opposite sides of Reviewer 1, given significant political divides. This can explain why, in our experience, Reviewer 2 is very often sharply divided from Reviewer 1 in their assessments. Alternatively, an Indigenous contribution may not be sent

[21] But see Stark's challenge to this division in terms of refusal and dialogue (Stark 2023)

to specialists in Indigenous issues, but to Reviewer 2 because they are an expert in the different literatures Indigenous contributions draw upon. A contribution that engages with political economy, Indigenous political thought, and settler colonial studies may be sent to a specialist in each of these disciplines, given the limited number of scholars who are conversant in all these disciplines at once. Reviewer 2's evaluation joins with the other reviewers to hold an Indigenous contribution to multiple disciplinary standards, making it very difficult to meet wide-ranging reviewer expectations.

Similarly, since Indigenous issues are generally understudied, this can lead to profound misunderstandings. Ferguson writes about an encyclopedia of political thought for which the editors compiled concepts of "great importance to political thought." Revealing for our point, he observes:

> all agreed on the importance of one entry: "metis." Only after the finished entries began to arrive many months later did we recognize a telling incommensurability in our discussion. For some of us, metis referred to the ancient Greek concept of wisdom in counsel, the ability to give and take advice for strategic and clever thinking. But others among us presumed we had been discussing the critical Canadian racial and cultural classification of métis: the descendants of mixed European and Native ancestry, who are legally recognized as one of Canada's three aboriginal groups. The real question this misunderstanding raises is not which of these definitions (or, more properly, concepts) is more important to political theory. It is, instead, how none of us considered the possibility of confusion. Greek mythology was so distant to one group, and Native North

> American racial identity so unfamiliar to another, as to allow the surprisingly long-lived nature of this miscommunication. (Ferguson 2016 1036)

Similarly, Reviewer 2 may be an expert on the Aristotelian good life and may thus be asked to review an Indigenous contribution about the Anishinaabe conception of the good life (Mino-Mnaamodzawin), in an evaluative process especially ripe for such miscommunications.

Given that top journals in the field receive significantly more submissions than they publish, two or even three reviewers may be required to recommend publication. Without questioning this practice, it should be clear, given the dynamics just surveyed, how Indigenous contributions may face additional challenges in a competitive publication process.

Conclusion: Am I Reviewer 2?

To conclude, we turn to the most easily operationalized remedies to Reviewer 2, for those committed to ensuring a pluralist political science more amenable to Indigenous contributions.

First, editors committed to pluralizing the discipline should communicate with reviewers to establish the importance of evaluating Indigenous social and political thought on its own terms.

Second, reviewers will need to become conversant enough in Indigenous social and political thought to evaluate the intelligibility, clarity, and relevance of the argument, shifting the burden of explanation, narrowing the "allowable ignorance" of editors and reviewers, and over time contribute to a more pluralistic political science.

Relatedly, editors should alert reviewers about unhelpful tendencies to overburden Indigenous scholarship with an educational mandate for well-known facts and concepts. Reviewers should be careful in requiring additional framing, justifications, and explanations regarding Indigenous issues.

Third, both editors and reviewers should be careful in their engagement with Indigenous contributions that they do not reproduce essentialism and romanticism, demanding Indigenous "differences" or worse, the Noble Savage. Listening to "other" and "othered" Indigenous voices does not imply that they will say something radically different or opposite or necessarily "better" compared to prevailing insights. Indigenous perspectives may make a distinctive, but not necessarily entirely unique – and necessarily or inevitably emancipatory contribution. Furthermore, the mobilization of Indigenous worldviews purely as foils for critiquing all that is wrong with colonial civilization should be replaced by more nuanced, rich, and thickly descriptive accounts of Indigenous lifeways.

Fourth, editors and reviewers should be aware of both the danger and the meaningful possibilities for comparative analyses of Indigenous and Euro-Western lifeways. How is a reviewer to know if a comparison is essentializing and romantic or meaningful? The answer cannot be given a priori but depends on the depth of engagement with existing Indigenous scholarship and knowledges and the care taken in the analysis.

Fifth, the underrepresentation of Indigenous scholars, and ensuing tendencies to sharply divergent reviews, can only be remedied by a significant increase in Indigenous scholars – and even then, the fact that Indigenous contributions are often trans-disciplinary means that they will remain susceptible to divergent reviewer assessments. Editors need to offer clear, specific editorial guidance to reconcile or navigate these divergences rather than regard them as disqualifying or leave it entirely up to the author.

In sum, Reviewer 2 can and should remain critical, but thoughtfully so, in service of a more intellectually diverse discipline. For those political scientists committed to decolonizing the discipline, such actions can help to undo the marginalization of Indigenous knowledges. The result

will be a more pluralistic and rigorous political science that takes up a fuller range of human knowledge, stimulating new debate and ways of thinking about our social and political lives.

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