

**Settler Colonialism + Native Ghosts:
An Autoethnographic Account of the
Imaginarium of Late
Capitalist/Colonialist Storytelling**

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This dissertation is an Indigenous, decolonial, and autoethnographic account of the genealogical formation and function of Nativeness within biopolitical formations and racializing assemblages, as well as the visual, ontological, narrative, and affective imaginings of the northern bloc of settler colonialism (the United States and Canada). As an autoethnographic work it centres my own lived and embodied experiences to chart the corridors of settler-colonial power and knowledge production, in particular my experiences as a diasporic, urban and liminally enrolled Native person, and the very real, and at times overwhelming, affective burdens that come with such a positionality. In doing so this work situates my journey within the structures of settler colonialism, and in particular against what the late Patrick Wolfe referred to as the “logic of elimination,” as well as what many scholars have identified and referred to as the Coloniality of Power and the Colonial Order of Things. Further, it works to centre Indigenous resurgence, insurgency, decolonization, self-determination, and a politics of refusal. In thinking through in particular the centering of practices of refusal, this work proposes and engages in a kind of methodological-pedagogical-praxiological movement of autoethnographic refusal, where the dissertation begins its first of two narrative movements by charting Indigenous damage narratives within frames of political ontology, biopolitics and racializing assemblages, visibility, and community loss and disruption, before moving towards actively no longer telling those stories. The second narrative movement of this

dissertation moves then from telling of my own stories of damage under settler-colonial regimes of power/knowledge, towards theorizing about Native damage narratives, most especially why they are so readily consumed within digital, filmic, and academic settings and the economies of late capitalism/colonialism. This is referred to within as *the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling*. In doing so, it continues to ask fundamentally onto-existential questions about Natives through frames of Savageness and Wildness, temporality, and what the late cultural theorist Mark Fisher referred to as the *Weird*.

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Maēc-waēwaēnen ketaēnen!

Dedication

For my mother, Gay Keshena Robinson, my aunts, my grandmother Jennine Keshena, and all of the Menominee women who made me who I am. For my Uncle Lee, my Aunt Ann, my Aunt Margaret, my brother Ben, other relatives, and, most especially, my grandfather, Gordon Keshena, who never got to see this dissertation begun, much less completed. I know you support me from the other side.

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A Prolegomena on Language and Territory

Before the serious work of this dissertation begins it is necessary, I believe to lay some conceptual groundwork, even before what may seem to be the primary conceptual groundwork that is to come in terms of illuminating my theoretical, methodological and research concerns. Primarily these words that I feel must come before all else have to do with two questions: language and land.

Language has often been the site of much anti-colonial and decolonial theorizing, imagining and material work. Language shapes our world, our place(s) within it, the zones of intersection, antagonism, and contextualization, paths to liberation, and ultimately our perceptions of these things, and many more. Language then—and the choice to use or not use specific language, terminology, descriptors, grammatical constructs, turns of phrase, etc.—is something that provides grounding in, and demonstrates an orientation towards, specific sets of epistemological, ontological, methodological, pedagogical and praxiological questions and views of the world. More pressingly though, and perhaps some would say most vulgarly, language, and the choice to, or to not, deploy certain words, means of spelling and phrasing is eminently political in nature.

The dissertation is, as the pages to come will nakedly demonstrate, not an exercise in mere dry sociological or more broadly social scientific investigation into a certain social issue. Rather, because of the very nature of the subject that it takes up and the

investigation that it follows, it should be understood, at its more basic level, to be an exercise in decolonial Native politics. This is not only because this dissertation roots itself in and towards a kind of decolonial and Indigenous epistemological and ontological framing, and the consequent methodological, pedagogical and praxiological commitments that arise from such an orientation, but because Native life, ensconced as it is within a global, continental and national terrain that seeks nothing short of its total elimination, cannot be anything but political. As Taiaiake Alfred deftly notes, “It has been said that being born Indian is being born into politics” (1995:1), and like Alfred, I believe this to be true.

Thus, in the pages and chapters to follow I make an active choice—not only as both an Indigenous scholar and an activist, but as simply a Native trying to uncover his place within this world—to shape my deployment of language in such a way that it functions within a general activity of raising a decolonial political consciousness within Indigenous peoples and decentres the normative linguistic signifiers of modernity/coloniality, settler colonialism, capitalism and cisheteropatriarchy. To this end, I agree with the New Afrikan Independence Movement activist Sanyika Shakur when he notes that we can use:

Certain spellings, particular words, phrases and slogans to distinguish, apply energy, weight and clarity to the ongoing and ever-increasing need for shaper, more critical, words of power to describe socio-economic phenomena of national oppression” (2013:91).

The decolonial Osage theologian George E. “Tink” Tinker likewise notes in his *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* that this form of linguistic praxis:

Allows readers to avoid unnecessary normativizing or universalizing of the principal institutional religious quotient of the euro-west ... It is important to my argumentation that people recognize the historical artificiality of modern regional and nation-state social constructions (2008:1).

My uses of language follow in this wake. Consequently, in this dissertation I make an active choice to not capitalize certain descriptive words and terms associated with the modern/colonial/capitalist order of things, such as christian, european, western/euro-western, canadian, euromodern, and american. Following Tinker, I also extend this to various geo-regional terms of delineation such as southwest, northeast or midwest when referring to political and geographical regions such as southwestern Ontario or the american midwest. I have however decided to keep most proper nouns such as the names of countries, states and provinces capitalized.

There are though two major exceptions to this general rule of thumb. The first is my choice to de-capitalize the term 'white' when referring to settlers of european descent, again to de-emphasize their place as the normative subject, not only within the geopolitical sphere of this continent, but of the entire modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. The second is the capitalization of Native North American when referring to Indigenous peoples.

Further, regarding my manner of addressing of the two English-speaking countries that occupy this continent currently, with their shared histories as imperial nations founded upon Fred Moten's sociological catastrophe of settler colonialism and

transatlantic slave trade (2017), I do not believe it is a significant conceptual leap to treat them as a collectivity. To that I would say that despite the formal international border in between them, flags, forms of bourgeois liberal democratic governance, and the various more minor settler nationalist aspirations to difference, from the perspective of the Native, it can be quite difficult to tell the two national-imperial-colonial blocs apart from one another. To further this Native ethico-political statement, and to more deeply de-emphasize and de-normativize their claims to exclusive or paramount sovereignty and territoriality, throughout this dissertation I refer to them using settler scholar Adam J. Barker's vocabulary of the "northern bloc of settler colonialism" (2012:42), or more simply the northern bloc.

When referring to the geographical terrain itself on which these colonial and decolonial contestations over sovereignty and territoriality play out, that is, when referring to the land itself, I simply call it Turtle Island. While there are a number of problems that could be pointed out with this, most specifically the fact that there is no one single term from an Indigenous language that was used for the continent, and there never has been, in this case I find it is apt because it is the translation of Maehkaenah-Menaehsaeh, a term from our largely unknown-to-self language of Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen. Similarly, there is the cognate term Mishiike Minisi from our linguistically, culturally, and politically close Anishinaabe kinfolk. There are similar cognate terms in the languages of other Algonkian-speaking peoples from the

northeastern woodlands of the continent, and within the unrelated languages of our culturally distinct co-habitants of the region, the various Iroquoian-speaking nations. Rather than juggle a number of these terms at any one time, Turtle Island will suffice for the purposes of this dissertation.

I. Some Key Terms

Additionally, it is best to also clarify that there are a number of terms that are used when referring to those peoples and nations that are Indigenous to Turtle Island within the following dissertation, both by myself and by the other authors, scholars, and theorists that I cite therein. A non-comprehensive list and their rough meanings and usages, drawn from Kanien'kehá:ka scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2009:23) is as follows:

- *Indian*: A legal term still in use among many indigenous people in North America.
- *Native*: A term used to refer to the 'racial' and cultural distinctiveness of individuals, and to distinguish indigenous communities from those of the mainstream society.
- *American Indian*: Despite attempts to replace it with alternatives such as *Native American*, this term is in common use by Native peoples. It is also a legal-political category in the United States. Use of this term is also reflected in the chosen names of several important indigenous activist organizations such as the American Indian Movement and United American Indians of New England.
- *Aboriginal*: A legal category in Canada that includes Indians, Métis, and Inuit.

- *Indigenous*: This term is used to imply a global context and to emphasize the supposed natural, tribal, and traditional characteristics of various peoples.

As Alfred notes, all of these terms are appropriate in their given contexts and are used extensively by Native peoples themselves. (Alfred 2009:23).

For myself, however, usage tends to focus on three: Indian, Native, and Indigenous. Perhaps as a product of my mother's generation and those that came before her, many of whom still choose to refer to themselves as *Indians*, I myself quite often refer to myself as such, both within the pages of this dissertation, and in everyday life. I also retain usage of Indian when speaking of specific organizations, pieces of legislation, and elements of governance that retain it in the name, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Act, Indian Status, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, etc. I also retain the usage of the old phrase at times that refers to "Indian Country," though I take Indian Country to be inclusive of Native beyond just those called Indians.

Indeed, Indian Country also speaks to another issue, which is that Native, and at times Indigenous, is the primary term used within this text, in part to move away from an implicit, and at times explicit, rendering of Nativeness as Indianness, and thus erasing Inuit, Métis, and other Indigenous peoples. This is the product I believe of both an american-centric upbringing, despite not being raised in the United States, which tends to dissolve all Natives within its borders into Indianness, including both Inuit peoples in Alaska and the Kānaka Maoli and other Indigenous Polynesian, Micronesian, and

Melanesian peoples of the country's Pacific territories, as well as a Indiancentric perspective that I believe is inculcated by Indians ourselves, outside of official settler State dogma, and which crosses the settler border. I have listened to, and learned greatly, from Inuit friends and colleagues about the erasure of them, their lives, their communities, and their experiences within broader Native communities, organizations, events, and everything else. It is my desire to push back against this erasure, as I feel it is my responsibility to do so as an Indian who tries to live their life in the spirit of reciprocity and good kinship with other Native peoples.

Additionally, regarding the terms Indigenous and Native, while Alfred's linguistic taxonomy above does differentiate between the two, my usage trends to treat them as interchangeable and thus I do not make a consistent choice to use one over the other in any given instance, though I do tend, as a matter of automatic writing tendencies, to favour Native. And that is certainly part of the point. In one of the chapters that will follow, I engage the arguments of Xicanx-Tzotzil scholar Nicolás Juárez around Native racialization, the question of visibility, and the idea that one can produce (and thus reproduce) a meaningful difference between the two concepts on the lines of race versus ethnicity. As that chapter will show, I profoundly disagree with Juárez's arguments, both their conclusions and what I see as his (mis)understanding of how *Nativeness* works under regimes of settler-colonial biopolitical governmentality. Thus, for me, the words actually carry much of the same content.

Additionally, there is a further set of political discourses around the usage of the term *Indigenous* (or *indigenous*) that complicates my desire to deploy, and which is hinted at my Alfred's decade-old taxonomy, which is that there is a global content to it. While I consider it to be largely unintentional, a key fallout from this has been the loss of specificity in terms of being able to discuss and analyse the experience of people and nations who are Indigenous to Turtle Island in the transition from speaking of Native Studies to Indigenous Studies. While these intellectual spaces *on this continent* were primarily fought for by Native North Americans, increasingly space within university departments and programmes, academic journals, and edited volumes, as well as within the myriad of enclaves that have been carved out of the terrain of various new and social medias, has been given over to the discussion of global Indigeneities.

I have no political or ethical issue with the discussion of Indigeneities and indigenous peoples around the world, and actively support intercommunal and international communication, sharing and collaboration between our various peoples and nations. That must be said upfront and openly so that I am quite clear on this issue. However I am concerned by the shifting usage of the term *Indigenous* towards a globalized usage within the colonized and westernized academy on this continent and what I see as the slow marginalization of Native North Americans in zones that we fought so long for, and more specifically the loss of a *specific* language for talking about our experience under the twin regimes of the northern bloc of settler colonialism.

Again, clarity of purpose needs to be made here: this is not a denial of other people's indigeneity, a claim which I have myself seen often thrown out towards Native North Americans within various online milieus when the term *Indigenous* is used to refer to a particular Turtle Island context and situatedness. What I am seeking is a language through which I can begin to talk about our particular shared (as in shared between our myriad nations and communities) experiences within the prison houses of nations that are Canada and the United States of America.

In the past, I have tried to deploy various solutions to this issue. In past I have used the Kanien'kéha phrase for indigenous/original people: *Onkwéhón:we*. However, this is a remnant of my older prior pan-Native conceptions of us as peoples, something which my politics have moved away from in the past several years. While this usage still marks the URL of my personal blog (because, as a graduate student I cannot spare the money to pay for my own personal web domain) it is otherwise absent from my vocabulary now. More recently I toyed with attempting a grammatical/case distinction between *Indigenous* and *indigenous*, with the former being used to signify the specific case of Turtle Island, and the former implying Alfred's global context. However, I have found this likewise to be clunky, and something which constantly needs to be defined in every new intellectual, social, and political context in which I may find myself. Thus, I have also begun to drop its usage.

For these reasons, and because, as with everything else, my language usage is an

ongoing project of development, throughout this dissertation all three terms—Indian, Native, and Indigenous—are made use of. This dissertation reflects the complexity of my own life and personhood; everything is murky, nothing is clear, and failure is perhaps just around the corner, but more so is always something that can be learned from. My speech and writing reflect this.

An ultimate point to be made is to say that throughout the body of this dissertation I make a conscious and concerted effort to use autonyms and toponyms when referring to specific indigenous nations and places. I do this out of recognition and respect for the struggles for self-determination and decolonization being waged right now within the confines of the northern bloc of settler colonialism by First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Kānaka Maoli and other Indigenous and colonized peoples. For example, I use terms such as Anishinaabe(g), or more specific terms such as Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomie, and Omāmiwinini rather than older colonial terms like Chippewa to refer to that geographically spread out and cross-border formation of Indigenous peoples¹. Again, as always, there are exceptions. The true name of my nation is Kaēyes-Mamāceqtawak; Menominee is what the Anishinaabeg referred to us as, however, while I do deploy use

¹ Briefly though, I do this within the best of my ability given that the shared language/dialect continuum of these peoples follows different conventions based on location and which specific nation one is from. See for example the shared autonym, which I render as Anishinaabe, can be represented as Neshnabé (Potawatomie), Nishnaabe (Odawa), Anishinabe (single vowel) and Anishinaabe (double vowel). In my own writing I follow the conventions of the online University of Minnesota-based *Ojibwe People's Dictionary*, and the print edition of *A Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe* (1995), both of which use the double vowel system of spelling and is largely based on Minnesota Ojibwe dialects

of Kaēyes-Mamāceqtawak, simply because of my own life being raised to call myself Menominee it has not always been easy to discontinue use of that word. Thus, as with other word usages, my practice here is inconsistent. I have purposely left it this way in the body of this dissertation.

Further, as a part of this linguistic effort, this dissertation also attempts to keep the orthography of each indigenous language as accurate as possible. Further, when an Indigenous place name is given for the first time it will be defined and the most well-known English name or names will be given in a footnote.

II. On the Question of Territorial Acknowledgement

During the autumn of 2016, in October, I attended a conference held at St. Paul's University College, an affiliate of the University of Waterloo entitled *Decolonizing Education/Integrating Knowledges*. The conference as part of a broader array of 'Truth and Reconciliation Response Projects' that had begun to take place across Canada over the course of the preceding year. These "response projects" were a largely liberal institutional response to the release in the autumn of 2015 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report on the residential school programme in Canada.

While emerging from a largely liberal institutional context, and perhaps in spite of those origins, the conference nevertheless saw some incredible keynote speakers, and a number of quite inspirational and informative Circle Workshops on diverse topics.

One of those circles which has stuck with me, and been the source of much reflection and meditation, was on the subject and practice of *territorial acknowledgements* in both the public and educational spheres. In light of my dissertation writing slowly approaching the end of a long tunnel and having recently completed a term teaching a course on Contemporary Indigenous Issues in Canada, I have been reflecting upon them once again.

The practice of territorial acknowledgement is, in my opinion, relatively self-explanatory: it is the practice of prefacing one's work, writings, talks etc. with a recognition of the land upon which one stands, and in particular of the original people from whom it was seized by the expansion of empire. For example, on the syllabus of my course I placed the following at the top of the first page:

We acknowledge that this course takes place upon the Dish With One Spoon Territory: the traditional lands of the Attiwonderon Nation, Anishinaabeg Three Fires Confederacy & Mississauga, and Rotinonshón:ni Six Nations Confederacy. The University of Waterloo and St. Paul's University College is situated within Block 2 of the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations to the British Empire in 1784, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source.

However, my thoughts on, and relationship to, the practice are not uncomplicated. It is some of these complications that I wish to briefly unpack here.

I must admit that for much of the time I have lived in this region I did not engage in this practice at all. Initially, this was because when I first relocated to southwest Ontario it was most common to see people only recognizing the theft of the Haldimand

Tract from the Rotinonshón:ni Six Nations Confederacy. However, the original residents of this territory were Attiwonderon nation, and so my initial response during these early experiences with the practice, more often than not performed by white settlers, was that it appeared to me rather Rotinonshón:ni-centric. This is not to say that I thought then, or believe now, that we *should not* recognize the peoples, territories and struggles of the Rotinonshón:ni, but rather that this quite narrow focus, again primarily enacted by settlers, buried the Attiwonderon and Anishinaabeg, and their own relationship to the land and territory.

Related to this was the position held by me that is best summarized as: "this is all stolen Native land, *and it should all be returned to us.*" However, in those experiences of what I can best label as a kind of Haldimand Tract exclusivity, what often I felt went unsaid was that the issue of stolen Indigenous land in this region was placed entirely within this restricted sense. In my view, then and now, this narrowing of the plane of dispossession to exclusively the Haldimand Tract is easily a way for settlers to side-step the larger issue that, of course, all of southwest Ontario, the rest of Canada and indeed all the northern bloc are, and were, land stolen and seized from Indigenous nations by dint of dishonesty, betrayal and elimination, and that it is *all* in need of decolonization. However, as I noted already, my relationship to the practice today is complex. This can be seen in my own inclusion of a territorial acknowledgement within the text of my course syllabus. Part of this arose from my learning over the years more about our

peoples' traditional worldviews and how we related to one another as individuals and as distinct, if still at times closely related and allied, nations. In learning ever more about the traditional and ancient relations between the closely related Kaēyes-Mamāceqtawak and Anishinaabeg Niswi-Mishkodewin peoples, I found that for myself it was important for to acknowledge that I live in the territory of the latter. The Menominee and Anishinaabeg are old friends and allies. Situated as my nation has been since the beginning of memory on the western shores of Nanāweyah Kaeqcekam/Ininwewi-Gichigami², we also maintained old ties to the Iroquoian Peoples of the Rotinonshón:ni and Attiwonderon.

