

**(RE-)ORDERING THE NEW WORLD: SETTLER COLONIALISM, SPACE,  
AND IDENTITY**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis undertakes an examination and articulation of the colonial dynamics of Settler people, collectives, societies, and nations in the settler colonial northern bloc. It is geographically situated, demonstrating that settler colonialism transforms spaces and claims places in powerful, consistent ways, leaving observable patterns across five centuries and a vast continent. Canadian and American citizens today are revealed to be much like their trans-Atlantic forbears, while even radically-transformative Settler social movements are shown to often leave colonial structures and legacies intact. This project constitutes a preliminary search for libratory, decolonising potentiality within Settler understandings of place, currently situated in the framework of settler colonialism and other forms of colonising, expansive powers, each possessed of distinct geographical imaginations. The goal of this project is to render visible long-standing dynamics at the root of on-going colonisation, situating collective Settler relationships as the primary location of settler colonisation in the northern bloc. This is not intended as an accusation, but as a creative deconstruction: revealing the intimate workings of settler colonialism and identifying the inherent weaknesses and contradictions in colonial spaces is the necessary first step in fundamental decolonisation of the people and places of the northern bloc.

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## **Dedication**

To the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island who struggle against oppression; to the Settler people of the northern bloc who strive to be something more.

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## **Introduction: The Northern Bloc of Settler Colonialism**

European. Euro-American. American. Canadian. White. Coloniser. Oppressor. Non-indigenous. All of these terms, and more besides, have been used to label or describe huge numbers of people — the people who came and still come to settle on land that is not theirs.

New England. New France. New Spain. British North America. The United States of America. The Dominion of Canada. Fortress North America. Stolen land. These terms, too, are an incomplete list of the many names ascribed to the places usurped and spaces created by these multitudes.

Hundreds of millions of people, from cultures and societies all over the world, occupy the spaces commonly recognised as belonging to the Canadian and American nation states. They speak diverse languages, practice an endless variety of cultures and religions, and occupy every socio-economic stratum imaginable: from the most powerful, globally influential elites, to the forgotten, invisible, disposable outcasts. Questions of identity and heritage regularly trouble these wealthy, northern nation states; tensions between anglo- and francophone Canadians parallel tensions between English- and Spanish-speaking Americans, in both violence and complexity, and multiculturalism and immigration remain divisive and potent discourses. Yet all of these people, spread across so many places and so much space, are alike in some way. These people live ‘on common ground’ in that they are settling on the lands that belong to Indigenous peoples and

nations — still present, in resistance, and reasserting their own spatialities on the land — and moreover, they collectively build and maintain these invasive societies.

Stuart Hall, citing Franz Fanon, has described colonisation as having a ‘deforming’ effect on the psychology of both the coloniser and the colonised (Hall, 1996 p.213). Over five centuries, this deformation has manifested spatially, becoming entrenched in the societies that the settler colonisers of Canada and America produce, and the identities that inform and are informed by this world-building. Despite the passage of time and increasing variety and complexity of newcomer populations, settler colonisation has remained remarkably persistent as a force of change and transformation, and consistent as a spatial, relational dynamic. Settler colonialism as a tactic of spatial control, imperialism, and power generation informs acts of invasion from Israel to Australia, from Argentina to Kenya, and beyond. In Canada and America the societies and nations of this northern bloc of settler colonialism are deeply intertwined and wield extraordinary collective and structural power. Simultaneously, all over the northern bloc, indigeneity is erased, Indigenous peoples exiled to ‘bare life’ (see Chapter 2) at the extreme margins of society, and histories of heroic settlement and succession are positioned to obscure stories of conflict, predation, theft, and genocide. This is the result of millions of people, settling and colonising across the northern bloc, building a colonial world by shattering Indigenous worlds, and appropriating and using the resulting fragments to their own ends. These are Settler people. They are the overwhelming-majority colonisers of the settler colonial northern bloc. I am one of them.

This project is a continuation of my on-going research into settler colonialism in contemporary North America. I have previously established a

preliminary theoretical basis of the Settler identity and the political, economic, and socio-cultural nature of contemporary Canadian and American imperialism and colonialism (2009; 2007a). However, while the colonial mentalities that I observed at work in Canada could be described, they remained frustratingly difficult to engage directly or perceive in development, prompting my engagement with theories of affect and considerations of spatialities in colonial contexts. Consequently, I began investigating the dynamics of activist movements for and on decolonisation (2012; 2010; Barker & Pickerill, 2012), and discovered that many radical social projects by Settler people, such as the Occupy movements, alter-globalisation protests, anarchist movements, and movements explicitly aligned with Indigenous peoples, evidence settler colonial dynamics and structures. Motivated by this discovery, this project is an examination and articulation of the colonial dynamics of Settler people, collectives, societies, and nations in the settler colonial northern bloc. It is geographically-situated, demonstrating that settler colonialism transforms spaces and claims places in powerful, consistent ways, leaving observable patterns across five centuries and a vast continent. As such, this project is not a historical geography, but a colonial geography; Canadian and American citizens today are revealed to be much like their trans-Atlantic forbears, while even radically-transformative Settler social movements are shown to often leave colonial structures and legacies intact. The goal of this project is to render visible these long-standing dynamics at the root of on-going colonisation, situating any and all Settler people as the primary agents of settler colonialism in the northern bloc. This is not intended as an accusation, but as a deconstruction: revealing the intimate workings of settler colonialism and identifying the inherent

weaknesses and contradictions in colonial spaces is the necessary first step in fundamental decolonisation of the people and places of the northern bloc.

This project will search for libratory, decolonising potentiality within Settler understandings of place situated in the framework of settler colonialism and other forms of colonising, expansive powers, each possessed of distinct geographical imaginations. In the words of settler colonial theorist Lorenzo Veracini, “[w]hile the geographical imagination of colonialism and settler colonialism are distinct but could overlap, the geographical imagination of settler colonialism and decolonisation remain irreconcilable” (2010b p.189). It is my intent to analyse the intricacies of northern bloc settler colonialism from its inception in trans-Atlantic imperial orders to its current incarnations in order to begin the process of reconciling Settler peoples and societies with decolonised imagined geographies.

The key research questions in this project are:

- How do Settler people perceive and consume Indigenous relationships to place (networks of being on the land)?
- How does the ‘colonial difference’ between Settler perceptions and expectations on one hand, and the experience of place-based difference and resistance to colonisation on the other, shape settler colonial spatial production and consumption?
- Is it possible to discover avenues for Settler people to relate to places — and the many beings that live on and in place — in a decolonised/ decolonising way?

- What would a decolonised Settler relationship to place imply for Settler social organisation and the development of libratory Indigenous-Settler cooperation and alliance building?

The following introduction provides a brief overview of the methodological and theoretical framing employed in this project, a short introduction to the concept and history of settler colonialism, and a preview of the chapters that follow. In this introduction, I present settler colonialism as a particular kind of colonisation, characterised by two features. First, settler colonisation involves the immigration of populations that come to stay into new places, often places already claimed and occupied by Indigenous peoples; the goal of these settlements is to transcend their colonial pasts and assert a 'nativism' that displaces and erases indigeneity. Second, settler colonisation relies upon an identity trialectic in the settler colonial imaginary — settler collectives in their various forms, and perceived indigenous and exogenous subjectivities — that must be managed through the generation of various types of space: advantageous spaces for Settler people, marginal spaces for exogenous Others, and spaces of exception for the erasure and elimination of Indigenous peoples. This geographical contestation is the primary focus of this research project.

### **Methodology and Theory**

This research project is intended to contribute to the growing understanding of settler colonialism as distinct from other colonialisms (Veracini, 2010a; Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010), with the ultimate goal of imagining a decolonised Settler relationship to Indigenous peoples and places. This project draws explicit

connections between constructions of space, situation in place, and the development of specific kinds of Indigenous or Settler identities. Methodologically, this project is an investigation of the 'affective geographies' of settler colonialism; I draw explicit connection between the spatialities of settler colonialism that inform (Settler) identity in the context of (settler colonial) power, and the 'sense of push' or affective connection to place that underpins the bodily enactment of settler colonisation.

Identity is difficult to describe and analyse accurately. As a concept, it has no concrete signifiers. Every identity relies on internal logics, symbolic expressions, and dynamic interactions with other identities and social structures. Identities, therefore, change, shift, and defy totalising definitions (Niezen, 2003). While other works have attempted to illuminate the inner workings of processes of settler colonisation, there remains the difficulty of placing a 'Settler person' into the dynamic of settler colonialism. The lived experience of being a coloniser in place is not reducible to a narrative form or a historical spatial parallel. The primary contribution of this project is to collapse the difference between individual Settlers and the Settler society that is generated through on-going colonisation. My work seeks to reveal how people are recruited into the settler colonial project and the Settler identity – the affective 'push' that creates social and cultural resonances across time and space, generating an incredibly powerful settler colonial 'bloc' across a continent

### **Geographies of Affect**

While settler colonialism is becoming increasingly understood as a spatial project involving particular imagined geographies (Veracini, 2010b), the source of those



imagined geographies is often obscured. As indicated above, I frequently discuss settler colonisers as 'peoples' possessing particular identity characteristics. However, the identity construct of 'Settler peoples' is often absent from analyses of settler colonialism. This project is an attempt to theoretically bridge the gap between the colonial mentalities of Settler people (Barker, 2007) and the acts of colonisation that have and continue to create the northern bloc of settler colonialism.

Particularly important here and throughout this thesis is the concept of affect. Affect in this context refers to the diffuse force generated through the interaction of an individual with other people and things that can inspire action or change (Seigworthy & Gregg, 2010 pp.1-3; Dittmer, 2010 pp.91-98). Dittmer defines two major streams of thought on affect, of which my research accords with the latter which "focuses on relationships between people, or people and objects":

This, like the other version of affect [posited on neurological and biological responses], is precognitive, or existing prior to active decision making... we exist in reciprocal relationships with the people and things in our environment. What those relationships are is not obvious, even to ourselves, most of the time. But affect serves as "a sense of push in the world," influencing our collective behaviour...

...Affect is not reducible to "emotions" though – it is both biological and social in a way that emotions are not. The body's experience of affect comes in the form of feelings and sensations prior to their being labelled as particular emotions by the mind.

Dittmer, 2010 pp.92-93

This last point is key to my investigation. William Connolly, who has frequently worked with theories of affect in relationship to media and politics in America, describes an “intrinsic connection” (Connolly, 2006) between mind and body, though not a strict correlation.

This is an important point, as I frequently shift back and forth between the perceptions and ‘logical’ arguments of settler colonisers on the one hand, and their bodily positions in space relative to each other, to elements of place, and to indigeneity on the other. To some theorists of affect, this is a violation of affective geographies; among many nonrepresentational theorists, affect requires an internal ‘layer cake’ construction, wherein affective and preconscious thought are fundamentally separated from higher, conscious thought (Pile, 2010; Barnett, 2008). Thus ‘expressions’ of a colonial mentality could be seen simply as rationalizations and justifications of affective connections that remain unknowable and unnameable. The body, in this sense, “is used to challenge the expression of emotions” (Pile, 2010 p.11), demonstrating that what is bodily experienced and performed is not of interest in what it says about an individual life experience, but rather “it becomes a device that enables the researcher to reveal the trans-human, the non-cognitive, the inexpressible, that underlies and constitutes social life”. I straddle this strict division somewhat through identification with Connolly’s construction of intrinsic connection; there are aspects of colonialism that Settler people consciously grapple with, and those that manifest as preconscious ‘push’, and both impact on how people spatially move and locate themselves.

This makes affect a potentially important analytical tool in discussing Settler identities and understanding the complicity of Settler people in colonisation. The degree to which Settler people enact colonisation as a physical

usurpation of place and attendant mental process of justifying and forgetting this usurpation through a transformative and affective situation in place is important. Settler colonisation, as a project, relies on individuals and collectives rationally identifying particular opportunities as ripe for exploitation (see Chapter 3); this is obviously a conscious process. However, the ability to perceive particular kinds of opportunity in place, and the drive that transforms an almost infinite set of permutations of settler collectives into a limited range of self-constituted spatial forms is clearly related to preconscious, affective push towards *particular, colonial* forms. One cannot assume that Settler people are nefarious or unrepentant conquerors (even if they remain unmitigated colonisers). At various points in this thesis, I engage with Veracini's discussion of narratives that settler collectives weave in order to justify their colonial acts, and Tuck and Yang's identification of 'moves to innocence' by which Settler people attempt to exempt themselves from colonial blame (Veracini, 2012a; Tuck & Yang, 2012; see also Chapters 2-4 on narrative, and Chapters 5-7 on moves to innocence). I raise these considerations here to emphasize that Settler people devote a great deal of personal and social energy into denying the existence of colonialism, the damage of colonisation, and the personal implication of being a coloniser (Regan, 2010). If one were to take the emotional expressions of Settler people 'at their word,' colonisation would disappear from the northern bloc social landscape. Thus, affect here is explicitly deployed to counter "overly cognativist models of action" (Barnett, 2008 p.118), many of which are deeply entangled with settler colonialism.

With this in mind, I feel justified in deploying affect in a manner contrary to the way that affect is often employed in human geography according to Barnett (2008 pp.189-190). I will employ a geography of affect that does not rely on a strict

'layer cake' construction (above), and consequently leaves room for interactions between affective impulses, expressed emotions, and cognitive processes that variously generate settler colonial 'push.' This approach seeks to foreground the simultaneously preconscious and conscious generation of settler colonial space. Affect should not be thought of as simply a 'priming to act' (Barnett 2008 p.189) but rather as the complex interplay of preconscious impulse, (pre-expression) feeling and (post-expression) emotion, and rational (or rationalized) thought that ultimately create a change in state (mental or physical), with an intrinsically connected change of state in body or mind. This must further be understood as a collective and social process by which individual Settlers come to identify as part of settler collectives, and collectives then come to identify through regional, national, and institutional ties (see Chapter 2-4). There is a tension throughout this project between any individual Settler person and the dynamics of larger Settler societies and populations, and affect is useful here as "more than an individuals' experience – it is something that circulates among people, through body language and the mutual experience of environments" (Dittmer, 2010 p.94).

Dittmer (2010), Pile (2010) and others generally identify three means by which affect circulates or generates social impact:

- Contagion: "Affect's ability to circulate among populations"
- Amplification: "Affect's intensification of individual experiences"
- Resonance: "Synchronicity between two or more affects to produce a much larger affect than would normally occur"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All definitions are excerpted from sidebar info-graphics in Dittmer (2010 p.94). It should be noted that these are not asserted as fact but as rough models; as Pile identifies, none of these rough models corresponds perfectly to how affective

All three of these social dynamics of affect are featured prominently throughout this thesis. Contagion is discussed least, implicit in discussions of colonial logics (Chapter 2) and aspirationalism that informs exogenous populations seeking to join settler collectives or Settler nations and societies (Chapter 5). Amplification is a constant feature of settler colonisation, as demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, in which experiences common to many populations – migration, narrative bricolage, and investment of sovereignty in particular institutions, for example – become “somatic markers” (Dittmer, 2010 p.94) that inform ‘gut feeling,’ underpinning the foundational spatialities of the northern bloc. And resonance is possibly the most obvious of these features – as is its opposite, dissonance, wherein two affective attachments work against each other, generating a tension rather than a push – as various colonial spaces are co-developed (Chapter 2), as settler colonialism and capitalism are jointly pursued (Chapters 3-5), and as settler colonialism and anticolonialism find common expression in defiance of decolonisation (Chapter 5). Crucially, these three forms of affective spread work together – circulating through Settler populations, emphasising particular kinds of Settler experience, and interlocking with affective ties to state, capital, and imperial structures – to generate social “dysconsciousness” an “uncritical habit of mind ... that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given” (D.M. Johnson, 2011 p.110).

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connections seem to be made at scales above the interpersonal (Pile, 2010 pp.15-16). As this thesis demonstrates, these rough models are useful, but the particular ways that affective connections move through Settler populations is varied and complex.

## **Settler Auto-ethnography**

Much of this project is based on Indigenous peoples' understandings of their connections to particular places; it relies on a critical reading of texts by Indigenous authors, and Settler and other non-indigenous academics explicitly concerned with personal and collective decolonisation, as primary theoretical material. It is important to prioritise work in which Indigenous peoples represent themselves in order to combat colonial methodologies and the appropriation of Indigenous voice (Smith, 1999). Though settler colonialism has existed as an analytical concept for some time (Hoxie, 2008 p.1158; see also below), much of the theoretical development of settler colonialism and, especially, of Settler peoples has only just begun (see below). It is my intent to weave together these multiple theorisations about Indigenous and Settler identities, space and place, colonialism and decolonisation, and imperial power in order to more fully explain historical and on-going colonisation in Canada and the USA and discover the decolonising potential of Settler peoples and societies.

As both a researcher and an individual, I accept the identity label of 'Settler' and that my privileges as a Settler person, both those beyond my control (whiteness and male gender) and those I have actively pursued (tied to education and lifestyle), are the consequence of or made possible by settler colonisation. I understand that the advantages I have had, and those enjoyed generally by northern bloc Settler peoples, have roots in settler colonial dispossession — or more accurately, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their homelands by colonising Settler people. Corresponding to this awareness is a critical understanding of the choice (in both preconscious/affective and conscious/rationalised forms) that Settler people make as to whether they will

participate in colonisation, and to what degree (Barker, 2007). I explicitly position this research as part of wider efforts by Settler people to act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples through the pursuit of personal decolonisation.

Throughout this project, but most especially in this Introduction, and in Chapters 6 and 7, I engage in personal reflection on my role as a settler coloniser and my identity as a Settler. Autobiographical (Moss, 2001) and auto-ethnographical (Bessio & Butz, 2004) research are well-established in geographical studies, and Pamela Moss' work has been instrumental to the revealing how positionalities and dynamics of power follow any academic into their research. Like Moss, "I think I lead a rather ordinary, mundane life", and like her, I do not intend to position myself either favourably or exceptionally through this banal assertion:

[b]y invoking this rather meek description of my daily life, I don't mean to dismiss my privilege; on the contrary, I wish to understand such privilege in the context of my own ordinariness, mundaneness, for it is through this invisibility that the subtleties of power express themselves — either in being oppressed or in being an oppressor.

Moss, 2001 p.3

As an autoethnographic project, this thesis corresponds to the first two forms of autoethnography identified by Butz and Besio, "(i) academics' systemic efforts to analyze their own biographies as resources for illuminating larger social or cultural phenomena; (ii) researchers' reflective ruminations on their fieldwork encounters" (2009 p.1660). Much of this thesis is more closely aligned with this second autoethnographic form, as a researcher of decolonisation also pursuing personal decolonisation and aware of the affective influences of my personal

colonisation on my rational, cognitive processes. As a theorist, my fieldwork encounters have been with texts; as a Settler person, the ‘encounters’ that have illuminated my understandings of colonialism have been pervasive through personal relationships and across many years (see below). Neither of these deviations from what might be commonly considered ‘fieldwork encounters’ is fatal, though they necessitate a method of discussing these encounters that is equally textual and diffuse.<sup>2</sup>

Chapters 1 through 5 read as a ‘sort of auto-ethnography,’ wherein the subject is an obscured, rejected identity (obscured intentionally by power; rejected because differences within identity are emphasised and settler colonialism claims hegemonic power to define space). Throughout these chapters, the autoethnographic pursuit may seem to disappear; this is because of the difficulty of being a Settler person attempting to describe how settler colonialism works and affective Settler attachments to place are generated, essentially from the ‘interior’ of the dynamic. As discussed below, one of the primary features of settler colonisation is the rejection of the existence of settler colonisation by Settler peoples, themselves generated as coherent populations by those colonial processes. Questions into ‘who’ Settlers are become incoherent, because many common identity markers — race, class, language — carry radically different meanings across different settler colonial spaces and through time. The composition of Settler society in the northern bloc is not fixed. As such, the Settler

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted here that textual research does not preclude the possibility of ‘encounters’ that can inform autoethnographic analysis. See, for example, Shawn Wilson’s discussion of Indigenous research methodologies that insist on developing a relationship with text (Wilson, 2008), which I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 1.



identity is not defined by any demographic makeup but rather productive and consumptive patterns with respect to space (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Consequently, it is more useful to ask *what Settler people do* and *why they do it*. The ultimate goal is to be able to intelligently theorise on what else *could* Settler people do, and why don't they already? This is not meant to be an esoteric question, but rather a strategic one. Settler colonialism is pervasive and implicated in many dynamics and is surprisingly durable. Challenging settler colonialism must begin at the fundamental levels of self and society, or there is the risk of colonial 'shapeshifting' (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005); either within settler colonial collectives to continue colonisation under different political, social or economic 'regimes,' or through affective resonance with other aspects of the neo-imperial assemblage (see Chapter 5). This is an attempt to engage with the "in-between spaces" (Pile, 2010 pp.15-16) of settler colonialism, and describe how affective connections are actually forged between such diverse Settler populations, addressing the major gap of "work to be done in thinking through the geographies of emotional and affectual life" (Pile, 2010 p.16), especially in the Settler northern bloc.

### **Autoethnography, Affect, and a Phenomenological Sense of Place**

Broadly, studies of affect commonly undertake ethnological studies as a "default methodology" (Pile, 2010 p.11). Autoethnography and affect remain conceptually related in this thesis; both rely on a phenomenological basis to inform inquiry. Phenomenology, roughly "the philosophical effort to ground knowledge in experience" (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b p.637), is intrinsic to my construction of a Settler ethnographic experience of the northern bloc, and thus to my

autoethnographic method and affective intervention. Larsen and Johnson assert this experiential, place-based 'worlding' as a necessary reflection of the complexity created when experiences of place are considered as an intrinsic part of knowledge generated in or about a space:

As soon as we put the lived quality of being into thought or speech, existence instantly recedes from embodied awareness; that is to say, it becomes abstract. Yet when we do attend to the experience of existing, we notice that far from being a single, static moment in a succession of moments, it is rather the singular, dynamic presencing of an entire world, one that encompasses but also exceeds the empirical and cognitive distinctions of self and other. It is like constantly finding yourself in a situation that is already lit up, given pace, and moving to the rhythm of mood and actions.

Larsen & Johnson, 2012b p.637

The importance of experience of place here is clear: without experiencing settler colonisation in the northern bloc, it is difficult (if not impossible) to disentangle the rationalisations of colonialism (expressed in legal and political regimes, norms of 'common sense' and other socio-cultural representations) from the affective push to settle and colonise. However, in focusing on my own biographical involvements with colonialism and my encounters with settler colonisation through my (textual) 'fieldwork,' there is the risk of introducing the northern bloc as a landscape that is already 'lit up,' and therefore obscuring the historical importance and transcendent trajectory of settler colonisation. It is necessary here to turn to an explicit discussion of my own experiences in and of colonising in order to reveal

my personal 'attunement' and 'understanding' of the northern bloc that generates my particular Settler 'being-in-the-world' (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b p.638).

### **Three Homelands: Affective Influence of Places on Autoethnographic Methods**

My experience of being a Settler person has been forged through my 'sense of place' relating to three separate places that I have considered 'home,' each of which appears (in more or less explicit fashion) throughout the remainder of this thesis.<sup>3</sup> First, is the 'homeland' of my birth: Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; a city with a fading steel industry and emerging cultural economy, situated squarely in the most densely-populated, cosmopolitan area of Canada, the Golden Horseshoe of southern Ontario, adjacent to Lake Ontario, opposite Toronto, and a short drive (by road or rail) from the American border at Niagara Falls. Second, my adopted home of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada; the provincial capital of Canada's westernmost province is a small city of disproportionate influence nestled against the Pacific Ocean. Third, the home from which I am researching and writing this thesis, the city of Leicester, United Kingdom, which has been important for me both as the site of my academic inquiry, but also as a site relatively free from 'pre-lit' settler colonial spaces. Each of these three places that I call home exert a different influence on this project through my autoethnographic research method.

'Home' is a particular 'sense of place,' and it is to different 'senses of place' that impact on my methods that I turn here. First, Hamilton, more than just a

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<sup>3</sup> As is inevitable in an autoethnographically-inspired piece, this project makes use of first-person narrative in several instances. In this section, I personalise my experiences of and relationships to particular places in order to explain the impact of those places on my methods; I return to a first-person narrative in Chapter 6 to a very different end.

modern, post-industrial, “ordinary city” (Amin & Graham, 1997), is a pervasively settler colonial place. Despite being raised in this city from my birth until I moved to Victoria at age 24, for much of my life I was only vaguely aware of the Indigenous histories and relationships to place that both preceded and continued to resist the Settler world imposed there. Much of that awareness only came once I had left the place (an experience paralleled by my experience of leaving the northern bloc for the UK). However, I did begin the process of becoming aware of colonialism pervasive in my life and the society around me as an undergraduate, when I began taking classes in the Indigenous Studies Department of McMaster University (2000-2003). Hamilton and McMaster University are located adjacent to one of the largest and most populated reserves in Canada, Six Nations. Many of the instructors and students in the Indigenous Studies Department identified as Haudenosaunee or Iroquois, and several classes were delivered in the community, on the reserve. These experiences led to my first encounters with the ‘colonial difference’ between Hamilton as the place that I knew as home, and Hamilton as a spatial result of settler colonialism. As such, much of my later work continues to rely on the examples, histories, and experiences that were part of the initial shifts in my affective relationships and the breaking down of Settler dysconsciousness. This is especially evident in my engagement with the War of 1812-13, a relatively minor conflict between America and the British Empire, but one which culminated in a series of battles on or around my home community (Taylor, 2010; Hall, 2003; Sugden, 1999; Benn, 1998). It is equally evident in my reliance on Haudenosaunee understandings of place (Swamp, 2010), histories (Wallace, 1994), political theories (Alfred, 2009a, 2005; Turner, 2006), and contemporary resistances (Keefer, 2010a, 2007; York & Pindera, 1991).



**Figure 1 - A view of the north end of Hamilton, Ontario, showing remains of the steel industry in the upper right, and Lake Ontario at top (North End Hamilton, 2007).**

By the time I moved to Victoria, BC, in 2004, my understanding of colonisation was rapidly developing; the reason that I moved away from my family and friends in Hamilton was to pursue a graduate degree in the Indigenous Governance Program (IGOV), University of Victoria.<sup>4</sup> This program has been described as ‘decolonisation bootcamp,’ and is known for an assertive approach to Indigenous nationhood and decolonisation. Through the IGOV Program, I had the opportunity to get to know people and places very different than those I had known in Hamilton; coming to understand the relationships of the Salish nations – the people who still hold legal claim to huge areas of Vancouver Island and the BC Lower Mainland – to each other, to their homelands, and to their seascapes, was

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the Indigenous Governance Program, please see: [www.uvic.ca/igov](http://www.uvic.ca/igov).

disorienting and powerful. As I transitioned from student to professional, I was employed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education; in this position, I travelled across nearly the entirety of BC, encountering more and more varied people and places, coming to see British Columbia for the multitude of colonial contradictions that it is (see Chapter 4). As such, many of my examples of colonial conflicts are drawn from British Columbia, including: histories of warfare on Vancouver Island (Arnett, 1999); displacement of Indigenous peoples by resource booms in the interior (Thistle, 2011; Wagner, 2008; see also Key Terms – Gold Rushes); legal conflicts, such as the Delgamuukw cases (Hurley, 1998) and the BC Treaty Process (Alfred, 2001); and especially anticolonial resistance and decolonising assertions, such as ecosystem restoration (Corntassel and Bryce, 2012) or urban reclamations (Culhane, 2003).



**Figure 2 - Victoria, British Columbia, at twilight (Godfrey, 2009); note the prominence of the natural safe harbour that positioned Victoria as a gateway from the Pacific Ocean to the interior gold fields, ranch lands, and other resources.**

This project as a whole is born out of the effects of the next move and adoption of a new 'home,' this one in Leicester, UK. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6, but my initial impulse for this move was to study settler colonialism from without, avoiding the pressures of social dysconsciousness that can make decolonising discourses in the northern bloc extremely difficult and frustrating engagements. What I have discovered is twofold. First, through geographical studies of mobility, positionality, spatiality, and affect, I have discovered new ways of interrogating migration, identity, power, and complicity in settler colonial spaces. I posit that none of these realisations would likely take the form that they have if pursued in a very different (settler colonial) place. However, what this physical removal of myself as a Settler from the physical infrastructure of settler colonial space has revealed about my own Settler identity and settler colonial entanglements is dealt with in the concluding chapters of this thesis.

### **Praxis and Positionality**

Mindful of Cole Harris' critique that settler colonialism must be considered "locally" in order to trace the "lines of force" applied through the colonial process (Harris, 2004 p.167), this project does not attempt to address all instances of settler colonialism simultaneously. Settler peoples exist in great diversity; while I will draw on examples and analyses from many locations, my primary focus is the area of Canada and the United States, the northern bloc of settler colonialism (see Key Terms and Concepts; Chapter 2). This project will begin the process of understanding how Settler societies can share places with Indigenous peoples in non-dominating, decolonised (or decolonising) ways.

In order to undertake this project in an ethical way, I must be explicit about my personal praxis (the relationship between my intellectual understandings of colonisation and decolonisation, and my personal commitments to decolonising projects and Indigenous-Settler alliance building). Like William Connolly (Bennet, 2008 p.187), I have an explicitly political intent with my construction of affect and my deployment of it in settler colonial analysis: my intent is to reveal possibilities for Settler decolonisation. My approach is thus informed by the ethics of decolonisation, as well as involvements in Indigenous struggles and anarchist politics. To begin, this project is motivated by ethics of reciprocity and mutual aid that are core tenets of both indigenism and anarchism (Lewis, 2012). I carry a responsibility to the groups that have accepted, taught, tested and entered into enduring relationships with me. Further, this approach is intended to accord with Gibson-Graham's "performative ontological project" of uncovering diverse economies (2008). Their project seeks to denude the hegemony of capitalism by uncovering already existing or developing non-capitalist economies; this project is a decolonising project in that it seeks to uncover anti-settler colonial potentialities in Settler identities. By specifically searching for the spatialities of Settler decolonisation, I am searching for a hint, a haunting, a potential that is not yet realised. However, the existence of even the possibility of Settler decolonisation forces a choice (to paraphrase Gibson-Graham):

... to continue to marginalize (by ignoring or disparaging) the plethora of hidden and alternative ... activities that contribute to [decolonization], or to make them the focus of our research and teaching in order to make them more 'real', more credible, more viable as objects of policy and activism, more present as everyday realities that touch all our lives and



dynamically shape our futures. This is the performative ontological project ...

Gibson-Graham, 2008 p.6

This responsibility is best fulfilled by developing the concept of Settler decolonisation, envisioning reconfigurations of space that allow for the co-existence of Indigenous and Settler peoples in place, and promoting a just and mutually beneficial set of relationships for both groups.

As a Settler person from a settler colonial society, many aspects of Indigenous 'being on the land' (see Chapter 1) are and must be obscured to me. At times this is a political assertion, a necessary defence against appropriation and abuse (Haig-Brown, 2010). For this reason, I prioritize throughout the analyses of Indigenous experts, including academics, elders, and community activists. Rather than focus on the effects of colonisation on or potential avenues for decolonisation of Indigenous societies — an ethically problematic and intellectually impossible task for a Settler person to presume to undertake — this project is focused on Settler people.

This leads me to necessarily address a related ethical issue: as a project with the (explicitly political) aim of decolonisation and targeted at a particular group of people (Settler people of Canada and America), there is the possibility of this work being directed towards affective 'brain washing,' reconfiguring affective relationships contra one set of power relations but in the service of another. I am aware of Barnett's critique of Connolly's approach as leading to a 'sinister' sort of political engineering; however, I do not believe this is a risk for my particular project. My deployment of affect in decolonisation is explicitly intended to open up rather than foreclose the possibilities of political expression (see Chapters 6 & 7); I

agree with Tuck and Yang, who argue that 'settler futurity' should not be a consideration in the pursuit of decolonisation – decolonisation must be pursued as an end unto itself (2012 p.14).

My praxis is theoretically grounded in my reliance on affective relationships rooted in place, which Larsen and Johnson assert can form the basis of creative affinities and unexpectedly reveal new ways of 'being in place' (2012b). As an autoethnographic project, I am informed not just by my immersion in (and identification with) Settler cultures, but my more specific relationships with various communities of activists, especially those pursuing decolonisation from a variety of positionalities. The pursuit of decolonisation is both the object of my study and the goal of my participation in Settler society and with Indigenous communities, activists, and friends. My praxis, then, is informed by both my positionality as a Settler and my identification as an activist; this praxis also impacts on how my project has unfolded as most of the academic insights have been spurred by my own struggles as an activist at one time or another (see Chapter 6). As mentioned above, much of the autoethnography in this project takes the form of 'reflections' on my 'fieldwork encounters' (with text and theory, informed by the lived experiences of my various colonial homes); however, I do explicitly engage in more direct interrogations of my particular 'biographical' experiences as part of developing settler colonial entanglements. This has been initiated above, in my first-person descriptions of my enduring relationships to 'home.' However, I have intentionally chosen to return to this technique only in the final two chapters of this thesis. My intention is to demonstrate, first, the general ways that Settler societies are envisioned and built, and settler colonial power generated and structured, through the bodily movement and interaction of

Settler peoples (and oppressed exogenous populations); and second, to offer my own personal case up as a 'strategic exemplar' of an incomplete and on-going struggle with decolonisation from a Settler perspective (see Chapters 6 & 7).

### **Settler Colonialism: A brief conceptual history**

Historian Frederick Hoxie, through a historiography of settler colonial analysis, reveals that settler colonialism has been under-applied and under-theorised in studies of place and space, despite originating in the field of Geography (Hoxie, 2008). Those geographers that have applied the concept have tended to work in historical geography (see for example: Harris, 2002; Clayton, 1999).<sup>5</sup> Some post-colonial theorists attempt to separate settler states such as Canada, America and Australia from "modern" settler colonialism, implying that these states are no longer colonial (Elkins & Pedersen 2005, p.14). This is clearly false; Canada and America remain colonised and colonial (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Barker, 2009; Alfred, 2005), but the perception speaks to an imperative to foreground the continuous and ongoing colonisation of the northern bloc, as well as its historical roots.

Settler colonialism as a concept enters its current usage with the book *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The politics and poetics of an ethnographic event*, by Australian anthropologist Patrick Wolfe in 1999. Although contrasts have been made for years between 'settlement colonies' or 'the

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted here that though Harris and Clayton, among others, have engaged with the colonisation of the northern bloc through settlement as somehow 'different,' they have not begun analytically disentangling settler colonialism from other types of colonialism. The term is only recently coming into usage in Canadian and American scholarship, and understanding of the theoretical background of settler colonialism is not common in Geography.

colonies proper' (as Marx and Engles labelled them) and 'franchise colonies' (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010 p.19 n.4), the distinctions were often hazy. Further complicating matters was the watershed moment of decolonisation following World War II, a process driven by the wealthy settler colonies in North America and Australasia, and from which they exempted themselves.<sup>6</sup> Academics have repeatedly attempted to address the settler colonial distinction, describing the colonisation of the Americas with metaphors such as "swarming" (Crosby, 1978), through theories of fragmentary cultural replication (Butlin, 2009 pp.10-12), or as part of processes of capitalist modernisation.<sup>7</sup> Wolfe's work neatly cut across all of these representations by insisting on the primacy of invasion in the history of Australia (1999) and America (2006). Further, Wolfe refers to invasion not in the form of marauding armies but of imposed structures. By extension, this invasion can never be considered 'over' — which is to say spatially or socially decolonised — so long as the structures of invasion remain, and they have proven extremely durable, surprisingly flexible, and at times difficult to identify.

Veracini discusses the settler colonial processes of building structures of invasion as a series of 'transfers' (2010a, pp.33-52) that function differently but

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<sup>6</sup> This is an example of "deep colonizing" (Veracini, 2011a) whereby states and societies use a focus on a historical colonial past — in the case of these Settler states, their own political break with the British Empire — to foreclose discussions of decolonisation with respect to Indigenous nations. See Chapter 3 for more on this.

<sup>7</sup> This last has been portrayed both as a historical inevitability, supportive of racist, white conservative politics (Flannigan, 2008), and also deployed critically, shining light on the complicity of urbanisation and industrialisation, globalising capital, settler colonialism in the northern bloc, and metropolitan empire building in India (Bhambra, 2007a; 2007b).

serve the same end: transferring land to settler colonial control and by implication erasing indigeneity from the land being claimed. For example, historical geographer Daniel Clayton (1999) has described how between the 1770s and 1840s the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples (whose territories are located along the west coast of what is now called Vancouver Island, British Columbia) “were engaged by three sets of forces ... : the West’s scientific exploration of the world in the Age of Enlightenment, capitalist practices of exchange, and the geopolitics of nation-state rivalry” (p.xi). The result was that “local, intensely corporeal, geographies of interaction were gradually subsumed into an abstract imperial space of maps and plans” (pp.xi-xii).

This research project is intended to fill an important conceptual gap between political and social theories that describe large-scale colonial dynamics, often over long periods of time, and detailed studies of localised colonial moments. The development of settler colonialism as a distinct field of inquiry has involved both types of study and is generating an expanding body of literature on settler colonialism’s global and local expressions. In 2010, two landmark works were released: First, Veracini’s *Settler Colonialism: A theoretical overview*, a groundbreaking work that for the first time attempted to articulate a comprehensive theory of what settler colonialism is, why it happens, and the significance of its particular characteristics. The second was an edited volume, *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on race, place and identity*; the editors, Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, assembled an exceptional collection of contributions on settler colonialism from scholars researching places around the Pacific, drawing attention to both the commonalities and local specificities of

settler colonial space, primarily through historical analyses.<sup>8</sup> These works complement each other but do not exhaust the field. Veracini's work takes a global perspective, focusing on colonial narrative forms and abstracted hierarchical social positioning based on perceptions of race, civilisation, and memory to describe the causes of a vast array of 'transfers' of land from Indigenous to Settler polities. By contrast, *Banivanua Mar* and *Edmonds* volume consists largely of studies of specific locations around the Pacific Rim, mostly those colonised by the British, which detail the nuances of how race, gender and identity have been differentially deployed and implicated throughout these settler colonial spaces. The gap that persists between these works is small but significant: between globalising narratives and location-specific perceptions, there are innumerable tensions and conflicts that help to explain how settler collectives invest their identities into spaces and societies to which they may be only tenuously connected. How Settlers imagine themselves is a product of both metanarratives and personal or site-specific experiences, and the two impact on each other. The dynamic tension between global-scale theories of colonialism and local-scale histories of colonisation is the arena in which intermediary geographies – such as the Canadian or American nation, the region of Cascadia, or a continent-wide 'land of opportunity', to name a few – are generated. This project is positioned to make the critical, missing connection between the approaches of these two works. Veracini discusses the 'imagined geographies of settler colonialism' (2010b pp.179-197), an important concept in the tradition of Derek Gregory (1994), and the ways that

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<sup>8</sup> For a more comprehensive review of these works and their situation in contemporary settler colonial scholarship, please see the review essay, *Locating Settler Colonialism* (Barker, 2012b).

Settler people create and actualize this imagined geography is precisely what I hope to describe.

### **Settler Identity, Settler Colonialism, and Geographical Thought**

Veracini says colonialism (the colonial mentality) and colonisation (the usurpation of land) are conceptually separated by colonisers (Veracini, 2010a pp.81-86). Partially this is because of the tendency, noted by Lefebvre, of geographical thought to fall into the conceptual gap between mental and physical space (1974 pp.3-9). This false distinction also arises because Settler collectives are the vectors of settler colonisation: average people with little in common, except for ways of seeing, being in, and moving through space.<sup>9</sup> This connection, though, serves to obscure the way that settler colonialism expands through coordinated — or, as demonstrated later, resonant — acts by large numbers of disparate Settler people over varying temporal and spatial frames. This project challenges settler colonial constructed invisibility through an analysis of settler colonial spatial dynamics demonstrating the integrated participation and privilege of Settler people, contemporary and historical, within the story of settler colonisation.

This identity has been the basis of my previous work on settler colonialism (2009; 2007). However, in the past I have examined the Settler identity as something static, a way of thinking almost frozen in time and premised primarily on the identity deformations caused by colonial domination. This is inaccurate; development of settler colonialism theory has demonstrated the diversity and

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<sup>9</sup> It could be said that Indigenous peoples fall into a similar categorisation: a vast variety of cultures, histories, political structures, and social spaces, sharing in common particular ways of 'being on the land' (see Chapter 1). This should only underscore how powerful these spatial dynamics can be.

mutability of the Settler identity. The development of settler colonialism theory has raised a number of important points of consideration: the always-local character of settler colonisation (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010 p.2); the settler collective as the primary unit of settler colonisation (Veracini, 2010a pp.59-62); and the interplay between settler colonialism and other types of colonialism and sovereign power (Veracini 2011a; 2010b pp.66-69; Cavanagh, 2009; Morgensen, 2011; see also Chapter 5). The goal of this project, though, remains the same regardless of these different configurations: to contribute to the decolonisation of settler colonial societies, clarifying entanglements of 'Settler' and 'colonial,' revealing the roles of individuals and collectives within broader colonial ways of thinking and being premised on advantage over Indigenous peoples.

Part of the basis for developing a theory of Settler perceptions of and connections to space and place can be found in what is already known of the ways that a variety of related Settler and non-settler peoples have constructed colonial spaces. Drawing here on the example of sociologist Richard Day, this project is inspired by his use of the semiotic square in disentangling perceptions of identity in the racialised history of Canadian multiculturalism. Day explains, "[s]uch a semiotic square is a formal method of exhausting the possibilities of signification inherent in a given concept or 'semantic axis'" (Day, 2000 p.54, Fig 3.2). Informally, a similar exercise reveals a variety of possible identity structures implicated in settler colonial spaces.

Settler colonisers come to stay and displace or erase Indigenous spatialities to assert their own sovereign spaces and it is therefore possible to construct several different types of colonial positionality and identity. There are colonisers who do not come to stay but do displace Indigenous spatialities; this could include



everything from slave traders to missionaries, colonisers who intend to return and remain connected to a distant empire, but who disrupt Indigenous spatialities by during and after their contact with Indigenous peoples. There are also colonisers who do not come to stay and do not ‘displace’ Indigenous spatialities, but rather reorient them to their own benefit; traders, military commanders, and others who rely on integral and strong Indigenous polities and economies are implicated here. Finally, there is the complementary term, “that which transcends the opposition” between contradictory elements of staying/returning and displacement of/reliance on Indigenous peoples (Day 2000, p.54). This, I assert, is the settler who comes to stay, but not to displace; essentially, Settler people whose identities are not dependent on settler colonial logics and spaces. The goal here is to derive a clearer picture of the relationships between colonialisms and space in order to understand one group of people implicit in the relationship — Settler people — better as a social category and as people whose spatial constructions of ‘homeland’ or ‘nation’ have massive implications for Indigenous peoples.

As mentioned, this project will combine a number of theories developed across various disciplines in order to examine an object that is otherwise both obscure and obscured (Settler identity). Much of this rests on the use of spatial theory and theories of social space in order to draw inferences about settler colonial spatiality — the connection between the ways settler colonisers think about space and how they destroy, build and occupy it.

### **The Imagined Geographies of Settler Colonialism**

Settler colonialism is a highly geographical process. Returning to the key works discussed above, *Settler Colonialism* describes how settler collectives move

through space, how they configure themselves in space, and how they relate to places through various psychological techniques (Veracini, 2010a). *Making Settler Colonial Space* describes the complex, unique dynamics between Settler and Indigenous peoples in place, showing how they navigate through intimate dynamics of race, class, violence, and discovery (Banivanua Mar & Edmonds, 2010). Between these two frames is the need to describe those imagined geographies that Veracini hints at, and that perceptions of settler belonging imply. The spaces that settler colonisers perceive are at the core of the Settler identity; they constitute the spatiality of settler colonialism, the impact of space on identity and vice versa. These spaces are racialised, hierarchical, and filled with perceptions of right and privilege, as well as threat of loss of privilege or legitimacy. These spaces are hostile, even antithetical, to indigeneity. But many questions remain.

In attempting to sketch the spatial dynamics and spatialities of settler colonialism, I situate this project directly in the lineage of Banivanua Mar and Edmonds', and Veracini's settler colonial analyses. Also, by prioritising the imagined geographies of settler colonialism this project is in the tradition of geographical theorists like Derek Gregory (1994) and historical geographers such as Cole Harris (2004). Even as this project differentiates settler colonialism from other forms of colonisation — which Gregory, Harris, and their contemporaries were not in a position to do, and which settler colonial scholars argue we must (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Veracini, 2010a) — it attempts to emphasise settler colonial continuity between periods and places across the northern bloc. The goal is to demonstrate the imagined geographies that underpin the spaces, power structures, and institutions of privilege that in turn sustain settler colonialism.

The dynamic processes of settler colonial spatial production and consumption is transformative in nature. The goal is to detach Indigenous peoples from their spatial networks and place-based relationships in order that settler colonial spaces and Settler spatialities can be rooted in their place. On one hand, this requires the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the 'transfer' of their lands. This is a transformative process in that Indigenous peoples and their environmental contexts are deeply and inextricably linked (see Chapter 1), and the limiting of Indigenous 'being on the land' changes the qualities of a place. Additionally, it is transformative in that Settler societies use both physical and conceptual 'remnants' of Indigenous spatial networks to build their spaces (see Key Terms and Concepts, and Chapter 4 on *bricolage*). Often simultaneously, there are physical transformations of landscape that bring the spaces of settler colonisation into resonance with the geographical imagination of Settler peoples. These changes can be as small as a stop sign or a fence, something demarcating private property or institutional control of movement across space. They can also be massive: the cities and urban centres that collectively hark back to powerful imperial metropolises. Regardless, it is the Settler perception — not the perspectives of indigenous or even exogenous Others — which inform these transformations. The transformations in physical and conceptual space mirror the transformation into Settler peoples and societies from settler colonial collectives.

### **The Northern Bloc of Settler Colonialism**

This project takes as its spatial boundaries what I call the northern bloc of settler colonialism: the places claimed by the American and Canadian states. An important consideration implied by settler colonial theory is that Settler nations

and states are merely different expressions of settler colonial space, no matter how strongly the idea of Canada or the United States as jurisdictions is socially endorsed and accepted (see Chapter 3). Thus it is necessary to actively avoid privileging the state system in settler colonial analyses. However, it is important to in some way limit the settler colonial spaces under examination to the largest functionally-similar geographical grouping. Eduardo Galeano makes a compelling case for a significantly different historical dynamic of colonisation on either side of the Rio Grande (Galeano, 1997) based on the presence of large, concentrated populations useful for labour in what is now Central and South America. However, Veracini makes the point that settler colonialism is less defined by the exploitation of Indigenous labour, and more precisely defined by the removal or extermination of Indigenous populations wholesale and subsequent “disavowal” of settler colonial violence (Veracini, 2008 p.365). As such, much of Latin America deviates sharply from models that could be constructed to reflect the colonial dynamics of Canada and the United States because Indigenous peoples south of the Rio Grande have endured metropole-style Spanish colonisation in addition to concurrent or later settler colonialism. The northern bloc settler states have much more in common, historically and in the present, with states such as Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, having both been colonised primarily under British imperial purview and having engaged in similar, legal-political-military colonial conflicts generated within the nascent colonial states.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I will continue to draw examples from other settler states as useful parallels and different perspectives on similar situations, focusing primarily on theoretical constructions from with the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand experiences. I will also draw on examples of struggles in colonial states that implicate both

This northern bloc of settler colonialism bears significant resemblance to Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand settler colonial contexts, and shares some elements in common with all settler colonies. However, this northern bloc encompasses a unique and internally contiguous colonial history, with common roots in British — and to a lesser extent, French and Spanish — imperialism (and resultant legal, political and economic structures), and a paradoxical character that positions this territory as both “metropole” and “colony” simultaneously. Mindful of sociologist Raewyn Connell’s argument that definitions of global and local are “conceptually arbitrary” (2007 p.59), the Settler peoples of this northern bloc are entangled with colonial power and practices on multiple scales: as imperial architects and elites (Stewart-Harawira, 2005; Tully, 2000); as active, localised primary colonists (Kupperman, 2000; Arnett, 1999); as transient labour alienated from place by capital and dependent on colonial states and nationalisms for social cohesion (Walia, 2010; Harris, 2004); and as the subjects of contemporary juridical neo-colonialism (Barker, 2009; Day 2005). The two central themes of this inquiry will be power and identity. Both of these are concepts that are often — and some may say always (Massey, 2009) — spatially defined and grounded in a concept of place. This is particularly true of contact zones of settler colonialism, evident in the ongoing conflicts between Indigenous and Settler peoples in contemporary settler states.

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Indigenous and Settler peoples, especially those that see Indigenous and Settler people finding commonality and building alliances around socio-political struggles; primarily, the efforts of the Zapatistas in Mexico and beyond (Khasnabish, 2010), and the autonomists and piqueteros in Argentina (Gordon & Chatterton, 2004). Finally, I will critically engage with generalised understandings of colonisation, imperialism, and settlement from sources in India, Africa, and South East Asia.

The societies of the northern bloc are not internally homogenous or free of racialisation and class differences. Chapter 5 examines in-depth some of the currents of contemporary global politics and economics that influence massive migrations to and through the northern bloc. These migrations collide with racist narratives supportive of settler colonialism, producing a complex 'topography of power' (see Chapter 3) that sorts and positions people based on class, race, and adherence to Settler socio-economic norms. These contemporary divisions may appear severe, but they mirror dynamics consistent throughout the history of the northern bloc: Settler people conspire to enhance the standing of their own collective and suppress the power of other collectives, contesting for the power to define the terms of transcendence of the settler colonial form. For example, Irish, British, Scottish, and American positionalities constantly jostled, displaced, or amalgamated in the chaotic period around the War of 1812 (Taylor, 2010). British-descended Settlers themselves were confounded by the presence of French *habitants* in the territories inherited after the British defeat of France in the French and Indian Wars. More recently, white, rural residents of Kentucky and Appalachia are discriminated against in many states, forging odd bonds between poor, rural white and black communities (hooks, 2009). Part of the reason for examining the northern bloc as a regional unit is that, given the divisions evident in the peoples that occupy it, the relative coherence of the political units and national and regional identities of northern bloc Settler peoples demands explanation.

### **Contributions to Understanding Northern Bloc Settler Colonialism**

One of the important motivating factors in this work is the paucity of settler colonial theory applied to and grounded in the American and Canadian situations

and histories. While Wolfe has written extensively on American settler colonialism from an anthropological perspective (2006), and others have contributed case-specific studies to the northern bloc (for example: Barman, 2010), settler colonialism has not been applied to nearly the same extent in analyses of the northern bloc nation states. Settler colonialism as a frame of analysis has predominantly derived from and been applied in the context of Australia (and New Zealand to a lesser extent). The Australian 'History Wars' disrupted nationalist tropes of progress and civilisation, which among many other effects opened up space and created the imperative for reconsideration of and innovation in examinations of colonial power and impact (Mickler, 2010).

By contrast, myths of national 'manifest destiny' (Teigrob, 2012) and 'peacemaker' myths (Regan, 2010) have diverted discourses of colonial power into discussions of political participation and tribal sovereignty (Alfred, 2005) or reconciliation and legal remedy (Veracini, 2008). Studies of settler colonialism — and indeed, studies of ongoing colonialism of any kind in relation to the North American nation states — tend to be exiled to 'Indigenous Studies' or 'Native Studies' programs (Grande, 2006; Smith, 1999). This is an exile both in temporal and intellectual space: colonisation is relegated to the 'before' of Canadian and American history, and circumscribed in the academy into Indigenous Studies because colonialism is perceived as a 'problem' only for Indigenous peoples. Settler colonialism clearly plays a major role in the histories of the northern bloc but it has been comparatively ignored. Thus the northern bloc of settler colonialism remains under-theorised.

In part because of this lack, the available theoretical literature that this study draws upon is necessarily limited. Veracini and Wolfe are quoted

extensively, as are the other, few scholars that focus on settler colonialism, such as Paulette Regan (2010), Scott Lauria Morgensen (2011; 2010), and Jean Barman (2010). Critically, none of these scholars work from a geographical perspective; they are primarily historians and political theorists. Cole Harris' historical geographies are revealing, but often do not have the benefit of the developed concept of settler colonialism, instead conflating types of colonialism — a common problem, as Veracini points out (2010a). Conflating different types of colonisation contributes to the afore-mentioned exiling of colonisation from Canadian and American consciousness and contemporary reality (Barker, 2007). So the spaces of the northern bloc created through settler colonisation — the northern bloc structures of invasion — remain only dimly sketched.

This thesis will reposition the northern bloc geopolitically, considering these spaces as entangled with global systems of state and capital, but also rooted in settler colonial dynamics of population movement and spatial production. This repositioning will open possibilities for seeing the social connections between Settler peoples differently: not simply as citizens of a state or identifiers with a common nationality, but as cooperative colonisers and co-producers of settler colonial space. The identity of the Settler is fore-grounded above national, regional, or ethnic identities in order to reveal the high-level influences of settler colonialism on identities, evident in the particular construction of settler colonial spatialities. Further, settler colonisation will be revealed as an affective process, inhering in the social relationships that make up Settler society in all its diversity. All of these perspectives on Settler society are designed to generate a critical framework that, through an interrogation of settler colonialism in the northern bloc, can reveal the potential for decolonising Turtle Island.



## **Chapter Preview**

Following decolonising ethics, this project must first and foremost centralise indigeneity with respect to the places of the northern bloc. Thus, this project begins with an attempt to describe — in very general terms — the spatial dynamics that predate and continue to defy settler colonisation. *Chapter 1: Indigenous Being on the Land*, describes a dynamic not familiar to many geographers: the network of relationships that animates Indigenous geographies. This chapter relies on Indigenous academics, writers, and elders, and employs story and oral history as well as anthropological, geographical and historical evidence. Any attempt at decolonisation by definition requires an understanding of Indigenous space in order to perceive the dynamic of settler colonial spatial consumption and production, and to provide a point of reference for imagined geographies of decolonisation. For the purposes of this project, *Chapter 1: Indigenous Being on the Land*, fills this role this and will be referenced extensively throughout the following chapters.

In *Chapter 2: The Spatial Logics of Colonial Geography*, I outline the dynamics of how particular colonial perspectives describe place and space, and the perceived role of spatial production and consumption in the generation of colonial power. I have used the term ‘logic’ consciously in order to help disambiguate overlapping types of colonialism. I view each type of colonial logic as a distinct way of perceiving and relating to place that entails the production and consumption of particular types of space, but also involves multiple evolutionary trajectories over time. I compare the spatial logics of three different (though

overlapping and interpenetrating) traditions: metropole colonialism, settler colonialism, and neo-colonialism. These spatial logics impact on each other in a variety of ways. While much of this thesis is devoted to exploring how settler colonial spatial logics manifest in generalised spatial dynamics, metropole dynamics remain relevant throughout, and neo-colonialism is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Moving from background logics to active perceptions, *Chapter 3: Settler Colonial Spatialities*, details the effects of settler colonial spatial calculation through the creation of a series of progressively colonised spaces. This genealogy details the transition from an imagined colonial space, through the identification of spaces of opportunity, the clearing and levelling of physical and social spaces required to create spaces of advantage, and finally the construction of enduring, powerful institutions of privilege. These spaces are all positioned as efforts by Settler people to bridge the colonial difference between imagined geographies of settler colonialism, and the physical, experiential reality of colonising. The production and consumption of these spaces is not a linear process and is rarely complete (especially due to Indigenous resistance — see Chapter 6). Settler colonial societies go through periods of intensification, internal consolidation, and expansion into frontier areas. The desire, though, is supersession: the transcendence of the colonial form into a post-Settler society.

From theory to practice, *Chapter 4: Settler Colonial Transformation of Space*, considers the dynamic construction of the settler colonial northern bloc. This section focuses on the simultaneous and intertwined acts of erasure, occupation, and *bricolage*. I position these settler colonising acts as a three-stage dynamic of spatial production and consumption that moves settler colonial space through the

spatial forms described in Chapter 3. These acts, at once individual and collective, perceptual and physical, are essential to the transfer of Indigenous lands to settler hands. I further describe the spatial trialectic — urban, rural, frontier — that results from this dynamic process, emphasising the unique characteristics ascribed to each, as well as the differences in perceptions of pure ‘wilderness’ versus the opportunistic ‘frontier.’ This chapter concludes with discussion of a failed attempt by Settler people in the northern bloc to spatially transcend settler colonial forms: the suburb.

Chapter 5 addresses a contemporary and particularly vexing set of problems. First, this chapter attempts to situate settler colonialism with respect to capitalism in the northern bloc. These two methods of producing power and control over people and places often resonate, with dramatic effects on population demographics, migration, and positionality with respect to race and class. From these analyses, *Chapter 5: Collisions – The conflicting trajectories of leftist activists and Indigenous peoples’ movements*, investigates the settler colonial tendencies inside leftist Settler political movements. I identify a number of ways that Settler activists disavow responsibility for colonialism, and count on anti-colonial actions to generate personal decolonisation. The oppressive and naïve nature of these efforts is examined through a discussion of post-capitalist settler colonial imagined geographies, and the retrenchment into ‘innocence’ that accompanies the assertion of these left-Settler spaces.

In *Chapter 6: Locating and Challenging Settler Colonialism*, I reconsider the spaces in which settler colonialism operates, from individual mindsets, to collective spaces, to contested dynamics across time and space, and locate settler colonialism squarely in the relational tensions between peoples and places.

Returning to the auto-ethnographic aspect of the project, this chapter re-evaluates the differences between individual Settler people, and settler colonial collectives, Settler societies, and the nations and state that they occupy. Individual and collective colonial dynamics are considered against the backdrop of Indigenous resistance and its disruptive effects on settler colonial space. Decolonisation as a process is investigated through the concept of 'affect' and personal unsettling, as well as compassion. This chapter reveals that decolonisation, even pursued as a personal project, is an extremely difficult (if not impossible) state to achieve, but that there are possibilities for change within social relationships.

The final chapter, *Chapter 7: Conceptualising a Decolonising Settler World*, directly addresses the fundamental question: can a Settler person decolonise? Navigating between abstract arguments for the possibility of social and cultural change, and the realities of power and privilege that channel Settler people into well-worn colonial dynamics, I develop a three-stage dynamic of Settler decolonisation based on practices of affect, affinity, and alliance. This chapter concludes with a discussion of how this process can be encouraged, and consideration of future trajectories of academic, social, and personal inquiry that are necessary to empower decolonising action.

### **Conclusion: In Search of the Decolonising Settler**

This project represents, in some respects, a leap of faith. Previous research on and personal experience of struggles against colonisation have revealed the sheer power and overwhelming momentum of settler colonisation as something akin to a juggernaut. But actions follow from plans, developed through thought and

discussion, and influenced by affective and emotional responses; colonisation follows from colonialism, which itself comes from people. In the case of the northern bloc, that implicates Settler people — like myself — and locates the responsibility for colonisation not in the past, but in the present. This should not be seen as a condemnation, but rather as an empowering perspective: Settler people are not just living with the legacies of colonisation but rather creating them, which means Settler people can influence the application of oppressive colonial power in the present and future. The leap of faith motivating this project is the belief that, somehow, an individual Settler person can begin a decolonising process, and that this process can spread, implicate others, and grow into not just a political movement but the basis for living differently on and with the land. This project is premised on the belief that, no matter how faint, there is a possibility that Settler people can be something more than colonisers.

## Key Terms and Concepts

Prior to engaging in analysis for this project, it is vital to clarify the language that will be used throughout. John Lutz, in the second chapter of *MAKÚK: A new history of Aboriginal-White relations*, his excellent text on ‘exchanges’ between Indigenous and newcomer peoples in the Pacific Northwest, discusses how language has changed over time and across contexts, often creating confusion in terms and meaning (2008 pp.15-30). Different languages coming together have resulted in patchwork descriptions and incomplete histories, and terminology being employed differently across disciplinary, cultural, and colonial divisions. There is no unified language or terminology of colonialism; as such, this list of key terms and concepts is intended to give definitions of contentious or fluid terms essential to this project, and where possible rough dates have been provided for significant events. These terms and concepts are not meant to be either exhaustive, or exclusive; where possible, further terms have been defined in the body of the thesis, and all of these terms may be employed differently in other settler colonial analyses.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Note: terms in this section have been arranged alphabetically; no other priority or preference should be implied.

## **Bricolage**

*Bricolage* is a term originally brought into popularity by postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha (1994). It is related to the concept of hybridity in postcolonial readings, accounting for the generation of socio-cultural identities and spaces that are derived in part from both colonising and indigenous traditions, and situated innovations within and beyond these. My usage of the term is usually in specific reference to settler colonial production of space and draws from Eric Selbin's articulation of storytellers as *bricoleurs*:

... a word which in this context should convey the ability to perform a large number of diverse tasks with whatever tools or materials are at hand, often things saved or collected as one's life unfolds for the moments when they might be of use. Neither practical scientist (or engineer) nor abstract theoretician, the *bricoleur* is thus prepared and able to deal with whatever the circumstance, by whatever means necessary. Hence a *bricoleur* might reasonably refer to someone who creates their own strategies for understanding and working with the reality at hand.

Selbin, 2010 p.40

A constructed *bricolage* can be physical, such as the settler colonial landscape of cities, rural spaces, and protected parks that reference both Indigenous and Settler conceptions of place. Alternatively, a settler colonial *bricolage* can be immaterial, such as colonial histories that mention indigeneity with respect to actual events, but assert colonial fantasies or biases as factual, changing the context of Indigenous content. Settler colonial *bricolage* is closely linked to the mimetic

character of settler colonialism in that all settler colonial space includes elements of indigeneity, although highly skewed and decontextualised.

### **Colonialism(s) and Imperialism(s)**

This project uses many terms with particular meanings related specifically to settler colonialism and settler colonial theory, which therefore warrant further clarification here. Imperialism and colonialism are two such terms whose common usages overlap with the intended definitions in this project, though incompletely and contingently. Primarily, the difference in how these terms are deployed in the context of this study is in the flexibility and variability within them. Imperialism is applied to an expansive ideology of domination through force, a broad but useful definition. Colonialism and colonisation, as terms, are much more contested. Lewis, drawing on McClintock's critiques of 'post colonialism,' offers the following useful definition:

[c]olonialism has been generally defined as "direct territorial appropriation of another geo-political entity, combined forthright exploitation of its resources and labour, and systematic interference in the capacity of the appropriated culture ... to organize its dispensations of power".

Lewis, 2012 p.233

Both historical and contemporary forms of imperialism and colonialism are discussed, as are many sub-types of each, including metropole, settler, and neo-colonialisms, and classical and neo-imperialism. Many further divisions and subdivisions are possible. For example, Edward Cavanagh convincingly describes



‘fur trade colonialism’ (2009), while Cole Harris identifies differences between colonisation before and after the advent of industrial capital (1997 pp.257-262). I assert that the three sub-types that I identify above represent the largest possible coherent dynamics of colonisation that can be discussed with reference to the transformation and organisation of the northern bloc, while still allowing for examinations of the local and globalising dynamics of contemporary colonisation within and beyond this region. Throughout this project, I endeavour to identify the specific type of imperialism or colonialism under discussion in a given context.

### **Decolonisation**

Decolonisation has a number of different meanings, which is expected given the variability in the term ‘colonialism’ (above). Decolonisation has historically referred to the divestment of overseas colonies by European imperial powers following World War II, facilitated through the United Nations. However, Canada and the United States, like most other settler colonies that had achieved statehood, were exempted from this process on the grounds that colonies were defined by a ‘salt water’ thesis. Settler states were considered ‘internally colonial’ (Tully, 2000); despite the expropriation of lands and labour from indigenous groups, the primacy of the sovereign nation state was upheld over political decolonisation.

Perhaps the best consideration of what ‘decolonisation’ means in the context of settler colonial states is Tuck and Yang’s recent article, *Decolonization Is Not A Metaphor* (2012). Tuck and Yang contest the overly-broad interpretation of decolonisation, generated in part by the historicisation of colonialism through some post-colonial discourses (Lewis, 2012 p.231), and as a result of “moves to

innocence” by which Settler people try to exempt themselves from colonisation (Tuck & Yang, 2012 p.9-28; see also Veracini, 2010a p.14). By contrast, Indigenous conceptions of decolonisation have been remarkably clear: decolonisation is the return of Indigenous peoples’ land bases and the relinquishment of Settler sovereign claims to place (Alfred, 2005; Corntassel & Bryce, 2012). Decolonisation requires restitution (Alfred, 2005 p.151-157) and massive redistributions of wealth (Tuck & Yang, 2012 pp.23-26), and will necessarily result in sweeping structural and systemic shifts throughout Settler society and across global political economies. Decolonisation of the northern bloc would be a radical spatial rupture from five hundred years of carefully constructed “geometries of power” (Massey, 2005). No singular vision can encompass decolonisation in the northern bloc, but given the entanglements of colonisation and modernity, the process is likely to be anti-capitalist and anti-statist (Alfred, 2005; Lewis, 2012).

### **Indigenous Peoples and Indigeneity**

Generally, I follow the lead of Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, employing ‘Indigenous’ as a situated identity. They state:

Indigenous peoples are just that: *Indigenous to the lands they inhabit*, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centres of empire. It is this *oppositional, place-based existence*, along with the *consciousness of being in struggle* against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization

by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world.

