Elizabeth Hoover, *The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxins in a Mohawk Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). 392 pp. Cloth $112.00, Paperback $28.00.

Elizabeth Hoover's *The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxins in a Mohawk Community* charts the Akwesasne community's navigation and experiences of industrial water pollution, partnerships with health science researchers, and the challenges and opportunities of existing and persisting in a dynamic political ecology shaped by Haudenosaunee and settler colonial worldviews. Hoover's work can be read as an ethnographic rope braided by two threads—one empirical, one methodological—that weave together insights relevant to the fields of Indigenous studies, political ecology, anthropology, and public health, and to anyone interested in community-based research. Unravelled, these threads expose the dynamic relations between industrialization, settler colonial environmental governance, and Indigenous survivance; and the politics of ontologically-disparate knowledge paradigms and the methodological practices that endeavour to bridge them. Through interviews with Akwesasne researchers and community members, as well as with university health science researchers, Hoover sheds light on the complex political, cultural, and ecological entanglements that tied—and continue to tie—together Haudenosaunee and settler colonial landscapes on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, and the dynamic ways of being that are fought for and made possible within them.

The book's first thread considers in parallel the settler colonial impositions of environmental contamination and the state governance regimes aimed at managing it. Hoover outlines the implications of each for the Akwesasne community and their ability to maintain self-determined practices of social and cultural reproduction. The 1980s release of methyl mercury, PCBs, and other industrial toxins into the St. Lawrence River interrupted key cultural and subsistence practices for the Akwesasne. As a result of the bioaccumulation of toxins in fish and muskrat populations and the contamination of water and soils used to grow traditional crops, Akwesasne community members increasingly turned away from gardening and fishing. Here, Hoover makes several brilliant moves to underscore why a political ecological analysis of the concentration of industrial toxins in the St. Lawrence would be incomplete without attending to the settler colonial context in which it occurred.

First, Hoover writes about environmental contamination as boundary crossing; as toxins leached their way into the waterways of the St. Lawrence, the state practiced an ethos of toxin avoidance, primarily through the issuance of fish advisories. The interventions that had failed to prevent environmental contamination in the first place subsequently failed to account for the socio-cultural impacts of contamination. Hoover's reference to boundary crossing can be used to set up a useful juxtaposition regarding enactments of settler colonial state violence. We

often think of this violence occurring through the imposition of boundaries (e.g. borders, property regimes) on Indigenous land—boundaries that have certainly impacted life in Akwesasne territory. But Hoover makes visible the enactment of state violence through the *negation* of boundaries via lax environmental regulations and the failure to hold industrial polluters accountable.

Second, Hoover relies on community insights to make a case for "the body" (in three registers) as a site to examine the metabolic effects of colonization. Hoover shows how the wastes of industrialization and the failure of the state to enforce environmental regulations not only put community members' health at risk but disposed some members to rely increasingly on supermarket food and waged labour to pay for it. By documenting the metabolic consequences of toxins at two embodied scales—on the individual bodies of community members and on the collective social body, in this case through interference with intergenerational sociocultural subsistence practices— settler colonial resource governance can be examined as a metabolic force in its own right, one that can work to expand capitalist relations and compromise Indigenous self-determination through environmental degradation.

In response to the contamination, the Akwesasne community strategically sought out partnerships with university health researchers to expand their understanding of the effects of toxin exposure, and to generate data to lobby the state for more effective remediation. Hoover couches this strategy in a profound and persistent tension that emerges in several places throughout the book: the fraught loop that catches Indigenous nations in a negotiation between "demanding rights and resources from the settler state while also challenging its impositions on them" (166). The need for scientific proofs required to advance their interests in a colonial justice system initially opened up the community to exploitative research practices. The Akwesasne community later set up grassroots and tribal governance infrastructure to advocate for their interests, but this tension raises important questions about the hierarchization of knowledges that shape interpretations of responsibility owed to a traditional homeland—both in terms of the (human and nonhuman) communities to whom we feel accountable, and how those responsibilities are enacted.

It is through this negotiation that we pick up on the book's second ethnographic thread, which documents the series of methodological interventions that emerged from the evolving partnership between the Akwesasne community and State University of New York (SUNY) health researchers. Hoover's decision to interview the SUNY researchers was both a substantive and political move, a choice to "study up" which she argues can make visible cultural groups that escape categorization due to institutional flows of power. Her research provokes the need to scale that effort up even further. While Hoover's work does justice to unpacking the effects of environmental contamination on the individual and social bodies of the Akwesasne community, there is more to be learned from the body politic at both the level of tribal and traditional governments, as well as that of the settler

colonial state. Hoover's research raises important questions about the jurisdiction of environmental knowledges and practices that could be answered in part through an ethnography of the state; one that documents the specific mechanisms by which the state reproduces and asserts its authority over nature (and its degradation) in the first place, and over lands and resources that remain jurisdictionally entangled and unsettled.

Second, Hoover documents the tensions and possibilities of cutting across knowledge paradigms to merge Indigenous grassroots organizing with academic scientific research. She writes of the ways SUNY researchers came to recognize that mismatched expectations over the scope and purpose of the research between themselves and the Akwesasne community arose from the researchers' lack of transparent communication and their initial failure to include the community in designing their research program. As these relationships persisted through several rounds of research, the Akwesasne community developed strategies to advocate for their own questions and interests, which included hiring Akwesasne researchers to conduct interviews and sample collection. Importantly, the community-based participatory research (CBPR) program that was eventually established had mutually-beneficial outcomes for all parties involved: it strengthened the rate of community participation in the study, the applicability of the findings for community members, and generated a more robust data set for the university researchers.

There are lessons here for both settler and Indigenous researchers who are contemplating collaboration, as well as for the conduct of "bridging work" that aims to work in and through ontological and epistemological differences. Hoover convincingly argues that Akwesasne interventions that prioritized community interests and capacity-building led to the development of an alternative research culture, one that broke down entrenched binaries between the "researcher" and the "research subject" and that reconsidered "*what* and *for whom* we learn" (5). Such active partnerships will of course continue to involve tensions that arise from the broader historical context in which research is generated and findings are circulated. One tension of note is that between accounting for the colonial histories of exploitation behind many academic research traditions, and questioning how power imbalances are often entrenched by the very conventions academic institutions recommend for "overcoming" real or perceived vulnerabilities. Hoover's approach is less about escaping these tensions, however, than deliberately working in and through them—as modelled by the ways the Akwesasne community has moved beyond a practice of surviving in toxic environments to one that centres Indigenous survivance and regeneration. Hoover's work makes a convincing case for CBPR as a means of reconfiguring research practices to establish self-determined relations between Indigenous and settler researchers and communities, and to work within and against settler institutions and knowledge paradigms.

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