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Darrel Manitowabi

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Gambling with the Windigo: Theorizing Indigenous Casinos and Gambling in Canada

Darrel Manitowabi[a*]

[a] *Northern Ontario School of Medicine*

Abstract: The legacy of colonialism in Canada manifests through land dispossession, structural violence and assimilative policies. Casinos are an anomaly emerging in Canada, becoming major economic engines, generating capital for housing, education, health, and language and cultural rejuvenation programs. On the other hand, the literature on Indigenous casinos raises crucial questions about compromised sovereignty, addiction, and neocolonial economic and political entrapment. This article theorises Indigenous casinos as a modern expression of the windigo. In Algonquian oral history, the windigo is a mythic giant cannibal. The underlying meaning of the windigo is the consumption of Indigenous peoples leading to illness and death. One can become a windigo and consume others, and one must always be cautious of this possibility. I propose casinos and Indigenous-provincial gambling revenue agreements are modern-day windigook (plural form of windigo). This framework provides an urgently needed new theorisation of casinos, grounded in Indigenous epistemology and ontology.

Keywords: Indigenous casinos, gambling, windigo, consumption

Windigo: Fabulous giant that lives on human flesh;
a man [sic] that eats human flesh, cannibal.
-Baraga (1992 [1878], p. 418)

Windigos come in different forms today. There are
Other harmful forms of cannibalistic consumption
that destroy lands and people.
-Borrows (2008, p. 226)

Introduction

There is limited theoretical engagement on the issue of Indigenous casinos in Canada, and the situation is comparatively similar in the United States. Furthermore, gambling studies are, for the most part, dominated by biomedical theoretical models focused on addiction, though there is an emergent social and cultural academic engagement (e.g., Nicoll, 2019; Gordon & Reith, 2019; Raylu & Oei, 2004). Approaches to Indigenous gambling studies include, for instance, mythology (e.g., Gabriel, 1996); literary analysis and research on the cultural form of gambling (e.g., Pasquaretta, 2003); sovereignty (Light & Rand, 2005); ethnography and the culture of casino money (e.g., Cattelino, 2008); gambling harm (e.g. Williams, Stevens & Nixon, 2011); neoliberalism (e.g., Manitowabi, 2011a); and historical analysis (Belanger, 2006). In this article, I propose an Indigenous-specific theory of casinos as modern manifestations of the *windigo*, a cannibalistic animate being in the Algonquian oral tradition. I base this on an anthropological hermeneutical (Bernard, 2011, p. 17) analysis of accounts of the windigo, and in doing so, I compare my interpretation of the windigo with the lived Indigenous community experience with a casino.

In this engagement, I revisit my past research on Ontario's Indigenous casino, a review of the Indigenous gambling revenue agreements in Ontario to the present, and subsequent work on Indigenous state-relations. An Indigenous anthropological approach informs my analysis (Medicine, 2011). I also respond to Ranco's (2006) call to address the lack of "a deep theoretical rumination on what indigenous (anthropological) researchers bring…" (pp. 61-62). Furthermore, Tim Ingold's move beyond ethnography's "study of", to instead embrace "a study

[*] Corresponding author. Email: dmanitowabi@nosm.ca
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with" (2011, p. 23, emphasis mine) informs this engagement. In particular, Ingold's approach integrates the experience of life in anthropological knowledge production, and it does not limit insight to fieldwork and cultural descriptions in ethnographies. Thus, to accomplish the objective of this article, I situate my own story of the windigo in the analysis, and I then revisit previous anthropological fieldwork and subsequent research and experience that has expanded my initial engagement with Indigenous casino research in Ontario. Though my focus is Ontario, there is theoretical applicability across Canada given the emergence of Indigenous casinos in Canada and the structural context of colonialism (see Belanger, 2006 for an overview of Indigenous gambling in Canada).

My Own Story of Windigo

During September 13-15, 2019, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island, Ontario, my home community, held the Robinson Huron Treaty Gathering: Honouring and Remembering our 1850 Treaty event. I accepted an invitation to present on the social, political and economic context at the time of the land cessions. In preparation for this gathering, I spent time reflecting on the significance of treaties and their contemporary meaning. The evening before my presentation, the idea of windigo came to mind upon reflecting on the land dispossession affecting the Anishinaabek signatories of the 1850 Robinson Huron Treaty and their descendants.