Alfred & Corntassel, 2005 p.597; emphasis added

Throughout this project, I employ an orthography of 'Indigenous' peoples, referring to an identity construct outlined above, and 'indigenous/indigeneity,'<sup>12</sup> in reference to a subjectivity situated in a place, whether speaking of beings or objects 'originating in' an area, or objects in the settler colonial imaginary. Much attention has been given recently to the ways that ongoing colonialism has affected Indigenous peoples' identities, and consequently, their cultural and political expressions and definitions of 'self' and 'other.' Niezen describes the burgeoning internationalist definition of "Indigenous" which has arisen in part because of common experiences of colonisation (2003, pp.12-14). However, as the eminent Lakota theorist and thinker, Vine Deloria, Jr. (1988) noted, collective terms like "American Indian" were incoherent prior to colonisation. Indigenous peoples remain a highly heterogeneous group, and should be conceptualised as diverse, even as generalisations are drawn on to make sense of colonial dynamics.

### **Indigenous Peoples: Related Terms**

#### **Aboriginal/Onkwehonwe**

The term 'aboriginal' is often used as a synonym for 'indigenous' or 'native,' meaning simply first or prior occupants of the land. However, the term has

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<sup>12</sup> 'Indigeneity' should be taken to refer to the performative and practiced ways of knowing and being that are characteristic of Indigenous identities and vital for sustaining Indigenous peoples' communities and nations (see Chapter 1).

recently taken on a more particular legal and cultural meaning, as the Canadian government has co-opted the term as a catch-all for the three types of Indigenous peoples recognised in the Canadian Constitution (Indian, Inuit, Métis). The use of this term conflates Indigenous communities as they self-identify, with government-recognised and endorsed communities of ‘aboriginals,’ and has been heavily criticised (see for example: Alfred, 2005). In contrast to assimilative and homogenising discourses of ‘aboriginalism,’ Indigenous peoples have often reasserted their own ways of conceiving of themselves and positioning others with respect to the land. Taiaiake Alfred employs the Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) word “Onkwehonwe”, meaning “original people” (2005 p.19), to assert an authentic form of indigeneity contra aboriginalism which is mediated through the state and politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2007). Many other terms exist in Indigenous languages, each with their own particular nuance and meaning, which is consistent with critique of the homogenising effect of aboriginalism. In this, the term ‘Onkwehonwe’ should be considered exemplary but not representational.

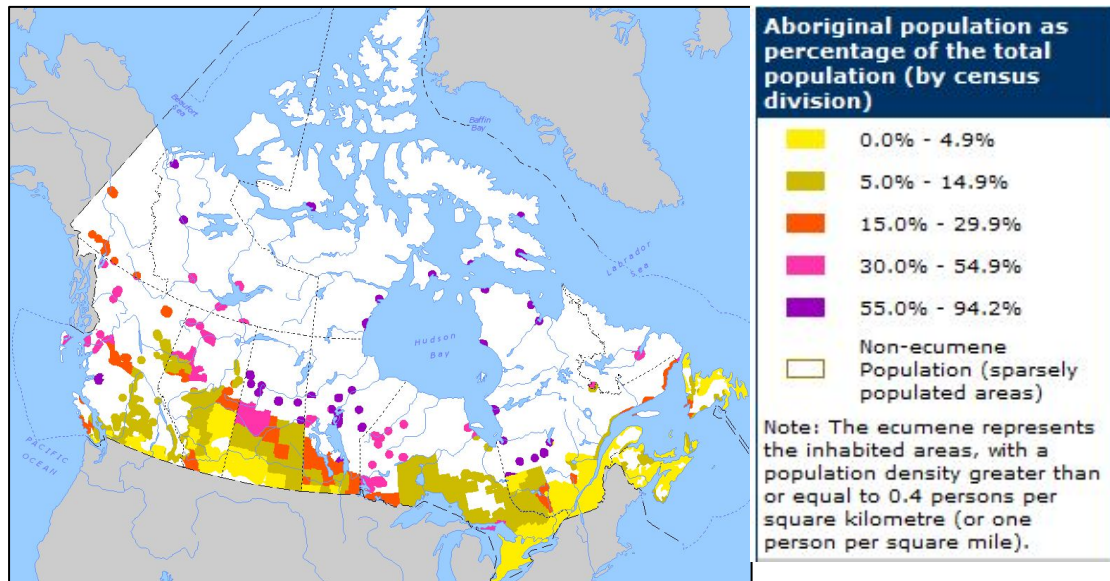
### **(American) Indian**

‘American Indian’ (along with ‘Native’/‘native’) is a term that was popular through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but which has now lost some of its cachet. In addition to ‘Indian’ being a former catchall term for Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc, the term was actively deployed by radical political groups starting in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM). Although the term ‘Indian’ is still in wide use colloquially, it is often considered racist or derogatory, particularly when used by non-Indigenous people. However, many Indigenous groups in the United States have reclaimed the term, and ‘American Indian’ is often

accepted nomenclature, similar to 'First Nations' in Canada. In some senses, this reclamation of the term is meant to assert the status of Indigenous peoples as 'the first Americans,' reminding Settler Americans of their newcomer status. In Canada, the Indian Act (see below) defines the government's legal and political relationships to 'status Indians' (individuals recognised by the government as an official 'Indian'). The Act, in part because of this term, is highly controversial and many attempts have been and are being made to reform or remove the Indian Act, with varying success.

### **First Nations**

'First Nation' is a political term that has achieved some purchase in Canada as a more acceptable replacement to 'Indian bands' (which are the political units written into the Indian Act as it stands today). First Nations is a term used, first, to soften racist connotations of the term 'Indian Bands', and second, as a subset of the umbrella term "Aboriginal peoples" in Section 35 of the Constitution, where First Nations refers to Indigenous peoples not part of the collective terms Métis and Inuit (see below). As a term, First Nations is popular in part because it portrays Indigenous peoples as comprising nations; Indigenous peoples have often struggled to force Settler governments to relate to them as nation-to-nation (Canada, 1996; see also broadly Alfred, 2009b).



**Figure 3 - Distribution of 'aboriginal' populations in Canada according to 2006 Census data (Natural Resources Canada, 2010). Note that percentage of the population identifying as 'aboriginal' generally increases northwards, away from the most heavily populated areas.**

### **Inuit/Eskimo**

Although there are many different cultures and peoples occupying the Arctic and far northern reaches of the northern bloc, many roughly belong to the Inuit as a distinct cultural and linguistic group. In Canada, the Inuit are considered, like Métis and First Nations, to be 'aboriginal' under the Constitution, although their status and governance structures are defined differently by the state. 'Eskimo' is often considered an offensive or derogatory term for Inuit in Canada; however the term is still in common usage in the United States where the term often serves as a catch-all of the indigenous occupants of the present-day state of Alaska.

### **Métis<sup>13</sup>**

The Métis are an Indigenous people, living primarily in Canada and centred historically around the Red River region and current province of Manitoba. The

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<sup>13</sup> My thanks to Adam Gaudry (2012), Henry Roe Cloud Fellow, Yale University, who provided the basis of this definition.

Métis have been misconstrued by many Settlers and academics because their origin is found in the interactions between European fur traders and Indigenous nations outside of areas of colonial control. As such, Métis people have been conflated with all people of mixed heritage, or with a post-colonial hybridity, neither of which is accurate. The Métis, as a people, are defined by the following:

- Common culture, kinship, and politics. The Métis are ‘a people’ in the fullest sense of the word.
- Descendant from the originating community of Metis: fur traders and Indigenous women who gathered at Red River in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and developed the common culture, language, political institutions, etc., that are associated with Métis today; contrary to some definitions, Métis people are not just ‘mixed parentage,’ but rather a people who are descended from Métis.
- A legally-distinct (though contested) relationship to Canada and the Crown, enshrined in treaty and other diplomatic agreements, and included in the Canadian Constitution as a recognised ‘aboriginal group.’

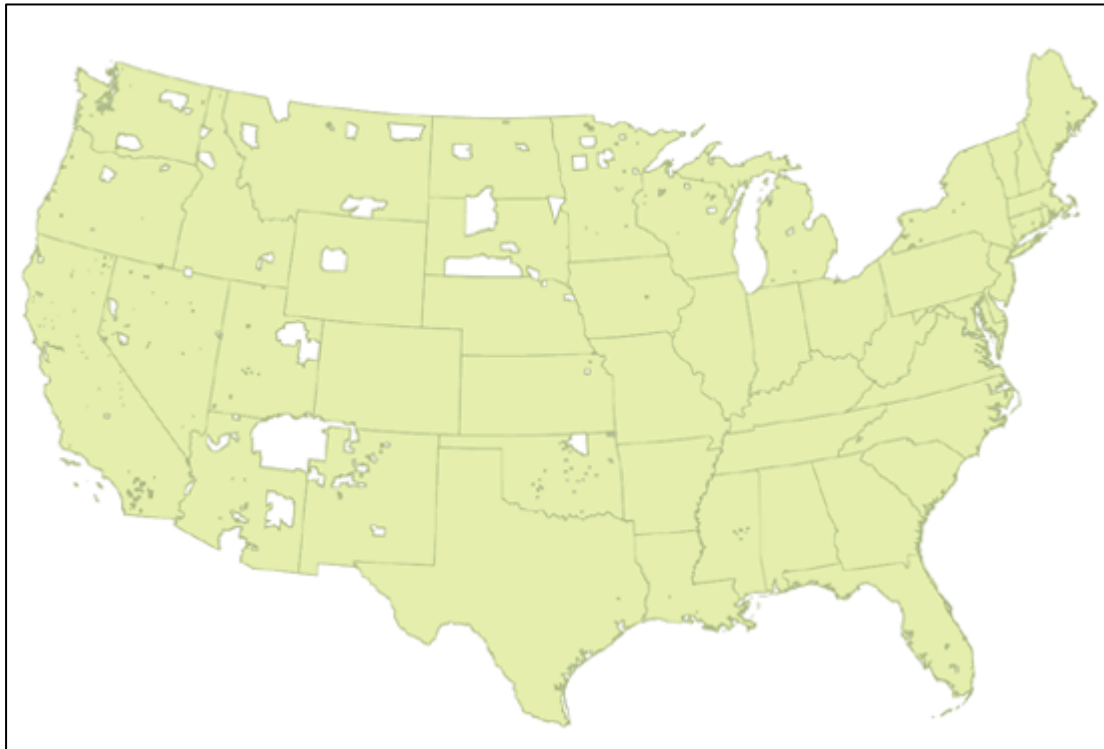
These criteria have been more fully articulated and codified by the Métis National Council (MNC) at their annual general assembly in 2002.

### **Reserve/Reservation**

A common spatial feature of the northern bloc, reserves (Canada) and reservations (America) are territories specifically identified as ‘Indian country’ or under the administration of a recognised Indigenous government. Elected chiefs and band councils administer reserves in Canada, while reservations in America are governed by a variety of bodies (often elected) generally referred to as tribal governments. Reserves were often forced on Indigenous peoples, such as the

Lakota and Apache who waged long wars of resistance to maintain their “transversal” (Soguk, 2011) ways of being on the land. Some Indigenous peoples who have been denied recognition by colonial governments, such as the Lubicon Cree in Alberta, have agitated for reserve lands as a basic recognition of Indigenous rights to place. Reserve lands are administered by the federal government in both Canada and the United States, and as such have shifting and unique relationships to various Settler political bodies and jurisdictions. Reserve land is not private property; it is held in trust by the government ostensibly for Indigenous peoples’ use. Many reserves are small communities, are isolated, and most reserve economies are depressed and social infrastructure is lacking. Reserves were developed around the belief in the ‘vanishing Indian;’ Settler people hoped that by isolating Indigenous peoples, their perceived-backwardness would lead to their eventual extinction. Simultaneously, reserves enabled the clearing of valuable land for settlement, and allowed colonial bureaucrats, like Indian Agents, to monitor and control Indigenous peoples’ mobility. For an in-depth analysis of the creation of a reserve system, see Harris (2002).





**Figure 4 - A map of continental American territory with Indian reservations removed (Citynoise, 2006). Note that the largest reservation areas are in the west and southwest, which were generally settled later than the coastal areas and Great Lakes region and which tend to lower population density.**

### **Isopolitics**

Isopolitics refers generally to the ability of a Settler person or collective to transfer their political rights and responsibilities from one sovereign power or political entity to another. It is connected to corporate settler notions of independence and individuality, but enacted collectively when Settler peoples transport their sovereignty through space and invest it in institutions of privilege. Isopolitics are not unique to settler colonialism; for example, supranational structures like the European Union or United Nations allow for isopolitical scalar shifts between state citizenship and regional rights regulations. However, isopolitical dynamics are necessary for settler colonisation, as Settler people must legally and politically

detach from their originating political institutions and reinvest in settler colonial structures of invasion to empower the transfer of lands from Indigenous peoples (Veracini, 2011a).

### **Place and Space**

Throughout this project, place and space are conceptually necessary, but also somewhat contingent in meaning. It is important to note that 'place' especially has multiple connotations. In general, I use place to refer to: 'the realm of meaning and experience. Place is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience the world. Place, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power' (Cresswell, 2004 p.12). Space, generally, refers to the arrangements of relationships over distance and across time that generate those meanings, what Massey has referred to as spatial geometries of power (Massey, 2005). Theorist Henri Lefebvre posited a trialectic of space: physical, mental, and social (1974). Space, in extremely general terms, is the result of people thinking about, moving through, altering, and interacting within places. As perceptions, built environments, and social relationships change, so do spaces; they are highly dynamic and variable. This project is primarily concerned with the connections between the mental (perceived, calculated and measured) spaces and social (lived, mediated, contested) spaces of Settler peoples. However, these definitions are extremely broad, and within the scope of this project, there are several very different and competing understandings of place.

Place is often used in largely materialist terms, appearing as the absolute location of a given landscape or material topography (Cresswell, 2004 pp.10-11).

However, place in Indigenous concepts is a much broader and more dynamic concept. In Indigenous thought, place does not inhere in materiality or even in specific geographical locations; rather, place is the aggregate interconnection of material and metaphysical energy waves (Little Bear, 2004). What we perceive as place is the barest sketch of the full interaction of energies, what Little Bear calls “flux.” For Cresswell, place is how we make meaning; for Little Bear, place already has meaning, which humans can only partially or incompletely perceive (see also Deloria, 2003; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001 pp.1-6, 21-28). While Larsen and Johnson – in a more advanced vein of Whatmore’s hybrid geographies (1999) – attempt a construction of place as open and experiential, with the intent of creating common ground for affinity politics (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b), specific places continue to be the primary site of embodied colonial contention (Kilibarda, 2012), speaking to very different affective relationships to place across the colonial difference. It is necessary to note these differences here because conflation of terminology has enormous consequences: the differences in the way that Indigenous and Settler peoples generally perceive place leads to the construction of spaces that are incommensurate (Tuck & Yang, 2012 p.27). As such, place is often contextually defined throughout this project.

## **Power**

In this project, power is conceptualised as the ability to organise people and things in place and across space. This is, of course, a very broad definition. Scholars of settler colonialism have focused on the demographic power of Settler societies (Crosby, 1978), the biopower of contemporary settler colonial states (Morgensen,

2011), and the potential power of collective Indigenous decolonisation (Alfred, 2005), among others. In this project, power ascribed to colonial and imperial hierarchies should be understood as a form of ‘power over,’ the ability to make or force populations to organise in particular ways through domination. References to Indigenous power, such as in Deloria and Wildcat’s formulation that ‘power plus place equals personality’ (2001), or in reference to cooperative alliances, should be understood as a form of ‘power with,’ the ability to produce change generated through cooperative, non-coercive efforts. Both forms of power are functionally expressed as ‘power to,’ the ability to change spatial organisation in some way. For details on these three kinds of power, see Gordon’s *Anarchy Alive!* (2008 pp.49-55).

### **Settler**

The term ‘settler’ has multiple meanings, and the meanings that are ascribed to it in this project are unusual and deviate from convention. This is intentional: central to this project is the discovery and analysis of Settlers as a people with a distinct identity, rather than simply actors devoid of agency or individuality. Settler peoples are often portrayed ahistorically (Veracini, 2007), aculturally (Veracini, 2008), and without identity; they are spoken of most often as ‘colonisers,’ or referred to through rough groupings of ethnicity such as ‘Euro-American,’ or even racially as ‘white.’ As I have previously demonstrated (Barker, 2009; 2007), these generalisations fail to capture the heterogeneity and, consequently, potential for change and difference in Settler societies. The following disambiguations are important for this particular project, and reflect primarily my own usage (other scholars likely differ — there is no agreement on these definitions at present):

- A) *settler coloniser*: In many academic discourses, it is conventional to use the term 'settler' as shorthand for 'settler coloniser,' the active agent of settler colonisation. I eschew this in favour of a more nuanced definition that conceptually separates 'settler colonisers,' those who exercise colonial agency to usurp Indigenous lands and enact spatial transformations, and 'Settlers' as an identity (see below). However, in a practical sense, there is little functional difference between 'settler colonisers' and 'Settler colonisers' at present (see Chapter 6).
- B) *Settler identity*: (*n.b.* capitalisation) This project builds on previous efforts to investigate the 'Settler' as a situated, disavowed, and very powerful identity construct (Barker, 2009; 2007). The Settler identity is posited on the collective expression of similar mentalities (patterns of thought and praxis) across various social divisions (class, national, regional, cultural, ethnic, etc.). It is a flexible, 'shapeshifting' identity formed by the usurpation and occupation of Indigenous people's lands, and the attempts to justify and naturalise these transfers. This identity need not be claimed for it to be relationally active, because Settler individuals socially relate through a wide range of institutions and practices (see Chapters 3-4).
- C) *settler as individual or collective subject*: Within the Settler identity, a key mentality is the identity trialectic (see Chapter 2). In the Settler imagination, there are three possible subjectivities: settlers, the 'civilised,' predestined, or otherwise 'special' group of people seen as 'self'; exogenous Others, the dehumanised but valuable 'chattel slave' populations, used for labour but without autonomy; and indigenous Others, whose very presence is a threat to the settler subject, and therefore targeted for elimination and

erasure. At times, it is necessary to refer to settler subjectivities — especially settler collectives (Veracini, 2010a) — in relation to these other two subjectivities; however, it should be clear that this refers to relationships and spatialities *within the Settler imagination*, rather than in reality.<sup>14</sup>

### **Specific Concepts and Events**

In addition to the terminology already discussed in the list above, I define in brief below a number of specific concepts and events that may not be well-known outside of the northern bloc. These are all directly related to Indigenous-Settler interactions and issues, and are usually the subject of large bodies of scholarship; however, many are not part of official histories or subject to wide discussion outside of Canada and the United States. For the purposes of comparison, I have provided dates where possible, but a strict chronology would be unhelpful here.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> As an example of how these definitions deviate from convention, there are few other academics engaging with ‘Settler’ as an identity (and thus it is rarely capitalised); Tuck and Yang explicitly state that settler as identity is “eschewed” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, pp.7). I agree that it is explicitly rejected by settler colonisers, but I believe there is a great deal of value in this conceptual engagement with the Settler identity as something closely associated with — but not wholly dependent on — settler colonialism. This is the subject of a paper currently in development with Emma Battell Lowman (see also: Battell Lowman, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> It is likely impossible to generate a complete history or historical timeline of Indigenous-Settler interactions. Even localised histories, such as the Cowichan Valley War (Arnett, 1999), have incredible depth and complexity. These events are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to serve as a reference to specific

### **(Civil) War of 1812**

A relatively short-lived war between the American state and Britain, contemporaneous with the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, the War of 1812 was fought over control of land and to contest the rights of the American Republic to grant 'citizenship' that conflicted with British imperial ties to 'subjects.' This conflict was primarily contested in the Atlantic, the St. Lawrence seaway, and the Great Lakes as a naval conflict, and around the present-day border crossings of Niagara Falls (Ontario-New York State) and Windsor/Detroit (Ontario-Michigan State). The war involved large numbers of 'Indian allies' (Benn, 1998), and had major consequences for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Tecumseh's Shawnee-led confederacy. Taylor has referred to this as a 'civil war' because the crosscutting antagonisms between Republic and Empire resulted in Settler peoples fighting against their own families and communities (Taylor, 2010). This conflict is emblematic of the ways that Settler identities can be multifaceted and internally divided, while still maintaining social bonds across political boundaries, perceived racial difference, and violent conflict. Settler identities have always been forged in internal conflict.

### **Indian Act (1876)**

The Indian Act is a Canadian statutory law that is often said to govern Indigenous peoples 'from cradle to grave':

[t]he Indian Act of Canada is the principal instrument through which  
federal jurisdiction over Indians and native people has been exercised ...

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examples deployed below. However, the following are generally useful historical texts and resources: Dickason & Newbigging (2010); Nabokov (1999); Trigger (1985).

It indicates the manner in which Indian reserves and treaties are administered ... First passed in 1876, the Indian Act was simply a consolidation of previous legislation.

Bartlett, 1978 p.581

Generally, the Indian Act defines the legal and political relationships of Indigenous peoples to the Crown. It defines Indigenous peoples who are recognised by the state as 'status Indians' (different terms are used for Inuit and Métis, but to the same effect), with particular legal consequences for that status.<sup>16</sup> Status Indians may live on reserves, for example, and generally do not pay taxes for economic activity conducted on reserves. The Indian Act also defines the governing body of a reserve-based First Nation (band) as an elected band council. These elected councils are considered by the Crown to be the only legitimate Indigenous governing bodies, disregarding widespread alienation from these bodies due to their origins in the colonial state, and often disregarding traditional or internally-generated governing bodies where they do exist. The Indian Act is the only federal legislation in Canada that sets aside people as different under the law based on an explicitly racial contract.

The Act has gone through several name changes and evolutions, including the Civilization of Indian Tribes Act in 1857, which was directly incorporated into the current Indian Act. The Act was also successfully challenged under the repatriated Canadian Constitution in 1985 as discriminatory to women; as a result the rules for assigning Indian status were changed, though they remain problematic (Ladner, 2009; Jones, 1985).

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed examination of status and Indigenous political identity, see Alfred (2009b).



### **Gold Rushes c.1800-1900 (California, Fraser River, Black Hills)**

Nineteenth century gold rushes with their attendant mass migrations of transient populations desperate to strike it rich had enormous effects on Indigenous communities across the western half of the northern bloc. Three separate gold rushes, in various times and places, demonstrate the general 'resource boom' dynamic of settler colonialism. The California gold rush followed the discovery of gold near San Francisco (c. 1848), which served to drive large populations of miners and other labourers through the port of San Francisco, and into the northern and eastern interior of California. This precipitated violence towards and displacement of huge numbers of Indigenous peoples throughout California (Cornford, 1999 pp.86-87), many of which still struggle for recognition by the Federal government. The discovery of placer gold in the Fraser Valley (c. 1858) attracted large numbers of idle miners from California northwards to what is now the interior of British Columbia (Thistle, 2011 p.420; Harris, 2004). This migration caused the Fraser River War, between American miners and prospectors and the Nlaka'pamux, and precipitated the British annexation of the territory between the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Ocean, north of the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel (the Colony of British Columbia). Finally, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills (c. 1880) led directly to the abrogation of the Fort Laramie Treaty between the Lakota and the United States, which had recognised sovereign Lakota territory; in essence, the discovery of gold precipitated an invasion by the U.S. military and the annexation of Lakota territory (Weyler, 1992 pp.62-64; Stelter, 1973). Overall, gold rushes like these are exemplary of settler colonisation entangled with resource extraction, underscoring the relationship between profit and violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples. They prefigure various other frontier 'resource booms,' such as the "energy

frontier” that developed in northeastern British Columbia in the 1970s and 1980s (Brody, 1981).

### **Occupations/Standoffs**

As Kilibarda (2012) has pointed out, occupying contentious sites is one of the most powerful and long-standing tactics of Indigenous resistance in the northern bloc. Though it is impossible to single out any particular occupation or standoff as exemplary, some are more well-known than others.

In the United States, the occupation of the town of Wounded Knee by members of the Oglala Sioux nation and the American Indian Movement is likely the most well known. The standoff at Wounded Knee lasted for seventy-one days, from February to May of 1973, motivated by anger against years of high-level corruption in the Oglala Sioux government combined with extensive persecution, racial abuse, and even murder of community members in and around the Pine Ridge Reservation (near the South Dakota-Nebraska border). Approximately two hundred activists occupied the nearby town of Wounded Knee and declared it an independent Lakota territory. The American government responded by deploying the military under the command of Alexander Haig to break the resistance. Armed only with a few rifles and including children and elderly community members among their numbers, the occupiers were subjected to attacks by armoured units and FBI snipers until the siege was finally broken by the surrender of the activists (the government reneged on promises of immunity from prosecution for most) (Weyler, 1992 pp. 58-96).

The most analogous event in the Canadian context (in terms of its impact on social discourses and general awareness) is the ‘Oka Crisis’ of 1990. Mohawks

from the Kahnésétake Reserve in Québec (near Montreal) occupied property in the adjacent town of Oka, precipitating a violent response from both provincial and federal governments. The property in question was a long-standing (Christian) Mohawk graveyard and forest area, which had been legally sold by Settler owners to a developer who intended to extend his nearby 9-hole golf course into a full 18-hole course by appropriating the graveyard. With no legal recourse (a land claim to this area was rejected in 1986), community members occupied the area in July and withstood assaults by the Sûreté du Québec (SQ, Québec provincial police), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP, federal police force), and the Canadian military, which deployed armoured personnel carriers and helicopters against civilians armed with rifles. The crisis was resolved after seventy-eight days through negotiation, though tensions between Mohawks, and the Québec government, police force and local Settlers remained high (York & Pindera, 1991).

These are only two of the better-known occupations and standoffs, including many which are ongoing today,<sup>17</sup> such as the long-running anti-logging standoff at Grassy Narrows (Willow, 2011).

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<sup>17</sup> At the time of writing this project, Idle No More (an emerging Indigenous-led protest movement that originated in Canada and spread globally) has spawned a new kind of occupation of space. The 'Round Dance Revolution' involves traditional or social ceremonies – such as round dances, where any number of people circle a group of drummers with a shuffling dance step – being asserted in places of capital or state power, including shopping malls and urban intersections. This movement is still developing and it will be important to observe how these occupations change form over time.

### **Red Power/American Indian Movement (AIM)**

The American Indian Movement (AIM) was, for many years, among the most radical political movements for Indigenous peoples rights in the northern bloc. As part of an emergent Red Power Movement, AIM was formed in the larger milieu of struggles for civil rights by racialised minorities, especially in the United States though also in Canada, in the 1960s and 1970s. The roots of AIM are found in the Indigenous communities of places like Minneapolis, where urban Indigenous youth were often aware of their 'difference,' but had little cultural guidance (Weyler, 1992 pp.32-36). Arising in an age of exploding radical, racial politics, AIM came to be seen by many as the voice of a new generation of militant Indigenous activists. The Red Power Movement participated in a number of high-profile actions during the 1960s and 1970s, most well-known being the Trail of Broken Treaties (which resulted in the sacking of the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Washington — see Deloria, 1985a), the occupation of Alcatraz Island by Indigenous activists from 1969 to 1971 (Weyler, 1992 pp.42-43), and the occupation of the town of Wounded Knee in 1973 (see above). The significance of AIM's popularity is in how it has brought Indigenous resistance into undeniable contact with Settler society (for contemporary perspectives on militant Indigenous activism, see also: Alfred & Lowe, 2005).

### **Residential/Industrial Schools**

Residential (Canada) and industrial (United States) schools were a key feature of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century policies of assimilation in the northern bloc. Though features differed between states and between individual schools, the basic concept was to eliminate the 'Indian problem' by educating Indigenous children in 'civilised' culture and technology. Most schools delivered only a bare minimum of actual

education, often teaching basic farming, labouring, and craft-making skills, insufficient as the basis for self-sufficiency or employment. The students quite often comprised a pool of forced labour, whose production supplemented the budget provided by the government, essentially forcing students to underwrite their own colonial oppression. The schools usually relied on severe punishments for performances of indigeneity, such as speaking an Indigenous language, refusing Christianity (many schools, especially in Canada, were run as partnerships between the state and various churches), or refusing to follow directions. Residential schools have become the basis for a number of major individual and class-action law suits, especially focusing on physical and sexual abuse of students by priests, nuns, teachers, and staff. However, the greatest impact of the schools has been the 'generational effect' on the descendants of residential school students (O'Connor, 2000; Morrisette, 1994). The loss of language, culture, parenting skills, and family and community contacts imposed by the schools continues to echo through Indigenous communities today. Although the residential school system had been in decline for decades, the final schools were only closed in the 1990s. In 2008, the Canadian government apologised for the residential school system (although this apology has been criticised as colonial in nature). For more details, see: Regan (2010); Reyhner & Eder (2006).

### **Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)**

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) is the most recent and well known of many studies commissioned by American and Canadian governments, looking for ways to defuse tensions with Indigenous communities. The RCAP was formed following the Oka Crisis of 1990, and was completed in 1996:

...[It] was established by the federal government in 1991 to carry out an independent inquiry into the troubled relationship between aboriginal peoples, the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole. It was given a broad mandate and asked to propose specific solutions to the problems that confront aboriginal people and plague intercultural relations.

The commission submitted its five-volume report in November 1996. Central to its recommendations ... were its endorsement of principles of respect for cultural differences and recognition of the moral, historical, and legal right of aboriginal peoples to govern their collective lives in ways they freely determine.

Castellano, 2000 p.22

Although the RCAP report (Canada, 1996) has generally been lauded for its recognition of the central role of colonisation in Indigenous social and material problems, and the recommendation that Canada and Indigenous peoples relate 'nation-to-nation,' no Canadian government has attempted to implement any significant recommendations to date. Given that the report envisioned a twenty-year plan for change, the report, while useful academically, must be considered dead as it relates to policy. This is representative of most government-sponsored research into Indigenous peoples' issues.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> While this remains true, the RCAP report has been revived in recent discourses spawned by the emergence of Idle No More, which has referenced the RCAP recommendations repeatedly in articulating the demands of those involved with the movement (Vowel, 2012).

### **Royal Proclamation (1763) and Quebec Act (1764)**

These two British juridical acts, one an assertion of Crown sovereignty and the other an act of parliament, were designed with two functions in mind: first, the reorganisation of the northern bloc following the annexation of the northern territories of New France; and second, the curtailing of colonial American independence through unauthorised settlement to the west and south of the established Atlantic seaboard colonies. These acts collectively restricted trade — especially of alcohol — with Indigenous communities, ensuring British control of the colonial economy, and restricting land sales without Crown approval, limiting land speculation and westward agricultural expansion. They are a prime example of the incommensurability of metropolitan and settler colonial regimes. The friction caused by the imposition of these laws directly led to American disenchantment with and rebellion against the British Crown through the War of Independence (1774). See Taylor (2010) and Hall (2003) for details.

### **Termination (American federal Indian policy)**

Unlike Canada, America has no single law or policy that over-determines federal-tribal or state-tribal relationships (Garrouette, 2003 pp.14-37). Instead, “every twenty years or so a new U.S. policy shift emerges that attempts to eliminate indigenous nations altogether or to assimilate Native peoples into the U.S. system” (Corntassel & Witmer, 2008 p.16). These include the infamous ‘Marshall decision’ in 1830, in which Chief Justice John Marshall “declared that [the State of] Georgia had exceeded its authority by extending state law into Cherokee territory”, but this decision was ignored in favour of the political exigencies of maintaining peace between northern and southern states. This laid the groundwork for arbitrary

dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands within the legal framework of the American legal system; in effect, “the Cherokees were sacrificed to keep the Union together” (Anderson, 1991 p.xii). The ‘Cherokee Removal’ (more commonly called ‘The Trail of Tears’) is one of several efforts to physically remove or transplant an Indigenous people in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

By 1953, the situation had changed; rather than outright removal, American policy had shifted to dispossessing Indigenous peoples through forced assimilation. This initiated the “termination era”, in that “nations and bands were effectively terminated by legislation that eliminated special Native programs and, in most cases, resulted in the sale of reservation lands” (Corntassel & Witmer, 2008 p.14). Following a number of further shifts in policy, Corntassel and Witmer assert that the current era is one of ‘forced federalism’:

[s]ince 1988 the federal government has compelled or coerced indigenous nations to negotiate away their powers of governance and jurisdiction of their homelands relating to taxation, gaming, hunting and fishing rights, homeland security, and so on ... This contemporary devolution process ... is just the latest attempt by the federal government to off-load their trust responsibilities to indigenous peoples...

Corntassel & Witmer, 2008 p.17

Corntassel and Witmer go on to point out how these present dynamics of forced federalism stem directly from the original *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* case heard by

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<sup>19</sup> For an example of Lakota removal in Minnesota, see: Waziyatawin (2008 pp.17-70); for an example of removal in the Canadian context, see the case of the Sayisi Dene relocation (Bussidor & Bilgen-Reinart, 1997).



Marshall in 1831; despite a lack of singular legislation like the Indian Act, American policy towards Indigenous peoples has remained remarkably consistent in intent. Termination of Indigenous sovereignty and claim to land continues to over-determine American Indian policy (consistent with the effects of the Indian Act in Canada, above).

## Chapter 1: Indigenous Being on the Land

### Centralising Indigeneity

In this chapter, I articulate a generalised version of Indigenous peoples' perceptions of and relationships to place — Indigenous spatialities — with the intent of establishing a baseline understanding of what kinds of space settler colonisers encountered and displaced over time through material invasions and cultural interventions. As a Settler person, my understandings of Indigenous spaces and spatialities are always incomplete and problematic. As such, in this section I have relied as much as possible on Indigenous articulations of the meaning of place to Indigenous societies, as well as on those non-indigenous commentaries that employ decolonising methodologies (as per Smith, 1999; see for example: Basso, 1996). The purpose of this chapter is not to articulate a new perspective on Indigenous places and spaces, but rather to frame existing articulations in such a way that the full extent and method of settler colonial spatial dispossession can be revealed. The northern bloc was not built on *terra nullius* (see Chapter 2), which means there are spaces pre-dating and often antithetical to settler colonial space. Understanding indigeneity can be challenging, but is absolutely crucial to this project. Indigeneity can be thought of

roughly as the ways that Indigenous peoples' spaces are generated through a profound attachment to place, and understanding the political and personal implications of this is necessary to begin imagining the northern bloc as a decolonised space. In this chapter, I develop a conceptual tool, Indigenous 'being on the land,' that centres Indigenous ways of relating to place, establishing the pre-existing set of spaces that settler colonial spaces encounter and seek to displace.

I anticipate an obvious question: why only one chapter explicitly addressing Indigenous geographies, and so much attention on colonial geographies? Does this replicate the coloniser/colonised power dynamic? Has the settler colonial story not been told enough? My response is that I seek to centralise and normalise Indigenous geographies and, by doing, disrupt the assumed, imagined geography of settler colonialism (Gregory, 1994; Veracini, 2010b). The phrase 'being on the land' can be understood as a holistic spatial metaphor that refers to the dynamic ways that mental, social, and physical spaces interact in the production of Indigenous space. However, rather than limiting my construction to these three aspects of Lefebvrian geography (1974), I present Indigenous being on the land as distinct from Lefebvre's Euro-centric constructions of space. Indigenous geographies exist across four different types of space, expressed through attendant, spatially-stretched and interconnected ways of relating to place: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical, each with specific human praxes. My goal in presenting this chapter first is to make an ethical statement: these ways of being are not strange, exotic, or 'oriental' to the northern bloc. They are rather original: the norm, the pre-existing, and the foundation of historical and contemporary Indigenous nations and communities.

## **An Overview of the Field of Indigenous Geographies**

Indigeneity has presented radical and potent challenges to dominant geographical and spatial thought, beginning with the difficulty involved in understanding the heterogeneity of Indigenous peoples and cultures. The chapter “The Challenges of and from Indigenous Geographies”, in *A Companion to Social Geography*, clearly portrays the difficulty, asserting “any attempt to promote a sub-discipline in Indigenous geographies, or even to consider the geographies of Indigenous peoples as if they are conceptually discrete, is contestable” (Coombes *et al.*, 2011 p.472). However, despite these challenges (or perhaps because of the fertile discoveries generated by engaging in difficult discourses through inter-relational research: Johnson & Murton, 2007), there has been an explosion of work in Indigenous geographies in the last ten years (Panelli, 2008; Johnson *et.al.*, 2007). Many of these works seek to explore the complexity and difference that Indigenous understandings of space and place evidence through interactions with non-Indigenous and Settler communities, especially environmental activists (Pickerill, 2009; Larsen, 2008), foregrounding possibilities for hybridity and autonomous spaces (Louis, 2007; Larson, 2003). These often challenge colonial tropes of terra nullius while demonstrating creative agency and adaptability by Indigenous communities (Thistle, 2011; Larsen, 2003), and work to reveal the intersections of race, space, and colonialism (Panelli, 2008; Shaw, 2006).

In addition to the caveat above on the difficulty of defining a ‘field’ of Indigenous geography due to the diversity of Indigenous peoples, it is equally important to avoid treating Indigenous geographies – informed by Indigenous understandings of place and space, in support of indigeneity contra colonisation, and generally involving Indigenous researchers (Louis, 2007) – in a way that

“segments “Indigenous research” into a discrete area of knowledge that is positioned in relation to Western scholarship” (Larsen & Johnson, 2012a). This is, in fact, an important motivation for the development of Indigenous geographies generally – and a framework of Indigenous ‘being on the land’ specifically (see below) – in this chapter. The goal of this research project is not the generation or critique of Indigenous geographies, particular or general. I recognise the need to be informed by and aware of Indigenous geographies – in their incredible diversity – for both the flaws that they reveal in traditionally Western, academic geographies and because of the possibilities that they open up for new ways of viewing and relating to place (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b), essential for decolonisation. But this project remains an investigation of affective, dynamic settler colonial geographies.

One example of the importance of understanding Indigenous geographies is the concept of relationality. Relationality – or a focus on the relationships between all things as the basis of place-based, spatially-stretched systems (of knowledge production, political leadership, and many other social institutions) – is a key feature of Indigenous geographies, and bears some resemblance to Dittmer’s (2010) definition of affective social relationships. However, a key difference in that place, for Indigenous peoples, is knowable (Little Bear, 2004; Waters, 2004a) and relationships to place are sites of exploration and investigation (Johnson & Murton, 2007; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). Because of this, there is a fundamental difference between ‘being in place’ – a general phenomenological and affective experience of becoming-in-place (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b) – and ‘being on the land’ – Indigenous-specific, direct and directed, personal relationships with both elements and the

aggregate ‘personality’ of place.<sup>20</sup> It is vital to fully draw out these differences, and thus to engage with Indigenous geographies, in no small part because of the implications for the political project of decolonisation: both environmentalists (Pickerill, 2009) and radical anarchists (Barker & Pickerill, 2012) have at times fundamentally missed or misinterpreted these differences leading to difficulties in developing a ‘common ground’ for decolonisation. As such, I turn now to a sketch of how Indigenous societies perceive and interact with the places of the northern bloc.

### **Indigenous Being on the Land**

Indigenous spaces and connections to place are sustained by ritualised relationships to particular places (Little Bear, 2004). In contemporary terms of power analysis, Indigenous peoples can be said to generate the power that establishes and maintains social cohesion, and provides the legitimacy for Indigenous governance structures, through a “power with” relationship to place

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<sup>20</sup> The term ‘being on the land,’ shorthand for Indigenous peoples’ ontological, historical, practical and spiritual relationships to place, has previously been used by Larsen and Johnson (2012a p.2). They introduce the term as part of an exploration of how Indigenous geographies confront the ‘colonial present,’ and follow with a discussion of several transformations in the ways that place and space can be understood and analysed through an Indigenous geographical lens. Below, I develop the term ‘Indigenous being on the land’ to describe the lens itself – the dynamic relationships that Indigenous peoples have with the places claimed by the northern bloc Settler societies – in order to foreground Indigenous being as an act of resistance and reassertion of identity and culture, and to develop a sketch of the material and embodied systems that are targeted for disruption and consumption by settler colonisers (which has implications for how settler colonial spaces can be and are developed). This construction, then, is a tool specific to my analyses and should not be considered in any way as a universal or homogenising framework of Indigenous geography.

(Gordon, 2008 pp.54-55). Conversely, settler colonial power is constituted as “power over” (pp.50-53), informed by calculated strategies of dominance and social stratification. Indigenous peoples’ cooperative generation of power with place allows for a much different range of “power to” effects (pp.52-53) than exist within Settler societies. Among these are the ability to perceive the “personality” of particular places, and through that perception, the ability to establish communication and relationship to, with, and in places. ‘Power to’ can be thought of as ‘capacity,’ and in this sense, Indigenous peoples cooperate with the land as an extensive community of diverse beings in order to increase their collective capacity for sustainable and balanced co-existence:

[f]or American Indians, the foundation of values arises from and is invested in land; being born in a landed context creates birthright responsibilities to uphold the collective community agenda of land tenure and retention of that land base. Thus American Indian communities carry an identity of being intimately tied to sustainable territories, where an individual’s identity of time, space, and place create a land-based worldview, complete with sustainable values.

Waters, 2004a p.xxiv

The generation of this cooperative, sustainable power implies vastly different spatial relationships rooted in a worldview that is radically and fundamentally different to those of Settler societies and European traditions that focus on acquiring, owning, mapping, controlling and exploiting land. Canadian political theorist James Tully notes:

... the ground of the [settler colonial] relationship is the appropriation of the land, resources and jurisdiction of the indigenous peoples, not only

for the sake of resettlement and exploitation ... but for the territorial foundation of the dominant society itself.

2000 p.39

This inherent conflict between two types of society existing in overlapping places, roughly divided between those indigenous to the place and those engaged in the colonisation of it, perhaps helps to explain why Indigenous relationships to place can and do so thoroughly expose, critique and denormalise the systems of spatial thinking that colonisation spread around the globe (Mignolo, 2000). Indigenous relationships to place challenge spatial concepts at fundamental levels, from the ways that we move from place to place and through spaces (Cajete, 2004; Pandya, 1990) to how we move through time (Jojola, 2004).

I posit here that Indigenous being on the land bears some resemblance to heavily-networked, affective relationships. However, as with many discussions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of place, this statement should be carefully qualified to reflect major differences between Indigenous spatialities and common academic uses of the terms 'affect' and 'network.' While the details of these relational networks of being on the land are drawn out below, it is important to establish here that this is not an analogy to the "pipes and cables" of some affective theories (McCormack, 2006; Thien, 2005), nor to the 'unknowable' and segregated version of affect derived from psychoanalytics (Pile, 2010; Barnett, 2008). Rather, these networks bear some resemblance to Sarah Whatmore's concept of hybrid geography, "which recognizes agency as a relational achievement, involving the creative presence of organic beings, technological devices and discursive codes, as well as people, in the fabrics of everyday living" (1999 p.26). The 'agency' that arises out of creation as a whole is comparable to a



sense of 'push' that results from an intimate but social relationship to place, to the various elements of place, and even to the ways of thinking and speaking about place. Indigenous individuals and societies participate in the creation and maintenance of these networks, and are thus affected by their contact with place through these networks, but also exercise their own agency, shaping and influencing the networks, similar to what Larsen and Johnson (2012b) refer to as an 'open sense of place.' However, this sense of place is not completely open or unbounded: place has its own 'personality' (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001) that must also be taken into account and which exercises influence over many aspects of Indigenous lifeways. Indigenous being on the land is thus a way of attempting to relate to place on its own terms:

... the traditional Indian understanding of land focuses on its use, and *the duties people assume when they come to occupy it*. When an Indian thinks about traditional lands he always talks about what the people did there, the animals who lived there and how the people related to them, the seasons of the year and how people responded to their changes, the manner in which the tribe acquired possession of the area, and the ceremonial functions it was required to perform *to remain worthy of living there*.

Deloria, 1985b p.244, emphasis added

These affective relationships become very complex when each element of place (like humans) can be considered independent, possessing both power and purpose (see below). As such, Indigenous peoples' praxes of being on the land must be understood as adaptive technologies allowing for individuals to make sense of affective place-based relationships in wider frames of reference and social spaces.

## Relational Networks

As established, Indigenous peoples have traditionally related to place through affective, spatially-stretched, and dynamic networks of relationships (Cajete, 2004; Johnson & Murton, 2007). For Indigenous peoples, place holistically encapsulates webs of relations between humans, features of the land (and water – see for example: LaBoucane-Benson *et al.*, 2012; Jackson, 1995), non-human animals, and living beings perceived as spirits or non-physical entities. All of these beings — humans included — are understood to have autonomy and will, but also obligation and responsibility to all of the other elements to which they are related and among whom they are situated, as indicated in the quotations from Waters and Deloria, above.

Perhaps with this in mind, it is fair to say that Indigenous peoples in the present often reference historical relationships to sacred places, colonial efforts at removal of Indigenous presence in place, and responsibilities to protect, “minister to” (Deloria interviewed in *In the Light of Reverence*, 2002), and understand the personality of places (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001 pp. 21-28; Gelder & Jacobs, 1998). It should not be assumed that this way of being with place only applies to ‘natural’ landscapes. Indigenous communities inhere in urban settings, both on “urban reserves” and as communities of displaced people coming together in the city (Depasquale, 2011 pp.3-5).<sup>21</sup> A well-known example of this can be found in Vancouver’s ‘Downtown Eastside’ (DTES) which has largely become perceived as

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<sup>21</sup> If urban spaces can coexist with Indigenous relationships to place, then (ironically) reserve spaces are often perceived as highly colonial. Both cities and reserves involve imagined, imposed boundaries, play roles in the capitalist exploitation of Indigenous and non-human beings, and are comprised of spaces sustained by the power of the colonial Settler state (Harris, 2002).

an 'Indigenous space' (Dean, 2010 pp.118-119) as well as an empty space. The DTES is often portrayed as a place filled with drug addicts, prostitution, and extreme poverty, leading to its perception in wider Settler society as a 'ghost town,' and abandoned place (Dean, 2010 p.114). This duality is consistent with Settler perceptions of 'frontier space' (discussed in detail in the following chapters), but is also only part of the story. Indigenous women's groups have begun to (re-)create Indigenous spatial relationships in the context of the DTES. By organising around issues specific to their community which are ignored or undervalued outside of the DTES, Indigenous women have revived Indigenous roles and responsibilities to this particular place. For example, "Aboriginal women, particularly older women no longer using drugs ... have emerged as community organisers, ritual specialists, spiritual icons, and political leaders in the neighborhood" (Culhane, 2003 p.599). This underscores the extent to which familiar constructs, like 'urban' and 'rural' (or 'reserve' or 'wilderness'), result from imposed colonial spatial and political assertions (see Chapter 4).

In Indigenous webs of place-based relationships, all of the elements — whether a blade of grass, a leaf on a tree, a river, or an Indigenous person — have roles that are only fully revealed in their interactions with each other (Swamp, 2010). Indigenous peoples' relationships to place are complex. Even 'place' includes elements that many common Geographical usages of the term would not necessarily imply. Place for Indigenous peoples includes: the land, sea, and air (with the sea especially having as many features and as rich a history as the land; see for example: Claxton, 2008 pp.52-55); spirit worlds and dreamscapes (Deloria, 2006; Brody, 1981); underworlds, sky worlds and other worlds that exist alongside and occasionally intersect with the world of human experience; all of the

living creatures dependent on those elements of place, from flora and fauna to spirits and supernatural beings and, especially, humans (Swamp, 2010); and the aggregate personality of the place itself. Indigenous peoples relate to these elements independently and also through complexes of action and being (described below).

To be sure, some geographers have begun to approach these ideas of interconnection and relatedness; Whatmore's hybrid geographies (above) certainly fit this description, as does Cresswell's understanding of place as dynamic and changing, expressed through the concept of mobility (2006), or Larsen and Johnson's call for a sense of place as 'always becoming' and founded in a dynamic experience of being in place. Some have even begun to integrate elements of place often considered featureless — such as seascapes or atmosphere — into geographical analysis. For example, Peter Adey has advanced the concept of aeromobilities towards an understanding of "a set of specific geographies ... that intersect both visual registers and practices" (Adey, 2008 p.1320). But there is an important difference: seeing place as constituted through interconnected relationships is not a frame of analysis for Indigenous peoples – it is intertwined with every aspect of Indigenous lifeways.

### **Praxes of Being On The Land**

Indigenous peoples achieve these (re-)connections with place by engaging in overlapping and interconnected praxes of 'being on the land.' These are simultaneously methods of being in and relating to place and also philosophies or ways of thinking about place and perceiving the meaning of different places.

Through these practices of thought and action, Indigenous peoples seek to reflect the dynamics of interrelation between the various elements of place with which Indigenous peoples share their social spaces. 'Being on the land' in this way brings humans into an — always already existing and functioning, but now partially visible — relational spatial network. In this network, every element is connected to every other element both directly and through their relations with further interconnected and related elements (see above on affective relationships). All of the elements of the relational spatial network have their own purposes and responsibilities with respect to the place of their existence as a whole and to other specific elements of place. These purposes and responsibilities ultimately are predicated on sustaining balance (Swamp, 2010), an important concept throughout this discussion.

Indigenous praxes of being on the land roughly fall into four (again, interconnected and overlapping) categories. I present these categories here such that they relate to the four aspects of holistic indigeneity articulated in many Indigenous traditions: mental, emotional, spiritual and physical (see for example: Hart, 2007 pp.83-85; Haig-Brown, 2009 pp.12-13). Indigenous cultural teachings, especially in the northern bloc, emphasise the necessity of holistic being and of consciously living a holistic life (Hart, 2010 p.3; Wilson, 2008 p.38). This is reflected especially in Indigenous art and symbolism, such as the medicine wheel common to nations on the plains, which "teaches that all peoples have a place in the circle of life" (Denis, 2012 p.454), and in complex and vital social practices, such as the Haudenosaunee condolence ritual which "pacifies the minds and emboldens the hearts of mourners by transforming loss into strength ... promising comfort, recovery of balance, and revival of spirit" (Alfred, 2009a p.9). Holism as a

concept is easy to understand, but in practice, holistic networks can be extremely complex and difficult to disentangle or categorise. As such, for brevity and clarity, I have summarised the holistic framework of Indigenous being on the land as follows:

<b>Holistic Element</b>	<b>Praxis</b>
<i>Spiritual</i>	<i>Ceremonial Renewal</i>
<i>Mental</i>	<i>Ontological Discovery</i>
<i>Physical</i>	<i>Economic Self-determination</i>
<i>Emotional</i>	<i>(His)Story</i>

**Figure 5- Indigenous Being on the Land**

Rather than attempt to address the many (and potentially infinite) ways that Indigenous people might relate to elements of place, or the similarly vast possible range of social configurations that reflect Indigenous relationships to place, I will instead focus on these praxes of being on the land. These praxes constitute a type of spatiality: they are simultaneously social organisations reflective of particular values and cultural realities as well as reflections of particular places and the impact of these places on social organisation.

### **Ceremonial Renewal**

Ceremony is a ritualised practice that is intended “to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves” (Wilson, 2008 p.11). A disambiguation is necessary here: ceremony and spirituality are terms often used carelessly (especially by Settler scholars) with respect to

Indigenous peoples and practices. These terms do not necessarily correlate to or overlap with terms such as sacred or religious. That which is spiritual is not *necessarily* sacred in a way that would prevent open discussion and understanding either within or beyond Indigenous communities. For example, Sean Wilson asserts that research conducted by Indigenous peoples can be a type of ceremony “that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into our world” (Wilson, 2008 p.11). As everything has spirit — from rocks and trees, to humans and animals, to supernatural or spirit beings (Cajete, 2004 p.53) — spirituality refers to the set of practices through which these beings are perceived, understood, and interacted with. In this sense, many Indigenous social structures or collective acts could be considered spiritual, and indeed, this accounts to some extent for the pervasiveness of ritual and ceremony in Indigenous social tradition and practice. While all spirit — and thus all beings and objects that possess spirit — is sacred in the sense that it is part of creation (itself sacred and imbued with spirit), far fewer things are sacred in the sense of being ‘taboo’ or restricted.<sup>22</sup>

As Wilson’s definition implies, ceremony is explicitly relational; the act of engaging in ceremony, whether alone or with a group, is an attempt to connect directly with one or more parts of the universe. Many ceremonies constitute what Blackfoot philosopher Leroy Little Bear describes as “rituals of renewal” (2004; 2000). As Little Bear describes, the Indigenous world is understood as being made up of energy waves that combine in specific forms and patterns to create the world as a whole and the specific places of Indigenous habitation. The movements and

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion on Indigenous spiritual traditions juxtaposed with restrictive traditions of monotheism, see: (Alfred, 2005 pp.108-109; Deloria, 2004; Deloria, 2003; Deloria, 1992).

actions of the many beings in and moving across places affect the flows of energy in that place, necessarily changing the nature and character of it. Rituals of renewal are designed to ensure that particular patterns and combinations of energy are created resulting in particular 'worlds' being maintained. In this material framework, it makes perfect sense that beings would exist that do not share the same physical properties as many others (spirit beings), and also that these beings – along with the spirit energy that is integral to all of the elements of creation – could be interacted with over distance (space) through particular, situated (place) action.

Partially because of this relationship to the physical world through ceremony, many Indigenous social practices are structured in such a way that, from a modernist perspective focused on maximising productivity, may seem inefficient or needlessly obscure. For example, the Haudenosaunee have a ritualised and ceremonial relationship to their food sources; food plants and animals are honoured specifically in the Thanksgiving Address (Swamp, 2010 p.16; Alfred, 2005 p.14), which serves the purpose of fostering social unity before meetings and deliberations. This has and does help to encourage a “mixed subsistence economy” that “prevented a total dependence on any single feature, such as hunting, and provided a safety net when a system failed, such as horticulture” (Hopkins, 2011 p.6). Europeans in the early contact period “viewed the native strategy as an inefficient use of available land” (p.7), in part because they did not understand the constant ceremonial protocols that accompanied food gathering, preparation, and consumption. These ceremonial relationships act as reminders of the responsibilities that the Haudenosaunee have to their food



sources, and helped to secure economic self-determination (see below) by *cooperating with* rather than *using* place.

The world-making function of ceremony ensures that the particularised thought or desires of even influential individuals cannot disrupt wider spatial relationships. Ceremonial obligations around resource acquisition ensure that resources are not denied to later generations for the aggrandisement of anyone in the present. For example, Nick Claxton (Tsawout Band of the WSÁNEC' Nation) relates that ceremonial obligations to honour salmon (as relatives and powerful spiritual beings) following the first catch of the season ensures that a significant salmon population is able to journey upriver to spawn (Claxton, 2008), ensuring both upstream fishing opportunities and renewed salmon stocks. Given the intense reliance upon salmon fishing both on the northwest Pacific coast and along the rivers from Alaska in the north to California in the south, this is a vital practice that avoids over-concentration or monopolisation of resources that are used by many different peoples. The spatial realities of distantly-located nations overlap through mutual reliance on particular resources, and social obligations to ceremony serve an important role in blunting material grievances that can and have arisen based on mutual reliance on similar resource bases.

### **Ontological Discovery**

Indigenous peoples' ways of perceiving and interacting with the world, of teaching children and sharing knowledge, and of constructing their lived realities are rich and complex, so much so that any kind of comprehensive discussion here would be impossible. Instead, it is important to recognise a commonality: Indigenous ontologies are rooted in place-specific understandings based on enduring

relationships to features of place. As outlined by Deloria, above, Indigenous peoples' relationships to place imply particular responsibilities. These relationships form the basis of Indigenous reality, and Indigenous "reality is not an object but a process of relationships, and an Indigenous ontology is actually the equivalent of an Indigenous epistemology" (Wilson, 2008 p.73). That is to say Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc conceive of knowledge as process, so the act of learning and the concept of knowing become one and the same.

Deloria and Wildcat root their understanding of Indigenous education in place. They emphasise the participatory and active aspect of Indigenous learning: education is the result of being on and with the land, experiencing its dynamics and coming to understand how one is affected by the shifts and movements in places and across space:

[t]he Indian world can be said to consist of two basic experiential dimensions that, taken together, provided a sufficient means of making sense of the world. These two concepts were place and power, the latter perhaps better defined as spiritual power or life force. Familiarity with the personality of objects and entities of the natural world enabled Indians to discern immediately where each living being had its proper place and *what kinds of experiences that place allowed, encouraged, and suggested*. And knowing places enabled people to relate to the living entities inhabiting it.

Deloria & Wildcat, 2001 p.3, emphasis added

In addition to being experiential, Indigenous ontological discovery has an imperative to be open to many experiences. Cajete states "Native science is inclusive of all the ways that humans are capable of knowing and understanding

the world” (2004, p.55). Thus, there are no ‘anomalies’ — processes or objects unexplainable within the theoretical framework — in Indigenous science, and if something anomalous should appear, it is the responsibility of the individual and/or their community to re-examine established knowledges to make sense of the incongruity. In this way, Indigenous knowledge remains simultaneously dynamic and rooted.

Indigenous knowledge has often been (wrongly) dismissed by colonisers as primitive or lacking in sophistication. However, in recent years, Indigenous knowledge has ‘benefitted’ (a dubious term) from an increased cachet among many academics, especially those interested in specific knowledge relating to properties of flora and fauna (Whitt, 2004 pp.188-189) or the specifics of place that may reveal particularly valuable resources such as petrochemicals or other extractive resources (Posey & Dutfield, 1996 p.9; for example, see Brody, 1981). However, Indigenous ontologies relating to the importance of ceremonies such as rites of passage, egalitarian social organisation, or respectful interaction with the non-human world have received comparatively little attention (Ermine, 1995). Indigenous ontologies are developed to work in interlocking fashion with ceremony, story, and sustainable and self-sufficient economic practices. The sort of selective mining of Indigenous ontology, then, is far from respectful; rather it remains colonial and in line with practices of extraction and acquisition for the purpose of generating advantage and constructing privilege.

### **Economic Self-Determination**

Many well-intentioned non-indigenous people have romantically misconstrued Indigenous peoples’ relationships to place through blindness to the material and

economic necessities of Indigenous life. New Age mystics, environmentalists, and socialists, among others, have all attempted to portray Indigenous peoples as proto-versions of themselves, ignorant of the ways that Indigenous peoples have perceived, acquired, and used material resources (Welch, 2002; Sturgeon, 1999; see also: Chapter 5). Indigenous peoples are often portrayed as simply gathering the bounty of the earth, denying the complexity, ingenuity, and sophistication of Indigenous technology and economic diversity. This is especially frustrating given that Indigenous peoples' methods for obtaining vital resources were and are often ingenious, practical, and remarkably far-sighted (Hopkins, 2011 p.8; Claxton, 2008). Consider the relationships between Indigenous hunters and their prey:

[t]he world operates on a constant flow of give-and-take relationships. Hunting rituals are performed before, during, and after traditional Native hunting to acknowledge the transformation of the deer's life, spirit, and flesh into that of the human. The Native hunter and community know well that this gift from Nature and the game spirits will have to be "paid back" at some time in the future by humans in the universal cycle of death, birth, and rebirth.

Cajete, 2004 p.55

Part of understanding a holistic relationship to place is understanding that while the deer may be a clan symbol,<sup>23</sup> may have significance in multiple oral histories, is seen as an autonomous being, and is likely understood as a vital aspect of place and respected for this, it is also a vital source of food, tools, and experience in

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<sup>23</sup> The deer is a clan symbol in Haudenosaunee traditions (Johansen & Mann, 2000 p.124), but others as well; many similar examples could be given.

hunting (used to teach and learn about land, as well as training for warfare and self-defence). Part of the place-based role is to act as a resource to humans.

Indigenous peoples' relationships to place are complex, multiple and varied, especially with respect to how they acquire their resource base to not only survive but thrive as peoples. Corntassel's concept of sustainable self-determination<sup>24</sup> was developed in opposition to contemporary regimes of political recognition that denude Indigenous peoples from exercising political independence and agency, but it is a useful concept in explaining Indigenous peoples' understandings of and ways of acquiring resources. Sustainable self-determination positions "social, economic, cultural, and political factors of shared governance and relational accountability into consideration for a broader view of self-determination that can be sustained over future generations" (2008 p.119).

Indigenous peoples' methods of gathering food are more than simplistic 'hunter-gatherer' behaviours. Resource acquisition and management techniques often reflect the responsibilities of Indigenous communities to their place-based networks. For example, the reef net fishing practices of the Coast Salish (WSÁNEC')<sup>25</sup> people encapsulate entire systems of governance, distribution of wealth, and sustainable resource management that ensured continuity and showed respect for the vitally-important salmon:

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<sup>24</sup> Corntassel's term is the basis for my concept of economic self-determination, and I hope to do it justice here. I believe the two terms are functionally similar, with Corntassel's concept broadening rights-based understandings of self-determination, and mine situating sustainable self-determination as a core pillar of Indigenous economies in the northern bloc

<sup>25</sup> This spelling is approximate due to the limitations of English language software. No disrespect to the WSÁNEC' is intended.

[a]t the end of the net, a ring of willow was woven into the net, which allowed some salmon to escape. This is more than just a simple act of conservation ... It represents a profound respect for salmon. It was believed that the runs of salmon were lineages, and if some were allowed to return to their home rivers, then those lineages would always continue. The WSÁNEC' people believe that all living things were once people, and they are respected as such ...

Out of respect, when the first large sockeye was caught, a First Salmon Ceremony was conducted. This was the WSÁNEC' way to greet and welcome the king of all salmon. The celebration would likely last up to ten days. All fishing stopped ... this deeply rooted respect was integral to the WSÁNEC' people's governance of their fisheries.

Claxton, 2008 p.55

The predetermination that hunting should actually stop as soon as the first of the most-desirable prey is caught means that salmon runs have ten days in which to procreate undisturbed by hunters. This ensures ongoing, healthy, and stable salmon populations. And while the salmon are still caught, killed and consumed through these fishing methods, this is not seen as incommensurate with holding the salmon as a creature to be respected, a cultural signifier, and a metaphor for ontological discovery and social behaviour.

The Lakota have similar stories relating to the buffalo, recalling a great race between two and four legged creatures, which resulted in the buffalo and other four legged creatures taking responsibility to act as food for the two legged creatures in exchange for a responsibility of care (Deloria, 1979 p.238). The position of respect and reverence that the buffalo occupy in the cultures of many

Indigenous peoples of the plains mirrors that accorded to the salmon on the northwest coast, or to moose in northwest British Columbia (Brody, 1982) or caribou in the northern interior (Bussidor & Bilgen-Reinart, 1997 pp.9-10). In part because people are conceptually integrated into their places through Indigenous being on the land, it is not contradictory for Indigenous peoples that they should respect and recognise particular creatures through ceremonies and stories, learn from observing and living with them, and still consume and otherwise physically use them. So long as the use and consumption are conducted with respect to Indigenous ontologies, ceremonies and stories, balance is maintained.<sup>26</sup>

At a larger spatial scale, Indigenous trade networks are similarly important in that they helped to cement inter-tribal and international alliances in the absence of dominating force, as well as ensure that political leaders at home were treating the people of their communities well enough that they would not leave for other more fair and prosperous communities (Corntassel, 2008 p.122, 125). The accomplishments of Indigenous peoples in agriculture, sanitation, medicine and other techniques for meeting material social needs must also be acknowledged

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<sup>26</sup> There is, in some respects, an aspect of Gibson-Graham's 'diverse economies' (2008); many of these traditional economic practices remain vibrant despite the intrusion of capitalist systems, and in some ways provide inspiration for defeating capitalist hegemony. Gibson-Graham advise that it is necessary not just to critique capitalist economics, but to actively look for alternative economic practices and systems that already exist that have the potential to denormalise and decentre capitalist hegemony. While it is clear that Indigenous peoples' economic practices are not 'socialist' in the common use of the term, they provide both an under-appreciated alternative system of economics to extractive capitalist hegemony and an example of alternative practices that have evaded and resisted invasive colonial structures (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Trosper, 2009).

here (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001 pp.57-65). For example, the common reliance among the Haudenosaunee upon the three sisters — corn, beans and squash — as staple foods (Hopkins, 2011 pp.32-33) goes well beyond simple hunter-gatherer tropes. Together, these three foods provide the vast majority of amino acids and other nutrients needed in a healthy diet. Careful cultivation and preservation of the three sisters allowed villages to survive in the absence of game or through difficult environmental conditions. The combination of agriculture and the Haudenosaunee cyclical movement between village sites (Hopkins, 2011 pp.29-30) ensured soil health, as well as preventing the overuse of other resources such as timber, game, or spaces for waste disposal.