Thus, for myself as a Menominee person, activist and scholar, my own practice of territorial acknowledgement is as much about the recognition of these ancient relations of friendship, kinship and alliance between our Menominee, Anishinaabeg, Rotinonshón:ni and Attiwonderon nations as much as it is about recognition of the relatively obvious fact that the land was seized through one means or another during expansion of white settler sovereign power. We must, and indeed are and have been, rebuilding and renewing these relations as we struggle together for decolonization, the resurgence of traditional culture and the return of our lands.

² Lake Michigan.

II.I Settlers & the Practice of Territorial Acknowledgement

Complexity is the word I have used to describe my relationship to this praxis already, and, while I have moved my own stance on it due to growing relations with other Indigenous peoples and nations, on the other side of is the growing engagement in the practice by settlers. As I mentioned before, it was largely through the skewed deployment of this practice by a white settler that I first encountered it. For many years it was a niche practice of certain sectors of the radical anti-capitalist left—it was specifically through interaction with various Marxist and anarchist settlers that I first came to know it—it has however since grown beyond those confines. Today it is an increasingly common sight to see major Canadian universities placing a territorial acknowledgement on their homepages, for business to do so, and for individual class syllabuses, such as my own, to contain one somewhere in their body. Even at this comparatively conservative and reactionary research institution, we have seen the university president delivering a territorial acknowledgement at the beginning of new building openings, and even at the start of convocations. Often, however, in terms of opening these sorts of events and sessions, Indigenous students at the University of Waterloo have found themselves receiving the requests to give territorial acknowledgements, perhaps to be paired with some kind of welcome song.

And this raises a further question, which is why we, as the Indigenous people, should have to recognize the territory in the first place? What I mean by this is not a

question of whether we should be engaging in territorial acknowledgement, but rather why, in these institutional contexts where we find ourselves being asked to deliver them, rather than settlers learning to perform them on their own, *do people think it is somehow an honour for us to recognize that our lands were stolen?* In light of the general reconciliation programme of the university and the country-at-large, I cannot help but think that this is a drive not to reconcile settlers to the guilt of what was done to found their nation, but rather to reconcile Native peoples to continuing settler colonialism.

And this is important for settler peoples to do—that is, if they truly do strive to be something more, and to engage us meaningfully in the process of decolonization. I do not believe that as Indigenous peoples, scholars, students, activists or otherwise, that it is our responsibility to save white people, to educate them, or to otherwise do this for them. This was always the point: to give settlers the initial push, so that they can begin to do this practice for themselves, not ask Indigenous people or organizations to do it for them. I believe it is very much so the responsibility of settler peoples to acknowledge settler colonialism, acknowledge cultural destruction and to acknowledge theft of the land upon which they stand. Rather than place the burden further upon our shoulders, it is for settlers to save themselves. Part of this is to speak truth, and the act of territorial acknowledgement is an element of this.

However, in this process of learning and unlearning, it is key to take leadership from Indigenous peoples on it. As I noted above in discussing why I pulled away from

the practice when I first encountered it, it was in part due to the Rotinonshón:ni and Haldimand Tract specific nature of it at the time. Again, this was not wrong per se: it was because of the tireless efforts of the brothers and sisters from the Rotinonshón:ni community in and around the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve in publicizing the history of struggle and theft regarding the Haldimand Tract that has put it in a prominent position.

This should not have meant that the Rotinonshón:ni and Haldimand Tract were the only peoples, territories and struggles to be acknowledged though. If the settlers who I first encountered writing and speaking territorial acknowledgements had taken the time to listen to the regional Native community, and more specifically to sit and take leadership from them, they would have known this. This all would have become obvious to settlers seeking to acknowledge the territory if they had taken leadership instead of seeking to find their own way.

This is important because while, as I say, the Rotinonshón:ni and Haldimand Tract specific nature of the territorial acknowledgement when I first arrived here was not bad outright, it was only a half-measure. And in being a half-measure it effectively erased the presence of Anishinaabeg and Attiwonderon. In doing this it actually perpetuated settler-colonial epistemic violence against those nations.

II.II The Becoming-Metaphor of Decolonization

Even as the practice of territorial acknowledgement spreads throughout white civil

society and circles of everyday life, I feel that we must also always problematize it to some degree in light of ongoing settler colonialism and imperialism. For example, what does it mean for the president of this university to acknowledge that our campus sits on the traditional territories of the Attiwonderon, Anishinaabeg and Rotinonshón:ni when this same university actively supports Israeli settler colonialism and which, through its massive STEM faculties, both reaps the benefits of, and trains the intellectual and practical foot soldiers for, the wholesale destruction of Native lands and resources?

Out of the university arena, we might also ask what good is it for a yoga studio, a long critiqued Mecca of white cultural appropriation and the emptying-out of the ancient spiritual traditions of the peoples of South Asia, to place an acknowledgement on their website that their capitalist private enterprise is situated on stolen Indigenous land? It is difficult to foresee and experience these sorts of institutional practices and not see bulwarks of capitalism, settler colonialism, antiblackness, and cultural imperialism. I look at them as they acknowledge the territory and I see a movement towards what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang deftly labelled "settler innocence" (2012).

At the individual level, the practice of territorial acknowledgement, in my experience, is also quite often coupled with the practice of what *Barnor Hesse* refers to as "white confessionalism" (2014). This is the practice of individual settlers proclaiming their ignorance with regards to the processes and structures of settler colonialism, even as it and the benefits of it are all around them; even as they know Indigenous people used

to be more numerous; and even as "good whites" have written about and opposed the evils of their kings and countries since Bartolomé de las Casas, and then saying that *they are sorry*. While it is no doubt genuine on the part of some, by-in-large it has always come across to me as a practice that is deeply self-congratulatory. The true cacophonous madness in this confessional practice for us as Indigenous peoples is that we—people who already bear the burden of having managed to survive five centuries of invasion, who carry the inherited trauma, pain and anger over a loss without name, and yet are people who continue to live, to thrive and to struggle for our freedoms against the overwhelming violence of multiple, converging vectors of death that are constantly arrayed against us still—are expected to shoulder these outpourings of settler tears and to reassure them that it is going to be ok.

For myself, jaded I think by far too many years chafing within the institutions of colonialist-capitalist education, I admittedly cannot help but approach these issues with a bad faith epistemology. To put it relatively simply, I think that settlers know the land is stolen, and that, existentially and phenomenologically, this knowledge compromises their sense of integrity, being, and property. Thus, as Indigenous peoples, we are made to approach a significant mass of people who either already know, knowingly do not care, or who even directly oppose decolonization, and it is on that plane where the issue and discussion must start. Acknowledgement of territory and confession of one's colonial sins do not necessarily lead to an ethic or politic that positions decolonization as

justice. And, as Native people, that is what is needed, not whiter confessionism.

Related to both practices of acknowledgement and confession is another practice, perhaps less common but increasingly witnessed in the conference and summit circuit, in which in the same breath of their acknowledgement or confession, settlers move to recognize themselves (and other settlers in attendance) as "guests on Native land." During the audience participation phase of the circle discussion at the 2016 St. Paul's conference this point was raised in a question asking the panellists if they ever "welcomed people to the territory." Not to linger on this too long, but there is a point to be made about this practice and a distinction to be drawn. Firstly, it is, I would argue that it is qualitatively different when Indigenous people and settlers do this. Unlike the practice of territorial acknowledgement, I do not believe it is the place of settlers, unrequested, to acknowledge that they are "guests on Native land." Simply put, guests are invited, and one would need to significantly stretch the definition of invitation to include the history of settler colonialism and violent dispossession that it represents.

II.III Acknowledgement, Decolonization & White Anxiety

Decolonization is a fear deep at the heart of settler society, and this is manifested in the concurrent push back and resistance to the growing trend of territorial acknowledgement. At this university, I can say that I know of at least one department with the Faculty of Arts that experienced quite a bit of staff and faculty push back against

the practice³. This dread percolates up from the knowledge—settler confessions to the contrary notwithstanding—of what settler colonialism is, and what it continues to entail for Indigenous People.

This fear though lives not just in the minds of the white capitalist, or the white imperial educator, or the white civil servant. Rather this deep fear, in fact truly a form of existential dread, cuts a deep path clear across the entirety of white society. This extends right into those sectors that most explicitly claim to oppose and resist the current dispensation of power relations in society: the radical anti-capitalist left.

In all of my years of involvement within this particular political sector what has always struck me the most, but which also long since has lost its shock factor, regarding the position of settler anarchists, Marxists, and assorted other “progressives” in all of this cacophony is that, generally speaking, despite claims to represent or speak on behalf of the interests of, the most oppressed strata of canadian society, these are people who do no land return or other decolonization-oriented work at all. Related to that is the fact that they often have no, or minimal, connection to or relationship with local Indigenous communities, and overall do not understand "decolonization" as anything except an academic or social justice buzz word which has nothing to do with an ethics and politics of actual decolonization.

³ I could say more, but I will not. This knowledge comes from knowing an Indigenous student in the department who had to be witness to the pushback. I do not have permission to share their story in such detail that it will reveal who they are. You will have to simply take it on faith that this did indeed happen.

Ongoing accumulation by dispossession is so deeply fundamental to the material basis, and attendant ideological outgrowths, of settler society that a call for even a small fraction of the bare minimum of decolonial justice—the return of what was taken—is interpreted as a clarion call for some kind of white genocide (and in this, the fear of *white genocide*, the circle between the white left and the white right becomes complete). This deep anxiety informs a sizeable portion, if not an outright majority, of knee jerk First World responses to genuine anti-colonial/decolonial ethics, politics, and theory.

This dissonance, between a seeming commitment to decolonization *in words* yet recoiling from it in reality, stems, in my experience, from not taking leadership from Indigenous communities. It also stems from how the practices of acknowledgements and settler confession can themselves function as moves to settler innocence. Both of these aim in fact at the continued reproduction of the material base of settler colonialism, through the defence of settler futurity, even if the ideology espoused is superficially more multicultural, anticapitalist or otherwise opposed to the conservative, reactionary mainstream of settler society.

Against these white anxieties, I offer a different response than that which I often hear or read. Instead of reconciliation, or rather against the liberal conception of it, and as my own take on what reconciliation must mean (in the literal sense of "to make right"), I say this: "yes of course, we do want our land back." The return of land is but a small fraction of the bare minimum of decolonial justice. Our lands are at the very centre of

our beings. Everything about us arises from the land: our languages, our cultures, our cosmologies, our ceremonies, our kinship structures, our spiritualities. Everything. Reconciliation, decolonization, territorial acknowledgement, confession: none of them mean anything without the repatriation of our lands to our sovereign nations. Further, it is not for a radical Indigenous decolonization movement to be responsible to notions of settler futurity. With that said, I make the following declaration:

I acknowledge that the writing for this dissertation was carried out on the Dish With One Spoon Territory: the traditional lands of the Attiwonderon, Anishinaabeg Three Fires Confederacy & Mississauga, and Rotinonshón:ni Six Nations Confederacy, within Block 2 of the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations to the British Empire in 1784, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source.

Introduction

Native Studies, putatively defined against the neoliberal university, is a discipline from which renegade knowledge is to be generated, one whose foundational object—the Native—shores up modes of intellectual production meant to depart from and, in this, attack the colonial episteme itself. In other words, theirs is a project, carried out in the name of social justice, that is by and for the Native. In the face of settler colonialism's apocalyptic teleology, Native Studies is thus a discipline from which the future, a decolonial one, is to be rebelliously thought.

– Billy-Ray Belcourt, *Can the Other of Native Studies Speak?*

In that undercommons of the university one can see that it is not a matter of teaching versus research or even the beyond of teaching versus the individualization of research. To enter this space is to inhabit the ruptural and enraptured disclosure of the commons that fugitive enlightenment enacts, the criminal, matricidal, queer, in the cistern, on the stroll of the stolen life, the life stolen by enlightenment and stolen back, where the commons gives refuge, where the refuge gives commons.

– Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*

Fundamentally, this dissertation is a story. On one level, perhaps the most obvious one when peering at its surface, it is the story of me, of my life, or at least part of the story of me and my life. Me and my Native life. It is a story about my journey, my path, my trials and tribulations, my time in the deepest darkness within the prison house of settler colonialism, as well as also my survival and return from those depths, and the moments of introspection and joy, both personal and shared, which have followed. Perhaps because of the fondness I have held since childhood for certain kinds of sci-fi and fantasy

fiction, I cannot help but think of the old Joseph Campbell theorization of the cyclical nature of stories, beginning with a call and the choice to answer that call, before journeying into the abyss and returning triumphant, ready to share what has been learned, before readying to start again (2008). I am not so bold as to compare myself to the legendary heroes of old, but I think there is something emergent from that line of thinking that resonates deeply as I think here of the calendar rounds of many of the Nations of the Great Lakes, including my own, and the cyclical nature of time, and of birth, death, and rebirth, and the role of stories in helping us to remember that (Whyte 2019).

But, on another level, this is also a story that is about more than me, more than my story and my life. It is also a story about what lies within, beyond, beneath, against, and after me. It is a story that, at its most important root, asks the question of what it means to live a Native life under settler colonialism, under the blood-soaked flags and bright city lights of amerikkka and kanada, and all of their attendant regimes and violences. It is about these things which afflict us, and our will to not only survive this lethal world, but to thrive, and, maybe, emerge into a new one. Because of that it could never just be the story of me, even though the words, pages, and chapters that follow from here emerge from the forms that my own life has taken. It is a Native story, not simply because I myself am a Native person, but because I must necessarily listen deeply for the voices of generations beyond me, stretching forwards and backwards in time. As Joey Bada\$\$ raps

in his track “Land of the Free” (2017):

Sometimes I speak and I feel like it ain't my words,
Like I'm just a vessel channeling inside this universe,
I feel my ancestors unrested inside of me.

While this is, indeed obviously must be, my own words that you are reading, I carry with me the stories of countless generations before me, as well as those who walk with me now. They and their voices, their stories, animate every word that I write, every terminological, stylistic, and structural choice. It is also a story, I hope, that is *not* about what will be faced by the generations that come after me. I hope that should some descendant seven generations from now pick up and read this dissertation it will have the appearance of nothing more than a nightmare dream to them, the story of a world that was. Those dreams for the future also fill every page.

As a story, this writing has a beginning. In many ways this project has been a long time coming; the culmination of a life's journey of sometimes self-interested, but increasingly, and with greater age, community-oriented searching and re-searching. However, as I have on numerous occasions now attempted to sit down at my computer, hands pressed firmly against my well-worn keyboard to begin to try and finally give form to this dissertation, I have found myself more often at a loss for words. I think to myself constantly “why is this so goddamn difficult, you know what you want to write?” Add to that other questions that come constantly racing towards me: What am I supposed to say? How am I supposed to say it? Is this even the right project, for me, and not only for

me but for my family, for my nation and for the wider community that is “Native North America?” Am I even going about this in a good way?

So, I become lost at the very site of enunciation, at the place where I seek to make myself heard, and to be heard. I choke up and lose my thoughts. I find myself stricken with what feels at times almost like a kind of non-medical aphasia. At the heart of all of this is that this project has compelled me into a position of vulnerability and self-exposure that I have almost always fought against allowing myself to concede within the sphere of the public. It might be safer to say that this is because I am not always comfortable in this position, but the reality of it is that it is because I am not comfortable with it ever. Those decidedly non-scientific, yet socially and culturally relatively widespread, Meyers-Briggs personality type tests always peg me as one of the introverted types, most recently as an INFP, and while they may be gibberish, introversion bordering on anxiety and depression, if not fully over that line, has long been a hallmark of my personality. So, I always play things close to the chest and opening up about that which affects and afflicts me is never a task I relish or find amusing or a source of personal growth. Because of that I almost always try to keep it hidden away, even from those closest to me.

With particular regard to this dissertation, this is because the specific ‘it’ in this instance, the ‘it’ which is the site of this research, is often a site of sadness, anger, confusion and loss. In many ways it marks an old and destabilizing wound at the very centre of my being; of who, and *what*, I am. It is a wound such that even in those instances

where I may find myself able to name it, as in the pages of this dissertation, as an assemblage of disjointed and disconnected parts—as a piece of family history, as thinking through certain colonial policies, as a personal experience, as a memory that bubbles to the surface—I also simultaneously find myself chronically at a loss to fully be able to articulate it. This is my anxious aphasia of opening up about myself in its most distilled form and experience.

Because of this, I find myself in the process of this writing, of trying to speak through text, meditating on the words of my fellow Indigenous scholar Nicolás Juárez (Xicano-Tzotzil) on the disruption wrought upon the thinking of Indigenous writers by "the raw violence that defines Native American life" (2014). Juárez notes that for those of us who occupy this space there arises from this violence of never-ending genocide "a psychic burden that causes a sense of anxiety that must be constrained and managed in even the most radical Indigenist texts, forcing one to tease out the various moments in the theorization of Native American scholars *in which the fires of their work overwhelm them*" (2014).

These fires-that-overwhelm have become all too familiar to me in both my academic work and in my experience of this thing we call everyday life. Indeed, if anything, it has been the case that this has only increased the further that I have perused this work down the proverbial rabbit hole. And much like Alice's journey down, it is profoundly disorienting and dislocating. The more I have read, the more I have thought,

the more I have taught, the more I have contemplated the subject matter of this research, the warmer and nearer the flames have felt. Sometimes it seems as though if I were to reach out any further that I would become actually burned in the moment.

This psycho-colonial anxious aphasia then raises a question: given this, the difficulty of figuring out how to speak, how does one begin to even name and articulate these feelings and experiences? To give name and shape to them? Most imminently perhaps what I can say is that this is what it is like to, in a self-reflexive and self-located manner, engage the question of Native life under what Fred Moten refers to as a “shared modernity founded upon the sociological catastrophe of the transatlantic slave trade and settler colonialism” (2017).

Beyond my personal struggle to give voice to this colonially wounded experience, I have also dwelt much on what may be the incomprehensibility of all of this to the reader, in particular, the non-Indigenous reader. In large degree, this is the product of the workings of my positionality as a diasporic, in-between Indigenous scholar inside the colonized, westernized academy. There is a significant degree of distrust here from myself directed at these institutions and their career apparatchiks. I find myself often asking if there is, or ever will be, a time and a place where it can be said that I have a genuine have faith in these institutions and their functionaries to such a degree that I can render myself vulnerable in such an intimate way before them? The colonial education system did, after all, play a not-so-insignificant role in the inflicting of the collective

wounds and collective traumas that we, as Indigenous peoples, are now seeking to resolve and to heal from. Is not that supposed to be, at least in part, the point of decolonization? I ask myself this repeatedly. So I wonder not only if my voice will be heard, but whether or not my voice will even be understood, or even if it is worth enunciating at all, lest I open up some of the most intimate parts of my being to the empirical, scientific gaze of the colonized, westernized academy and my non-Indigenous fellow scholars. This is something I think is aptly summed up by Indigenous theorists Eve Tuck and C. Ree when they say:

In telling you all of this in this way, I am resigning myself and you to the idea that parts of my telling are confounding. I care about you understanding, but I care more about concealing parts of myself from you. I do not trust you very much. You are not always aware of how you can be dangerous to me, and this makes me dangerous to you. I am using my arm to determine the length of the gaze (2013:640).