On the day of my presentation, the scheduled outdoor location at Thunderbird Park in Wiikwemkoong shifted indoors at the recreational centre due to projected rain. In my opening, I stated, "I am here because of the windigo," and I immediately caught the attention of community members, chiefs and leaders gathered. I next went on to explain the Anishinaabek way of life that existed at the time of the 1850 Treaty, and I then shared a story of the windigo collected by A. Irving Hallowell in northern Manitoba in the 1930s (Hallowell, 2010, pp. 239-240; 248-249). In this story a hunter is pursued by a windigo that he could hear, but could not see. Fearing for his life, he frantically canoed across a river navigating the sound of the approaching windigo, and he finally escaped it by confronting the being out of desperation. Before reciting the story, I mentioned that in the old days, storytelling of mythic beings such as the windigo would take place in the winter to avoid upsetting the thunder beings (who migrated to the south) and the underwater beings (who were beneath the ice). At the midpoint of my narration, the rain started to fall hard on the roof of the centre, drowning out my voice, and I needed to pause before continuing with my presentation.

After my talk, a young Anishinaabe from another community approached me and shared thoughts on the critical connections between the windigo and colonialism. She mentioned she did not plan to attend the Treaty gathering, but changed her mind the evening before and participated at the last minute. She remarked she was glad she did and encouraged me to write about the windigo and I promised I would.

The silence of those gathered at my presentation spoke of a comprehension of the windigo. Furthermore, the reception of my story by the youth indicates continuation and geographic adherence of its meaning. Was the timing of the hard rain a random coincidence?

I have chosen to recite this windigo story regardless of the season, since, as I subsequently show, the modern-day windigo is no longer limited to the winter months. Metaphorically, colonialism is a continuous winter for Indigenous peoples in Canada that presents a threat to wellness. In what follows, I review the literature on the windigo and situate the contemporary Indigenous literature on the windigo with past casino research to suggest casinos represent modern-day windigook, possessing animistic qualities that may consume individuals and communities.

Background on the Windigo

The Algonquian concept of a cannibalistic giant who occupies the northern forests is known by varied terminology. This variance is due to differences in dialect, and some examples include wee-tee-ko, wihtikow, witiko and windigo, with the latter being the most common spelling in English print (Smallman, 2014, p. 13). In this article, I retain the original spelling in cited sources, but use windigo as a general reference to all accounts. Brightman (1988) provides the following succinct definition of the windigo:

> The noun windigo… …refers to one of a class of anthropophagous monsters, "supernatural" from a non-Algonquian perspective, who exhibit grotesque physical and behavioral abnormalities and possess great spiritual and physical power. Either many or all windigos were once human beings, transformed, usually irreversibly, into their monstrous condition. In some cases the transition was conceived as rapid while in others the condition could be covert and volitionally disguised (p. 337).

The earliest historical record of this being is in 1612 in a Powhatan dictionary (Brightman, 1988, p. 339). In 1638 the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune recorded a narrative of cannibalism in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec (cited in Smallman, 2014, p. 79). Various fur traders collected stories of the windigo (e.g., Thompson, 1962 [1784-1812]; George Nelson, 1988 [1786-1859]), along with early travellers (e.g., Kohl, 1985 [1850]; Henry, 1901 [1809]). The windigo has either been documented or studied in various academic disciplines such as linguistics (Baraga, 1992 [1878]; Rhodes, 1993), history (Carlson, 2009; Smallman, 2014), religious studies (Smith, 1995), and anthropology (e.g., Cooper, 1933; Hallowell, 2010 [1934-1972], Barnouw, 1977; Brightman,

1988) and it has also been examined in interdisciplinary scholarship (e.g., Gercken & Pelletier, 2017).

Anthropologists have used materialist interpretations (see Brightman, 1988 for a review) in theorizing the windigo, arguing it results from starvation and cannibalism and is thus a cultural interpretation of animal resource depletion (e.g., Bishop 1975; Marano, 1982). Others suggest it is a psychiatric disorder known as windigo psychosis, an Algonquian-specific culture-bound syndrome resulting in psychiatric illness-induced cannibalism (e.g., Parker 1960). Waldram (2004) provides a post-structural critique of the windigo as being an anthropological construction of "primitive" peoples.