Much of this is informed by Native science (Cajete, 2004; Colorado, 1988), which is to say that these are not accidental technological developments or simply the result of a 'primitive people' living close to their environment, as has been suggested by some (for more on these debates in Anthropology, see: Doxtater, 2004). It should be noted that many colonial portrayals of Indigenous peoples' relationships to their environment include two serious errors. First, it was assumed that Indigenous peoples did not alter their environments and that the northern bloc, prior to contact with Europeans, was 'unspoiled' wilderness; this position has been repeatedly debunked (Mann, 2006). Second, it was also assumed that non-indigenous (in this context, read: civilised) peoples do not live close to their 'environments' while Indigenous peoples do, ignoring that all societies alter and interact with the features of their land base differently (Short, 1991 pp.5-6), making such speculations spurious at best. While Settler peoples now rely on chemical fertilisers and genetic engineering to increase crop yields, Indigenous peoples relied on different technologies designed to meet the material



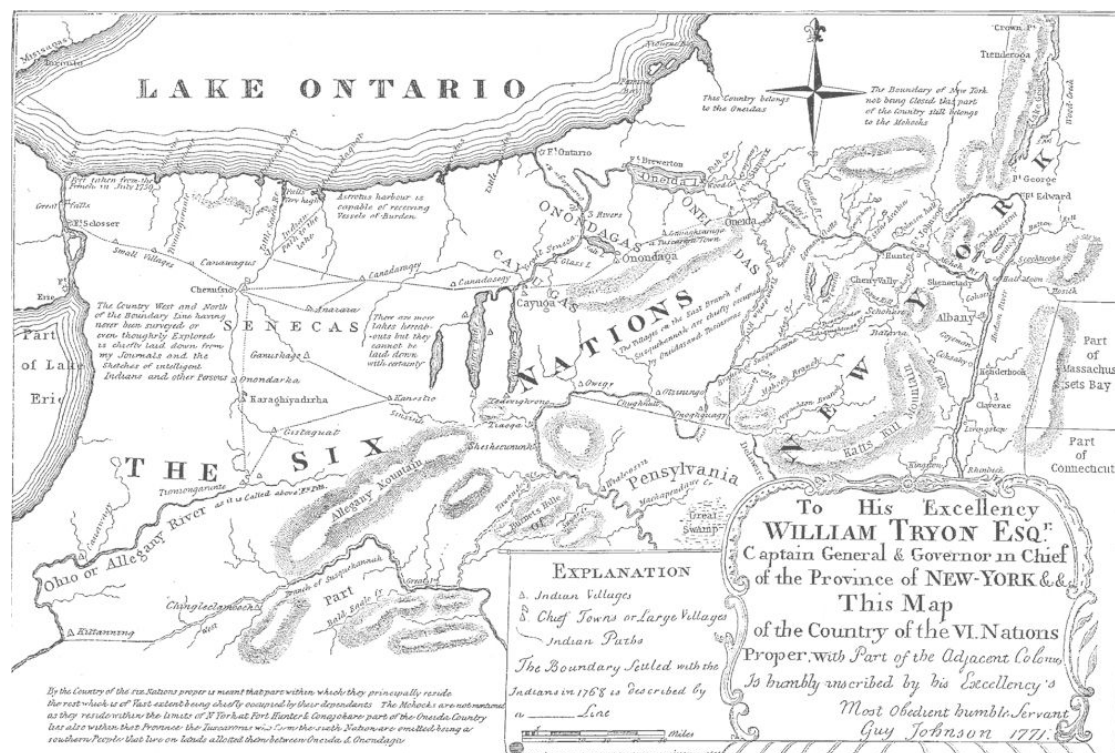
needs of their people through methods consistent with Indigenous ceremonies, ontologies and histories, and concerned with maintaining balance and sustainability in and with place.

### **(His)Story**

Indigenous histories, especially those housed in oral traditions can be considered living things, narratives with their own power that remains rooted in particular places, and that can affect people and places across time (King, 2003). Indigenous peoples' histories are at times transmitted through a combination of physical reminders, such as the wampum treaties, that act as a material base for the 'story' of the object's history and meaning (Doxtater, 2010 p.102). In part because of their place-rootedness, Indigenous stories do not often attempt to codify a set of historically 'accurate' facts, dates, and important figures. Rather, these stories are descriptions of patterns of action, reaction and interaction that result from being in place (sometimes using particular events, dates, or people as touchstones). Creation stories are particularly important, as are stories of social transformation (Archibald, 2008), keeping in mind that 'social' can also include how humans, spirits and other beings sharing places interact with each other.

Consider the story of the creation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, one of the most well-known and influential Indigenous political organisations in the northern bloc. The rich and detailed history includes: stories of war and vengeance among five, related Iroquoian nations; the birth of a spiritually powerful man — the Peacemaker — to an enemy nation; the coming of that man to the five nations and his efforts to bring peace; the formation of the political body of the Confederacy to ensure the peace would last; and the establishment of protocols

for extending the peace to friendly nations and eventually, it was hoped, the whole world (Wallace, 1994). ‘Historical facts’ — such as the precise dates for the founding of the Confederacy — are not included in the story, as that sort of information is largely irrelevant (pp.67-69). However, the story does imply obligations to Settler populations, as some versions continue on to tell of the spread of the Confederacy, through both the adoption of the Tuscaroras and establishment of official relationships with the French and other colonial peoples (Wallace, 1994 pp.91-107; Mohawk, 1994 pp.117-120).



**Figure 6 - An 18<sup>th</sup> century map of Haudenosaunee Confederacy territory, including adjacent American colonies (Johnson, 1771). The author's hometown would later be situated in the upper left, at the western end of Lake Ontario.**

While Western historians may question the ‘accuracy’ of this type of history, it makes functional sense given the relational, experiential, process-based nature of Indigenous ontology. For the Haudenosaunee, the history of the founding of the Confederacy is indistinguishable from the story of the Peacemaker or the codified

knowledge of the Great Law, or the experiences of 'living' these relationships in the present, and collectively these contain all of the principles of leadership and responsible living that define an authentic Haudenosaunee existence (Alfred, 2009a). This story is told in different ways depending on the setting, the audience and the intent — sometimes ritualistically, sometimes casually, as well as being written down or displayed in cultural centres — and the act of telling and listening joins contemporary Haudenosaunee to this story, the beings in it, the places where events occurred, and the lessons learned.

Ontologically, rather than simply telling young people the principles of being Haudenosaunee, the story of the Peacemaker and the founding of the Confederacy causes the listener to, first, see themselves in the history (through familiar places/place names, as well as through the clans, nations and important ceremonial roles developed during the story). Second, listeners must introspect to personally discover the meaning of this story; the story implies rather than spells out moral lessons. The Apache, similarly, attach particular stories with particular meanings to the places where they happened (Basso, 1996). In this way, as one learns the names of places required to navigate through the Apache world, one also learns the dynamic history of that world, helping them to find their ways within it. Generally speaking, "within an Indigenous sociocultural framework, storytelling is the central medium of knowledge transmission and is also an important educational tool" (Christensen, 2012 p.232). In this way, oral histories, storytelling techniques, and Indigenous ontologies are inseparable. As discussed above, economic self-determination is also connected to stories, as Indigenous peoples oral histories often record the location and uses of particular resources, as well as the consequences when they are used improperly. Stories considered

sacred are told specifically (or exclusively) during particular ceremonial events, during specific times and in particular places (King, 2003 pp.153-154). This both grounds the ceremony in place and history, but also ritualistically incorporates the import of the stories into the lives of those who participate, both as tellers and listeners.

Indigenous oral narratives have often been dismissed by Settlers and settler society as fanciful stories rather than reliable or factual 'history' due to the inclusion of spirit beings and fantastical events. For example, the most famous court case on 'aboriginal title' (legal rights to traditional lands) in Canada is *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997). This was an appeal brought before the Supreme Court of Canada by the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en nations, contesting a decision by Chief Justice Alan McEachern in the British Columbia Supreme Court, 1991. The Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples of the British Columbia interior had been attempting since 1984 to have their claims to their traditional lands recognised by government and courts, and as part of the evidence offered before the court, elders agreed to be recorded reciting oral history about those places to prove long-standing connections to place (occupation being a legal requirement to proving aboriginal title). Some of these stories included interactions with spirit beings, such as a spectral bear that destroyed a village in times past. McEachern dismissed all such oral testimony, choosing to privilege the legal and ontological traditions of the Canadian government (Hurley, 1998).

However, there is more at work here than the arbitration of facts from fiction. As Deloria points out, "[e]very human society maintains its sense of identity with a set of stories that explain, at least to its satisfaction, how things came to be" (Deloria, 1997 p.23), and in this case McEachern chose to believe his own cultural-

story framework rather than lend any credence to Indigenous stories. This is both arrogant and dangerous considering the degree to which Indigenous stories and oral traditions are now recognised as containing incredible insights into various aspects of the world and human relationships (see for example: Cornthassel *et al.*, 2009; Christensen, 2012).<sup>27</sup> Further, “even when Indian ideas are demonstrated to be correct there is the racist propensity to argue that the Indian understanding was just an ad hoc lucky guess” (Deloria, 1997 p.45). Of the four aspects of Indigenous being on the land presented here, the validity of Indigenous story and history may be the most contested, in part because the function of such stories is to unify and transmit understandings of ceremonial obligations, methods of resource acquisition and management, and ontological techniques and imperatives. In short, stories are “all we are” (King, 2003) because stories are about knowledge, worldviews, peoplehood and what it means to be in place.

### **Ownership, Control and Demarcation of Place**

As settler colonisers advanced unevenly into Indigenous spaces of the northern bloc over the last five centuries, it is easy to accept that they could remain ignorant of Indigenous relationships to place given the complexity of those relationships, the number of actors and elements involved in networks of being on the land and the vast differences between Indigenous-place relationships and predominant forms of Settler-place relationships (see Chapter 2 for comparison). However,

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<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, this was also contrary to the interpretations of the Supreme Court of Canada, which overturned the previous decision, and while failing to recognise the full extent of Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en land rights, did recognise oral traditions as a legitimate form of legal evidence (Hurley, 1998).

Indigenous peoples' understandings of and relationships to place are not invisible; they were and are socially and visibly performed in a number of ways that designate particular places as important to or owned by particular peoples.

Ownership — especially of property or control over specific places — is a confusing concept in much of the literature on Indigenous peoples and colonisation. Various commentators have attempted to articulate Indigenous peoples' relationships to place within European or Settler frames of reference; as these frames do not fit Indigenous peoples' understandings of place and space particularly well, most have served to mystify rather than clarify. Stalinists and various other political movements against the democratic, capitalist state, have relied on various formulations of indigeneity designed to fit their overarching theoretical relationships between individuals, collectives, and property, often falling back on liberal ideologies of stagism that positioned Indigenous peoples as primitive, but full of potential.<sup>28</sup> That Indigenous peoples are neither primitive nor socialist (both foreign concepts) has not prevented many non-Indigenous commentators from spreading these tropes. Locke, whose ideas on property are

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<sup>28</sup> Keefer argues that this view of Indigenous peoples as 'pre-communist primitives' was not part of Marx's theories, but were rather imported into communist thought from liberal bourgeois tropes and argued against vehemently by Marx. However, the distinction between caricature and respect is likely not as clear as Keefer portrays. Keefer also notes that Marx included Indigenous peoples in constructions of "archaic communism", which given the diversity of economic models and thinking about 'land' among Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc and around the world, is far from accurate (Keefer, 2010b pp.107-109). In other words, while it is very attractive to Marxist-inspired thinkers to construct Indigenous peoples as socialistic and in opposition to capitalism, while the second is usually true, the first is not necessarily so.

antithetical to most socialist positions, also described Indigenous peoples as primitive. But in his construction this was to explain the lack of Indigenous “improvements” on the land, which to Locke abrogated their claims to live on or possess land (MacMillan, 2011; Tully, 1995). That Indigenous technologies and related spatial practices were (and often remain) invisible to colonisers fundamentally undermines this point, but so too does an expectation on the part of the colonisers for Indigenous to ‘perform’ sovereignty through ‘development.’ Both capitalist and socialist positions have misconstrued how Indigenous peoples allocate and demarcate places, which is an important point to remember throughout this thesis (see especially Chapter 5). To clarify this point, it is necessary to understand how Indigenous peoples’ conceptions of ‘ownership’ of place do and do not accord to Euro-American concepts of sovereignty, and the implications of Indigenous peoples as non-statist for the form and function of Indigenous governance.

### **Sovereignty and Indigeneity**

Alfred has explicitly stated that ‘sovereignty’ — the basis of state rule — is an “inappropriate concept” for Indigenous peoples (Alfred, 2006); their political relationships to place are often very different than those implied by the term. Indigenous societies generally articulate and are seen as collective entities upon their land. This collectivity has been communicated and recognised in a variety of ways. Ronald Neisen (2003), writing on international rights discourses, and Will Kymlicka (2001), working from within the liberal tradition of human rights within states and constitutions, both acknowledge and grapple with Indigenous collectivity. Indigenous positions have been less compromising, asserting Euro-

American individualism as incommensurate with Indigenous collectivity (see for example: Deloria, 1988; Alfred, 2005). Historically, both the Canadian government, through Enfranchisement and insistence on situated agriculture (Neu, 2000 pp.275-276), and the American government, through termination and other legal actions (Corntassel & Witmer, 2008), have actively pursued the break-up of collective Indigenous ownership into individualised private property.

Indigenous contentions with capitalist development, from bourgeois real estate development (Day & Haberle, 2006; Barker, 2007b) to environmentally destructive resource extraction (Huseman & Short, 2012 p.220), have often been predicated on the rejection of 'ownership' of private property and "Indigenous understanding of environmental and cultural domains as inseparable" (Pickerill 2009, p.70). Indigenous traditional governance systems have proved surprisingly resilient in the face of settler colonial sovereign violence and control, in no small part because of the horizontal and participatory elements of Indigenous praxis. Indigenous spatial relational networks form a sort of partnership between the elements of place — humans, animals and plants, spirits and dreams/visions, and physical landscape — to fulfil particular roles with respect to each other. By being on the land as Indigenous peoples, they participate in the construction of networks that route or shift power horizontally to various partners as is required to fulfil their roles. The observable result of this participatory generation of 'power with' all of the elements of place is the achievement of dynamic balance.

This collective being on the land exists outside of the traditional Western private/capitalist-public/socialist dichotomy of property. Similarly, those areas that are designated for particular uses or for uses by particular peoples are not 'owned' in the common sense of the word. In many Indigenous societies, families



or clans can be said to own particular places or resources. However, it is difficult to encapsulate the meaning of this relationship in English; that Indigenous peoples have at times used English terms that seem to imply ownership confuses the issue further.<sup>29</sup> In practice, by dint of historical events (described in oral traditions), ceremonial obligations, or social standing, particular families will have particular relationships to places. These relationships often bring great benefits to the family such as access to particular resources or spiritual power (see for example the distribution of fishery sites in Coast Salish communities: Claxton, 2008), but they carry corresponding obligations and responsibilities. These responsibilities may be to the place itself as caretakers or guardians performing rituals of renewal (Little Bear, 2004), to the wider society through fair distribution of resources or power,<sup>30</sup> or to spirits and other non-human beings associated with or interested in that place (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000 pp.3-8).

Indigenous societies can claim rights and responsibilities to places that they do not occupy or have not for some time, what Holm *et al.* have called a connection

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<sup>29</sup> On contemporary Indigenous communities and the adoption and expansion of private property by band council (ex. Osooyoos First Nation in Canada) or tribal council (ex. Oneida Nation in New York State) see: below; Chapter 5 on capitalism and settler colonialism; and Chapter 6 on spaces of resistance. For an example of Indigenous peoples appropriating the concept of 'ownership' as "jurisdiction" consistent with Indigenous spatial traditions, see the words of Spin'tlam, Chief of the Nlaka'pamux, to ethnographer James Teit in 1858 (M'Gonigle & Wickwire, 1988 p.28). Chief Spin'tlam articulated his people's territory as being circumscribed by place-specific 'posts' within which he recognised "no white man's boundaries or posts".

<sup>30</sup> See the example of the Pacific Northwest potlatch ceremony as the centre of sustainable and equitable economic practice (Trosper, 2009).

between “peoplehood” and “lost sacred lands” (Holm *et al.*, 2003). It should be noted that many Indigenous societies rely on the ability to relocate or self-remove from places of habitation as a strategic advantage. For example, Brody discusses how the Beaver people have traditionally relied on the ability to “retreat” into various parts of their territory when threatened, either by violence or scarcity (Brody, 1981). When an issue is dividing the people such that it threatens the integrity of the community and disrupts collective efforts and holistic, communal being on the land, a group will relocate to pursue their own goals without imposing on the rest of the community.

This does not mean an end to relationships to the place that is left, or in the case of community division, an end to relationships between peoples. Just as relationships to place can be maintained across space and time, so are social relationships within and between communities maintained by spatially-stretched networks of being on the land. For example, the relationships between the Haudenosaunee communities spatially divided by the imposition of the American-British border, especially during the War of 1812 (Benn, 1998 pp.29-66; see also: Taylor, 2010), were stretched but never broken. That these communities were in conflict is undeniable; however communication over distance, political power, and praxes of obligation and responsibility continued despite these conflicts. This maintenance of responsibility across place and space has become a doubly important point in recent times as Indigenous peoples in both Canada and the United States seek recognition of their ownership of traditional lands. Canadian courts, for example, have asserted that “Aboriginal Title” can only be claimed if an Indigenous group can prove ‘continuous use and occupation’ of a place (Berg, 2011 pp.19-20; Hurley, 1998). Obviously, this is unrealistic unless the courts can

recognise uneven occupation and use across distance, something that Indigenous societies rely on and that sovereign states appear unable and unwilling to comprehend.

Indigenous spatial understandings of possession and obligation to place are not invisible. They have been asserted at every level of political rule and law in Canada and America, and throughout the history of both states. Indigenous spatialities are marked on the land in both altered landscapes and in place names formalized on Canadian maps. Despite all of these prominent signs, and the continued existence of Indigenous peoples and their efforts to have their lands and rights recognized and protected, Settler people persist in both their general illiteracy of Indigenous ways and a determined ignorance and refusal to recognize indigeneity. Settler people are, as Alfred asserts, “in denial” (2005 p.107).

Indigenous peoples have spatial relationships that in many ways are even more complex than the hierarchical sovereign spaces of Settler societies (see Chapter 2). Needless to say, Indigenous peoples of the northern bloc did not build spaces that would resemble or mimic state structures, or other sovereign spaces such as those under feudalism or imperialism. This is not to say that all Indigenous societies were non-hierarchical, or that problems associated with sovereign state power did not or do not occur in Indigenous political and social structures. Various Indigenous societies of the northern bloc have been characterised by slavery, class divisions, gendered hierarchy, oligarchic governments, and so on. To pretend otherwise is fanciful, revisionist history. However, I would point out that even as ‘sovereignty’ or ‘socialism’ do not accurately reflect similar concepts in Indigenous cultural and intellectual traditions, often these hierarchical divisions function

sufficiently differently in Indigenous societies that using these common terms to describe Indigenous social spaces can be extremely misleading.

For example, Indigenous societies are sometimes portrayed as patriarchal based on the reservation of 'chieftainships' (official positions of political leadership) for men. However, "Indigenous women were considered within Indigenous society as persons; they were not the property of men, nor the drudges of society" (Ladner, 2009 p.70). In the case of the Blackfoot Confederacy, women were recognised as vitally important:

... women were integral members of society in the pre-colonial period.

Though most women remained in camp and were responsible for camp life, the persistence of this gendered division of labour cannot be equated with inequality, subordination or oppression. Rather, these roles were respected and are recounted with great reverence in the oral tradition. Further, women were the owners of matrimonial property, the intermediaries between men and "power" (in a non-Western sense), and the ones who brought the sacred ceremonies and the political order to the nations. Women were not confined by an absolute gender division, as many *ninawaki* or *sakwo'mapiakikiwan* (manly hearted women) pursued more masculine roles as warriors, hunters and leaders.

p.70

This may not accord with contemporary understandings of gender equality, but it is also not patriarchy. Power was not invested in institutionalised roles, so hierarchies familiar to statist societies did not necessarily manifest in Indigenous societies.

In relation to sovereignty, then, it is fair to say that Indigenous peoples of the northern bloc have been and continue to be non-statist nations. Broadly, this results in spatialities that display a great degree of flexibility built around vital cultural cores encapsulated in ceremony and story. Indigenous nations at times share places, often through overlapping spaces that allow for different peoples to relate to the same place in different ways and for differing purposes (and often at differing times). Further, in times of threat, crisis or scarcity, Indigenous spatialities can often be temporarily relocated (Brody, 1981), amalgamated with other (compatible) spatialities (White, 2011), or invested into story and ceremony in absence of contact with the particular place being referenced (Holm *et al.*, 2003). Despite this flexibility, Indigenous spaces and Settler spaces have rarely been able to successfully or sustainably coexist. In fact, Settler societies have, through acts of colonisation, created material conditions that abrogate Indigenous being on the land; more to the point, this is intentional and highly profitable for Settler peoples.

### **Dispelling Myths About Indigenous Peoples**

One of the most important tasks in working to clarify the functioning of Indigenous spatialities is also one of the most delicate and difficult: dispelling myths about Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are not 'ecological Indians,' 'noble savages,' or members of some socialist utopia. Indigenous peoples' connections to place did not prevent the emergence of tyrants, manipulative or exploitative people occupying positions of power, international conflicts and warfare, or the development of social systems that could be described as oppressive. However, it

is equally important to understand the extraordinary differences between Indigenous and Settler imagined geographies in order to appreciate the impacts of these differences.

### **Warriors and Peace**

Take the idea of warfare. Indigenous histories record the existence of warfare, sometimes involving huge numbers of people across long stretches of time (Alfred & Lowe, 2005); this is no different to European pre-Columbian histories. However, Indigenous networks of being on the land impact the conduct of warfare. The individual responsibility associated with a generalist and experiential methodology for knowing and being on the land is vitally important in perceiving differences between Indigenous and European or Settler ways of engaging in conflict. Benn, in *The Iroquois in the War of 1812*, describes how Indigenous military cohesion was governed by two factors: first, the ability of a war chief to influence and inspire individual Haudenosaunee to accompany him on a campaign; second, the lack of military compulsion and the need to wed strategic goals to individual perspectives of honour and victory (1998 pp.67-86). The Haudenosaunee were horrified and baffled at the European and American methods of conducting warfare: the massive losses of life in pursuit of sometimes esoteric or symbolic goals were seen as wasteful and ill advised. The lack of a professional army (though not a social warrior class) also factored into this: wars were always a sacrifice for Indigenous peoples, as warriors engaged in combat could not simultaneously be farmers, healers, orators, or fill other responsible social roles (Benn, 1998). To most Indigenous peoples, the concept that someone's occupation would make them expendable was incomprehensible.

Many Indigenous histories record significant social events that shaped versions of these views on warfare and violence. The Haudenosaunee, long before the arrival of Europeans, were extremely warlike. Their own histories tell of how their people, divided between five nations, engaged in intractable blood feuds, were slowly destroying themselves (Wallace, 1994; see also above). It took the political and spiritual intercession of the Peacemaker, to stop the warring. This involved the creation of a number of important ritualistic and spiritual activities (such as the condolence ceremony, mentioned above), political institutions (the Onondaga central fire, the ranks of national chiefs in the longhouse), social and familial (re)organisations (the creation of clans that cross-cut allegiances to the five nations), and important place-based roles (the Mohawks as keepers of the Eastern Door, the Onondagas as fire-keepers) (Johansen & Mann, 2000; Wallace, 1994). In this way, Haudenosaunee histories counter imposed tropes of innocence and nobility; the Confederacy is aware of and open about their own origins being rooted in war and conflict.

These histories, though, also counter European myths of superiority and progress, crucially demonstrating that Indigenous peoples like the Haudenosaunee succeeded in humanely limiting the fallout of international violence through coalition building, development of checks and balances, and other social systems. Meanwhile, European and American militaries reached towards increasingly destructive weaponry and tactics costing staggering numbers of lives. That the Napoleonic Wars, the World Wars, and so many other deadly conflicts involving the British, French and Americans occurred after these nations were invited to join the Confederacy under the 'great tree of peace' is an indictment of European and Settler aggression and wastefulness.

## **Newcomers and Networks of Being on the Land: Flexibility, Treaty Making, and Physical Change**

It bears repeating that Indigenous peoples, even decimated by disease and demographically overwhelmed, have never been powerless. Hybridity and flexibility are two aspects of Indigenous being on the land that have manifested as adaptive strategies for dealing with outsiders. Indigenous ways of knowing produce bodies of knowledge that are constantly in flux. The personal and experiential nature of Indigenous knowledge production, combined with the holistic rejection of anomalies, results in social systems that must be able to incorporate new and unexpected elements.<sup>31</sup> The Hopi, for example, are deeply rooted in their sacred homeland, but also ritualistically send groups out, travelling through the world, who return with knowledge and changed perspectives that must be reincorporated into the social collective (Jojola, 2004 pp.90-93). The Hopi world, then, is always expanding and changing, through the incorporation of new or changed place knowledge. The Hopi ontological imperative is to change with it, while remaining rooted in tradition; the result has been a sustainable relationship to place among the most stable and enduring anywhere.

This flexibility and contingency in ways of being on the land extends to ways of being with other people (on the land). This is how the Haudenosaunee longhouse can be extended to include the Tuscarora and European nations (Wallace, 1994). This is also how Indigenous communities in the land-based fur trade were quickly able to assess foreign traders and make shrewd decisions on what and when to trade, despite European and American military might (Clayton,

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<sup>31</sup> For an introductory exploration of Indigenous thought, including its application for Settler and non-Indigenous researchers, see Barker & Battell Lowman (2010).



1999). Indigenous peoples have also appropriated various European conventions to their own ends, such as the 'war flag' commonly seen at protests involving Indigenous communities. A flag generally is "a European construct and for it to be displayed so prominently amongst Indigenous peoples is extraordinary" (Doxtater, 2010 p.105). However, the point here is that these flexible and adaptive strategies are not simply a response to colonisation; rather they are fundamental to Indigenous being on the land more generally.

Indigenous peoples have always had protocols for relating to newcomers and integrating them conceptually into Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous peoples treated European newcomers, both sojourners and settlers, as 'different' but not incomprehensible; they "sought to incorporate these new people into their own systems ... [which] necessarily involved trying to figure out the nature of the others" (Kupperman, 2000 p.1). Often these cross-cultural protocols are embodied in treaties; crucially, these treaties are living documents of a relationship rather than static political agreements. Turner articulates the Indigenous "treaty position" as "the political stance that the treaties represent not only binding political agreements but also sacred agreements, and that to violate them is morally reprehensible" (Turner, 2006 p.26). Treaties such as the Haudenosaunee "Two-Row" Treaty were designed to integrate newcomers<sup>32</sup> into Indigenous networks. The Two-Row Treaty is a metaphor for co-existence based on mutual non-interference, but it would be wrong to suggest that these treaties call for segregation or non-interaction. It must also be understood that the relational

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<sup>32</sup> Not necessarily European newcomers: these treaties were developed between Indigenous nations in pre-Columbian times, and continued to be despite colonisation.

values of peace, respect, and friendship form the core of these treaties (Turner, 2006 p.48). Treaties like these represent not just a political arrangement, but a statement of relationship and alliance with the entire networks of place that Indigenous nations occupy and rely upon. Breaking of these treaties is more than a political convenience; it is a declaration of war on the very personality of a place.

It is also important to remember the pace and impact of the colonisation of the northern bloc. Settlers did not simply arrive and displace Indigenous peoples through superior technology and culture. Comparatively few Indigenous peoples encountered settler colonisers directly. That is to say, almost all Indigenous peoples encountered other “colonial sojourners — administrators, missionaries, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and adventurers” (Veracini, 2010a p.6) — and developed complex relationships with them before meeting people who came to stay and self-identified through their settlement in place. Further, without implying genetic or physical inferiority, it is necessary to recognise that disease has played a massive role in Indigenous social change in the post-Columbian period. The extent to which small pox, influenza, and other European diseases catastrophically reduced Indigenous populations even ahead of direct or sustained contact is finally being theorised and understood (Harris, 1997 pp.3-30; Cronon & White, 1985 p.32).<sup>33</sup> This in no way mitigates or excuses settler or other forms of

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<sup>33</sup> Indigenous peoples continue to be disproportionately afflicted with diseases compared to Settler populations. In addition to viral or bacterial infections that recall historical small pox and influenza epidemics, Indigenous peoples also suffer from elevated rates of diabetes, malnutrition, and suicide. These and other grim statistics must be seen as evidence of colonising acts that begin with historical imposed starvation and dependency and intentional infection and withholding of treatment, rather than as simple health care issues.

colonisation; population loss aside, the lands that Settler people saw as advantageous (Chapter 3) were far from empty. Contrasting with racist tropes of a greatly-reduced indigenous population prostrated at the merciful feet of newcomer Settler peoples, Indigenous resistances are recognised as creative, transformative, and enduring, throughout the northern bloc (Alfred 2005; see also Chapter 6).

But undeniably, many Indigenous societies were in flux during periods of initial colonial settlement, such as the Lakota whose “subsistence base had grown precarious: the buffalo and beavers they’d hunted ... were declining, and the decline of the farming villages from disease meant [the Lakota] could no longer raid or trade with them for food” (Cronon & White, 1985 p.33). Disease often combined with the introduction of new ‘technologies’ — from firearms to horses, from counting and census-taking to access to trade goods and currency — creating massive shifts in Indigenous spatial networks. Colonisers undoubtedly took advantage of this, often intentionally; divide and conquer strategies common to colonisation generally are especially effective in times of social turmoil. Assassinations of popular leaders such as Crazy Horse (in 1877), material or political support for divisive, corrupt, or comprador figures (Alfred, 2005 pp.61-62), and the imposition of direct structures of control like the band council system, should all be seen as divide and conquer tactics that both cause and rely on social upheaval.<sup>34</sup> But despite these tactics, Indigenous networks of being on the land

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<sup>34</sup> Although it is not commonly known, it is historically recognised that the imposition of band councils and tribal governments was an intentional tactic to break up the political resistance and viability of Indigenous nations. See for example the petition of Deskaheh to the League of Nations (League of Nations,

have survived (discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). Indigenous peoples have also used colonial racism to their advantage, continuing cultural traditions such as the potlatch in secret or in remote areas (Cole & Chaikin, 1990), leaving colonisers to assume these cultures were simply fading away.

None of this is meant to suggest that Indigenous societies were or are utopian, idyllic, or Edenic. I assert, though, that there are important lessons to be learned from Indigenous methods of social and cultural organisation, Indigenous political institutions, Indigenous praxes of health and education, and many other aspects of indigeneity in the northern bloc. Many Indigenous societies are founded on traditions of political freedom, empowering individualism, and socio-cultural ethics of responsibility that, especially compared to modern Settler societies, appear remarkably mature, rational, sustainable, and liveable.

### **Conclusion: Contemporary Indigeneity**

All the same, in the post-Columbian period, it was increasingly likely that an Indigenous people would experience multiple, massive social shifts, that were simultaneously demographic, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual. To make matters worse, alliances with competing imperial powers and the unbalancing effect of European weaponisation and military backing (Benn, 1998; White, 2011) exacerbated existing conflicts and generated new ones. Indigenous politics and conflicts did not end because of colonisation any more than Indigenous alliances and confederacies suddenly disintegrated. But the effects of political shifts were

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1923-1924), accusing the British Crown of invasion and treaty violation in forcibly imposing an elected council on the Six Nations reserve.

intensified, their implications made murky, and in the midst of this arrived the people 'who come to stay' (Veracini, 2010a). Opposed to this, Indigenous networks of being on the land have been reformulated to include an imperative for 'being' in resistance (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Indigenous being on the land sits in direct opposition to colonial spaces that dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands or vice versa. These traditions of resistance, adaptation, and survival, far from being extraordinary, must be recognised as constantly active against the complex and powerful assertion of colonised spaces, the details of which I outline in the following chapters.

## **Chapter 2: The Spatial Logics of Colonial Geography**

### **New Worlds, New Visions**

Indigenous peoples encountering early colonists in the Americas could not know how differently these new people would see and live in this world. But they learned quickly, and Indigenous peoples soon learned to distrust the English and other Europeans. Often their efforts to incorporate the acquisitive drive of colonialism into their own Indigenous cosmologies yielded surprisingly poignant conceptualisations; when “Captain John Smith asked Amoroleck, a Manahoac captive ... why his people were hostile to the English ... ‘He answered, they heard we were a people come from under the world, to take their world from them’” (Kupperman, 2000 p.177). This turned out to be remarkably accurate. However, there are more new people “come from under the world” than just the English in the history of the northern bloc, and the ways that they have tried to displace Indigenous networks of being, claiming places as their own, are remarkably varied.

Here, I outline the dynamics of how three particular colonial ideologies and positionalities — metropole, settler, and neo-colonialism — describe space, and the perceived role of spatial production and consumption in the generation of colonial power. I have used the term ‘logic’ consciously. Rather than a method for

producing or consuming space, I construct each type of colonial logic as a distinct way of perceiving and relating to place. This entails the production and consumption of particular types of space, but also involves multiple evolutionary trajectories over time.

### **Colonisation and Space**

Post-Columbian 'discovery' of and sustained contact with the 'New World' across the Atlantic created massive shifts in how Europeans, especially imperial elites, thought about space. Colonisation was a two-way process, and the trans-Atlantic world that was created by the export of imperial power and populations to the Americas, also necessitated a re-orientation of the Christian, European cosmology and, in fact, basic idea of geography. And encounters by colonists and sojourners with Indigenous peoples suddenly broadened European ideas about humanity, governance, and culture. As contact was sustained and intensified, attitudes towards and understandings of the positionality of Europe and Europeans changed. MacMillan describes this change with respect to English colonisation:

... conquest, in Elizabethan England ... was a term used in a benign and benevolent manner that fit within humanist goals for a noble, peaceful, and long-term relationship with both the people and land of America. ... American Natives were not willing to accept English presence on the benevolent terms anticipated by English humanists. ... by the time the permanent English empire in America was established, the idea of benign conquest no longer had a place in domestic, colonial, or supranational discourse.

MacMillan, 2011 p.32

Regardless of the belligerence or benevolence of the intent, colonialism generally can be thought of as an ideology for the imposition of particular types of spatial relationships on previously-foreign or external places in order to extract profit and control flows of power. For Indigenous peoples, this has had the effect of separating them — often violently — from their homelands and places of reference (Gibson, 1999). As will be seen below, however, the intent of specific colonisers, both individual elites and various forms of collectives, can have major implications for what kinds of colonial spaces are created, and how these spaces are produced (which, in turn, affects definitions of decolonisation).

The majority of the post-Columbian period of colonisation has been characterised by imperial competition, both in Europe and in the ‘emerging’ northern bloc as a new theatre of conflict. All empires — the Spanish, English, French, Dutch, Russian, and others — engaged in exploration, exploitation of Indigenous labour, and expansion of imperial power. However, while these pursuits were competitive, they also relied on particular logics of metropole superiority — the belief, outlined by MacMillan, in the superiority of a core culture or society — which were thrown into question by the emergence of powerful, new, Settler societies. The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) was in many ways a direct response to the imposition of power and control from the English imperial centre. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 served to restrict and frustrate the desires of an expanding and increasingly-powerful Settler polity who saw themselves as “kindred peoples” distinct from England, lines of kinship that persisted across the political divisions in American and British space (Taylor, 2010 p.6; see also: Hall, 2003 pp.310-312). Correspondingly, emergent settler colonial elites — such as land speculators and wealthy tobacco plantation owners —



perceived a spatial opportunity (see Chapter 3) to secure their own positions of power and prestige through the isopolitical transfer (Veracini, 2011a) of their rights from the jurisdiction of the metropole to the overlapping jurisdiction of the settlement colonies (Holton, 1999). The emergence of Canadian sovereignty involved a much slower pace, though similar dynamics are evident throughout.

The differences between the ‘clean break’ of the American Revolution and the Canadian legal-political route to sovereignty that culminated in the 1982 patriation of the Canadian Constitution,<sup>35</sup> have historical and policy relevance. However, following the Charlottetown Conference (1864) that precipitated Canadian confederation (1867) — and even before in many areas, depending on the purview of the local governor — the Settler society that would become Canada internally functioned largely independent from the British Crown.<sup>36</sup> Rather than metropole subjects, Canadian settler society operated as allies to but independent from both the French and English founding empires. This is especially evident in the militarisation of Canadian settler society. Consider that, by the culmination of the War of 1812, the forces which turned back the American invasion of ‘Upper Canada’ (later Ontario), though commanded by British-born Isaac Brock were partially composed of Settler peoples (including Brock’s second-in-command, John Macdonell) and local Indigenous peoples under the command of Tecumseh (Taylor, 2010). With the majority of British military power occupied by the Napoleonic Wars, Canadian settlers had to quickly establish military prowess. By

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<sup>35</sup> Prior to 1982, Canada was officially a Dominion of the British Crown; functionally, Canada has acted as an independent state since World War II.

<sup>36</sup> The British Crown controlled Canadian and other Dominions’ foreign affairs, including the establishment of embassies, until 1925-1926.

the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Canadian paramilitary and military forces were sufficiently developed to not only operate independent of British support or influence, but also to engage in a number of conflicts with Indigenous peoples across the continent (see for example: Nettleback & Foster, 2012 p.127).

With the development of these competing but related settler colonial jurisdictions, the northern bloc of settler colonialism was instituted. However, as a jurisdiction created through the competitions between different colonial logics, enduring colonial dynamics must be understood as the product of a variety of overlapping colonial geographies.

## **Overview of Colonial Geographies**

### **Core and Periphery**

The 'Old World' and 'New World' dichotomy, though dated, is important to understanding colonial geographies in the northern bloc, in no small part because it encompasses the sudden shift from a Euro- and Christian-centric model to one which had to incorporate new lands, new peoples, and completely alien ways of thinking about place, space, and identity (Deloria, 2003). Crucially, though, the 'New World' also opened up avenues for different kinds of colonisation.

A colony, according to Veracini, can be a reference to either of two different (but related) things:

[a] colony is both a political body that is dominated by an exogenous agency, and an exogenous entity that reproduces itself in a given environment (in both cases, even if they refer to very different

situations, “colony” implies the localized ascendancy of an external element — this is what brings the two meanings together).

Veracini, 2010a pp.2-3

As such, any consideration of colonisation must include both a ‘core’ that is the source of the exogenous agency and a ‘periphery’ that is the foreign, distant, or separate place where the colony is located. However, how these relative positions are conceptualised, how they relate to national or other group identities, and what kinds of spaces are built in and around a colony, are highly variable.

Settler colonialism, as a tactic pursued in order to exert imperial control over a peripheral space, is not new or exclusive to trans-Atlantic colonisation. The Crusades (c.1100-1300) against the Islamic societies that held Jerusalem can be seen as a very early example of settler colonisation, as European populations sought to establish new settlements and displace existing populations in the Levant (Riley-Smith, 2005 pp.82-83). Alternatively, the City of London “as a corporate collective entity” facilitated the settler colonisation of Londonderry in Ireland in 1613 (Veracini, 2010a p.59). However, as discussed at the end of Chapter 1, disease and depopulation, along with radical social differences between Indigenous and European peoples, and the geopolitical positioning of England, France, and other empires around a globalising Atlantic, created an understanding of the New World as particularly ripe for both conquest and settlement. Soguk describes the rise of a “matrix of positionality” that generated the idea of Europe as the centre of the ‘universe’ and the Americas as a bountiful periphery:

[t]his alignment of positionalities and subjectivities would ultimately empower an ideological strategy that would not only effect a dominant European agency with respect to the Indigenous spaces,

but also fuel a wholesale assault on, and even negate altogether, Indigenous agency. From the beginning, European programs and projects were set to conflict with Indigenous civilizational practices.

Soguk, 2011 p.38

It is this backdrop that enables a definition of 'metropole' as the imagined geographical 'centre of the centre.' Urbanising metropolitan centres, like London or Paris, were seen to dominate the kingdoms and states that in turn dominated Europe, and as Soguk demonstrates, Europe was positioned as the 'core' of the civilised world. As such, all power was traceable back to the elites that held sway in the metropole, and eventually to the economic and political structures inhering in the metropole. As such, the metropole is both a real place (or type of place), and also the conceptual centre of civilisation that informs how distant lands become not just 'periphery' but also 'inferior' in colonial imaginaries.

All of the major colonising powers in the northern bloc were initially informed by the rubric of metropole colonial logic and, at some point, employed settler colonial means to greater or lesser degrees. The Spanish for example are well known as imperial conquerors but, contrary to many perceptions, did engage in limited settler colonisation of the northern bloc, including ill-fated settlement of present day New Mexico in 1600 (John, 1975 pp.54-66). Similarly, Dutch, Russian, Swedish and other settlements have been established throughout the northern bloc. However, by far the greatest European colonial influences on the northern bloc — in either metropole or settler forms — are the English (British)<sup>37</sup> and,

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<sup>37</sup> Although some slippage in terms is unavoidable, the English Empire became the British Empire in 1707 with the political unification of England and Scotland.

secondarily, the French.<sup>38</sup> Later, the emergence of the American and Canadian Settler states massively altered perceptions of the New World as a periphery and the meaning of 'frontier' space.

Early metropole colonisers struggled to understand the meanings of the new places that they encountered, filtering their experiences through their European, Christian historical worldviews and cosmology (Cruikshank, 2005; Deloria, 2003; Kupperman, 2000). As discussed, metropole colonisation opened an explosion of new ideas and understandings of European place in the world that stretched and fractured colonisers' views of the world. Simultaneously, many of these new ideas were wrapped around older understandings, as debates raged about how much place could change a person (Merrens & Terry, 1986). These debates helped to shape the shifting, imagined geographies that fuelled colonisation.

### **Imagined Geographies**

The concept of *terra nullius* (discussed further below) has come to dominate discussions of the imagined geographies of the northern bloc, but this has not always been the case. The English, for one, were very well aware that Indigenous peoples occupied the Americas, and even that they had some claims under European legal traditions to the land that colonisers desired (Kupperman, 1980 pp.4-5). The occupation and possession of land, in a legal sense, was more complicated in the European imagination than is often understood. The English

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<sup>38</sup> I do not restrict myself to analyses of these colonial traditions, but evidence and analysis presented throughout this and later chapters relies heavily on historical British and French colonialism based on both their pre-eminence and the corresponding preponderance of academic study of these empires.

claimed sovereignty but not right of possession during Early Modern period through right of 'discovery'. In this sense, 'sovereignty' becomes an important concept; as discussed in Chapter 1, sovereignty is not necessarily applicable to Indigenous societies. However, the meaning of sovereignty has also changed for European and Settler peoples in the post-Columbian era. Sovereignty in the early colonial period referred to the right of a sovereign (monarch) to assert their imperial influence over a given place; it was largely *an assertion against other sovereigns*, with occupation and possession being more complicated matters. Sovereignty, in the present sense, is the collective claim of a people to occupy and use a place *to the exclusion of all 'Others,'* including the establishment of governance structures, and the monopolisation of legitimate violence by those structures. The doctrine of discovery (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2012) that awarded sovereignty *and* possession of land in this sense did not become enshrined in British law until 1823, after the American Revolution (MacMillan, 2011 p.33 & note 5), and persists in legal and political definitions of American and Canadian sovereignty. However, the common practice of claiming sovereignty and possession simultaneously through discovery had been fuelling settler colonial ambition for some time.

This raises the question: what exactly were Europeans 'discovering?' In addition to lands full of exotic resources, Kupperman reminds us that Europeans also 'discovered' and interacted with many different kinds of people. However, while colonists and explorers understood Indigenous societies as complex (Kupperman, 1980 pp.3-4), Europeans did not see many *expected* markers of civilisation. Indigenous peoples' differences from Europeans were transformed, through an expectation of linear advancement of civilisation, into evidence of the

paucity of Indigenous culture or civilisation.<sup>39</sup> This imagined geography has persisted into the present, summarised well by Johnson's use of the term 'dysconsciousness' (D.M. Johnson, 2011 p.110), as discussed in the introduction.

However, dysconsciousness is not produced simply through lack of critical awareness; it involves a corresponding assertion of what colonisers expect to encounter or see in place. This assertion, evident in everything from literatures that describe colonies to the ways that colonisers transformed and used places, constitutes an important observable 'colonial difference.' Mignolo describes colonial difference as the ways that colonisers conceived of themselves and their spaces as fundamentally different from Indigenous peoples and spaces, measured in everything from the use of writing, occupation of particular kinds of environments, and relationships to 'history' as a concept (Mignolo, 2000 p.3). However, I deploy this term in a broader sense: the colonial difference can be seen as a difference between a coloniser's expectations of colonisation, and the reality of 'doing' colonisation in place.<sup>40</sup> Crucially, colonial difference is enacted *physically and socially* when colonisers are forced to reconcile the gap between their own expectations and the realities of colonisation. Different colonial logics produce varying 'colonial differences,' an important concept that I deploy throughout the following chapters.

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<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that this paucity — of perception rather than indigeneity — was not predestined. Colonists who directly interacted with Indigenous peoples in the early colonial period developed more complex portrayals of indigeneity than did metropolitan commentators, discussed further below. This speaks to a level of intentional blindness to Indigenous difference.

<sup>40</sup> Kupperman describes something similar: English colonisation of the Americas as shaped by ambivalence and "double vision" (Kupperman, 2000 p.20).

These tensions between expectations and biases on one hand, and the realities of colonising on the other, were intellectualised in European epistemologies. Derek Gregory notes that the discovery of the New World brought 'metaphysical unease' that contributed to the hegemony of the experimental method as a way of knowing (Gregory, 1994 p.31). This had a double effect. First, colonial knowledge changed over time as colonisers 'experimented' with different colonial logics and spatial forms; in effect colonialism 'learned' and evolved. Second, like all elements of these places being colonised, Indigenous peoples and spaces became seen as things or objects: removable, mutable, lifeless. Gregory goes on to quote the Comaroffs who note that the "essence of colonization inheres in ... seizing and transforming 'others' by the very act of conceptualizing, inscribing and interacting with them on terms not of their choosing; in making them pliant objects ... in assuming the capacity to 'represent' them". Similarly but with important differences, colonial spatial logics are the ways that colonisers 'calculate' space — how they choose what to measure, why they choose those things, and on what standards measurements are made. These calculations change over time as colonisers learn about the places that they are colonising and build social spaces and institutions; the experience of colonising shapes the coloniser. Land often becomes the common referent in these calculations and logics, either based on the ideas that places have inherently different characteristics, or in the sense that places should come to resemble each other over time as human societies evolve (Mignolo, 2000 p.3).

Kupperman demonstrates that the earliest colonists attempted to interpret Indigenous being on the land in terms that they understood. Chiefs occupying positions of respect and wealth but not coercive power were construed as



monarchs reigning over hierarchical kingdoms, and “graded status markers in badges, body, painting, and tattooing were reassuring, because they indicated impressively sophisticated social and communal distinctions and an orderly society” (Kupperman, 2000 p.64). Creative relationships often developed between very different peoples dependent on each other (see for example White, 2011). Later, though, Indigenous peoples’ differences from Europeans became an increasing focus of colonial thought, and by the time of settler colonisation replacing metropole colonisation as the primary logic of imperialism in the northern bloc, Indigenous peoples were described as weak, less evolved and “treacherous” (MacMillan, 2011 p.41). This shift in colonial logics around ambitions for land should not be seen as a calculated ploy; rather it is indicative of a shift in how colonisation is conceived by the colonisers:

... underlying this common frame of reference is the unspoken assumption that [modern, northern bloc states are] ... an inevitable byproduct of modern history, the global move toward industrialization, the consolidation of diverse peoples into nations, and the expansion of political democracy. Historians narrate the “story” of indigenous people in North America in the shadow of these trends. The Indian role in this story is to resist, adapt, negotiate, endure and persist.

Hoxie, 2008 p.1154

### **Colonial Diversity**

Particular ways of thinking about space, place and human relationships to the wider world are evident in particular ways of colonising, in turn demonstrating a

great deal about how these complex influences combine or conflict. This is colonial spatiality, the interconnection between spaces of colonisation and the identities of colonisers.

Colonies were founded in different places, at different times, for different reasons. British colonies in the Americas differed, for example, between plantation colonies like those of Virginia or the Caribbean, and military outposts which were intended to provide tactical advantage in raiding Spanish shipping (Kupperman, 1980). Other colonies, like those founded by Puritans and Quakers, often were founded with the aid of British elites, but not necessarily Crown approval or coordination (Bontrager, 2012 p.613; Kupperman, 1980 p.11). This became important when the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Quebec Act of 1764 restricted the westward spread of colonies and settlements; to colonies founded on nominal ideas of independence, this was anathema and Crown oppression (Taylor, 2010 pp.16-17; Hall, 2003 pp.10-12). Regardless, colonies in the Americas were intended to benefit the metropole, through trade or the assertion of claims to resources. Victoria, the provincial capital of British Columbia, was established to oversee both types of activity, playing vital roles in the fur trade (Clayton, 1999) and gold mining in the interior (Loo, 1994 pp.54-55). However, the effect of all colonies, whether directed to trade, conquest, or settlement, was to extend partial imperial sovereignty into the distant places across the Atlantic. This sovereign assertion has had enduring effects.

### **Spaces of Exception and Frontier Spaces**

Sovereignty is an important consideration of colonial logics; not just the assertion of it, but the ways that sovereignty is constructed over and using Indigenous

peoples. Morgensen, in an insightful article (2011), locates foundational and enduring sovereign assertions in the ways that settler colonisers in particular claimed responsibility over Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc. He phrases this in terms of Agamben's (1998) concept of *homo sacer*:

Wolfe has observed in histories of the Americas that a settler colonial "logic of elimination" located Indigenous Americans relationally, yet distinctly from Africans in the transatlantic slave trade or colonised indentured labour, thereby illuminating ... the 'peculiar' status of Indigenous peoples within the biopolitics of settler colonialism. Western law is troubled once European subjects are redefined as settlers in relation to the Indigenous peoples, histories, and lands incorporated by white settler nations. I argue that this tension is engaged productively by Agamben's tracing of the state of exception to *homo sacer*, and notably its derivation in Roman law from a thesis of consanguinity ... Western law incorporates Indigenous peoples into the settler nation by simultaneously pursuing their elimination.

Morgensen, 2011 p.53

This concept warrants attention, as it remains important throughout discussions of the colonisation of the northern bloc under various imperial ideologies.

*Homo sacer*, according to Agamben, is a concept derived from Roman law and persistent in later European and American assertions of sovereignty. *Homo sacer* is the designation of a person who, by declaration of a person of power or status, does not have intrinsic value. The example that Agamben uses is that of a father who, despite filial obligation, must put to death his own son for rising against him (Agamben, 1998). Contrary to natural law, the father revokes the

protection of family, exiling the son to a condition of 'bare life.' In Roman law, someone declared *homo sacer* could be killed by any Roman, without penalty, as they were not taking a sacred life, but rather disposing of a 'thing.' Similarly, such people could be used as objects: essentially, this is a justification for slavery, the differentiation between people whose lives have value, and those who exist to be used and discarded. This leads to the generation of spaces of exception: where people who are exceptions to the rule of law, exceptions to the rule that life is sacred, can be put; or, more sinisterly, where people who are exceptions can be created. Slave camps are an early and common form of these spaces, but Agamben asserts WWII extermination camps as an ideal form (1998), while Morgensen argues that Indian reserves are definitive spaces of exception (2011).

However, regardless of how closely reserves fit the ideal of a space of exception, there is a larger, evolutionary spatial trend that should be attended to here. Colonial imagined geographies and attendant, imposed systems of land management have produced a wide array of spatial forms – official or otherwise – that have maintained the fundamental, perceived division between 'civilised' spaces, and spaces inhabited by Indigenous peoples.<sup>41</sup> In multiple, entangled ways, spaces of exception have been applied throughout the northern bloc as a variety of 'geographies of exclusion' that have been premised on non-contact or non-encounter between colonisers and Indigenous peoples (see below). Larsen notes that the 'frontier myth' – important to multiple types and methods of colonisation – is premised on implied segregation (Larsen, 2003). 'Civilised' spaces – recognisable by the presence of colonial populations and social institutions – are

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<sup>41</sup> I develop a partial genealogy of settler colonial space in the northern bloc in the next chapter.

seen as emptied of Indigenous presence. Meanwhile frontier spaces are the spaces where segregation is imposed and enacted: the frontier is an area where Indigenous presence is still registered, but where it is also confined and spatially restricted as it is registered. If Indigenous people are to be considered disappearing, they have to be seen disappearing from somewhere.

This spatial segregation is partially achieved through the imposition of particular forms of mapping, measuring, and place geometry (Gregory, 1994). Johnson and Murton (2007) note that a conceptual separation of society from ‘nature’ or ‘wilderness’ is a common feature of colonial imagined geographies, supportive of the vast movements and migrations of people that colonisation implies, and obscuring Indigenous presence, tied as it is to the land through intimate relationships. Frontier spaces are areas that are in the process of being mapped and measured, in the process of being settled or pulled into imperial spheres (for example, through the creation of military or trading forts), and where place-based value is perceived by colonisers but where the extractive processes of colonisation have not yet reached ascendancy. Frontiers represent the ‘edge’ of colonial spaces (Harris, 2004), the extent to which colonial power can be exercised as sovereignty over land, and thus loom large in the literature on and of colonisation (Nettleback & Foster, 2012; Jones, 2011; O’Connell, 2010; Larsen, 2003). However, an often-overlooked point is that the imagined geographies of colonisation make a subtle but important distinction between these frontier spaces, and the kind of ‘pre-existing’ wilderness implied by Johnson and Murton’s observations. Frontiers may be an ‘edge’ space, but they are not without shape or form. They can be thought of as ‘contact zones’ (Pratt, 1992) in the sense that, before the process of measuring, breaking up, and digesting these spaces into the ‘civilising’ spaces of colonisation can begin, some experiential knowledge of the place

in question must exist (hence why Indigenous peoples tend to encounter traders and explorers before they encounter settlers and or other longer-term colonial agents).<sup>42</sup> Frontiers are a fuzzy, contested space, even for colonisers.

Beyond the frontier, though, the wilderness remains, and wilderness is a problematic concept for most European and American spatial logics (Johnson & Murton, 2007; Cronon, 1996). Wilderness, as a space absent human impact, literally does not exist and never has in the practical history of the northern bloc; the intimate, enduring, networked relationships between Indigenous peoples and places render this concept incoherent. However, to some extent, any frontier needs a conceptual wilderness beyond it to sustain it, whether the ‘frontier’ settlements imposed on the Inuit against the backdrop of Arctic ‘wilderness’ (Stevenson, 2012), or the frontier of early 20<sup>th</sup> settlement – the ‘West’ – that necessitated the creation and protection of clearly-artificial wilderness in the form of Banff and Yellowstone National Parks (Banivanua Mar, 2010). These wilderness areas, even as they are portrayed as wild and dangerous, are always shrinking, under threat of development, and ever-more distant, paralleling colonial constructions of indigeneity as inferior and disappearing (Grek-Martin, 2007; Olund, 2002) or violent, dangerous and in need of containment (Day, 2005 pp.138-139).

Specific to settler colonialism, it is important to consider how the narrative construction of frontier and wilderness spaces, and how the separation of certain people

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<sup>42</sup> At the same time, this should not be read as a necessarily rural, distant project; in fact, it is often very intimate and directly implicates the creation of urban space. For examples of how gender, family lineage, and violence play out in the making of frontier spaces around colonial towns and urbanizing settlements, see Edmonds (2010) and Barman (2010) on examples from 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia and Canada, respectively.

and things into these different spatial spheres, is indicative of particular colonial spatialities. It bears stating that there is no public agreement nor private conspiracy to remove – physically or conceptually – Indigenous peoples from settler colonial spaces. Rather, spatial forms and narrative patterns across history can give a hint as to how the affective motivations for settler colonialism unfold, and thus how Settler peoples come to develop a very different ‘sense of place’ than the Indigenous peoples that they seek to displace. Chapters 3 through 5 undertake the investigation of these affective spatialities of settler colonialism much more fully, and the concepts of ‘wilderness’ and ‘frontier’ are revisited in Chapter 4 in the context of an urban-rural-frontier settler colonial spatial trialectic. The difference between metropole and settler colonial iterations of geographies of exclusion is in the intent. Metropole colonisation pursued the dehumanisation of people for exploitation: missionaries wanted souls, entrepreneurs wanted labour, explorers wanted local informants, and so on. While settler colonisation pursues similar dispossession and dehumanisation of exogenous Others (see below), with respect to Indigenous peoples, the goal was (and is) not exploitation, but extermination. This underscores the importance of understanding metropole and settler colonialism as distinct. Metropole and settler colonialisms both involve the assertion of foreign sovereignty over territory, but the ‘where’ (sovereignty is located), ‘how’ (sovereignty is exercised) and ‘why’ (is sovereign capacity expended, and to what ends) are different in each set of logics. These specific differences are investigated in the following sections.

### **Trans-Atlantic Empires: Metropole Colonial Space in the Northern Bloc**

I turn now to a further examination of the metropole spaces of core and periphery and the effects of that spatial orientation. I locate the metropole colonial period as beginning with European travel to North America and contact with Indigenous peoples at the close of the 15th century, and continuing until during the period between 1783 (the signing of the Treaty of Paris formalising the succession of the United States of America from the British Empire) and 1813 (the close of military conflicts between the British Empire and expanding American state resulting in the competitive drive of westward settlement), when metropole colonialism gradually gave way to the predominance of settler colonial logics. There is, of course, no clear date for the end of metropole colonialism as the predominant colonial logic of the northern bloc; both Canadian and American states have at times employed metropole colonial strategies and tactics, either preceding eventual settler colonisation or mimicking European empires by founding or conquering overseas colonial footholds (such as the Philippines and Puerto Rico following the Spanish-American War (1898) and those in Iraq or Afghanistan in the present).<sup>43</sup> Further, colonisation did not occur within the same time frame throughout the northern bloc, and hard lessons learned in conflicts in the east and south of the northern bloc resulted in more effective colonial tactics in the north and west (see for example: Arnett, 1999). Imperialism as an ideology was central

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<sup>43</sup> These metropole logics are often complicated by imbrications with neo-colonial logics in the present; see below.



to many European political spaces in this era, and the establishment and exploitation of colonies fuelled imperial ambitions.

### **Lines of Force, Sojourners, and the Trouble with Distance**

European empires created and sustained their far-flung imperial peripheries through the projection of “lines of force” (Harris, 2004) across distance. These collectively comprise the networks of power of a globalising Atlantic (and later Pacific) imperial periphery. The colonial lines of force can be traced in the ships that crisscrossed the Atlantic, transporting or supplying colonists and soldiers, raiding each other, and always returning to the metropole with extracted resources — furs, food, slaves, kidnapped local informants — as well as valuable knowledge about these Indigenous places and spaces (Harris, 2004; Hall, 2003; Clayton, 1999). Spatially stretched, resource intensive, and requiring large numbers of metropole citizens to participate in highly specialised roles, the complex contact and exchange processes required to interface metropole and Indigenous spatial networks of power ensured that the colonial power flows remained visible in the northern bloc (although these are often selectively obscured in Settler histories). They were visible in their alien-ness in comparison with Indigenous power flows and spaces. Early sojourners like Arthur Barlowe, who on “the first reconnaissance voyage to Roanoke in 1584” found himself the object of much fascination, but also heard oral histories of previous white visitors (Kupperman, 2000 p.58), could not help but be aware of their status as foreigners.

A sojourner is not a settler; a sojourner is not at 'home' in the colonies, but rather intends to return 'home' when they leave the colonies.<sup>44</sup>

The penetration of lines of force into and through Indigenous networks often resulted in the disruption and reorientation of local, Indigenous dynamics towards the imperial core. Indigenous peoples' access to 'natural' resources, such as furs, attracted traders who through their own supply of exotic resources encouraged changes in Indigenous relationships around resource maintenance and acquisition. Clayton describes the way that trade with British and American ships in the Pacific northwest changed traditional patterns of hunting sea otters (Clayton, 1999 pp.70-71). As trade goods became more desired by the Nuu-chah-nulth and other coastal peoples, the hunting of sea otters changed from something integrated into traditional patterns of being on the land to an extractive process. The voracious desires of metropole economies suddenly became very disruptive to distant, established economic and social processes. Missionaries at times had similar disrupting and reorienting effects. Christianisation, to the extent that it inserted an understandable worldview into Indigenous spatial perceptions, disrupted Indigenous patterns of being on the land, and to the extent that

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<sup>44</sup> Intent is important: Veracini locates the difference between settlers and sojourners in the *animus manendi* (intent to stay) or *animus revertendi* (intent to return) that motivates their colonial acts. However, mirroring the disavowal of the Settler identity (see Introduction), "it is not the intention to return that precludes a colonial predicament; *it is the lack of an intention to stay that rules out a settler colonial one*" (Veracini, 2010a pp.149-150 note 15, emphasis added). Yet, there are grey areas; see, for example, the case of the British-born missionary Stanley Higgs who went to British Columbia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a metropole coloniser (not intending to stay) and became a settler (Battell Lowman, 2011).

European missionaries mediated this worldview, attached Indigenous peoples to European religious institutions (Axtell, 1981, pp.42-44).

It must be noted that early colonists in New England perceived and treated many of the various “Indian” peoples as kingdoms or political entities equivalent to what they knew from Europe. Kupperman discusses how chiefs or other local leaders were accepted as “kings” and “emperors”, relating that this was partly English people fleeing “a society many believed was degenerating into a cockpit of competing particular interests marked by disrespect for authority” (Kupperman, 2000 pp.96-96). Indigenous leaders were seen to command great respect and their allegiance and friendship were often sought by imperial powers. The important point here is that Indigenous peoples were not passive recipients of imperial lines of force; imperial sojourners did not pass through the New World as a *terra nullius*. Indigenous peoples traded intelligently and to their own benefit (Lutz, 2008), and missionisation and conversion was not, as ethnohistorian James Axtell has suggested, “tantamount to a complete transformation of cultural identity” (Axtell, 1981 p.42) for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous people were undeniably impacted by colonisation, but that impact was not simply one-way nor was the impact always determined by Europeans; colonisation by metropole powers was at times based on exchanges between equals (or equally-unfamiliar strangers, at the least).

Corresponding to this discussion of lines of force are persistent tensions between core and periphery. Distance is a pervasive feature of metropole colonial spatialities; colonising acts are driven — if not actually undertaken — by distant imperial elites, often ignorant of the realities of Indigenous peoples and places, and free to ruthlessly construct conduits of force that support imperial ambitions. One

of the definitional but overlooked points of metropole colonisation is that the majority of imperial elites, and the majority of imperial subjects, would never meet or have direct contact with Indigenous peoples and would have no direct experience of Indigenous places or the construction of colonial spaces. Much metropolitan writing on Indigenous peoples during the early colonial period was based on second-hand or wholly fanciful accounts, so fact and fiction about Indigenous peoples were mixed in the minds of English colonisers. However, as Kupperman points out, “[t]he more direct experience a colonist had, the more complex became the description” of Indigenous peoples (2000 p.20). Likewise, later settler populations often encountered Indigenous peoples already learning and adapting to the presence of transient, metropolitan Others, such as the dramatic adaptation of the horse by the Lakota (Cronon & White, 1985). Thus the portrayals of Indigenous peoples and places by traders and other colonial agents reveal a great deal about how colonisers thought about place across colonial difference.

Distance, then, is an ever-complicating factor for metropole colonial logics. Metropole colonial dynamics involve the projection of overwhelming force (of some kind, whether military, economic, political, etc.) across space and into distinct places in order to shrink the distance between exotic periphery commodities and consumers in metropolitan markets. At times, the space across which power is projected is a real place, a physical barrier or divide, or “wilderness” areas that evade capture and control by colonising force (Shaw, 2004): the Atlantic Ocean, the Rocky Mountains, the dense boreal forests of northern Canada. At other times, the spatial divide might be a result of wider geopolitics; competing imperial lines of force, perhaps, such as the way that

violence precipitated by conflicts between British and French created contested spaces, where no particular political power could predominate (White, 2011). Historically, metropole colonialism has relied upon various technologies to 'shrink' space and cross barriers, from sail or steam technologies to traverse oceans and continents, to telegraph, telephone and other systems of coordinating action and sharing information over distances. Conduits, whether they are military or merchant ships, explorers and scientific missions of mapping and anthropology, or temporary religious/cultural missions such as those conducted by the Jesuits among the Huron, serve to connect complexes of power — those of the metropole and those of places targeted for colonisation. Much work has been done on the spaces of ships, especially those of the British navy during the imperial dominance of Britain (see for example: Featherstone, 2008; Clayton, 1999); these ships, their complex systems of surveillance and discipline, and intense spatially-shaped cultures are one kind of conduit-in-action.

At the terminus of the conduits are the various nodes, extensions of imperial power into distant places that anchor conduits, assert imperial sovereign authority over local places and people, and provide the groundwork for low-level instigation of surveillance and discipline as tactics of sovereign authority; fur trade forts are a common example of this (Harris, 2002 pp.31-67), but missions, plantations, mines, military outposts, and other configurations could also serve as nodal points. These nodes, as much as they are considered to be 'imperial' spaces, are not to be confused with the spaces of the metropole itself; forts often existed outside of the juridical reach of empire, colonies were seen as dangerous places, and plantations or mines were primarily peopled by slaves and other perceived 'non-humans.' As differences between settler and metropole colonialism are

drawn out, distinctions between metropole core, conduits, and peripheral nodal spaces are crucial.

Kupperman has extensively documented the ways that Indigenous practices were misinterpreted by early colonists and traders, including fundamental misunderstandings of Indigenous peoples' religions and spiritualities, ritual practices, family structure, and other basic social structures (Kupperman, 2000, 1980). She raises the point that each 'side,' Indigenous and European, could only view the other through their own pre-existing ontologies and epistemologies. No wonder then that profit seekers saw Indigenous peoples and lands as potential goldmines, and portrayed them as such to the metropole. Clayton also notes the ways that traders often minimised or dehumanised Indigenous peoples during trade interactions, misunderstanding Indigenous agency, systems of gifting and political manoeuvring involving exchanges, and valuing of specific items or resources on Indigenous standards (Clayton 1999 pp.90-91, 142-143). These perceptions, and the influential (though never hegemonic) ideal of Indigenous peoples as simple savages who could be easily exploited by savvy European, also infiltrated metropole colonial understandings of Indigenous societies. As will be seen, these perceptions and beliefs persist in later settler colonial logics.

### **Indigenous Labour and Exotic Resources**

It must not go unstated that, underpinning discussions of trade, metropole colonialism's strategic orientation is to funnel the potential and inherent power of distinct, foreign places back to the metropole as the strong centre of a geographically divided empire. Soguk outlines the specific connections between

the proliferation of European imperial power and wealth and the economic benefits of colonising across the Atlantic:

... the European Renaissance also ushered in a European Reconnaissance driven by political-economic forces. Not surprisingly, the royal contract Columbus signed with Queen Isabella contained articles almost exclusively regulating economic interests in congruence with the financial needs of a political regime in ascendancy. In short, Europe's Reconnaissance was envisioned primarily as an extractive and exploitative project.