But here I am still, fingers to keyboard. I feel the nervousness I have so often felt. But I press on against the constant refrains the constant, internal refrains of “why even bother?” I continue, not because I necessarily am concerned with the legibility of my being and my enunciations within and to the westernized academy, but because I remember that while in an immediate sense this project is about me, about my life, it is also not just about me. It is about we as Indigenous peoples and nations and our

survivance, resurgence and flourishing within, against and beyond⁴ this always-already post-apocalyptic psycho-geographical landscape that has been shaped by the sociological catastrophe of settler colonialism. I remind myself constantly that this project is not just about a selfish or self-centred attempt to articulate my own experience of wounding at the hands of a particular world-building project, but to also think through and about the possibility of decolonial and healing Indigenous futurisms. I remember that this struggle is not just my own, but one in which I am joined by and join into a chorus of Indigenous voices, inside and outside of the westernized academy, which swells ever greater, moment by moment, rebelliously writing and speaking against the apocalyptic teleology of settler colonialism, (post)modernity and late-capitalism.

And the words come. Finally, I say to myself “let’s do this.”

I. Locating Myself in My Work

So, I begin in earnest this writing, this process of storying and storytelling. And as an Indigenous scholar, I begin in all seriousness this story with the practice of locating

⁴ The concept of the “within, against and beyond” (or “against-and-beyond”) is one that I take from anarchist scholar and historian Chris Dixon (2014). The *within* can be best summarized as the site of struggle within the structures of settler colonialism, capitalism, the westernized academy etc. Regarding the *against* and the *beyond*, for which Dixon draws on radical theorists John Holloway and Ashanti Alston, he notes “our ‘against’ is our active opposition to all forms of domination, and our ‘beyond’ is our work to build new social relations and forms of social organization through struggle” (2014, 8). For myself, as an Indigenous scholar and activist I take this idea of the against-and-beyond to be on the one hand our active theorizing of and struggle against the grammars of suffering of Red Life, which Juárez names *clearing* and *civilization* (2014), and the beyond to be the call to imagine decolonial Indigenous futures, ones that not just seeks to replicate an idea of *before colonization* but which seeks to call into being new forms of belonging, of community, of social organization and ways-of-life that learn from the past but also always look to the future.

myself within the context of this writing. I do this because, as Anishinaabe epistemologist,

Kathleen Absolon states:

The self is central to Indigenous re-search. The flower centre represents the self and the way Indigenous searchers include and situate themselves in their methodologies. This includes the re-searcher's location, memory, motive and search for congruency. What we see revealed through Indigenous re-search is the re-searcher, the self. Within the self exists millennia of Indigenous ancestral knowledge, teachings and Spirit (2011:67).

As an Indigenous scholar thinking within, against and beyond the colonized, westernized academy, I believe that it is essential to begin any research, any story, with/in a practice of reflexive and reflective self-location because "positionality, storying and re-storying ourselves comes first (Absolon 2011:13). Not only because this is, at least in large part, my story, but because it is a story about Nativeness, I cannot be anything but a part of it. Externality is simply not a methodological or theoretical possibility with regards to this work, and so telling you my place in all of this should come before anything else.

Against the dry, overwrought, modernist and euro-western assumptions of scientific and ethnographic practice that assume even the possibility of some kind of value-neutral objectivity, I believe sincerely that at best we can achieve a kind of general inter-subjectivity, and within that who we are, where we are, and who and where we come from is essential. The old modernist empiricism is, I believe, fundamentally a Eurocentric ego-politics of knowledge, which overcodes an essentially colonialist, imperialist and capitalist geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge. In the interests of

the methodological, pedagogical and praxiological commitments that I hold, it is essential that this euro-colonial grip on the place of knowledge be disrupted.

So, I begin with my name. My birth certificate reads Rowland Keshena Robinson. This is the name I have come to think of in more recent years as my “white name” though I do not mean this in a negative way. It is a name that for me has become a bit of a gag, because it seems like almost too many men on my father’s side of the family have it: his brother, his father, one of his brother’s sons and of course myself. Keshena, my middle name, is my mother’s maiden name, the name of my Indigenous family. It is a name I have always been proud of, even as non-Indigenous people have often struggled with its, to me at least, seemingly easy pronunciation, because it is also the name of the largest settlement on our reservation and because it ties our family back to a leader of some import to our Nation in the mid-19th century.

I also have an “Indian name.” It is Enaēmaehkiw, to which in my work as both a scholar and an activist I have come to append the second name Kesīqnaeh to. Enaēmaehkiw was given to me in ceremony by an elder of my Nation back in the summer of 2011, when I was 25 years old, and so like many modern Indigenous persons such a name came to me relatively late in life. It has several interrelated meanings, but the one which I most often choose to express to others is “Thunderbird.” Kesīqnaeh, on the other hand, is a more correct rendering of Keshena, the latter of which is an anglicization. Its meaning is a little bit more complex, and consequently takes a little bit more time to

explain, but for the sake of brevity I will say that it also is a reference to the Thunderbird. I also am of the Menominee Nation, or more correctly the Kaēyes-Mamāceqtawak⁵. This is the people of my mother Gay Robinson (née Keshena) and of her parents Jeannine and Gordon, and her siblings Ann, Kathy, Scott, Lee, Chris, Joe and Margaret, not to mention my many cousins and other relatives. We are small Algonkian-speaking nation originally from Wisconsin and the Upper Michigan Peninsula. Fortunately, we were able to escape the fate of relocation that befell many nations east of the Mississippi and currently maintain a small reservation in northern Wisconsin. We are closely related to, culturally, politically, and in ways of blood kinship, with the Anishinaabeg and other Algonkian-speaking nations around the Great Lakes region.

I am also a diasporic Menominee. My father is an Anglo-West Indian, in particular

⁵ Kaēyes-Mamāceqtawak is the name for my Nation in our own language, Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen. The best translation of it into English, avoiding a potentially long linguistic digression, is “Ancient People.” Menominee on the other hand is the name by which we and are known to our close linguistic and cultural relatives the Anishinaabeg. It is a reference to wild rice, a principle staple food of both our communities, meaning “Wild Rice People” or “People of the Wild Rice. The root word in Anishinaabemowin is “manomin”, while the cognate in Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen is “manōmaeh.” I alternate between using both terms when referring to myself or my own thoughts, however for those references beyond myself I will defer to the name used by any given person or organization, such as in the full name of our Federally recognized tribe, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.

an Anglo-Bermudian⁶. Having met my father in only her mid-twenties while he was in Milwaukee on a business trip, my mother made the life-changing choice to move to Bermuda in the mid-1970s and married. It was on that comparatively tiny island in the sea that myself and my younger brother Dylan were born and raised.

Spending my childhood so far away from the traditional territories of the Menominee, and without a significant replacement connection to my father's on-island family (I have always known them, and we have perfectly cordial and friendly relations for the most part, but we have never been what I would consider particularly close), has left an indelible mark on my conception of self, in particular my sense of being Menominee. My brother and I were always told, from as young as I can recall, that we were Menominee Indians. However, outside of occasional visits to the island by mother's parents or siblings, we only had access to family and the knowledge of what it means to be Menominee that comes with that during the summers of our childhoods, when we

⁶ Depending on who you ask, Bermuda either is, or is not, West Indian. While there is a simplistic geophysical case to be made that it is not, because Bermuda lies much further out to sea in the Atlantic Ocean than the also-not-geographically West Indian Lucayan Archipelago. However, this belies Bermuda's long cultural, political, kinship and economic ties to Caribbean, especially the former and current British West Indies. The split in opinion on Bermuda's West Indianness, in my lived experience, is often fractured along Bermuda's deep racial lines. While not a researched social scientific opinion, in my experience it is most often those of the island's large white minority who most vigorously reject any notion that Bermuda is part of the Caribbean collectivity, which I think is rooted deeply in an endemic antiblackness and recalcitrant orientation towards the settler colonies of the northern bloc and towards the British imperial metropole, which still holds Bermuda in its grasp as a "Overseas Territory." Because of this the same racial-political fractures can be found regarding the question of whether or not Bermuda should seek independence or continue on in its current status as a British Overseas Territory. However, in my mind, and in my heart, Bermuda is a West Indian nation, and that is how I refer to it. For perhaps the single best discussion of Bermuda and its history of colonial/racial relations, see Quito Swan's *Black Power in Bermuda: The Struggle for Decolonization* (2010).

were often sent off to Wisconsin to spend most of the hot months of July and August with our grandparents. Often, we were joined by cousins, the children of our mother's siblings in Milwaukee, who would make the trek north with us. I have vivid, though long past memories, of going to the annual pow wow on the reservation, travelling deep into the woods—covered head to toe to avoid ticks and always wary of the possible presence of snakes and bears—to pick blackberries and raspberries with family, and of going to the cemetery to see where other kin have been laid, including the older half-brother I never go to know in this world, Benny. It was during these years that I learned what for many years the only words in Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen that I knew: “pōsōh; āneq nāp nēhtās?”⁷

But those connections have become less and less consistent as time has pressed on. My grandfather passed away when I was still in my preteen years. Our regular summer journeys to the lands of upstate Wisconsin became less and less and less from then on. We made one more trip in our mid-teens, at our insistence. After that, it would be another five years or so, and only then it was on the occasion of the passing of my uncle Lee, who, after my grandfather, was probably the most important male Menominee figure in my life. Dylan and I were pallbearers; it was a surreal experience in hindsight. I haven't been back since that time. It has been over ten years. This dearth has over the last decade left

⁷ “Hello; how are you doing my friend.” Roughly. There is more than one phrase that could be translated into this, but this is the one I learned as a child.

me for much of my life with a deep sense of disconnectedness, though at no time have I ever ceased to identify as an Indigenous person, or as a Menominee in particular.

Support in this regard came in an unforeseen way when I was unexpectedly given the opportunity to receive my Menominee name in May of 2011. This came about unexpectedly during a visit to Bermuda by one of my mother's cousins. He was there on a trip sponsored by the Bermuda branch of Amnesty International to speak on the revitalization of Indigenous languages, and I found myself back home on break between the winter and spring terms of my master's studies. He asked my mother and me if we had Menominee names, to which we responded that we did not. He asked if we wanted ones. I do not think I hesitated in accepting.

Buttresses of my sense of self are also owed significantly to the urban Indigenous community of Kitchener-Waterloo, in particular the many Anishinaabeg relatives who call this city home, whether permanently or transitively. Because the Menominee and Anishinaabeg have ancient relations, and are very closely related in terms of culture, language, traditional worldviews, philosophies, stories, cosmologies etc., being able to connect with my Anishinaabeg relatives in that city helped me immensely in the securing of my own sense of Menomineeness. While it is not, and cannot be, a complete substitute, and nor do I wish it to be, at the very least when I am with them, I feel somewhat more secure in knowing that, in a way, it is the closest thing to being amongst my own nation without actually being there on their reservation.

However, there have been significant shocks to my sense of Menomineeness. In particular, as an adult I slowly learned more about the complicated relationship that not only I, but also my brother and most of my mother's nieces and nephews also have with the formal system of enrollment within the nation has been enacted by the tribal government. What it boils down to is an issue of blood quantum: my mother is 31/64th Menominee, or slightly less than 50% blood quantum. The cut-off point for full enrollment in the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin is 25%. Since my father is white, that means that my brother and I receive only 31/128th Menominee blood. As a result, we, along with most of our first cousins, fall a mere 0.78% below the minimum for full enrollment. Instead we are enrolled as 1st Degree Menominee Descendants. While we are Menominee, this secondary status causes us to lose access to many things that tribal members of only 0.78% more blood are given. More than a secondary status, it is more akin, in the reckoning not only of myself, but also my mother and other family, to a kind of second-tier status or citizenship. I have come to often think it is a form of liminal tribal citizenship; in between the outside and the inside. I am treated as a Menominee at times, and not at other, of crucial, moments.

This subjection by forces outside of the limits of my own body to a kind of biopolitical algorithm of both Federal and tribal governance that calculates the preciseness of my Nativeness has left me often with a paradoxical split in my identity. It disrupts my feeling of embodied *Menomineeness*, and *Nativeness*. It is here at this site that

I *feel* what Patricia Tinciento Clough means when she muses upon “the ways bodies are thought in relationship both to trauma and to technoscientific productions of bodily capacities beyond the human body’s organic-physiological constraints” (2007:4). This is, for me, the weight of colonial affect, the coloniality of my being, at its most raw and violent. In a way, these external biopolitical algorithms come to curate the official potential of my Menomineeness (Cheney-Lippold 2017:253). This has often forced upon me a questioning of my own innate sense of identity: I *know* that I am Menominee, this is what I was also told and came to know via my mother, her parents, our extended family and the rest of the Menominee community I have come to know, both on and off the reservation. I possess a Menominee name, and all of the attendant duties that come with its particular meaning. However, what does it mean to know that I am a Menominee when both the official tribal government, and consequently the settler-colonial state, reject that claim to membership and belonging?

I cannot understate the weight that I have come to feel regarding this. The *affective burden* of this biopolitical liminalization of my Menominee citizenship is such that I can not only can I never live within my community, but I can never die within my community. I cannot be buried ever next to my family, next to my grandfather, aunts and uncles, or my brother. Access to tribal resources, for schooling, or for health, or anything else is of absolute minimal concern to me. Indeed, they do not interest me; while I and my family did make use of tribal health benefits, via my mother, during my childhood

for testing and treatment of hearing difficulties I was born with, I recognize that I have been blessed enough in life to not have to need financial support from my nation. But it does interest me, or rather haunts me, to know that when I pass, I can never be welcomed next to my kin as I am returned to dust.

For myself, this affective burden ties most immediately into how affects are those pre-conscious, or in-excess-of-consciousness, automatic and autonomic responses which Patricia Ticineto Clough describes as driving “the augmentation or diminution of a body’s capacity to act, to engage, and to connect, such that autoaffection is linked to the self-feeling of being alive—that is, aliveness or vitality” (2007:2) and which Brian Massumi describes as “autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is,” and “Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage” (2002:35). The tribal and settler-colonial forces, which are both before and beyond my embodied self, circumscribe the limits of my ability to feel alive in my Menomineeness, and instead drive me towards what often feels like a sense of desperate holding-on, clinging to the edge of an abyss of in-betweenness, and in-betweenness as a kind of ghostliness and spectral haunting.

More specifically though I cannot help but think of Lauren Berlant’s notion of “cruel optimism,” in which an object of desire, in this case my desire for full-embrace of my Menomineeness, is, or becomes, itself an obstacle to flourishing

(2011). The affective structure of my desire is not only “sticky,” to borrow Sara Ahmed’s line of thinking (2010a), in these sense that clings to me, and I to it, but is what ultimately weighs me down.

While I hold no grudge against the formal, modern tribal government of the Menominee for this, as I know they are simply working the best that they can within a settler-colonial system that allows them only minimal autonomy and self-determination that otherwise seeks their elimination, it would be a lie to say that the way that this comes down upon me, upon my younger brother, and upon my cousins does not affect me in substantial ways. Perhaps more than anything else, beyond the formal arithmetic trapping of blood quantum fractions, this cuts most deeply into my sense of who and what I am when I say that I am a Menominee Indian.

These algorithms consequently force me to eke out a Native existence at the margins between the biopolitical imperatives of the settler-colonial state, and my/our own autonomous, traditional and futurist modes and potentials of belonging. The State says I am not Indigenous, or at least not fully Indigenous, but the Indigenous community accepts me. I exist in this liminal space, on the border between official Indigeneity and the outside-of-Indigeneity. In this space there is also resistance, a decolonial imperative to think through these structures of settler-colonial subjection and the limitation of our belonging, and consequently to think, and act, our way out of it, and into a decolonized, living and healing Indigenous future. It is from this terrain that the fundamental drive

for this project finds its emergence and its enunciation.

II. Towards a Genealogy of Nativeness under Settler Colonialism

So, what then is this project fundamentally about? Why write it? Why do this research? I can best begin to answer these questions by casting my own counter-gaze backwards and working towards the development of a genealogy of the regime of power/knowledge of what we may call the sign of *Official Nativeness*, referred to simply as *Nativeness* throughout the rest of this dissertation. This is what I contend to be the first contribution of this dissertation, of three that I maintain that I make. Specifically, what I contend here is not just the usual kind of genealogy of the Native, as a legal construct, an anthropological construct, or a literary construct, but rather a genealogy of the Native that cuts not only across these modes of historical and socio-political analysis, but also beyond them. In particular, what I seek to demonstrate in the chapters that follow is how not only the Native is constructed through those modalities of settler-colonial state and civil society, but how those constructions bleed into others, and ultimately are necessary for settler society's understanding of itself. In particular, what I will set about showing is how these constructions of the Native both rely upon, and mutually re-inscribe and reinforce, discourses of Savagery, Wildness, and a radical outsidersness with regards to settler cartography (both socially and geographically) and settler temporality, and the effect that this outsidersness has when the Native and the settler encounter each other through performance, politics, and narrative.

The regime of settler power which provides the grounding for this kind of colonial knowledge production of the Native has its antecedents in the initial Colombian contact event, but really began to take its current shape following the separation of the american colonies for direct British rule, before becoming finalized in the form that we now recognize them today following the end of the period of frontier expansion, and with that the end of perhaps the most gratuitously violent manifestations of the eliminative logic of settler colonialism. With this end of the frontier, the territorial engulfment of Indigenous peoples by the twin English-speaking settler colonies of the northern bloc became complete. With this end of the frontier became the need to solidify the sovereignty of the settler nation-state, emergent as it was from the state of exception par excellence that was the frontier (Wolfe 2016), and to quiet the alternative and, more importantly, prior, sovereignties and territorialities of Native nations, north american settler colonialism set about in earnest to codify into law already existing discourses of Savagery, discovery and imperial cartography that had already been at the centre of this shared experience we call *modernity*: scientific rationalism, enlightenment liberalism and western humanism (Byrd 2011; Dussel 1995; Mignolo 2007; Quijano 2010; Wilderson III 2010). Importantly, with the end of the frontier, "Indian relations" also lost their previous externality, with Native nations no longer beyond the formal borders of the settler empire, but now enclosed fully within them. What were once international relations were formally transferred to the realm of domestic administration and ensconced within the

imperial bureaucracy. Fundamentally at the heart of these post-frontier processes was the emergence and codification of a juridical, rhetorical and eminently biopolitical category of population governance that I call Official Nativeness, or just Nativeness.

At the highest level of abstraction, this work concerns itself with an elucidation of a genealogy of the ontological and structural formations of Nativeness, and how they emerge from and are articulated by the structures and functioning of the settler-colonial state and civil society. My understanding of ontology here is specific to a kind of political ontology, and thus most closely cleaves to that which emerges from a Heideggerian philosophy of ontological difference (Saar 2012:79-83). On this Nicolás Juárez says the following:

Just as Heidegger frames the difference in ontological position between Beings as differences in terms of constitution, disclosure, non-identity, displacement, and absence, the political ontology herein articulated conceives of the political ontological position of Beings as defined through how they differ in the political structures of culture, society, law, and philosophy (what might be called “the world”), what they attempt to disclose, what they can (and cannot) be within the world, and what capabilities and powers they have (and lack). This understanding thus sees that the difference between “Being” and “beings” is mirrored in the difference between the “political” and “politics.” Such a politically ontological framework clarifies the way in which we come to understand Red life and its modalities (2014).