Indigenous-Centred Windigo Narratives

Academic writing is not the only source of windigo narratives. Nor is it the case that windigo narratives are only historical. In his compilation of legends, renowned contemporary Cree oral historian Louis Bird (2007) devotes seven stories to the witigo. There is continuity in the Indigenous literature on the windigo dating to 1887. Gerald Vizenor (1970) reproduced Anishinaabe stories originally published 1887-1888 in *The Progress*, an all-Anishinaabe White Earth Minnesota publication, including reference to the windigo in a story (1970, p. 137-142). The late Basil Johnston, a contemporary Anishinaabe storyteller, recites weendigo legends, and also provides an interpretation of modern-day windigos. In response to scepticism of the windigo as past fiction, Johnston states, "Actually, the Weendigoes did not die out or disappear; they have only been assimilated and reincarnated as corporations, conglomerates, and multinationals. They've even taken on new names, acquired polished manners, and renounced their cravings for raw human flesh in return for more refined viands" (1995, p. 235).

Contemporary Anishinaabe and Cree novelists have reinterpreted the modern windigo as the manifestation of residential school priests who culturally and sexually abused Indigenous students (e.g., Highway, 1999; Metatawabin, 2004), or as a thematic representation of the lived social, political and economic experience resulting from colonialism (Vizenor, 1990 [1978]). Contemporary writing on the windigo also occurs in stories for young readers (e.g., Erdrich, 1999). Pasquaratta (2003, pp. 111-162) provides an analysis of the cultural form of Anishinaabe gambling based on the writings of Erdich, Johnston and Vizenor that is comparable to my analysis, particularly the connections between gambling and the windigo in Vizenor's work.

Aside from the literary tradition, there is an emerging academic engagement with the contemporary relevance of the windigo. In the field of Indigenous law, Borrows (2010a, pp. 216-227; 2010b pp. 77-84) positions windigo narratives as evidence of Indigenous jurisprudence in prosecuting those committing harm. Friedland analyses Cree and Anishinaabek wetiko stories as a legal principle framework in addressing alarming rates of intimate violence and child victimization in Indigenous communities. According to Friedland, "The majority of non-Indigenous reactions to and treatment of the wetiko concept encapsulates the broader colonial issue of forcible dismissal" (2018, p. xvi).

The most recent scholarship that connects with the theoretical argument of this article is the work by Cree community scholar Suzanne Methot (2019). Methot (2019) critiques the anthropological literature on the windigo as being ethnocentric by creating a "mental illness superimposed onto Indigenous cultural practice" (p. 272). In historic times, the windigo reflected the inherent dangers of selfishness, over-consumption and disconnection, illustrating illness. Wellness lies in the balance of individuals and community, while greed and excess compromise well-being (ibid.). The contemporary windigo reflects neoliberal capitalism, environmental destruction and the internal Indigenous lateral violence related to the intergenerational trauma due to colonialism (Methot, 2019, p. 273). For Methot, "Today's wittigo cannibalizes other people's souls through sexual abuse, and it eats away at another person's identity by inflicting emotional abuse. It cannibalizes the strength of communities by engaging in toxic communication patterns… Today, the wittigo craves alcohol and empty sex to numb the pain and fill the gap created by a lack of love and belonging. The wittigo destroys connection: to others, and to oneself" (Methot, 2019, p. 274).

Anishinaabek Gambling and Windigo Narratives

In historic times, the Anishinaabek practised two gaming types: chance and skill (Densmore, 1979 [1929]). An example of a chance game is Makizinataadiwin, or the moccasin game, being a game of chance involving guessing the location of an object under moccasins. Baagaadowewin is an example of a game now known as the athletic team-based game of lacrosse (ibid., pp. 114-119). In the moccasin game, Copway (2001 [1850], p. 48) documented that gambling took place with guns, traps, clothes, tobacco and pipes being wagered. In Vizenor's (1970) text, Theodore Beaulieu (ca. 1887-1888) recited the trickster legend "manabozho and the gambler". In this legend, manabozho (the compassionate trickster) is challenged by the gambler nita ataged (evil gambler) to pagessewin (the dish game), which is a dice game also known as the plate, bowl or dish game (cf. Densmore 1979, p. 115). The wager of the game is declared by nita ateged as follows,

> Seek me and whoever enters my lodge must gamble. Remember, there is but one forfeit I demand of those who gamble with me and lose, and that forfeit is life. I keep the scalps and ears and hands, the rest of the body I give to my friends the windigo and their spirits I consign to niba gisiss (the sleeping sun or darkness). I have

> spoken. Now we will play (in Vizenor 1970, p. 148).