Soguk, 2011 p.39

Traders were, at times, the most efficient means by which the power of particular resources could be acquired; for example, the fur trade was both profitable and systemic in the absence of large-scale military support or settlement infrastructure (Cavanagh, 2009). Crucially, though, trade relations in colonial contexts have — from the coloniser's perspective — always been about extraction. In the metropole era, extraction primarily implied desirable or luxury items, the access to which often relied on the place-specific knowledge of Indigenous peoples. However, this did not always involve trade.

Often Indigenous peoples were forced to show colonisers resource locations in their territories or in those of neighbouring groups. The colonisers certainly took many resources as military plunder from the Indigenous nations south of the Rio Grande, some of whom practiced complicated and beautiful metallic arts. The famous silver mines of Potosi were worked by forced labour, much of it Indigenous labour enslaved by military conquest, supplemented by African and other imported slaves (Galeano, 1997 pp.11-58). The difference

between fur traders engaging Indigenous hunters in mutual exchange and trade on one hand, and enslaved Indigenous people mining silver on the other, is vast. However, these examples do underscore a point made by Veracini: one of the marked differences between settler colonialism and prior (and current) forms of metropole colonialism is that settler colonialism does not rely (permanently) on Indigenous labour (Veracini, 2008). Different metropole colonial logics in different colonial contexts ordered economic relations with Indigenous societies to ensure Indigenous participation in primary extraction of resources, whether through trade or through enforced labour. Indigenous participation in the extractive endeavour was required. This posed a number of problems, namely how to discipline and organise this workforce in the absence of modernist systems of surveillance and control (Harris, 1997 pp.60-63).

Difference, especially Indigenous difference, was not necessarily something to be erased, but rather something to be managed. To the extent that Indigenous informants had knowledge of local resources and terrain, held the balance of military power in an area, and desired European trade goods of various kinds, difference was considered necessary. Many early agreements with Indigenous peoples, such as the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand, or the Douglas Treaties around Coast Salish territory in the northern bloc, contain provisions for perpetual and unaltered harvesting of resources by Indigenous communities (Claxton, 2008 pp.48-52). Obviously, these treaties were pursued with certain vested interests and often with duplicitous intent on the part of colonial agents. However, it would be wrong to ignore the extent to which early metropole colonisers relied on the maintenance of some Indigenous difference. As just one example, Benn describes how imperial powers from the French to the British to



the emerging American empires courted the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as military (and political) allies between the Hudson and St. Lawrence Rivers until after the War of 1812 (1998; see also: Taylor, 2010 pp.125-126, 229-232).

### **Impacts on Indigeneity**

Colonial spaces created under metropole colonial logics inevitably confronted the pre-existing matrices of power that sustained Indigenous spaces. This contact did not result in either the simple creation of colonial spaces or replacement of Indigenous spaces. Rather, the networks of power that created and sustained colonial spaces interfaced with place-based Indigenous networks of power, changing and affecting each in overt and subtle ways. Indigenous peoples were formidable and active adversaries, allies, and “agonistic others” (Featherstone, 2008), contending and cooperating with early colonists. In some senses, European empires incorporated Indigenous peoples of many political, social, and cultural arrangements into their pre-existing systems of contention and understandings of political space. If chiefs and leaders were seen as kings, so too were the rest of Indigenous societies positioned as subjects or even serfs. Insidiously, the patriarchal societies of Europe refused to perceive or recognise women as leaders (Martin-Hill, 2004a; 2004b), a misogynistic stance that continues to impact Indigenous peoples.

Regardless of European technology, population advantage, and rapidly-shrinking and increasingly-interconnected global spaces, Indigenous nations largely held the balance of power in contact zones throughout the early colonial period in the northern bloc. Indigenous nations possessed advantages over European colonisers, including their place-knowledge. Indigenous nations knew

and understood the terrain of encounters. They practiced military strategies and fighting techniques developed to engage with such terrain to their best advantage (Benn, 1999 pp.78-80) and integrated European technologies like rifles (pp.74-75) and horses (Cronon & White, 1985 p.32-33) intelligently into their social and martial systems. In some areas they grouped together into large political coalitions, confederacies and collectives,<sup>45</sup> all of which made them formidable allies and antagonists. European colonisers ignored Indigenous political power and military advantages at their peril.

All the same, the competing networks of British and French mercantilist capitalism played major roles in reshaping space in Indigenous lands of the northern bloc as part of setting the stage for settler colonies, and in founding nodal points which generated sovereignty through spatial exception. Clayton identifies the ways that traders on the northwest coast constructed spaces and imposed their views of spatial relations between peoples and peoples' relationships to places (Clayton, 1999) and notes that the traders fundamentally altered the economic rhythm of Indigenous life, preparing the way for European-style trade that functioned very differently from the trade between Indigenous nations. And, it should be noted, a trade dynamic in which European traders held significant advantages. Trade always took place against the backdrop of European military and technological power; armed trade ships and the active support of the British military in the mercantile capitalist system provided the constant reminder that a major trade advantage was underpinned by a powerful military.

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<sup>45</sup> See for example Tecumseh's confederacy opposing American expansion in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Sugden, 1999).

The projection of lines of force across space left metropole colonisation vulnerable to both natural and human disruption. Indigenous peoples frequently disrupted colonising projects, as did storms, fires, and violent interference from competing imperial powers. Colonisers could also act counter to their own imperial interests, such as Lieutenant Commander Horace Lascelles, whose violent treatment of Coast Salish peoples around the Salish Seas as the commander of the gunboat *Forward* (c.1860) turned the press in Victoria against the colonial governor, James Douglas, and precipitated conflicts that damaged the reputation of the Royal Navy as an invincible force (Arnett, 1999). Both colonial agents and indigenous Others could at times be unruly and unpredictable, exerting massive influence on fragile networks of power in imperial peripheries. As Harris points out, metropole colonial powers often desired greater levels of control, but lacked sufficient disciplined populations and disciplinary structures to achieve it (Harris, 1997 pp.46-47). Settlement was often encouraged for this reason, regardless of whether or not settlement — which is to say the deployment of settler colonial logics in imperial applications of power — ultimately undermined metropole colonialism.

### **Our Home and Native Land: Settler Colonisation**<sup>46</sup>

Settler colonialism, the central focus of this thesis, differs markedly from metropole colonialism. Settler colonisation by definition involves an immigrant population that, rather than conforming to local spatial norms, reconstructs space

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<sup>46</sup> “Our home and native land” is the second line of the Canadian national anthem, *O Canada*. The line has often been used ironically by Indigenous peoples and colonial critics given its obvious *double entendre*.

around itself. Carrying sovereign capacity with itself through space, a settler collective can take on many forms, but all are predicated on the total and enduring transfer of land from Indigenous to Settler control. Elkins and Pedersen assert that “settler colonialism cannot be seen as an essentially fleeting stage but must be understood as the persistent defining characteristic, even the condition of possibility, of this new world settler society” (2005 p.3). Veracini describes settler colonialism as characterised by assertions of Settler sovereignty through the control of ‘population economy’ and a particular state of mind and specific narrative form (Veracini 2010a, p.12). This is to say that settler colonialism produces particular spaces based on the assertions of sovereignty over Indigenous peoples (see *homo sacer*, above), and the discourse of “colonial mentalities” (Barker, 2007) that justifies and shapes those spaces (and is shaped by them in return). This underscores the need to articulate the spatialities of settler colonialism as the overlap between these asserted spaces and invisible ways of perceiving and relating to place and space.

### **Sovereignty Through Space**

Settler collectives carry a sovereign capacity with them as they move through space (Veracini, 2010a pp.59-74) that is invested in places through the construction of permanent and irreversible settler colonial spaces. Settler people see themselves as special and distinct from their metropole forbearers by right of “residency in a special locale” (Veracini 2010a, p.55). This move to and occupation of ‘special locales’ is a physical move across colonial difference. As described above, the expectations of settler colonisers and the physical reality of colonisation are often worlds apart. Traversing colonial differences creates a sort of mirror

subject, the 'same but different' from those in the metropole, evidenced in the isopolitical transfer of rights between political entities and sovereign territories (Veracini, 2011a; 2010a pp.69-73). But the exercise of sovereignty by the settler collective remains critical; settler colonisers must have an awareness of their own capacity to transform space, and the intention to use that capacity.

Transfer of land from Indigenous to Settler control is the primary goal of settler assertions of sovereignty. Thus settler colonialism is constantly active so long as Settler people continue to live and assert sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and place. As Elkins and Pederson note, "settler colonialism, then, is not the past — a violent but thankfully brief period of conquest and domination — but rather the foundational governing ethic of this 'new world'" (2005 p.3). This sovereignty is also constructed in opposition to metropole imperial sovereignty, distinguishing settler colonial spaces from metropole colonial spaces. However, although speculation from afar by metropole elites was rendered 'unreliable' by direct accounts of settlers and sojourners, Settler observations remained mediated by "European conceptual categories and European ways of seeing" (Gregory, 1994 pp.22-23). In this way, even as Settler people rely on imperial conceptions of power, progress, and sovereignty, they differentiate themselves from the originating metropole cultures by virtue of their experiences and direct knowledge of colonising in place.

There are two points that warrant clarification. First, the initial application of Settler sovereign capacity is directed towards erasure of Indigenous presence and anchoring of Settler people in occupied places (see Chapter 4). Settler colonial sovereignty is premised initially and continuously on the destruction of

indigeneity in place. This is part of the process of differentiating the Settler polity from the metropole:

... the independence of these polities was premised on an ultimate settler assumption of responsibility for the indigenous peoples contained within the area they exclusively claimed, studying their sovereign autonomy provides another point of departure for complicating available narratives of decolonization. Settler self-governance ultimately denied the possibility of indigenous appeal to the metropolitan sovereign against settler abuse.

Veracini, 2011a p.172

As discussed above, Indigenous peoples must be 'set apart' or otherwise segregated in a frontier or exiled to wilderness in order for Settler sovereignty to be applied over place, an assumption that is now deeply entrenched in Settler social and political institutions. All further applications of Settler sovereignty are built on this foundation — the "structure" of invasion identified by Wolfe (1999) — and so every future generation of Settler people must defend it or face the consequences of the delegitimising of their sovereign power over occupied places. This at times draws Settler national sovereignty into conflict with established social institutions of rights and juridical 'equality.'

A famous example of this is the culmination of the *Delgamuukw* court case, discussed in the previous chapter. In the final decision by the Supreme Court of Canada (1997), several institutional 'gains' were made for Indigenous peoples.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> These included an articulation of aboriginal title under the law, several tests for aboriginal title, and the recognition that oral histories comprise evidence (Hurley, 1998).

However, the Supreme Court — despite the proven colonial dispossession of the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en nations — did not find in their favour, but rather deadlocked (a move many consider to be carefully calculated). This court case, heralded by many as a clear 'win' for Indigenous peoples in the Canadian judicial system, actually served more than anything else to prop up Canadian sovereignty and state power. The Supreme Court acting on the evidence presented, and according to their own articulations of the importance of oral histories, would have had to admit the lack of sovereign 'right' to a vast area in the middle of British Columbia and set a standard for all other Indigenous land claims that would have fractured the state. In effect, the Supreme Court could not find in favour of the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en because to do so would have undermined the legitimacy of the sovereign power rooted in state territory that empowers the Supreme Court itself. The decision — or lack thereof — provided a juridical escape; the sovereignty of the settler colonial state institution was preserved, and Indigenous peoples were barred from presenting a challenging, alternative claim to place. Title to land for Indigenous peoples was only permitted to be articulated within the narrow state system; the Supreme Court and Canadian government chose to maintain Indigenous peoples' "entrenchment in the state system as citizens with rights defined by the constitution of the colonial state, which is the defeat of the idea of an independent Onkwehonwe existence" (Alfred, 2005 p.23).

By the logic of settler colonialism, Indigenous peoples must remain segregated within or exiled from Settler space — unable to access a fair system of arbitration, unable to assert an authentic Indigenous identity and connection to place — and the power of the state, no matter how it is used to the benefit of how many Settler people, remains 'power over' Indigenous peoples and territories.

Historical settler colonialism and present day Settler people are forever linked through the need to continually legitimate the oppressive, genocidal, and decidedly illegitimate seizure and occupation of an entire continent.

### **Self-Perpetuation and the Settler Identity**

As I have demonstrated in earlier work, contemporary Settler peoples are colonisers, individually and collectively informed by ideologies of colonisation and who enjoy levels of privilege made possible by colonial exploitation of Indigenous peoples and homelands (Barker, 2007). However, the colonial logics of settler colonialism can twist and turn sharply, as identity and reality conflict in places whose meanings are being forcefully transformed. Defining settler colonialism in spatial terms means locating settler colonial spatialities between Settler peoples and wider currents of hierarchy, imperialism and Indigenous resistance. Settler colonisation is an emergent property of imperialism: no one designed it or articulated the logics of settler colonisation beforehand, but it is no less real, complex or powerful because of its murky beginnings. As settler colonial logics function through and in the Settler identity, they are doubly hard to locate and define.

Settler colonialism is self-perpetuating, unlike metropole colonisation which relies on the constant assertion of power from imperial core to periphery. Veracini chose as the cover illustration for *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, the painting *Wives for the Settlers at Jamestown*, by William Ludlow Sheppard (2010a). This painting, that Veracini locates as the moment of settler colonial inception, shows the moment of settler colonial inception: the arrival of women and families, opening up (sexual) reproductive possibilities for settler collectives. Over many



generations, settler colonial spaces have become normalised such that, even if the colonial past of the northern bloc is acknowledged, Settler people are insulated from their history of violent oppression and dispossession. Settlement as a term, whether intended to reference colonisation and dispossession or heroic tropes of frontier conquest, conjures up images of pastoral landscapes and homesteading families — the romantic ideal of the frontier. However, the reality of settler colonial perpetuation and the generation of a distinctly Settler identity is often murkier. As Edward Cavanagh writes:

[a] 'pure' type of settler colonialism — the term I slightly modify from D. K. Fieldhouse's framework in *The Colonial Empires* (1965) — signifies a situation in which white woman and white man advance hand-in-hand with white, native-born family in tote, contributing at the same time to a settler society that denies Indigenous presences and a settler economy that has freed itself from its reliance on Indigenous labour. Until this utopia is realised, however, the labour of Indigenous people — usually men — can be quite helpful, as can be the sexual services of Indigenous women.

Cavanagh, 2011 p.159

As such, there is no 'pure' Settler identity or settler colonial polity. But these realities do not interfere with settler colonial attachments to place; rather, the complexity of Settler identities allows for the selective obscuring of unwanted historical entanglements.

Settler identity co-exists with or cuts across many other identity structures (which are, of course, multiple and layered). Nationalism, racism, classism, Eurocentrism, Judeo-Christianity and other allegiances and positionalities factor

into Settler identity constructions. None fully defines or encloses the Settler identity, and in fact, each also extends beyond the Settler identity in ways that connect Settler people with various other societies and classes — including the founding metropole society — and challenge the coherence of the Settler ‘self.’ Settler colonisers isopolitically transfer their privileges between different jurisdictions, from metropole subject to settler state citizen, a move that is often contested by metropole authorities. For example, British imperial authorities and the American republic largely fought the War of 1812 over disputes about whether British-born subjects could become American citizens, freeing them from service in the Royal Navy (Taylor, 2010). These movements and transfers also have effects on both metropolitan and settler jurisdictions, and leave disrupted political structures in their wake.

As Featherstone (2008) has demonstrated, even agonistic identities influence and change each other as their respective networks interact and interconnect. For example, media focus on Indigenous protests has brought Settler peoples into closer ‘contact’ with Indigenous others that, until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, most Settler people considered to be extinct (Deloria, 2003 pp.25-32). Since then, the attitudes of Settler societies towards Indigenous peoples and on the treatment of Indigenous people by state authorities have shifted. Overt violence has been eschewed — in theory though not in fact — in favour of other, still colonial but increasingly subtle, methods.<sup>48</sup> Settler peoples internalise, justify, and articulate colonial logics in a multitude of ways, commensurate with their relative privilege and position within the hierarchies of Settler societies. These, too, have

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<sup>48</sup> See the variety of types of transfer identified by Veracini (2010a pp.33-50); see also the “moves to innocence” identified by Tuck and Yang (2012 pp.10-28).

and do change over time. Alfred, for example, positions Canadians who reject globalisation not because of critiques of neo-liberalism but because current globalising trends have resulted in loss of employment (and privilege) as simply “staunch defenders of the first wave of globalization against the second” (Alfred, 2005 p.235).

### **Identity Trialectics, Transfer, and Transcendence**

Population control is a key aspect of settler colonial logics. Settler people, in addition to their ‘residency in a special locale,’ also define themselves through gatekeeping indigenous and exogenous subjectivities. Settler people, themselves ‘exogenous’ to Indigenous populations, differentiate between the two populations based on both ideologies of race and cultural superiority, as well as on the ability to incorporate or assimilate the two groups; “the exogenous Others category is defined primarily by its not belonging to the settler and indigenous collective” and includes “enslaved peoples, other imported labour, and subaltern migrants on the one hand, and metropolitan colonisers on the other” (Veracini, 2010a p.123 note 13). These three subjectivities — settler, indigenous, and exogenous — form a trialectic that supports the Settler identity and impacts upon mobility and belonging in the settler colonial imagined geography. The goals of settler colonialism regarding each of the three sectors of the trialectic are different. Indigenous Others, as discussed, are targeted for elimination, though this is not always physical in nature. Exogenous Others, meanwhile, are conditionally admitted or denied access to settler colonial spaces, dependent largely on the extent to which their presence enhances existing settler colonial privilege.

In the present, many “ethnic minorities” are permitted access to state citizenship and some (often limited) privileges of Settler society (Day, 2000), dependent on their ability and willingness to adapt to and support currents of settler colonialism. Thus, while racialised populations in Canada and the United States are still discriminated against — dispossessed for the purposes of exploitation (see for example: Walia, 2010; Choudry, 2010) — their presence and participation in Settler space supports settler colonialism and Settler identities.<sup>49</sup> In my previous works, I have articulated the Settler identity as dependent on a willingness to participate in and benefit from the colonisation of the northern bloc. This is not to suggest that all Settlers benefit equally; in fact, uneven hierarchies, similar to Memmi’s “pyramid of petty tyrants” (1965 p.17), help to generate the aspirationalism for social mobility that supports myths of settler colonial liberty in new and providential lands.

Exogenous Others, to the extent that they help to define the limits of settler colonial space, are crucial to settler colonial transfer of lands. For example, under “transfer by settler indigenisation” (Veracini, 2010a p.46), Settler people assume the mantle of the ‘true’ native population of an area. This, of course, requires an exogenous population that is demonstrably or perceived to be antecedent to the Settler population in question. An example in popular culture is the portrayal of conflicts between ‘Native Americans’ — white, American-born New Yorkers — and Irish Immigrants in the film, *Gangs of New York* (2002). Without the influx of exogenous populations against whom Settler indigenisation was defined, this type of transfer would likely be untenable.

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<sup>49</sup> This is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Veracini also notes that the ultimate Settler fantasy is to empty two-thirds of the settler colonial identity trialectic (2010a p.28). That is to say, settler colonial trajectories are intended to remove all indigeneity from place, and incorporate all peoples into settler colonial structures and dynamics (though, as stated, not equally). Were this to be accomplished, Settler peoples as a whole could transcend or supersede the settler colonial form (p.22): forget their pasts and imperial origins, and naturalise in place as the rightful inhabitants of the land. In this “triumphant settler colonial circumstance”, exogenous Others must submit to assimilation, and no indigenous Others remain to challenge the legitimacy of the settler colonial society. However, this point has never been reached in the northern bloc. The increasing variety and complexity of ways in which Indigenous peoples’ lands are transferred to settler colonial control occurs in response to Indigenous resistance to colonisation (see Chapter 6), and is also evidence of the extreme difficulty and near-impossibility of this goal. This does, though, create a system of perpetual hierarchical exploitation: Settler people continue to scramble for relative advantage, willingly participating in institutions of privilege and supporting the accumulation of state and capital power by elites and, ultimately, the spread of neo-colonial systems and networks of global capital. As these structures and dynamics of space are explored, it must be remembered that this colonial logic of ultimate elimination and supersession sits at the root of settler colonialism and is heavily entrenched in Settler identities.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> It is also one of the fundamental aspects of settler colonialism that must be eliminated in the process of Settler decolonisation (see Chapter 6 and Conclusion).

### **Settler Collectives, Narratives of Superiority, and Erasure of Indigeneity**

With settler colonialism, settler collectives assert a sovereign capacity founded in part on the premise that the collective is, in and of itself, a viable entity. As a settler collective claims place, it inherently claims all possible social roles (worthy of consideration) for itself. Indigenous peoples are entirely displaced in settler colonial spaces, in part because the concept of the indigenous subjectivity, as described above, is one of a person with nothing to contribute. The actual roles and actions of Indigenous peoples within their place-based networks are ignored or invisible; only effort expended in pursuit of work, culture, or the social good (which is to say, work within Settler economic systems, culture as Settler people recognise and enact it, and the social good of the Settler collective) are perceived as valuable.

On one hand, settler collectives are the carriers of sovereignty, implying cooperative, collective effort in social construction, if not between all Settler people then at least between the members of a given collective. This could be described as a kind of 'power with' between Settler people, though I would argue that such a construction matches Settler myths more than the settler colonial reality. The perception of collective power is woven into metanarratives that are difficult to penetrate: America as the 'land of the free' (and indeed America's history as a destination for those fleeing oppression in Europe and, later, around the world) (Mennell, 2009), or Canada as a 'peacemaker' nation (Regan, 2010), are both portrayals of places founded on a lack of imposed power or the active creation of cooperative power. These metanarratives serve primarily to obscure the fact of settler colonial dominance: first, over Indigenous peoples who are declared *homo sacer* and erased and/or displaced; second, over place through the

exclusive assertion of territorial sovereignty; and third, internally through the attainment of comparative advantage through capitalist economics, state electoral processes, and informal or cultural institutions of race, religion and other markers of a personal capacity for 'power to.'

Settler collectives exert their sovereignty in the first instance through exiling Indigenous people to spaces of exception, laying the groundwork for the right and ability of Settler people to claim ownership and exert power over places. This is the source of the ultimate incommensurability of Settler and Indigenous spaces (Tuck & Yang, 2012). In effect, Indigenous people must be killed but not sacrificed — erased without memorialisation or valorisations, killed conceptually as well as physically — to establish settler colonial sovereign transfer from the relations of the Settler collective to the relational dynamics of the emergent Settler social space. The erasure of Indigenous presence by Settlers is thus the foundational relationship of settler colonialism, but is invisible despite its importance. As mentioned, settler colonialism is about the destruction or collapse of difference (contrasted with the metropole colonial taming and discipline of difference); however, difference cannot be erased completely any more than Indigeneity can (see Chapter 6 on Indigenous Resistance).

While Settler societies of the northern bloc have incorporated many aspects of Indigenous aesthetic and expression, it is a warped indigeneity that has been co-opted and assimilated. It is indigeneity perceived across the colonial difference, reliant on misunderstandings of roles and relationships in and to place. This is precisely why John Ralston Saul is wrong in his popular assertion that, to some extent, all of Canada is now a "métis civilization" combining European and Indigenous cultures, in effect collapsing difference into a single naturalised identity

(Saul, 2008 p.3). As Alfred pointedly objects (2010), such a claim smacks of claiming legitimacy for occupation of land — a settler colonial objective — but perhaps more importantly, Saul's contention does not correspond to the facts. Hybridity implies multiple subjects sharing and mixing. Settler colonialism picks and chooses markers of meaning from indigeneity and attempts to destroy the rest (see Chapter 4 on *bricolage*).

### **Shapeshifting: Neoimperial and Neo-colonial Spaces**

Here it is important to briefly mention that metropole and settler colonialisms are not the only methods by which dominating power is generated in the northern bloc. Neo-colonialism, in the tradition of Jean-Paul Sartre (1964; see also: Boyle & Kobayashi, 2011), is a form of late-stage capitalist exploitation of colonial Others. Over time this term has shifted to also encompass restrictive discourses of human rights (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Corntassel, 2008), ethics discourses that reinscribe domination (Freidberg, 2003), and other techniques of creating “dysconsciousness” (D.M. Johnson, 2011) specifically aimed at eliminating indigeneity, and generally flattening difference. I have previously discussed this as the generation of a “society of control” through Canada and the United States (Barker, 2009, 2007). As such, neo-colonial logics and the colonisation of and by capital are heavily imbricated, but not synonymous. This is crucial in understanding contemporary colonial dynamics in the northern bloc, as is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Neo-colonialism involves the generation of broad social ‘norms,’ like dependency on the welfare state, or wealth as synonymous with conspicuous



consumption. Neo-colonisers insist that all social interactions can and should be mediated through prescribed spaces, such as markets and state judiciaries. The logics of neo-colonialism are based on similar ideologies of power and profit as settler colonial logics, with the added wrinkle of spatial universality (juxtaposed with settler colonialism which, through references to special locales, is asserted as place-based particularity). The goal is to allow the exercise of sovereign power over distance and across spatial scales, minus the cost and instability of metropole projection of lines of force through territory that is not (absolutely) controlled and defined by colonial logics. In theory, through the use of propaganda/education, economic benefit or denial, juridical control, surveillance, and moral calls to “just war” (Hardt & Negri, 2000), spaces of imperial domination and colonial expansion can be rendered ‘banal’ and normalised, even for the dominated (Flusty *et al.*, 2008). This is tied to the expansion and intensification of capitalist exchange, speaking to the prevalence of neo-colonial logics in neo-liberal perspectives. However, it would be a mistake to assume that only neo-liberal institutions employ these logics.

### **Neo-liberal Economics and Neo-colonial Banality**

Settler colonialism establishes spaces ‘for’ Settler people and collectives while neo-colonialism establishes spaces for particular processes leading to particular outcomes, most often centred on capitalist priorities of production and consumption, regardless of who occupies particular spaces. Neo-colonial interpenetration of settler colonial space has frequently been asserted by capitalist elites precisely because of the fluidity of capitalism — the same fluidity that makes capital exchange a useful economic form for settler colonialism in the northern

bloc. As Settler people invest sovereignty permanently in place (institutions and structures), flows of capital help to materially inter-connect often distant and/or isolated Settler spaces across the northern bloc.

Settler colonialism, though, has been pursued through a number of economic forms: from agrarianism that drove settlement in the early American republic (Taylor, 2010), to mercantile and industrial capitalism that drove the later growth of Victoria and Vancouver in the Pacific northwest (Barman, 2010; Harris, 1997 pp.68-102), to globalised capitalism and deindustrialisation that goes along with cities like Toronto becoming “world cities” (Freeman, 2010; Massey, 2007). Contemporary neo-colonial spaces have become heavily reliant on globalised capitalist economics while settler colonial spaces remain relatively diffuse and transient, shifting between discourses of capitalist economics, nationalist politics, racial belonging and other constructions of Settler identity. The implication is that settler colonial capitalism is an *arrangement of convenience* rather than necessity for Settler people. Harvey (2000) points to neo-colonialism being reliant on stable and diverse (settler colonial) regimes when he indicates, first, that neo-liberalism (which is, in this context, a form of neo-colonial capitalism) serves primarily to *re-enforce* elite power and, second, that neo-liberalism is fundamentally unstable.

Recalling ‘dysconsciousness’ as key to the normalisation of exploitation of (exogenous or indigenous) Others, it is possible to trace continuity from the founding violence of settler colonisation to present inequalities within globalising systems of state and capital. Morgensen notes that state sovereignty was worked out in part through the assertion of Settler sovereignty over Indigenous peoples, establishing enduring hierarchies of power in state structures (Morgensen, 2011; see also Chapter 3 on relative advantage). Under neo-colonial power, dynamics of

‘everyday life’ produce and reproduce hierarchy and exploitation as ‘normal,’ not just in state structures but in the perceptions of Settler (and other) peoples. In the same way that Dittmer reveals that toys and postage stamps normalise militarised global neoimperialism (Flusty *et al.*, 2008 pp.620-622), so too do mascots (D.M. Johnson, 2011), movies (Veracini, 2011c), and so on normalise settler colonial space through the assertion of “a savagely barbaric other, a techno-rational sanitisation of violence, and encouragement to inflict the latter overwhelmingly upon the former” (Flusty *et al.*, 2008 p.619).

### **Deterritorialisation**

One particular manifestation of banality is worth further investigation: deterritorialisation. The neo-colonial ideal state is one where capital has become infinitely mobile and thus truly universal, occupying all possible places simultaneously. Flows of people and things between places are to be regulated by globalised juridical orders according to the needs of capitalist production and consumption. In this, neo-colonisation can be said to have a “deterritorialising” effect (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Hardt and Negri link deterritorialisation to neo-liberalism as a globalising project, suggesting that the end state of neoimperialism is a global order functionally identical in all places: all locations will be connected to the same flows of power and capital, subject to the same regimes of laws and surveillance, equally predictable and delocalised. However, the relationship between deterritorialisation and settler colonial spaces is complicated.

Conflicts over specific sites in the northern bloc point out tensions between deterritorialisation and the assertion of settler colonial space as something distinct and ‘special.’ Settler peoples have and do benefit from neo-colonialism, especially

given that the United States, specifically, and other colonial states including Canada, more generally, are often the sites of significant accumulations of power and capital. Capitalism and settler colonialism have developed together for centuries. However, Canadians and Americans think of themselves as distinct, and generally resist attempts to subsume regional ('southern,' 'New Yorker') and national ('Canadian,' 'American,' 'Quebécois') identities into wider identification through consumerism. Further, as Day (2005) and Harvey (2000) both point out, centres of power like New York and Toronto still exist, and capitalist elites still rely on the mechanisms of the state to protect and provide infrastructure for capital; meanwhile, Indigenous peoples remain in contention with these forces (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Neo-colonial deterritorialisation, largely through neo-liberal capitalism, has fundamentally changed the roles of states in global politics, but not enough to signal the death of states, or to fully take over state functions of deploying violence against Indigenous peoples (and agonistic Settlers). This is partly why so much Indigenous resistance to colonisation in the present takes the form of place-specific occupations or coalition building around local concerns: from logging blockades (Willow, 2011) to intimate relationships positioned as essential to the pursuit of social justice (De Leeuw *et al.*, 2012). These Indigenous occupations confront both settler and neo-colonial forces, but in different ways.

The tension is this: settler colonialism conceptually relies on conceptual territorialisation, carving places up into discrete Settler spaces, which undermines and opposes Indigenous traditions of transversality (Soguk, 2011). Settler colonialism counters the dynamic networks of place-based indigeneity by imposing borders of property nested in borders of state sovereignty nested in structures of settler governmentality. Specificity through naming (Berg, 2011),

and playing regional (O'Connell, 2010) and national (Hatter, 2012) identities off of each other, are tactics through which settler collectives impose their own histories and spatialities; consequently, Settler peoples can develop very strong “cultures of place”, exemplified by the rural Kentuckians described by bell hooks (2009). The deterritorialisation of space pursued by neo-colonial elites to facilitate the movement of capital is in opposition to both Indigenous transversality and settler colonial territorialisation, and as such threatens Settler power and privilege. This does not speak to some underlying commonality between Settler and Indigenous peoples; rather, it is a caveat that must be remembered when considering the extent to which anti-globalisation and anti-capitalist movements support Indigenous peoples' interests (see Chapter 5). Most importantly, it should be a reminder that ‘colonisation’ is not a monolith; various colonial agents may follow common logics, but to their own unique ends.

### **Conclusion: Diversity and Continuity**

Veracini asserts that the imagined geographies of settler colonialism emerged from metropole colonialism, but in forms antithetical to them (Veracini, 2010b). However, the conflicts and continuities between colonial logics — including neo-colonial logics — imbricate and interpenetrate in complex ways. MacMillan notes that English settler colonialism was in part motivated by the legal requirements of English metropole colonisation:

... pluralistic cultural and legal mechanisms demonstrated that the English were effectively occupying the territory claimed through discovery, which fulfilled the requirements of establishing territorial

sovereignty in the law of nations and helped secure the English Atlantic against the claims of European competitors.

MacMillan, 2011 p.34

Settler colonialism in the northern bloc was, in some senses, initiated as a by-product of metropole colonial considerations of space. Legally securing spheres of imperial influence against competitors required occupation, but these legal traditions were designed without the colonisation of the 'New World' in mind. The simultaneous emergence of trans-Atlantic colonisation, modernity (Bhambra, 2007b), and capitalism underscore the extent to which metropole colonialism developed in transition *between* legal-political regimes. There is, however, a heritage of hierarchy and conquest that persists in settler colonial spaces, enshrined in transferred ideas of sovereignty and the material imbalances resulting from hierarchical empires extracting wealth and exotic commodities from Indigenous lands. All of these interpenetrations of colonial seeing and thinking must be remembered and considered in the construction of settler colonial spaces, a genealogy of which I develop in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Settler Colonial Spatialities**

### **Too Much Geography?**

William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874-1950), former Prime Minister of Canada, is said to have quipped that Canada has too much geography, not enough history. In a way, likely not in the sense intended by Mackenzie King, this is true: Canada, like America, has ‘too much geography’ in that Settler and Indigenous perceptions of space are asserted against each other in place. Likewise, Settler people in the northern bloc often lack the understanding of how their spaces — of nations, states, cities, and private properties — have developed over time. However, without understanding how settler colonial spaces are perceived, created, and expanded, it is impossible to articulate Settler people’s involvement in colonisation.

This chapter focuses on Settler spatialities, articulating the affective ties between settler colonial collectives and the places that they occupy. The dynamic processes of settler colonial spatiality are broadly produced and sustained through a particular spatial genealogy: the perception and creation of spaces of opportunity; the occupation and exploitation of spaces of relative advantage; and the investment of sovereignty into powerful institutions of privilege. The complex

processes whereby colonial accumulation by dispossession is routed back into Settler society as heightened privilege is investigated, as is the ways in which these processes create a shifting ‘topography of power,’ normalising and disappearing settler colonialism beneath Settler space.

Gregory states “the social construction of space is shown to be important not simply as a logistical exercise ... but also as an essential component of the construction of social meaning” (Gregory, 1994 p.128). A framework that foregrounds “the intertwining of the social and the spatial, which makes clear that society and space are simultaneously produced” (Katz, 2009 p.238), can be used to reveal both the internal perceptions and external impositions of settler colonialism. That is to say, it is important to focus on *what* spaces Settler people make, because this can simultaneously reveal *why* they build these spaces, and *how* these spaces are designed to accomplish transfer, revealing the affective interpenetration of identity and colonialism. For Settler people, how they relate to the places of the northern bloc is mirrored in how they relate to each other, and both are connected to the colonial mentalities central to Settler identity. It is important to remember that settler colonialism is not monolithic, in part because it is located in individual colonial perceptions and then enacted spatially by settler colonial collectives. There is an imperative to examine not just ‘what colonisation does,’ but rather, how colonisers act and what colonisers think about colonial space that influences their actions.

### **Frontiers and *Terra Nullius*: Old World Haunting of the Northern Bloc**

Just because settler colonial imagined geographies are antithetical to metropolitan imagined geographies of empire (Veracini, 2010b) does not mean that the imperial



metropole is removed from settler colonial spatialities. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the geographies opened up by metropolitan colonising helped to set the stage for settler colonial spaces. Indeed, metropolitan anxieties continue to 'haunt' settler colonial space. By this, I mean that select metropole colonial logics and the spaces that they articulated in the northern bloc persist in Settler spatialities. Settler colonial sovereignty is often defined contra the metropole; settler colonial spaces are portrayed as the natural successors to these preceding imperial spaces (though preceding Indigenous space disappears entirely from view). Both the perception of spaces beyond Settler control as frontiers to be explored, measured, and appropriated, and the *a priori* perception of these spaces as empty (*terra nullius*), represent metropolitan perceptions of the imperial periphery. However, unlike metropole colonial imagined geographies, settler colonial spatialities require that such spaces be reconstructed and filled with Settler peoples and societies, both as a source of advantage and to protect Settler peoples against 'treacherous and wild' Indigenous others.

Settlers expend effort and energy to maintain their illusions of colonial myths and liberalist rights-based egalitarianism, against the 'intrusive' reality of Indigenous existence, socio-cultural viability and autonomous political and economic systems. Indigenous peoples, whose spatial understandings of place are not understood as profitable but as savage or undeveloped (if they are acknowledged at all), have often been portrayed in the writings of notables such as John Locke as having no claim to place because they did not improve the land, a notion deeply embedded in Settler spatial thought (MacMillan, 2011; Tully, 1995). Thus, Settler society's foundational hierarchy: Indigenous peoples' spaces are seen as inferior or invalid, while Indigenous places are conflated with the simplistic

notions of the inhuman/inanimate/'natural' world. This generates the perception that Settler spaces legitimately *should* replace Indigenous spaces. Darby Cameron, refining earlier discussions of settler colonial imagined geographies, refers to this as an "anticipatory geography":

... based on Eurocentric conceptions of space. In other words ... a vision that was both an arm of what Thomas Richard calls "the epistemological extension of Britain into and beyond its empire" and a decentralized idea emanating from the aspirations and values of Anglo-American settlement society and capital interests ...

Cameron, 2010 p.9

These anticipatory geographies are based simultaneously on Settler desires and fears, and reference spaces to come as inevitable. Anticipating a space implies anticipating the actions required to make that space, which can be used to either motivate or discourage action; "anticipatory action functions by (re)making life tensed on the verge of catastrophe in ways that protect, save and care for certain valued lives, and damage, destroy and abandon other lives" (Anderson, 2010 p.793). In some senses, settler colonisers see what they expect to see: looking for opportunities, they find them.<sup>51</sup>

### **Impacts of Disruption and Reorientation of Indigenous Networks on Settler Perceptions of Place**

Settler colonialism is expressed and enacted through many relationships —Maori scholar Makare Stewart-Harawira (2005) does an excellent job of describing how

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<sup>51</sup> 'Spaces of opportunity' are conceptually very important to the spatiality of Settler societies. They are discussed in greater detail throughout the remainder of this Chapter.

some of the major systems of thought associated with events in Western history have contributed to general (mis-)understandings of Indigenous peoples and places. Drawing on world systems theory, Stewart-Harawira closely links a number of processes such as industrialisation, mapping, and taxonomising to empiricism, positivism, and Enlightenment rationality, culminating in powerful, pervasive Eurocentric ideologies of superiority that underpin colonisation (Stewart-Harawira, 2005 pp.56-144). One of the important points that must be remembered, though, is that much of the imagined, anticipatory geography of settler colonialism is not reliant on Indigenous peoples being integrated into Settler worlds. Rather, the elimination of Indigenous peoples — including retroactive elimination from archives and histories — is fundamental to these geographies. Veracini premises settler colonialism on the ahistorical “non-encounter” with Indigenous peoples (2010a p.86), even to the extent that actual meetings between Settler and Indigenous peoples are cast as not representative of or meaningful for historical or contemporary relationships. This goes to the heart of the problem of non-representation described by Harrison:

[h]ow, on the one hand, are we to understand the occasion of the failure or lack of communication and correspondence otherwise than as an error to be corrected or a lack to be filled, as such a response can only take shape insofar as it overwrites and effaces that to which it responds? And yet, and on the other hand, how are we to avoid becoming paralysed by this irreducible nonthematisability, by this absence of signification and the noncoincidence of intention and its putative object, and so in staying silent fail to respond again? Although to explain may be to efface, such that one can understand how there may be “good

reasons” for not responding, one “cannot, one ought not to respond with nothing”.

Harrison, 2007 p.597

The Settler response to Indigenous presence has tended to be concurrently silent and violent. Settler people are put into a bind by encounters with indigeneity: settler colonial spaces encounter networks of being on the land only as they displace and contest with them, but Settler people cannot admit this “founding violence” (Veracini, 2010a; 2008) because to do so would be to admit that their land is and was not *terra nullius*. Settler spaces must be seen as spaces of non-encounter because Indigenous and Settler spaces cannot occupy the same place or be represented in place through the same means.

Despite this, settler colonisers are not wholly ignorant of Indigenous peoples and spaces; they just think of these spaces as distant, anachronistic, or illegitimate. As discussed, Settler peoples interact with worlds that they perceive but often do not understand; further, they often encounter highly disrupted worlds. Chapter 1 outlined the impact of disease, technology, religion, and a number of other introduced elements on Indigenous people’s relationships to place. This was expanded on in Chapter 2, through discussions of imperial lines of force, imperial sojourners, and the impacts on indigeneity resulting from, for example, the ways that capitalism altered relationships to resources and environments among Indigenous communities. So it is that for much of the history of the northern bloc, Settlers have been bringing a sorting, ordering, evaluating gaze into environments, social and physical, undergoing massive changes and shifts.

### **‘How to our Views’: The Colonial Difference in Action**

Mignolo’s concept of “colonial difference”, introduced in Chapter 2, is useful in understanding how Settler perceptions of the northern bloc have traditionally been stretched across the difference between the expectations of the coloniser moving through space and the experience of colonising in place. The colonial difference is the site of settler colonial conflict as settler colonisers attempt to collapse the epistemological divide between expectations and reality, largely through the destruction of Indigenous space and the creation of ‘empty,’ fertile spaces of settlement.

Reconciling anticipatory geographies of settlement with the differential physical and human geography encountered during settlement contributes to an ambiguous and conflicted settler colonial experience; see for example the “bewildering and profoundly disorienting” geographical experiences of settler collectives on the north Atlantic coast in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Harris, 2008 p.21), or the strength and power of the Lamalcha people which surprised and terrified settlers, who only heard of them as weak, landless “ex-slaves” (Arnett, 1999 p.89). This has a contemporary analogue in the differences between nationalist narratives of progress or peacemaker myths portraying colonisation as natural and inevitable, and contested material and political realities of colonial oppression and Indigenous resistance (Regan, 2010), which confuse Settler people. Settler colonisers essentially must go through particular processes of constructing settler colonial space to reconcile these conflicts, which leads to commonalities of spatial dynamics across a variety of official or recognised structures.

Colonial difference is often a (partial) result of the difference between the written histories produced by imperial sojourners and explorers, and the realities

for people attempting to settle in place. In Merrens and Terry's (1986) history of settlement and perceptions of health in early South Carolina (c. 1620-1750), it is clear that Carolina was portrayed, and initially experienced, as a bountiful, healthful place. That perception changed over time as colonists suffered from illnesses seen as inhering in the local environment, until the same place was regarded as pestilential. However, as Merrens and Terry note, although colonists ascribed these characteristics to the place of their settlement, the "unhealthiness in early South Carolina was man-induced and not environmentally determined" (p.336). That some settlements did not live up to expectations or, in fact, failed outright, does not undermine settler colonialism. Rather, failed settler colonies, from Roanoke (Kupperman, 1985) to Algeria (Veracini, 2010a pp.102-104) only strengthen Settler claims to naturalisation in places where settlement endures.

Another example, this one a highly successful settler colonial endeavour, can be found in the British Columbia Lower Mainland. Metropole colonial contact in this area predated settlement by many years, and this area was primarily known to potential settler colonists (though metropole informants) for its role in the fur trade. That is to say, the area was portrayed as wild, dangerous and filled with unruly indigenous Others. Harris has shown how the permanent forts and early colonies established in the area to facilitate the fur trade (Fort Langley and Fort Victoria most notably) began a process of reconstructing space in the Lower Mainland (Harris, 1997 pp.68-102). Soon, potential settler colonists began to perceive timber, fishing, mining and other emerging industries as sources of potential opportunity, facilitating a massive spatial change between 1820 and 1881. In this case, the opportunity perceived was clearly socially constructed; narratives of progress and development, as well as huge capital demands for food

and industrial resources by the growing Settler states, promoted the industrialisation and corresponding settlement of the Lower Mainland. However, it is not the place itself that changed, but the expectations of potential and actual settler collectives. The colonial difference between the environment as experienced by earlier traders and metropole colonisers in the area, and the environment as experienced by later settler colonisers who followed them, are variations in colonial difference rather than variations in experiential reality.

One of the most revealing incidents of colonial difference in action can be found in the proceedings of a “special commission to investigate Indian Affairs in the Canadas at the end of the colonial era (1856)”. The Commission’s main recommendation was that Native groups “should at once cede at a fair valuation to the Province, such lands as shall be previously decided not to be necessary for their own use” (Report of the Special Commission, quoted in Parenteau, 2012 p.264). The argument used to justify the recommendation “was that the Native lands should be sold because the state did not have the capacity to control squatting and land speculation, and that the Crown itself could not be trusted to deal equitably with First Nations” (p.265). This is a clear reference to settler collectives exerting sovereign capacity and advancing property through occupation and erasure ahead of state territorial claims.

However, this recommendation does not seem to correspond with established ideas of the sovereign authority of the state, nor did calls for restrictions of settlement (in accordance with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, among other laws and treaties) resonate with settler colonial traditions of independent recognitions and occupation of spaces of opportunity. And neither the arguments of powerlessness against squatter agitation, nor the proposed

benefits Indigenous communities would derive from the land sales were “sufficient to warrant the proposed, unprecedented capital expenditure by Indian Affairs” (Parenteau, 2012 p.265). The ultimate spatial effect of these policies was the implementation of a program:

... designed to replace the piecemeal dispossession of Native lands and its accompanying conflicts with a centralized state dispossession program that would proceed in an orderly fashion. It was simply a rationalization and legalization of a process that had been ongoing for generations.

Parenteau, 2012 pp.265-6

But behind the juridical effects, we glimpse the reasoning that bridges the colonial difference. In order to reconcile the competing ideas involved in land appropriation — from the honour of the Crown and the romantic pastoral ideal, to *terra nullius* and improvement as proof of sovereignty, to modernity, law, and the state — these transfers had to be carefully pursued in particular ways. The expenditure by the Crown on land deals, no matter how unfair, was predicated on the need to give the impression that colonial officials were concerned with securing and improving the welfare of Indigenous peoples. The Commission made very clear “how to our views, the proposed transfer is co-incident with the interests of the Indians” (Special Commission quoted in Parenteau, 2012 p.264). That transfer is never ‘for’ the colonised is obvious; the imagining of particular kinds of settler colonial geography, though, is important.

This is a geography in which Settler people are legitimated on the land; no longer squatters, but citizens, property owners, rooted in place. It is not enough for Settler peoples to possess land; they must shape space to make it appear as if



the land is rightfully theirs. This same colonial difference has echoed throughout settler colonial spatial history in the northern bloc. It was manifest in key 'improvement' rationales and policies directed towards Indigenous peoples: residential and boarding schools (improvement through education), allotment and termination (improvement through private property), and enfranchisement (improvement through citizenship), just to name a few. Alfred discusses contemporary improvement rationales in the context of assimilative 'aboriginalism' that seeks to incorporate Indigenous peoples into colonial systems, ostensibly for their own good (Alfred, 2005 pp.126-132). The land transfers initiated through the Special Commission of 1856 are an obvious example of this dynamic across colonial difference, but the complexity of efforts to bridge colonial difference are exemplified in the present by suicide prevention and housing programs aimed at Inuit people by the Canadian state (Stevenson, 2012), which are simultaneously expressive of both sides of the colonial difference. First, these diverse efforts both demonstrate the ways that settler colonisers think of themselves: as legitimate and heroic (pp.595-596), as expressed through the Settler desire for Inuit to "partner" in the effort to save themselves by selling away their right to choose (pp.599-600). This mirrors the way that Indian policy in the colonial period of the British North America Act<sup>52</sup> was generally valorised through encouragement by colonial officials towards Indigenous communities that they should *agree* to sell their land on the cheap *for their own good*. Second, and on the

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<sup>52</sup> The British North America Act (1867) defined British North America as a jurisdiction under the British Crown but served also a transitory function as Settler people's isopolitical relationships shifted from the imperial core to the burgeoning Settler state of Canada.

other side of the colonial difference, is the “disavowed colonial desire to ‘have’ a dead Inuk” (Stevenson, 2012 p.583), which echoes the naked ambition of the earlier regime to simply have land, as expressed through the fundamentally colonial “social relations of land administration and acquisition” (Parenteau, 2012 p.262).<sup>53</sup>

The suicide prevention program discussed by Stevenson is important as an example, in part because of a distinction that Ben Anderson makes, between precautionary action, “which aims to preserve a valued life through prevention”, and preemptive action:

[w]hat characterizes such preemptive action is that it is generative. In relation to a present that is unbalanced by potential threats, preemptive logics work by unleashing transformative events in order to avoid a rupture in a valued life ... In comparison with the emphasis on continuity that we find in precaution, preemption unashamedly makes and reshapes life ... In the context of the Iraqi war, for example, this has involved a redistribution of the potential for catastrophe from “zones of liberal peace” to lives that are subject to advanced techniques of damage and destruction ... [The] proliferating effects of preemption may generate something else: opportunities to be seized ... We see this in the case of the geoeconomics of the 2003 Iraq war. In inciting its adversary

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<sup>53</sup> Similarly, present day tar sands development in the Treaty 8 area of Alberta is couched in terms of economic development and benefit for First Nations despite amounting to “slow industrial genocide” (Hausman & Short, 2012). This dynamic of self-aggrandising the benevolence of the Settler self even as Settler people exploit Indigenous dispossession resonates strongly with logics of ‘economic development’ that support settler colonisation (Alfred, 2005 p.23).

to take form, preemptive war in Iraq opened up lucrative markets for private security firms and contractors as well as short-term investment opportunities for finance capital ...

Anderson, 2010 p.790

This should raise the question: in 'preventing' suicide — or poverty — in Indigenous communities, are these programs not rather pre-empting Indigenous agency and being on the land? I argue here that this is precisely the purpose of these programs, with space remade and reshaped to take advantage of emergent 'opportunities to be seized' resulting from Indigenous dispossession. In these cases, preemptive action is generative of settler colonial power. While housing and suicide prevention programs for the Inuit, jobs for the Treaty 8 First Nations, and the land sales proceeds that would allow "Indians to gain a settled income" (Parenteau, 2012 p.265) did and do come at some cost the state and Settler society, none are particularly effective in doing anything other than facilitating transfer of land to Settler control. This is the contour of colonial difference: the way that Settler people must shape settler colonial spaces in certain ways, through certain justifications, and accept some level of cost, to maintain their spatial perceptions.

### **A Genealogy of Settler Colonial Space**

Because settler colonial spaces do not appear in place fully formed, I develop here a genealogy of settler colonial spaces in the northern bloc. Settler colonial space is produced through the identification, occupation and consumption of a series of spatial types, corresponding to the imperatives of the imagined geographies of settler colonisers, and influenced by centres of imperial power. These spatial types

may be expressed differently based on the local conditions, cultural values, and entanglements of power specific to a given time and place. However, these differences serve largely to obscure remarkably consistent dynamics of spatial production and consumption, which tend to occur roughly in the following order:

1. *Terra nullius* and non-encounter
2. Spaces of opportunity
3. Clear-levelled ground
4. Spaces of advantage
5. Institutions of privilege
6. Intensification/consolidation/expansion

Settler colonial spaces are *generally* produced according to this genealogy, nevertheless the process does vary.

*Terra nullius* and non-encounter, as I outlined previously, are important to recall here. Indigenous peoples are perceived and interacted with, but lands are constructed as somehow empty or illegitimately occupied by Indigenous peoples. As a haunting from earlier colonial logics and spaces, this perception of *terra nullius* may be generated across a distance, through the accounts of traders, soldiers and other colonial ‘sojourners,’ but these perceptions of a free space motivate the colonising actions of settler colonial elites and disadvantaged settler collectives alike. Even when Indigenous presence is perceived, it is denied.

### **Go West, Life is Peaceful There: Perceived Spaces of Opportunity**

A perceived space of opportunity crudely maps the frontier spaces — spaces outside colonial power and seen as potentially useful (see Chapter 4) according to preconceived expectations and spatial logics. These spaces become the beginning

point of colonial 'imagined geographies' as per Gregory and Veracini. Spaces of opportunity are perceived in the 'empty' landscapes that settler collectives move through, drawing collectives to settle in particular places, not due to their actual content, but for what spaces they could support if properly 'developed' by Settler people.

There is often a perception that these places exist(ed) outside of established socio-political orders, and are therefore not only free to be claimed, but also free from pre-existing spatial structures, in theory allowing Settler people to shape their own lives. In a broad sense, "[t]his ideology supported the settler population and capital interests in acquiring land and natural resources by contributing to the abstraction of customary and local claims to land" (Cameron, 2010 p.7). However, as noted in Chapter 2, early colonists of the Atlantic coast of the northern bloc understood Indigenous peoples to be very much like themselves and respected their independence (Kupperman, 2000). Further, as previously demonstrated, discussions and debates about "legitimate" conquest in European imperialism began with "benign" conceptions of relationships with Indigenous peoples, but were eventually replaced by much more "belligerent" conquest language and ideology (MacMillan, 2011). So, while colonisers often were not usually looking for conflict — and some explicitly avoided it — settler colonisation as a whole remains premised on a founding violence (Veracini, 2010a p.78; 2008). That violence inheres in the conceptualisation of an available land that separates Indigenous peoples from their places, and becomes actualised through the assertion of spaces of advantage.

These spaces of opportunity must be considered in the context of burgeoning Settler populations that have frequently emphasised their own impoverished or

stagnant social opportunities. Consider the large number of ‘rejects’ (those individuals and communities occupying marginalised spaces and lower levels of hierarchy) that undertook settler colonisation: examples just from European backgrounds include Puritans (Meuwese, 2011) and other oppressed Christian minorities, such as Quakers, and both Catholic and Protestant Irish (Ireland, 2012); and later, Doukhobors and other European ethnic communities marginalised within nation states (Day, 2000 pp.115-145). Later, some of these persecuted groups in turn persecuted others and expelled them from settler colonial spaces; for example, the expulsion of arriving Quakers from Boston by Congregationalist New Englanders (Pestana, 1983). This is an early example of how settler colonial opportunity adheres to a retreating frontier, as opportunities are seized and occupied by settler collectives.

This underscores that — even among Americans — migration and settlement was often motivated by a desire to escape a decline or decay (Veracini, 2010a pp.101-102). Kupperman reminds us that many early trans-Atlantic colonisers were surrounded by interlocking discourses of American opportunity and European decadence:

[m]any of the early English commentators on America were profoundly unhappy about their own society. They believed that they lived in a country which was undergoing rapid change and that the change was almost always for the worse.

Kupperman, 1980 p.141

As Merrens and Terry note, few potential settler colonisers bothered to undertake serious investigations into the conditions in the settlements (1986 pp.331-332); the fear that metropole society was “breaking down” (Kupperman, 2000 p.18) was

enough to impel movement. Kupperman also notes that many English colonial elites perceived the northern bloc as a land of opportunity as well — the chance to turn troublesome poor or religious groups into potentially useful settler colonials:

America was seen as a great sinkhole into which England's "superfluous multitude" could be sent. English parishes were encouraged to send their "swarming" poor "with whome they are pestered." The king [Charles I] ordered the Virginia Company to make arrangements to send over a group of "dissolute persons" he wanted to get rid of. The company said they would have to send them in small batches in order to avoid mutiny at sea. All these people were being sent regardless of their wishes in the matter. There is evidence that considerable numbers of people were sent against their will ... Roman Catholics were frequently sent to Virginia and sold.

Kupperman, 1980 p.135

It is interesting to note that some settlers perceived opportunity in the simple absence of metropole power and elites, while imperial metropolises found similar opportunity in the removal of particularly troublesome people or groups.

Spaces of opportunity may be structurally dependent (for example, dependent not just on the availability of a resource, but also of the value and the ability to extract the resource, as in the above example of the British Columbia Lower Mainland). John Thistle discusses how settler colonisers to British Columbia who came with the intention of cattle ranching quickly identified particular places as opportune based on their physical characteristics:

[a]s cattle required range and shelter in winter, ranches tended to concentrate in areas with very particular ecological and geographical

attributes. These were lowlands where snowfall was light, seldom exceeding a few inches, and thaws from warm mountain winds occasionally left the ground bare and thus available for winter grazing.

Thistle, 2011 p.420

That these spaces of opportunity conflicted with Indigenous uses — as ranges for horse grazing, especially important to local Indigenous communities which regarded horses as wealth — did not factor into opportunistic Settler plans.

In the present, Settler Canadians in the City of Vancouver have recognised opportunity for material gain through gentrification of the Downtown East Side, a place long perceived as a space of exception for the urban, Indigenous population (Dean 2010; see also Chapter 1). The settler colonial recognition of opportunity for profitable gentrification of the DTES was made possible in part by the massive flows of capital into Vancouver around the 2010 Winter Olympics (O'Bonsawin, 2010) but the narrative surrounding it is more telling:

... the Downtown Eastside is frequently cast today as a “mythical frontier” that is “wild, dangerous, and, ultimately, [an] empty space, ripe for (re)settlement.” The repetition or recycling of language and metaphor evident here indicates that colonization is not a finished, settled, or past project, but instead is ongoing and continually remade in the present.

Dean, 2010 p.118

The constant is that Settler peoples recognise in particular places the potential for exploitation, which includes the implicit assumption that Indigenous peoples cannot legitimately benefit from these spaces of opportunity; it is Settlers who “improve” the land, justifying ownership. The result has been that Indigenous



peoples are displaced in their own lands as geometries of power are shifted to funnel resources and comparative advantage to Settler society.

### **The Settlement Fantasy: Clear-Levelled Ground**

Clear-levelled ground is a transient or transitional space, a space of affect created in the moments when settler collectives, in pursuit of a perceived opportunity, encounter places and perceive 'their' space. Clear-levelled ground is created within the settler colonial gaze, occurring when a Settler's individual experiences of a place — whether distant/textual or intimate/experiential, often involving elements of both — crystallise into a perception of especial value in a place. The metaphor is based on the ideal site for a frontier homestead: ground that is clear of barriers such as trees or obstacles such as hills, making for easy construction of houses and establishment of agriculture. However, the metaphor applies to any situation where settler individuals and collectives perceive an especial right or providential benefit in a place that motivates the decision to invest their sovereign capacity in a place and settle.

Clear-levelled ground is almost always perceived in spaces disrupted by colonial impact, interface and interference with Indigenous networks. Colonial power is not necessarily dominant in clear-levelled ground, but competing (other settler collectives), hostile (Indigenous being on the land), or antithetical (spaces of metropolitan imperial control) spatial dynamics have been dispersed or disrupted. Like the difference between homesteading myths and realities (Nettleback & Foster, 2012; Edmonds, 2010), the spaces occupied are never as ideal for settlement, or the settler collectives as independent and self-sustaining, as Settler people would like to believe.

Historical examples speak to this dynamic, including Richard White's "middle ground" (2011). In the Australian context, Penelope Edmonds has demonstrated how settler colonisers in early Melbourne differentiated between the desirable ideal of pastoral homesteads, and "Aboriginal space" of swamps and fringe areas around Melbourne (2010). The violence of the pastoral lands is often forgotten, as is the later displacement of Indigenous peoples by the draining of swamps that cleared land for construction. Clear-levelled ground, then, is simultaneously an imposed spatial perception, and a desire for what could be, both contra the reality of Indigenous existence and resistance.

#### **A Vision of Progress: Spaces of (Relative) Advantage and Settler Power**

Spaces of advantage are occupied by Settler people in order to gain relative advantage over Indigenous and exogenous Others and, often, other Settler peoples. These spaces enact the settler colonial identity trialectic that both differentiates Settler people from exogenous Others, and through the required transfer of land, leads to Indigenous erasure by Settler people — after advantage is claimed in place, Indigenous others become intolerable as challenges to total transfer. These are the true building blocks of settler colonial space in the northern block in that the occupation and assertion of advantage allows for Settler peoples to begin generating power. This self-generation, I argue, is as important as biological self-perpetuation. Advantage is conceptualised as resulting from collective labour and hard-work, cultural superiority, religious piety, or individual innovation. In reality, settler colonial advantage is founded on the dispossession of someone else, especially Indigenous peoples. The pursuit of advantage on settler colonial terms entails the use of power to separate Indigenous peoples from place through the

destruction of networks of being on the land and their replacement with Settler structures of invasion.

Advantage is defined here broadly as the ability to obtain or create something that was previously denied. Advantage can be material, as in the impoverished servant or tenant farmer who immigrates to Canada or America, seeking the ownership of land and property as a basis of personal wealth (for an example of agrarian advantage in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, see: Taylor, 2010 p.308). Alternatively, advantage may be immaterial, exemplified by the Puritans and Quakers historically, and in the present by refugees, seeking the freedom to practice particular lifestyles, religions, or cultures that are elsewhere persecuted. Advantage is in this context always socially calculated and thus spatial. On a simplistic level, many Settler people could be described as seeking a level of ‘power to’ denied to them in other contexts; at times, this has even taken the explicit form of ‘power with,’ especially among cooperative communities or mutually-dependent early settlements (like the Quakers, Mennonites, and — later — labour-organised nationalist or ethnic immigrants). However, on some levels, the hierarchical structures of imperialism and colonialism shape spaces of advantage such that they are foundationally unequal and oppressive. A settler colonial space of advantage is always predicated on the disadvantage of the prior occupants of the land and their place-based networks: the Indigenous person exiled to bare life, the space of exception comprising a wilderness beyond even the frontier in the Settler’s imagined geography (see Chapter 2).

As stated, the first privilege is to claim a Settler land base; evidence of this privilege in action can be seen in the exercise of the “sovereign exception” over Indigenous peoples (Morgensen, 2011). Settler societies must constantly work to

maintain their precarious perch in the northern bloc, a psychic balancing act achieved through spatial perceptions and interactions between self and other on this colonised land.<sup>54</sup> In brief, a resonance is generated between elitist and popular hierarchical social organising. This leads to imbrications of structural traditions of power and popular understandings of acceptable social expression and aspiration, bounded by notions of guaranteed rights for people and protections from elitist abuses (or, perhaps, overuses) of power through official structures. This can be seen to create a kind of “resonance machine” (Connolly, 2008) that encourages the construction of the kinds of spaces most acceptable to both elite and popular understandings of respective particular roles and positions, and the roles and positions of problematic “agonistic Others” (Featherstone, 2008), especially Indigenous peoples who exist largely outside of these frameworks. I have previously examined this resonance machine, labelled the “colonial mentalities” of Settler society, in greater detail (Barker, 2007) in an attempt to articulate the ‘why’ of settler colonialism. Here, I intend to focus rather on the ‘how’: the ways that Settler perceptions of Self and Other translate into individual and collective colonial acts. These colonial acts in aggregate lead to an aggressive expansion of particular kinds of colonial spaces, enabled by a deeply entrenched core of values in Settler peoples generally:

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<sup>54</sup> This psychic balancing act requires oppressive dynamics to be explained away by myths of progress, which in turn rely on a perceived temporal ‘beginning’ and expected ‘end’ to society. This temporal tightrope is created through a variety of psychological forms and encapsulated in Settler metaphysics and worldviews. On the psychology of primal scene and screen memory, see Veracini (2010a pp.86-94); on the temporal imperatives of Judeo-Christianity, see Deloria (2003 pp.62-77).

[a] vision of progress promoted ideals such as improved transportation and the expansion of resource industries. On the other hand, leaving anything more than the most necessary lands to Aboriginal peoples was deemed an impediment to progress.

Cameron, 2010 p.11

### **Law and Every Other Damn Thing: Institutions of Privilege**

As advantage becomes normalised, settler collectives increasingly invest their sovereign capacity into powerful institutions. These institutions vary widely in form and function, depending on the local histories and environments, and the desires of settler collectives to guarantee, perpetuate and justify privilege. These institutions also change over time as sovereign capacity shifts between institutions as the settler colonial polities change in character. Borrowing from Veracini who references the HBO television series *Deadwood* as a useful dramatised example of settler colonisation, institutions of privilege are paradoxically seen as both an impediment to settler colonial freedom, but more so, a guarantee of established advantage. As the town of Deadwood,<sup>55</sup> founded outside of the American state around the time of the American violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty with the Lakota (1874), pursues annexation by the American state, the characters repeatedly and ironically note that soon the town will have “law and every other damn thing” (*Deadwood*, 2004-2006).

Institutions of privilege interlock, interact, and change over time. They are, however, bound together by a common land base from which they derive their

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<sup>55</sup> Although the show is fictionalised, it is based on the real events surrounding the founding of the town of Deadwood, South Dakota, sometime in the early 1870s.

power. The interpenetration of these institutions forms a dynamic and shifting “vertical topography of power”. This term, deployed by James Ferguson in an interrogation of neo-liberalism and Africa, is born out of an attempt to “speak, in an explicitly non- or supra-ethnographic way, about broader questions concerning the category that is ‘Africa’ and its place in the world” (2006 p.4). In interrogating the way that transnational and globalising power are brought to bear on Indigenous peoples in Ecuador, Susanna Sawyer uses the term to evoke:

... a spatial imaginary in which the Empire/state floats above, the individual/family huddles below, and the Multitude/civil society mediates between the two. This ordered stratigraphy simultaneously instantiates fixed categories and locates them in a hierarchy of value and complexity. It obscures how each of these spheres is relationally constituted through deeply transnational practices.

2009 p.68

Rather than revealing transnational practices, institutions of privilege represent the ways that settler collectives, over time, will Settler society into being around themselves, from the state to the nuclear family. Governments may assume the sovereignty of the state, but sovereignty must first be invested in place by settler collectives. Settler ‘civil society’ that mediates between individual and state is a constantly negotiated collectivity, wherein various institutions (maintaining the vertical metaphor) rise and fall dependent on their ability to organise people and produce space. These topographies of power become especially important when considering notions of property and nationhood (below), and the roles globalising powers in shaping settler colonial space (Chapter 5).