Essentially then this research is an investigation into the genealogy of the nature of my Native Being, or what it means for me, as a Native of liminal status, to try and find an existence within the coordinates of the world when the world is the realm of the shared modernity built upon the sociological catastrophe and onto-structural process of Native

(and Black) death. More specifically this research asks the question of what it means to attempt to articulate a sense of Nativeness in this contemporary post-frontier era, and to thus be subjected to these biopolitical systems of control and algorithmic identity configuration and re-configuration by the technologies of governance of the settler-colonial state, as well as the broader libidinal, political, and sign economies of the euro-west.

This genealogy, I would contend, is also more than a Nietzschean-Foucauldian diachronic reading of the sign of Nativeness, and in fact requires that it be more. While much of importance can be, and is in fact readily, gleaned from this sort of genealogical mode of studying the historical development of a particular sign and its meaning, which parts have come to be hegemonic through discourse, and which modes have been suppressed or repressed, I pursue a kind of Saussurean synchronic reading, through the thought of figures like Jean Baudrillard (2006) and Jacques Derrida (2016). This considers not only the historical development of Nativeness as a sign coded and overcoded by the juridical, philosophical, academic and popular discourses of settler coloniality, but also its context in the present moment. Nativeness in this mode of thought can only be understood through its relationship to other signs such as settler, arrivant, Menominee, Anishinaabe, and others, signs which are tied together in a signifying chain. Nativeness must be taken to be only one non-linear, non-arborescent sign amongst others, connected rhizomatically within the code of settler coloniality.

The essential starting point of this analysis is to ask by what processes distinct Indigenous Nations—Kaēyes-Mamāceqtawak, Anishinabek, Meskwaki, Nēhilawē, Rotinonshón:ni, Dené, Wabanaki, Oceti Šakówin, Niitsítapi, Kwakwaka’wakw and many others—have been, and still continuously are dissolved into an official administrative, judicially defined, category of Native in both Canada and the United States? Further, this research asks what are the seemingly discordant and antithetical, though ultimately complementary, roles played by the various apparatus, formal as well as informal, of the settler-colonial state and civil society, including academia, not only in providing the content of the discussion of Indigeneity, but also in defining its boundaries?

This latter zone of investigation is of particularly crucial importance to me precisely because of my place and my role as an Indigenous researcher within the westernized academy. Given the autoethnographic and phenomenological contours of this work—examining the first-person encounter between my lived experiences and these technologies of settler-colonial governance and philosophical imagining, and the appearance and structures of those experiences—this dissertation then it oriented towards a series of onto-existential questions that both arose from and mutually re-inform and reinforce the juridical and biopolitical production of the category of the Native.

Here I take phenomenology in the same vein as the queer phenomenology of Sara Ahmed (2006), which while perhaps not *properly phenomenological* in a sense recognizable

within the dusty halls of euro-western philosophy departments, *takes from* phenomenology orientation towards an object, a desire towards something. For me this something is Nativeness, and so, following Ahmed, I believe that phenomenology offers me a potent, if not always foregrounded explicitly, resource “insofar as it emphasizes the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready-to-hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds” (2006:2). With particular emphasis on lived and embodied experiences, this is why I speak of both autoethnographic and phenomenological contours to my work; I believe that the former necessarily, and naturally, gives rise to the latter.

III. Coloniality & the Disruption of Imperial Social Science

This work should be read then not only as a firstly as a contribution to the growing body of critical Indigenous scholarship and theoretical production which seeks to escape Native Studies historical ethnographic entrapment (Byrd 2011; Smith 2010), but also as an intervention into contemporary sociological and anthropological understandings of Nativeness. In particular this work seeks to question, reveal, and disrupt the colonial regimes of power/knowledge which both call it forth into existence, as well as sustain, rearticulate, and deploy conventions and constructions of Nativeness as part of a broader set of settler-colonial regimes which aim to not only govern the remnants of conquered and genocided Indigenous nations, but which also are necessary for the ongoing onto-

existential reassurance of the settler-colonial state and society itself.

Tracing the euromodernist disciplines of sociology and anthropology back to the founding fathers (meant in the quite literal sense)—Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and others—one finds that they have long been marked by an extensive eurocentrism in their epistemological, theoretical, and methodological commitments and practices. While I take up the particular question of Marx and Marxism in the following chapter, where I go into further depth about my own theoretical and methodological considerations, it is safe to say that this eurocentrism tends to mark all such paragons of euro-western social scientific thought. In my thinking, and most importantly in my own personal experience, moving from a bachelor's in anthropology, to a master's in public issues anthropology, through to now a doctorate in sociology, there has always been a fundamental component of the scientism that I have found remains at the heart of much of social scientific practise and theory within the westernized academy. While this has been disrupted to a greater or lesser degree within these institutional disciplines (unfortunately, quite often, leaning towards the lesser degree in my own assessment) we could perhaps say that this still remains through a recalcitrant Cartesian-derived subject-object dualism, as well as the naturalization of a foundational ideology of possible value-neutrality found within the work and theories of disciplinary founding fathers such as Max Weber (2004).

For myself, as a Native scholar, as a Menominee scholar, this has quite often been a cage, or a trap, against which I have had to struggle. I find myself often reflecting on

the words of Brazilian philosopher and critical legal theorist Roberto Mangabeira Unger, when he wrote:

Thus, the house of reason in which I was working proved to be a prison-house of paradox whose rooms did not connect and whose passageways led nowhere ... The premises of this vision of the world are few; they are tied together; and they are as powerful in their hold over the mind as they are unacknowledged and forgotten (1975:110)

Escaping this house has been a journey, with many twists and turns. Perhaps the most significant tool that has aided and abetted my escape has been the flourishing of decolonial theory, in particular the theorization of what Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano referred to as *coloniality*, or the *colonial matrix of power*, and its unity with modernity within the compound concept of *modernity/coloniality* (2008; 2010). Thinking of Rudi Visker's study of Foucault's genealogical methodology (1995), what an understanding of coloniality has given me in my work, both within and beyond the confines of this particular dissertation, is a recognition, and perhaps more keenly a mode of recognition, not only of the ordering systems of contemporary late capitalist, late colonialist, and late liberal, but of the very conditions of their possibility.

Walter D. Mignolo writes that "Coloniality names the underlying logic of the foundation of the unfolding of Western civilization from the Renaissance to today of which historical colonialisms have been a constitutive, although downplayed, dimension" (2011:2). Coloniality, for Mignolo and Quijano, is the "darker" and co-constitutive side of modernity. I believe that a fundamental question we must ask

ourselves here then is how this can begin to shift our thought on, and the place of, the social science disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and history? While history as a discipline has long existed, Immanuel Wallerstein traces the origins of sociology, economics, and political science to the period following the French Revolution of 1789, after which the “dominant liberal ideology” came to insist “that *modernity* was defined by the differentiation of three social spheres: the market, the state, and the civil society” (2007:6)⁸. In essence, following Wallerstein, the core of the modern social sciences—to which anthropology would later come to be added after the major colonial powers of the world developed a need to have some degree of understanding (as inherently distorted as it would be expected to be) of the people under the ever-expanding imperial rule—find their origins in the fracturing of knowledges about the human and of human society into distinct institutional disciplines, each with their own methodologies and practices designed to “objectively” and “scientifically” study their given domains. This is both a part of, and a result of, the *modernization* of

⁸ Building on Wallerstein, as well as Quijano and Mignolo, Nelson Maldonado-Torres refers to this period in which the social sciences as we now recognize them emerged as the “second modernity” of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. In his analysis the “first modernity,” which reigned from roughly 1450 through 1640, was one dominated by religion, specifically Christianity. Following this period, and in particular following the American and French revolutions of the late 18th-Century, secularism and scientific outlooks came to slowly supplant religious document during the flourishing of the European enlightenment (2008). A similar genealogy is also traced by the Jamaican theorist Sylvia Wynter in examining the emergence of Man, or what she more specifically refers to as the ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man, as the subject of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. For Wynter, the development of Man can be broken into two temporal periods, Man1 and Man2. Like Maldonado-Torres’s first and second modernities, Wynter’s Man1 and Man2 can be roughly distinguished by a religious character on the part of the former, and a secular, scientific, and rationalist latter (2003).

human self-knowledge, and thus the emergence of the disciplines, their theories, epistemologies, and practices, is ineluctably emergent from modernity, and thus modernity/coloniality. In short, we can say that the basic condition for the arising of the modern social science disciplines is the extension of colonialism across the globe, the consolidation of power in the newly emergent nation-states of Europe and their social, political, and cultural kin in the major settler-colonial empires.

For myself, working within a modernist, liberal, and quite thoroughly colonized academic institution, and specifically within the social sciences an analysis of coloniality helps to free my work from institutional and disciplinary confines. It helps to reveal and lay bare the foundational conditions for not only the emergence of social sciences as they exist as disciplines in the contemporary era, but also the genealogies of their inner-most methodologies and epistemologies. In working under, through, and beyond the coloniality of power, and the trap of modernity/coloniality, this allows me to not only contribute to the field of Native Studies, but to intervene in the fields of sociology and anthropology by way of a genealogical critique of their foundations and guiding concepts.

Importantly, such a genealogy reveals the extent to which both sociology and anthropology—in attempting to study Natives as both domestically governed populations, as well as primitive, Wild, and Savage Others—has aided in not only the construction of modernist conceptions of the Native but have worked to maintain them.

Thus, a significant contribution of this work is not only an illumination of these social, political, philosophical, and cultural genealogies of the Native, but a disruption of them.

IV. Refusal, Resurgence, & Indigenous Futurity

However, it is not my desire for this research to be simply yet another enunciation of the grammars of suffering of Red Life, of what Eve Tuck and C. Ree refer to as our “damage narratives” (2013). As an Indigenous scholar, an activist and, most simply, as just an Indigenous person, ultimately this work seeks to overturn the kind of nihilistic defeatism that can easily emerge from research and theoretical production which seeks only the excavation of our pain and its modalities, and the consequent projection into the future of an Indigeneity, defined solely through these grammars. I do not want this writing to be solely the personal memoir of my journey through the archive of Indigenous suffering, disconnectedness and loss.

If the genealogy I chart of the construction of Nativeness is the first of my major contributions in this work, and it can best be placed within the realm of theory and theoretical production, then I believe that this refusal to continue to speak of my own, as well as my immediate friends’ and kin’s, narratives of settler-colonial damage is the second major contribution of this work. If my genealogy of Nativeness is best understood as a theoretical contribution, then perhaps this second contribution can best be understood as a methodological one.

Methodologically, as is explained in greater detail in the first chapter, this

dissertation is grounded in an autoethnographic methodology, of using my own lived and embodied experiences of Nativeness, and specifically urban and diasporic Nativeness, towards the charting of my genealogy of Nativeness. The first arch of this work follows my damage narrative, through my discussions of colonial ontology, the visuality of racializing assemblages, and the heartbreak that comes with communal loss and disruption. However, at the mid-point of this dissertation, I refuse to continue that errant any further. While narratives of Native damage continue throughout, simply because it is the nature of Nativeness to be damaged by settler coloniality, methodologically-speaking I refuse after that point to continue to centre them, and thereby continuing to make a spectacle of them for non-Indigenous eyes. Methodologically, as well as theoretically, this dissertation moves from one way of talking about damage narratives, to another way of talking about damage narratives. The first is the way that comes with telling of my damage; the second comes through theorizing about that damage, and about the function that it carries out within the libidinal, political, and sign economies of settler coloniality. To borrow and modify a concept from Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2007) I propose then that methodologically this dissertation engaged in a practice of *autoethnographic refusal*.

However, resisting this urge to continue to speak exclusively of my damage has been a constant trial throughout this process of research and writing. While I must always overcome my anxiety/aphasia that strikes me when I must open myself up for viewing

and reviewing, once that process has begun it can be more than easy to just rend that wound as wide open as can be done. This is a way of saying that once the process of telling you about the pain of my loss is begun, I find it difficult to stop telling. One may say that it is a paradoxical problem with oversharing, but really there is something more to it. For myself, and only speaking for myself and for my own experience, it can be easier to dwell upon the loss, to ruminate on it, then it is to engage in a strategy and praxis of finding my way. Perhaps this is the condition of my depression and anxiety, perhaps it is being in the affective wake of a colonialism that can make Native life unbearable, or perhaps it is the zone where those two things meet, co-mingle, reinforce and merge. Either way, this is how it can be; this is how this writing has often been.

It is unhealthy. It is not really sustainable as a model either. Eventually one burns out, or so I imagine, and ultimately nothing would be gained. Thus, I think it is important to actively resist the urge to overshare my narrative of damage. This dissertation is also an exercise in that resistance.

In this aspect I draw upon the debate within Queer Studies between José Carlos Muñoz (2019) and Lee Edelman (2004), between pessimism and utopian optimism, to seek and to develop ways in which this project can be taken up as a starting point from where I can begin to imagine new modalities Indigenous refusal of and resistance against the violences of the colonial state, and from that new Indigenous futurisms and new politics, ethics and modes of decoloniality and decolonizing action. Thus, this project is

two-fold: the illumination and examination of my journey through the regimes of ontological, existential, narrative and biopolitical formation and governance of Natives by the settler-colonial state, and also my journey through that “genocide machine”⁹ into a new realm of Indigenous healing experience.

This second aspect to my writing must be necessarily understood as emerging from within the accelerating struggle for decolonization within the political, economic, cultural and philosophical terrains of the northern bloc. Of particular interest for myself as an scholar of critical indigenous studies, is how the insertion of decolonization and resurgent Indigenous sovereignty can begin to demarcate the boundaries of an intellectual, political and sociological arena in which the processes of the production of Natives through juridical, rhetorical and biopolitical acts of coding collides head-on *with the refusal of Indigenous people to engage in them any longer*.

This dissertation can be read as a narrative arc telling the turn towards this second aspect; towards resisting of seeing us as only broken beings, and of telling that story to ourselves and to others. When I began to write initially, to reflect on my life experience, it was easy as I said above, once I had forced myself to overcome my initial anxious trepidation, it was easy to simply pour out onto the keyboard my woeful sense of loss and anger at a colonial order of things that makes me into a not-quite-Native who doesn't

⁹ I borrow the term "genocide machine" from the title of Robert Davis and Mark Zannis work *The Genocide Machine in Canada: The Pacification of the North* (1983).

quite belong yet does. As I wrote though, working through the first two chapters, eventually this kind of work became exhausting, and eventually came to almost cease altogether.

I could not keep writing about my damage narrative anymore. And so, I decided to stop. Against the plans that had originally been laid out for this dissertation, I made an abrupt turn towards something else. I made an active decision to refuse to continue to open myself up like that any longer. I began then to ask why that was even what I had been doing up until that point, and I began to ask why it was that that kind of work, about Indigenous people, from an Indigenous person, seems to be so readily accepted within this colonized, westernized *épistémè*.

While different from what I originally intended to set about to write in the second half of this dissertation, I believe that this is actually a much more pressing and important question to ask. In doing so, and in trying to formulate something of an answer to it, I choose to refuse to open myself up with scalpel-like precision over-and-over again. Though for some I imagine such a change in direction during the latter part of a writing and research project may warrant the necessity, or at least the desire, to start again, I leave the arch of the dissertation as is, exactly because it is all a microcosmic reflection of what ultimately emerged as the central theme of this writing: how is that we as Indigenous people are damaged and what form and function does that have within the wider *socius* of settler colonialism?

IV. Chapters

Throughout this writing and storytelling my own personal journey through and beyond what I have called the genocide machine serves as the fundamental locus around which I analyse and theorize the onto-existential regimes of power and control which have shaped my own, as well as the broader, experience of what it means to be Indigenous within the (post)modern post-frontier era. However, my work also seeks to disrupt and undermine these machinations of the settler-colonial state. Thus, my writing also serves as an injunction into the structures of Official Nateness towards a goal of disrupting them and developing decolonial Indigenous futures and healing. With that explicit goal in mind, this work is divided into a number of chapters that take up and investigate a number of distinct aspects of the settler-colonial assemblage.

However, before moving to an outline my chapters, I think it is also important to mark out a larger narrative contour and structure to this dissertation. This is the splitting of the structure of this dissertation into two narrative arcs. While not explicitly labelled as *Part 1* and *Part 2*, effectively this work bears that kind of textual mark and break. The first through fourth chapters form the first arc, while the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth the second. Narratively, thinking back to Joseph Campbell (2008) and the calendrical round system of our Great Lakes Nations (Whyte 2019), the first part can be seen as a descent into the abyss of settler coloniality, into the realm of Native death. This takes the form of testimonial storytelling about Native damage under the varied regimes of

settlement and colonial governance. The second narrative arc begins after that, and marks, as I see it, my descent out of that colonial miasma, climbing towards something else. This takes the form of theorizing *about* our damage narratives, rather than continuing to speak *of* them. Throughout both arcs of this writing the locus of rotation for my storytelling remains my life, and my own personal lived and embodied experiences of Nativeness. With that said, let me say something of the specific chapters to follow, and the individual elements of my story/ies that they tell.

The first chapter, *Decolonization, World Building, & Methodological Considerations*, articulates and outlines the general theoretical and methodological course of this dissertation. In this chapter, I outline this project as sitting at the intersections of a contemporary Black Studies-informed Indigenous Critical Theory and Native Studies, Decolonial Theory, variations of Marxism and Critical Theory, Settler Colonial Studies and poststructuralist descriptions of biopolitics, bare life, and racializing assemblages. I explain in particular how this dissertation writing process, and my doctoral studies more generally, have necessitated a movement away from the kind of Marxist orthodoxy that I formally clung to as a method and theory for explaining the world. While this has not involved a complete break with Marxism—and in this chapter I introduce the influence on this work of contemporary Marxist theorists of the postmodern condition Fredric Jameson and Mark Fisher—I explain my disavowal and evolution away from overly scientific interpretations and towards a more open epistemological perspective that

rejects Cartesian dualism and the ego-politics of knowledge. In this chapter, I also outline my methodology—or methodological-pedagogical-praxiological concerns and orientations—as part of the trend and milieu outlined by Kaupapa Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith refers to as “decolonizing methodologies” (2012). Finally, this chapter outlines not only this work’s formal organization around autoethnographic methodologies, but also why such a methodology was chosen as the best possible, as well as most personally fulfilling, as well as challenging, methodology for engaging the questions investigated and raised within the rest of the work.

The second chapter, *The Coloniality of (My/Our) Being*, opens the ontological and existential stage for the rest of the dissertation. Towards that end, I take up the question of the *sub-ontological difference*. While political ontology in the post-Heideggerian sense is the difference between Being and beings, the sub-ontological difference is that which lies between Being and what is below it. The sub-ontological difference is what transforms Native life into a form of bare life, able to be murdered and killed without being mournable. The philosophical impact of this is two-fold: firstly, it is what allows the instantiation of the thinking Cartesian subject, the ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man, as a disguised particularism asserted as a liberal modernist universalism; secondly, ontologically it both emerges from and reinforces the eliminative regimes of settler colonialism. Thinking along Derridian lines, I argue then that if ontology, proper to such, is actually a hauntology—haunted by what is in the past, as well as what is yet to come—

I argue that the normative subject of political ontology, the *ego cogito*, is haunted by that which had to be conquered and exterminated to render its place on the world stage. Bringing together the Fanonian insights of modern Decolonial theory with Indigenous critical theory, I argue that this creates a condition of Native life that wears down the subject into a zone of nonbeing, in which death of some kind lurks behind every corner.