In the game, nita ataged plays first with the game's objective to have the figurines, carved in the form of stages of life of man, stand erect in a bowl with a toss. After nita ataged achieves success with several winning plays, on the last match, with the aid of the wind, manabozho whistles, causing nita ataged's figurines to land non-erect thus resulting in a lost game. The legend ends with manabozho next taking a turn, and the story ends, without a known outcome (ibid., pp. 148-149).

In contrasting historic Anishinaabe gambling with the present casinos, Vizenor relates the beat of a drum and song accompanied games of chance such as the moccasin game and some of the best tribal songs derived from dreams and visions. In contrast, there are no traditional songs played alongside modern electronic games, and narratives of chance are limited to "casino stories" (Vizenor, 1994, p. 142). In critiquing casinos, Vizenor states,

> Casinos are the wages of wealth, morality, and sovereignty, but tribal courage and an international presence could secure more than the envies of casino riches and the limited sovereignty determined by federal courts and the government. Casino avarice with no moral traditions is a mean measure of tribal wisdom (p. 148).

Casino Rama and Indigenous Gambling Revenue Agreements 1994-2020

This section revisits my original research with an updated analysis of the Ontario casino revenue agreements. The thrust of this research takes place at Casino Rama, initially, "Ontario's only Aboriginally-owned casino" from the period 1996-2011 (Manitowabi, 2011a) and now marketed as "Ontario's only First Nations resort casino" (Casino Rama 2020, para. 1). The casino emerged in response to the success of Indigenous casinos in the U.S. and the desire of Ontario First Nations to open casinos of their own. Upon learning of these intentions, the Province of Ontario negotiated with the Chiefs of Ontario, a political advocacy organization for First Nations in the Province, on the terms of a First Nations casino. The plan was that all First Nations in the Province would benefit from the revenue of this casino. It would furthermore serve an economic development mechanism for First Nations seeking employment at the casino. In 1994, The Chippewas of Rama were the successful bidders to host the casino and Casino Rama opened in 1996. The initial six years of the casino were tumultuous; it experienced a construction delay when a new conservative provincial government came to power in 1995 and imposed a 20%-win tax on the casino. Furthermore, Metis and non-Status Indigenous communities litigated for a share of the revenue, and the Chippewas of Rama and Ontario First Nations disputed over casino revenues (see Manitowabi, 2011a, pp. 257-262 for this history). To situate my theoretical argument, I revisit part of this history below.

In the early stages of the casino, non-Status Indigenous and Metis Indigenous groups went to court for a portion of the revenues, and in1996, an Ontario court ruled they had a right to casino revenues (Lovelace v. Ontario, 2000, para. 34). The case was appealed in favour of Ontario First Nations in 1997 on the basis that the casino was intended for on-reserve First Nations to address social and economic conditions (ibid., para. 49). It then went to the Supreme Court of Canada, which agreed with the Court of Appeal (ibid., para. 112).

A stakeholder emerging from the creation of Casino Rama is the Ontario First Nations (excluding the Chippewas of Rama). In 2000, under the name "Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership," the Ontario First Nations entered into an agreement with the Province of Ontario, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (a provincial crown agency) and the Mnjikaning First Nation (now known as the Chippewas of Rama) for a share of accumulated net revenues (since opening) and ongoing net revenues from Casino Rama. Until that point, the Metis Nation litigation had stalled revenue distribution. The basis of the revenue dispute stemmed from the original proposal to host the casino, submitted by the Chippewas of Rama. During the first five years of operations, the Chippewas of Rama would retain 35% of net revenues (to address infrastructure and community investments required for the casino) while Ontario First Nations would receive 65% for economic development, health, education, and community and cultural initiatives. After that, a new agreement would be sought (Casino Rama Revenue Agreement, 2000). In 2001, Ontario First Nations voted against the Chippewas of Rama retaining the 35%. In response, the Chippewas of Rama litigated against the Chiefs and Province to maintain the 35% in perpetuity (Manitowabi, 2011a, p. 260). The initial revenue agreement expired on July 31, 2001, and the Chippewas of Rama's 35% dispersal froze pending their legal case. After another disagreement regarding payment of a hotel loan, Ontario First Nations revenue froze pending resolution of the disagreement. In 2008, Ontario First Nations (under the new name Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership 2008, or OFNLP2008) and the Chippewas of Rama struck a new deal. In exchange for ending the legal case for the 20%-win tax, the Province proposed a new agreement where Ontario First Nations would receive 1.7% of province-wide gaming revenues and non-gaming revenues such as hotel and food services for 25 years. Thereafter, a new deal would take place, and the agreement also included an appointed representative of the OFNLP2008 to the Board of Directors of the OLGC. The Province would furthermore enter into a separate agreement with the Chippewas of Rama (ibid., p. 261). The Chippewas of Rama signed a

deal in 2009 for 20 years beginning August 1, 2011. As part of this agreement, Rama receives whichever is the greater from 1.9% of gross revenues, or $5.5 million (adjusted annually to Consumer Price Index) (OLG 2019, p. 44-45).