Sawyer uses the example of the power dynamics at play between two sovereign states (Ecuador and America) and Texaco, an American-based transnational oil producer, which resulted in decades of avoidance as the responsibility for exercising sovereign authority over the corporation was held in limbo between jurisdictions. Moreover, she asserts that “poor peasants and Indians” through legal struggles and “transnational alliances and collaborations” both “forged a ‘class’ [of common resistance]” and produced a situation where they, despite their low elevation in the topographies of power, were able to at least challenge a major American oil company (Sawyer, 2009 p.70). However, the topographies of power affecting Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc are somewhat different than in Sawyer’s example. Submerged within settler colonial discourses — and with indigeneity exiled to ‘bare life,’ where Settler people can ignore it (see Chapter 4 on erasure) — these resistances are constructed as localised issues.

This is similar to the situation that George Manuel encountered while embarking on his career in political organising that would lead to the creation of the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), later the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) (McFarlane, 1993). As Manuel travelled the province of British Columbia between 1955 and 1960, he noticed striking similarities in how settler colonisation had affected the various reserves. He also knew that “the system was stacked against all Indians, rural or urban, man or woman, formally educated or not” (p.55). Yet he discovered that most communities felt isolated and as if no one else cared about their concerns, with leaderships that were unwilling to unite. Striving first to build unity across British Columbia, Manuel’s organisation found relevance on a national level. The state responded by co-opting the NIB and, in so doing, co-opting the

elected chief and council system that supports it (Alfred, 2009a). In this way, settler colonial institutions of privilege defuse responsibility for colonisation on the local level, and deflect or contain it at larger scales (see also Chapter 5 on state apologies).

Of course, Indigenous peoples are not the only ones implicated in exploitative dynamics in the creation of these topographies of power. In contrast to the state as an institution of privilege, consider the social construction of whiteness as a disavowed and diffuse institution of privilege. As Austin discusses, various non-white Settlers have participated in imperial projects and benefitted from the production of settler colonial spaces to varying degrees:

Nova Scotia's Black population has its roots in the settlement of Black United Empire Loyalists, African-American refugees of the US War of Independence. Many Afro-Scotians share Mi'Kmaq (Indigenous) ancestry, further complicating the otherwise simplistic tendency to funnel various groups, including White Canadians, into discrete ethno-racial categories. In 1796, Jamaican maroons — former African slaves who had engaged in a series of wars with the British and established autonomous settlements in Jamaica — were exiled to Nova Scotia before eventually being shipped to Sierra Leone in 1800. Curiously, despite their longstanding presence in the country, Canadian Blacks, who are scattered across the country but with large populations in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax, are consistently relegated to the category of immigrant newcomers, as are Arab Muslims, Asians and Jews of various backgrounds ...

Austin, 2010 p.21



While it is important to note the various ways that racialised or class-marginalised peoples can be co-opted into settler colonial projects (see Chapter 5 for an extensive discussion on this), it is more important here to discuss how “power, in this case state and corporate power, is facilitated and exercised through the production of truth” (Austin, 2010 p.21). The ‘truth’ in this case is simultaneously that settlement encapsulates and defines the limits of indigeneity, but also that some Settler peoples benefit more from the land than others. So it is that Canadian and American societies, across racial lines, continue to aspire to a goal of ‘whiteness’ (p.22), inscribing a racial stratigraphy at the heart of settler colonial space.

### **Settler Colonial Belonging: Private Property and the Nation State**

This genealogy of settler colonial space reveals a great deal about settler colonial spatialities. The ways that various spaces are created, articulated, and justified are crucial to understanding the connections between the places of the northern bloc and the individuals and collectives who act as settler colonisers. Consideration of the individual and collective colonial identities is especially important with respect to settler colonial societies like those of the northern bloc, wherein colonial agents are not singled out by profession (unlike sojourners who are identified as explorers, fur traders, or imperial soldiers). Because settler colonialism is pervasive throughout Settler society, settler colonial spaces must be denormalised — shown as imposed in place and developed over time — in order to reveal the connections between past and present settler colonisation.

The topographies of power that result from the dynamic interaction of sovereign power invested into institutions of privilege are not generally recognised as such by Settler peoples. Rather, the ‘truths’ that Austin identifies manifest as a number of discourses that define how Settler people come to ‘belong’ in place. As discussed in Chapter 2, Settler people can and do build ‘cultures of place,’ and to the extent that the spaces of settler colonialism come to be synonymous with the places that they are built upon — whether specific sites and cities like Toronto (Freeman, 2010) or mythical historical regions, like ‘The West’ (Thistle, 2011; Stelter, 1973) — Settler people can become extremely attached to the material landscapes of their imagined geographies. Here, I present two methods of thinking about place common to the northern bloc which serve to generate Settler ideas of belonging: one in which Settler people own and appropriate places (private property); and one in which Settler peoples articulate themselves as belonging to place (the nation state).<sup>56</sup>

### **Property and the Cadastral Grid**

One of the most important institutions of privilege in Settler societies is the organisation of space through the creation and delineation of private property. Private property is a dominating relationship to place that objectifies and deconstructs complex living independent systems for the benefit of an individual or group. But before place in the northern bloc could be carved into property and commoditised, the places targeted for colonisation needed to be measured out

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<sup>56</sup> These should not be seen as exhaustive; rather, they are extremely common but private property and the nation-state are just two among many ways that Settlers conceive of their belonging in place. The general creation of attachment through settler colonial *bricolage* is discussed in Chapter 4.

according to the logics of settler colonialism. Here, the metropole imperial origins of northern bloc settler colonialism are vitally important. Settler colonisers in the northern bloc, like those in Australia and New Zealand, applied a European “cadastral grid” over lands, which surveyed potential property in geometric grids and which, entangled with processes of exploration and dividing land for different uses, underlies later extractions of wealth and atomisation of place.

Denis Byrne discusses this imposition in the Australian context as fundamental to both settlement and also the differentiation between kinds of spaces, which serves to obscure settler colonisation. He also traces this cadastral grid to spatial divisions in the English countryside, with its attendant hierarchies and private spaces:

England had long possessed a developed (though not static) cadastral system that divided the kingdom into counties, shires, parishes and ‘hundreds’, down to the level of individual agricultural fields. Many of the boundaries of this system had been in place since Saxon times or earlier and had thus been a recognised reality for thousands of years before the cartographic surveys of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fixed them on paper ... [By] contrast, the colonial cadastral grid made an instantaneous appearance in the Aboriginal landscape. It completely ignored pre-existing Aboriginal boundaries and spatial conventions, even where these were known, let alone any form of pre-existing Aboriginal land title. Rather, as part of the imperial machinery, it assimilated colonial terrain to metropolitan terrain by imposing the same generic grid of counties, parishes and rectangular holdings onto it. With England’s cartographic language inscribed upon it, the landscape

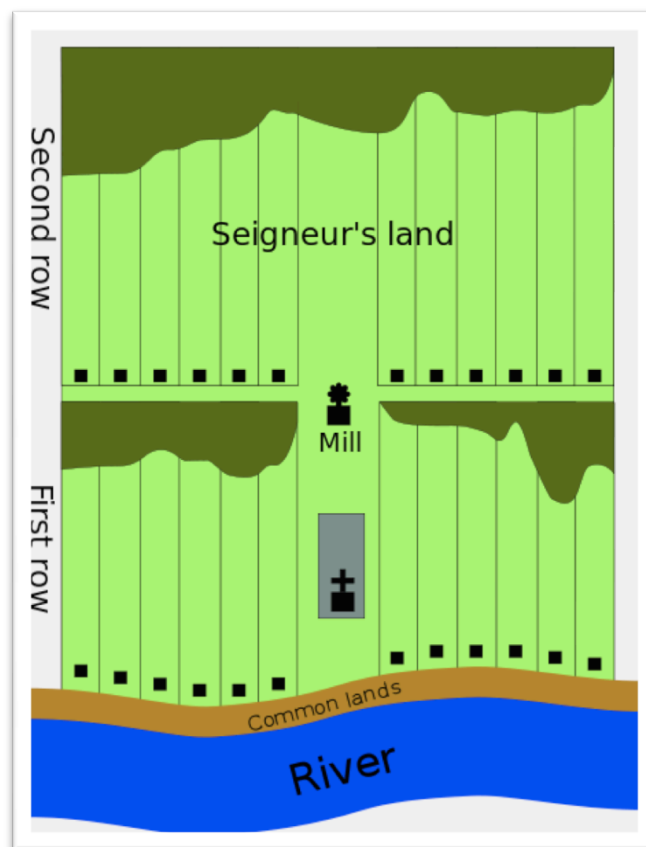
of colonial Australia would be in immediate dialogue with the landscape of England. What made the cadastral grid so ideal for the colonial project is that it could be applied with impartiality to previously unknown terrain, which is to say that it would take a landscape just as it found it, rolling over it with indecent familiarity, as if it knew it in advance. In actuality, of course, it did not know it, and as time went on it was modified by local conditions and local demands.

Byrne, 2010 pp.105-106

The cadastral grid, in this sense, predates Settler states, and remains a metropole colonial haunting of the northern bloc. Land was parcelled out and subdivided for Settler use long before states were required to ensure property rights, in part because colonising metropolises were relied on to protect settler colonial space before Settler people asserted their own sovereignty contra the metropole.

It should be remembered, though, that this system was not imported directly or without problems from England, especially in the northern bloc. In the eastern areas of the northern bloc, the cadastral grid was developed unevenly between competing English and French settler colonists (a complication not shared with Australia), resulting in messier, less uniform systems. New France's seigneurial system (established 1627, abolished 1854), for example, relied on a different method of dividing up land and different colonial policy and priority *vis-à-vis* Anglophone settlements. This French cadastral grid was designed around long narrow strips of land, premised on ready access to water (see Figure 5), while English cadastral grids followed the radial model of fields surrounding a town, centred on a town square, reminiscent of English pastoral lands. Later settler colonisation changed these configurations again, commonly instituting

checkerboard farmland (see Figure 6) and other systems of dividing property (see also changes in British Columbia land use around cattle ranching and fruit orchards: Thistle, 2011; Wagner, 2008). This variation serves to obscure settler colonialism in the northern bloc to a greater degree than in Australia and many other settler colonial spaces.



**Figure 7 - A typical design for Quebec's seigneurial system of settlement property (Cleduc, 2007). The black squares represent individual dwellings, clustered around a central mill and church, and water access.**



**Figure 8 - An aerial photograph of typical American-style square fields, near Benton County, Indiana (Wjmummert, 2008).**

In the Pacific Northwest region, the cadastral grid has become a point of contention in contemporary court cases and high-level politics. Unlike east of the Rocky Mountains, where settler colonisers often divided up land prior to or in conjunction with state authorities, in wide swaths of the Pacific Northwest, the cadastral grid was laid out *following* the assertion of the state. For a time, parts of the region were tenuously connected to states due to lack of occupation and/or improvement. For example, many settlers on Vancouver Island outside of the colony of Victoria, or on the islands around the Salish Sea, held no legal title to land which in turn generated militarised expeditions of mapping and surveying in support of the pre-emption of property (Arnett, 1999 pp.98-110). As such, the roles of mapping and surveying in creating the cadastral grid are revealed as less heroic frontier acts and more as generation of knowledge about spaces of opportunity for a settler colonising capitalist state structure.

As part of this process, Settler people also enact their perceived right to manage or gate-keep Indigenous others. In fact, Morgensen argues, it is that gate-

keeping which actualises the cadastral grid as something more than just a perception, asserting the juridical power of Settler sovereignty over the grid:

European settler societies enact Western law — indeed, in ways often validated as exemplary of that law — by occupying and incorporating Indigenous peoples within white settler nations. The indigenisation of white settlers and settler nations thus shifts our reading of their capacity to represent the West. Rather than presuming that the West is defined by enforcing boundaries to preserve purity, we must consider that the state of exception arises in settler societies as a function of settlers' inherent interdependence with indigeneity.

Morgensen, 2011 p.60

The point here is that the cadastral grid is projected over space, but becomes materialised as property through the expulsion of Indigenous peoples from place. This is the relative advantage that underpins the privilege to own property: the advantage to not just see spaces as a neat and ordered grid, but to impose that grid on others.

Projecting a cadastral grid, much like the projection of violent force to erase indigeneity from place, is among the basic evidence of possible 'improvement.' The division of the physical space of claimed places based on settler colonial logics (mental spaces) is proof *in absentia* of occupation by Settler people. It is important to understand the extent to which the cadastral grid has empowered a multiplicity of Settler spatial formations. Cavanagh, in his overview of settler colonial geographies, notes the connections between present marginalisation of ghettoisation of Indigenous peoples in cities, and these initial practices of arbitrary division:

... the spatial partition of Indigenous peoples in the cityscape [is] just one example of how the spatial orders of settler cultures have worked against settler colonised peoples everywhere. The very act of planning, “the social practice of spatial ordering” (and all of its pernicious effects), argues Porter, “is not just complicit in, but actively reproduces, social injustice for Indigenous peoples” ...

Cavanagh, 2011 p.161

Which is to say, the initial relative advantage of Settler space is replicated again and again through all of the structures — urban and rural, physical and imagined — that follow from it. In this way, the cadastral grid is a powerful conceptual tool that binds Settler people to state and capitalist structures in all their variation.

### **Nationality, Belonging and Homeland**

One of the vitally important aspects of the northern bloc’s colonial history that shapes contemporary settler colonial forms is the competition between settler colonisers from multiple, different, and even antithetical imperial cores. The French and British specifically colonised towards, around, and against each other. The French colonised the northeast, the Great Lakes region, and Louisiana and the Mississippi basin. The British Empire dominated the northern trans-Atlantic world, and New England became the heart of a new country. Between the two, their approaches to difference and identity were divergent. Day asserts that “[w]hile the Indians were seen as Useful Others by the British, they were Useful *external* Others, definitely to be kept outside, both literally and figuratively” (Day 2000, pp.97, emphasis in original). Day contrasts this with the tendency of the French to integrate Indigenous people who had accepted Catholicism and learned



the French language. This results in a process of social understanding whereby routes are created for some 'Others' to be accepted as 'Self,' but always with the caveat that Indigenous peoples represent an unassimilable 'Other.' Meanwhile, the creolised peoples of the Caribbean and South America became exogenous Others in the eyes of the predominantly white, European immigrants. But whiteness is complicated, perhaps especially in the northern bloc. From the advent of settlement efforts, the English were not alone in working to colonise the 'New World'; they brought their already complex empire with them. Scots and Irish and Welsh emigrated with various internal complexities. And very quickly, a concept of 'American' emerged. This identity may have been the most diverse and multifaceted of all: one based on the freedom to seek opportunity in places, to be "special by virtue of occupation of a particular" — settler colonial — "locale" (Veracini, 2010a).

As Agamben notes "constituting power, when conceived in all its radicality, ceases to be a strictly political concept and necessarily presents itself as a category of ontology" (Agamben, 1998 p.44). This underscores the 'radical similarity' of Settler polities that have exercised constituting power to create settler colonial space all across the northern bloc. The act of constituting a settler collective that carries its sovereignty with it necessitates an ontology that includes colonial mentalities and the colonial difference. This constituted identity is diverse: Settler peoples have had multiple internal wars that implicated Settler 'belonging' of different kinds. From the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the American-British conflict of 1812, Settler identity has been forged in contestations with other Settler people as well as with Indigenous peoples (Veracini, 2011a p.176).

Day tracks how Canadian policy (since before Canada has existed) has been designed to manage difference, from racial policies of immigration, to assimilative definitions of ethnicity and culture, and concludes:

... the greatest gift given by Europe to the Canadian discourse on diversity came from both the English and the French, in the form of a binary system of Self-Other distinction that allowed the immediate work to be done, but has also proven to be amenable to infinite multiplication and permutation as the problem of Canadian diversity has evolved.

Day, 2000 p.99

In this context, this is a particularly settler colonial pre-occupation. The first reconciliation of identity — that of formerly-metropole-turned-settler coloniser — is worked out, as Veracini says, “isopolitically”:

[a]ppraising isopolitical relationships (that is, the way in which people and rights can be transferred across the constituent entities of a community of ‘racial identity’) can thus contribute to an understanding of independence and decolonization that goes beyond familiar narratives emphasizing anticolonial militancy, metropolitan concessions, and nationalist takeovers in the context of a non-sovereign-to-sovereign (colonial dependency to independent polity) paradigm.

Veracini, 2011a p.172

Settler colonial spaces of opportunity create the illusion of never-ending possibilities for escape and improvement; a new life is perpetually just over the horizon.

This fantasy is premised on the ability to gain power by detaching from centres and systems that monopolise power, exemplified by the way that

Americans in the early republic rejected British imperial power in favour of trying to generate their own imperial power in place (Taylor, 2010). This is tied to settler colonial myths of independence and individualism, expressed through the 'miraculous' independence of the American republic:

... these polities' independent status was actually premised on the enhanced subjection of indigenous 'Others'. Settler independence constitutes an acceleration, not a discontinuation or diminution, of colonial practices. I define this circumstance as deep colonizing: a situation in which the very attempt to bring forward the supersession of colonial practices actually entrenches their operation.

Veracini, 2011a p.172

Both American and Canadian approaches demonstrate the same fact of settler colonial deep colonising: settler colonialism is in part invisible because settler colonial ideas of difference monopolise the discourse of difference. The Settler identity is developed through nationalist and racist discourses of belonging antithetical to indigeneity (O'Connell, 2010). This happens in many settler colonial locales; in the northern bloc, the diversity, time span, and complexity of settler colonial history create extremely deep colonisation. 'Canadian' and 'American' are ubiquitous national identities; discussions of the colonial past or colonial power actually serve to further colonisation.

Now, Canadian and American states are moving into a 'postcolonial' era of identity, a move clearly designed to facilitate settler colonial transfer in many respects. Consider the role of apologies in settler colonial discourse:

[a]pologies provide political representatives with another role, that of expressing in concentrated form the values and sensibilities of the

nation. In so doing, apologies provide politicians with the opportunity to reinvest the authority of the state by addressing specifically national concerns. In ... Commonwealth settler states [like Canada], recent apologies to indigenous people are in fact moments in which a more local form of authority is constituted. This has occurred in a broader political context in which these countries have undergone significant changes in economic policy and the reorientation of the markets that they engage with in the past four decades.

M. Johnson, 2011 p.193

In the northern bloc, state apologies are designed to retrench settler colonial power and privilege without disturbing Settler cultures of place; they are preemptive in that they create the possibility for legitimate Settler nationhood, but simultaneously foreclose the possibility of Indigenous independence.<sup>57</sup>

### **Power and Privilege in Settler Spaces**

As settler colonisation progressed in the northern bloc, spaces of opportunity have been perceived, pursued, and occupied; advantage created and power invested into institutions; place commodified and claimed. Flows of power have shifted as Settler people have isopolitically transferred their political and social allegiance across jurisdictions. Ultimately, some Settler people have benefitted more than others, often thanks to occupation of advantageous positions in the topography of power. Elites and disadvantaged and dispossessed peoples exist side-by-side in

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<sup>57</sup> Apologies are discussed further in Chapter 5 in relation to leftist politics and reconciliation.

Settler society. Here, I draw out some of the implications of this social stratification.

Morgensen demonstrates convincingly that settler colonialism relied more strongly on the creation of spaces of exception and segregation than did metropole colonialism. The state, in this context, is a systematised relationship of peoples under political hierarchy, the spatial expression of sovereign power. Morgensen notes, however, that in Settler states like Canada and America, “governmentality acts in the name of the very sovereignty that it exceeds” (Morgensen, 2011 p.54). Governmentality in this context refers to the state’s power to “‘make’ live or ‘let’ die” (p.54), replacing the authority of the sovereign with the mechanisms of surveillance, incarceration, and control of the flow of resources. In settler colonial contexts, however, governmentality is primarily concerned with protecting Settler interests and regulating Indigenous being on the land; Settler people design their governments in part to take on the function of ‘gatekeeping’ indigeneity.

Isopolitical connections between diverse Settler collectives are created through the transfer of multiple sovereign capacities to common political and legal institutions. These connections tie settler collectives to common political structures. Nationalist narratives, designed to generate unity around this diversity, are one necessary by-product of these isopolitical dynamics, as these intersecting political connections are often unruly, locally determined, and highly contingent. It is a paradox of settler colonialism that its attendant isopolitical structures can be fundamentally hostile to each other. As per Day (2005), multicultural policy has grown in response to agonistic demands of exogenous Others seeking entry into Settler colonial society. However, admission into the broadest spaces of settler colonialism — through citizenship or other recognition

of belonging such as the right to own property — does not imply admission into all institutions of privilege. The admittance of immigrants from around the world into the Canadian and American states, even to the extent that they may hold citizenship, does not prevent the functioning of institutions of whiteness, which are heavily imbricated with other institutions of settler colonial privilege.

### **Elites and Social Hierarchy**

Settler elites have comparatively unfettered wherewithal and advantage even relative to other Settler peoples, enabling them to seek spaces of opportunity and advantage of much greater potency/proportion, and influence corporate settler colonisation by underwriting colonisation. As mentioned in Chapter 2, elites in the City of London formed a corporation to settle the colony of Londonderry, Ireland (1613). Similar examples exist across the northern bloc, exemplified by the colonial governors and military personnel who encouraged the colonisation of Vancouver Island for their own profit from land sales (Arnett, 1999). These elites created spaces of advantage for themselves by using their existing power to begin the process of Indigenous dispossession and to create spaces of opportunity for new settler collectives, which in turn empowered the business and political interests that the elites controlled. Both settler elite and collective advantages, though, are premised on transfer of Indigenous land to settler colonial control, even though the Settler people themselves benefit differently depending on their institutionalised privilege.

These elite positions are not necessarily secure. For example, environmental change and range degradation undid the fortunes of many powerful ranching families in the British Columbia Interior during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These

ranchers were, at the time, undoubtedly elites: wealthy landholders operating almost in the absence of state sovereignty and governmentality. But though anger for the loss of resources that guaranteed their station was often directed towards Indigenous peoples' horse herds, the spectre of modernism and shifts in topographies of power loomed:

Native people were easy targets because they had little social power, but increasingly ranchers blamed each other for range degradation. Some of these arguments were purely local matters as, for instance, when ranchers from neighboring valleys argued over how many cattle could graze when on what commons. But debate also divided along economic lines: small-scale ranchers with little or no capital blamed range degradation on the corporate and large family ranches that controlled most of the resources.

Thistle, 2011 p.424

Thistle continues by noting how the largest corporate ranches, integrated with industrialising agriculture, went on to monopolise the region. Elite status is dependent on multiple, contingent flows of power, and shifts in many spatial orders can reorder hierarchies, sometimes drastically.

However, it should be noted that those colonisers who already wielded power — religious leaders, the politically connected, possessors of capital that funded settlement, and so on — have often been in the most advantageous position to identify and take advantage of emerging dynamics of power within settler collectives. Later arrivals to Settler societies have found these hierarchies obscured but impossible to avoid, what Sneja Gunew refers to as a colonial haunting of multiculturalism (Gunew, 2004). Just as there is no clear division

between elites and ‘common’ Settler peoples, there is no clear division between Settler peoples and exogenous Others. The contingent and shifting nature of elites positions means that, rather than kings and emperors, settler colonial elites often comprise ‘petty tyrants’; elites only in comparison to seriously disadvantaged exogenous Others.

### **Exogenous Others and the Pyramid of Petty Tyrants**

What are exogenous Others, beyond something to be assimilated in the process of Settler naturalisation? In fact, ‘exogenous Others’ is a vastly generalised catchall term. It is generally applied to populations and individuals that Settler society sees as ‘not us,’ including other colonisers such as metropole sojourners, as discussed in Chapter 2. Given the multiple and dynamic makeup of the Settler polities of the northern bloc, who is considered ‘exogenous’ changes from place to place and over time. Further, while exogenous Others are targeted for assimilation and absorption into the body politic, the discourses around exogenous Others have shifted; “in a postmodern predicament, strangers are here to stay ... Exogenous alterities are now predominantly construed as enduring” (Veracini, 2010a p.51). So, exogenous Others, while still targeted for eventual elimination (as a category, not as people), are now in some senses eliminated by non-assimilation: the Canadian practice of assimilative multiculturalism (Day, 2000) writ large. This minoritarian thinking, which threatens to subsume all difference — including indigeneity — into Settler discourses of belonging on the land, is a powerful act of erasure (discussed further in Chapter 4).



Alfred articulates a view that, while not based in racialised ideas of purity, skewers this subtle assimilation aimed at both Indigenous peoples and disempowered or devalued exogenous Others:

[t]he social and political agenda of the state is to mediate ethnic and racial conflicts. This is called “multiculturalism” ... but it is in reality nothing more than a surface celebration of folkloric traditions from various immigrant cultures combined with the promotion of deeper assimilation to monocultural societal norms (though it is sometimes reflected through more than one of the European colonial languages). Whether multiculturalism communicates itself in English-French or English-Spanish, is still only an accommodation of the ethnic power of colonial Euroamericans and their more recent immigrant allies.

Alfred, 2005 p.248

Multiculturalism seen from this perspective makes tenuous allies of Indigenous peoples and exogenous Others against the dispossessing power of Settler society. However, that is often not the case in practice.

Often, Indigenous peoples and exogenous Others are played off against each other. Positioned as ‘disadvantaged’ groups in society, Indigenous peoples are portrayed as ethnic minorities competing for common streams of funding, assistance, and accommodation. There is no doubt that this is a strategic position on the part of Settler colonial elites to divide and conquer agonistic Others. Harsh Zaran, a self-identifying person of colour, is a blogger and activist on colonialism in the northern bloc. He recently noted a particularly troublesome passage in Canada’s most powerful newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*. John Ibbitson, a columnist covering the contentious 2012 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) elections, asserted

that First Nations chiefs were facing “diminishing influence” because of the changing nature of Canadian demography (2012). Ibbitson argued that newer/recently immigrated Canadians do not feel empathy towards Indigenous peoples or care to pursue reconciliation and redress, because they are not responsible for Indigenous dispossession. Zaran responded directly to this column, addressing several absurd points implicit in this argument. Notably, he refocused the conversation on the power wielded over both Indigenous peoples and exogenous Others by the — multicultural but still whitestream — Canadian state and society:

[w]hat he is really hinting at is the fantastic job the Canadian state has done in “whitening” the idea of who is “Canadian”, and how racialized folks are being coerced to “whiten” themselves to fit in. The forging of the citizenship contract is played out in the arena of “culture”, which is supervised by the ideology of song-and-dance multiculturalism. This works to drive a strong wedge between possible decolonized alliances between indigenous peoples and racialized settlers. As racialized Canadians cultivate a stronger stake in the Canadian state, they are coerced to absorb and uphold the prejudices of white society. So, if the impatience on the part of racialized Canadians will arrive, it will be due to the completion of the white assimilation process.

Zaran, 2012

This particular blog post is notable for the insight with which it reveals the operation of a persistent colonial form of hierarchy in the northern bloc: the pyramid of petty tyrants.

The pyramid of petty tyrants, a concept introduced by Albert Memmi (1965), is a concept that I have developed previously (Barker, 2009, 2007) and which remains vital to understanding the settler colonial population economy of the northern bloc. As Zaran identifies above, exogenous Others are permitted access to the broadest spaces of Settler society, in the first instance, and various institutions of privilege, in later instances, to the extent that they assimilate themselves. This, crucially, involves rejecting solidarity with Indigenous peoples on common grounds of dispossession and of being colonised peoples, which many immigrants from the global south have experienced (Zaran, 2012), though through very different colonial dynamics.<sup>58</sup> So, exogenous Others are made responsible for their own assimilation, with the fundamental markers of assimilation situated in complicit, colonial action. Exogenous Others become Settlers through their pursuit of opportunity on Indigenous lands, but with the added complication of navigating an already-constituted and shifting topography of power. The spatialities that exogenous Others face in becoming Settler peoples or gaining space in Settler societies are simultaneously colonised and racialised, and the tensions and pressures on them serve to foreclose Indigenous affinity with these racialised communities (for more on multiculturalism and assimilation in the Canadian context see: Day, 2000).

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<sup>58</sup> The tensions between racialised immigrant and Indigenous communities, commonly opposed to neo-liberal, whitestream oppression, but differently positioned with respect to settler colonialism, are drawn out fully in Chapter 5.

### **Conclusion: From Diversity, Unity**

The spatialities of the northern bloc are difficult to identify and analyse in part because of their extreme diversity. The topographies of power created by institutions of privilege across many spatial scales — some very localised and contingent, like small agricultural cooperatives, others pervasive throughout the northern bloc, such as patriarchy — encourage a ‘stratiographic’ (to modify Sawyer’s term) view of Settler society. The divisions between peoples become the focus, rather than their mutual imbrication in generating advantage from place through displacement of indigeneity and empowering of colonial structures of invasion. There are so many cultures, experiences of colonising, ideas of belonging, aspirations for various kinds of wealth, and impositions of power that are simultaneously implicated in Settler identity formation that it is easy to perceive a disconnected and atomised population, rather than a cohesive one. To some extent, that is true. Internal hierarchies and persistent institutions of racialised power and conspicuous consumption serve to emphasise difference. Keep in mind that the northern bloc was settled primarily by settler collectives that move through space, either across the Atlantic during the metropole period, across the continent during the consolidation of the Settler states, and currently across the globe, seeking opportunity and privilege. Of course many communities in the northern bloc would continue to think of, act as, and portray themselves as distinct. But the fundamental perception of opportunity in uncontested, ‘frontier’ spaces, and the willingness to move through space and settle in new places to pursue opportunity and privilege, are powerful, cohesive dynamics. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the individual characteristics of settler colonial spaces at small scales is subordinate to much larger, repeated settler colonial dynamics

that create diverse spaces through common, Settler acts of erasure, occupation and *bricolage*.

## Chapter 4: Settler Colonial Transformation of Space

### Colonising Acts

Settlers have come to the northern bloc from all over the world; in some times and places, newcomers have poured into Indigenous lands like a flood. For example, the masses that flowed into the rapidly changing world of the Pacific Northwest during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were highly diverse. These settlers were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, class positions, and aspirations.<sup>59</sup> Some created pastoral communities coalescing around access points and nodal spaces, arable agricultural or pastoral lands, and strategic resources. These served as extensions of a growing network of settlements, such as those that eventually penetrated the Okanagan region (Thistle, 2011; Berg, 2011). Other collectives hurried to join urban, industrialising workforces (Harris, 1997 pp.257-262), both attracted by and contributing to the growth of settler colonial centres of power. Some had intentions of forming states themselves, such as post-fur trade agricultural settlers on Vancouver Island who aspired to formal inclusion in the British world (Arnett, 1999). Many were internally conflicted. They all, in one way

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<sup>59</sup> It should be noted, though, that the vast majority of early settlers in this region were men; the colonisation of the Pacific Northwest was largely homosocial.

or another, sought to occupy new lands and remove the traces of Indigenous people that might be found occupying these places. They all built spaces that did, and continue to, generate power and privilege for colonisers while dispossessing Indigenous peoples. But clearly, settler colonisation as exemplified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century invasion of the Pacific Northwest, is a messy, non-linear process. So to revisit the conclusion of Chapter 3, how is unity produced out of this diversity? How do so many different collectives come to produce the same sorts of settler colonial space?



**Figure 9 - A satellite photo of the Pacific Northwest region. The large central island is Vancouver Island, which roughly marks the current Canada-USA border which continues eastward along the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel, with British Columbia in the north, and the states of Washington and Oregon in the south (SebastianHelm, 2006). It is important to note that the physical geography of mountains and coastlines runs perpendicular to the state border.**



In this chapter, settler colonial spatial production is presented as three, entangled, interdependent types of colonising acts: erasure, occupation, and *bricolage*. Each of these is informed by the spatial logics of settler colonialism and accords with settler colonial spatialities, yet the specific arrangements of power in place produced through these colonising acts can vary significantly. However, several consistent features of settler colonialism are asserted through these dynamics, not the least of which is the way that colonising acts are normalised, taken for granted, and perceived as ‘banal’ (Berg, 2011). Throughout this chapter, the Pacific Northwest is presented as a ‘strategic exemplar’ (Stevenson, 2012) of settler colonial spatial dynamics. The Pacific Northwest is somewhat unique in that colonial settlement of this region occurred much later than in the rest of the northern bloc, largely after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Correspondingly, a detailed and growing body of literature has been developed around these accessible regional colonial histories. Evidence presented here is not exclusive to this region or period, although I return to this space as a useful example of settler colonisation in action. In addition to articulating the logics and spatialities of these colonising acts, this chapter investigates several common northern bloc spatial characteristics that can be traced to settler colonisation, including urban, rural, frontier, and — perhaps most importantly — suburban spaces.

### **Dynamics of Erasure**

It is important to begin by investigating the erasure of Indigenous presence from place. Erasure is essential to both occupation and *bricolage*, the two other colonising acts that are critical to settler colonial spatial production. Erasure of

Indigenous presence can take many forms and may precede and continue throughout the time of Settler occupation. The variety of ways that settler colonialism produces space is predicated on consuming elements of Indigenous relational networks. Elements of Indigenous relational networks are extracted (removed from contexts that sustain meaning), processed and redeployed through settler colonial social space.

### **What is Erasure?**

Historical geographer Cole Harris chose to reprint his essay 'The Good Life Around Idaho Peak', originally researched and written more than thirty years ago, in a 1997 collected volume "partly because it contains an egregious error that reflects the mind-set of colonialism" (xvi). In the first version of this essay, Harris asserted that Idaho Peak, north of Nelson, British Columbia, had never been a site of Indigenous settlement. In the 1997 volume, he recanted: "[m]y proposition that no Native people had ever lived near Idaho Peak is absurd, and grows out of the common assumption, with which I grew up, that a mining rush had been superimposed on wilderness" (p.124). Harris, one of the most important and influential scholars of British Columbia's native-newcomer history, bases this striking reversal on a 1930 report by ethnographer James Teit of which he had previously been unaware. Based on interviews conducted between 1904 and 1907 with elders of the Sinixt (Lake) people whose ancestors had lived in the region, Teit's report details Indigenous peoples' village sites and the devastating impacts of imported disease (pp.194-195). In this case, not only were the physical bodies and communities of Indigenous peoples destroyed and reduced by pathogens introduced by European and American newcomers, even Settler knowledge of

indigeneity was discarded and ignored. In Harris' analysis, "[m]ine is another example, from one who should have known better, of the substitution of wilderness for an erased Native world" (1997 p.xvi). This is erasure: the total removal of Indigenous being on the land, even from history, memory, and culture, to facilitate the transfer of those lands. This can even be accomplished without the removal of Indigenous bodies; it is the relational networks with place that sustain Indigenous being that are the true targets of erasure.

Veracini notes that settler colonialism is most often pursued by settler collectives operating in corporate form (Veracini, 2010a pp.59-62). It is easy and not uncommon to ascribe Settler peoples the role of occupation while attributing erasure to a combination of 'just war' by state and imperial para-/military forces, and uncontrollable diseases like smallpox or influenza, washing Settler hands of responsibility. Individual Settler people deny their colonial responsibilities through this corporate 'limited liability' such that settler colonialism "obscures the conditions of its own production" (p.14). However, Settler peoples are — historically and in the present — directly implicated in acts of erasure. It is more acceptable to suggest that the British Empire or the American state 'have colonised' than to suggest that the Settler populations of the northern bloc 'are colonisers/colonial.' This is part of the complex dynamic whereby Settler people, even as they are or become aware of the existence of settler colonial atrocities, are able to deny their own complicity (Regan, 2010) or even those of their forbears.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> It is an enduring example of the resiliency of Settler denial that Cole Harris, an articulate and ground-breaking analyst of the creation of colonial space in Canada and an enormous influence on this research project, included an epilogue to his seminal work *Making Native Space* (2002 pp.293-323) that retrenches deeply into

The goal of erasure is the reconciliation of the colonial difference through the materialisation of perceived *terra nullius* (Tully, 2000), an 'empty land' that, if not actually empty, is at least open: to the entrance of settlers, to being reshaped, to the extraction of advantage. The literature on *terra nullius* is extensive, and it was recently condemned as part of the 'doctrine of discovery' by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2012). For the purposes of settler colonial erasure, *terra nullius* can be thought of as the creation of a vast, conceptual space of exception. Settler state sovereignty is premised on spaces of exception that reduce Indigenous people to *homo sacer* (Morgensen, 2011), and Settler identities are entwined with spatial segregation through frontier narratives that exile indigeneity to the wilderness beyond the reach of the civilising state (Larsen, 2003 pp.92-94). Thus state space is premised on the erasure of indigeneity itself; Indigenous bodies stripped of sacred nature can be consumed or disposed of in a variety of ways without consequence. The governmental act of regulating and extinguishing indigeneity exceeds Settler sovereignty in two major ways: first, in the extension of the power of life or death over populations whose relationships are not considered part of the state (thus an extra-territorial assertion of sovereign power), and second, in the extension of the state over territories to which Settler people have no legitimate claim based on the presence of Indigenous peoples.

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colonial mentalities based on a personal, familial connection to a colonised space (his family ranch in British Columbia). This juxtaposition is so stark, that it has received an enormous amount of scholarly attention (Harris *et al.*, 2003) without resolution.

According with Agamben's observations of the creation of spaces of exception and the imposition of spatial restriction, and the reduction of human life to numbers, both Canada and the United States imposed 'band lists' on Indigenous communities. These lists of names of 'official' members, later identified by personal identification cards (numbered), issued by the government, were used to control Indigenous movements on and off of reserves and to prevent the entry of Indigenous individuals into colonial spaces, like cities and towns (Frideres *et al.*, 2004 pp. 95-102). Further, the governments of these states have turned the extermination of Indigenous peoples into a demographic problem. By claiming the sole responsibility to determine who is 'Indian' (as per the Constitution in Canada or a whole host of statutes at federal and state levels in America), states were able to legislate rules of heritage. These 'status' laws — based often on varying levels of blood quantum in the USA (Garoutte, 2003 pp.38-60), and an odd, collapsing system of parentage in Canada (Lawrence, 2003 p.6) — ensure that, even as Indigenous populations increase, 'Indian' people are disappearing.

### **Physical Erasure**

Indigenous peoples perceived across settler colonial difference are often constructed as a threat: to the advantages conferred by the occupation of spaces of opportunity, to the safety of Settler people and to the norms and 'civilised' values of settler colonisers. As a consequence, all manner of violence is directed at Indigenous peoples, resulting in the physical elimination, removal, or disappearance of indigeneity from place. Physical erasure of Indigenous peoples is often initiated extraterritorially by para-/military forces. This is important for understanding the concept of 'the frontier' (below); however, it should not be read to implicate only metropole powers in physical erasure.

Settler collectives also participate in the physical erasure of Indigenous peoples and spaces. With rare exceptions, it has been expected that Indigenous peoples will assimilate into and disappear from Settler spaces, rather than the other way around. There are, of course, exceptions to this. There are widespread accounts of Settler people either excluded or exiled from larger collectives, or remnants of failed or collapses collectives, being adopted into Indigenous societies. For example, the second Roanoke colony is believed to have been assimilated into local Indigenous societies sometime between 1578 and 1590 (Kupperman, 2000 p.12). In a different but related vein, the Métis people of the Red River Valley, while a hybrid of Scottish, French, English, Cree and other peoples, are widely recognised as an emergent Indigenous peoplehood (Read & Webb, 2012; Tough & McGregor, 2011). Although the Métis are both culturally and genetically related to European peoples, they assert indigenised networks of being on the land rather than dominating colonial displacement of indigeneity.<sup>61</sup> Indigenous networks were capable of absorbing these non-indigenous Others absent the violent intercession of colonial force. As Chapter 3 has shown, settler colonial space is created by the direct assertion of Settler power over place with the result that exceptional examples such as Roanoke or the Métis are rare.

Of course, personal relationships between Settler and Indigenous peoples are not completely encompassed by the drive for erasure, but the threat of colonial violence is ever-present. Even when pursued ‘peacefully,’ intermarriage and social

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<sup>61</sup> Recalling Chapter 2, this is another reason why John Ralston Saul’s construction of Canada as a “métis nation” is so inaccurate (2008): in addition to covering up Canadian colonial dispossession, it conflates Settler and Métis people, a type of “narrative transfer” (Veracini, 2010a pp.42-43).

integration of Indigenous peoples into Settler spaces occurs in a highly coercive and uneven environment. For example, settler colonial logics that divide and sort have consistently dehumanised Indigenous people, and especially Indigenous women (Smith, 2005; Maracle, 1996 pp.14-19), leading to widespread gendered and racialised violence. The selective dehumanisation of Indigenous women by settler colonisers contributes to very real physical erasures; consider the contemporary case of the hundreds of missing and murdered Indigenous women in and around Vancouver (Dean, 2010 p.14).

More broadly, Settler collectives also play direct roles in spreading disease (Swanky, 2012; Wright, 1992 pp.74, 103-104) and in extermination through dispossession. Returning to the example of the Pacific Northwest, Settler ranchers did not necessarily intend to physically erase Indigenous populations, but as they monopolised both grazing lands and food markets in the British Columbia Interior, they deprived Indigenous communities of networks of resources that had sustained them since time immemorial (Thistle, 2011; Harris & Demeritt, 1997 pp.234-240). Erasure through deprivation continues to this day. Despite the fact that Settler societies of the northern bloc are among the most affluent in history, Indigenous communities continue to endure starvation, lack of access to clean drinking water, lack of medical and other health and social services (including education), enforced isolation, and denial of a sufficient land base for social health and reproduction.

### **Conceptual Erasure**

As well as the removal of the physical presence of Indigenous people from the land, settler colonial logics call for the removal of Indigenous peoples — at least as

autonomous, intelligent actors — from the understood history of places (Veracini, 2007). Bureaucratic management techniques ensure that the business of solving the ‘Indian problem’ does not impact on the daily life of the average Settler person by positioning Indigenous populations as inventories to be liquidated rather than people to be engaged with. Erasure has been at times a matter of counting: how many ‘Indians’ are left, how many fewer than last year, how much property should be allocated ‘per Indian,’ and when will the ‘vanishing Indian’ become reality (Veracini, 2010a: 39-40; Neu, 2000). This further allows individual Settlers to deny complicity in the erasure of Indigenous presence: the modern, industrial state counts, includes or excludes, and ultimately disposes of Indigenous peoples, and the state is impersonal. That the state exists because of settler colonisation, that Settler people serve as bureaucrats and colonial agents, or that erasure and occupation go hand in hand is rarely acknowledged.

Indigenous histories, especially those living histories sustained in oral traditions, are the storehouse of knowledge of rituals, sacred places, and place-based personalities and tend to confound settler colonisation. These histories constantly remind Settler peoples of their illegitimacy on the land; they point out that there are ways of relating to place beyond the understanding of contemporary Settler peoples; and, they provide a source of strength and identity for Indigenous groups even after they have been separated from their places or their spaces have been replaced by colonial spaces. As Holm *et al.*, point out, even the stories of loss regarding a sacred space can be a source of identity (Holm *et al.* 2003 pp.9-12; see also Chapter 1). Settler colonisers, then, if they wish to avoid the discomfort associated with living Indigenous histories, must follow a logic of deliberately constructing histories in which Indigenous peoples are either absent or relegated



at the margins. These then serve as the reference point for Settler people to judge their own 'progress' or 'development' as a people against anachronistic 'savages' who lack agency or power. This is also projected temporally forward: settler colonisation does not intend simply to erase these histories, but also to predetermine the future through "master narratives" (Austin, 2010) of technological progress, the inevitability of civilisation, rights-based social assimilation, and the wholesale replacement of Indigenous systems of law and governance (Alfred, 2009a).

Settler collectives create and perpetuate Settler myths such as the "Peacemaker myth" (Regan, 2010), the heroic trope of the frontier pioneer (Nettlebeck & Foster, 2012), and the up-by-the-bootstraps myth of the self-made Settler (Ramirez, 2012), to name but a few. Often these myths were created and are perpetuated by playing off of stereotypes about settlement in other colonial jurisdictions. Historian Chris Arnett has remarked:

... there remains the colonial myth that, contrary to what happened south of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, the British resettlement of British Columbia was benign, bloodless and law-abiding ... Granted the "Indian Wars" of British Columbia came nowhere near the wholesale slaughter of aboriginal people that too often characterized the inter-racial conflict in the western United States, but as one historian has observed, "human conflict does not decline in complexity as it does in scale."

Arnett, 1999 p.14

Both American and Canadian settler colonisation involved in varying combinations: treaty-making and breaking; violent military and para-military force; and, concerted attempts at cultural assimilation or extermination.

In Regan's work, she positions the peacemaker narrative in opposition to the violent reality of residential schools (Regan, 2010). As she points out, many physical buildings of residential schools still exist, though Settler people are unable to "see" them (2010 pp.5-6). Steeped in national myths premised on narratives of treaty making and cooperation, and especially played off against perceptions of American 'militant' conquest, residential schools physically disappear to Settler Canadians: the structures are not seen, the damage not perceived. The residential school project in Canada, jointly pursued by the federal government and churches, was premised on the belief that 'primitive' and 'disappearing' Indigenous peoples could best be served by ushering their extinction through assimilation.<sup>62</sup> However, given that the role of residential schools in erasure cannot be denied, Settler people instead must either deny their own involvement with them (and thus with settler colonisation) or deny that they existed at all. This is symptomatic of widespread Settler denial that serves not just to erase indigeneity, but also to erase the colonising act of erasure.

### **Erasure and Transfer**

Erasure is required at some stage for each type of settler colonial land transfer. Sometimes this is obvious; for example "necropolitical transfer" (Veracini, 2010a: 35) involves the physical liquidation of Indigenous peoples by military action. However, erasure is involved in many other kinds of transfer either concurrent to (and hidden by) occupation and *bricolage*, or (usually) before or after these other colonising acts. Notably, Veracini describes that "perception transfer" — "when

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<sup>62</sup> Residential schools should be taken as largely commensurate with industrial schools in the United States; see Key Terms.

indigenous peoples are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual presence is not registered (... for example, when indigenous people are understood as part of the landscape)” — “is a crucial prerequisite to other forms of transfer” (Veracini, 2010a p.36). Veracini then draws attention to an important dynamic: “when really existing indigenous people enter the field of settler perception, they are deemed to have entered the settler space and can therefore be considered exogenous” (2010a p.36). The implication is that erasure is unidirectional. Indigenous peoples cannot be retrieved or revived from their erased condition without serious disruption to settler colonial space. All transfer, regardless of whether it relies on physical or conceptual erasure, is intended to be permanent. Arguments that certain kinds of transfer are ‘better’ than others — such as the Canadian assertion of the peacemaker myth juxtaposed against violent American frontier adventurism — are seeking to differentiate between genocidal acts based on arbitrary distinctions, splitting colonial hairs.

### **Dynamics of Occupation**

Occupation, like all settler colonial dynamics, constantly changes. However, while the means by which occupation is pursued changes, the fundamental reasons why — to claim places from Indigenous peoples and integrate them into settler colonial spaces — remain the same. By way of a useful example, it is an often-overlooked point that much of the Pacific Northwest, from Oregon north through British Columbia, was appropriated into the sovereign territory of the northern bloc states despite vast swaths of territory being occupied and used almost exclusively by Indigenous people. The first official census of British Columbia in 1881, for

example, shows no data for the entire northeastern part of the province (Harris & Galois, 1997). This was not only due to a lack of Settler collectives to enumerate and survey in that region, but also because the power of the state in that place was largely theoretical. Importantly, it is not an indication of *terra nullius*: Indigenous people lived in that area and Indigenous being on the land still defined the spaces of the British Columbia Interior. Similarly, south of the border, American statehood did not suddenly exile Indigenous peoples “behind bushes, roaming the woods, consigned to the wilderness” (Barr, 2012 p.512). However, this demonstrates the ties between occupation and erasure: regardless of indigeneity in place, occupation is always predicated on perceived *terra nullius*. Occupation is a nuanced concept; it is not simply a matter of being in place.

### **Occupation as Praxis**

Occupation can be considered as a type of praxis: key aspects of settler colonial logics rely on occupancy and settlement in a place, and so settler colonial spatialities are partially created and contoured through the act of asserting residency and right to place. Settler colonial occupation is about relationships to place, which can be spatially stretched. As spatial orientations in the northern bloc changed, away from logics of the metropole and imperatives to sustain links between colony and foreign imperial centres towards identifying spaces of opportunity and supporting the creation of institutionalised privilege, a concept that could be called Settler ‘homeland’ developed. Settler people begin to think of themselves as belonging in place. As the need for particular resources or access to place becomes subsumed in the drive to construct colonial spaces of control (Barker, 2009; 2007) — security being a prime consideration in the perception of

opportunity and in the willingness of Settler people to invest in particular institutions of privilege — Settler perceptions of Indigenous peoples and spaces change. In the broadest strokes, the shift from a metropole colonial logic to a settler colonial logic with respect to the perception of Indigenous peoples is a shift from the perception of Indigenous peoples as potentially useful partners to probably threatening outsiders.

Occupation praxis is based, in the barest sense, on acquiring knowledge of place (see below on *bricolage*). The ability to scientifically break place into separate elements and reposition those elements in Settler systems of knowledge (Soguk, 2011 p.41) is part of the conceptual occupation of a place. Settler people exert claims to frontier areas premised on the presence of spaces seen as *for settlement* — the perception of spaces of opportunity, and attractive clear-levelled ground waiting to be occupied — without actually having to occupy frontier spaces. For example, “wilderness” may be “protected” as national park space, such as Banff (Canada) or Yellowstone (America) National Parks, incorporating these places into Settler geometries of power not because they are occupied, but to serve as a reminder that they potentially could be (Banivanua Mar, 2010).

### **‘Improvement’ of Land**

As discussed in Chapter 2, occupation praxis involves the two key components: habitation and improvement. If habitation can be conceptual — knowledge of, intent to use, and assertion of juridical claim over space — then so can improvement. The complex interplay of being in place and the transformation of space by settler colonisers is often couched in positivist terms like ‘improvement,’ but studies of these dynamics in action reveal a far-messier production and

consumption of space. For example, consider again the complex dynamics of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Pacific Northwest: by the time of northern bloc state consolidation,<sup>63</sup> settler colonisers had developed the array of aforementioned juridical, militant, and socio-cultural methods of colonising. However, from the initial moments of colonisation, a fundamental premise remained that land could only be claimed if it was occupied *and* improved (MacMillan, 2011; Tully, 1995). In the East, this often included plantation farms, town squares, and other recognisable aspects of transplanted English culture (MacMillan, 2011 p.51). In the Pacific Northwest, improvement had been reinterpreted through centuries of experience of settler colonisation and advancements in technologies to connect spaces across distance. The islands and coastlines of the Salish Sea (Strait of Georgia) were considered ‘improved’ by the presence of British naval and military power (Arnett, 1999). This in turn drew occupants to the area, settler colonisers who perceived spaces of opportunity thanks to improved security and connectedness.

Improvement is not simply justification for occupation; it also facilitates occupation by increasing the mobility of Settler people. Settler “mobility” is not simply “movement” in that mobility “involves paying close attention to how the displacement of people entails meaning, power, practice and embodiment” (Leitner *et al.*, 2008 p.165). Examining the ties between mobility and

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<sup>63</sup> The Pacific Northwest was divided between and incorporated into the trans-continental states of Canada and the USA during the same time period and largely owing to regional political and economic dynamics, contra regional identities (Lindquist, 2012; Alper, 2011). British Columbia was incorporated into the Canadian state in 1871; Oregon joined the United States of America in 1859, and Washington followed in 1889.

improvement reveals that settler colonial technologies can impart different meanings to place. It seems obvious that the development of railways that ran through the Rocky Mountains did not imply that Settler people would flood into the mountainous areas to build homesteads and other improvements. Rather the railways were themselves an improvement, in that they selectively increased the mobility of Settler peoples between nodal centres, and between eastern settler colonial spaces and the western frontier.

### **Occupation and the State**

The important point to take away from the above discussions of occupation, and the entangled conceptual and physical evidences of occupation and improvement required to justify the transfer of land in the settler colonial imaginary, is the degree to which settler colonial logics can justify claiming place and transforming space on large scales. The stereotype of the pastoral homestead represents only one kind of settlement, but one that accords smoothly with settler colonial tropes. Edmonds discusses this in the context of early Melbourne, demonstrating that ideas of and distinctions between settlements, pastoral homesteads, and Indigenous spaces were never as clear as Settler people might like (Edmonds, 2010). This is similar to Indigenous spaces in Vancouver and Victoria that were approached differently by Settlers based on perceived 'whiteness' of the Indigenous peoples occupying them (Barman, 2010). These nuances, however, are obscured both by time and by the spatial assertion of the flattening, erasing form of the settler colonial state.

Through the establishment of spaces of violent exceptionalism as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the basis for the state was laid. The state played a vital role in

settler colonisation as it allowed for occupation to be claimed in any place where force could be brought to bear against Indigenous peoples and spaces. In some senses, the idea of the Settler 'nation' — an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) developed and expressed through affective processes of occupation — comes into being and fills the spatial container of the state. This is to some extent irrespective of actual physical settlement; what matters is whether or not a place is occupied *in the settler colonial imagination*. The state is, of course, only one of many types of institutions of privilege constructed by settler collectives. Other types of institution have implied occupation at different times and through different means.

Conceptual occupation can be said to result in the occupation of places even in the absence of physical Settler presence or infrastructure; an extreme example can be found in imperial designs on Antarctica, which relied on the potential for occupation by 'suitable' (Nordic) peoples (Howkins, 2010). However, the same dynamics are at play when Settler state power is used to claim occupation and improvement of spaces vital and current to Indigenous being on the land. Nationalism and state building can create the impression of a space as properly belonging to the Settler society in very powerful and enduring ways, even when those spaces are unoccupied by Settler people. For example, the far north is a vital part of Canadian identity even though it remains one of the few areas in the northern bloc primarily populated by Indigenous peoples (Hall, 2012; Stevenson, 2012). In this way, frontier spaces can be seen to be 'occupied' because they fall *inside the borders* of the settler colonial state.

The Settler state promotes continuous colonisation in that it takes over many acts of erasure, and encourages and endorses (through zoning and



incentives like the Northern Allowance)<sup>64</sup> further occupation through selective immigration of “bureaucratic heroes” (Stevenson, 2012 pp.595-596). The state, as it assumes territorial control of places, normalises and selectively promotes or absorbs institutions of privilege. To Settler peoples, these institutions seem to grow naturally from their own hard work and good use of territorial opportunity. The fact that their institutions are dominant and confer upon them massive privilege is, in the mind of Settler peoples, justification of settler colonisation.

### **Railways and Borders: Mobility and Immobility**

Returning again to the example of the colonisation of the Pacific Northwest, settlement began with the individual or small group cooptation and occupation of land, a venture considered risky, and in fact often violent, given Indigenous resistance to incursion in the absence of or in violation of treaties and agreements. Farmers and homesteaders around the Salish Sea (Strait of Georgia) often clashed violently with Indigenous communities, conflicts used to justify the application of military force and deadly juridical ‘justice’ (Arnett, 1999). Later, populations in Victoria and the Lower Mainland swelled with the discovery of gold in the Fraser Valley, again an opportunity for individuals or small collectives of miners to converge around and (violently) accumulate valuable commodities. As people and value became concentrated in place, the burgeoning Settler states of Canada and the United States both moved to claim these places, each contra the other. With the consolidation of states and the certainty of ownership and property, capital investments rolled in, as did settler populations.

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<sup>64</sup> The Canadian government allows a tax exemption for people living and working in the high north to help attract immigrants by defraying the high costs of living in the Arctic.

The development of British Columbia is exemplary here, and Jean Barman's comprehensive and authoritative history of the province, *The West Beyond the West* (1991) documents the settler colonisation of the province in detail. British Columbia existed in the imperial hinterlands in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its depressed economic conditions encouraged the British Crown to offload the struggling colony on the newly-formed Dominion of Canada. British Columbia was admitted to Confederation in 1871 with a population of only around twenty thousand, and most of its claimed territory occupied by Indigenous nations (pp.99-100). However, as part of joining Confederation, the federal government prioritised the space-time compression of distance between eastern political governance in Ontario, and Vancouver on the Pacific Coast: the Trans-Canada Railway was extended into British Columbia in 1880 (p.107), and occupation immediately increased. First, masses of railway workers (primarily Chinese immigrants/'sojourners,' but also from many other places) flooded the province, and spread through the interior following the construction of the line. With the completion of the line to Vancouver, property in the Lower Mainland became extremely valuable:

[t]he speculative cycle of growth that accompanied [the railway's] first months rivalled Victoria's transformation at the beginning of the gold rush. In 1884 the shores of Burrard Inlet had a population of about nine hundred; within weeks of incorporation Vancouver alone possessed some eight hundred businesses and a population of two thousand.

p.108

Though growth soon stalled, the railway continued to open up the province to resource extraction. Soon the "Canadian Pacific Railway energised the province's

economy” by connecting the “isolated clusters of settlement generally based in a single resource” across the province (p.114). At this point, settler colonial power grew enormously:

[b]etween the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the beginning of the First World War ... British Columbia underwent a demographic transformation. In less than three decades the province’s non-native population expanded almost tenfold, even as the Indian people declined by one-third. A fragile settler society on the frontier of the western world became a self-confident political and social entity.

p.129

The example of the growth of British Columbia shows the way that settler occupation *both precedes and follows* the assertion of settler colonial spatial forms, such as the state. The settlements throughout British Columbia existed in the pockets where settler collectives perceived opportunity in resource extraction, and these settlements justified assertions of state sovereignty. State power and legal mechanisms secured private property from the threat of competing claims, encouraging capital investment, which in turn energised the mobility of new settler collectives and occupation of more of the province. Occupation accelerated as more ‘frontier’ space became ‘settled,’ opening up more opportunities by carving up place without regard for Indigenous claims.

Paradoxically, this opening up of land to occupation followed the assertion of borders designed to restrict and control the movement of peoples (such as the groups of miners that flooded into British Columbia from California following gold rushes). Demarcating space is both a product of Settler occupation and a way of asserting it, and this is commonly done through the establishing of ‘official’

borders of various kinds. Borders should not be confused with frontiers,<sup>65</sup> and while Settler perceptions of and interactions with frontier spaces is discussed further below, borders are noteworthy in the specific ways that they play into transfers of land. One of the most obvious the role of borders in “administrative transfer”:

... when the administrative borders of the settler polity are redrawn and indigenous people lose entitlements they had retained in the context of previous arrangements ... In this case, as the settler entity retains the sovereign capacity to draw and enforce administrative boundaries, it is rights — not bodies — that are transferred, and indigenous peoples become the subject of a transfer that does not necessarily displace them physically ... Privileging a definition of indigeneity that is patrilineally transmitted, [as Canada did through the Indian Act] for example, can allow the possibility of transferring indigenous women and their children away from their tribal memberships and entitlements.

Veracini, 2010a p.44

In this way, the drawing of state borders contribute to Indigenous dispossession generally. But as shown in the example of British Columbia, occupation and the assertion of settler colonial space preceded the state; the generation of states and borders must be seen as a social arrangement — a spatial geometry of power

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<sup>65</sup> Frontiers, though both actual in the sense of places of contact and contestation with Indigenous peoples, and perceived in the sense of Settler perceptions of opportunity in ‘empty spaces’ (see below), should not be conflated with the settler colonial imaginary of ‘wilderness,’ a frightening, dangerous exterior to Settler space. Even frontiers have a place in the settler colonial imaginary; the wild does not.

imposed by Settler people — that amplifies the settler colonial claims to land made through occupation.

### **Dynamics of *Bricolage***

So far, the dynamics of settler colonial colonisation have discussed the destruction and erasure of indigeneity from place, and its replacement with Settler spaces and population economies. However, given this discussion of erasure, the preservation of Indigenous elements of place must be discussed. Settler people do not intend to completely destroy Indigenous networks; they seek to preserve particular elements of these networks as a form of primitive accumulation particular to settler colonialism. These elements, disconnected from their relational contexts, form both the physical and conceptual basis of settler colonial space. Indigeneity pervades settler colonial societies — it is impossible to miss it in Victoria or Vancouver — but it is denuded, its power and meaning circumscribed and controlled by settler colonial institutions. This is the settler colonial “*bricolage*” (Selbin, 2010); a synthetic collection of elements of indigeneity, and metropole cultural ‘fragments’ (Butlin, 2009 pp.10-11), organised and contextualised to give meaning to Settler spaces. This *bricolage* changes over time, comprising a constantly evolving legend of the present (Stevenson, 2012 p.593), the narrative towards which Settler dysconsciousness is biased.

### **Settler *Bricoleurs*: Story and Reality**

The process of erasure can be totalising without being total. Selective erasure of indigeneity also grants to settler colonisers the power to preserve and recontextualize (bodies, stories, art work, names and terms, etc.), and of course,

this comes along with the power to create implicit meaning. The majority of settler colonial *bricolage* consists of telling different stories about elements of place, their meanings, and how Settler people come to know and be in relationship to them. In the broad strokes, this can be thought of as cultural appropriation (Haig-Brown, 2010), but with specific purpose. All sorts of imperial projects have relied on cultural appropriation — and attendant notions of exoticisation, commoditisation of bodies, and cultural superiority — in the exercise of colonising power (see for example the exploration of Africa: Driver, 2000). What makes settler colonialism different is primarily in that objects are decontextualised and moved around, but not necessarily moved out of place.<sup>66</sup> For Settler people, Indigenous ‘artefacts’ preserved in place become settler colonial objects through the stories told about them, as much as through their material situation. As Settler society builds its *bricolage*, Settler perspectives take priority. Consider Gloria Jean Frank’s article, ‘“That’s My Dinner on Display”: A First Nations Reflection on Museum Culture’ (2000), which implies that the Royal British Columbia Museum maintains artefacts from the Indigenous peoples of the province, largely gathered around or before the consolidation of the Northwest, as part of the popular regional story rather than for the sake of the Indigenous peoples who produced and used them.

Land itself is an interesting case, especially in the Pacific Northwest. The consolidation of this area involved closely connected physical and conceptual *bricolage* as part of processes of making settler colonial space. The settlers of the

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<sup>66</sup> This can be contrasted with metropole colonisation that involved people, artwork, and even buildings being relocated from places such as Egypt and India to reside in London museums.

Victoria colony recognised the physical benefits of Indigenous farmlands in the Cowichan Valley; certainly Cowichan farming and their use of the area made it clear that the place was suited to agricultural production, but this knowledge is not simply instrumental: it is part of Cowichan knowledge generated through longstanding ontological relationships to place. The settlers who occupied the area through pre-emption (Arnett, 1999 pp.102-110) preserved the physicality of the land as agricultural base while appropriating and *transferring the idea* or knowledge of the space from Indigenous.

Settler *bricolage* is made of both physical and conceptual elements. The appropriated works of art and cultural display that fill museums and private galleries are obvious, as are their use in reminding Settler people of their cultural superiority and victorious condition with respect to indigeneity. The Settler appropriation of stereotypical West Coast Indigenous imagery in the Pacific Northwest, whether by artists (Braun, 2002) or by sports teams like the Vancouver Canucks (Mandelker, 2000 pp.371-372), helps to remind Settler people of their residency in a 'special locale,' contributing to the Settler's mimetic character (see below). These are both examples of how the *bricolage* is tied up with 'deep colonising' (see Chapter 3) as well: these particular elements are preserved because they are somehow special, alien, or exotic, and so they point to the colonial history of Settler peoples. Yet, rather than point to illegitimacy, they instead obscure settler colonialism further. The settler colonial contextual meaning displaces meanings derived from Indigenous networks of being on the land.

### **Necro-Settler Colonialism: Preserving Bodies, Living and Dead**

There is a persistent myth in the contemporary northern bloc that, because Indigenous peoples have not been exterminated by colonisation, colonialism must be ‘over.’ The deaths of Indigenous peoples as discussed by Arnett, above, are used as a measuring stick for colonisation. However, as stated, erasure — even physical erasure — targets indigeneity rather than Indigenous peoples’ corporeal forms (though sometimes the latter is eliminated to remove the former from place). Indigenous peoples as physical entities can be incorporated into settler colonial space as part of the Settler *bricolage*, so long as they are isolated from networks of being on the land by colonial geometries of power.

Like apologies, which are discussed further in Chapter 5, ‘humanitarian’ efforts to sustain Indigenous life are not done *for* but rather *to* Indigenous peoples in order to disavow Settler desires for the elimination of the Native. Like the pittance compensation made by early Canadian governments to local Indigenous communities, as discussed by Parenteau (2012), payment is made to benefit the Settler payees and their claims to legitimacy, rather than the Indigenous recipients. Stevenson discusses in-depth the complicated bio-politics involved in state efforts to keep the Inuit alive in the far north, through historical removal of Tuberculosis patients to southern clinics, and through suicide prevention hotlines aimed at Inuit youth (Stevenson, 2012). The efforts to sustain Inuit life, as mentioned in Chapter 3, are directed in part towards reconciling colonial difference: between Canadian peacekeeping myths and the reality of choosing between a “disturbed” and a “dead” Inuit.