The third chapter, *#NotYourNativeStereotype & the Question of White-Passing Natives* extends the discussion from the second chapter on colonial ontology and the anthropological machinery of settler colonialism which renders Indigenous peoples as eliminable to further examine the workings of settler-colonial racializing juridical assemblages through engagement with the particular case of ongoing discourse in social media circles about the question of visibility and of *white-passing* with regards to Indigenous peoples. This chapter sets out to trouble this discussion, which is often unstated to be a mechanistic transposing of U.S. racial theory of Black and white relations onto Indigenous peoples on both sides of the settler boundary, by more clearly establishing the biopolitical governmentality of Official Nateness through racializing assemblages, which functions along different, in many ways opposing, logics than those of Black racialization in the United States. In particular, the discussion in this chapter is rooted in my own discussions via blog writing and Twitter correspondence with Nicolás Juárez, a fellow Indigenous critical scholar, and my responses to his positions. In essence I argue that, because of the ways in which the *logic of elimination* fundamentally functions

at the macro-level, that is the level of the State, towards the biogenic and cultural elimination of Indigenous peoples through biopolitical regimes and racializing assemblages of the hyper-solubility of “Indian Blood”—as well as the ontological entanglement of the categories of white, settler and master—that is ultimately impossible to speak of Natives who possess a true ability to pass as white. Intersecting with this I also examine the non-visual means by which the colonial gaze may interpolate one as Indigenous absent direct or immediate visual confirmation of one as such. From these points I argue that while it may be possible on the level of individual and personal interactions to momentarily avoid, or hide from, the murderous colonial gaze through outward appearance of white phenotypical features, that does not disguise one from the biopolitical algorithms of state violence, which are the ultimate arbiter of violence and power in society, and which seek to destroy Indigenous people in toto as nations. This makes the violence experienced by Indigenous individuals at the hands of individual white settlers and white functionaries of the settler-colonial State (namely the police) a horrifically violent experience that can leave one traumatized, if not outright dead, but also ultimately an experience of violence that is secondary to, or derivative of, the violence of the State. Taken together I read these movements and functions within settler-colonial racializing assemblages to affect a detachment of Nativeness from visibility as the principal signifier of importance in understanding the violence of the logic of elimination, though not completely displacing visibility as still important in

understanding of other instances of the experience of anti-Native violence.

Examining all of this, in the fourth chapter, *Community, Pretendians, & Heartbreak*, which takes the form of an interlude between the first and second portions of this work, I take up and build upon the nature of Native life as a way of living where, following Belcourt, “death hangs in the air like a rumour” (2017a), and the affective burden that that has upon not only my own life but the lives of many, if not most, Native peoples within my friend and kinship circles. I also discuss the necessity of community for alleviating this burden, of finding safe harbour amongst the storm. But, against the need for community I also introduce the discussion of white/settler people falsely taking up Indigenous identity as “fake Natives” —including in the political sphere with Elizabeth Warren, the academic with Andrea Smith and Ward Churchill, and in my own personal lived experiences in Kitchener-Waterloo—and the implications that this growing social and colonial phenomenon heaves on top of disconnected and diasporic Indigenous people seeking to reconnect, as well as how making room for them within Native spaces can also profoundly disrupt them.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation, *The Problem of Telling Stories to Some People, or Why Do We Tell of Our Damage to Those Who Damaged Us?* begins a shift in orientation towards the second narrative arc of this work, and the rise out of the abyss towards analyzing the question of why we tell our damage narratives. Originally here I meant to tell the story of my experiences with the approval process with the Menominee language

and culture commission and the subsequent failure to obtain approval for the original ethnographic project that was to be this dissertation. However, after many months of no movement on the writing of this chapter I reached an epiphany of sorts, which was that I cannot tell that story because to tell that story is to continue to tell the narrative of my damage, in particular, continues to tell that narrative, in a broad sense, to those who damaged me. Thus this chapter importantly is a turning away from the continued telling of damage narratives and begins the arc that consumes the remaining chapters of this dissertation, which is to begin to examine and then answer the question of why we as Indigenous peoples tell our damage narratives, and more so why those narratives are so readily consumed by the broader society of settler colonialism. This chapter ultimately is a practice of refusal. While the previous chapters of this text remain, marking out of the contours of my own abyss, and in their own way do tell part of the story of my damage as an Indigenous person, as does this introduction, this chapter forcefully asserts that I will no longer do so.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of this dissertation then take up, extend and attempt to come to something of a theoretical answer to the questions raised in the fifth about the role that our damage narratives play in settler-colonial society. In that light the sixth chapter, *Digital Worlds, Native Ghosts, & the Socio-Existential Suturing of Settler Society*, is an examination of the constant drive by settler-colonial societies to foreclose Indigeneity, most especially the prior and alternative sovereignties and territorialities

that they represent, in order to existentially suture their own sense of self-legitimacy and psychological cohesion. I argue in this chapter that so long as the Native persists an unstable terrain is always-already being generated within the regime of the settler, and that because of that the State and civil society of the settler will always be at an ideological, ontological, symbolic and libidinal impasse with regards how to mediate and concretize its ongoing existence qua itself. To this end this chapter begins with a meditation on the recent trend in the United States and Canada to institute a form of what is now called Indigenous Peoples' Day, and continues on as I build a brief discussion of representations of the Native within settler popular media, particularly within the world-building of digital and filmic narrative representations. This discussion examines how representations of the frontier in video game presentations often lock the elimination of Indigenous peoples, and the loss of our territories, firmly into the realm of the past, unable to find recompense. This chapter ends with a reassertion of Patrick Wolfe's maxim that "invasion is a structure not an event" (2006:388), and that as much as one can argue that we have passed over the horizon from the modern into Fredric Jameson's postmodern (1991) or Mark Fisher's capitalist realism (2009) the regimes of power under which we live remain not only haunted, but animated by, settler colonialism.

The seventh chapter, *Settler Colonialism & the Incommensurable Cartography of the Native Savage*, thematically continues this discussion through an explicit interrogation of the ontological formation of Nativeness within the juridical and philosophical imagining

of settler-colonial state and civil society. Echoing the discussion from the second chapter, this discussion returns to the question of the ethnoclass of western bourgeois man and the Nativeness that haunts its temporal and spatial margins. Here I outline two ways that the Native is foreclosed from amalgamation within the world of Man: the Native as a being-out-of-time and as a being-in-the-Wild. Here I present how this spatiotemporal outcast status of the Native is always-already generated by the needs of the colonial order of things to instantiate and re-affirm itself. From this, I also directly engage with and criticize the well-known understanding of Indigenous sovereignty and the ontological placement of the Native within the colonial order of things by Afropessimist theorist Frank B. Wilderson, III. I demonstrate how both Wilderson's earlier and more moderate position on the matter as well as his current and more extreme position fundamentally misunderstand Indigenous sovereignty and the ontology of Nativeness by mistaking the outward linguistic construct of those subjects for their substantive cores. I argue, against Wilderson, that (the loss of) sovereignty by Natives is in fact not a point of grammatical articulation with the world-building of the settler, because the "sovereignty" that the Native possesses is in fact of a radically different kind than the politico-governmental concept bearing the same name which defines the subjectivity and governmentality of the settler. Instead, I argue that the sovereignty of the Native is not so much one that is something possessed, but rather, is a form of categorical lack.

The eighth and final chapter, *Red Monsters: The Native-Outside & the Weird*, takes

the previous two chapters on digital worlds, being-out-of-time and being-in-the-Wild to formulate an understanding of the consumption of Native damage narratives within what I call the *imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling*. Here I draw together these concepts regarding the always-already abject status of Natives to push towards an understanding of the Native as a *Weird being*, working through the theorization of the Weird by Mark Fisher. I counterpoise this directly to the general understanding of abjection as a concept related to the psychoanalytic *unheimlich*, something in which the familiar becomes strange, instead arguing that as Weird, rather than uncanny, the Native is a being that does not belong within the cartographic worlding of the settler. I further examine the ways in which Native people can, through their own work and lived lives, actually function towards a reinforcement of a kind of Nativeness that is able to be tamed and made acceptable with the social, cultural, and political fields of the settler. I look at this primarily through both my experiences teaching in the classroom during the winter of 2019, as well as through the varied material and social-cultural production that many Natives may engage in, such as pow wows or bead working. I argue that this is a performance of Indigeneity which locks Nativeness within a conception of the past that in fact never really was; it is a simulacrum of Nativeness, a copy of something that never actually had an anchor in reality. I also take up the issue of urban Indigeneity, and its general erasure within popular and theoretical conceptions of Nativeness and of Native experience, because of the grounding that the Native as a being-of-the-Wild, and as such

does not belong within the limits of the city, the boundaries of which are such that they delineate the world of nature from the world of Man. Together these two experiences of Nativeness, urban and acceptable performativity, reinforce the Native's being-out-of-time and being-in-the-Wild through their negative lack, and through that reinforce a genuine Nativeness, especially a Nativeness that exists decolonially for its own self, as a Weird being that does not belong. Finally, this chapter seeks to answer the question of the consumption of Native damage narratives within settler-colonial institutional and civil society, such as in this dissertation's earlier pages, through the idea of the Weird. I here follow Fisher closely in reading the Weird in a psychoanalytic register of *jouissance* in which the Native as Weird, through the telling of the damage narrative, is something that cannot be looked away from in the eyes of the settler. However, unlike the limit experience in the thought of Georges Bataille and Michel Foucault, rather than being generative towards a breakdown of binaries and boundaries, the *jouissance* coloured encounter in the telling of Native damage narratives reinforces rather than liberates.

Chapter 1. Decolonization, World-Building, & Methodological Considerations

There is a long and bumbled history of non-Indigenous peoples making moves to alleviate the impacts of colonization. The too-easy adoption of decolonizing discourse (making decolonization a metaphor) is just one part of that history and it taps into pre-existing tropes that get in the way of more meaningful potential alliances.

– Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang, *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*

In carrying out this research project I draw from, situate myself against, and am profoundly indebted to three principal fields of research and theoretical production: Native Studies, Black Studies—specifically the constellation of differing theoretical approaches that the late Cedric Robinson called the Black Radical Tradition (1983) as the pioneering works of Black Feminists—and contemporary decolonial scholarship and theory, but in particular that branch of which has emerged from Latin American Studies and scholars such as Walter D. Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, Nelson Maldonado-Torres and others. In thinking through these mutually informative influences, I would say that the former, Native Studies, is my principal theoretical axis, and against which I place this dissertation’s contributions and interventions, while the latter two enter my work primarily through various and important critiques and points-of-meeting between Native Studies, Black Studies and contemporary decolonial critique

These three traditions, especially in the past twenty or so years, have come to increasingly mutually influence each other through dialogue between scholars, citational

practices, collaborative writings, and theoretical cross-pollination and critique. My dissertation, while emerging from a particular nexus of Native Studies, sociology, and anthropology, is also situated against, and indeed part of, this theoretical and scholastic entangling, blurring, and constructive inter-building. Indeed, while this work seeks mainly to contribute to Native Studies, sociology, and anthropology through a genealogy and critique of Nativeness in the biopolitical, visual, narrative, and philosophical imaginings of settler coloniality, it would not have been possible without the tireless and incredibly insightful work of those within Black and Latin American Studies.

With regards to Native Studies, I specifically take up what Chickasaw scholar Jodi A. Byrd refers to as indigenous critical theory, in her 2011 work *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Byrd attempts to give a broad outline of what is meant by the term, saying that:

Indigenous critical theory could be said to exist in its best form when it centers itself within indigenous epistemologies and the specificities of the communities and cultures from which it emerges and then looks outward to engage European philosophical, legal, and cultural traditions in order to build upon all the allied tools available. Steeped in anticolonial consciousness that deconstructs and confronts the colonial logics of settler states carved out of and on top of indigenous usual and accustomed lands, indigenous critical theory has the potential in this mode to offer a transformative accountability (xxix-xxx).

She continues:

From this vantage, indigenous critical theory might, then, provide a diagnostic way of reading and interpreting the colonial logics that underpin cultural, intellectual, and political discourses. But it asks the settler, native, and the arrivant each acknowledge their own positions

within empire and then reconceptualize space and history to make visible what imperialism and its resultant settler colonialisms and diasporas have sought to obscure (xxx).

For this project, the key tool provided by indigenous critical theory is its ability to illuminate the oftentimes previously undertheorized ontological, existential and structural orderings of Indigeneity within the coordinates of the libidinal, political, and sign economies of settler coloniality. In other words, the triangulation of Native life within the sum of interconnected systems of power and knowledge production that we may choose to call the world. It also allows us to do the thinking against-and-beyond the systems imposed by the settler-colonial state and civil society, including the westernized academy, and to dream of new futures and new politics. Theoretically and methodologically this is an explicit move against what Andrea Smith calls the “ethnographic entrapment” of Native Studies studying Natives (2010) and the subsequent quest for the visibility of the Native within a westernized concept of universal subjecthood.

This move against ethnographic entrapment is essential in my own understanding of Indigeneity and the consequent theorization that this writing moves to produce as I do not seek as a primary goal legibility within the walls of the westernized academy, or, more broadly, adjusted within and into the modernist, post-enlightenment fold of the universal western subject, what Jamaican theorist Sylvia Wynter referred as the ethnoclass of bourgeois Man and its overrepresentation as the human (Wynter 2003). On

this question of the human, or more correctly of Man and his overrepresentation as the human, in my dreaming and theorizing of new potentialities for Indigenous existence, I think it is vital to think in terms of the against-and-beyond. Here I again follow Nicolas Juárez, who calls for both First Nations, Native American and Indigenous Studies, as well as Indigenous activists, to “relinquish their desire to be structurally adjusted into the human fold, a fold which will never solve or relieve our problems because our problems are the condition of possibility for that fold’s existence” (2014). Fred Moten put it perhaps most succinctly: “fuck the human” (2016)¹⁰.

Whereas indigenous critical theory, as an indigenous critical scholar myself, enters this dissertation as a defining theoretical lens, contemporary Black radical theory and Black feminist theory enters itself at many levels. Most strongly my writing is indebted to the theoretical interventions and productions of Lewis R. Gordon, Fred Moten, and Alexander G. Weheliye, as well as Black Feminists Sylvia Wynter, Saidiya Hartman, and Hortense Spillers; scholars and theorists working in the mold of Frantz Fanon and the long Black Feminist tradition, and who critically engage the euro-western canon. They are especially essential with regards to the question of the human, and the human-as-Man, as the supposed universal subject of the (post)modern *épistémè*, a notion which is central to many of my more abstract and ontological investigations. Methodologically

¹⁰ From Moten in conversation with Saidiya Hartman, as part of *The Black Outdoors: Humanities Futures after Property and Possession* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_UZ6dybrc

speaking, my deployment of an autoethnographic approach is also deeply indebted to the work of Black Feminist theorist Tiffany Lethabo King. Finally, this work critically engages the theorizations of aspects of Nativeness within the area of critique and theorization known as *Afropessimism*, primarily through the writings of Jared Sexton on Native racialization and Frank B. Wilderson III's theorization of Indigenous sovereignty and ontological placement in the world making project of the human (2010).

The traces of decolonial theory can likewise be found across virtually every page of these writings. Most obviously this comes through my deployment of concepts such as coloniality and modernity/coloniality. As I discussed in the introduction, coming to terms with the coloniality of power, and of coloniality as the darker side of euro-western modernity, allows this dissertation to not only contribute to the discipline of Native Studies, but also to intervene in my "home disciplines" of sociology and anthropology, by revealing the genealogy of the conditions of possibility for these disciplines' emergence with the modern, westernized, and colonized academy. As thoroughly modernist disciplines, even if there have been greater or lesser attempts to shake off elements of their origins (such as in moves by some to question the scientificity of their methods, or to de-naturalize the Weberian notion of objectivity and value-neutrality), at their root the conditions of possibility for knowledge production within sociology and anthropology is the coloniality of power. As Foucault (1980) and Said (1979) remind us, knowledge is inseparable from the dynamics of power which produce it. With respect to

modernity, and the disciplines that it has given rise to, decolonial theory and the coloniality of power help to keep that recognition firmly in central focus.

I came to decolonial theory perhaps most recently of these three major streams of thought. I was introduced to it through the work of a friend and colleague, a religious studies doctoral candidate at Wilfrid Laurier University, and with whom I shared a panel at a 2017 conference on biopolitics. What caught my attention at first was this colleague's use of the concept of a modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. The reasons for this was because for many years prior I had been under the influence, to one degree or another, of world-systems analysis and dependency theory (which, in many ways, world-systems analysis is a development of), being a student in many ways of Immanuel Wallerstein (1995), Samir Amin (1974), Giovanni Arrighi (1994), Arghiri Emmanuel (1972), and certain contemporary thinkers who have picked up and extended the lines of analysis first laid down by these theorists, in particular Zak Cope on the international stratification of labour between the Global North and Global South in the era of contemporary capitalism (2015). Thus, because I was already quite familiar with at least the central theorists of world-systems analysis and their works, it was not much of a leap for myself to dive headlong into decolonial theory, especially as theorists of it such as Mignolo (2011), Quijano (2008; 2010) and Maldonado-Torres explicitly align their thinking on coloniality as both a critique, and extension of, earlier thinking about the world-system. However, the place of decolonial theory within my thinking, and its relationship to world-system

analysis, also shines light on a fourth pillar of thought against which I situate myself: Marxism.

1.1 Marxism, Coloniality, Man, & Euromodern Science

For many years, my primary theoretical grounding could best be described as some kind of Marxism. This was still very much so the case when I began the studies that led me to this point in my writings. For much of that time, while often nominally loyal to some kind of Leninist/Maoist Marxism, in the sense of how it viewed the project of actual leftist organizing, the primary internal debate that I engaged in with myself with regards to this outlook was between a kind of Althusserianism and Gramscianism. Ultimately, I did, and still do, take a number of key elements from both. From the former, a kind of ‘soft Althusserianism’, as Peter D. Thomas refers to it, the hallmarks of which are “a suspicion of teleology, an attentiveness to the social and political processes of subject- and subjectivity-formation, a respect for the relative autonomy of diverse instances within the social totality” (2009:11). In particular, key elements that I continue to draw from Althusser’s work is long-running rejection of deterministic or fatalistic modes of analysis (often typified, in Marxist works and activism, as the assertion that “communism is inevitable”), which coalesce most clearly within the late-Althusser’s “aleatory materialism,” or “materialism of the encounter,” (2006) and an attentiveness to the working of ideology in the production and reproduction of capitalism, and, more essentially, the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system (2014).