The new agreement did not signal the end of disputes with the OLGC. In 2014, the OLGC introduced a gambling modernization plan. A significant component of this plan included reconfiguring the gambling landscape by closing slots at select racetracks, creating new casinos, expanding lottery ticket sales, implementing digital gaming (e.g., electronic bingo, casino-style Internet gaming) and expanding private sector delivery of lotteries and gaming (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2014, p. 10-11). At the same time, the Province stalled in appointing a member of the OFNLP2008 to the Board (Miller 2015). The OFNLP2008 contend the stalling was a calculated move to avoid an OFNLP2008 voice at the table during the design of the modernization plan (ibid.). The OFNLP2008 went into arbitration with the OLG, and in 2015, a panel of three Superior Court Justices awarded the OFNLP2008 a seat on the OLG Board (ibid.).

Aside from the Board seat, another issue arose with the modernization plan. In addition to 1.7% of gross provincial gaming revenues from on-line games, sports games, instant games, bingo, slot machines and table games at casinos and racetracks, the 2008 revenue agreement also included non-gaming profits from hotels, food, beverages and other services provided to patrons on a complimentary basis (OFNLP2008 v. OLG, 2020, para. 23). The OLG's modernization plan changed the business model of provincial gambling, transferring non-gaming revenues to private sector operators without consulting the OFNLP2008, despite the OFNLP2008's request to take part in consultations in 2012 (ibid., para. 24-25). In 2013, the OLG decided to stop sharing non-gaming revenue with Ontario First Nations (ibid., para. 34). It took until 2016 for the OFNLP2008 to become aware of this change and this was made possible only after reviewing an OLG financial statement in the same year (2016) that the non-gaming revenue ceased (ibid., para. 23, 47). In 2019, an arbitration panel ruled the OLG did not have a right to discontinue sharing non-gaming revenue, and thus must honour the agreement. The OLG appealed this decision, and in 2020, lost their appeal (ibid.).

"The Casino is Buying all the Houses": Hermeneutics in Indigenous Casino Research

In my earlier work (Manitowabi, 2007; Manitowabi, 2011a), I described how the quietness of the Chippewas of Rama community has disappeared, in part because casino development resulted in property and homes near the casino being purchased. Community members relocated their homes afar from the casino seeking a return of privacy. While in Rama, I spent time with an Elder who continued to practice the old ways of the community. He still hunted, fished, collected medicines and shared the oral history of the place to those with an interest. I drove the Elder around in the community one day while he provided an illustrated oral history of Rama, pointing out who once lived here and there, and how the land looked where the casino is located. After his narrative, he stated, "the casino is buying all the houses" (in Manitowabi, 2007, p. 59). In this statement, the casino is an animate being or force that is consuming homes, community space and causing relocations of community members (I will return to an analysis of this in the discussion).

The structure of Casino Rama lies at the address: 5899 Rama Road, on the site of a former vacant field in the community. In the original planning of the casino, the current location was temporary: a waterfront location was the originally envisioned permanent site. In this context, I had the opportunity to attend community planning meetings. In one such instance, an economic consultant presented on the economic benefits and necessity of moving to the waterfront resort development stage, demonstrating evidence of this necessity based on the competitive nature of casino gambling in Ontario and the optimistic financial forecast of a waterfront location. During the presentation, the energy of the audience took a downturn based on my observations of body language and facial expression, and it was clear to me that members were upset with the presentation. During the question-and-answer period, the consultant received harsh questions on the recreational and environmental impact of waterfront development (Manitowabi, 2007, p. 60). Ultimately the waterfront casino development did not take place, and the casino remains in its current location.

During my time in Rama, I observed the community negotiating the casino. The casino operates like a gambling factory. There is constant traffic destined to the casino, mostly from Toronto where buses transport gamblers to the casino. At the time, I lived in the city of Orillia (a 15-minute drive from Rama), beside the busiest road to the casino, and I observed an assembly line of buses destined to the casino. This mechanical experience is common to casino patrons, who travel to the casino, and then return, with a select few stopping at the Rama gas station or stores. I still go periodically to Rama, and I observe this continuing pattern of transit in 2020. However, there is at present relative quietness, due to the temporary closure of the casino as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic that has paralyzed the Canadian economy and led to public health measures limiting public gatherings (Powless & Duric, 2020).