These efforts are also part and parcel of Settler colonial distinctiveness: through administrative transfer, “Settlers insist on their capacity to define who is



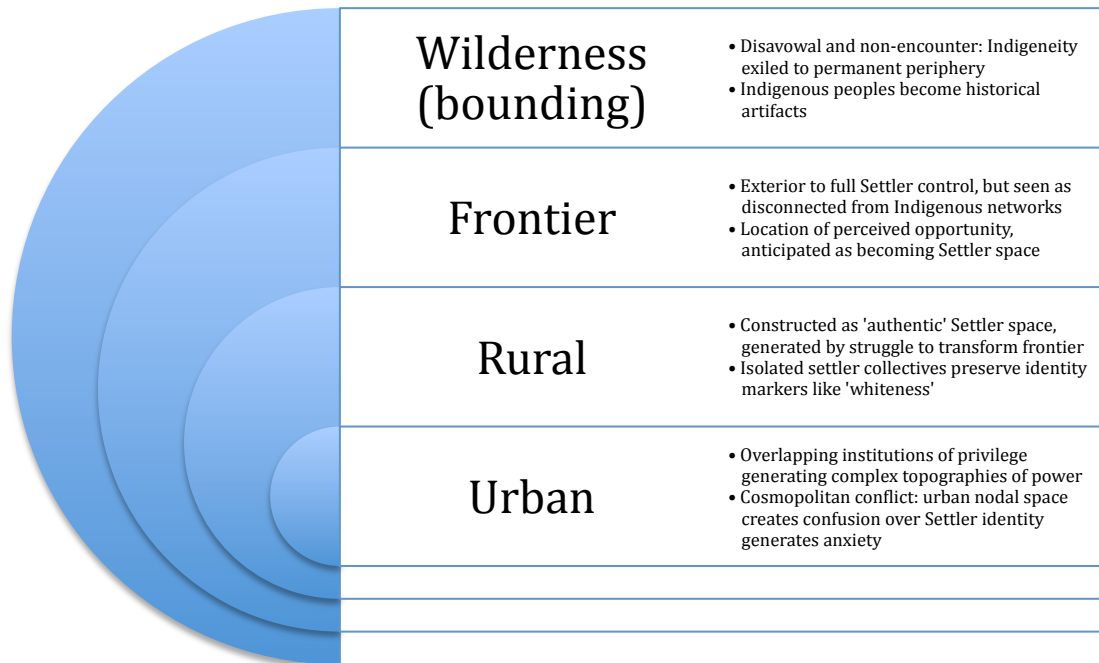
an indigenous person and who isn't, and this capacity constitutes a marker of their control over the population economy" (Veracini, 2010a p.44). By maintaining Inuit or other Indigenous bodies in settler colonial space, and by treating Indigenous peoples' 'special circumstances' through bureaucratic and humanitarian aid, Settler people continue to assert their initial relative advantage: Settler people set themselves up as arbitrators of whether Indigenous peoples live or die. In doing so, Indigenous agency is dispersed; by co-opting the power of basic life or death over Indigenous communities, a system of dependency is created (Alfred, 2009b p.9) that *forces Indigenous peoples to live*, if only a 'bare life' (see Chapter 2). This helps to explain why Indigenous peoples often perceive Settler efforts to 'care' for Indigenous health as "murderous" (Stevenson, 2012) — indigeneity is functionally 'murdered' by the incorporation of Indigenous bodies into the Settler *bricolage*.

Contrasted but related to the preservation of *living* Indigenous bodies, is the spatial preservation of *deceased*, Settler bodies: what I refer to here as 'necro-settler colonialism' (not to be confused with necropolitical transfer, described above). Necro-settler colonialism contributes to the Settler *bricolage* by inserting Settler bodies into the earth. Both necro-settler colonisation and necropolitical transfer involve death, but in the latter, indigenous subjectivities are removed and forgotten, while in the former, Settler 'selves' are memorialised and made sacred. But even this is transitory: Settler bodies, and attendant memories of their lives, are remembered so they can be forgotten later. The Settler is haunted by the unanswerable question: if this is your land, where are your stories (Chamberlin, 2004; see also: Deloria, 2003 pp.165-183)? It is a constant challenge to Settler belonging that indigeneity is able to assert a right to land expressed in intimate physical terms: not of English desire for a bride (MacMillan, 2012 p.54), but of

children's affection for parents, grandparents, family and ancestors. Settler people must die, be interned, be memorialised, and, ultimately, be forgotten to truly challenge Indigenous connections to place. This is the equivalent of the creation of new 'time immemorial' through Settler *bricolage*: the incontestable temporal frame of Indigenous being on the land that Settler people hope to replicate by selectively preserving living Indigenous and deceased Settler bodies.

### **Urban, Rural, Frontier: Settler Colonial Spatial Trialectics**

The conceptual Settler *bricolage* that helps to generate settler colonial space tends to follow particular narrative forms, which translates into tendencies to perceive and enact particular kinds of space. Nationalist narratives tend to mirror the structure of the state; cities and towns rely on common practices of planning and underlying assumptions of property and the cadastral grid. O'Connell (2010) describes the settler colonial geographies of the northern bloc as existing in tension between what she labels "an urban-rural dyad", that has myriad influences on racism, perceptions of exogenous Others, frontier ethics, and the meaning of being 'Settler.' To this urban-rural dyad, I would add the space of the frontier — as it is perceived, and how it is interacted with, though not conflating the two (see Chapter 2) — to describe the settler colonial 'spatial trialectic' of the northern bloc (see Figure 10).



**Figure 10 - The idealised Settler spatial trialectic, bounded by non-encounter in a distant 'wilderness.' In reality, 'frontier' spaces are contested spaces that crosscut all settler colonial space, contra disavowed indigeneity.**

What is a frontier space in the settler colonial imagination? It is important to recall here to the logics of settler colonialism introduced in Chapter 2, remembering that colonial logics structure spaces of exception and segregation, informing wide-spread frontier and wilderness myths. Thus a frontier can be located in a variety of places, produced by the separating, sorting, segregating logics of colonisation. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is a place considered outside of settler colonial space, but where indigeneity has been dispersed to the extent that Settler people can perceive opportunity in that place. In the earlier discussion of the development of British Columbia and Vancouver, frontier spaces were revealed to be dependent on some level of erasure (of rightful Indigenous belonging) and occupation (as part of the assertion of sovereignty). They are also intimately tied up with settler colonial *bricolage*, in the way that persistent perceptions of frontier

struggle come to define Settler histories and empower institutions of privilege (like whiteness, defined against both frontier absence and urban multicultural 'impurity'; see: O'Connell, 2010). As such, though a frontier may be outside of settler colonial space, it is incorporated into settler colonial imagined geographies; anticipatory geographies of colonisation need to reference frontiers 'becoming' Settler spaces to justify myths of progress that underpin settler colonial claims to place.

O'Connell does an excellent job of describing the complex interplay between urban and rural in the Settler consciousness through an examination of 'Redneck Games' public events in both Ontario and Georgia. Cities are cast in the dubious position of harkening back to imperial metropolises — recall settler collectives motivated by perceptions that 'something is wrong' in the imperial core — while rural areas are instilled with an inherent 'frontier ethic' that legitimates racialised violence, and supports different topographies of power. This imbricates with perceptions of 'dangerous' exogenous Others populating cities, and of rural spaces constructed as more 'authentically' Settler. The result is the creation of a form of "redneck whiteness" that simultaneously contributes to violently gatekeeping indigenous and exogenous Others in Settler space more generally (pp.553-556), and differentially privileges particular (white, employed, property-owning) Settlers.

But it would be a mistake to believe that the Settler *bricolage* that locates frontier spaces on the physical periphery of settlement, away from areas of Settler population and culture, is accurate. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Indigenous spatial networks can persist in and against settler colonial space (Adams, 2011; Shaw, 2006), such as the way that Indigenous communities have coalesced in

places like San Francisco (Nagel, 1995 pp.158-160) and Vancouver (Dean, 2010). Further, “intimate frontiers” like those described by Edmonds (2010), reveal that opportunity can be perceived through relationships between as few as two people in place. There are thus two competing visions of frontier geography. In the first, frontier *bricolage* incorporates landscapes into settler colonial space, locating ‘natural environments’ as *terra nullius*, the initial stage of settler colonial spatial dynamics, rural landscapes as ‘clear-levelled ground,’ and urban environments as spaces of highly institutionalised privilege (see Figure 8). In the second, frontier spaces are revealed as spaces of contestation: between the dynamic production and consumption of space through generation of Settler *bricolage*, and resurgent Indigenous networks of being on the land.

There are several important things to keep in mind about the settler colonial spatial trialectic. First, it is the spatial analogue to the settler colonial identity trialectic, the spatialisation of Settler efforts to gatekeep and sort their own and perceived Other populations. The admittance of exogenous Others to urban spaces corresponds to Settler privilege in many ways, but often conflicts with white privilege. This creates tensions in Settler identities, and precarity in communities of exogenous Others (Choudry, 2010; Walia, 2010). Second, the selective designation of spaces for “preservation” (Banivanua Mar, 2010), whether ‘nature areas’ such as parks, heritage buildings, or spaces in urban centres, helps to produce a Settler spatial ‘compass.’ By orienting settler colonial imagined geographies around particular kinds of protected space, certain histories are reinforced: as discussed, Settler peoples have constructed the northern bloc in part through stories. The ability to refer to Banff or Yellowstone Parks as ‘preserved,’ supports the construction of pristine wilderness (Short, 1991) — absent

indigeneity — and this is balanced against the ‘heritage’ status of urban sites, that privileges the settler colonial urban form of history (Veracini, 2007). This dovetails neatly with the way that Indigenous spaces are preserved in (or exiled to) rural and frontier areas, and ignored in cities, even where urban Indigenous communities assert these spaces. Confining Indigenous peoples to reservations/reserves is a common tactic within settler colonisation, with state created reserves in the United States and Canada, as indeed is the case in most settler colonial states. Further, Indigenous people who relocate to urban centres tend to be ghettoised into racially- and class-segregated neighbourhoods (Dean 2010 pp.124-125). Both spaces represent frontiers to eventually be colonised, but the spatial trialectic obscures indigeneity in these urban spaces from Settler view.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Bricolage, Belonging, and Transfer***

Ultimately, Settler people combine their colonising experiences of pursuing opportunity and advantage with larger tropes of Indigenous primitivism or inevitable extinction into a conceptual *bricolage* in which Settler and other colonising peoples have a place, exogenous Others are problematically recognised, and Indigenous peoples and relational networks disappear completely. *Bricolage* does not just follow erasure and occupation, however. Stories of Settler right to land and belonging are often founded on stories of failed settlements or Settlers

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<sup>67</sup> Urban frontiers are not ‘colonised’ so much as ‘gentrified.’ However, even discussions of urban gentrification tend to obscure histories of Indigenous being in place, both historically/traditionally, and contemporarily/adaptively. For more on this dynamic, see Freeman, *‘Toronto has no history!’: Indigeneity, settler colonialism and historical memory in Canada’s largest city* (2010).

who have been driven out of place (see the examples of Roanoke and Algeria: Kupperman, 2000 pp.11-12; 1985; Veracini, 2008 p.374); these too contribute to the conceptual *bricolage* of belonging in conjunction with occupation through knowledge. It is certainly a contributing factor to the couching of military and paramilitary assaults against Indigenous being on the land in the rhetoric of protecting settler collectives, including those corporate forms that exist outside of the official borders and boundaries of settler colonial space. Settler collectives, like the settlement of Deadwood (as in the example discussed in Chapter 3), were considered ‘threatened’ by virtue of being outside of secure Settler space.

But *bricolage* and transfer also involve the obvious assertion of elements of indigeneity within Settler spaces. Transfer by performance, “when settlers — indeed often the very epitomes of regenerated settlerhood — dress up as natives” (Veracini, 2010a p.47) is closely related to transfer by settler indigenisation, “when settler groups claim current indigenous status” (p.46), and even to multicultural transfer, “when indigenous autonomy is collapsed within exogenous alterity” (p.43). The Boston Tea Party (1773), as transfer by performance, preceded American claims to indigenisation (pp.43-48), paralleling widespread Canadian appropriation of Indigenous symbols to nationalist ends, such as during the Calgary (1988) and Vancouver (2010) Olympic Games (Ellis, 2012; O’Bonsawin, 2010). Although different Settler peoples have uniquely constructed their conceptual *bricolage*, the effect has been the same: to allow Settler people to claim legitimacy on and naturalisation to place through selective incorporations of indigeneity.

This goes hand-in-hand with settler colonialism’s “mimetic character” which “produces a circumstance where the actual operation of settler colonial

practices is concealed behind other occurrences” (Veracini, 2010a p.14). Settler colonial spaces takes on characteristics and appearances of Indigenous spaces as Settler people build cultures of place in part because the settler colonial imagined geography needs to be conceptually patched across the colonial difference in often messy ways. Again, this is not hybridity<sup>68</sup> or evidence of agency on the part of Indigenous peoples (although Indigenous peoples have at times asserted agency against and through these processes) because the preserved elements are *for Settler usage, contextualised through settler colonial logics*. This is worth underlining: settler colonialism does not necessarily ‘create’ space, but rather captures pieces of Indigenous spatial networks and reassembles them differently in place.

### **Ideal-type Transcendence: The ‘Burbs**

There remains, in the logic of settler colonialism, very real, place-based frontiers: the ‘energy frontier’ in British Columbia (Brody, 1981) and northern Alberta (Huseman & Short, 2012); or the mineral wealth motivating Indigenous dispossession in the American southwest (*In the Light of Reverence*, 2002; Weyler, 1992 p.137). These spaces represent a haunting of Settler societies’ metropole antecedents; specifically, the periphery, the exterior to the empire. Settler space is totalising; ideally, Settler people monopolise all roles, seek to naturalise absolutely, and seek to erase Indigenous presence completely. Thus, a spatial paradox: Settler spatial dynamics rely on settler collectives conditioned to seek opportunity in the frontier. This drives the transformative dynamics of settler colonisation described

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<sup>68</sup> Recall the discussion of John Ralston Saul’s thesis of Canada as a “métis nation” (2008) in Chapter 2, and Alfred’s response (2010) to this thesis as racist and reflective of Settler privilege.



in this chapter. But the frontier becomes, in the Settler imagination, more and more distant and reified. Opportunity shrinks, becomes harder to access, and anxieties arise over the topographies of power that become increasingly stratified, as will be explored further in Chapter 5. The very dynamics designed to foreclose the frontier become disrupted as the frontier is foreclosed.

The unresolved question of settler colonialism is how to kill the myth of spatial opportunity even as Settler power is directed into the final foreclosures of Indigenous space. This question is, more appropriately, how to discipline the desires and aspirations of Settler peoples — whose identities are inwardly focused by dynamics of erasure and *bricolage* — to seek opportunity in frontier spaces? This is the question that must be answered in order for a concept discussed throughout this project to become actualised: transcendence of the settler colonial form. The previous chapters have referenced aspects of Settler naturalisation in place and supersession of colonial pasts as the ultimate goal of settler colonisation, and at times the spaces that Settler build to house their privilege, such as whiteness and urban spaces, persist in reflecting the settler colonial conditions of their construction. This maintains settler colonialism as the primary spatial referent in the northern bloc, and so settler colonial transcendence must also be implemented spatially. One way that this has been attempted is through the Settler suburban landscape.

### **The Spatial Trialectic and the Suburbs as the Best of All Worlds**

Suburbs, while not an exclusively American formation, are certainly ubiquitous to the northern bloc. The development of urban and suburban space in the northern bloc was relatively similar between the two states (Harris & Lewis, 2001 p.263).

Urban historians Harris and Lewis have shown that suburbs have not been exclusively white, middle class spaces, or spatially overdetermined by nearby cities, yet there remains a persistent image of the suburb as a space of white, heteronormative, patriarchal affluence (pp.262-263). It is this 'imagined' suburb that never was — the ideal form of the suburban space within the colonial imagination — that I engage with here.

For several decades post-WWII, suburbia held a powerful and important place in the imagined geographies of Canada and the United States. Veracini positions the suburb as an extension of common settler colonial forms, noting the similarities between frontier homestead dynamics and the dynamics of Settler migrations to suburbs (2011). However, while I agree with Veracini's analysis, I assert that the Settler suburb also occupies a fundamentally different position in that, unlike the homestead or the city, the suburb occupies a position imaginable but not inherently located in the spatial trialectic. The suburb maintains many of the desirable characteristics of the city, without requiring or engendering the personal acts of violence associated with racialised urban tensions. The suburb comes to represent an 'interior frontier': a space filled with opportunity and otherwise unoccupied, but unlike frontiers perceived in absence or wilderness, the suburb is already bounded by Settler institutions of privilege:

[t]hey have a distinct materiality, a material environment that is historically constructed — networks of roads and railroads, the layout and design of residences, offices, factories, public parks and recreation areas, fences, walls, etc. This materiality regulates and mediates social relations and daily routines within a place, and is thus imbued with power ... the walls and fences of gated communities, a distinct feature of

US suburbia, work to restrict access and exclude non-residents. In this case the walls and fences facilitate the ability of its residents to control access to 'their' space, creating socio-spatial boundaries that define who belongs and often become the object of contention.

Leitner *et al.*, 2008 p.161

Interconnections of capital and technology (such as the automobile and systems of highways) serve to shrink the wide-open spaces of the rural, even as lawns and horizontally-stretched properties deny the population crowding of cities and perceived 'threat' of exogenous Others.

Suburbs are situated as in-between space in settler colonial imagined geographies, and in some senses sit outside of the anticipatory geographies of settlement. Suburbs are created, but not anticipated. Settlers almost stumble upon suburbs by trying to fulfil the competing desires represented in the spatial trialectic: to identify potential opportunities (frontiers), to assert sovereignty to create relative advantage (rural spaces), and to gatekeep and discipline agonistic, exogenous Others (cities). Suburbs emerge from the at-times conflicting dynamics of settler colonisation; they are consistent with the genealogy of settler colonial space, but formed through an intensification of existing spatial dynamics. They are shaped by the racialised dynamics of "metropolitan development in the post-World War II years" resulting in the dominance of "sprawl, concentrated poverty and segregation (if not hypersegregation)" (Squires & Kubrin, 2005 p.38). As such, suburban areas were seen as areas of escape, especially *vis-à-vis* areas of poverty or racialisation.

### **Betters Homes and Gardens: Property and Security**

Suburban escape can be seen as a kind of settler colonial transcendence, the closing of the settler historical 'palindrome' (Veracini, 2010a pp.100-101). Though a number of transfers are operative in Settler suburbs, one of the most important to recognise is Veracini's second type of narrative transfer:

... when a "tide of history" rationale is invoked to deny legitimacy to ongoing indigenous presences and grievances. This transfer focuses on "fatal impacts", on indigenous discontinuity with the past, and typically expresses regret for the inevitable "vanishing" of indigenous peoples. If they have had their last stand, if their defeat is irretrievably located in the past, their activism in the present is perceived as illegitimate ... Indigenous survival is thus transferred away, foreclosed.

Veracini, 2010a pp.41-42

This type of transfer is pursued throughout settler colonial space, yet it is key to a spatial transcendence. The absolute denial of contemporary indigeneity, subsumed beneath the transformed geography of the suburb, frees the Settler imagination from fear of settler colonial transcendence through the destruction or expulsion of the settlement (see example of Algeria: Veracini, 2010a pp.102-104). Suburban spatialities are in part an expression of Settler peoples' desires to permanently empty the indigenous sector of the identity trialectic, and free themselves from the threat of indigeneity forever.

Settler people, as mentioned above, 'stumble upon' suburbs. That is to say, consistent with settler collectives colonising outwards from a perceived-degenerate imperial core, Settler people flee from other settler colonial spaces to suburbs. This has historically been a highly-racialised (thought not racially

homogenous) migration, with suburbs akin to settler collectives organised around whiteness and class privilege:

[w]hiteness as economic value is, of course, one of the main reasons behind the American phenomenon of “white flight”. Alongside industrial relocation to the suburbs and the Cold War fear of urban nuclear annihilation ... white homeowners relocated to the suburbs in order to protect their real-estate investments ... The fear was that as more and more black people moved into what were ostensibly white neighbourhoods property values would decline. As such, we might reinterpret white flight as a form of anticipation, a speculative hedge against devaluation both of the real-estate asset price and its underlying value: whiteness.

Baldwin, 2011 p.177

This anticipation is consistent with settler colonial pre-emption, although what is being pre-empted is any loss of Settler privilege. Suburban property ownership is commensurate in the Settler imagination with security — and finality — of colonial power.

This is part of what Veracini describes as Settler suburbs turning the world inside out. Settler suburban dynamics “aimed to pre-empt the possibility of revolutionary change by turning the world inside out rather than upside down” (Veracini, 2011b p.6), accomplished by ‘re-enacting’ settler migrations and homesteading through automotive commutes and private property — preferably at the end of a cul-de-sac. The settler colonial search for opportunity in space is followed by the need to secure that space against threat; in this world turned inside out, the absolute securing of space is co-constitutive with Settlers’ waning

need to search out new spaces, distant from imperial cores, but not threatened by frontier encroachment. It is not simply security that is being guaranteed, but in fact, privilege and advantage. In that sense, suburbs represent a space of endless (though not infinite) opportunity, contributing to their utopian character.

Contrasted with urban, rural, or frontier spaces, suburban spaces are presented as healthful and encouraging of social (and sexual) reproduction and well-being. Urban spaces are often portrayed as ‘polluted,’ whether environmentally or racially (see, for example, the case study of Los Angeles: Frost, 2001 pp.364-365). While rural spaces are portrayed as healthful (O’Connell, 2010), they are also subject to intrusions by exogenous Others from the cities, and Indigenous others from the frontiers. As such, the lawns and greenspaces of Settler suburbs recall the benefits of rural homesteads in different forms that imply cosmopolitan sensibilities. Lawns and greenspaces are portrayed as essential to the raising of children (Veracini, 2011b), which is a conceptual continuation of the rural land base that enables subsistence and sustaining Settler families. With the meeting of basic needs no longer an issue in the suburbs, the self-perpetuation that drives settler colonial logics twists as Settler people focus on raising, rather than merely feeding, the next generation of Settler people, including spatial reorganisation around exploiting women in the home, as the “unserved and unregulated suburb offered ... the best opportunity to supplement monetary income with unpaid labour” (Harris & Lewis, 2001 p.278).

Lawns and greenspaces also represent a continuation and, perhaps, pinnacle of ‘preserved’ spaces that provide the compass of the settler colonial spatial trialectic. Suburban lawns and greenspaces parallel and epitomise the preservation of ‘nature’ in national parks (Banivanua Mar, 2010). These are spaces

of groomed, conquered nature, both representatives of myths of triumph over 'wilderness' (including indigeneity), and providing a controlled, conceptual periphery to balance and orient the spatial trialectic. However, while parks represent the periphery of the national core (the Settler metropole), the core-periphery dynamic in the suburbs is played out in individual property arrangements. Wilhite argues that suburbs should be understood as intensifications of northern bloc 'regionalism,' simultaneously secure as part of the triumphal nation state, and yet internally competitive against other suburban regions for desirable populations, economic influence, and place-based identity (Wilhite, 2012). In the suburbs, the distance from the metropole no longer implies a loss of privilege, and so by definition, the proximity to spaces of 'nature' or 'wilderness' no longer implies an increase in perceived threat. The settler colonial frontier is effectively displaced, rural spaces becoming the new periphery to the urban, Settler core, with the suburbs disconnected from both. Individual lawns and parks become display places for everything from garden gnomes to automobiles, and other signs of Settler identity and affluence.

### **Behind Closed Doors: Obscuring Intimate Violence and Cultures of Amnesia**

The way that the spatial constructions of the Settler suburb create false ideas of a dispelled, distant frontier, and settled population dynamics contra the urban-rural dyad, serves to distance Settler people even further from the effects of settler colonialism. By orienting Settler *bricolage* in a way that positions the 'frontier' as something distant to the point of abstraction, where most people will never experience it — except for the brave and adventurous few (Stevenson, 2012) — settler colonialism's intimate violence is obfuscated. This has the effect of

crystallising perceptions of peacefulness not at all representative of the violent reality of settler colonialism.<sup>69</sup>

As noted throughout this and the previous two chapters, there have been examples of the same spatial dynamics at play in early trans-Atlantic colonisation and in contemporary Canadian and American societies. Erasure and occupation do not only happen in the ‘wilderness’; they happen in cities and towns (Barman, 2010; Edmonds, 2010), and are pursued by bureaucracies and corporations (Mandelker, 2000; Neu, 2000), and through everyday relationships (Denis, 2012; Adams, 2011). An example is the way that “missing and murdered women” — primarily Indigenous women who have been disappeared from the Vancouver area — have been continually marginalised through media discourses and social perceptions (Jiwani & Young, 2006).<sup>70</sup> These trends are only exacerbated in suburbs, where Indigenous peoples’ economic dispossession often bars them physically from access (through lack of ability to purchase property, lack of access to transportation, and disconnection from flows of capital that carry bodies to and through suburbs as labour or work-social connections), contributing to their conceptual erasure.

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<sup>69</sup> In recognition of the ‘colonial difference’ between the perception and reality of suburbs, suburban spaces are not fundamentally safer in terms of measurable statistics like crime, than urban centres, and both are less safe than ‘rural’ areas (Squires & Kubrin, 2001 p.54). However, this fact is dispelled from whitestream Settler consciousness, as the majority of urban and suburban violence is experienced by Black and other racialised communities.

<sup>70</sup> Violence against Indigenous women is a particular feature of settler colonialism, and has been discussed throughout but bears emphasis here. See also: Martin-Hill (2004a), Culhane (2003), and Trask (1996).



The settler colonial spatial trialectic contributes to the normalisation and valorisation of paramilitary and police violence against unruly 'Indians' by the maintenance of the abstract, distant understanding of 'frontier.' From the Canadian mounted police forces historically subduing the Canadian West (Nettleback and Forster, 2012) to provincial police forces clashing with Indigenous protestors occupying suburban developments near Six Nations (Keefer, 2010a pp.78-80), the assertion of indigeneity in settled spaces is punished severely. The 'frontier ethic' that O'Connell describes in 'rural' spaces is doubly harmful because it both motivates and normalises settler colonial violence. O'Connell describes the personalised racist attacks on racialised minorities in rural Ontario communities as caught up in white privilege and perceptions of rural residents as 'purer' (2010 pp.553-556). These acts of racialised violence are subsumed in positive tropes of heroic paramilitary and racialised 'self-defence' on the frontier.

Turning to the situation of the suburb, a space itself in tension between the urban and the rural: to the extent that colonial violence is normalised through its *activity* across frontier spaces, suburbs normalise policing and associated violence by its *absence*. This is part of what I call a culture of amnesia: the very acts that create settler colonial space are forgotten and disavowed along the Settler trajectory towards transcending settler colonialism. This culture of amnesia is built on a culture of dysconsciousness, but in addition to 'how things are,' Settler people increasingly accept new assumptions that justify changes to space as if these changes are natural and inevitable, or in fact portray spaces as rightly returning to normal from some period of disruption. In connection with the security of property (above), security against violence is assumed in the suburbs. Harvey refers to the gated "securitopias" of neo-liberal America as an aspirational

space “designed to induce nirvana rather than critical awareness” (2000 p.168). There is no need for police to walk a beat, because Indigenous and exogenous Others are barred at the gates. The display of violence associated with colonial exclusion and dispossession is discarded along with the racialised violence of the rural and urban (and, not coincidentally, with the physical presence of racialised bodies). Similarly, the ‘classless’ space of a uniform middle-class polity denudes and submerges Settler drives for opportunity in the frontier. The frontier can safely be foreclosed on and forgotten — replaced by suburban lawns and greenspaces, as discussed above, because the suburb sits as a utopian example of how to discipline space.

### **Conclusion: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Disillusionment**

It is likely obvious that the fantasies of suburban transcendence of settler colonialism have never come to pass. Settler colonialism remains alive and well throughout the northern bloc, but it is also contested and, as such, visible and impossible to forget. Indigenous resistance continues to challenge erasure, contest occupation, and reassert being on the land that reveals the lie of Settler *bricolage*. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, Indigenous resistance is a vibrant and powerful force in the northern bloc, and has played a key role in unsettling suburban colonial transcendence. However there are other factors at play. The Settler suburb has proven unequal to the task of being all things to all people; it has in part been undercut by clashes between ‘capitalism and its discontents,’ and in part revealed as an idealised form of extreme conservatism that has proven untenable.

Harris and Lewis point out that the perceived suburban ideal of ethnically-homogenous and class-privileged radial communities organised around an urban core, has never actually been achieved (Harris & Lewis, 2001). Suburban spaces have always involved a mixture of affluent communities seeking urban escape, and aspirational communities seeking settlement opportunities in 'open' spaces on the periphery of developed cities (Squires & Kubrin, 2005). Further, following the post-World War II reification of the white, affluent suburban space in the northern bloc, neo-liberal globalisation has resulted in a recession of the Settler middle class. As exogenous Others have gained the economic ability to purchase desirable rather than peripheral or segregated suburban property, and as the pressures of urban population and dispossession have pushed upon the boundaries of suburban space, many wealthy Settlers have withdrawn further. The existential horror and disconnect of "exurbs", suburban sprawl, and widespread urban decay has disillusioned many Settler people (see for example: Davis, 2007). Even Settler peoples who occupy positions of privilege in settler colonial spaces participate in the production of oppressive power. They then may have that same oppressive power directed against them (Barker 2009; 2007). The satisfaction of material desire through property, monocultural remove, and classless capitalism, has proven to many Settler peoples to be a fantasy. However, it would be incorrect to assume that leftist Settler movements against capital and state oppression of difference, as exemplified in the suburban ideal, are inherently decolonising, as will be shown in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5: Collisions — Conflicting Trajectories of Leftist Activists and Indigenous Peoples' Movements**

### **Considering Capitalism, Globalisation, and Decolonisation**

Settler colonial space is not isolated; the northern bloc is only an island or 'fortress' in the most conservative of imaginations (Gilbert, 2007). The logics, spatialities, and processes of spatial production and consumption that have been outlined in the previous three chapters, function at a variety of scales, though not all. Individual Settlers, settler collectives of various sizes and dispositions, and the aggregate 'settling' of the Canadian and American states, all evidence settler colonial dynamics, but many other spatial dynamics and power influences interconnect in and through the northern bloc. An inventory of all the forces that interpenetrate settler colonial space would be a major undertaking, to say nothing of an enumeration of the shifting, contradictory interactions between these forces; such an attempt is beyond the scope of this project. However, the shifting contexts of power around and through the northern bloc do have important effects on settler colonisation and Settler peoples, and these must be accounted for in any theorisation of decolonisation.

In this chapter, I examine a powerful and often-overlooked current in the northern bloc: persistent settler colonialism within leftist or radical movements, especially against the backdrop of contemporary globalising capital and the movements that seek to resist the commodifying, homogenising effects of capitalism. Capitalism is deeply imbricated with neo-colonialism (Pollard *et al.*, 2009) and neo-imperialism (Flusty *et al.*, 2007), and has historically been a major engine of settler colonisation (Tuck & Yang, 2012 p.5). However, capitalism and globalisation, though often linked to the deprivation of Indigenous communities, are not the sole or even direct cause of this dispossession (Choudry, 2010 pp.98-99). It is often easy — too easy — to see settler colonial constructs in familiar spaces of conservative, nationalist, or aspirational capitalist privilege, such as the idealised suburban spaces described in Chapter 4. However, a closer examination of the role of capital in settling the northern bloc, and the discourses in and around Settler anti-capital or anti-globalisation movements, is revealing: even trenchant, conservative Settler people can be disadvantaged by capital, and perhaps more importantly, even radical Settler anti-capitalists can drive settler colonialism towards fantasies of transcendence and naturalisation.

### **Scale: Settler Colonialism on the Global Stage**

Scale is a frame of analysis that fairly begs to be applied to the northern bloc. Settler colonisation has generated dynamics that are extremely powerful and influential, and which have already been shown to function at various scales, from the individual and small collective, to huge movements and migrations of populations or the establishment of whole societies. Leitner *et al.*, have pointed

out that some geographers have called for abandoning scale as a method of analysis in favour of networks and mobilities (2008 p.158). However, there is a particular reason for pursuing some analysis through a scalar frame: the clashes between the territorialising and deterritorialising drives of settler and neo-colonialisms, and the tension that this generates in capital mobility. As discussed below, the construction of Settler identities and the influence of settler colonial power changes between localised Settler spaces, settler nation state scales, and global perspectives. Settler colonialism is not alone in claiming the territory of the Canadian and American states, and the forces that overlap and interpenetrate with settler colonial spaces also extend beyond the northern bloc. The power of globalising capital, especially, demands a consideration of settler colonial power and how it is situated in relation to global or globalising political economies.

Leitner *et al.* (2008) provide an excellent, functional definition of scale in their study of the spatialities of contentious politics:

[s]cale is conceptualised as a relational, power-laden and contested construction that actors strategically engage with, in order to legitimise or challenge existing power relations. In the course of these struggles new scales are constructed, and the relative importance of different scales is reconfigured. Central to the politics of scale is the manipulation of relations of power and authority. This process is highly contested, involving numerous negotiations and struggles between different actors as they attempt to reshape the scalar spatiality of power and authority ... We argue ... the politics of scale should be invoked in a ... restrictive,

relational sense; to examine the ways in which various scales articulate with one another.

Leitner *et al.*, 2008 p.159

As Leitner *et al.* warn, it is important not to assume the embeddedness or positionality of one political practice or set of actors within another. Settler colonialism and globalising capital function together at a variety of scales; they co-produce (along with state and other forces) the spatial dynamics of the northern bloc. However, beyond the northern bloc, other forces of globalising capital, itself not homogenous across scale or place, work to co-opt or denude the power of northern bloc states and societies.

It is perhaps best to begin by recognising a debt to the work of Makare Stewart-Harawira in *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization* (2005). In this ambitious work, Stewart-Harawira tries to make sense of globalisation and neo-imperialism from an Indigenous perspective that connects these power dynamics to earlier colonial formations. Stewart-Harawira outlines many of the philosophical and ideological bases of colonialism, and I take many of her arguments as now given within fields relating to Indigenous peoples' politics and historical and contemporary colonialism. However, her focus on world systems analysis and neo-liberal globalisation has limits. I believe that Stewart-Harawira over-ascribes both hegemonic power and hegemonic aspirations to various imperial actors, and over-values the settler colonial-capital imbrication. There is a diverse history of settler colonialism that is specifically anti-capitalist in motivation or funded through vastly different economic means, such as Quakers in New England (Tiro, 2006) or the history of Siberian settler colonisation (Sablin & Savalyeva, 2011). To account for this, it is necessary to throw off presumption that

“vertical, inter-scalar relations dominate the spatiality of politics” (Leitner *et al.*, 2008 p.160), and search for the tensions between various scales in and around settler colonial spaces.

### **Local/Global, Individual/Collective, and Resonance**

It can be difficult to determine relative scales and scalar relations. Settler colonisation tends to be carried out by settler collectives, but how big is a collective? What is the role of the individual in the collective, and how do multiple collectives form a society? The answers to these questions are only partly pursued in this project, though the last has been obliquely answered in the previous two chapters: settler collectives form larger societies when they join together through common investment of sovereign capacity in institutions of privilege. In short, settler collectives pool and agree to share certain advantageous spaces. Of course, this can happen at a variety of scales. It would be possible to represent anything from a single family unit — the classic frontier homesteader — to an entire nation — as an imagined community in the tradition of Ben Anderson (2006) — as a settler collective.

Regional identities can be equally powerful, whether they overlap with national identities, as in the case of the Québécois, or span national differences, as in the cases of the Great Lakes Region (Taylor, 2010; White, 2011) and the Pacific Northwest (Alper, 2011; Barman, 2010). States and provinces in the northern bloc are exceptionally powerful institutions, and settler collectives come to invest very heavily in these structures as sources of both privilege and identity. And as discussed in the previous chapter, modes of living, such as divisions between urban, suburban, and rural, can play major roles in perceptions of spatial scale.



This is in part because settler colonial space is dynamic. There is no pure Settler 'local' in the northern bloc in the sense that all settler colonial spaces are dependent on and productive of wider imperial connections.

William Connolly, in his attempt to explain the genesis and significance of capitalism and Christianity in America, invokes the metaphor of the "resonance machine" (2008). Settler colonialism, concerned primarily with imposing power over place through the selective mobility and immobilisation of populations, similarly resonates with other means of exerting power over place, so long as they are not directly competitive. So it is that the northern bloc has not been immune to urbanisation and suburbanisation, industrialisation and deindustrialisation, and other spatial dynamics of globalising capital (Wood & Rossiter, 2011; Pollard *et al.*, 2009). However, it would be a mistake to view cities or workforces in the northern bloc as merely manifestations of capital — settler colonialism persists in space and effects and is affected by flows of capital.

The point is not that things and people move through capitalist means, but rather that mobilities are often directed *according to settler colonial needs*. Capitalism is the (or rather, a) vehicle for the movement of people and things that must accompany settler colonisation, and the systemic dynamics of the northern bloc are designed around capitalism while remaining, at the core, settler colonial dynamics. Here, Pollard *et al.*'s discussion of post-colonial geographies of capitalism is prescient:

... a postcolonial perspective pushes us to go further than traditional geographies of the Left which, though often sympathetic to the needs and experiences of the subaltern, tend to focus on systemic critiques of

capitalism and analyses of the formal spaces of labour, to the detriment of vivid, complex and embodied accounts of lives and livelihoods.

Pollard *et al.*, 2009 p.138

While their article focuses on the ways that concentrations of poverty in the Global North and wealth in Global South have been buried under meta-narratives of geography and capital (p.137), the point holds. The experiences of Settler people, of contemporary migrants and refugees, and of the cross-cutting racialised communities in the northern bloc, interact with but are not wholly defined by capital.

### **Interconnections: Networks, Nodes, and Circuits of Power**

Nascent British mercantile capitalism helped to fund many of the earliest efforts at settlement in the Americas (through ‘franchises’ granted by the Crown — see for example: MacMillan, 2011; Kupperman, 2000), and the British empire eventually came to dominate trade throughout North and South America by virtue of their trade monopoly and industrial capitalist economy (Taylor, 2010 pp.115-119; Galeano, 1997 pp.173-204). As has been discussed in earlier chapters, metropole colonial contact through traders began creating the conditions for the spread of circuits of capital through the northern bloc: colonisation by capital, a “relentless” and “omnipresent” commodification of the Indigenous lifeworld accompanied by an invasive, pervasive “economy of desire” (Mooers, 2001 p.69; see also: Holloway, 2010). Fur-trade colonialism, a colonial logic that involves the direct assertion of sovereignty by capitalist corporate entities like the Hudson Bay Company (Cavanagh, 2009; Day, 2000), helped to spread capitalist circuits through the interior of the northern bloc, and settlements tended to follow these circuits. By

the time settler colonisation rose to predominance in the northern bloc, capitalism was a familiar economic form, and capitalist elites wielded enormous power. Gregory has drawn attention to the tensions between the “immobility of spatial structures and their capacity to stretch across ever wider spans of time and space” (Gregory 1994, pp.92-93). Settler colonial institutions of privilege adhere in place partially because they are able to stretch across the northern bloc through the mobility of capital.

Butlin discusses how colonial settlement geography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been understood to produce difference between metropole and periphery as the result of fragmentary cultural transplanting — an incomplete and partial spread of culture through a few specific individuals (Butlin, 2009 pp.10-12), exemplified through the colonisation of Canada. However, taking settler colonial isopolitics into account, these cultural transplants must be re-examined. First, culture is not the only thing imported; political power and economic exploitation, among others, are stretched across space and empowered in new places by settler colonialism. Second, as Settler people isopolitically transfer their rights and support to new settler colonial structures and institutions, ties to other imperial regimes and structures are not severed, but altered. The conflicts between the British Empire and the emerging American Republic leading up to the War of 1812 demonstrate this tension. Both polities contested for subjects and citizens; both pursued settler colonisation though with different strategies and policies, but towards the same ends (Taylor, 2010 pp.8-10). Ultimately, both adopted domestic and international policies that helped to produce the current dynamics of globalising capital and neo-imperialism by the Global North, strengthening these connections and

encouraging interface between (supposedly hostile) settler colonial spaces and systems and other systems of imperialism and colonisation.

In the contemporary northern bloc, people are seen as more than just potential subjects, citizens, or even consumers. Populations are instead positioned as networks of globalised communities that have spread along with the expansive spaces of global capital. The globalisation of capital has been accompanied by a globalisation of people, and state and capital power have responded not by eliminating these flows, but rather channelling them:

[b]order controls are deployed against those whose recourse to migration results from the free licence afforded to capital to ravage entire economies and communities in the global South. While borders were essential to unify national markets in nascent capital-ism, today they are used to create differential zones of labour and surplus capital, in which cheap, temporary workforces are used to attract investments.

Walia, 2010 p.73

These migrant populations, dispossessed by capital, are part of the flows of people and things that sustain settler colonialism in the northern bloc. As mentioned in Chapter 4, though, the arrival of these newcomers generates adverse reactions in Settler populations, with cities inaccurately portrayed as sites of immigrant concentration and thus violence (O'Connell, 2010). In some senses, then, the mobility of capital can be seen as disruptive to the naturalisation imperative of settler colonialism. Settler colonisers desire settlement — which is to say finality, belonging, and irrefutable ownership of the land — as symbolised in the 1950s suburb, and as undermined by the realities of class and racial population dynamics in those suburbs (Squires & Kubrin, 2005). The mobility of people generated by

capital in the northern bloc has not been restricted to one kind of people; settler collectives of many compositions have followed flows of capital to suburbs, new urban frontiers, and ever more distant settlements, and mobility in itself has frustrated settler colonial transcendence.

### **Globalisation, Capital, and the Northern Bloc**

Since the end of the 'formal' frontier period and the consolidation of the American and Canadian state forms around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the contexts in which Settlers colonise have changed. As such, Settler dysconsciousness continues to function. This is related to the concept of 'banality' as a feature of contemporary neo-imperialism:

... imperialism has never gone away, disguising itself instead with considerable success in new and dissimulative clothes. ... much valuable attention has been invested in revealing the characteristics and global machinations of empire in a supposedly post-colonial time. Less attention, however, has been directed towards the everyday actions and implements through which imperial realities are created, valorized or concealed, received, reinterpreted, and even refused. Actions and implements through which empire must be constituted if it is to be a concrete reality at all.

Flusty *et al.*, 2008 p.617

The banality of contemporary neo-imperialism is, in part, a function of settler colonial dynamics. Erasure and *bricolage* combine to remove or distance any troubling aspects of oppressive power while emphasising and normalising Settler

‘right’ to exercise power over others. Through the invisibility of power dynamics, settler colonialism interconnects with wider imperial currents in powerful (and sometimes contradictory) ways.

### **Tangled Webs: Capitalism and Settler Colonialism**

The relationship between capitalism and settler colonialism is deep and well documented. Albert Memmi famously noted “the economic motives of colonial undertakings are revealed by every historian of colonialism” (Memmi 1965, p.3). In the northern bloc, Indigenous people have long made the connection between material dispossession and capitalism (see for example: Adams, 1989; Manuel & Posluns, 1974). It is not the goal of this chapter to recount all of these many, complex discourses, or to comment on capitalism itself. Rather, the goal of this section is to clarify the role that capital plays in shaping settler colonial space, and how Settler people in turn respond to capitalism.

Here, it is useful to reference several concepts developed in Chapters 3 and 4. The ‘clear-levelled ground’ of settler colonial space serves as an initial spatial claim, the assertion that a place is not, in fact, filled with meaning but is rather property waiting to be used and transformed. This claim generates property out of nothingness, and is the first real ‘profit’ of settler colonisation; it is primitive accumulation in some senses, but also a ‘violent creativity’ (Walker, 2011 pp.398-401) that asserts a new, exclusive space where before there were many, networked spaces. Later forms of capitalist processes, such as extractive or industrial capital, are still based on this ownership of property. However, the conceptual creation of property entails the severing of dynamic links that give meaning to ‘being in place’ — Indigenous populations are prevented from moving

through or occupying private property; animal migrations or environmental landscape features may be changed or interrupted — and so new methods of flow and interconnection of resources are required. As discussed above, capital serves this function.

Circuits of capital serve to link Settler labour to points of primitive accumulation or violent creation, especially in frontier areas. These circuits then, in turn, link Settler state produce and commodities to global markets. This has been the foundation of northern bloc economic dominance through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: easy access to place-based resources (erasure and occupation); pliant and organised labour population (Settler peoples); a mass underclass of potential labour (exogenous Others); and rapidly-developing and integrated systems of production, transport, and consumption (state and capital). Capital and the movements of resources and commodities through circuits of capital contribute heavily to the dynamics of settler colonial *bricolage*, as well. Wealth is seen as generated from within, rather than deriving from exploited Indigenous lands and resources. The individualistic, entrepreneurial spirit is celebrated, obscuring Indigenous labour, sacred histories, and collective ways of using land particular to Indigenous communities.

The capitalisation of settler colonialism must be seen as more than simply the ‘colonisation by capital’ of settler colonial space. As much as settler colonisation relies on capitalism to help move things through space, capitalism relies on the settler colonial structures of invasion to provide sites where capital may ‘touch down’ in a material sense. It is useful here to engage with the ways that capital and power intersect in an abstract sense, and then to examine northern bloc dynamics specifically. Drawing on Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler’s

concept of the capitalisation of power, it is possible to understand capitalism and settler colonialism as methods of transforming organised human efforts into vast reservoirs of power. In *The Capitalization of Power*, Nitzan and Bichler conceptualise capitalism not as a linear accumulation through investment and profit, but rather a vast leveraging of advantage with striking similarities to settler colonial advantage (2009; see also 2012). Nitzan and Bichler present the capitalisation of power as based on the ability to organise and deploy more power than competitors, rather than on the maximisation of profits and production as in classical capitalist economics. This can include “sabotage” and other types of imposed disadvantage that, while imposing a cost on the assertive capitalist entity’s resources without direct returns, depresses average profit, making for a net gain in power, both with respect to the opponent targeted and the market generally.

So, it must be recognised that capitalism selectively serves to both create and suppress value – both materially and socially – and is affectively ‘resonant’ (Dittmer, 2012 p.94) with settler colonialism on these grounds. The suppression of, first, indigenous difference, then of exogenous alterity, and finally of Settler heterogeneity, all serve to selectively capitalise the power of settler colonial elites and capitalist elites involved in the northern bloc. Consider the issue of labour, an example that will reoccur throughout this chapter. As pointed out by Cavanagh, settler colonialism did exploit Indigenous labour at times, but this was always a temporary scenario. Indigenous networks of being on the land frustrated attempts to organise a workforce through traditions of transversality (migratory traditions and spatially-stretched relationships to place; see: Soguk, 2011) and flexibility (Brody, 1981). Indigenous attachments to place have also fuelled the vast majority



of Indigenous occupations and standoffs with state authorities (Kilibarda, 2012). These conflicts tend to be sparked off by capitalist exploitation of lands under dispute — Oka, the most vivid standoff of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century, was about a graveyard targeted for ‘development’ into a golf course. So, in order to exploit the land, capitalism and settler colonialism are partnered; capital encourages the movement of Settler peoples into particular spaces for profit, while Settler states prevent Indigenous peoples from doing the same, and both state and capital work to ‘sort’ potential settlers.

Many of the types of transfer that Veracini identifies are clearly co-beneficial to both the interests of capital and settler collectives. In some cases, this is obvious: “[t]ransfer by coerced lifestyle change” (Veracini, 2010a, p.44) contributes directly to an increased dependence by Indigenous peoples on capitalist markets, and as traditional methods of material sustenance become unavailable, replacement resources must be found. The denial of traditional resource gathering inherently repositions Indigenous peoples as consumers; the networks of Indigenous being on the land are disrupted and market intermediaries are inserted into the disrupted space. Meanwhile, settler collectives use this change in lifestyle to extend claims to land. Veracini notes specifically the “individualisation of communal indigenous tenure [which] had devastating consequences for indigenous cohesion” (p.44).

Through the capitalisation of power, the pace of settler colonial accumulation increases. For example, a few wealthy ranchers were able to very quickly monopolise the majority of grazing land in the British Columbia Interior, displacing both Indigenous and Settler ranchers alike (Thistle, 2011). However, this process opens up settler colonial dynamics to influence from flows of capital

connected to globalising sources of power not beholden to settler collectives. In a similar region and period, witness how wealthy settlers were able to quickly and effectively appropriate and repurpose the fertile lands in the Okanagan basin (Wagner, 2008), only to have this original dispossession overtaken by the *nouveau riche*, who have turned much of the area into pocket wineries or vineyards. Settler agriculturalists have given way to the neo-liberal wealthy, turning the bastion of settler colonial accumulation into a neo-colonial resort, and disadvantaging settler colonial spaces of accumulation and production that were once powerfully entrenched.

#### **Flows of Capital, Flows of People: Power and mobility in the northern bloc**

Veracini notes, "settler colonialism collaborates on the outside and, at the same time, asserts an independent sovereign capacity on the inside" (Veracini 2010a, p.30). That is to say that, in an ideal system, settler colonialism disappears into other colonialisms, capitalism, and the diffuse flows of power in modernity. One of the collaborations that settler colonialism engages in is around the managing of bodies in place. Settler people are, by definition, people who have or are moving through space to settle in a new locale; movements of populations like these are often the result of global power dynamics, such as the mass emigrations from Ireland in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, or the movements of refugees and impoverished immigrants today (Day, 2005; Walia, 2010). At individual and small collective levels, capitalism often produces the conditions of 'decay' or oppression that Settler people seek to escape; more simply put, settler collectives are often economically motivated migrants.

Borders between the states of the northern bloc have always been selectively porous. For much of the period following the American Revolution (1775-1783), flows of people across the Atlantic and across the British-American (now Canadian-American) border underscored and furthered the similarities of varied settlers to each other, and through these similarities, tied British, Irish, American and other nationalist subjectivities to each other (Taylor, 2010, pp.8-9). The result was a multiplicity of Settler positionalities, with ambiguous relationships to each other, but common bonds forged in narratives of frontier struggle and the isopolitical rejection of imperial authority. That tradition is continued today, aided by capitalism, which facilitates the mobilisation of peoples and materials to the advantage of settler colonial states in exchange for the interests of capitalists taking precedence in state decisions. A prime example of this is the Security and Prosperity Partnership<sup>71</sup> (SPP) formed in 2005:

... the SPP is a NAFTA-plus-homeland-security model. But unlike NAFTA and other continental free trade agreements, the SPP is not an official treaty. Made operational through nineteen working groups that are outside the legislative process, over 300 policies and agreements are being implemented to realise the stated priorities. The North American Competitiveness Council (NACC) is the only formal advisory board to the SPP and is made up exclusively of corporate CEOs.

Walia, 2010 pp.77-78

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<sup>71</sup> The SPP is a complex arrangement, with many important impacts on Canadian and American (and Mexican) policy, law, and economics. For a thorough treatment of the SPP as it relates to the creation of a “divisive and striated regional space”, see Gilbert (2007).

In the way that it formalises the ties and cooperative interests between the Canadian and American states through capitalist extraction and exploitation, the SPP is exemplary as the latest iteration of a state-capital geometry of power “which tie different places together, subordinating some to the dictates of others” (Massey, 2009 p.16).

Space is relational: specific relationships enhance or suppress particular positionalities and mobilities, encouraging or discouraging the aggregation of different kinds of power (Massey, 2006; 2005). The power geometries of state-capital, like the SPP, work to increase the mobility of labouring populations by making migrations an economic necessity for many, while tailoring state systems of borders and population control to account for these economic migrants (Walia, 2010 p.72). The majority of migrant workers come from outside the northern bloc, primarily from Mexico and the Philippines, political economies that often bear the brunt of neo-liberal capitalism and neo-colonialism by the Global North. Mobility is not evenly distributed; geometries of power ‘preference’ citizens to non-citizens, and some (white, upper class, etc.) to others:

[p]referred citizens who represent capital are ensured border mobility through initiatives such as the Business Resumption and Partners in Protection Program and the Fast and Secure Trade Pass... In these ways, the SPP intensifies the practices of both state selection and state expulsion.

Walia, 2010 p.78

Thus geometries of power linked to state and capital produce a system of highly mobile bodies and highly selective borders and bureaucracies. These selection processes are reflective of different relationships between capital and race, but

also between race and place: in the northern bloc, non-white and racialised peoples, whether citizens or not, are increasingly deemed illegitimate by white Settler people (Walia, 2010; Choudry, 2010; Austin, 2010).

Shifts in the geometries of power produced by neo-liberal capital serve to exacerbate the previously noted tendencies of Settler people to categorise and organise things (including bodies) in space:

... neoliberal societies are divided according to multiple lines of inequality based on race, gender, sexuality, ability, age, region (both globally and within nation-states) and the domination of nature. Populations must be sorted into apparently 'natural' hierarchies if the differential distribution of social goods that capitalism creates is to be reconciled with the values espoused by a liberal politics. Because these hierarchies must be strengthened as ... inequalities increase, we have seen a return of social conservatism and a backlash against the progressive ... welfare state.

Day, 2005 p.6

This is an appropriate description of the social dynamics of the contemporary northern bloc. Further, these dynamics are largely presented, even by leftist and anti-colonial thinkers, as a negative: the erosion of the welfare states is in some ways the erosion of settler colonial privilege.

This sorting of people and imposition of particular relationships in place is reflective of what Sawyer has called the "uneven topographies of power" (2009), a concept introduced in Chapter 3 to articulate the overlapping terrain of settler colonial institutions of privilege. Topographies of power are produced by the relative tension between various geographically-situated sites of power

concentration. In the case of the northern bloc, the capitalisation of power does not over-determine geometries of power, but does enhance or suppress the geometries of power generated through settler colonisation. When flows of capital change — such as through the SPP, which gives capitalist elites a more direct voice in governance structures — the topographies of power shift. One of the consequences is a selective increase or decrease in mobility — “the material or virtual movability of individuals or objects through space-time, within and between places” (Leitner *et al.*, 2008 p.165) — for particular people and things.

It is especially important to consider these topographies as multiply constituted by various forms of dominating power because doing so requires one to think against the current of contemporary scholarship which posits capitalism as both hegemonic and totalising. Gibson-Graham have exhorted geographers to engage in “re-reading to uncover or excavate the possible” (Gibson-Graham, 2008 p.621) with respect to diverse economies existing alongside or within capitalist spaces, but it would be too much to assume that all non-capitalist economies uncovered in the northern bloc would also be anti-colonial or decolonising. Much contemporary scholarship on neo-liberalism and anti-capitalism pits the two as diametrically opposed, one a homogenising discourse of domination, the other a multiple and varied movement for liberation. However, as demonstrated here, capital and settler colonialism are both implicated in northern bloc topographies of power, and in effect, settler colonialism has at times “conditioned not only Indigenous peoples and their lands and the settler societies that occupy them, but all political, economic and cultural processes that those societies touch” (Morgensen, 2011 p.53). Anti-capitalist, anti-globalisation and anti-state movements must remember that their struggles impact on the settler colonial

northern bloc, which in turn “directly informs past and present processes of European colonisation, global capitalism, liberal modernity and international governance” (p.53).

### **In or Out: Race, Class, and the Topographies of Power**

Celia Haig-Brown has written that studies of diasporas must include a consideration of whose lands refugees and migrants come to occupy (Haig-Brown, 2009). Haig-Brown recognises that this consideration is dual-purpose: first, studies of diasporas often focus on the oppression, marginalisation and agency of displaced peoples coming to the northern bloc without recognising their complications in similar displacements of Indigenous peoples; and second, given the disparities of power and privilege within and between Settler peoples and exogenous subjectivities, it is ‘unfair’ to categorise all occupants of Canada and America as either ‘Indigenous or non-indigenous’ (p.9). Following from above, globalising capital helps to generate large, displaced populations who are forced to ‘follow stolen resources’ to places like the northern bloc (Tuck & Yang, 2010 pp.18-19; Walia, 2010). However, race and class (and other positionalities) exist in tension between various points of power in the topography of the northern bloc.

Gregory, citing Fredric Jameson, points out that the making of the Settler societies of the northern bloc has not been even, uncontested, or strictly homogenising. Focusing on the 1960s as a period of rapid social change, “countless people were admitted to the discourse of history for the first time, and ... this took place ‘internally as well as externally: those inner colonised of the First World — “minorities,” marginals, women — fully as much as its external subjects and official ‘natives” (Gregory, 1994 p.320). This is to say that through multiple,

interconnected contentions, the settler subject in the Settler identity trialectic has been constructed differently. This has been partly the result of the massive migrations and diasporas as part of state-capital systems. However, economic motives can only partly explain both these population dynamics, and the changes in Settler spatialities that accompany them. Gregory, in discussing the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles (1992), recognised the complex contribution of factors to these violent eruptions:

[o]ne would have to be a fool to deny the salience of class in all this; but it would be equally foolish to ignore the ways in which class relations were cross-cut with intricate ethnic, gender, and generational divisions ... no simple analysis will be able to do justice (literally so) to the complexities of despair and discrimination in late twentieth-century Los Angeles.

Gregory, 1994 p.308

I would add to that it is impossible to understand the shifting topographies of power in the northern bloc, entangled as they are with ethnicity, gender, class, and age divisions, without accounting for settler colonialism.

As neo-liberalism has come to dominate the political economy of the northern bloc, widening disparities of wealth between Global North and Global South have been mirrored by widening disparities of wealth in both American and Canadian societies (see for example: Williamson & Lindert, 1980 pp. 9-10). Even as more and more populations have been flowing into the northern bloc, institutions of privilege have at times contracted. The result is a complex dynamic of race and class privilege that can obscure settler colonialism. For example, the contemporary settler subject is often conceived of as racially white (and portrayed



as such by many Indigenous and racialised critics — see for example: Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009); however, throughout the history of the northern bloc, many settler people and collectives have not been or not been seen as white. This can include the French (Day, 2005; Austin, 2010), Black United Empire Loyalists who settled in Nova Scotia or communities of Jamaican maroons settling in Québec (Austin, 2010), Japanese settlers in Hawaii (Teves, 2012; Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2011), and many contemporary racialised economic migrants.

These perceptions of Otherness by Settler peoples have not always served to ensure that particular communities or collectives remain seen as 'exogenous.' To begin, Settler people are extremely heterogeneous in their ideas of 'Self' and 'Other,' in no small part because of their mimetic character and *bricoleur* preoccupations. Settler collectives can expand their sense of self to conditionally or fully admit peoples previously considered exogenous. This does not imply full admittance to settler colonial institutions of privilege; that is a matter of scale, and depends on the ability of one or some collectives to sway relocations of Settler sovereignty. This can be seen in some aspects of the American Civil Rights Movement: some institutions of privilege, like courts and governance structures, were forced — in part by the mobilisation of wealthy, white, and powerful northern Settlers (Tarrow, 1998) — to accept the black American community as 'Self,' with ripple effects through many other institutions of privilege.

Changes in collective make-up or membership in institutions of privilege may seem traumatic or disruptive to many Settler people, but what must be remembered is that more often than not, it is racialised and marginalised communities that are forced conform to particular settler colonial norms. This is accomplished in part by coercing 'minorities' to act like the dominant Settler

society, as can be witnessed in the ‘myth of the model minority’ that paradoxically results in an *increase* in racialised bodies admitted into Settler society, while also *strengthening* the institution of whiteness:

[t]he impossibility of fully becoming a white settler — in this case, white referring to an exceptionalized position with assumed rights to invulnerability and legal supremacy — as articulated by minority literature preoccupied with “glass ceilings” and “forever foreign” status and “myth of the model minority”, offers a strong critique of the myth of the democratic nation-state. However, its logical endpoint, the attainment of equal legal and cultural entitlements, is actually an investment in settler colonialism. Indeed, even the ability to be a minority citizen in the settler nation means an option to become a brown settler. For many people of color, becoming a subordinate settler is an option even when becoming white is not.

Tuck and Yang, 2012 p.18

Thus Settler privilege must be conceived of as a spectrum: while the white Settler has access to more institutions of privilege than the racialised Settler, both have access to some Settler privilege, and thus both contribute to settler colonisation in various capacities. Crucially, the same argument could be made about hetero- and homonormativity (Morgensen, 2010), or many other social divisions. However, race and class are crucial in that they speak to the continuing flow of bodies and construction of identities that are central to settler colonialism, and both linked to the globalisation of capital that has accompanied the rise of the northern bloc.

What results, then, is a complicated social ‘code’ of belonging that selectively polices and enforces the invisible boundaries within the northern bloc

that mirror the selectively porous borders between northern bloc states. Racialised populations are often Othered by language, such as long-standing Black Settler peoples in Québec who are subsumed into “cultural communities” and subordinated to the Québécois/white Francophone community (Austin, 2010 pp.23-26). Similarly, terms like ‘immigrant’ take on complicated connotations — a code-words that help to normalise and reinforce “Whiteness” at the heart of northern bloc societies, and “demobilise racialised populations in Canada” and America (Walia, 2011 p.79). However, just because settler colonial power is not evenly distributed, and is affected by the race and class dynamics of a mutable and dynamic society, does not mean that the responsibility for settler colonialism dissipates with privilege.

It would be ridiculous to claim that only the wealthy have responsibility for settler colonialism; many Settlers have been poor, and it is the myth of opportunity that continues to generate a globalised, racialised underclass of potential settler colonisers. It would be equally indefensible to claim that only Settler people are white, given the historical and contemporary cases of non-white or racialised settler colonisation. Settler colonialism, as previously established, is not the work of imperial elites alone, but rather of all peoples who participate in and benefit from the spatial dynamics that transfer Indigenous lands to Settler control. So in this sense, who is not a Settler? Haig-Brown is correct in denoting refugees as a complicating case (2009). Haunani-Kay Trask once commented that she did not hold the descendants of slaves responsible for the colonisation of the Americas, as they had no choice (Trask, 2007). Walia points out that racialised and marginalised communities of migrant workers often do not want to take advantage of Indigenous peoples and have pursued solidarity efforts with them, certainly an

important consideration. However, despite the possibilities for creating different spaces between peoples similarly marginalised by Settler society, racialisation and poverty are not enough to ensure decolonising relationships:

[i]n fact, there are many factors preventing this shared terrain of struggle from developing into genuine solidarity, especially the tangible role of immigrant and migrant workers in facilitating the removal and theft of Indigenous land and resources. As Indigenous activists called for the cancellation of the 2010 Olympic Games in BC under the banner of “No Olympics on stolen Native land”, an increasing number of migrant workers were being employed in those same industries that were expediting the rate of sport tourism and mining on Native lands. Of course, migrant workers are not themselves responsible for the devastation of Indigenous lands but, as the Native Youth Movement has asked, how can one be a miner or a logger and still support Indigenous peoples’ defence of the Earth?

Walia, 2010 p.81

The journey from ‘exogenous Other’ to ‘settler Self’ is one that is not encompassed by legal recognitions, political enfranchisement, or economic integration; it is a journey that involves movement in the spatial, relational understandings of Settler peoples generally.

### **Conflicting Trajectories: Northern Bloc Left Politics and Settler Colonialism**

One of the important reasons for delving into race and class as relates to Settler peoples has to do with the existence of Settler anti-racist and social justice

movements in the northern bloc. Social movements, especially on the political left, have long drawn inspiration from and sought alliances with Indigenous peoples against neo-imperialism and colonisation by capital. Indigenous traditional governance systems have proved surprisingly resilient in the face of settler colonial sovereign violence and control in no small part because of the horizontal and participatory elements of Indigenous praxis. Unsurprisingly, anarchists have referenced Indigenous governance structures and land use patterns when constructing examples of plausible, functional horizontal societies, existing on collectively 'owned' land bases, at times equating "indigenous societies and [anarchistic] revolutionary movements" (Amster *et al.*, 2009 p.247; see also: Lagalis, 2011).

As discussed, a settler colonial analysis shows that the links between capitalism (especially late-stage capitalism) and settler colonialism are more contingent than might otherwise be thought. For example, settler colonisation in Siberia by a distinctly non-capitalist jurisdiction evidences many of the same spatial patterns as settler colonisation of the northern bloc: recognition of spaces of opportunity across colonial difference; occupation of spaces of advantage and creation of institutions of privilege; and the transfer of land from Indigenous peoples to settler collectives by a variety of means (Sablin & Savelyeva, 2011). Conversely, capitalism can and does accept Indigenous peoples into its circuits — as demonstrated in discussions of metropole trade in Chapter 2 — which is anathema to settler colonial logics. A prime example of this is the "rich Indian racism" that accompanies discourses around "Indian gaming" in the United States (Corntassel & Witmer, 2008). This has little to do with actual class resentments as few Indian casinos actually make large profits and Indigenous peoples remain

among the poorest in America. Thus it must not be assumed that resistance to capitalism — or any other kind of imperialism and colonialism — is inherently decolonising of the northern bloc.

### **Anti-colonialism vs. Decolonisation: Anticipatory Geographies of the Left**

Adam Lewis defines colonialism as “based on power and oppression, and as long as social relations continue to be structured as such, there will be little justification for the ‘post’ in post-colonialism” (Lewis, 2012 p.231). Anti-colonialism can be conceived of in such a way as to leave certain kinds of power and oppressive social relations in place while rejecting and resisting others. As described above, Tucker and Yang assert that anti-colonialism, as opposed to decolonisation, is often related to the ascendancy of an idealised post-colonial subject within colonial systems:

... an anti-colonial critique is not the same as a decolonizing framework; anti-colonial critique often celebrates empowered postcolonial subjects who seize denied privileges from the metropole. This anti-to-post-colonial project doesn't strive to undo colonialism but rather to remake it and subvert it. Seeking stolen resources is entangled with settler colonialism because those resources were nature/Native first, then enlisted into the service of settlement and thus almost impossible to reclaim without re-occupying Native land. Furthermore, the postcolonial pursuit of resources is fundamentally an anthropocentric model, as land, water, air, animals, and plants are never able to become postcolonial; they remain objects to be exploited by the empowered postcolonial subject.

Thus changes in settler colonial society may be of an anti-colonial yet not decolonising nature if they do not address the underlying exploitation of place and dispossession of Indigenous peoples.

Consider, as one example, the shift in understanding of Indigenous culture that has accompanied the post-colonial turn. Whereas previous colonial regimes portrayed Indigenous cultures as static and barbaric, post-colonial analyses have insisted on the dynamic nature of indigeneity. But have the underlying relationships to place — the ‘anthropocentric model’ of settler colonialism — changed? Alfred contends that rights discourses have helped to reduce Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc to little more than an ethnic group:

[t]his process is founded on the idea that all cultures are mutable and constantly changing and that all cultural boundaries are contested — but with the practical caveat, of course, that it is only Onkwehonwe cultures that change and mutate to accommodate the supposedly natural and just cultural exchange and interaction.