From the latter I have long been attracted to, and taken up, Gramsci's 'absolute historicism,' which entails the denial that any real or meaningful qualitative distinctions between different conceptions of the world—much less ideologies and philosophies—can genuinely be made, and consequently flowing from that a deep suspicion, and ultimately a quite uncompromising rejection, of "scientistic" and "deterministic" versions of Marxism (2009:11). Other key elements of the kind of Gramscianism that Thomas describes, namely the study of subalternity and the form and functions of the microphysics of power, have also long been key elements of my outlook on the world (2009:11)¹¹.

However, while many of these outlooks remain close to my mind and heart, the principal place that they held for me began to change with my exposure to more recent critical and theoretical production from within the spheres of Native, Black, and Decolonial Studies. Ultimately my exposure to these new frameworks slowly began to erode the relative Marxist orthodoxy that informed so much of my views and work.

This has been the path for the last few years. Nowadays my uses of Marxism are more in the direction of what I have taken up jokingly calling *postmodern neo-Marxism*; an

¹¹ I have often found myself cleaving closer to this kind of Gramscianism than to Althusserianism though, primarily because of my long-held suspicion of scientistic approaches to Marxism. This is a key element of much of Marxism, which insists that the historical materialist methodology is a/the "science of history" and thus lays forward the claim that what it is doing analytically and theoretically is akin to science. While I understand the Marxist drive/desire to be "scientific," it has never been a concern that I have shared, primarily because I consider it to be an epistemological standpoint that is deeply wedded to the European Enlightenment, which as I discuss briefly above, is ultimately a colonial epistemology.

intentional appropriation of the wording of Canada's currently most recognizable reactionary academic: Jordan Peterson. This, for me, is a Marxism that not only naturally emerges from those Althusserian and Gramscian moments and engagements of mine in years past, but which is also critically informed by the work of the late Mark Fisher (2009) and Fredric Jameson (1991), in that it is concerned with the postmodern condition, what Fisher refers to as *capitalist realism*; does not recoil in horror, as so much of Marxism in my experience appears to, from the contributions of radical scholars outside the Marxist canon and who are most associated with what we might call postmodernism or poststructuralism, such as Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, or Jacques Derrida; and which now adds to its list of suspicions the state of current Marxist futurisms, both in terms of the necromantic practice of summoning the ghosts of socialisms long dead (Robinson & Schram, forthcoming), and in the ongoing quest for universality.

The very last of these points, the question of universality, also opens up a door onto what has become my primary issue with so most of Marxism, of almost any variant—Althusserian, Gramscian, Jamesonian, Fisherian, Leninist, Maoist etc.—which is quite often and quite simply that it is profoundly eurocentric. What Marxism tends to miss in this regard—whether Althusserian, Gramscian, Jamesonian, Fisherian, Leninist, Maoist—is that this is a problem that Marxism is not really equipped to grapple with because, at the heart of things, Marxism, or at least orthodox Marxism, deeply holds to

the abstractly “progressive” powers and qualities of this thing that we call *modernity* precisely because it is a product of modernity, born at the necrotic heart of the colonial order of things.

In this regard, I do not believe that there has been a meaningful shift away from eurocentrism, though certainly efforts have been made. Indeed, in my experience outside of academia, in on the ground activist work, in interactions with leftists of a myriad of different Marxist tendencies (Marxism-Leninism, Trotskyism, Maoism, various “left-communisms” etc.), the apparent default response amongst many to any attempted critique of eurocentrism within Marxism is to assume that those of us making the critique are saying that Marxism is a “white thing.” On the surface, this is quite obviously not the case, based purely on the historical record of 20th-Century revolutionary Marxist movements, nor do I think it is what anyone putting out a real analysis of the issue means to imply either. Regardless, watching an endless parade of Twitter arguments, the fact that that is not what I or others are saying does little to stop Marxists, in particular Marxist-Leninists from parading out images of their favourite “Revolutionaries of Colour”: Hồ Chí Minh, Thomas Sankara, José María Sison, Huey P. Newton, Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung etc. This, because no one who is really thinking through these issues is calling Marxism a white thing, does not actually do anything to diffuse the critique of eurocentrism. In reality, what these two things are—the claim that people are saying Marxism is “white”, and the parade of images of ROC as a supposed counter-point—is

actually, simply put, an ideologically placed thought terminator designed to short-circuit critique.

This, of course, is far from the only thought terminator used by many Marxist activists and theorists to diffuse attempts at critique. A popular one, and one which I have had levelled at myself more than once over the years, is the proposition that critique of Marxism represents the work of some nefarious apparatus of the colonial-capitalist state, such as COINTELPRO¹², the CIA, FBI, or, for those of us up here in Canada, the RCMP or CSIS. For example, as I write this a quite popular claim, bordering on conspiracy theory, amongst certain segments of the cyberspace left is the american CIA, via its Paris-based front organization the Congress for Cultural Freedom, had a hand in translating into the Anglophone world the writings of certain postmodern/poststructuralist theorists, such as Derrida and Foucault, in the hopes that this would coax the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rightwards and away from radical critique (Rockhill 2017). While I cannot speak to the role that the CIA may actually have had in this, the assumption seems to be that other scholars, theorists, and, also, activists would not have reached a point of critiquing Marxist assumptions without the cynical

¹² COINTELPRO, short for Counter-Intelligence Program was a U.S. State project that targeted for political repression left-wing organizations and other movements deemed subversive which originated within the colonial and racial “minority” populations resident within the United States. Targets including the Communist Party, elements of the american New Left and New Communist Movement, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, the Black Panthers, American Indian Movement, and Young Lords (Churchill & Wall 2001).

guiding hand of the CIA. This functions as a thought terminator by allowing those Marxists who choose to deploy it to simply point at a source of critique and yell “agent!”

That said, working within the Marxist tradition, there have been a number of important attempts to think again and beyond eurocentrism. I believe that amongst these various efforts, Robert Biel in his text *Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement* (2015) is absolutely correct when he says, speaking of Marxism, or what he thinks should be its “more neutral name” historical materialism, that:

The reality is that it is embodied in a particular movement which originated and developed in a definite set of geographical and historical conditions. These inevitably influenced, and imposed limitations upon, the concrete form in which the theory was first put forward (2015:4).

Here Biel’s assessment of the geo-historical location and timing of Marxism’s birth, and the marks that it has left on its body of theory, cleaves quite closely to what the late Cedric J. Robinson much more expansively noted in his classic text *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Speaking of what he identifies as Marxism’s “ominous limitations, Robinson says:

However, it is still fair to say that at base, that is at its epistemological substratum, Marxism is a Western construction—a conceptualization of human affairs and historical development which is emergent from the historical experiences of European peoples mediated, in turn, through their civilization, their social orders, and their cultures. Certainly its philosophical origins are indisputably Western. But the same must be said of its analytical presumptions, its historical perspectives, its points of view. This most natural consequence though has assumed a rather ominous significance since European Marxists have presumed more frequently than not that their project is identical with world-historical development. Confounded it would seem by the cultural zeal which

accompanies ascendant civilizations, they have mistaken for universal verities the structures and social dynamics retrieved from their own distant and more immediate pasts. Even more significantly, the deepest structures of 'historical materialism' ... have tended to relieve European Marxists from the obligation of investigating the profound effects of culture and historical experience on their science. The ordering ideas which have persisted in Western civilization ... have little or no theoretical justification in Marxism for their existence (1983:2)

However, even the best-case examples of contemporary Marxist attempts to confront their school of thought's congenital eurocentrism, such as in Biel's important work, I have issues with the accounting of the problem. For example, Biel ultimately largely boils the endemic issue of eurocentrism in Marxism down to a question of its political economy (2015:171). While in a sense I do agree that the political economy of most Marxists is somewhere between one hundred and one hundred fifty years out of date, the question of eurocentrism is not simply one that can be solved by the correct reading and application of dependency theory or world-systems analysis. While certainly taking up that theoretical line—updated as it should be for the early 21st century, is important, and especially when paired with a serious concern for the question of imperialist parasitism—the manner in which it is focused upon by Biel actually, in my opinion, obscures the other, often deeper ways that Marxism has been marked by a profound eurocentrism since its original formulations.

Indeed, despite the recent efforts of the canadian Maoist philosopher Joshua Moufwad-Paul, working through the late Samir Amin, to portray Marxism as a "modernity critical of modernity," and leaning heavily on the concluding pages of

Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in order to declare "the need to establish a new Enlightenment that will be free from the predations of Europe" I find little hope for this within the onto-epistemological framing of the Marxist project (2018). Indeed, elsewhere Moufwad-Paul falls back on old Marxist tropes I have no taste for in order to circumvent Black theorist Alexander G. Weheliye's criticism of all theoretical traditions of European origin as "white European thinkers [who] are granted a *carte blanche*" (2014:6). Namely, Moufwad-Paul consciously falls back on that old Marxist claim that "it is only the Marxist tendency that can account for and surmount this *carte blanche*, thus necessarily generating theoretical offspring critical of its erroneous aspects, because of what it is: *a science*" [emphasis original] (2019).

As I have said already, I am critical of the claims to not only Marxism's long-running project of positioning itself as a science, as well as generally scientific outlooks in general, a lingering remnant of my Gramscianism. However, the claim to Marxism's scientificity, made explicit in Moufwad-Paul's body of work, brings into quite clear focus the problems of Marxism's onto-epistemological eurocentrism. Take for instance this paragraph, in which he quite boldly writes:

Moreover, claims that there are other knowledges that have been excluded by the dominant scientific narrative does not prove that science-qua-science is incorrect—as the artefacts the latter produces immediately demonstrates. At best such claims only demonstrate that the colonial-capitalist monopoly on scientific investigation has excluded just as much as it has appropriated and that it could stand to learn more from the research of others: we know this is correct since environmental scientists have discovered that there are indeed suppressed knowledges

of numerous Indigenous populations that prove the possibility of living sustainable lives. At worst, however, claims about excluded knowledge traditions can lead to unqualified endorsements of culturalist mystification. Just because a truth claim is made by a colonized or formerly colonized population does not make it correct, no more than the various anti-scientific truth claims made by colonizing populations (i.e. Six Day Creationism, anti-vaccination, “chem-trails”, ethno-nationalism, conservative conceptions of gender and sex, etc.), and thus it is not always wrong that science excludes some knowledges. Indeed, science necessarily has to exclude those truth claims that are proven wrong regardless of their origin. This does not mean that scientific investigation, because of the influence of the ideological instance, might not wrongly exclude truths due to a scientist’s devotion to various social dogma, only that other times the exclusion is correct. Only Christian fundamentalists would argue that we are not better off for the exclusion of Six Day Creationism from the discipline of biology (2019).

In a single arch here Moufwad-Paul concedes that primitive Savages, such as Indigenous populations, may actually have some sort of useful knowledge about the world in the form of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, or TEK—a currently buzzworthy area of discussion within philosophy, the social sciences and environmental studies—yet, in a stunningly oblivious move demonstrating the deep eurochauvinist and racial-colonialist contours of his own Marxist “science”, simultaneously colours non-european traditional knowledges and epistemologies with the same brush of “culturalist mystification” as conservative christian supremacists seeking to overturn the current liberal-bourgeois secular order to replace it with their own. In labelling traditional Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies “culturalist mystification” Moufwad-Paul not just side-steps, *but actively pushes to the side*, the fact that “science,” as a “structured and systematic production of knowledge,” is, by most accounts, something

that “all societies and all groups, everywhere and anytime, are engaged in” although “not all of them are institutionalized to the same degree” (Reiter 2018:3).

Moufwad-Paul’s characterization of non-european knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies is, I think it is safe to argue, deeply problematic. This is because, as Bernd Reiter notes, colonialism “erased many local scientific traditions by declassifying them as primitive and folklore and substituting what was perceived as Southern superstition with Northern science” (2018:3). However, this is, as I have already noted, something which Moufwad-Paul appears to not even notice, much less concern himself with. Indeed, in labelling traditional Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies “culturalist mystification” he commits the very same colonial error that Reiter speaks of, saying:

To some authors, the very power of colonialism rested on its ability to name and categorize the world according to its heuristic schemata and interest, thus inventing, and enforcing, such binaries as modern/traditional, progressive/backward, and civilized/primitive (2018:3).

“Culturalist mystification” is a labelling of traditional Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, and methodologies that can only arise from the imperial gaze of modernity/coloniality, and thus invests in, constructs, and reifies a colonial epistemological hierarchy and binary, and by extension implies other imperial hierarchies and binaries, and core-periphery like relationship (Escobar 2011; Lugones 2007). Given his philosophical commitment to epistemologically and methodologically

situating Marxism as a science, and demonstrated euro-colonial myopia, I suspect that even if these problems were presented to him, he would not be able to recognize that the knowledge production of euro-western science, much less that of Marxism's supposedly scientific outlook and methodology, is made possible by the coloniality of power/knowledge (Dussel 2002; Quijano 2008).

Moufwad-Paul's line of thinking here is one which, as should be obvious, is deeply antagonistic with regards to any sense of epistemic plurality, or of co-extensive *pluriversal* knowledges (Reiter 2018; Harding 2018; Escobar 2018). Moufwad-Paul's Maoist Marxism appears quite strongly here to be a case-study in why Santiago Castro-Gómez answers with a provisional no regarding the possibility of epistemic plurality under the current colonial *épistémè*, saying:

at least for the last 500 years, it has not been possible to recognize the epistemological plurality of the world. On the contrary, a single way of knowing the world, the scientific-technical rationality of the Occident, has been postulated as the only valid episteme, that is to say the only episteme capable of generating real knowledge about nature, the economy, society, morality and people's happiness. All other ways of knowing the world have been relegated to the sphere of doxa, as if they were a part of modern science's past, and are even considered an 'epistemological obstacle' to attaining the certainty of knowledge (2010:282).

And is this not indeed a quite precise summation of Moufwad-Paul's assessment of Marxist scientificity, and indeed for the necessity of Marxist scientificity? He makes this quite clear in his reply to Weheliye, that it is Marxism, and only Marxism, that is capable of providing a meaningful explanation of the world, and thus a meaningful impact on

the world, *because it is a science*. Does not Moufwad-Paul make it clear that he views, from within the Marxist domain, Indigenous and non-european to be an epistemic obstacle to the flourishing of Marxist science? What else could it be to label the subalternized, colonized, and genocided world-views of Indigenous peoples as “culturalist mystification” and paint them with the same brush as settler-colonial christian clerical fascists? It does not seem, to myself at least, to stretch credulity by much to imagine that Moufwad-Paul—while not doubting what I believe to be he and other Marxist’s *political* commitment to what they believe to be a freer, more equal, and more just world—maintains a fixed and rigid euromodern and euro-western *methodological-epistemological-axiological* commitment that is rooted in a profound colonial-imperial arrogance. And this is a kind of arrogance that can only be imagined from one who sits at the very heart of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. It is an arrogance that allows one to believe that they stand at a kind of zero-point around which the earth rotates (Castro-Gómez 2010; Grosfoguel 2013). The truth of the matter is that European ontologies, epistemologies, academic and social research programmes, cosmologies and the like are only able to place themselves at the zero-point of contemporary human knowledge production and accumulation because they have conquered the world, and suffocated all others (Chakrabarty 2007), or, to think in Dusselian terms, covered all others (Dussel 1995).

Against this decolonial and postcolonial critique however, in their recent writings both Biel and Moufwad-Paul hinge much of their thought on this matter, on the assertion that as a theory, analytic, and methodology historical materialism, the Marxist science of history, is not only the best tool for the job, but indeed is the only one, and, not only that, it has already succeeded in that regard¹³. This is, to put it mildly, debatable.

To be even more specific, the position which Moufwad-Paul outlines here is profoundly epistemicidal, to borrow a concept from Ramón Grosfoguel (2013) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2018; 2014). Turning back to Castro-Gómez's comments on the scientific-technical rationality of the Occident, Moufwad-Paul's thinking is also deeply tinged by what Fernando Coronil would call, drawing on already-existing discourse, *Occidentalism* (1996), and which, reflecting on Edward Said's conception of *Orientalism*, with its focus on the euro-west's deficiencies in representing the Othered "Orient" (1979), he describes as "the conceptions of the West animating those representations" (56).

¹³ Moufwad-Paul at times is all over the place. For example, in these writings, and on his personal blog works in which he argues against anything appended with the prefix "post" (postmodernism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, post-Marxism etc.) he argues at length that a major problem with these schools of thought, in so far as the question of eurocentrism is concerned, is that they are often rooted, ultimately, in theorists more eurocentric than Marx. While it is no doubt the case that philosophers and theorists such as Nietzsche were deep eurochauvinists, an argument amounting to "well, those thinkers are more eurocentric" is not one that I find particularly convincing. Additionally, this line of thinking from Moufwad-Paul is significant in its uncharitability towards Native, Black, Third World, migrant and other subaltern theorists, whom he seems to treat as oblivious to the eurocentrism of theorists and theories other than Marx. This would seem to me to be a kind of white-saviourism in Marxist clothing, which is a particular flavour of eurocolonial racism. I can assure Moufwad-Paul, as well as my readers, that we, and I include myself humbly here, do not need a white canadian Maoist philosopher to instruct us in what is and is not eurocentric.

While it may seem unfair here to single out a single Canadian philosopher representing a specific strain of Marxism, in this case, Maoism, I focus briefly here on Moufwad-Paul precisely because he so well articulates in the contemporary philosophical and theoretical arenas the argument for Marxism's claim to scientificity, and, by way of negative extension, also lays clear the problems of that position, again whether or not Moufwad-Paul necessarily recognizes them as problems¹⁴. Additionally, some of the pitfalls that lead Moufwad-Paul to the almost-funny-if-it-was-not-serious euro-colonial, and frankly racist, equivocation of Christian fascist theology and the subalternized, genocided, and still colonized and suppressed cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples have entrapped many a Marxist thinker attempting to cut themselves out of the net of endemic eurocentrism. This is not a particularly new argument for Marxists to make. In the closing decades of the Cold War, the Cuban philosopher Roberto Fernández Retamar attempted to make a link between a kind of proto-post-Occidental thought and Marxism. For Retamar capitalism was essentially the same as Occidental thought, and therefore Marxism, as a critique of capitalism, could not be anything other than post-Occidental (1986). However, while the colonial genesis of capitalism has caused a global ontogenic overlapping of capitalism

¹⁴ I must credit this insight here to a fellow Indigenous leftist, Lakota tweeter Hinskéhanska, with whom I have regular discussions on social media. I had already been critical of the earlier 2018 piece by Moufwad-Paul and the claim of Marxism as a "modernity critical of modernity," but had not read the follow up article from this year.

and colonialism, hence my, and others', use of the compound term "the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system", I do not believe that this makes the two categories reducible to each other. If they were, then class struggle and anti-colonial/decolonial struggle would seem to be reducible to one another, but, as such contemporary Native thinkers such as George E. Tinker (2008) and Glen Coulthard (2014) I believe convincingly demonstrate, this would be an oversimplification of colonial relations as they exist, and one which ultimately leaves Natives by the wayside in the global quest for proletarian revolution and socialism.