Inside the community, some frequent the casino and while others do not, expressing concerns about harmful gambling. One community member shared with me that he researched community casino use and found that, while an estimated 75% of the population do not use the casino, there are silent addictions (Manitowabi, 2007, p. 58). During my research, I observed community members engaged in harmful

gambling while others avoided the casino altogether. I once recalled a community member chastise another about too much gambling at the casino, and I also observed a community member attend the casino regularly, without being chastised.

Windigo as Indigenous Consumption: Discussion

Reith and Gordon (2019) lament that most gambling research is dominated by psychology, public health, and in economic modelling that examines human behaviour, addiction and rational "action". Though this is the case, the authors acknowledge there is a gradual shift with socio-cultural approaches emerging (para. 1). In their analysis, Reith and Gordon (2019) call for a social practice theory approach since,

> Practice theory can help foster a shift in gambling research from a focus on gambling as related to individual choice, or as entirely configured by political, economic, and social structures. Practice theory provides a way to acknowledge both structure and agency in gambling which acknowledges the body, mental activities, discourses, materials, social norms, and social structures (para. 24).

In my initial theoretical engagement with the casino, I positioned it as both a provincial strategy to contain the proliferation of Indigenous casinos in Ontario, and a neoliberal solution to address Indigenous poverty by creating economic opportunities and directing casino revenues to five areas: health, culture, economic development, community development and education (Manitowabi, 2011a). In subsequent analysis, I discussed the experiences of Indigenous migrant workers at the casino within the context of neoliberalism and symbolic capital, arguing that life histories influence casino employment success (Manitowabi, 2011b). More recently, I engaged in a critical analysis of the cultural representation at the casino (Manitowabi, 2017), showing that the artistic imagery is touristic, intended to market Indigeneity for commercial purposes. In contrast, the Indigenous practice of culture is invisible to the outside, known as bimaadiziwin, a word meaning "a holistic, healthy way of life". I based this on a behavioural analysis of the cultural practice of everyday life (ibid.). The following literature review builds upon this most recent work, and I revisit fieldwork experiences that inform a new theoretical engagement with my earlier findings.

In earlier work, I engaged with Richard White's (1991) concept of middle ground and with the literature on neoliberalism. My then argument ultimately situated the Indigenous casino as representing a "partial middle ground", neither serving state domination of Indigenous peoples nor Indigenous emancipation from colonialism. In retrospect, my earlier work has been framed within a Western hegemonic theoretical lens, privileging dominant, non-Indigenous theoretical, analytical frameworks such as neoliberalism, habitus (Bourdieu, 2004[1977]) and middle ground. My initial Indigenous theoretical engagement began with a focus on Anishinaabe bimaadiziwn (Manitowabi, 2017), and I primarily engaged with neoliberalism, habitus, and middle ground as bridging frameworks connecting bimaadiziwin. At present, I do not entirely abandon social science theory, but I more explicitly shift my approach to Indigenous anthropology in the tradition of the work of Beatrice Medicine (2011), and I respond to Darren Ranco's (2006) call for a theoretical engagement in Indigenous anthropology. Thus, anthropology for me is a disciplinary tool used to reveal a theory of Indigenous casinos, and Indigenous anthropology integrates an Indigenous standpoint. I am not discounting a non-Indigenous approach since I have already demonstrated the applicability of these approaches. Instead, I am expanding theoretical knowledge in casino studies by reflecting the Indigenous-centred standpoint.

Reith and Gordon (2019) engage with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, and his understanding of how culture and history shape social action (para. 33). I similarly positioned bimaadiziwin as an Indigenous habitus, or social practice, evidenced by investments made in education, language, heritage, and recreation, all taking place through the guidance of Elders, showing persistence in an Indigenous knowledge system (Manitowabi, 2011a; 2017). Thus, my work has increasingly centred on Indigenous cultural frameworks, e.g., a stronger focus on bimaadiziwin, in gambling research (e.g., Manitowabi, 2017), and this brings me back to the relevance of windigo.