Alfred, 2005 p.127

Indigenous populations positioned as ethnic minorities — and encouraged to think as such — tend to resist colonial exploitation in ways that are routed through established colonial structures, actually serving to legitimate those structures (p.128). For example, Kymlicka’s theory of Indigenous peoples as having minority national rights, while recognising different cultural understandings of ‘rights’ (2001), serves only to reassert the primacy of state jurisdiction over Indigenous politics, and the economics of development as a panacea for the material deprivation caused by colonisation (Barker, 2007 pp.77-85). This simultaneously

transfers land to settler colonisers; access to property, resources, and a stabilised work force to capitalist powers; and empowers juridical regimes and justifies military intervention in Indigenous affairs. Crucially, because this type of transfer is predicated on this multi-frame shift in the way that Indigenous peoples are perceived as and allowed to relate to place among the Settler population, opposition to racism in this context actually contributes to transfer:

... both the racist ideologies that insist on the dichotomy between white and non-whites and their adversaries transfer indigeneity away: it is unsurprising that the relationship between indigenous activism in settler locales and civil rights agendas has been a contrasted one.

Veracni 2010a, p.48.

This, again, becomes important in considering the role of social movements in transfer.

There are pressing, contemporary reasons for considering the differences between anti-colonial and decolonising action including the popularity of ‘apologies’ among leftist and progressive political circles in the northern bloc (see for example: Veracini, 2011a; M. Johnson, 2011; Wood & Rossiter, 2011). Contemporary apologies and treaty-making (Alfred, 2001) go hand-in-hand with processes of blunting Indigenous resistance to colonisation and interfacing Indigenous spaces with neo-colonial power. Conflicts between Settler peoples and Indigenous people are ‘bad for business’ (Wood & Rossiter, 2011). The colonial ‘past’ of Settler states must be reconciled to demonstrate safety and security for investors, and that populations of potentially agonistic Others have been disciplined. Reconciliation on these terms — largely pursued through policies of apology, treaty-making, and other acts of ‘taking responsibility’ — is a technique



for managing the settler colonial identity trialectic consistent with modernity and postcolonialism:

[t]his is a peculiar form of nationhood in which the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous, primarily white, settlers bears symbolic significance for how the state reckons with the colonial past in bringing about a postcolonial future. That relationship even frames how state representatives describe the incorporation of new immigrants who are neither indigenous nor white into the contemporary multicultural nation.

Postcolonial nationhood in settler states is not dependent upon an actual shift in indigenous peoples' access to, or representation by, state power. Rather the state is still, in the three countries under consideration here, primarily a "settler" one. There has been neither a revolutionary rupture with the settler colonial past nor a dramatic shift in the balance of power to indigenous minorities. Instead, what has happened through the affective phrasing of reconciliation is that the authority of the settler state has been cast away from the former imperial metropole and localized in terms of more indigenous claims of political belonging.

M. Johnson, 2011 p.187

Thus apologies and treaties in the northern bloc serve to further impose and normalise population organisation for labour and exploitation.

Possessing an awareness of power and domination in the present, a focus of much leftist critical thought (Tuck and Yang, 2012 pp.19-22), is not sufficient to dislodge settler colonial dysconsciousness. Settler people can be critical about

capitalism without being critical of settler colonialism, and vice-versa, even though the two are often imbricated. In Chapter 2, Alfred was cited to the effect that Settler people opposing neo-liberal globalisation are “nothing but staunch defenders of the first wave of globalisation against the second wave” (Alfred, 2005 p.325). That phrase takes on new import here: while few have failed to perceive the connections between colonisation and capitalism in the northern bloc, correspondingly few have noted that capitalism — in enhancing or warping the accumulative, hierarchical dynamics of settler colonisation — has also undermined key features of settler colonial space. Globalising power interests contest for sovereignty over institutions of privilege, directly challenging Settler sovereign capacity; Settlers become ‘staunch defenders’ of their own globalising traditions (Walia, 2010).

### **Nationalism and NGOs: Generic left politics**

Many movements and currents within what might be called the ‘generic’ political left<sup>72</sup> of the northern bloc seek political engagements with Indigenous peoples through larger social justice or anti-racism movements, usually at the national or international level, and often demanding structural reform. Choudry observes:

... many supposedly progressive political organisations — while proclaiming that there are alternatives to free markets, free trade and transnational corporate power and that ‘another world is possible’ — reproduce dominant colonial worldviews and resist challenges by Indigenous peoples and activists to address colonial injustices. While

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<sup>72</sup> The term ‘generic left’ is David Austin’s (2010 pp.28). He was referring only to the Canadian context; I use it throughout this section to refer to the mainstream leftist political parties and movements of the northern bloc.

some have asked whether the global justice and anti-globalisation movement is anti-capitalist, it is also important to ask whether it is anti-colonial.

Choudry, 2010 p.99

Similar questions could be posed regarding anti-racist and human rights-based campaigns, especially those that rely on international NGOs (McCormack, 2011 p.291; Corntassel, 2006). These and other reform-focused movements often adopt an anti-colonial stance towards capital and economic imperialism without a fundamental decolonising focus (as articulated above).

Generic left critiques of political economic structures are often critiques of the topographies of power only in their current configuration. However, the underlying settler colonial geometries of power are not necessarily considered or challenged by reformist discourses. This emphasises again the importance of scale, as oppression can be addressed by the reformist left when it originates in globalising capital, but the settler colonial underpinnings of the Canadian or American states, domesticated systems of capitalist dispossession, and the Indigenous-Settler divide that reinforces racism and racialisation, are all consistently missing from these critiques (Choudry, 2010 p.98). In part, this is because the generic left in Canada draws on many of the same master narratives of settlement and progress more commonly associated with overtly racist and conservative politics. Though the political left and right may disagree on “official or conventional histories”, it is “worth nothing that ... White Left narratives do not fare much better than their more centrist and right-wing counterparts”:

[t]hey too generally relegate Indigenous, Black and other struggles to the margins of Canadian history, a reality of exclusion that is only

compounded by the general marginalisation of [the northern bloc's]  
generic left ...

Austin, 2010 p.28

The result is contemporary leftist politics rife with nationalism, white supremacy, or corporate aspirationalism. That these narratives are referred to obliquely does nothing to disempower their social impact.

Discourses of rights protection or full citizenship are commonly deployed by the generic left in reference to both racialised and migrant populations, as discussed above, and Indigenous communities as well. This inherently positions the problem of settler colonialism as one of not enough state and juridical oversight: a call to strengthen rather than weaken institutions of privilege and entrench settler colonial topographies of power. Settler states have often opposed these movements (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Short, 2005), including the international Indigenous rights discourse, though this should not be read that leftist support for rights and citizenship is somehow decolonising. Rather, state refusal to participate in international rights agreements like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) actually makes generic left activism in this field relatively 'safe.' Without state endorsement, the entire northern bloc of settler colonialism is excluded from meaningful regimes of rights and responsibilities (Corntassel and Bryce 2012, pp.154-156). Although both American and Canadian states have (as of 2007) ratified UNDRIP, they have done so while specifically emphasising "that the Declaration is a 'non-legally binding document that does not reflect customary international law nor change Canadian laws'" (Anaya quoted in Corntassel and Bryce, 2012 p.155). As Corntassel observes:

[w]hile indigenous peoples are now sharing the same conference room with UN member states in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), this does not necessarily signal that indigenous/state relations have been significantly restructured or that indigenous voices are truly being heard. In this case, there is a danger of co-optation and an illusion of inclusion regarding indigenous participation within global and regional forums.

Corntassel, 2008 p.111

In this sense, generic leftist discourses on rights and citizenship become a way of disavowing responsibility for settler colonialism without fundamentally challenging or taking responsibility for settler colonisation (Noxolo *et al.*, 2011).

However, discourses of leftist inclusion are problematic not only because they do not have the intended effect; the legal and policy effects that these rights discourses produce or legitimate are also problematic:

[g]iven that the very foundation of Canadian nationhood involves the legislating of an apartheid system of reservations, residential schools and other measures directed at Indigenous peoples, discussions of citizenship are always far more than a legal exercise. The denial of Indigenous self-determination is closely linked with the exclusion of racialised immigrants, migrant workers and refugees. And the granting or withholding of citizenship rights — both immigrant status and registered Indian status — is part of the way in which the state determines and regulates who is part of the national community. Many movements in Canada have focused on the concept of full equality of citizenship rights as a strategy for social justice; however ... formal

citizenship status has, by and large, not been sufficient to lift immigrant women of colour and Indigenous women out of extreme poverty and dependency on dangerous and precarious labour in garment factories, domestic work, the sex trade and the general service sector.

Walia, 2010 p.89

In short, the reformist goals of the generic left are an alteration of how settler colonialism is perceived and implemented, not a fundamental questioning of settler colonial transfer and Settler privilege. Generic left appeals to rights and citizenships are predicated on the “master-narrative” of settlement (Austin, 2010 p.29), even if the left and right “version” this story differently (Selbin, 2010 p.34).

It should be noted that generic left discourses are far from ‘safe’ for many interests — capital and otherwise — that imbricate with settler colonial space. These discourses challenge the current configuration of the northern bloc topographies of power, and for many marginalised communities small shifts in power geometries have major impacts (Massey, 2009 pp.21-22; Gibson-Graham, 2008). As Harvey correctly notes with respect to social and economic disruption resulting from shifts in the power of capital, “[w]hile the instability is disconcerting, sometimes destructive, and always difficult to cope with, it provides multiple opportunities for subversion and opposition on the part of the laborers” (Harvey 2000, p.105). However, these subversions may or may not contribute to dynamics of settler colonisation, as has been demonstrated with the generic left, and as is also the case with respect to radical leftist challenges.

## **Radicalism Reconsidered: 'Occupy,' Anarchists, and Settler Colonialism**

One reason it is important to draw a distinction between the functioning of capitalism and of settler colonialism is that many radical leftist positions assert that opposing one implies *a priori* opposing both.<sup>73</sup> However, as Tuck and Yang note, “[c]olonialism is not just a symptom of capitalism ... Capitalism and the state are technologies of colonialism, developed over time to further colonial projects” (2012 p.4). Settler people can reject spatialities like the neo-colonial ‘society of control’ (Barker, 2009) without rejecting settler colonial privilege. Kirstin Ross, writing on the emergence of social space in the Paris Commune (1871), makes an interesting observation:

[r]evolutionary struggle is diffuse as well as specifically directed, expressed throughout the various cultural spheres and institutional contexts, in specific conflicts and in the manifold transformations of individuals rather than in some rigid and polar opposition of capital and labour.

Ross, 1988 p.33

Similarly, revolutionary struggles in the contemporary northern bloc must be interrogated specifically because there is not a rigid or polar opposition of forces that encompasses settler colonialism. Settler people may struggle against a specific concentration of power or privilege in settler colonial space, without

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<sup>73</sup> See for example, Keefer (2007), who equates capitalist and colonial exploitation through equivocation of capitalist and state power, a common position across the generic and radical left; and, my previous work (2009; 2007), where I fall into the trap of equivocating colonisation by capital and neo-imperial juridical control to settler colonisation. Suffice to say, it is a common problem, and Keefer’s work remains insightful.

struggling against settler colonialism. As Leitner *et al.* discuss with respect to the Immigrant Workers' Freedom Ride (2003), solidarities that are strong in one context may disintegrate when entering "centres of corporate and political power" (2008 p.169). This indicates the degree to which "any social movement ... has to negotiate power relations within the movement, and the power geometry of the socio-spatial relations it is embedded in" (p.168).

In early 2012, a tumblr account '#leftfail' appeared. According to the site, the development of #leftfail is a direct result of the G20 Toronto protests and related political and police suppression of activists, but as a way of venting frustrations with tendencies in the activist communities at the time (#leftfail, 2012). Among many others, the maintainers of the blog posted an image macro that bears reproduction here:



Figure 11 – Frustrations with protest tactics and colonial tendencies evident in the #leftfail tumblr.

The frustration expressed through this image mirrors the frustration evident in Tuck and Yang's accounts of Settler society "playing Indian" (Tuck & Yang, 2012



pp.8-9). These frustrations can increase when Settler people consider themselves radical enough to invoke words like 'traditional lands,' or more problematically, 'decolonisation' as part of their struggles:

[t]he easy adoption of decolonization as a metaphor (and nothing else) is a ... premature attempt at reconciliation. The absorption of decolonization by settler social justice frameworks is one way the settler, disturbed by her own settler status, tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being one's self. The desire to reconcile is just as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native; it is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore.

Tuck & Yang, 2012 p.9

This desire is clearly evident in the reduction of all social ills — Settler and Indigenous — to a single, exploitative, exterior force such as capitalism. In this construction, defeating capitalism is synonymous with defeating the illegitimacy of Settler people on the land. In reality, however, this is simply another exercise in settler colonial *bricolage*: appropriating and using Indigenous struggles against capitalist exploitation to build a new settler colonial narrative in which capitalist elites are a common enemy.

A similar dynamic occurs with respect to contemporary anti-capitalist and alter-globalisation movements; most recently, this is evident in the '99%' moniker and class analysis produced by the Occupy movements (Barker, 2012; Kilibarda, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012 pp.23-28). The Occupy movements must be recognised for creating significant shifts in the political-economic discourse of the northern bloc, but have also demonstrated that it is possible to be politically extremely

radical, and still a settler coloniser spatially. Consider Mitchell's meditation on the 'meaning' of Occupy through its root word, *occupatio*:

[i]n the context of the rhetoric of public space, *occupatio* is, as the original meaning of the word reveals, the seizure of an empty place, one that is supposed to be *res nullius*, not owned by anyone, not private property ... But the demand of *occupatio* is made in the full knowledge that public space is, in fact, pre-occupied by the state and the police, that its *pacified* and democratic character, apparently open to all, is sustained by the ever-present possibility of violent eviction. *Occupatio* thus aims, not just at taking possession of an empty space in an argument, but of provoking a response and framing it in advance.

Mitchell, 2012 p.10

The Occupy movement falls back on several tropes of settler colonialism, including 'empty space' as free for the taking. However, in recognising that public space is pre-occupied, the structures of state and capital are positioned as a homogenising entity, the enemy that must be 'provoked' and attacked for the good of 99% of the population. Yet the goals of Occupy are not actually decolonising:

[f]or social justice movements, like Occupy, to truly aspire to decolonization non-metaphorically, they would impoverish, not enrich, the 99%+ settler population of United States. Decolonization eliminates settler property rights and settler sovereignty. It requires the abolition of land as property and upholds the sovereignty of Native land and people.

Tuck and Yang, 2012 p.26

The Occupy movements have not thus far been able to “reject the language and ideology of colonialism, conquest and exploitation ... Place decolonization at the centre of [the] movement and abandon the language of occupation”, as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson asserted they must (2012).

In a recent article (with Dr. Jenny Pickerill) I noted that Indigenous activists, following the G20 protests in and around Toronto (26-27 June 2010) have become increasingly frustrated with Settler-based social movements:

... [Indigenous] struggles foundational to the existence of unequal and oppressive Settler states, were being subsumed under “sexier” issues popular among alter-globalization movements (neoliberalism and poverty; surveillance and criminalization of dissent; opposition to war and military adventurism). They resented that Indigenous deprivation was conceptualized as another form of poverty resulting from neoliberal capitalism, with little understanding of the complexities of settler colonialism and loss of land that predate and, in many cases, enable capitalist exploitations.

2012, p.1713

The article goes on to discuss the ways that anarchistic activists often misunderstand Indigenous ideas of and connections to place. However, that article left unexplored the possibility that radical social movements could be ‘successful,’ but the question is implied.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> For a parallel inquiry, see the discussion of leftist trajectories in *What Would It Mean to Win?* (Turbulence Collective, 2010).

### **Is Another World Possible? Revolutionary Stories, Transcendent Fantasies**

It would be foolish to suggest that there have not been useful and productive partnerships between Settler leftists and Indigenous peoples in the northern bloc, yet across the spectrum of progressive and revolutionary politics, settler colonialism remains a powerful force. As always, the ultimate goal of settler colonisers is to naturalise in place; that has often been assumed to involve a conservative, populist, and ahistorical Settler positionality. The transcendent conservative Settler wistfully recalls the age of rampant opportunity and ever-increasing advantage, the frontier rolling back before the brave (white) homesteaders and pioneers, or morphing into the middle-class, consumerist suburbs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That these racist, capitalist 'master narratives' (Austin, 2010) do not accord with leftist politics in the northern bloc is not an indication that settler colonialism only exists on one end of the political spectrum; rather it is an indication that Canadian and American master narratives can vary widely and contend with each other, while still supporting Settler transcendence.

#### **Left Utopia: Imagining and Narrating an Empty Space**

What sort of spaces do Settler leftists envision for themselves that can defeat capitalism while leaving settler colonialism in place? Under leftist settler colonial logics, questioning settler colonisation is done not to undermine the project, but to assert a different way of colonising. Settler colonisation is portrayed as having been done 'incorrectly,' but still capable of being made functional. Radical movements against state or capital may only be reformist movements when viewed from a scale that references settler colonial space. Basically, these movements can be seen as invaders arguing amongst themselves about the

political economy of the invasive societies. Working from the definition of 'Occupy' above (Mitchell, 2012), settler colonialism is ultimately about the transfer of land, the control of people in place, and the assertion of that control as simultaneously justifying the right to do so.

As early settlers imagined complex environments filled with Indigenous peoples and relational networks to be 'empty wilderness,' contemporary leftist Settler people imagine multiple oppressions — colonial, racial, class — to be flattened under singular impositions of power — imperial, whiteman, elitist (Tuck & Yang, 2012 pp.17-19). Rather than an untamed land requiring cultivation and civilisation (the traditional settler trope), leftist imagined geographies identify contemporary spaces as filled with the unbridled power of state and capital. It is this power that needs to be dispersed so that personal and community advantage can be pursued. Capitalism and the state are here constructed as barriers to rather than guarantors of opportunity.

This accords with Mitchell's discussion on how the Occupy movements have identified and created 'public' space. Radical movements may see space as empty, with all power geometries dispersed except for the interpersonal. This dispersal is targeted at those geometries of power created by the imbrication of concentrated capital and the capacity for state violence, but the oppression of colonisation is expected to dissipate as well. Through the dynamics of struggle against these two oppressive structures, social justice movements appear to believe that they will be washed clean. By sacrificing established privileges, Settler leftists equate themselves to Indigenous peoples whose very existences have been and remain under attack.

Ultimately, this imagined geography of perfectly dispersed power across empty, *res nullius* spaces, betrays longing for a settler colonial transcendence. But this ignores the persistent issue of the land: so long as the land is under primarily Settler control, decolonisation remains a fantasy. Contemporary leftist discourses in the northern bloc rarely call for the explicit return of land, if for no other reason than the settler colonial imaginary cannot stretch that far. Land is not seen as-is (related to Indigenous peoples, rightfully belonging to their political economies and diplomatic networks), but rather as it could be in socialist fantasies of equal access and opportunity. For example, consider the American reading of the 'libratory' story of the French revolution as a 'warning' (Selbin, 2010 pp.107-111). In this, the 'land of liberty' (as Americans have considered themselves since the Revolution; see Taylor, 2010) finds a limit — the space in which too much liberty exists — and in so doing, justifies its own space as 'perfect.'

Compare this historical discourse to Occupy Oakland's rejection of "Decolonize Oakland" as a moniker (Tuck & Yang, 2012 pp.24-26; Barker, 2011; Ruiz-Lichter, 2011). The Settler members of Occupy Oakland asserted many excuses — over clear Indigenous objections to the language of 'occupation' — to justify why shifting the name in this way was simply 'too radical.' Occupy Oakland, though Settler dominated and focused on state and capital, was perceived as the 'perfect revolution.' Indigenous resistance in this scenario was rearticulated as something unfathomable, and thus outside of consideration by activists with the effect of creating a crisis of decolonising Settler leadership. Settler activists seem unwilling to take direction from Indigenous peoples (Kilibarda, 2012 pp.28-30; Barker & Pickerill, 2012 p.1713), or seem unable to think for themselves and take concerted action (Keefer, 2012a, 2007; Lagalis, 2011). In short, the Settler left

either tramples Indigenous concerns, or cannot imagine acting on those concerns and so continues to search for a solution that fits their imagined geography. This is part of why activists keep asking Indigenous peoples ‘what do we do?’ (Alfred, 2005 p.236), as if it is Indigenous peoples’ responsibility to decolonise Settlers. The fundamental imbalance remains; the master narrative of the northern bloc remains determined by Settlers, and it is still a story of Settlers triumphing over injustice rather than a story of Settlers restoring land to Indigenous nations.

### **Imagining a Post-Capitalist Settler Colonial Geography**

Thankfully, there exist several examples of specific ways that these transcendent empty spaces of the northern bloc can be visualised. Here, I focus on one remarkably complete vision, generated by a long-time leftist critic of capitalism, and a geographer with deep understandings of northern bloc power geometries. I refer, of course, to David Harvey’s post-capitalist vision in the Appendix to *Spaces of Hope* (2000 pp.257-281), which models a post-capitalist settler colonial utopia, providing some crucial understandings of how the imagined geographies of settler colonialism can function without the aid and influence of state and capital.

Harvey begins by defending utopian thinking, which as demonstrated above, is dangerous in the context of settler colonial transcendence. Harvey dismisses such fears as “all too fashionable ... to insist that utopianism of any sort will necessarily and inevitably culminate in totalitarianism and disaster” (p.257). Harvey then proceeds to sketch a utopian vision that, in his perception, is neither totalitarian nor disastrous, but rather an escape from the tyranny of capital and disaster of modernity. However, there are several important characteristics here that speak to the underlying tyranny of settler colonialism.

First, a notable absence: Harvey does not mention Indigenous peoples or indigeneity. Harvey's vision is haunted by traditional socialist thinking that subsumes all resistance movements into the materially deprived poor and, later, the disaffected 'masses' (Keefer, 2010b). He attempts to recognise some dispossessed peoples, such as women (pp.262-263), but this seems to be set up as a representation of all dispossessed groups, and as demonstrated earlier, there is a difference between dispossession for exploitation and for elimination. This parallels the real and current homogenisation of Indigenous peoples and concerns regarding monikers such as 'the 99%' (Killibarda 2012; Barker 2012).

Second, Harvey's utopia is achieved after passing through stages of extreme social repression, violence, and economic collapse (2000 pp.258-263). In addition to ignoring that many of the spatial configurations of this repression are already commonly deployed against Indigenous peoples — for example, the use of extensive systems of surveillance (Smith, 2009), criminalisation and imprisonment (Gordon, 2006), and segregation outside of cities (Harris, 2004) — this oppressive phase is presented as exceptional or unusual in relation to earlier and later social contexts. In the context of settler colonialism, the founding violence that creates relative, situated advantage, is disavowed (Veracini, 2010a). This disavowal has seeped into Harvey's work. He not only ignores the already-existing forms of repression that help to render future repression banal (see above), he also ignores the Indigenous resistances to these structures of invasion that should inform mass movements against them.

Third, Harvey deals with difference in his Utopian vision by imagining a combination system of localised "hearths" ('home' attached to a spatial unit rather than a family unit) and nested scales of organisation maximise mobilities between



“places where people who want to be different can express that want with the greatest freedom” (p.264). From sexual orientation and preference, to artistic expression, Harvey envisions all manner of difference to be accepted within these hearths, and if someone cannot find the space they need in one, they may move or relocate through a variety of process to another. This denies the possibility of Indigenous being on the land that, through relationships to place, promotes understanding, respect, and cooperation with the personality of place (see Chapter 1). These Indigenous spatialities are flexible, and Indigenous traditions of treaty making and sharing place are well established, but they are not endlessly permissive. Indigenous sacred spaces are anchored in place (Little Bear, 2004; Deloria, 2003; Basso, 1996), and Indigenous communities have often dealt with difference by removing themselves to other parts of their territories (detailed previously and in Chapter 6). Harvey does away with property without doing away with the settler colonial gaze; clear-levelled ground in Harvey’s utopia is ground free of capital and militarism, but not necessarily of settler colonial power and myth.

Post-capitalist settler colonial geographies like Harvey’s, then, are not ‘convergence spaces’ as they may at first appear (Routledge, 2003 p.346), but rather spaces of collision — where Indigenous and radical Settler trajectories against or away from domination by state and capital push against each other, unexpectedly. Settler imaginary geographies need not be capitalist or even internally homogenising in order to be colonial; they need only to erase the ‘militant particularisms’ that attend to Indigenous networks of being on the land. By implication, no social movement, no matter how radical, can be decolonising if it does not start with an implicit focus on restoring and defending Indigenous

connections to place, even (or perhaps, especially) at the expense of Settler anticipatory geographies.

### **Transfer and Transcendence in a Post-Capitalist Northern Bloc**

Settler colonial transfer in the northern bloc has often been facilitated by the might of the state or the leverage of capital. Transfer and transcendence, then, will likely appear to be very different processes in a post-capitalist space (as has been shown with transcendence, above). Consider that discourses that identify and reject the coercive violence of state and capital but do not confront settler colonisation must assume a paradoxical position: systematised or institutionalised violence is rejected, but settler colonialism is exempted because it cannot be identified as or with either a system or institution. The systems and institutions of settler colonialism are largely contingent; although changing them would cause massive social upheaval and a rewriting of internal colonial hierarchies (Tuck and Yang, 2012 pp.29-35), it is social relationships to land that produce settler colonisation. Those relationships can be expressed and institutionalised in a multitude of ways, but all are settler colonial.

Settler leftists attempt to reconcile this paradox through Settler “moves to innocence”. These are responses to the juxtaposition of settler colonial imperatives against ideals such as human rights and social justice that motivate leftist politics. Tuck and Yang identify six different moves to innocence (2012 pp.4, 9-12):

- Settler nativism — Settler people pretending to have meaningful indigenous heritage or belonging to place

- Settler adoption fantasies — ‘tribal’ adoption as a legitimising (but meaningless) fantasy
- Colonial Equivocation — repression of some kind of Settler difference or imposition of exogenous status is equated with settler colonial dispossession, legitimising minoritarian positions within Settler society
- Free your mind and the rest will follow — a focus among Settler people towards ‘decolonising the mind’ to the exclusion of material and political organising
- A(s)t(e)risk Peoples — the conceptual and legal collapse of Indigenous peoples into other variously counted and accounted ‘at risk’ groups
- Re-occupation and urban homesteading — equating anti-capital claiming of space by Settler peoples with decolonisation, obscuring colonial dispossession behind capitalist exploitation

They further describe how Settler moves to innocence are attempts to deal with the incommensurability of Settler spaces imposed upon Indigenous lands. Being confronted with this incommensurability is less problematic for conservative politics which retreat into narratives of conquest and manifest destiny. Leftist movements, however, are deeply unsettled by the realisation that they cannot support both Settler liberalism/socialism and Indigenous being on the land:

[a]n ethic of incommensurability, which guides moves that unsettle innocence, stands in contrast to aims of reconciliation, which motivate settler moves to innocence. Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. Reconciliation is concerned with questions of what will decolonization look like? What will happen after abolition? What will be the consequences of decolonization for the

settler? Incommensurability acknowledges that these questions need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework.

Tuck and Yang, 2012 p.35

Transcendence, by extension, is the final reconciling of this incommensurability.

Conservative Settlers simply assert their world until it fully over-writes the pre-existing Indigenous world (as in the suburban utopia discussed in Chapter 4), while leftist Settlers find a way to contribute to Indigenous movements and causes without fundamentally threatening settler colonialism by giving up some established privileges but refusing to sacrifice the positionality of the settler coloniser, the original claim upon the land, from which all privilege stems. This can be thought of as a tension between rationalisations for colonisation, which are rejected, and affective attachments to settler colonial structures, which are protected. As transfer occurs incompletely and unevenly, some kinds of transfer build off of others; for example, 'multicultural transfer,' acceptable to many leftist discourses, stems from the disempowerment of Indigenous nations through other types of transfer. As such, moves to innocence can be seen as transitions between earlier forms of transfer, and forms more applicable to the current constitution of Settler society. In this, the colonial difference can be clearly seen: not just as the difference between terra nullius and the already-occupied reality of the northern bloc, but rather the difference between how life 'could' or 'should be' (aspirationalism). This, in the broadest strokes, must be seen as consistent with settler colonial collectives that remove from a fallen/decadent society as part of a return to purity (Veracini, 2010a). Leftist spaces in the northern bloc are

positioned as more legitimate on the land than spaces of state and capital, rather than less.

### **Conclusion: Reconceptualising Spaces of Decolonisation**

The purpose of this chapter has not been to malign leftist activists in the northern bloc. There have been and are many individuals and groups involved in the political left of the northern bloc that are sincerely pursuing decolonised relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities, and some groups and organisations on the political left still hold the potential to act as allies. Keefer identifies organised labour's participation and potential with respect to the Six Nations land reclamation (Keefer, 2007), Lewis has asserted particular interpretations of anarchism as profoundly anti-colonial (Lewis, 2012), and Walia has noted that "anti-colonial and anti-capitalist migrant justice groups like No One is Illegal have prioritised solidarity with Indigenous struggles and acknowledged that demands of migrant communities will be short-lived if gained at the expense of Indigenous self-determination" (Walia, 2010 p.81). There undoubtedly remains a greater potential for decolonising relationships among the Settler left than among the right if for no other reason than that leftist activists — especially radical leftist activists — are less attached to some or all of the institutions of privilege that generate the uneven topographies of power in the northern bloc.

However, it is not enough to decolonise by changing relationships between peoples and structures or forms of governance (Lewis, 2012 p.235); it is necessary to change relationships between peoples in place, and between peoples and places. The settler colonialism revealed here in various aspects of the Settler left is an

example of 'deep colonising' (Veracini, 2011a), and it is not easily confronted. Barker and Pickerill assert that Settler activists must confront this deep colonising by reflecting on their own positionality and actions through a lens of Indigenous being on the land:

... the true challenge for ... would be allies is to find their own new way of looking at — and being in — place that compliments but does not replicate what Indigenous peoples are attempting to do. Replication of relations, as with appropriation of voice, is an unwelcome and unneeded imposition.

Barker & Pickerill, 2012 p.1719

Concentrating on complementarities both foregrounds Indigenous understandings of place, and re-centres Settler responsibility across difference as 'to places' rather than to paternalistic attempts at solidarity or assumed aid through political economic contestation. This, though, is not as simple as it may seem: few Settler people in the northern bloc at this point support Indigenous concerns, and social movements, as demonstrated, have not been able to effectively challenge settler colonialism and other forms of oppressive power. Chapter 6 will address this through discussions of personal relationships of unsettling and compassion.

## **CHAPTER 6: Uncertain Edges — Indigenous Resistance, Settler Allies, and Decolonising space**

### **Settler Colonialism's End?**

Part of the purpose for this study has been to expose the complexity of settler colonialism's spatial dynamics. A diversity of spaces, material and conceptual, have been discussed here: these spaces do not fit together smoothly, nor do they displace and consume indigeneity in the same ways. Complexity should not be confused with invincibility or monolithic power. Quite the opposite: settler colonialism's spatial complexity is contradictory, even internally agonistic.

In this chapter, with the spatial dynamics described through this project so far as a frame, I re-examine contemporary Indigenous decolonisation movements, theorise on the possibilities for and of Settler alliances, begin to sketch some imagined geographies of decolonised space, and comment on the spatialities of Settler people attempting to decolonise. Crucial to understanding these decolonising spatialities is an understanding of what contemporary Indigenous resistance reveals about settler colonialism, and how these resistances affect Settler identities. Indigenous resistance is among — if not the — most important

factors in creating or revealing the uncertain edges or limits of settler colonial space.

### **Uncertain Edges**

I choose the term ‘uncertain edges’ because of the simple but important fact that it is not clear where settler colonial space ends. This is in part because of other methods of hierarchical, oppressive, expansive spatial production that overlap and interpenetrate settler colonialism, as demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 5. This is also because settler colonisation is not total: land has not been irretrievably transferred to settler collectives, and settler colonial forms have not been (and perhaps cannot be) transcended. As discussed in Chapter 4, frontier spaces — spaces where the Settler identity is unsettled and destabilised due to a lack of colonial structures and institutions, not just places where Settlers perceive opportunity — can emerge or re-emerge almost anywhere, and borderlines are never as impermeable or permanent as Settler societies would like to believe. Frontiers can change, move, even reappear in spaces perceived as irretrievably transferred and transformed. In this chapter, Indigenous resistance is linked to theoretical conceptualisations of Settler decolonisation to create new ‘frontiers’ in and against settler colonial space. Likewise, institutions of privilege in the northern bloc are not the singular, powerful entities that they often appear to be. Some, like whiteness or the state, have shifted drastically over time while retaining power. Others, like industrial capital, have been disempowered in settler colonial space largely through the shifting of economic and political power at much broader scales.



Settler colonialism is not total but portrays itself as such. Therefore, it is important to find the uncertain edges, the places where colonial logic does not overwhelmingly structure social space in order to find the functional limits of settler colonial spatial production. This is especially true of places where Indigenous place-based networks remain relatively vibrant. Further, it is necessary to discover both Indigenous spaces that settler colonialism has not been able to consume, and also spaces liberated from settler colonial control, where Indigenous being on the land is or may be reasserted. These spaces are the weakest points in the spatial dynamics of settler colonialism, and so can help identify potential for decolonising actions.

### **Indigenous Resistance**

Indigenous presence on the land as part of dynamic networks of being stands in clear opposition to the construction of settler colonial spaces of opportunity and advantage. Likewise, Indigenous presence as “being” indigenous, an oppositional act in the parlance of Alfred and Corntassel (2005), disrupts settler colonial mentalities predicated on *terra nullius* and tropes of civilisation versus savagery. Indigenous peoples’ resistance is the assertion of Indigenous space in and against settler colonial space. It is the forceful insertion of the ‘complementary term’ of settler colonial spatialities — ‘the colonised’ — into dialogues across Settler difference. But it is also an assertion as something other than the colonised. An “authentic” Indigenous identity (Alfred, 2005), both exerts a spatiality of “peoplehood” (Corntassel, 2003) and demands “justice” (Waziyatawin, 2008). Thus, it both confounds settler colonial imaginations by materially producing the

unimaginable, and opens possibilities for a decolonising Settler imagination premised on very different understandings of and connections to place. Indigeneity asserted into settler colonial space changes the spatialities of settler colonialism, often in unpredictable, powerful, and affective ways. Indigenous resistance directly confronts and confounds both the spaces of settler colonialism and the colonial mentalities of Settler people, striking to the core of settler colonial spatialities.

Throughout the previous chapters, Indigenous peoples have been implicated in and referred to by the creation of particular kinds of colonised space, though I have only obliquely referred to their capacity to affect settler colonisation (with the exception of Chapter 1). I have devolved a settler colonial ideal form (settler colonial logics) through the introduction of Settler collective spatial perceptions, the material dynamics and conflicts of settler colonisation, and the possibility for settler colonialism to persist in rebellious and revolutionary Settler movements. However, reading between the lines of these analyses, it should be clear that Indigenous peoples' resistance to settler colonialism remains central to any decolonised future.

### **Reassertion of Indigenous Being on the Land**

During much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indigenous activists fought for their collective survival and recognition of their basic existence; much of this was intended to be self-determining, but given the political context of the northern bloc at the time (including civil rights struggles), Indigenous activism was largely perceived by popular commentators and historians to be subsumed into popular discourses of rights and inclusion (Deloria, 1970). As mentioned above, through continued

assertions of nationality and difference, exemplified perhaps by the clashes between the Mohawks of Kahnésatake and the Canadian government during the Oka crisis (York, 1999), the discourse of resistance was reframed in terms of “nation-to-nation” self government (Canada, 1996). This led to the development of the British Columbia Treaty Process (and similar legal, land claim process in other jurisdictions), a process that has since been revealed as thoroughly colonial (Alfred, 2001). Currently, Indigenous nations are moving into a period of post-treaty resistance. Even as some First Nations bands are signing treaties, such as the Tsawwassen and Nisga’a First Nations (*Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement*, 2007; *Nisga’a Final Agreement*, 2000), others are pulling out of treaty negotiations and consultation processes with resource extraction corporations. A prime example is that of the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en people, who have withdrawn support from their treaty negotiators for cutting deals relating to the Enbridge pipeline project, and physically blockaded the treaty office (Stueck & Bailey, 2012).

None of these incidents are isolated; similar dynamics are occurring in the American southwest as Navajo people oppose the theft of water and destruction of their sacred spaces (Chee, 2011), and in California where the Winnemem Wintu have declared war on the American state as part of their reclamation of sacred river spaces (Fimrite, 2012). As such, against the current of settler colonial spatial production, I situate Indigenous peoples’ traditions and strategies of resistance in the northern bloc as a *parallel affective process*. Affective resistance is premised on the understanding that social relationships — the foundations of the spaces that people build and occupy (Massey, 2009 pp.16-17) — are a crucial site of struggle.

Stevphen Shukaitis frames this as a dynamic process, linking affective relationships to effective tactics of resistance:

... one can ultimately never separate questions of the effectiveness of political organising from concerns about its affectiveness. They are inherently and inevitably intertwined. The social relations we create every day prefigure the world to come, not just in a metaphorical sense, but also quite literally: they truly are the emergence of that other world embodied in the constant motion and interaction of bodies.

Shukaitis, 2009 p.143

This dynamic motion of bodies can be thought of as a counter-current to settler colonial dynamics. Just as settler colonialism is created by settler collectives spreading through places, building spatially-stretched relationships, Indigenous resistance simultaneously disrupts settler colonial space while reasserting Indigenous spaces, altering the spatialities of both.

This process is strongly in the tradition of Indigenous scholars who have developed the concept of resistance beyond contestation for political power or social support. As Corntassel and Bryce assert:

... when approaches to indigenous cultural revitalisation and self-determination are discussed solely in terms of strategies, rights, and theories, they overlook the everyday practices of resurgence and decolonisation. Indigenous resurgence is about reconnecting with homelands, cultural practices, and communities, and is centered on reclaiming, restoring, and regenerating homeland relationships. Another dimension centers upon decolonization, which transforms indigenous struggles for freedom from performance to everyday local

practice. This entails moving away from the performativity of a rights discourse geared toward state affirmation and approval toward a daily existence conditioned by place-based cultural practices.

Corntassel & Bryce, 2012 p.153

The work of Taiaiake Alfred is especially important to contemporary theories of Indigenous resistance,<sup>75</sup> and I use his work as an example here. Alfred has developed a theory of resistance that is premised on the fundamental reconnection of Indigenous communities in and with place. Illustrative of this parallel affective process is this dynamic between Settler colonisation and Indigenous resistance: the more forcefully that settler colonisers have claimed exclusive dominion over the northern bloc, the more determined and creative have been Indigenous peoples' responses and challenges, and corresponding articulations of the connection between indigeneity and place.

Paralleling the common adoption in Canada of the term "nation to nation relationship" (developed through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples), Alfred called for a resurgence of Mohawk nationalism (Alfred, 1995). At the same time that many academic discourses of colonisation were turning to culture as a key reference (Gibson, 1999), Alfred explicitly connected traditional Haudenosaunee cultural values with the need to reject state control and corporate exploitation of Indigenous lands and peoples, relying on traditional governance structures rooted in traditional territories (Alfred, 2009a). Most recently, as neo-

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<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that Alfred's work, along with that of Jeff Corntassel, has been formative for me both before and beyond this project. As a graduate student in the Masters of Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, I was fortunate enough to be supervised by Alfred and Corntassel from 2005 to 2007, and owe them a great intellectual and ethical debt.

liberal globalisation has invited “aboriginal” people into expanding capitalist markets, multicultural Settler states have “recognized” limited aboriginal rights (Coulthard, 2007). In contrast to assimilation through markets and citizenship, Alfred has called for Indigenous communities to pursue physical and cultural reconnection with the land as a source of identity and material sustenance (Alfred, 2005). Indigenous resistances, such as those Alfred studies and endorses but also many, many others, have refused to allow the Settler fantasy of naturalisation to fully germinate.

Crucially, Indigenous resistance in the northern bloc also undermines several aspects of neo-imperial power that imbricate with settler colonialism. Indigeneity does not rely on sovereignty (Alfred, 2006), and Indigenous being on the land is defined by transversality rather than jurisdictional claiming of territory. That is to say that the borders and boundaries — state, regional, and perceived — that pervade the northern bloc were not written onto blank canvas:

... boundaries were empowered where previously transitions and circular nomadism had characterized life Indigenous communities. This was true especially in North America where cycles and patterns, “ancient, ongoing, and organic,” had guided political and economic activities. The nomadism that accompanied the cycles and patterns was not “free wandering” but an enactment of community in movement. In other words, Indigenous communities established and renewed their roots in constant movements. Accordingly, the cycles and patterns were not “blockages or walls” that incarcerated people but “textures and

motions of life that guided” and enabled people in structuring their lives while moving in concert with the shifting textures and rhythms of life.

Soguk, 2011 p.46

Soguk further describes how assertions of indigeneity on these transversal precepts undermine systems of state power, the extractive power of capital, and the regimes of rights by which individuals are separated from networks of being on the land by challenging the basic logic of the structures of invasion. This crucially positions indigeneity in opposition to regimes of private property and universal rights that link settler colonial space to globalising neoimperialism.

Larsen, in his study of the resettlement of Ootsa Lake in the interior of British Columbia during the early 1900s, demonstrated that intimate, familial ties could help to undermine – though not disperse – colonial power in the area (Larsen, 2003). Some of these ties continue to have an enduring influence. However, these cross-cultural spaces, for as much as they challenged tropes of frontier segregation (Larsen, 2003 pp.93-94), were predicated in part of the absence of colonial authority emanating from Victoria (pp.94-95), and were rendered moot when concentrated capital investment resulted in the relocation of both Settler and Indigenous communities in the 1950s (p.88 note 4). Further, in a study of collaborative efforts between Settler environmentalists and Indigenous communities around Anahim Lake, also in the BC interior, Larsen demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining “frame alignment” between Settler and Indigenous activists in the absence of an “external threat” resulting in fragmentation of spatial discourses such that “the community and its... agenda cease to exist in the mind of the residents” (Larsen, 2008 p.180). This demonstrates the pervasiveness of Settler privilege, which unbalances efforts to create decolonising, hybrid spaces

without the imposition of formal relational ties (intermarriage and family ties), unifying external threats (to shared environmental features or resources), or the absence of direct state or capital power. However, at the same time, the success of temporary assertions of indigeneity into spaces of state and capital – such as the highly-publicized ‘Round Dance Revolution’ associated with the Idle No More movement – indicates that the potential here is more than just in historical example. The question is how to effectively capitalize on Indigenous resistance to generate Settler decolonisation.

Indigeneity is, as mentioned previously, not explicitly or necessarily anti-capitalist or pro-environmental; to claim as much would reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of indigeneity. Rather, it challenges the imposed hierarchies, concentrations of power, and elevation of imperial elites which are all rooted in the claiming and transforming of the spaces of the northern bloc. Indigenous resistance need not be explicitly anti-capitalist to confound capitalism. The most basic conceptualization of a decolonised northern bloc would require such a degree of spatial reordering as to render contemporary understandings of capitalism incoherent. Likewise, indigeneity need not be positioned as secessionist or competitive with the sovereignty of America or Canada; Indigenous being on the land simply refuses to legitimate and recognise the absolutist, static boundaries of the northern bloc states (Soguk, 2011; Alfred 2005).

### **Implicating Settler People: Colonising Dynamics and Denials of Complicity**

Indigenous being on the land is an especially effective method of resisting colonisation in that it confronts both erasure and occupation simultaneously. Further, it reclaims and recontextualises elements of Indigenous networks from



the settler colonial *bricolage*.<sup>76</sup> Indigenous peoples enacting indigeneity in place violate the Settler 'right' to act as gatekeepers of the settler colonial identity trialectic, discussed earlier. This both forces Settler people to recognise Indigenous traditional and ongoing presence in place (contra erasure), and disrupts Settler occupation by asserting spaces which Settler people may not enter. For example, the longstanding Anishinaabe blockade of Grassy Narrows<sup>77</sup> against loggers has shown that neither the overwhelming violence of the state nor coercive power of capital can force open the area to Settler control (Willow, 2011). The projection of the cadastral grid over the area and the incorporation of property into capitalist extraction are demonstrated to be simply imaginative, with no basis in actual erasure or occupation. Spaces of opportunity — in this case, the availability of accessible, desirable forest products and other commodities — confer no advantage to settler collectives when indigenous subjectivities cannot be segregated within the frontier or exiled to an exterior wilderness.

Indigenous resistance in the northern bloc has shifted since the Civil Rights era of protests. With the benefit of a rich and growing history of Indigenous thought and resistance, Indigenous activism can no longer be subsumed into currents of identity politics and recognition (Simpson, 2008; Coulthard, 2007).

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<sup>76</sup> On this second point, the most obvious examples are Indigenous land reclamations, which have a long history (Kilibarda, 2012 pp.27). However, the efforts by Indigenous peoples to resist cultural appropriation through electronic and digital media, such as the excellent blogs *Native Appropriations* ([www.nativeappropriations.com](http://www.nativeappropriations.com)) and *Beyond Buckskin* ([www.beyondbuckskin.blogspot.com](http://www.beyondbuckskin.blogspot.com)), should also be recognised here.

<sup>77</sup> The Grassy Narrows blockade in northern Ontario recently passed its tenth anniversary, making it the longest continuous occupation of land by Indigenous protesters (Ball, 2012).

Rather, Indigenous being on the land has manifested as a progressive rejection of institutions of privilege, comparative advantage, and colonial opportunity. However, the persistence of the imagined geographies of settler colonialism should not be discounted, nor should the connection between anticipatory geographies and anticipation: Settler people can subsume spaces of Indigenous resistance into a ‘not quite yet’ deferred fantasy of transcendence (see below on Decolonising Settler Individuals and Society).

### **The Trouble with Settlers, Redux: Decolonising Settler Allies**

I argue that Indigenous resistance as an assertion of Indigenous being on the land has both historically and in the present provided a powerful, impossible-to-ignore counterfactual to Settler perceptions of erasure and fantasies of naturalisation. However, awareness of colonisation and resistance is not enough. Settler colonisation may be *facilitated by* particular knowledges and ways of knowing, but it persists in powerful social relationships in and to place that are not strictly based on what is known or perceived. Indigenous resistance has shown the ability to penetrate and disrupt these resistances, underscoring the necessity of these resistances to any decolonising efforts.

This is the importance of conceptualising resistance — Indigenous and otherwise — as affective. The colonial mentalities of Settler people are deep and powerful. Generational inculcations into colonial logics — which despite changes and dissimilarities, seem to comprise an unbroken line to whatever indigenous ‘origin’ point Settler people can find — function on a preconscious level. Dysconsciousness (D.M. Johnson, 2011 p.110) may be uncritical, but uncritical in what way and towards what bias? As observed in Chapter 5, settler colonisation is

not, in the past or present, the enemy of stories of freedom, to collective action, or to the drive for liberation from various exogenous powers. Settler people can be critics of capitalism and empire, and remain settler colonisers in their desire to transcend their illegitimate origins and their continued assertion of colonial spaces. As such, Settler decolonisation must be materially grounded not just in the local — the particularist concerns generated by a hierarchy of petty tyrants that selectively disadvantages through refusal of admittance to select institutions of privilege — but in the individual, in the specific here-and-now lived experience of *being* a coloniser... and *desiring* something else.

### **Beyond Denial: Settler Individuals and Settler Society**

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to various colonial hauntings, such as the persistent presence of indigeneity and Indigenous resistance in Vancouver's DTES. These hauntings disrupt "notions of space as containable and static, of temporality as linear, and of history as something fixed, finished, and past" (Dean, 2010 p.115). There is another 'haunting' in this work, located between any discussions of a generic, individual Settler, and the amorphous, shapeshifting, endlessly open and difficult to define Settler society. This tension exists because there is no generic Settler person; the expandable construct of Settler identity in the northern bloc has created a distractingly diverse, obfuscating and flexible identity, grounded only in that common illegitimacy articulated as residency in a special locale (Veracini 2010a).

Settler society can be identified, but not engaged with as such; Settler peoples' refusal to seem themselves 'as Settler' powerfully forecloses any such

conversation. For Settler people, the admission of a Settler identity entails the simultaneous but antithetical admission that their privileges and lifestyles are rooted in settler colonisation. Effectively, identifying as a Settler in the present means admitting complicity with settler colonialism.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, individual Settlers can be engaged with, but not necessarily ‘identified’ as such, in that none is representative of Settler people generally or especially positioned to effect decolonising change. Settler colonialism, a logic that structures the basic ways that Settler people relate in and through space, becomes *invisible* on individual levels. This is the foundation of disavowal: of founding violence (Veracini, 2008); of the imagined, “dead Indian” that results from founding violence (Stevenson, 2012); and of personal complicity in the inevitable, actual deaths and dispossession necessitated through settler colonisation (Regan, 2010). It was not the ‘I’ that did these things, and the ‘we’ holds no relevance to individuals whose social realities are spatialised to focus on difference and seek individual opportunity.<sup>79</sup>

In the introductory chapter, this project was referred to as a “sort of autoethnography” and this conundrum is the reason why: haunting this research has been my own construction of the Settler individual. As there is no such generalised subject, I have consistently performed the unscientific-but-necessary

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<sup>78</sup> And, it should be noted, this disavowal underscores the importance of attempting to recognise, engage with, and activate the Settler identity as part of the disruptive process of decolonisation.

<sup>79</sup> As a brief aside, I have previously pointed out that the state is a spatial relation that allows Settler people to disavow through ‘limited liability’ in a corporate form (see Chapter 3 & 4). I would suggest here, though, that the state is just one possible formulation for this; disavowal and deferral happen at many scales, through many forms.

substitution of the generalised subject for my own particular experiences. The ‘Setter individual’ throughout this project is me.

For that reason, I must attempt here to reconcile individual and society to reconnect understandings of how Settler society could be decolonised — derived from the in-depth analyses of Settler space and spatialities — and my own, individual attempts. Already it is impossible to speak about these experiences without the singular subject, ‘I’: I as a Settler; I as a coloniser. As a Settler Canadian, I have direct experience of settler colonial geometries of power. As a person who has worked to understand and engage with Indigenous communities in resistance, I have personal experience of decolonisation efforts. For these reasons, the following section is intentionally written using the first person.<sup>80</sup>

### **I Was Not Surprised**

It was a revelatory moment while reading Lisa Stevenson’s article on the “psychic life of biopolitics” (2012) that brought me around to the conclusion that I need to

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<sup>80</sup> This is, I understand, a risky proposition. It has become increasingly common to end various studies with over-personal or purely creative and imaginative narratives. I have already critiqued two — Cole Harris’ last chapter in *Making Native Space* (2002), and David Harvey’s epilogue to *Spaces of Hope* (2000) — and there is the risk here of not learning from their mistakes. However, I do not slip into the personal here thoughtlessly, or without intent to return to more removed consideration. I do so only to examine a significant piece of evidence in this study — my personal experience of being a coloniser and of attempting to decolonise — in a more critical and useful form. I deploy myself as a “strategic exemplar”, something that “has a concrete existence in the world, but, at the same time ... reveals something important about the relations of power and affect at play ... more broadly” (Stevenson, 2012: 602). My story is not special, though I hope it is illustrative.

write here in a very personal voice. Stevenson's study is a scathing indictment of the power and practice of biopolitics by well-meaning Settler Canadians among the Inuit in the far north. From TB epidemics to suicides, these communities have often measured the impacts of colonisation in a grim ledger-sheet of Inuit deaths. Stevenson argues that suicide hotlines comprised a "strategic exemplar of a particular form of sociability" (p.602). I have referred to her work repeatedly in this project to help illustrate a number of important examples of settler colonial spatialities. But it was her comment on the reactions of suicide hotline workers to Inuit suicides that brought home a sudden and familiar discomfort. No one is surprised by Inuit suicides, she says, and "the absence of surprise is significant" (p.603). She presents the settler colonial thought process thus:

[s]uicide is at once prohibited and awaited. Suicide, as a counterfactual, evokes ambivalence. Future suicides are imagined and the thoughts then suppressed. Suicide, too awful to think about, is a possibility that is articulated and then denied.

Stevenson, 2012 p.603

This discussion of struggle that in failure brings not defeat but ambivalence is a strange but useful parallel to my own activism and attempts to build decolonising alliances with Indigenous communities.

I think of the times — there have been more than a few — when someone has accused me of being colonial, or acting like a coloniser. The accuser was not always an Indigenous person. Importantly, more often than not, they were also *correct*. I try to think of my emotions when these things happened, and I can remember feeling many things: angry, resentful, aggrieved, shameful, humiliated, and probably as a result of all these, usually speechless. However, I was rarely

surprised. Sometimes I was shocked by the context, or the (perceived) hostility. But the surprise was denuded because the event had happened over and over in my mind before that moment. Sitting in my Indigenous Rights class under Dr. Theresa McCarthy at McMaster University, waiting for my turn to deliver a presentation.<sup>81</sup> Driving in the car on the way to my job with the British Columbia Ministry of Education, where I would be meeting with members of a First Nations government we couldn't help.<sup>82</sup> Waiting to pick up my teaching partner, Chaw-win-is, for our frequent 45-minute commute to and from the Saanich Adult Education Centre.<sup>83</sup> All these times, I imagined being wrong even as I tried my best to be the supportive ally that I imagined myself to be.

Dr. McCarthy did tell me in a subtle, gentle way that I was being colonial; I had openly laughed at the overt racism of some white people discussing offensive sports logos and she had to remind me that not everyone finds it possible to laugh at that sort of racism. For some it is literally a matter of life and death. The First Nations representatives didn't call me anything; these were just normal bureaucratic meetings, and they seemed to know how it worked. Somehow that made me feel worse; we all knew I was a coloniser but no one spoke the words out loud. Chaw-win-is, though, did call me colonial without pulling punches; frequently, in fact, going back to our time as students together in the Indigenous

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<sup>81</sup> I would like to thank Theresa McCarthy, Assistant Professor of American Studies, The State University of New York at Buffalo, for both her guidance over many years and her permission to share this story.

<sup>82</sup> This refers to a number of incidents following similar patterns during my tenure as a research analyst for the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2007-2009).

<sup>83</sup> I would like to thank Chaw-win-is, a Nuu-chah-nulth warrior, mother, teacher, and friend, for her critical support and her permission to share this story.

Governance Program. She often did so forcefully, but never without cause. I learned a great deal from her, and from the (many) other times that Indigenous people who I hoped to approach in friendship and alliance pointed out my colonising acts. In my chapter of *Alliances: Re-/Envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships*, I argued that it is necessary for Settler people to engage in radical experimentation. I posited that a necessary element of this was to get over a fear of failure (2010). I have never stopped fearing failure, but I've certainly had enough experience of it to face it with clarity. Perhaps more important is to 'get over' an *expectation* of failure.

Like Stevenson's suicide hotline workers, or even the "heroic" bureaucrats, doctors, and nurses she describes flocking north earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who lamented but were un-phased by Inuit deaths, I was saddened but not surprised by these accusations of colonial complicity. I was not surprised by any of my failures to decolonise my relationships with Indigenous peoples because I expected those efforts to fail. In most cases, I expected that I would — in my ignorance — overstep (always respectfully!) the acceptable boundaries of my Settler voice. This allowed me to apologise — *mea culpa!* — and in so doing claim for myself that comfortable settler colonial position of being the one who apologises (M. Johnson, 2011; Veracini, 2011a). I imagine the hotline workers and TB nurses glumly shaking their heads over another 'failed project' and lamenting their inability to do more or better, before moving on to the next 'project' in the form of a patient or suicidal youth. I was often quick to claim for myself the position of apologise; in so doing, reminding everyone of my power in social spaces by dint of my membership in some fundamental institutions of privilege: racial, gendered, economic, nationalistic, and otherwise. I engaged in deep colonising behaviour:



reinscribing my position of power by recognising it over and over again. (Yep, still there... Yep, still there...)

The other option was to dehumanise and derationalise my accuser; to transfer back on Indigenous people responsibility for their own anger. I would assert — if only in my mind — that they were angry because of my whiteness, or my privilege, rather than my actions. I just wished they could see that I was trying to help! And I knew a thing or two about colonisation, so I could help strategically, right? They were just ‘too emotional’ to see it because of the effects of all that colonisation... that I benefited from.<sup>84</sup> The lack of connection between cause and effect is a clear example of dysconsciousness behaviour, but a side effect of a lack of critical mind is the inability to know how uncritical that mind is. So I was at turns baffled by and resigned to these responses. I could not understand, but I expected.

### **I Was Surprised At Myself**

It was an interaction with Harsha Walia — herself not Indigenous to the northern bloc, but “a South Asian activist, writer, and researcher based in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories” — that stayed with me and sparked this particular line of thinking, years after the fact.<sup>85</sup> Walia, whose work I have referred to earlier in this

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<sup>84</sup> There is a parallel here between larger constructions of religious adherents as ‘too emotional’ and thus violent, and this intimate dismissal of real anger as a side effect of colonisation (Cavanaugh, 2007).

<sup>85</sup> This description is excerpted from Walia’s panellist biography for the ‘Decolonizing Cascadia? Rethinking Critical Geographies 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Mini-Conference,’ University of British Columbia, Nov. 16-17, 2012. The full biography can be accessed here:

project, is extremely ethical, effective and inspiring in her engagements for social justice. I do not know her well, and while we have both quoted each other's work,<sup>86</sup> we only truly worked together once. We were both working on a guest editorial collective for an issue of *New Socialist Magazine*, and Harsha and I were asked to shepherd an article involving a round-table of people or selection of responses to an issue. I tried very consciously to be respectful and careful as we worked out how to bring the article together, and yet no matter what I said or suggested, Harsha corrected me at every turn. And she was right. Every time, right, right, right; even by my own understandings, leaving me without even the ability to mount an argument in my defence. She was polite but completely straightforward and clear about her arguments and positions. It intimidated the heck out of me, and it irritated me. I admit the intimidation made the irritation feel like anger. I also knew immediately that it was wrong. I was surprised at myself, at my own reactions.

I didn't know Harsha personally, but I knew her reputation. She was and remains very well respected in a number of communities and movements, and from what I'd read of her writing, I found her inspired and inspiring. In fact, working with her was exactly as I'd thought and hoped it would be: she was 'better' at these things (communication in radical media, cooperation across difference, Indigenous solidarity) than me and took a strong lead in a respectful way. I hope she didn't know how conflicted I was feeling. If she had imagined that

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[www.geog.ubc.ca/cascadia2012/speaker\\_bios.html](http://www.geog.ubc.ca/cascadia2012/speaker_bios.html) [last accessed 5 December 2012].

<sup>86</sup> Being cited in her chapter in *Organize!: Building from the Local for Global Justice* (Choudry *et al.*, 2012) was among the first times that I felt as if something that I had written was useful.

a privileged, middle-class, white male, with a government job, a Master's degree, and a rebellious streak, might get riled up by a strong, capable, activist woman of colour — who, by the way, knows more about colonialism, his speciality, than he does — she'd have been right. And *I* should have known better, because I knew *that reaction is what I would have expected from other Settler people in my position*.

In those many instances that I'd been called a coloniser or colonial, when I failed to be surprised, the resignation to failure was itself a settler colonial response. Like the nurses and doctors caring for the Inuit TB patients, like the suicide prevention hotline workers in the north, there was only the self-referential frustration that I wasn't being cooperated with (Stevenson, 2012 pp.599-600). What surprised me in the interaction with Harsha Walia was not my failure *per se*, but rather how I failed. Harsha *did* cooperate; she took me seriously. I was trying very hard not to be a settler coloniser, to remember my power and privilege with respect to indigenous and exogenous Others, but despite being focused on this to the point of distraction, Harsha pointed out colonialism in my words again and again. She listened carefully, gave me space and time to think and speak, and tried really hard to propose solutions in terms that I would understand and appreciate. And I still felt those same feelings: why isn't this person cooperating with me? Can't they see I'm trying to help? But it made no sense in that context. She was clearly used to mediating difficult and oppositional people. And so if there was an oppositional element in the conversation, it had to be me.

I didn't think a lot about this conversation for a while; there are a number of reasons for that. Not the least was that it made me uncomfortable. In the four years that have passed, the memory has faded and warped, as memories do. I can't even recall the specifics of the conversation anymore, just the feelings and

impressions. It was an intensely affective interaction. My reactions were not just significant because of their oddity but because of their intensity and conflicting trajectories. But, in researching this project I also began to examine activism more closely, to study social change with an eye to making it, and this affective encounter with Harsha was suddenly something I could not stop thinking about.

### **Uneasy Activism and the Uncertain Edges of Settler Colonialism**

I have always had a difficult relationship to the idea of activism and being an activist. I know from scholars of activism such as Chris Bobel (2007) and Paul Chatterton (2006), that this is not uncommon. I also know that some of my insecurities and perceptions are a result of my coming of age in the turn-of-millennia world of globalising power and anti-globalisation protests. My political awareness began to formulate in the late-1990s: in the wake of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and right before “The Battle of Seattle” and, on its heels, “9-11”. Still immature but ready to be active and engaged, I never found my way to many protests or marches. While I wasn’t attracted to rugged individualist positions, I did come to identify as an anarchist, with perhaps unavoidable fantasies of victory over power through civil disobedience. But I never found my analogue to the Paris barricades or the communal chaos of Seattle. I never clashed with police or was arrested. In a strange way, my involvement in radical politics coming as it did through Indigenous politics actually directed me away from that sort of activism.

I have recounted above how Indigenous activism, as a parallel affective process, precludes the foreclosure of a Settler identity, preventing transcendence

by countering erasure, occupation and *bricolage*. However, settler colonialism responds too, and Settler perceptions are twisted around across colonial difference regardless of time and experience. The RCAP directed a lot of grassroots anger in Indigenous communities into long, bureaucratic processes of research, gathering evidence, hearing testimony, and preparing reports. By the time that everyone had finished trying to figure out the implications of the RCAP report, it became clear that the government had no plans to implement its recommendations. But by that point, the perception of Indigenous-Settler contestation was shifting, on both sides. Canada, which as a nation had been captivated by the images of armed standoffs at Oka in 1990, seemed to have grown blasé about Indigenous protests and standoffs in the new millennium, distracted by the spectacle of summit protests, and normalising and even promoting the image of the unruly, “Native warrior” in need of discipline (D.M. Johnson, 2011).

The local politics of Indigenous peoples that motivated standoffs at Grassy Narrows and Six Nations were treated as “law and order” nuisances (Willow, 2011; Keefer, 2010a). As such, they were seen as no real threat to Canadian sovereignty.<sup>87</sup> That the state could not physically contain these Indigenous resistances seemed beside the point: their defeat seemed inevitable, despite persisting for decades and centuries. So while these standoffs continued to challenge place-specific settler colonial claims, confounding the attempts to erase

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<sup>87</sup> By contrast, witness American states’ appeals to the Federal government to limit the economic benefits of tribal casinos, which are located on reservation land in part to avoid state regulations and taxes. These appeals often employ the rhetoric of state rights and economic inequality of states with respect to tribes — dog-whistles for Settler sovereignty — to force tribal submission to state legislatures (Corntassel & Witmer, 2008 pp.18-19, 25).

and occupy, claiming back the elements that Settler *bricoleurs* have co-opted, they were also spatially inscribed and limited. Spaces of Indigenous resistance began to be treated much like Indian reserve lands: spaces set apart by the state to deal with a problem, eventually. Settler people's perception of opportunity in frontier spaces, and the drives of capital to seek new markets, produces desires to colonise those spaces; this is not beside the point, but rather after it. The frontier could not be *tamed*, it seemed, and remain the frontier, but it could be *contained*.

At the same time, a generation of Indigenous scholars was inspiring new radicalism in the academy. Leanne Simpson lists "John Mohawk, Sakej Youngblood Henderson, Vine Deloria Jr., Leroy Little Bear, Winona LaDuke, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Taiaiake Alfred, Haunani-Kay Trask, Trish Monture" as "Indigenous scholars and activists who nurtured ... inspired ... informed ... and supported" today's generation of radical, Indigenous scholars (Simpson, 2008 p.15). I have read the work of all of these scholars, been fortunate to meet several, and privileged (in a positive way) to study under three of them. As the anti-globalisation movement changed into the alter-globalisation 'movement of movements,' I was busy trying to understand the personal and social legacy of settler colonialism in Canada. I tried and failed to keep one foot in a current of global activism through mass physical contention, and another current that consistently carried me, introspectively, towards myself.

In 2006, when the Ontario Provincial Police violently and decisively moved in on the Six Nations reclamation site near the town of Caledonia (Keefer, 2010a pp.78-80), I was in Arizona, presenting a paper in the American Indian Studies section of the Western Social Sciences Association Annual Conference. Caledonia is a place I know well; it is a short drive from my family home, relatives have lived

there, and I frequently drove through the town on the way to university classes on the Six Nations reserve. Friends and former classmates were involved in the reclamation and were at risk of harm. I heard the play-by-play of the police invasion through CKRZ (Six Nations radio out of Oshweken) over the internet. Jeff Corntassel and I delayed the section he was chairing that afternoon to alert anyone who may not have heard. But I needed something more: my understanding of ‘what an activist does,’ my feelings of activist inferiority, and my nascent understanding of Settler responsibility drove me to look for a greater opportunity (in retrospect, a dead giveaway) to help. By the time I was back in Victoria, British Columbia, I was riled up, ready to fly to Ontario, my long-time home, and take care of ‘my responsibilities.’ Taiaiake Alfred told me not to; actually prevented me, in a way, by forcing me to choose between that course of action and completing the studies I had already devoted two years to pursuing. He asked me what I intended to do there. Years after the fact, reading Day and Haberle’s article (2006) on anarchist solidarity with the reclamation, and Keefer’s article (2010a) on the poverty of Settler leadership at the site, I have to admit that I wasn’t sure then and I still do not know what, if anything, I could or would have done.