Thinking back again to Moufwad-Paul, while I am not necessarily opposed to the idea of a "modernity critical of modernity," or Fanon's call to build a new enlightenment, for myself, probably contrary to Moufwad-Paul, this is because I follow Lewis Gordon's corrective of Enrique Dussel in that what we generally call modernity in a broad sense should more correctly be understood as *euromodernity*, because modernity is not something strictly owned by Europeans (2013). This is the crux of my issue with not only Moufwad-Paul, but with Marxism in general: it is not that it is, or even can ever claim to be, *just* or *simply* a "modernity critical of modernity," but that we must also be precisely clear about that which we speak, and in this case we can only regard Marxism as a product of euromodernity that attempts an internal critique of euromodernity. In this vein, as far as we can genuinely consider Marxism to be an actual critique of modernity,

then it must be said to be, much like its oft ideological foe postmodernism, a eurocentric critique of euromodernity (Grosfoguel 2008).

This is a trap that Marxism—despite all of the insight that it may contain about the exploitation of wage labour by capital, imperialism, class struggle, the state etc.—fundamentally cannot escape because of the eurocentric corruption in its roots, which ultimately causes it to mistake a european vision for a “scientific” one, and one with an unqualified universal applicability which should supplant all other epistemological systems. This is one of the ultimate traps of Marxism: the notion of universality. Abstract universals as they are, with the global designs that they proffer, especially when rooted in something birthed at the heart of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system, are inherently epistemically western and colonial (Mignolo 2012). This is a trap set by the fact that that this thing we call modernity is indelibly, ineluctably, and inescapably linked with the colonial order of things. It was out of needing to understand this trap, out of the context of the Latin American engagement with dependency theory and world-systems analysis, that the late Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano coined the concept of the coloniality of power, often shortened to just coloniality, sometimes also referred to as the colonial matrix of power, and linked it to the compound concept of modernity/coloniality in order to describe this twinned relationship (2010; 2008).

Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism, in a broad sense, setting aside the specifics of settler colonialism, denotes the political and economic relationship

wherein the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation. Coloniality, rather, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, and thus, coloniality survives colonialism, being maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self etc. Coloniality, understood in this way, is constitutive of modernity, which, broadly construed, are those pillars and interrelated spheres that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production/epistemology and ontological questions and concepts such as the nature of the human and the naturalization of life and the permanent regeneration of the living (e.g. the invention of the concept of “nature” etc.) well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations (Maldonado-Torres 2010; Mignolo & Walsh 2018).

Related to this is the concept of the *decolonial* and *decoloniality*. In my interactions on social media platforms with Marxists and other leftists over the past months and years, what I suspect to be an attentiveness to the verbiage, but not the content, of current Native critique by many Marxists has given rise to a seeming neologism, *decolonialism*, and a conflation within that between two related by different concepts: decolonization and decoloniality. In essence, decolonization is and always has been tied to the question of land and power. As Glen Coulthard notes in his *Red Skin White Masks* (2014) both Native oppression and resistance to that oppression are informed by, and through, the question of land. Decoloniality on the other hand, while inherently tied to the materiality of

decolonization is about those patterns of power and epistemological/ontological elements that originated from colonialism and modernity, but which can persist, and very much so have persisted, beyond colonialism. In short decoloniality is the end of coloniality, which implies the end of modernity as well, or, to be more correct, euromodernity.

Likewise, a *decolonial critique* of modernity/coloniality is a critique from the position of subalternized and silenced knowledges, rather than Marxism or postmodernism's eurocentric critique of euromodernity (Mignolo 2012). These are the very same knowledges which Moufwad-Paul's eurocentric ideological stance regarding the scientificity of the Marxist worldview relegate, at best, to possible mere addendums to western science's body of knowledge, and at worst superstitious artefacts of a by-gone era that must now be rejected on the grounds of being "culturalist mystification" of the same kind and content as colonial and deeply anti-Indigenous conservative Christianity, to be replaced by the more correctly "scientific" Marxist epistemology and methodology of historical materialism.

Thinking through the decolonization/decoloniality distinction in this way it becomes possible to see that the first instance, that is, land and power, can be taken up without actually uprooting the second, those patterns of power that form modernity/coloniality. In fact, I would argue that a basic cursory look of the history of Marxist revolutions around the world in the 20th century, from China to Cuba to Viet

Nam, demonstrates that this has actually been the general pattern with previous decolonization movements. While it is perhaps possible to recapitulate this within a more traditionally Marxist theorization of the base-superstructure relationship, because of the deeply rooted epistemological, ontological and cosmological commitments within Marxism to a European geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge, there are elements of modernity/coloniality that escape the sight of Marxism often when considering the ideological dimensions of capitalism that will be struggled against both before and after the formal end of the capitalist world-economy, once the march towards communism is begun.

Indeed, in many ways because of these deeply held, and often unquestioned conceptions within at least mainstream and orthodox conceptions of Marxism, such as the conception of human-as-Man, of nature and of the human-nature relationship, it is possible for Marxism to actually deepen the commitment to modernity/coloniality within a given situation, even as it may work to struggle against others because of the perceived universality of Marxism. In fact, because of at least orthodox Marxism's open and enthusiastic commitment to many of the core tenants of euromodernity, and hence its lurching fear of 'postmodernism' (itself a Eurocentric critique of euromodernity), a more cynical reading would see this kind of deeper westernization to be an almost inevitable.

Marxism is thus, within this kind of understanding, a thoroughly modernist analytic and political project, and is thus tied up with many of the epistemological and

ontological dimensions of coloniality. Marxism, like postmodernism and post-structuralism are, as Grosfoguel notes, “epistemological projects that are caught within the western canon, reproducing within its domains of thought and practice a particular form of coloniality of power/knowledge” (2008). This includes in many ways a recapitulation of liberal-bourgeois notions of the human and humanism, a problem with which I grapple significantly in this dissertation [you can catch a few glimpses of this aspect of my work in some previous posts I have made, which also were clips of my dissertation writings]. For Marx, and for the Marxist tradition that followed, this liberal-bourgeois humanist tendency is perhaps most clearly subsumed up within what Tiffany Lethabo King identifies as a Lockean formulation that links labour with land, and labour with property, and eventually labour with the ability to claim status as a proper human subject (2019:23). This analytic has been the site of deep challenge and critique from within both Black and Native Studies.

The encounter between Marxist theory and Black and Native Studies is one that destabilizes the former by way of a structural violence that both prefaces the labourcentric analytics of Marxism, as well as exceeds its margins of theorizability and incorporation. From within Black Studies, Saidiya Hartman, for example, theorizes the fungibility of Blackness and of the enslaved Black person as a challenge to the labourcentric theoretical analytic of Marxism, which has historically, and currently, tended to reduce this ongoing structural mechanic and lived experience to mere alienated

labour, if an extreme case of such. Pushing beyond these limitations, she proposes racialization, accumulation, and domination as the analytics best suited for understanding the development and position of Black subjectivity, rather than pure labour (2003). Similarly, emerging from Native Studies, Glen Coulthard, in his attempt to think through and with the Marxist analytic, necessarily pushes beyond the Lockean labourcentrism of Marxism in order to find grounding on which to orient both discussions of Native oppression and colonization, and question of Indigenous liberation. He notes in *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, “the history and experience of *dispossession*, not proletarianization, has been the dominant background structure shaping the character of the historical relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state” (2014:13). Indeed, the relationship between Indigenous people and the processes of proletarianization, or rather the lack thereof (in so far as the cognition of the settler state and society views it), is paradigmatic of the Native as the Savage, and as part of the Wild, an ontological status that I explore later in this dissertation.

What is ultimately at stake here concerning Marxism as a particular kind of liberal-bourgeois, euromodern, and labourcentric humanism, is that the violences of conquest, genocide, and enslavement escape the ability of its grammars and registers to make a full accounting of them. If Marxism is to be made applicable to the violent sufferings experienced by genocided and enslaved peoples, it must be stretched so much that it will

perhaps become unrecognizable to those theorists who take up and proclaim the myriad Marxist schools of thought. This, of course, reflects Fanon's old, if perhaps quite understated, prescription that "a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue" (2004:5).

To a considerable extent this problem of Marx, and Marxism's, liberal-bourgeois humanist tendencies in theory-analytics and methodological-pedagogical-praxiological commitments extends even to those sub-formations that have attempted to openly expunge this kind of allegiance from the Marxist canon. One can here think of the Spinozist Marxism of Louis Althusser, and the many students and theorists that he cultivated or influenced, including Jacques Rancière, Alain Badiou, Antonio Negri, and Étienne Balibar. Indeed, here we can even group those outside of Marxism, or at least its mainstreamed manifestations (including Althusserian), but who were aligned in some manner with Althusser's anti-humanist impulses. The chief theorists that come to mind in this regard are Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze¹⁵, as well as the latter's occasional partner in writing and theory, Félix Guattari.

Curiously, or perhaps not (if you are as cynical of the world of Man as I am) it is something to note that the natal and myopic eurocentrism of the broad Marxist tradition

¹⁵ Both Deleuze (1988) and Althusser (2016a), besides being contemporaries, and though not always in theoretical agreement, were notable for their shared commitment to the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza, against the general historical trend of Hegelianism within Marxist thought, and much of the rest of continental philosophy. For Althusser, Spinoza is a major source of his reading of Marxism in an anti-humanist direction. Influenced deeply by both Althusser and Deleuze, Negri is today notable as a public, non-humanist, Spinozist Marxist (2013; 2020) as is Althusser's former student Balibar (2008).

prevented those Marxist, as well as poststructuralist, postmodernist and post-Marxist, theorists looking to sketch a way out of the humanist impasse from seeing that such onto-epistemic worldviews already existed in the world, but who's genealogies of such were, and are, submerged under centuries of colonial domination, genocide, and enslavement.

As Tiffany King says:

Genealogies have a way of remembering the “anti-humanist” traditions of Native/Indigenous people's that the West's form of violent Enlightenment humanism wiped out through genocide. The only reason that we experience European postmodern/poststructuralist anti-humanist impulses like those found within Deleuzian thought as novel and as an epistemic revolution is because Indigenous and Native people's cosmologies and epistemologies that did not recognize boundaries between nature/culture or the human and the western sensuous world were wiped out and had to be remade by the West (2016).

Today the proclamation of these sorts of epistemic non-revelations confused for revolutions of thought are still being produced within the confines of the westernized, colonized academy. As such, because our genealogies of thought have never been quite as dead as western anthropologists and philosophers may have believed, Black and Native Studies have often met the arrival of these still-newer iterations within western thought with scepticism. Consider for example the now quite vogueish anti-anthropocentric frame-work provided by Graham Harman's object-oriented ontology project (2011; 2018)—as well as the his fellow-travellers within the broader contemporary movement of speculative realism, such as Ray Brassier (2007), Iain Hamilton Grant (2006) and Quentin Meillassoux (2008), all of whom seek, in one way or another, to overturn

post-Kantian anthropocentrism—whose arrival on the academic and theoretical scene both Jodi Byrd and Kim Tallbear critique as Johnny-come-lately-ish and *Columbusing* in their approach to issues of the human, because they are anything but new to Indigenous worldviews (Byrd 2018:602; TallBear 2015:234).

Thinking again of both Cedric Robinson and Louis Althusser's critiques of certain tendencies within Marxism, there is one ultimate point worth noting, and that is my already stated suspicion of teleology, a key feature which marked the thought of both, and which has also deeply influenced my own thinking vis-à-vis Marxism. In his late work, following his psychiatric hospitalization after the murder of his wife Héléne Rytman, Althusser wrote of a materialism of the encounter, "of the aleatory and the contingency," and that:

this materialism is opposed, as a wholly different mode of thought, to the various materialisms on record, including that widely ascribed to Marx, Engels and Lenin, which, like every other materialism in the rationalist tradition, is a materialism of necessity and teleology, that is to say, a transformed, disguised form of idealism (2006:167-168).

Pessimist horror writer and theorist Steven Craig Hickman writes that Althusser's late-philosophical anti-teleological musings invite us to dive deep into a "multimodal materialist analysis of relationships of power," in which the emergence of phenomena such as colonialism/coloniality, modernity, and capitalism arise contingently, rather than as fated, destined outcomes of earlier social phases of human history, traced along universal and unilinear evolutionary mappings, and that, within such an aleatory

materialism, "it is important to recognize their diverse temporalities by examining their more enduring structures and operations as well as their vulnerability to ruptures and transformation – all the while acknowledging that they have no predestined, necessary, or predictable trajectory" (2012). Such a multimodal analysis of the heterogeneous and overdetermined nature of social development (thinking here also of the younger Althusser's work (2005)), in which change, movement, revolution, and emergence are not reducible to a single set of dialectical contradictions (such as that in orthodox Marxist class analysis of the relations and forces of production), has always been, and will likely remain, an essential line that cuts across my thought and work.

While Althusser tackled the problem of Marxist teleology from the perspective of western philosophy, Robinson instead rooted himself in an anthropological investigation of Marxism and Marxist thought. Robinson links the Marxist inversion of the Hegelian dialectic of the world Geist into the dialectic of history (historical materialism) with a shift away from seeing time as non-linear and cyclical, to linear, and notes that there are christian religious and prophetic dimensions to this shift which are secularized and subsequently re-articulated within Marxism. In his *An Anthropology of Marxism* he notes:

This peculiarity is barely disguised in the Western eschatological ordering of history. Modern Western civilization derives from its cultural predecessor, Judeo-Christianity, a notion of secular history which is not merely linear but encompasses moral drama as well. The narratives of providential history are sufficiently familiar to most of us as to not require repeating ... Even secular historical conceptions like historical materialism reflect the 'good news' presumption of the Judeo-Christian gospel: the end of human history fulfills a promise of

deliverance, the messianic myth. When Marx and Engels maintained in *The Communist Manifesto* that human history has been the record of class struggle and then proffer the socialist society as one without classes, it is implied that history will then come to an end. Socialist society—a social order which displays no classes, no class struggle and therefore no history—reflects a kind of apocalyptic messianism (2001:6-7).

In the linear historical dialectic of orthodox Marxism, the coming socialist/communist society takes the place of the new heaven and new earth promised in the christian book of revelation, and the mythologically borderless proletariat the place of the return of Christ. Indeed, given how this is linked to the shift in western thought (long before the rise of euromodernity) from cyclical temporality to linear readings of time and history, it should lead us to question what Biel has to say about historical materialism when he claims:

In that sense [historical materialism as the application of dialectics to the development of history], although the approach was discovered by Marx, we could say it had an existence independent of its origins in time and place and could well have been worked out under a different set of circumstances (2015:4)

While perhaps in a sense correct, especially as Marx, and Hegel before him, was far from the first person in human history to develop and deploy a dialectical perception of the world—though, thinking through King, one has to again consider how this is, in fact, an epistemological non-revelation when confronted with the genocidal and epistemicidal annihilation of many such dialectical worldviews with the coming of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system—one has to seriously wonder whether historical materialism as it is broadly understood by most Marxists would have actually

arisen in such circumstances which may have evinced a profoundly different perception of time, such as those embedded within the epistemological and cosmological conceptions of many of our diverse Native nations in the northern bloc. There is also a sense here, within mainstream Marxism, of a universal or general time at work within the historical dialectic, even within the linear sense, which is something that has been deeply troubled recently by theorists as diverse as Mark Rifkin (2017), José Rabasa (2010) and Kyle Powyss Whyte (2019).

However, all of this has not meant that I have rejected Marxism in a full sense, or if not Marxism per se, then perhaps certain critiques and analytics emergent from within the Marxist paradigm. Rather it means that I do not hold that the paragons of the euro-western philosophical and social scientific canons—from the founding fathers of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Freud, through Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Derrida, Foucault, Latour, Deleuze, Lacan, Althusser, up to and including Fisher and Jameson—hold within their various theoretical corpuses all the tools that are necessary for challenging the order of things of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system (Harding 2008; Connell 2007). However, and perhaps this is my own artefact of thought, I still maintain that they include many useful tools. Indeed, my writing in this dissertation makes regular references to the Gramscian concepts of civil society and hegemony, the Althusserian line of thought regarding ideology, and, especially towards its latter chapters, is deeply

informed by the thought of Mark Fisher, and to a lesser extent by Fredric Jameson. My bibliography is replete with references to these thinkers and their works.

That said, I would refer now to my relationship with Marxism as complicated, or in a state of revision, which seeks to combine, perhaps unevenly and certainly with jerks and stops, on the one hand what I see as a kind of postmodern neo-Marxism (an appraisal by labelling that I am sure would drive most Marxists I know into a fit) and on the other with a decolonial, Native, and Black Studies informed critical theory perspective which is mindful of the relationship between modernity (and ultimately postmodernity, and the posthuman, if such a thing is actually meaningfully different from modernity in a qualitative fashion) and coloniality, and is suspicious of the scientific quest for universal laws of human development and pathways into the future. I sometimes jokingly refer to this project as one of *decolonial indigenous postmodern neo-Marxism*. A mouthful for sure, but no worse than the endless strings of hyphens seen throughout the history of the Marxist project. What is important here in all of this is that, to follow King's prescription, any loyalty on my part to Marxist theories, methods, and analytics is properly prioritized—which is to say made subordinate to, and consequently in a state of constant scrutiny from—commitments with and within Native, Black and Decolonial Studies (2019:68). Thus, while Marxism is not dismissed from my political and theoretical commitments, what role it does play is refracted and modified by the decolonial and the

abolitionist. This is where I, suffering to make a decolonial corrective to Marxism, make my point of departure.

1.2 Settler Colonial Studies & the Settler-Colonial Modality of Power

In seeking to correct these many insufficiencies of my Marxism, I must turn to tendencies and lines of inquiry that lie outside of the orthodox. As with the fields of Indigenous critical and decolonial theory more broadly, this ongoing complication, and thus consequently this research and *its* theoretical orientation, is also informed by and deeply indebted to the development over the previous two decades of the field of Settler Colonial Studies. In particular I draw much insight and direction from the work of the late Australian historian and anthropologist Patrick Wolfe, in particular his elaboration of the central eliminative logic of settler colonialism (2006). The logic of elimination is, for Wolfe, one of the central axes differentiating settler colonialism from the more commonly theorized metropolitan colonialism of the European, North American and Japanese colonial and neocolonial powers. It is the fundamental drive to not only dispossess Indigenous peoples of their traditional lands and sovereignties, but to eliminate them as well, through various overlapping, and at times seemingly contradictory, means, ranging from the physical violence of the frontier to the cultural and biological assimilation of Indigenous peoples into the mainstream settler society. In short, it is, as Wolfe describes, the “organizing principle of settler-colonial society” (2008:103).

This understanding, that settler colonialism is a modality of domination distinct

from other colonial and imperial projects seeks not to exploit the labour of Native peoples, but to render them extinct in toto, is taken by myself as perhaps the most fundamental understanding of our current society within the pages of this dissertation. From it flows virtually all of the other ideas that are either deployed or developed within what follows. And likewise, without it in hand, this dissertation would make little, if any, coherent sense.