In windigo narratives, central to the message is the transformation of a community member leading to the consumption of others. This transformation is inherently destructive to the individual, and the individual eventually consumes community members, leading to their destruction. It is possible to heal windigos, though the dominant outcome is the death of the windigo. A literal focus on cannibalism dominates most windigo narrative analyses. There are researchers, mostly Indigenous, who occupy a minority position in the windigo research who critique this dominant research as a Western fetishizing gaze of constructed primitive Indigenous behaviour (e.g., Methot 2019; Podruchny, 2004; Waldram, 2004). On the other hand, Indigenous writers and researchers focus on the symbolism of the windigo as a teaching narrative of the adverse effects of selfish behaviour manifested through capitalism and environmental destruction (e.g., Johnson, 1995), and colonially induced trauma and lateral and sexual violence (e.g., Friedland, 2018; Methot, 2019). Indigenous literary scholars have linked casino imagery with the windigo, for example, as cited earlier, in Vizenor's recitation of the "manabozho and the gambler" (Vizenor, 1970, p. 147).

In a contribution honouring the work of Gerald Vizenor, Joe Lockard (2008) examines Vizenor's work

specific to the windigo and the concept of survivance (survival through resistance). The modern windigo represents how "Colonial violence sought to negate native consciousness in all its continental variety as well as ensuring submission to displacement, exile, and extermination" (Lockard, 2008, p. 209). For Lockard, Vizenor's concept of the windigo is a social and mythic "invisible beast that feeds off those who fall under the spell of such enticing purist deliriums of identity" (ibid., p. 210). Lockard, for the most part, focuses on identity, though engages with the themes of evil and destruction of peoples in Vizenor's (1984, pp. 4-6) updated retelling of "nanabozho and the gambler".

According to Lockard (2008, p. 209), the modern windigo is invisible and is a "destructive cannibalistic force". In applying the concept of a modern colonial social windigo to select casino literature, there is a case to be made for an Indigenous-specific articulation of consumption. By way of comparison, Reith (2007) engages with Bauman's "consumption ethic", moving beyond the view of Western societies as dominated by economic production. In this model, gambling is a consumption habit of modern life, and ethical behaviour lies in self-control, and the lack of it results in problem gambling (see Cosgrave, 2009 for an exposition of gaming as "risky consumption"). For scholars such as Reith and Cosgrave, the focus is the gambler's consumption of gambling. Within an Indigenous framework, gambling is manifested through the legacy of colonial displacement of Indigenous gambling such as the moccasin game and lacrosse. Economic and political aspirations through casino development and expansion are the potential consumers of Indigenous peoples. The word potential prefaces consumption because it is not inevitable. In this positioning of casinos as modern windigos, I emphasize their transformative aspect. In historic windigo narratives, the Indigenous person is a contributing member of the family and community, and the transformation into a windigo is one that is disruptive and destructive. It consumes the individual, and the individual then consumes others.

> As stated earlier, in the words of a Rama Elder, "the casino is buying all the houses." This statement in effect classifies the casino as a being, or an invisible force that consumes homes and territory, and the casino's hunger for development is presented in an attempt to eat more land. Furthermore, the casino has the potential to destroy individuals in the community through harmful gambling behaviours.

At the political level, the casino is a transformative shapeshifter, originally envisioned as a mechanism to heal and restore communities through investments in job creation, education, health, and cultural programming. During 1996-2011, the casino was either generating divisions between Indigenous groups and between Indigenous groups and the Province or giving capital for community services, with revenue dispersal initially being delayed due to litigation and then frozen due to disputes over revenue and a hotel loan. In the current First Nations gambling revenue agreement (circa 2011-2020), the casino revenue is no longer only limited to Casino Rama but now includes all provincial gambling. Despite this apparent goodwill, the Province developed a new modernization plan, delayed the appointment of a First Nations representative to the OLG Board, and attempted to remove non-gaming revenue transfers to First Nations. This ill-will signals the consistency of the transformative nature of gambling and casinos. This problematic arrangement continues at the time of writing: the Province of Ontario is faced with a global COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and casinos are closed, and gambling revenue transfers to First Nations will significantly decrease until the reopening of casinos (Powless & Duric, 2020).