Suffice to say, I have never lived up to my own ideal of what an activist should be or do. In part this is because the ideal is a silly, heroic one. No different, in all likelihood, than the ideal of heroic nurses and bureaucrats conquering the TB epidemics of the far north on a mercy mission to the Inuit. It is rather a new colonial frontier: settler colonial fantasies seeing opportunity in an unruly space that is waiting for occupation by, the willing and righteous, in the conflicted currents of protest and activism. So creative can be a settler coloniser’s fantasy, or more accurately, *my* settler colonial fantasy. My clear-levelled ground was one in

which the Indigenous presence was not neutralised as a threat because of elimination, but because ‘they’ liked me. In this fantasy, ‘they’ no longer saw me as a coloniser because of my credibility as an activist. My advantage was still colonial and oppressive in nature: rather than the coloniser who accepts, or the coloniser who refuses (both still colonial in nature, see: Memmi, 1965), I was the coloniser who changes sides. Not by recognition by Indigenous allies, but because I *chose* to. It was my choice to try and decolonise — a project expected to fail, my lack of surprise at that failure being telling in retrospect — and so I didn’t break free of anything at all. The difference between my position and that of the coloniser who refuses was a matter of degrees: I was trying to prove that I could refuse *more* or *harder* or *better* than any other Settler person. My feelings of failure in activism also come from this: an impossible goal, because of a misguided method.

### **Personal Mythstories**

Which returns me to my conversation with Harsha Walia. The oddness of my reactions forced me to note my own lack of surprise at a major inconsistency — a moment of being displaced enough to see the colonial difference; not across it but to perceive it in the divide between Harsha and I — and to be surprised at myself for my reaction. Years later, as the impressions linger, I realise how “affective” (Shukaitis, 2009) that moment was. Enough so that I began to see my personal reactions, in and through my ideas of and attempts at activism, as expressing settler colonial dynamics.



Perhaps that is why I came to the United Kingdom to pursue a doctorate.<sup>88</sup> The assertions of indigeneity that I had sought served to constantly reveal settler colonial power everywhere in the society of the northern bloc, making it more and more difficult to ignore the other place that settler colonialism hides: in the individual, the self, me. I came to the United Kingdom to study because I ostensibly wanted to escape what are sometimes very subtle settler colonial pressures within the Canadian (and American) academy. Perhaps I also came trying to escape my own shortcoming and failures as an ally. But in that attempt, too, I failed. I could not escape settler colonialism even by leaving settler colonial space; it travelled with me and now manifests as a haunting in my everyday life. Settler colonial collectives may carry their sovereign capacity with them through space, but a settler collective of one, short on capacity, still carries a Settler's imagined geography, that anticipatory geography that is assured of an eventual transformation of space as it is rooted in Settler sovereign power, even in the absence of it.

This is, perhaps, a neo-colonial haunting, "an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence" makes itself known (Gordon, 2008 p.xvi). That unresolved social issue is my own geographical mobility, and social privilege of sliding into British society and being accepted as part of the imagined community of the UK, all of which comes to me through my personal and collective Canadian colonial attachments across the Atlantic. Here, I am researching and writing settler colonialism every day, seeking the complicity of the Settler people whom I identify with, seeking the roots of illegitimate privilege in the places I call

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<sup>88</sup> I indicated in the Introduction, under the discussion of my three 'homelands,' that this subject would become important towards the conclusion of this thesis.

home. This forces me to perceive settler colonialism more and more clearly in my own life, which distinguishes me further and further from the non-Settler people (English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and so many European, African, and Asian peoples) surrounding me in Leicester. In the absence of Indigenous others, my settler colonialism still sets me apart. My own colonisation, colonial privilege, and fantasies of transcending settlement and legitimating in place are powerful spectres.

Thinking over these affective encounters, though, I am struck by something. In trying to exceptionalise myself through my own settler colonial mythstories — my localised and powerful variant of the coloniser who refuses (Memmi, 1965), an adaptation of the peacemaker myth (Regan, 2010) — I tried to set myself completely apart. Apart from Indigenous peoples, surely, but also from the mass of colonial Settlers. Of course, this was never my choice to make; by virtue of talking about settler colonialism, I opened myself up to the subaltern speaking back. And, as it turns out, ‘the subaltern’ knew exactly how to speak to me in order to make me listen, and what I was told were stories of my own colonialism. The reason for this is that they happened in the weakest space within settler colonialism: the individual personal relationships between people who do not neatly fit into the expected subjectivities of the Settler identity. I set myself apart, but in so doing discovered that I was reifying my colonial position and foregoing the possibility of having real decolonising impacts. In attempting to escape the space of colonialism, I tried to disavow my advantageous position in settler colonial topographies of power, forgetting that space is relational: the only way for a Settler to escape colonial space is to change their relationships in place.

My affective encounters with Chaw-win-is, Harsha Walia, Theresa McCarthy, and many more besides, are all examples of people in my life who are 'Othered' by settler colonialism and yet reached across the colonial divide and affected me very strongly. It is probably significant that most are women,<sup>89</sup> and that most had a particular responsibility to engage with me as part of larger interactions (a university classroom, an editorial collective). All treated me with respect, but with honesty: they treated me as someone trying to learn, and sometimes failing. But there is something missing from this equation: the third sector of the identity trialectic, the one primarily constructed through building the settler colonial bricolage. What of my affective experiences with other Settler people?

### **I and We: Northern Bloc Settler Societies and Decolonisation**

Here, the self and society must be reconciled. It is necessary first to reposition myself with respect to Settler society. I have come to see the impact of deep colonising (Veracini, 2011a) on my individual Settler identity, but that does not mean I know how to address it. I can intend to be decolonising and even strive to decolonise, but I remain colonial because I cannot extract myself from the institutions of privilege and flows of power that settler colonialism has and does situate around me. Alfred and Corntassel position Settler power as the "fundamental reference" of both colonial dynamics and the Settler "world" (2005

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<sup>89</sup> This deserves much more than a footnote, but here it must be sufficient to note that Indigenous women are often at the forefront of Indigenous resurgence movements; see generally: Maracle (1996); Trask (1996); Monture-Angus (1995).

p.601), and that power is wrapped around every Settler, even those who try to break free. I cannot *refuse* my way out of settler colonial space.

But there is a thought experiment here worth pursuing: Settler ‘people’ and any individual Settler are connected through a common perception of ‘being as the people who settle.’<sup>90</sup> Richard Day called it the endlessly open system of identifying self and other (2000), and Veracini talks about the settler colonial need to empty, first, Indigenous and, later, exogenous sectors of the identity trialectic (2010a). So in this expanding-but-flattening spatiality, Settler people relate to each other above all else through their location in and benefit from settler colonial space. These are spaces that they make through their presence as Settlers on the land, and that are exposed through understanding of and assertions of Indigenous being on the land. This is the foundational referent of Settler identity, the condition that must be accepted for membership.

If Settler society is colonial, so I am colonial. I cannot refuse my way out of my colonial positionality. Similar to Sidaway’s observations with respect to the academy (another positionality in which I am implicated), settler colonialism constitutes “a ‘value/power/knowledge’ system [that] allows and even thrives on ... periodic disciplinary revolution, innovation accompanied by devalorisation of earlier works, and theoretical breaks” (Sidaway, 2000 p. 265). In this sense, a personal refusal of one’s settler colonial positionality is part of a strategic trajectory, through American suburbs and radical movements, to always claim that the preceding Settlers were the colonisers, while ‘we’ are ‘different.’ But the same is true in reverse: if I am decolonising — as are others (see below) — striving for a

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<sup>90</sup> An interesting contrast with Indigenous peoples ‘being on the land’, and an interesting possibility for future research.

different way of being in and relating to place, then so too is Settler society. Unwillingly, contestedly, perhaps minutely, and maybe even futilely, but all the same, decolonising. Self and other in the Settler colonial collective are positioned as a non-discreet, non-binary dual (Waters, 2004b), inextricably linked through assertions of colonial sovereignty and positioning in Settler institutions; I may have to accept my own colonial nature, but in so doing, Settler society must also accept my decolonising trajectory. That is why, even as the remainder of this chapter engages with collective or social decolonisation, that I remain 'on stage' as an individual Settler person.

### **Decolonising Settler People and Affective Relationships**

I know very few Settler people I would say are decolonised or even decolonising, but I have known some. Two of the closest to me, who have taught me the most, are key figures in my life and my scholarship. They too are women, both academics but much more besides. Both are historians, or at least keen students of history. The first is Paulette Regan, the first person I heard use the term 'settler' to refer to an identity. She, in her work, seeks to "unsettle" Settler people (2010 pp.13, 190-191) — to shake-up and disturb our sense of self, and underscore the dysconsciousness at work in settler colonial space. She was studying for her doctoral degree in the Indigenous Governance Program at the same time as I was working towards my Master's degree. I was having an extremely difficult time; more specifically, my classmates and instructors kept pointing out my colonialism, and I was dejected by my failures. At this crucial time in my studies and politicisation, she told me "if you are uncomfortable you are probably in the right

place”; I am still coming to understand how true that is. I am still becoming unsettled.

The other is my partner and collaborator, Emma Battell Lowman. Emma seeks, in all things, stories of connection. Though a Settler person, she was the driving force behind our article ‘Indigenizing Approaches to Research’ (Barker & Battell Lowman, 2010) for the online scholarly magazine, *The Sociological Imagination*. She has published on the need to rethink and reconnect with — on a personal level — forgotten Settler peoples, such as 20<sup>th</sup> century missionaries (Battell Lowman, 2011), generating a kind of “weak theory” that relies on “re-reading to uncover or excavate the possible” (Gibson-Graham, 2008 p.8), combating erasure through interconnection. She is equally adept at rethinking the archives through Indigenous research methodologies, as she was bringing together stakeholders in Indigenous education when she worked with the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. It was there that a knowledge-keeper and elder of the Tsartlip First Nation, Greg Sam (Lux-Lax-A-Lux), named Emma. He stood her in front of a conference room filled with Indigenous and Settler educators and named her “Hya-Luck”, the water that comes up the beach and recedes. He called her this after watching her at a conference where she spent all day quietly slipping in and out of the room, identifying peoples’ needs and connecting them with the people and things that they required. She is a compassionate person before all else.

Combined, these two Settler women have affected me in two different ways: through unsettling and through compassion. Paulette demonstrated that unsettling is something that must happen constantly, that decolonisation is something that is not achieved but rather pursued. Emma has shown that

compassion is an extremely powerful affective connection, one that can avoid the othering of both 'anonymous care' (Stevenson, 2012) and postcolonial 'responsibility' (Noxolo *et al.*, 2011).

### **Unsettling and Compassion as Affective Relational Acts**

Unsettling forces Settler people to resituate themselves, to confront and perhaps address an emergent colonial difference. The spatial reality of being Settler suddenly shifts — through awareness of Indigenous others; through awareness of Settler illegitimacy; through awareness of exogenous Others' agency — and identity must change in response, even as it pulls against this shift in spatiality. This is the unsettling moment: when a Settler person or collective can perceive the path back to a settled state, but must also recognise the colonial actions that define the path.<sup>91</sup> Settler spaces must progress through their genealogy, with concomitant Settler involvement in dynamics of erasure, occupation, and *bricolage*. Absent the physical and conceptual insulations of settler colonial space and participation with a like-minded settler colonial collective, the Settler is revealed in their most basic form: as usurper and synthetic mimic (Tuck & Yang, 2012 pp.8-9).

This is a highly affective engagement because, while someone seeking to unsettle seeks to change the context of another's decisions, the actual process and content are still left to the individual. As discussed above, Indigenous resistance and resurgence is a parallel affective process, "the ontological relation of bodies coming together and increasing their capacity to act through interconnection" (Clough, 2012 p.1669). However, the process does not stop with Indigenous-

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<sup>91</sup> Paulette Regan has written the most comprehensive discussion of unsettling developed to date. Her work in *Unsettling the Settler Within* (2010) is invaluable and far more nuanced than I can justly express here; it should be read widely.

Settler relationships. As Regan and Battell Lowman have proven for me, sometimes the most impactful affective relationships are those *between* Settler peoples. In no small part this is because, in addition to unsettling, these relationships can also be hopeful, empowering, and inspiring. As Clough notes:

... the emotional states of activists are important for movement growth and recruitment of new members, for the capacity of movements to sustain collective orientation and action, and for the ability of groups to carry out oppositional actions. In this manner, emotion is always connected to affect, to the ability of a movement to organize themselves and become powerful.

Clough, 2012 p.1671

The emotional impacts of relationships between Settler people, then, can generate decolonising power by changing the relationships — and thus spaces — that Settler people occupy. Settler people must *get emotional* about decolonisation in our own lives, and spaces for emotional connection, consideration, and recovery must be a part of our collective decolonising efforts (Brown & Pickerill, 2009).

Compassion, as an affective engagement, is in some sense the opposite of Stevenson's "a-nonymous care" (2012 p.598). It is personal, rather than categorical: it is caring about specific people, about the particular things that happen to them and that they do, and recognising the connections between their reality and one's own — the relational spaces that connect and divide across and through difference. Compassion can be constructed as a basis for Chatterton's concept of a morality of common ground, "a social and spatial practice ... based upon non-essentialist and relational understandings of the self, openness and connection, hybridity, negotiation, and a global and more ecological sense of place"



(Chatterton, 2006 p.277).<sup>92</sup> The etymology of compassion is important here: from the Latin *com*, meaning together, and *pati*, to suffer; but *pati* is the direct root of *passion*, which itself often references suffering, but also endurance. *Enduring*, in space and as oneself cognoscente of the complexity of forces at work on everyone to produce conformity to power, is simply *being*. Compassion is not just sharing pain, but also sharing being. Not simply co-occupation — ‘being together’ in space — but actively ‘being, together’ in place. Compassion thus constructed does not imply a condescension, because it can (and must) be positive: sharing passion means being excited about happenings and victories that excite someone else, not for the event (anonymous involvement) or one’s own benefits or costs related to it (self-interested involvement), but because it matters to them specifically. In that way, compassion is interest and involvement in exchange for nothing, except that ‘one must be who one is’ through the relationship; Larsen and Johnson situate compassion as “a kind of clarity based on the insight that to make sense of being-in-the-world, to find one’s proper place in it, requires helping others to do the same” (2012 p.639). And in this sense — of Settler people aware of settler colonialism, struggling with the Settler identity, and of offering compassion to another, struggling Settler person — it is a powerful and potentially transformative affective connection.

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<sup>92</sup> Chatterton cites ‘compassion’ in the same essay as an emotional state that can serve to divide self-identified ‘activists’ from ‘non-activists’ (p.270). My construction of compassion here is partially influenced by the need to address this concern.

### **Affect, Indigeneity, and Settler Responsibility**

As I have demonstrated through my own experiences, affective unsettling and compassion can be extended to Settler people from Indigenous peoples, perceived exogenous Others or racialised peoples, and from other Settler peoples. All are valuable — and perhaps necessary — engagements. However, the decolonisation of Settler colonial space implies, ultimately, decolonisation between Settler peoples and the places that they occupy, necessary for the restoration and regeneration of Indigenous being on the land. Indigenous scholars, from Vine Deloria to Taiaiake Alfred, have repeatedly invited Settler people into conversations on decolonisation. But with this invitation comes an implicit responsibility that points away from the ‘cosy’ idea of responsibility. This cosy responsibility is one in which Settler people can create a ‘fair’ society through reforms, without fundamentally sacrificing anything or altering the underlying geometries of power that have been created through settler colonisation. Settler people commonly attempt to address glaring inequality between Indigenous and Settler communities through NGOs that focus on capitalist or corporate greed (see Chapter 5), but which also reduce Indigenous peoples to “a token sidebar in policy statements and declarations, a tragic case study, or otherwise rendered invisible or marginal in narratives designed to appeal to liberal audiences” (Choudry, 2010 p.98). Even radical challenges to neo-liberal orders are often organised around Canadian nationalisms that leave unaddressed the fundamental appropriation of Indigenous lands as the basis of any political economy, capitalist, socialist, or otherwise (Kilibarda, 2012).

Contrast these positions with Regan (2010 pp.183-189) and Alfred’s (2005 pp.154-157) calls for alliance building from both Indigenous and Settler

perspectives which both insist on the necessity of restitution before respectful relationships can be established. Considering the historical and contemporary facts of settler colonial dispossession — that the entirety of the northern bloc is an imposed topography of power, suspended between Settler individuals and collectives, enacted through relationships to and in place, overwhelming Indigenous networks of being with the goal of destroying and consuming them — restitution is far from a cosy concept. In fact, it raises the most unsettling question of all: what and how much are Settler people willing to give up in order to be ‘welcomed’ on the land? Thus far, the answer has been very little. Settler people will give money, time, and effort to improving relationships within the context of the Settler nation-state, but refuse to accept the possibility of Indigenous authority over place. The disavowal of Indigenous authority, the counter-factual to settler naturalisation, re-inscribes Settler colonisation through Settler acceptance of the role as the powerful person who must give gifts to legitimate rejected colonial position and privilege. Instead, Settler people must pursue relationships that are “are contested, complicated and productively unsettling” (Noxolo *et al.*, 2012 p.425).

As Alfred states, in his typically challenging and provocative response to an imagined white Settler Canadian asking for direction in how to help with decolonisation:

[h]onestly, what does one say to that? “Get the ball rolling on land claims by signing over your backyard to us?” “Quit your job and come be my personal assistant for free?” “Stalk and kill the Minister of Indian Affairs?” It’s tempting to be so facetious. I believe the serious answer to that all-too-common question is the same as when Malcolm X answered

it ... in 1965: "Whites who are sincere should organize among themselves and figure out some strategy to break down the prejudice that exists in white communities. This is where they can function more intelligently and more effectively." Word, Brother!

Alfred, 2005 p.236

This passage unsettles people; I have been questioned about it more than once. The reason for this is the trick that it plays on the Settler colonial imagination. The desire of an unsettled Settler person tends to be for an easy answer, a path back to comfort and advantage, a simple responsibility that can be understood, acted upon, and expunged. Alfred's simple suggestion is the disavowed imaginary, the counterfactual, the thing that while easy to conceive of and understand cannot be accepted.

This puts Settler people in the difficult position of imagining their responsibilities differently. Rather than pursuing comfort and resolution, the unsettled Settler person then becomes responsible for passing that unsettlement on, for affectively engaging with a wider Settler community. There are both spatial and a temporal aspects to this. Settler people have responsibilities to the places that they have settled, but following from Massey (2006), both place and space must be understood as socially-generated and shifting. Settler people must constantly reassess their positionality in space and responsibilities to place, as both constantly change, and the unaware may become prematurely settled, swept back up in settler colonial retrenchment. While spending time in place with Indigenous peoples may lead to transformative affective relationships, it is the responsibility of such affected Settler people to spread these ways of relating in

their own communities, countering settler colonial dynamics both socially and personally.

### **Decolonising Spaces as Decolonising Relationships**

I personally have been affected most strongly through unsettling and compassionate engagements, but these are not, of course, the only affective decolonising engagements that exist, or that are effective. The key is less the type of affective engagement as it is the commitment to decolonising personal relationships. One of the important points about unsettling and compassion is that they are both based on very personal engagement. One can only be unsettled from where one is, one's own positionality. The purpose of unsettling is to make one aware of one's own positionality through the experience of being displaced from it (Regan, 2010 p.236). Compassion, as discussed, is a personal connection across difference, the assertion that one matters not because of one's inherent humanity, or membership in a group, or sacredness of every individual life. Instead, compassion is the assertion that one matters because of who they are individually; regardless of whether or not an individual (or their struggles) matter to anyone else, they matter to me, to you, to the person affectively asserting a compassionate connection. Both are open-ended — unsettling through the implied "what next?" and compassion through the maintenance of connection through and after a response — and so speak to the intentional development of dynamic relationships over time.

Neither of these affective engagements stands unprecedented in activist praxis generally. Both unsettling and compassion occur on — or perhaps help to create — a space for dialogue on "uncommon ground" (Chatterton, 2006). As

Chatterton asserts, “[d]efensiveness or moral indignation can be swapped for dialogue” (p.265), even in tense circumstances, when dialogue is positioned in a space of two people coming together through difference. When those people also come together through common cause — the identification as a Settler, the determination to decolonise — the difference shrinks, the ground becomes more common (see concluding chapter).

This is, to date, among the only effective paths to decolonisation that I have identified. Echoing Taiaiake Alfred’s exhortation to Indigenous peoples to decolonise “one warrior at a time” (2005), Settler people may have to decolonise one unsettlement at a time: not even individual by individual, but moment by moment in individual lives. This, though, requires a revisiting of an earlier piece of my own work. Adam Lewis, an activist and scholar that I consider a colleague and friend, recently authored the article ‘Ethics, Activism and the Anti-Colonial: Social Movement Research as Resistance’ (2012), in which he takes me to task for a stance in one of my earlier articles, ‘From Adversaries to Allies’:

[a]nti-colonial work in practice, following Barker (2010), suggests that what is important is not simply whether or not settlers have been unsettled and made aware of colonialism and their relationship to it (although an important first step), but rather what the settler decides to do — whether they will seek to resist colonialism as an ally with Indigenous peoples or whether they will choose to do nothing. The only contention I have with Barker is his assertion that we must respect those who choose to do nothing once they are made aware of their colonial privileges (2010 p.323). Rather being aware of privilege indicates the point where an individual has an obligation to work

against such privileges and commit to a politics of decolonization. We cannot, as settlers and peoples committed to resisting all forms of oppression, let others continue colonial dynamics. Understanding our position as settlers requires us to take action and commit to a decolonizing and unsettling framework.

Lewis, 2012 pp.235-236

I do not attempt to defend myself by claiming Lewis misrepresents my writing. I will suggest that in my original article, I was thinking in a very abstracted way: not as an activist, and not as a Settler person, but as a scholar in a position of privilege. My intent was, myopically, to make clear that some Settler individuals (perhaps myself?) would or could never make the choice to decolonise; I believed that this would position them as “enemies” rather than the “adversaries” represented by truly ignorant or unchallenged Settler people (Alfred, 2005 pp.104-105). Certainly I believed that such unrepentant colonisers had to be engaged, though differently. But how? If decolonisation was off the table, what remained for relating to entrenched enemies: destruction, capitulation, transcendence? All clearly settler colonial fantasies, as was my disavowal of the unrepentant settler coloniser as the counter-factual I refused to consider.

In my earlier writing, I believed that I understood decolonisation enough to draw distinct lines between those who chose to decolonise and those that did not, recalling Chatterton’s observation of activists disconnecting themselves from non-activists, to their own detriment (Chatterton, 2006). From that perspective, consciously colonising Settler people sit on one side of an intractable divide, reifying decolonising Settlers, and foreclosing the possibility of a decolonising Settler polity. In effect, I had already closed the door on the possibility of Settler

decolonisation. However, through this project I have come to an understanding of politics of affect, understanding the powerful and treacherous positioning of settler colonialism resonant with capitalism and state violence, understanding how insidious can be settler colonial fantasies of transcendence, and understanding how layered and complicated are the spaces that we are trying to decolonise. Accordingly, my thinking has changed. Lewis is absolutely correct:

[w]e must continue our ethical activist research work, maintaining embedded relationships, reflexivity and a commitment to resist oppression and domination, all aspects that resonate with Indigenous and anti-colonial articulations. But we must go further. We must recognize the persistence of colonialism in intersecting systems of oppression and domination and seek to include such an ethical understanding into our research practice. We must recognize ourselves as allies in solidarity with Indigenous and anti-colonial struggles ... with the imperative to unsettle and decolonize within our own communities and selves. We must rethink our collaborations, our contexts, our privileges and our practices, and conceive of them ethically in anti-colonial terms as a process that is never complete.

Lewis, 2012 pp.236-237

There is a divide between Settler people who choose to pursue decolonisation and those who do not, but the divide is not intractable. As Edmonds writes in her historical study of relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples in early Melbourne, the frontier could be as thin as opposite sides of a mattress (Edmonds, 2010).



Likewise, the uncertain edges of settler colonialism can and are everywhere: between the Settler people whose relationships to each other and to place generate the power of settler colonialism, and by extension, other imbricated systems of power and oppression, including our own oppression. As Featherstone has demonstrated, relational dynamics co-produce both antagonisms and solidarity, and solidarity itself is “dynamic, contested and networked” (Featherstone, 2008 p.37). Decolonising Settler society does not involve the monolithic clash of opposing (colonising versus decolonising) forces. It is the repeated, conscious decision to be differently with people and place, every day, without end. And while no Settler person can be made to interact differently towards ‘people’ or ‘place’ generally, we can insist differently in our personal relationships.

### **Conclusion: Over the Edge**

All manner of Settler social movements are labelled as radical: environmental movements, animal liberation activists, radical feminists, the radical student movement in Québec, even right-wing survivalists and, increasingly, mainstream activists battling powerful currents of conservatism. Indigenous movements are often perceived to be the most radical of all. The label more often than not is in recognition of a movement that has departed the imagined geographies of settler colonial space, dropped off of one of the uncertain edges of Settler society.

But Settler space is dynamic: colonial logics transition into and through each other and leave hauntings in their wake. Settler spaces are designed to succeed each other, belying the intended permanence of Settler society as a whole;

in fact, a Settler society is designed to succeed itself, its narratives shaped like palindromes (Veracini, 2010a). Dynamic internal processes of unmaking and remaking space, obscured and normalised by appropriation and fantasies of superiority, and dynamic resonance and interference from neoimperial power that interpenetrates settler colonial space, all contribute to this spatial fluidity and change. Nothing in settler colonial space 'sits still' despite the imposition of territoriality. Indigenous peoples move through space to connect with place, while Settler peoples situate in place and then transform space around themselves in a never-ending attempt to simultaneously destroy and rebuild, until they can forget they ever belonged anywhere else.

Likewise, uncertain edges can be swallowed up, re-mapped, reintegrated into settler colonial space. The most radical movements can be subject to the hidden currents of settler colonial spatial power. Pickerill and I (2012) have identified this concern broadly within anarchist activism, and as discussed in Chapter 5, within several other, specific movements that, by all accounts, seek to radically reshape Settler society. Harris and Harvey's failures to envision a post-capitalist, post-statist and decolonised future are persistent spectres. What, ultimately, were these failures? Post-capitalist settler colonisers, along with Harvey and Harris, all misconstrue the 'location' of settler colonial power. Distracted by powerful institutions and structures of state and capital, the destruction caused by settler colonisation is, ironically, rarely blamed on Settler peoples. The fact is that settler colonisation is about the creation of spaces that consume and replace (in theory) Indigenous spatial networks, and that spaces — like power — are created through the relationships between people (Massey, 2009 pp.18-19). It has been shown repeatedly through the history of the northern bloc

that Settler people respond to the presence of opportunity outside of established systems, constantly seeking new positionalities with respect to established power, changing relationships between themselves as they interfere with Indigenous relationships to place. The location of settler colonialism is, therefore, in the dynamic relationships between Settler peoples themselves.

If Settler social relationships are the site in which settler colonial power is produced, and relationships, spaces, and power are constantly shifting, the lesson to take from this is that alliances must always change; affinity must always be reconstructed; affective engagement must constantly be pursued. No Settler person can ever become so arrogant as to consider themselves decolonised; until they relate to everyone in Settler society in a decolonised way — and vice versa — and until they find their responsibilities in and to places corresponding with Indigenous networks of being on the land, such a claim is a fantasy. Fantasies of final decolonisation are fantasies of transcendence; assertions of decolonised superiority are perceptions of clear-levelled ground — clear of Indigenous threat, perfect for resettlement — regardless of the work required to pursue decolonisation to that point. Relentless pursuit of change is the only reasonable position for decolonising Settlers to take here. How then to connect to place?

Indigenous societies connect to places through many methods, but in one way or another, most of these are articulated through story. Settler peoples' stories of place are, for the most part, settler colonial stories. Settler people must begin telling and retelling their stories of being in place differently, of struggling to decolonise, to build these repertoires of connection. This, too, is an open-ended project and not one that I can envision in future maturity, though it is being pursued in the present. These stories — of affect, affinity, and alliance; of Settler

people decolonising; of a radically reorganised geometry of power in the northern bloc — are the focus of the concluding chapter of this thesis. But it must be a central insistence of decolonisation movements that Settler people need to start ‘being’ — as a process — differently and then talking about what the experience is like, of both ‘success’ and ‘failure.’ Settler people need to create the future memories of the past struggles that are being engaged now.

## Chapter 7: Conceptualising a Decolonising Settler World

### Can a Settler Decolonise?

In a theoretical sense, Settler people should be able to decolonise. All cultures are fluid and changing. All nations are imagined communities. No state has ever endured. Even if the financial crises of the past few years are truly the proof of late-stage capitalism nearing its breaking point, history will not end. This may seem a provocative position to orthodox Marxists or disciples of Francis Fukuyama, but one that I think must simply be asserted at this stage. Even places change over time, or even can be seen as constantly being made anew (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b); a “provocative” point as well, but one with huge import (Massey, 2006). Assuming fixity is risky. However, whether or not Settler individuals or groups are actually decolonising (or even whether or not that is fully achievable), it is vitally important that Settlers come to *perceive decolonisation as possible*. Settler people must attempt to imagine decolonised settler geographies, because, in the attempt, Settler people are forced to actively choose what their relationships with Indigenous people and the lands of the northern bloc will be, and to take responsibility for how they will go about building the necessarily, radically different society. This is a move to recognize the affective force of settler

colonialism as a spatial framework, and to reject it in favour of other affective attachments regardless of potential discomfort (see below). Whether this is complete or partial, permanent or temporary, is besides the point; the important point is the intrusion of 'unimagined geographies' into the settler colonial geographical imagination; even perceiving the possibility of Indigenous-Settler coexistence is disruptive to the colonial Settler identity, creating the possibility of becoming other than coloniser. This creates the space for *critical hope*: there is something to strive towards beyond 'not feeling guilty' or other moves to innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Settlement alone does not inevitably entail colonisation. Colonisation, the destruction of Indigenous spatial networks to create profit and privilege for invaders, does not necessarily accompany the act of settling on lands to which one is not indigenous. However, *terra nullius* is a myth; Indigenous peoples' spatial networks are vast and complex, their relationships with place intimate and profound, and despite colonisation, enduring. There is no place in the northern bloc that can be considered *terra nullius*; all land is occupied land, in both senses of the word. Settlement in the northern bloc is, thus, always a political act.

Settler decolonisation very likely involves a transformation so profound as to render the identity and concept of the 'settler' incoherent along with settler colonisation. But drawing inspiration from Agamben (2009), while it is possible to predict the 'coming communities' of Settler people, it is impossible to know what form they will take. And, Settler people have proven extremely good at one thing: building new societies, especially given time.

## **Protocols and Practices of Sharing Place**

It is difficult to conceptualise Settler people existing on the land as something other than settler colonisers. In fact, given present conditions, it is almost impossible. Settler people at present lack, first, a functional framework for sharing land that does not rely on the 'benevolence of the Crown,'<sup>93</sup> and second, a culture and history of co-operation and respect without coercion. That is to say, Settler people's social structures and cultural institutions are premised on the colonial conquest of the northern bloc, making reform impossible, and Settler people's cultures and identities are saturated with settler colonial myths and mentalities that make revolution unlikely. The affective, unsettling connections described in Chapter 6 must be spread much further in order to begin generating social 'resonance' between a variety of decolonising experiences, before individual or small group Settler commitments to decolonisation have any tangible effect on wider settler colonial power.

These relationships are not pursued only against settler colonial relationships. They also must be developed with respect to Indigenous being on the land. It should be remembered that the settlement of outsiders is not an unfamiliar concept to most Indigenous nations of the northern bloc. Treaties, confederacies, adoptions, land leases, seasonal or resource-specific sharing of space: these and many other spatial arrangements have been and are practiced by Indigenous nations. Indigenous political entities of many kinds have developed

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<sup>93</sup> 'Benevolence' is a concept often deployed in Settler narratives of racial or cultural superiority. It has been a powerful trope in various colonial logics, including the early "benign and benevolent" English colonialism (MacMillan, 2011), and contemporary "liberal tolerance and benevolence" (O'Connell, 2010).

comprehensive legal, social, spiritual, and cultural traditions that speak to the (conditional) acceptance of newcomers or outsiders (see for example: Alfred, 2005 p.266; Borrows, 2002; Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000; Turner, 2006). Throughout colonisation, Indigenous people have extended these practices to conceptually include European and later Settler peoples (Turner, 2006 pp.47-50). Many of these practices were and are either ignored by or confounding for colonisers who construct civilisation and sovereignty within very narrow bounds (p.26). However, traditional Indigenous political and trade agreements themselves are conceptually sound; so much so that some Indigenous academics have argued for a revitalisation of traditional Indigenous political and trade networks as fundamental to decolonisation (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Corntassel, 2008; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005 p.613). This should be a rallying point for Settler people wishing to decolonise; facilitating these interconnections, materially or otherwise, is an obvious necessity for restitution.

### **Previewing Decolonisation: Summary of Findings**

Before advancing my own recommendations for Settler decolonising processes, it is important here to revisit some of the important findings detailed in this project in the previous chapters. This project, as a wide-ranging literary investigation and theoretical construction of the dynamics of settler colonial spatial production and Settler identity and social decolonisation, has covered a great deal of ground and diverse historical eras and events, geographic locations and experiences, and political and economic theories and analyses have been deployed in conjunction. This project has pushed the boundaries of how we understand both the histories and the contemporary constructions of the settler nation-states imposed upon



Turtle Island. The framing of this research in the spatial bounds of a conceptual northern bloc of settler colonialism has been instrumental in unsettling the powerful Settler narratives of naturalisation and erasure of indigeneity. This alone would be valuable given the ongoing evidence of settler colonial thought, pervasive in Settler society. That being said, it is important to revisit here the impact of the autoethnographic method and centralisation of affect as conceptual tools.

There is a tension running throughout this project, as stated more than once, between the individual Settler and the settler colonial collective or Settler society. As Pile (2010) observed, affect does not ‘scale up’ well as a concept, and this has placed a bind on my attempt to understand the affective motivations of settler colonisation. My autoethnographic foundation and explicit engagement with personal experience has been in an effort to convey my own experiences as a ‘strategic exemplar.’ In this sense, this project has been an attempt to apply a concept that I have previously developed in reference to Settler people seeking to act as allies to Indigenous peoples and movements. I have stated the need for Settler people to engage in ‘radical experimentation’ (Barker, 2010) in their efforts to work as effective allies, and this project – both in its academic and personal aspects – has been just that: a radical experiment on the possibilities for affective and effective (Shukaitis, 2009) decolonisation of Settler peoples. While this method has been very revealing in many respects, it has at times limited potential insights because it would be irresponsible to read too much of my own experiences as some kind of a blueprint for Settler decolonisation.

First, as discussed in Chapter 6, I must accept my own ongoing colonialism even as I struggle against it; second, my experience of being a Settler is very unique. However, as Wolfe observes, the relative differences within settler

colonialism obscure the unifying power of various drives and narrative impulses (Wolfe, 1999). To that end, I believe that my experiences of being among the most privileged of Settlers – at the intersection of whiteness, patriarchy, anglo-centrism, suburban middleclass economics, and with a status among the educated elite – are revealing of both how Settlers like me tend to think, feel and act, as well as of the barriers to decolonisation among this group of ‘deeply colonised’ Settlers. Thus, through my ethnographic methods and theoretical engagements, I believe this project provides a base from which to speak with at least some confidence about the affective push of settler colonialism, and the importance of affective, personal relationships to decolonisation throughout the northern bloc.

We must pay attention to the reasons why people come to the northern bloc and how they build their lives there, because this gives us a hint as to the nature of the affective ‘push’ of settler colonisation. Why people choose and/or feel compelled to uproot, move, and resettle on someone else’s lands is intimately tied to the creation of a colonial Settler identity through aspirationalism (into Settler institutions of privilege), and impacts on the ways that shapeshifting settler colonial structures may manifest in different forms. Paying attention to migration and diaspora is important for avoiding appropriation (Haig-Brown, 2010; 2009), but also for understanding the dynamics of how settler colonial power recruits an ever-expanding variety of people into the creation of settler colonial space and structures of invasion (often against their own liberty and economic interests).

Because Settler people defer their personal responsibility for the effects of colonisation – first, through their immediate settler collective (intimate community), then through economic, political, and cultural institutions of privilege – actions against state, corporate and civic ‘structures of invasion’ can be

profoundly anti-colonial but never *a priori* decolonising. Flows of colonial power blunted by institutional challenges are not necessarily dispersed, but rather redirected. Further, because potential allies are always subject to possible recolonisation, or may not recognize ties to various colonial institutions (such as in the case of Occupy), it is important to ensure communal and collective capacity-building for decolonisation. This is the flip side of the previous point: interpersonal connections founded on decolonisation attack the problem at the root, which is to say: in how Settler people socially experience place. Affective engagement means seeking out the discomfiting aspects of personal and social metamorphosis, specifically for the purpose of building a shared 'affinity' through affective resonances between the ways that place is experienced (though affinity does not mean replication or reproduction, as much as symmetry or complementarity). So, we need to *learn together* how to be in place (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b), *differently, together*. Decolonisation, like colonisation, is a social process; but unlike colonisation, it cannot be linear so it cannot inhere in 'progressive' institutions or 'development' ideologies.

Returning to colonisation as linear, a concept tied to this linearity became increasingly important throughout this project: 'colonial difference.' Originally a concept developed by Mignolo through postcolonial readings of literature (2000), the colonial difference can be seen to have spatial corollaries, through affective impulses to transform place to match the imagined geography of the coloniser. This has always been true, but becomes particularly important in the context of northern bloc settler colonialism, because – with an awareness of Indigenous being on the land as a contrast – we can track the spatial genealogies that appear and reappear across the northern bloc. This general concept supports Kevin

Bruyneel's recent analysis, generated through an American political development (APD) study of various 'eras' of American-Indigenous relationships, that "the imposition of American colonial rule and the indigenous struggle against it constitute a conflict over boundaries... in space and time" (2007 p.xvii). Bruyneel identifies a number of conceptual boundaries imposed by the American geographical imagination, all of which, I suggest, map onto Settler identities as attempts to 'bridge' the colonial difference and rationalise the affective push to settle and colonise.

This is itself significant because of what it allows us to do with emerging spaces: to perceive latent or persistent settler colonial dynamics within libratory movements, like Occupy or the other leftist movements described in Chapter 5, or emerging out of personal interactions, as I exemplified in Chapter 6. This is in accord with Pile's (2010) identification of 'in-between spaces' as a potentially fruitful framework for deploying affect in geography. Specifically, in the northern bloc, it is clear that we must pay attention to the 'unimaginable geographies' and 'uncertain edges' of settler colonialism – the pervasive but unseen relationships between people that defy boundaries and upset the linear palindrome of settler colonisation. This is essential to avoid the 'divide and conquer' that happens when Indigenous peoples and allies are recruited into 'state and capital versus anarchists and socialists' dynamics, and also to empower intervention in the interests of decolonisation during early stages of spatial construction.

### **Affect, Affinity, Alliance: A Decolonising Process**

It is not enough to say that we must decolonise relationships. Recognising that the power of settler colonialism is generated in the relationships between people belies the intent and influence behind Settler social organisation. It is certainly not enough to declare, 'Physician, heal thyself!' since many Settler people are content as they are. And no wonder: the topography of power may be uneven, but institutionalised privilege of all kinds discourages Settler decolonisation or even recognition of the possibility. Meanwhile, environmental degradation, social inequality, and the other ills of a hierarchical, violent society continue apace, and Indigenous peoples continue to bear the brunt of Settler conceit and waste (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012).

However, opportunity also exists. Understanding that the source of settler colonial power is not the government, the corporations, or even persistent racism and racialisation, but rather Settler people, individually and en masse, allows us to think strategically about how to employ relational decolonisation. Returning to Alfred's 'one warrior at a time' (2005), decolonising Settlers can also take inspiration from the ways that Indigenous peoples are employing that ethic. Corntassel and Bryce show that a certain scale of longitudinal thinking is required. Regardless of calculations about how much more space needs to be cleared of invasive plants, or how many more people need to be involved to roll back settler colonial space, Bryce (Lekwungen) situates her individual acts of resistance as simultaneously *insufficient*, *necessary*, and *educational* (Corntassel and Bryce, 2012 pp.159-161). A decolonisation movement built 'one Settler at a time' must adopt a

similar method of thinking about the common opponent that they share with the Lekwungen — settler colonisation — and about themselves.

As a concluding point to my research findings in this project, here I propose a three-stage counter-colonial method of building relationships to people and place. It is extremely open-ended and the specific dynamics of application in local circumstances and between diverse individuals is, as yet, provisional. However, I believe that as a very different method of ‘being in place together,’ it can have profound impacts.

### **Affect**

First, a commitment to affective engagement is required. Recalling from Chapter 6, affective engagement is often pursued through personal contact and direct relationship, though that need not always be the case. However, whether affective engagement is enacted through individual relationships or collective acts of asserting decolonising spatialities, it must be pursued with an understanding of the uneven topographies of power across which people engage. Which is to say, dynamics that produce racial and class inequality persist. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, capitalism and racial oppression are intertwined with settler colonial oppression in the contemporary neo-liberal northern bloc. This means that affective engagements involving Settler peoples — whether between Settlers occupying various positionalities, or Settler and Indigenous communities, or privileged ‘white’ Settler people and racialised, marginalised communities — always and inescapably involve uneven geometries of power and privilege. Even Settler peoples engage on ‘uncommon ground,’ and these differences matter to how we engage and to what effect (Chatterton, 2006). Further, Settler people must

be conscious of the shifting spatialities around them; as Leitner *et al.* discuss, contained and 'safe' environments (in their study, buses) lend themselves to far different affective connections than do environments permeated with power, like New York City, a node of interconnecting structures and networks of power (Leitner *et al.*, 2008 pp.168-169). In any affective moment, Settler individuals have the responsibility to try to perceive the power geometries around them, and to find opportunities to shift those towards decolonisation. This means that the crisis of leadership, referred to in Chapter 5 and above, must be resolved by groups of Settler people coming together, unsettling together, and beginning to decide how they will proceed with their own decolonisation.

These affective engagements must be read as simultaneously enacted and experienced, pursued and created. That is to say, affective relationships must never be pursued in an authoritarian way: affective engagement between an intractable, forceful person and others targeted as affective vessels is tantamount to bullying. Rather, every affective engagement must be an opportunity for co-learning, and Settler perspectives, no matter how informed, will likely always need to be affectively unsettled. It must be remembered that Settler people have thoughts, feelings, and opinions on colonisation and Indigenous peoples; that these are often coloured by privilege, racism, classism, and Othering does not denude their resiliency or their key positioning in Settler identities. Colonial Settler identities cannot be both dismissed and engaged at the same time: no matter how racist or warped, these positions must be taken seriously — which is to say, compassionately, but also critically.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Many activists and academics, especially on the Settler 'generic left,' proclaim that racists and other heavily biased individuals should simply be ignored and

Of course, the goal of engaging with these positions is not to take them ‘as is,’ but to unsettle Settler people from them, and that requires both critical thought and personal connection. Pursuing this kind of affective engagement is difficult. In some senses, spontaneity is required, and the ‘right moment’ can be encouraged but never assumed or willed into existence. The right moment may never come. But there are all sorts of situations that lend to affective engagement, including colonial and oppressive ones (Clough, 2012). Affective engagement can present itself as an option in the midst of conflicts between Settler people as much as during cooperative efforts. This is in part because affective engagement is designed to fundamentally alter the phenomenological way that people experience place (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b); this will almost inevitably involve resistance and avoidance, retrenchment and ‘moves to innocence.’ Larsen and Johnson elsewhere note that just because the process is painful or difficult, does not mean that it is not also incredibly powerful:

Metamorphosis is neither entirely nor primarily a euphoric, blissful experience. It is just as equally if not more so characterized by discomfort, pain, angst, failure, disappointment, and readjustment, all of which can be thought of as expressions of ecstatic encounter.

Larsen & Johnson, 2012a p.7

To be clear, these ecstatic encounters must be pursued in order for decolonisation to be possible; however, they are not likely to be pleasant or easy, and there is an ongoing

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marginalised. However, this thesis has shown logics of racism and exploitation at the very root of Settler society; excluding ‘obvious’ or extremely bigoted individuals simply reifies Settler spaces as neutral or unbiased, leaving pervasive discrimination that undergirds settler colonial geometries of power unaddressed.



need for social support against retrenchment given that – materially and psychologically – decolonisation is often painful and difficult, while colonialism promises privilege and security. Moreover, social support for and through decolonisation is required in order to figure out how a given place- or community-specific settler collective can ‘scale up’ affective engagements from the level of the personal (Pile, 2010) in order to build effective, sustainable decolonising relationships.<sup>95</sup> Of course, the temptation will exist to avoid engaging as Settler people with Settler people in favour of pursuing affective engagements primarily with Indigenous communities – a tempting move to innocence that raises spectres of a Settler ‘crisis of leadership’ (Keefer, 2010a; 2007) or problematic notions of responsibility (Noxolo *et al.*, 2011).

Settler people must be aware that interactions with Indigenous communities, while one way to pursue affective moments, is an engagement which may not be welcome, or which may involve very different kinds of engagements than Settler people expect. Returning to Alfred’s provocative response to ‘white’ involvement, seeking out an affective moment from an Indigenous person for one’s own benefit does not address the racism in white communities, or contribute to Indigenous being on the land, for that matter (see Chapter 5 on the need to complement rather than replicate Indigenous struggles). Haig-Brown discusses how honest attempts to learn are often wrapped up in appropriating action (Haig-Brown, 2010); this is part of the subtle construction of settler colonial *bricolage*.

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<sup>95</sup> See for example Larsen’s examination of Indigenous and Settler communities near Anahim Lake which were able to come together and bridge their different relationships to the environment; however, this affinity only remained powerful when resonance was generated by an external environmental threat. In the absence of that threat, the communities were unable to find the impetus to develop a common ‘place frame’ (Larsen, 2008).

Indigenous peoples' perspectives and concerns are and will continue to be paramount in any discussion of decolonisation, but the hard work of decolonising Settler self and society *is not an Indigenous responsibility*.

Engagements with Indigenous peoples are crucial, so long as they are also invited and respectfully structured. Settler people should not be mining for knowledge or solutions; nor should Indigenous peoples be reified as 'wise Indians' dispensing knowledge. Settler peoples must prioritise affective engagements with other Settler people. Pursuing decolonisation involves risk, and when Settler people pursue decolonisation through and with those closest to them, the risk increases. Often these engagements are painful and traumatic, so it is important to remember that there must be "space for emotion in the spaces of activism" (Brown & Pickerill, 2009). These emotive, risky experiences with friends and family are the most important affective engagements that Settler people can pursue. I recall Regan's lesson to me: that unsettling and discomfort can be compasses that point towards identifying the sources of colonial power. So long as that discomfort is occasionally dissipated to avoid burnout, it can be a useful tool.

### **Affinity**

Affective relationships to and in place are necessary for the development of affinity-based politics. Day discusses the concept of 'affinity' and affinity groups with respect to the newest social movements, and clearly takes inspiration from Indigenous struggles in his arguments (2005, pp.193-197). Affinity also has a long history of theory and practice among non-indigenous peoples, such as the affinity groups among Spanish anarchists and the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. More recently, affinity groups have

been a feature of many late-20<sup>th</sup> and early-21<sup>st</sup> century radical protests, from the anti-WTO and alter-globalisation protests of the late 1990s, to many of the ongoing Occupy movements. Affinity begins with the discovery of common ground. After the affective experiences that begin the process of bridging difference on uncommon ground, affinity is a return to engagements across difference but from a changed or changing positionality; affinity implies relationship, but also sustained effort.

Larsen and Johnson discuss affinity politics as potentially growing out of common phenomenological experiences of 'being in place' (Larsen & Johnson, 2012b). More specifically in the context of decolonising relationships between Indigenous and Settler peoples, being in place must be an experience founded on respect for Indigenous understandings of the personality of place, even (or especially) if the full details of these relationships remain obscured to the would-be Settler allies (Barker & Pickerill, 2012). Affinity is the point at which decolonising Settlers must choose to "give up activism" (Chatterton, 2006), which is to say, to stop thinking about or approaching Indigenous issues as something which can be specially acted upon, in addition to one's daily struggles. Affinity, rather, is the recognition of intimate and fundamental interconnections, both negative (through the coloniser-colonised identity binary) and positive (through the sharing of place or common history which can be beneficial when done properly and respectfully). Regardless, there are connections between Settler and Indigenous peoples that, while implicating each differently, demand recognition of relationships.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> I would make a caveat here: Settlers must be careful of appropriating specific affective attachments to places that are not their own. There is an implicit critique

If it is recognised that Settler people and Indigenous people are already in relationships, and that those relationships are often heavily influenced by colonial power, resulting in colonial spaces being built around and through the act of relating, then the real goal of affinity is to begin finding different ways of relating. This is inherently a prefigurative act (Day, 2005 pp.24-45). That is to say, pursuing relationships differently in shared spaces of the northern bloc is a form of “direct action” (Gordon, 2008 pp.34-40) against settler colonialism that prefigures whatever broad social and societal changes are being more widely envisioned. Jamie Heckert, writing on ‘relating differently’ in the context of sexuality, explains the transformative possibilities in this type of direct action:

[Relating differently means] meeting another — listening bodily, with empathy, to what is currently alive in them, as opposed to responding to one’s own thoughts of who another is, one’s image of another ... Relationship, in this sense, side-steps and undermines a moral economy of person-hood and the ‘the subtle ruse of power’ ... on which it depends, for there is neither truth of the self nor judgement ... Relating as equals serves as a gentle form of direct action — engaging directly

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of Larsen and Johnson’s phenomenological construction of affinity politics here: given the power imbalances inherent to settler colonial spaces, it is important to be wary of claims to hybridity originating from Settler positionality. I am personally very wary of claims to hybridity due to the potential imbrications with a variety of narrative transfers and moves to innocence (see Chapters 5 and 6). Hybridity is possible to pursue, but to reiterate the point made by Pickerill and I that was asserted in Chapter 6, it is vital to approach affinity relationships through place with the imperative of complementing rather than copying or replicating Indigenous relationships to place.

with others to address oppressions rather than through representation, elected or imagined.

2010 p.404

As prefigurative relationships take hold, other relationships become implicated through the personal networks that every individual brings into affinity spaces. Spaces of affinity thus shift as the relationships in them change, progress, and contest.

Because these spaces of affinity are not structurally-bounded (one type of relationships insisted on and imposed) or spatially-bounded (contained within jurisdictions or juridical institutions), they are always uncertain spaces. This contributes to the anti-colonial character of these spaces: as ‘uncertain edges’ of settler colonial space, they may appear as “mutinous eruptions” (Brown, 2007) or remain invisible, but always they are shifting and impossible to police and control (without policing and controlling every individual in them). They constitute, in some senses, what I call the ‘unimaginable geographies’ of settler colonialism: in this case, a space with all the characteristics of a frontier, including the possibility of opportunity, but lacking any possibility for advantage. The Settler gaze cannot clear-level ground so co-constituted; settler colonial sovereignty cannot exile Indigenous peoples to spaces of exception when doing so would necessitate a permanent acceptance of coloniser status and thus foreclose transcendence and naturalisation.

It should be remembered, though, that the label of ‘affinity’ is borrowed; it is applied to many spatial arrangements that are not necessarily decolonising. As discussed above, affinity is a widely used term in anarchistic organising in the newest social movements. As Jenny Pickerill and I have elsewhere argued (Barker

& Pickerill, 2012), the prefigurative, affinity-based spaces of anarchism do not necessarily correspond to the needs and desires of Indigenous peoples. The nature of the affinity matters; thus, there is a need for not a singular affective moment, but constant affective engagement, ensuring continuous reflection on individual differences (uncommon ground) as part of the search for affinity (common ground).

### **Alliance**

Just as affinity is based on constantly-renewed affective engagements, so must Settler-Indigenous alliances for decolonisation be based on constantly-renewed spaces of affinity. This is a 'return to activism,' but pursued differently than previous; it is an active, directed commitment to pursuing decolonised relationships through expanding, dynamic, and growing communities of affinity. This must inevitably manifest as social transformation (self-directed decolonisation of relationships in and between Settler and Indigenous communities) and also strategic resistance (contention against the imposition of relational norms and privileged spatial configurations). As relationships constantly shift across the terrain of common and uncommon ground, alliance entails the development of protocols and practices that both encourage and ensure the respectful creation of decolonised relational spaces. These protocols can serve to mirror Indigenous 'rituals of renewal' as discussed in Chapter 1 in that they assert not just ideas of ways to co-exist, but demonstrate patterns of trust, obligation, responsibility, and reciprocity over time.

Indigenous alliance-building traditions can be helpful here. For example, the Guswentha (Two-Row Wampum) Treaty contains, in the physical treaty itself,

reminders of the values needed to uphold it. The treaty is embodied in a belt made of beads, with two parallel purple lines on a field of white. The two lines represent the mutual non-interference of the Haudenosaunee and other treaty partners (including European nations and the Settler nations of the northern bloc). These parallel lines are separated by “three beads, representing peace, respect, and friendship, that bridge the two parallel rows” (Turner, 2006 p.48). These elements are understood as essential to upholding the actual treaty. The agreement of respectful non-interference and co-existence is not about lines drawn on maps or juridical definitions decided by courts; it is, in fact, a relational agreement between peoples that, like affinity, is open-ended and shifting. The constant is the spirit in which parties to the treaty approach it, each other, and importantly, themselves. Further, the treaties are as much reminders as formalisations of positive, decolonised relationships; they cannot be agreed to without some evidence that both parties can fulfil the agreement. That means that Settler people trying to decolonise relationships should not expect that Indigenous peoples would be willing to formally recognise positive relationships with Settler people until those relationships have been active for some time. Alliance-building requires a commitment to being an ally in the absence of being perceived as such; being called an ally is a recognition of fact, not a promotion or reward. *Being an ally carries no special cachet; it is simply something one does. Ally is not a noun; it is a verb.*

The development and practice of protocols are also vitally important, and these can be difficult to learn and understand. In Chapter 1, I highlighted the importance of ceremony, not just as a religious practice but as a method for pursuing particular kinds of place relationships and ontological discoveries.

Ceremony is related to protocol in that particular practices and behaviours are conducted publically to ensure that diverse and dynamic communities are able to come together to exercise effective governance.<sup>97</sup> Protocols, specific, shared rituals for governing good behaviour, are both a sign of consent and agreement to particular kinds of relationships. They also involve demonstration of sufficient knowledge, respect, and comprehension to justify allied relationships. Protocols in Indigenous contexts can be especially important around the tricky issue of Settler people and Indigenous territory. Again referring to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, protocols existed (and continue to be enacted) governing newcomers seeking entrance to Confederacy territory (Johansen & Mann, 2000 pp.315-317). In 2008, Emma Battell Lowman and I were invited to attend the Mohawk Nation Conference, at Six Nations Polytechnic, on the Six Nations Reserve. As part of the conference, Settler people and Indigenous peoples from outside of the local community gathered on the edge of the reserve to present themselves in a traditional way before entering the community. Lighting a small fire and sending up a line of smoke, we waited at the appointed meeting place for representatives of the Confederacy to arrive. Eventually a group — including traditional chiefs, clan mothers, a number of other knowledge keepers, and youth — arrived to welcome us. This welcome included a long recitation of their responsibilities as hosts, and our responsibilities as guests, and then an individual welcome, as we were each asked to demonstrate that we all agreed and understood our relationships of responsibility. Then, with children hanging from the running boards and showing

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<sup>97</sup> See the Haudenosaunee Condolence Ritual (Alfred, 2009a) or Thanksgiving Address (Swamp, 2010; Wallace, 1994), both discussed throughout this thesis, as traditional examples of this.



the way, the newcomers drove in a line to Six Nations Polytechnic, being greeted by community members along the road. The protocol, adapted from Confederacy traditions, had the desired effect of promoting understanding across difference, unity of purpose, respect for the place and our hosts, and a clear sense of mutual obligation. Similar protocols exist everywhere in the northern bloc, though few Settler people know them.

Clearly missing from this consideration, though, is the need for new relational protocols and agreements between Indigenous peoples and would-be Settler allies. As Corntassel suggests for Indigenous nations, it is more important to pursue traditional inter-connections and revitalise trade and political relationships between Indigenous nations, than to appeal to state or international bodies for protection (Corntassel, 2007; Corntassel & Bryce, 2012). The same is true for Settler peoples. Rather than constantly appealing to Indigenous peoples for guidance, for acceptance, and for authenticity on the land, Settler people must begin the hard work of formalising decolonising relationships between each other. This involves the creation of new relationships, but also the effort to develop existing relationships differently: it is important to recognise that, just as there are non-capitalist economic practices hidden by the overwhelming pre-eminence of neo-liberalism (Gibson-Graham, 2008), there are potentially decolonising relationships spread throughout the northern bloc, obscured by settler colonial power.

In order for Indigenous-Settler alliances to be of any benefit to Indigenous peoples, Settler peoples must have something to offer other than empty apology, postcolonial responsibility, and anonymous care, as discussed in Chapters 4-6. Settler communities must understand and articulate not just what they are against

but also and especially what they are *for*, what they will *do*, and how they will replace colonial power with something else. Protocols need to be developed over time to recognise powerful articulations of decolonising relationships, helping to insulate decolonising spatialities from colonial pressures; this is not done *for* Indigenous peoples, but *for and by* Settler peoples who otherwise cannot effectively unsettle enough to act as allies. As well, reflective of the dynamics of affect and affinity, Settler people must be flexible around these protocols and alliances; Indigenous peoples may well not accept the proposed alliances, which is not a failure on their part. As discussed previously, Indigenous communities in the northern bloc have a long history of alliance-building and relating across difference; if Settler people fail to connect with this despite good intentions, it is a sign of a deep colonial imbalance in need of redress.

### **Restitution and the Creation of Shared Spaces**

In this respect, the Settler course for decolonisation is clear: work to identify and free from Settler control the places and resources necessary for Indigenous peoples to regenerate formal political and economic networks, and wider place-based relational networks. The role of Settler people in this is often indirect — one must remain wary of Deloria's famous demand for a cultural 'hands-off' policy (Deloria, 1988) — and involves the generation of "space ... — intellectually and socially — for peace to be achieved" (Alfred, 2006 p.266). Alfred goes on to establish the useful metaphor of "'the clearing,' the space between the village and the woods, between home, family, safety and the dangerous space of freedom" (p.266). Settler people need to create 'clearings,' spaces where Indigenous peoples

can pursue Indigenous spatialities without settler colonial interference, which means spaces free of the influence of state and capital, emptied as much as possible of the institutions of privilege and, often, Settler bodies and presence. This is not segregation or division; rather this firmly places Settler people into a shared space with Indigenous peoples by virtue of their shared 'situated, oppositional' stance to colonisation. All the same, Settler people must remember that these remain 'dangerous spaces' and must be willing and able to step back and remove themselves when Indigenous communities request or demand it.

Participation in Indigenous protocols and practices relating to settlement must be preceded by restitution (Alfred, 2005 pp.151-157; Regan 2010 pp.183-189), and accompanied by the unsettling realisation that individual Settler presence on the land is never guaranteed. Without restitution, Indigenous peoples cannot be expected to extend place-sharing practices (again) to Settler peoples. Restitution in this sense is both exceedingly simple and deceptively complex: simply put, restitution means return of the land to Indigenous control, and sincere Settler commitments to revitalising place-based networks of being on the land. That is an incredibly complicated task; restitution is the re-establishment of balance in place. As discussed previously, the shifting nature of place and the fluid and layered geometries of power that permeate the northern bloc mean this must be a constant pursuit. Settler people would be wise, then, to engage with the complex concept of 'balance' in Indigenous thought.<sup>98</sup> Changing relationships with

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<sup>98</sup> The literature of Indigenous peoples' concepts of balance is extensive, though not often engaged with due to marginalisation in 'native studies' programs (Smith, 1999) or disregarded as 'unscientific' (Deloria, 2004). For an introduction to this concept, see Jake Swamp's address in *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous-non-*

Indigenous peoples requires the consistent demonstration of efforts to change spatialities and pursue rebalancing over time and through adversity. This takes time, both to find appropriate praxis (or praxes), to practice it or them properly, to fully internalise these practices, and to build trust among Indigenous peoples that these efforts towards decolonisation are legitimate.<sup>99</sup> As well, understandings of restitution and balance in a decolonising context reveal something very uncomfortable to many Settler peoples: Indigenous people are under no obligation to share space. The only obligation that Indigenous peoples and nations face is the obligation to themselves to figure out 'what to do with all these Settlers.' If Settler people choose to pursue decolonisation, they may engage in cooperative efforts with Indigenous people to manage settlement properly. But it must be remembered that these efforts, even if cooperative, must happen according to Indigenous spatialities, legal traditions, and material needs.

### **Conclusion: The Other Side**

This project has been wide-ranging and has uncovered a number of important aspects of Settler identities and settler colonial spaces. I have shown that Settler people do not completely ignore or fail to see Indigenous networks of being on the land, but are particularly effective at deconstructing those networks and

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*Indigenous Relationships* (2010), and the documentary *In the Light of Reverence* (2002). Crucially, balance in Indigenous thought does not imply static situation, but dynamic and shifting action.

<sup>99</sup> Meaning worthwhile and sustainable, rather than sincere or honest. Settlers have often spoken sincerely about their respect for Indigenous peoples and cultures even as they aggressively colonise.

recontextualising particular elements to settler colonial ends. This allows Settler people to bridge the settler colonial difference by forcibly changing the meaning of place over time by the implementation and dehistoricisation (presumed normalcy and banality) of settler colonial *bricolage*, contributing to Settler peoples' mimetic character. That being said, the production of settler colonial space is intended to be open-ended and highly flexible, supportive of diverse Settler relationships that obscure colonial responsibility. Thus, there is potential for turning Settler people against settler colonisation by stretching the definitions of 'relationship' to include indigeneity as a fundamental and irreducible element of place. This, though, implies massive reorganisation of the spatial geometries that define or support most of the social, political, cultural, and economic institutions of privilege in the northern bloc. A decolonised or decolonising Settler space would be unrecognisable to most Settler people. While decolonised Settler space would also be almost unheard of, it would also present possibilities for new ways of organising socially across difference to peoples confronting growing crises of economic stratification, political corruption, and environmental degradation.

As such, the next steps in both academic and activist decolonising Settler praxes are clear. The potentiality for Settler decolonisation may exist, but it is meaningless if it is not acted upon. Decolonisation is pursued through changing relationships in and to place, meaning it must be pursued collectively. Settler collectives have, almost exclusively, coalesced around settler colonisation as an explicit goal; can Settler decolonisation motivate similar mobilisation against the pervasive geometries of power that support northern bloc structures of invasion? Can small groups of Settler people committed to living differently on and with the land begin rolling back the edges of settler colonial space to reveal potentially

different ways of living in the 'clearing' between colonial power and Indigenous resurgence? Possibly.

The decolonising relationships that build the unimaginable geographies of settler colonialism — the Settler space that defies colonial oppression and supports the power of Indigenous being on the land — are 'messy' and difficult to envision or describe. Even the attempt to articulate these spaces in some senses forecloses possibilities that could be vital to Settler decolonisation (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Turbulence Collective, 2010). Simply, Settler people are not yet ready to envision or enact these different spaces; rather, Settler people first need to start coming together around decolonising concerns and decolonised ethics, understanding the extent and possibility of their own inter-relations before exploring how these can be implemented with Indigenous communities. This will require a great deal of research and experimentation — in the academy, but more so in the daily lives and collective activism of would-be Settler allies — to fully map the occupied terrain of settler colonial space. It will also require a reorientation of Settler scholarship away from anti-colonial critiques of governments and markets, and towards decolonisation and towards challenging settler colonial dispossession as the basis of governmental, capitalist, and other kinds of power that can otherwise survive the demise of any particular Settler social form. Settler scholars, if they wish to contribute to these new imagined geographies, must commit to learning about indigeneity and Indigenous peoples, but apply this knowledge in critical reflection on Settler peoples and settler colonial space.

Settler colonialism, as shown throughout this thesis, is not monolithic. Rather, settler colonisation is the result of a multitude of acts, from exceptional power imposed by elites to banal, everyday lived dynamics of 'average' Settler

peoples. The fact that Settler people can conceivably decolonise is one implication of this difference between structure and dynamic; the fact that doing so is only meaningful if it is a collective act is another. How do Settler people relate to each other and to place as decolonised peoples? That is a question that will require different answers across places, at different times, and in response to various oppressive, colonising entities (capitalist, metropole colonial, settler colonial, etc.). It is a question that asks a great deal of Settler people. It is a question which Settler people must try to answer, never sure if there is an answer at all, and knowing that Settler people fear few things more than illegitimacy in place. Alfred and Corntassel assert that “[f]reedom is the other side of fear”, and that Indigenous peoples must seek liberation by confronting “fears head-on through spiritually grounded action; contention and direct movement at the source of our fears is the only way to break the chains that bind us to our colonial existences” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005 p.613). Settler people do not have the spiritual traditions that ground this type of Indigenous resistance, so perhaps the first and most important goal for decolonising Settler collectives is to articulate their own ethical ‘grounding’ — what are decolonising Settlers fighting for? Somehow, though, Settler people must come to accept their fear of never belonging, of always being in-between and in transition; eventually, Settler people must accept that the only way to truly ‘settle’ the disputes between Indigenous and Settler peoples is to unsettle ourselves and the entirety of the northern bloc.

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