Thus, within an Indigenous theoretical framework, Indigenous concepts such as the windigo still have relevance today. This windigo manifests through the colonial environment in which Indigenous peoples in Canada are now living. Gambling and casinos take place within this environment and are thus manifestations of the inner workings of structural colonialism. The history of Casino Rama and the First Nations gambling revenue agreements demonstrates the restrictive permissiveness of casinos and gambling in the lives of Indigenous peoples. The casino and revenues are permissive by addressing social and economic conditions, but at other times the casino shapeshifts into a restrictive and disruptive entity. This disruption includes stalled development in the early stages of the casino building, denying access to capital to off-reserve, non-status and Metis Indigenous peoples, the imposition of a 20%-win tax, and manipulations relating to the current revenue agreement. At the Chippewas of Rama community level, it has permitted the development of community infrastructures such as new roads, a new school, a new recreational facility, an Elders long term care home, and new businesses and employment opportunities (see Manitowabi, 2011a). It has also been restrictive and disruptive by consuming homes and the landscape, shifting homes away from the casino, resulting in harmful gambling for some, and leading to decreased revenues (post initial agreement). With the new gambling modernization plan, an expansion of provincial gambling will likely curtail Chippewas of Rama revenue.

A commonality of historic windigo narratives is the association with wintertime and human adversity through the potential of starvation (e.g., Brightman, 1988, Cooper, 1934, Hallowell, 2010). I suggested that colonialism represents a continuous winter for Indigenous peoples and this manifests through political relationships with state agents such as the OLG. The casino is an animate force in Indigenous communities

that brings visibility to the invisibility of the modern windigo and thus shows the potential for harm in community and individual relations at the localized level. Like windigo narratives of the past, confronting a windigo does not lead to an inevitable harm, but its avoidance requires careful navigation.

Conclusion

In this article, I have responded to Ranco's (2006) call for Indigenous anthropologists to "theorize within" and I have done so by engaging in the hermeneutics of windigo narratives, Casino Rama, and First Nations gambling research. Through this approach, I have also responded to Ingold's (2014) call for anthropology to move beyond descriptive ethnographies and integrate the knowledge of the everyday into anthropological knowledge production. In doing so, I have engaged with the life experience of windigo storytelling, alongside theoretical engagement with the Indigenous literary tradition of the windigo in the past and present, and comparative analysis of gambling research.

I conclude this article by returning in greater detail to the windigo story collected by A. Irving Hallowell that I shared in Wiikwemkoong on September 13, 2019. Hallowell (2010 [1938]) related a tale told by an "old man" of a pursuing windigo. The man is hunting muskrats in the spring, in an area where the lake is still frozen, but the river is open. At darkness, the man makes a fire to have supper, and he then hears someone passing across the river and the sound of branches cracking. The man then gets in his canoe and paddles away from the noise. He then hears a noise in the air, and a big stick is thrown, missing him. After arriving at the opposite side of the river, the person is already there. The man returns across the river, canoeing all night to avoid the person. Near the morning, he reaches a high rock to rest and sleep, and during the following evening, again the person returns, and the man paddles off once again. At this point, the man wonders how to get away, and he decides to confront the being. He grabs his axe and gun, venturing in the direction of the sounds. Tables turn, and the person retreats, crashing through the forest and then onto the ice. In a weak spot, the person falls through the ice and the man hears a loud yell. He then returns to hunting, and attempts to go to a camp close by. He finds it deserted since the previous occupants heard the being and left, frightened (ibid., pp. 239-240). In this paraphrased retelling of a story collected by Hallowell, the windigo being is not observed in detail, though it makes sounds and pursues the man, and from the perspective of the man, this event is real.

After reciting this story during my Wiikwemkoong presentation, I raised the question to the audience, did a real windigo pursue the man despite it not being visible? Was it by chance something else and interpreted as a windigo? Was the story fiction? I then made a connection with treaties and the colonially-induced consumption of community members by lateral violence, addictions, trauma, and shame. I then asked, are these behaviours modern-day windigook? I ended my talk by emphasizing the possibility of windigo-like consumption, not the inevitability of this consumption, and the need to address these issues as consequences of the land cessions resulting from the Treaty of 1850.

All the while, the rain continued during my presentation. It stayed on my way home and through a previously planned trip to southern Ontario that evening (I live in northeastern Ontario). This trip coincidentally took me through Orillia, driving near Casino Rama. The rain continued, even making road visibility difficult, and I had to slow down numerous times. I nevertheless made it to my destination later than expected due to the weather. The next day, I awoke to a calm and sunny day.

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Author Details

Darrel Manitowabi, PhD, is the inaugural Hannah Chair in the History of Indigenous Health and Traditional Indigenous Medicine at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. He is an Indigenous anthropologist with research interests in Anishinaabe ethnohistory, Indigenous health, Indigenous-state relations and gambling.