In particular, it is this final aspect, as it concerns the processes of the biopoliticalization of Indigenous people in both the United States and in Australia, a process which he refers to as a “trace of history” (2016), that I draw significant analytic and theoretical influence. Most especially, Wolfe illuminates the connection, within the logic of elimination, of the content of Native biopolitical-being as “maximally soluble” (2016), in which Nativeness decreases through the generations and increasing levels of miscegenation. This is incredibly important to my critique of the current political discourse around the question of racial passing within Indigenous and settler-colonial spaces, as I believe an understanding of the racialization of Indigeneity as something inherently dilutable deeply troubles much of this contemporary discussion, which I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3.

Beyond Wolfe I also draw broadly upon the work of Iyko Day, who situates indigenous elimination alongside the critique of antiblackness in the formation of settler colonial critique (2015; 2016), as well as the racialization of other colonized subjects and

immigrant peoples. My understanding of Wolfe's formulation of the logic of elimination also dovetails as well with Kiera Ladner's discussion of the political genocide of Indigenous peoples via legislation and what she calls "slow-moving poison" (2014). the path-breaking analysis of U.S. blood quantum policy as 'statistical extermination' in the work of M. Annette Jaimes (1992), and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui's examination of the discursively cognate case of the colonization and biopoliticalization of the indigenous Polynesian people of Hawai'i (2008; 2018).

The latter chapters of this dissertation also concern themselves deeply with the turn that Wolfe inaugurated in this 1998 work *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* regarding the colonial imaginary of *terra nullius*—empty land—and the assemblage of social, cultural, ontological, economic and libidinal infrastructures that have been constructed around it in order to push further under the proverbial rug the simple fact that the land was not empty. These include the many narratives that are employed and deployed to render the Native as something outside of the fold of the human, such as those of the Wild, and of Native Wildness, which either dissolve Natives into the land entirely, or, seemingly in contradiction, remove Natives from the land and rendering their prior stewardship as act of nature itself, if not outright divine providence; and the bizarre juridical, philosophical and cultural conjunction which renders Native temporality as something outside of the standardized, universalized, *colonized*, universal time stream of the settler.

However, an additional word must be said about both the deployment of Settler Colonial Studies within this writing and the place of this dissertation within Settler Colonial Studies, and this is this: the advancement of a white-dominated field of Settler Colonial Studies has often acted as a kind of disciplinary, academic, and theoretical colonization of the space of Native Studies, as well as in many instances Black Studies also. Thus, to raise the question of Settler Colonial Studies, for all of its potent theoretical insights over the past two to three decades, is to also summon the spectre of Native Studies and Native theoretical production.

The hybrid Marxian-Foucauldian theorizing of Patrick Wolfe, as the preeminent scholar and writer in the field, both before and since his passing in 2016, is for many the leaping off point in coming to an understanding of settler colonialism as a “distinct social, cultural and historical formation with ongoing political effects” (Edmonds & Carey 2013). I know this not only from my years working as a Native academic, studying, reading, writing, but also in my experience as a course instructor. When I taught in the University of Waterloo’s Indigenous Studies programme during the Winter 2019 term, the first reading I assigned my class was Wolfe’s often quoted and cited, but increasingly not actually read, seminal 2006 essay “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” (2006). I did this because I felt it was vital for my students to have a grounding in settler colonialism, what it is, how it functions, how it continues to overcode the everyday politics of a settler-colonial configuration such as Canada before we dove into the subject

of contemporary Indigenous issues in Canada.

There is a certain potency within Wolfe's work, as evidenced by this very dissertation, and I myself hold Wolfe in significant regard. His work has permanently functioned to shift my own understandings, to bring ideas that were blurred or just out of grasp into focus and into reach. I also believe that he was a genuine ally of Indigenous peoples, our plight, and our struggle for decolonization. As Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman wrote of him following his passing he:

Engaged our field [Native Studies] in a respectful and nuanced manner, far beyond many scholars of this settler stature that perceive Indians/Natives/Indigenous as objects of study. His work became a place to engage Indigenous studies concerns in relations to settler colonial studies that at times leaves out indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, as well as our own political framings (2016).

However, as respectful as Wolfe may have been towards Native Studies, as much of an ally as he may have been towards Native scholars and Native theorists, this has not stopped, as Tiffany King notes, the uncomfortable fact that "his work," and the work of Settler Colonial Studies more broadly, "has been used in ways that often end up consolidating settler colonial studies as a White field that displaces Native and Indigenous Studies" (2019:65). Again to return to my own experiences, when interacting with scholars, students, professors and the like from outside of Native Studies (whether that means outside of a specific Native Studies programme, or those in positions such as myself who attempt to carry out Native Studies-informed research and writing programmes within other departments and disciplinary fields) there is often a confusion

between where Settler Colonial Studies ends and Native Studies begins. It is certainly the case that many Native Studies scholars today take much from Settler Colonial Studies, especially the work of Wolfe—to list off the names of scholars who do would be simply too long of a list here, and an exercise in citational masturbation—and sometimes the distinction between the two is obvious, such as in the case of the old ethnographic and ethnohistorical work that continues in many ways to dominate Native Studies, but when it comes to the point of actually theorizing the present now breakdown often ensues. I recall during my early doctoral studies at the University of Waterloo, a university with something of a dearth in not only direct Indigenous scholarship, but also Indigenously informed scholarship, that when I assigned readings for both of my comprehensive exams, the second of which specifically was to deal with the questions of current Native issues and struggles, that there was a confusion between Settler Colonial Studies and Native Studies. This was also indicated to me during the comprehensive exams themselves when during the first examination, if I recall correctly, I was asked questions about Settler Colonial Studies as a field. Knowing my fellow scholars in my department as I do, I only assume good intentions on the part of my examination committee members, but I remember remarking to myself at the same time that I felt that others in our department did not know the difference between these two fields.

Because of this, there has been some degree of pushback against the displacing wave of Settler Colonial Studies by those writing, thinking, and theorizing from within

Native Studies. Notable here is Lenape scholar Joanne Barker, who since 2011 on her blog has sustained numerous criticisms of Settler Colonial Studies and its relationship to Native Studies, while also at the same time carrying out open dialogue with those within the former, namely Wolfe and Mark Rifkin. In my own opinion, Barker somewhat overstates her case that the idea of settler colonialism does not truly reflect “the current structure of social formation of the U.S.” (2011). She also takes issue with what she considers to be the more friendly, less violent, less horror-inducing meanings of settlement as to reconcile and to make friends and states her preference for holding onto “harsher” terms such as “imperialism” and “colonialism,” saying that:

it is important and necessary to secure indigenous self-determination and decolonization [by holding] onto the “empire” in our understanding, describing, and strategizing ways of empowerment and revolution (2011).

I believe that the source of my disagreement with Barker is likely the result of how I myself was introduced to the notion of the “settler.” I first came to the subject not through Settler Colonial Studies, or even through Native Studies, but through the proto-Third Worldist anti-colonial Marxist “movement literature” of J. Sakai (2014; 2017) and allied authors such as Butch Lee (2015; 2017), E. Tani and Kaé Sera (1985), and the Bottomfish Blues Collective (2014). While these authors generally do not actually theorize the phenomena of settler colonialism—instead providing something more of a critical labour history of the white working class in the United States, particularly in the case of Sakai’s seminal, if somewhat heretical work in *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat from*

Mayflower to Modern (2014)—for myself, my exposure to them prior to my exposure to contemporary Settler Colonial Studies and Native Studies has coloured my thinking such that the concepts of “settlers” and “settlement” have never possessed a positive set of possible connotations; rather they have always to me implied violence, parasitism, invasion, genocide, enslavement and a structural relationship to those violences that materially benefits the dominant white settler population. Indeed, to Barker’s call to hold onto the “empire” as necessary for Native decolonization and revolutionary struggles, I would offer Sakai’s statement that

The key to understanding Amerika is to see that *it was a chain of European settler colonies that expanded into a settler empire*. To go back and understand the lives and consciousness of the early English settlers is to see the embryo of today’s Amerikan Empire. This is the larger picture that allows us to finally relate the class conflicts of settler Euro-Americans to the world struggle (2014) [emphasis mine].

I also do not agree with Barker, perhaps naively I readily admit, that settler colonialism as an analytic is pathologically far too rigid and inflexible and does not allow for contingency and malleability (2017a). *However*, where I strongly stand with Barker, despite these disagreements, is in seeing the tendency within Settler Colonial Studies to seek negotiation, reconciliation, and reformation with settler states, rather than decolonization and abolition (2017a). While a politics and praxis of decolonization has increasingly come to the fore within Native Studies and allied fields of inquiry, and my centring of such is detailed later within this chapter, notable luminaries in the field of Settler Colonial Studies, particularly Wolfe’s fellow white Australian Lorenzo Veracini,

reject calls of reparations, rematriations, and returns as not only undesirable, but actually some kind of perverted and inverted reenactment of the original dispossessive and eliminative violence of the settler-colonial project (Veracini 2011). Here not only does Settler Colonial Studies move Native Studies to the side as a site for understanding the formations of american, canadian, australian and other settler-colonial formations, but the *reconciliatory drive* of Settler Colonial Studies smothers and displaces the *decolonial imaginaries* of Native Studies. On this King, who operates at the intersections of Black and Native Studies, quite harshly, and I believe correctly, notes:

The field of White settler colonial studies has yet to truly reckon with the ways that it erases Indigenous knowledge and forms of Indigenous politics of decolonization that require the end of U.S. and Canadian nation-states as well as the end of Whiteness and the version of the human that sustain them. The prominence of Settler colonial studies itself as a key analytical turn in the social sciences and humanities performs a form of genocidal violence as it displaces Indigenous and Native studies (2019:66-67).

Echoing both Barker and King, Jeff Corntassel, Corey Snelgrove, and Rita Kaur Dhamoon likewise diagnose the situation, writing:

Our overall conclusion is that without centering Indigenous peoples' articulations, without deploying a relational approach to settler colonial power, and without paying attention to the conditions and contingencies of settler colonialism, studies of settler colonialism and practices of solidarity run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonial as well as other modes of domination (2014:4).

This is something that cannot be ignored, and it is for this reason, given my own reliance upon many of Wolfe's insights, that I raise here the spectre of Native Studies smothering

by Settler Colonial Studies. As a Native scholar myself, I do not wish to enact the displacement of my own field by a white-dominated one. More so, I wish to honour the way in which Wolfe himself, against how he has often been deployed by others, and against the scholarship of others within his own field, worked to be an ally of Native Studies and Native scholarship. It is in this spirit of reciprocal kinship that I critically deploy Wolfe's analytics, properly prioritized to borrow King's phrasing, within this writing.

1.3 Racializing Assemblages, Bare Life & the Colonial Order of Things

Additionally, these discussions of Native Studies, Black Studies, Marxism, and Settler Colonial Studies also necessarily open up onto another theoretical terrain from which this work draws, and against which this work is deeply situated: biopower and biopolitics. More specifically, this work draws critically from present discourse and research on biopolitics and biopower, especially those which have sought to extend the paradigm beyond the initial pioneering work of Foucault (2003; 2009; 2010), and in particular that of perhaps his most significant contemporary interlocutor in Giorgio Agamben (2003; 2017a; 2017b; 2017c), and to examine their usefulness as an analytic of the processes and structures of global power, namely post-Fordist neoliberal capitalism, imperialism, racism, borders, and settler colonialism, with a particular emphasis laid upon the final, but with a layered approach that ultimately brings into consideration all of these various modalities of domination and the structural relations to violence which they represent.

Eugene Thacker describes three contemporary philosophical-theoretical modes of engagement with the concept of “life”: the affective-phenomenological (life as time), the biopolitical (life as form), and the politico-theological (life is spirit) (2010:xiii). This work largely dispenses with the third of Thacker’s approaches (the politico-theological), and by its very nature as an autoethnographic work tends towards the first (the affective-phenomenological), however engagement with the second, the biopolitical, in particular via Agamben’s formulation of the notion of the *Homo sacer* and bare life (2017a), is a thread that runs throughout this dissertation. Agamben situates his own philosophico-theoretical work as an effect to correct, or to complete, the Foucauldian analytics of biopower and sovereign power (2017a:11), a project in which he reads Foucault with and against Carl Schmitt’s notion of the sovereign nomos and state of exception (2006), Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (2019), and Hannah Arendt’s investigation of those rendered into a position of statelessness in her work in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2001).

Tracing the origins of the figure of *Homo sacer* through ancient Roman law, through the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon juridical orders, Agamben situates bare life against the old Aristotelian metaphysical notions of *zoē* (raw biological or natural life) and *bíos* (qualified life, in particular, full human existence). Though often confused in misreadings of Agamben with *zoē*, bare life is, in fact, raw life that has been naturalized—politicized—into the sphere of the political. Bare life is a form-of-life in which life is

stripped down to its bare minimum, most animal, qualities, and such is life which then excludable from the sphere of the political and of civil society (2017a; 2017c). Cast out of the political sphere, and thus rendered into an embodied exceptional state, bare life stands outside of the juridical order, the figure of the *Homo sacer*, bare life, is that which “may be killed and yet not sacrificed” (2017a:10) or, put another way, “killed by anyone without committing homicide” (87). Here we get at the true distinction between bare life and *zoē*, and in that the ultimate deployment of bare life within the body of this work; bare life, according to Agamben, is “not simple natural life, but life exposed to death” (2017a:74). Additionally, of great import, is the role that bare life plays within Agamben’s discussion of the state of exception and the sovereign *nomos* (2017b), for it is the primordial juridical irregularity that allows the sovereign to declare the rule of law. Indeed, it is Agamben’s assertion that “The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life” (2017a:148).

Reading Agamben, Brian Massumi deftly describes bare life as “life radically emptied, dequalified, in implosive indifference, held eventlessly in suspension. Death in life: potential stillborn” (2015:44). My own deployment of the notion of bare life within this writing is a reading of bare life through Jodi Byrd (2011) and Judith Butler (2003; 2009; 2016) that takes up the question of when is life grievable? In my writing, I posit that the Native, broadly conceived, is cast into a state of bare life by the technologies of settler-colonial governmentality, and thus killable without being mournable, lamentable but not

grievable.

This though, as with my deployment and uses of Marxism and Settler Colonial Studies, raises its own spectres. Here, as with Marxism, any use of Agambenian notions must be properly situated within the colonial order of things¹⁶. Indeed, while not completely unacknowledged within his literary oeuvre, the legacies of conquest, colonialism, and imperialism are howling present absences within Agamben's work. As David Atkinson notes:

For all his admirable and clear-eyed engagements with totalitarianism and its biopolitical interventions, and for all his persistent efforts to address 'the camp' and the haunting presence of the Holocaust in twentieth-century European thinking, it is curious that Giorgio Agamben largely elides colonial contexts in his writing. This is all the more perplexing as the applications of surveillance, oppression and, in extremis, violence directed at those with differently racialized bodies characterise totalitarianisms and their camps, but also many colonial regimes at various times and places. Indeed, colonial contexts surely produced the sites and occasions where the conceptual frames of bare life and states of exception that Agamben explores were planned, articulated and realised most starkly (2012:155).

Patrick Wolfe, speaking of the irregular violence of the settler-colonial frontier, is blunter, noting that Agamben's "scrupulous eurocentrism" prevents him from being able to see the colonial commonplace antecedents of the production of bare life and the state of exception that he examines (2013a).

The problem with Agamben is two-fold, with both issues relating back to his

¹⁶ I borrow this phrase from Ann Laura Stoler in her own colonial reading of Foucault (1995).

“scrupulous eurocentrism.” The first, and perhaps more sensitive of the two, is the manner in which for Agamben the Nazi concentration camp is the archetype of the production of bare life and the actualization of the state of exception within the *épistémè* of modernity. To be very clear I am not here challenging Agamben’s description of the camps or attempting to engage in what Byrd refers to as the discourses and problematics of competing genocides which attempt to pit, variously, “the slavery and lynching of African Americans against the removals and massacres of American Indians against the death camps in Germany” (2007:329). Rather, here I follow Weheliye in:

questioning the projection of the death camps onto an exceptional ontological screen (both as an end point and as a site of origin) rather than emphasizing their constitutive relationality in the modern world as well as the resultant displacement of racial slavery, colonialism, and indigenous genocide as *nomoi* of modern politics (2014:36).

The question here then is not that of the camps themselves, and the sheer industrialized and modernist horror of the Shoah and the Pharrajimos, but rather how Agamben’s “scrupulous eurocentrism” obviates the relationality between those events instigated by the Nazi regime and its various allies, and separates them from coloniality and the colonial order of things, in particular the exceptional state of colonial violence, whether against Black and Native people in the northern bloc of settler colonialism (Weheliye 2014; Churchill 1997; Wolfe 2006, Gilroy 2000), north and southwest African people in Germany and Italy’s former colonial possessions (Weheliye 2014; Atkinson 2012), the genocide of Filipino people committed by the United States following its seizure of that

archipelago by the United States (Rodríguez 2010) and many more instances of colonial violence too numerous to list. Speaking of Indigenous peoples' experiences under the regimes of State power of the U.S. and Canada, and in particular her home community of Kanehsatà:ke, Kanien'kehá:ka anthropologist and political theorist Audra Simpson harshly castigates Agamben for eliding this relationality, saying that his:

Legally sanctioned no-holds-barred space of "exception" has alluring conceptual attributes when accounting for times of crisis, but is simply not surprising or, perhaps, innovating when considering the case of Indigeneity and settler colonialism. As well, one does not have to dwell exclusively in the horror of a concentration camp to find life stripped bare to cadastral form, ready only for death in a biopolitical account of sovereignty (2014:153-154).

Euro-modern society has always been, to borrow a phrase from Thacker, a collection or series of necrologies (2011). This is not to engage in a comparison of suffering, or an attempt to bring the crimes of the Nazi regime into dialogue, but rather to suggest, to again follow Weheliye, how "the concentration camp, the colonial outpost, and slave plantation suggest three of many relay points in the weave of modern politics, which are neither exceptional nor comparable, but simply relational" (2014:37). Certainly, part of this is what I have argued in other writings (2017a) is the violence of fascism being in many ways a return home to the imperial metropole of violence that has been carried out, experimented with, and perhaps even perfected, in the colonies, the frontiers, and the slave plantations, however, the more that one begins to dwell on the question of antecedents the more one can become lost, I believe, in the exploration of how it is

exceptional states all the way down so to say. The point here then, to think again of Simpson, Wolfe and Weheliye's admonishment of Agamben, is how these sites of colonial violence, alongside the Nazi camp, rather than any single one of them in exclusivity, all represent different facets of what Weheliye calls "the genocidal shackles of Man" (2014:4).

The second, perhaps less controversial, but no less important, issue with Agamben's philosophico-theoretical framework is his description of a quasi-ontological sphere, to borrow from Weheliye, in which *zoē*, natural life, is politicized into bare life which he refers to throughout his work as a "zone of indistinction." Key here is Agamben's departure from Foucault, whose project he is seeking to extend, correct, or complete, in that for him this zone of indistinction is one in which the signs by which humans are divided—race, religion, nationality, sex, gender etc.—are eradicated.

Agamben himself states directly that:

What characterizes modern politics is not so much the inclusion of *zoē* in the *polis*—which is, in itself, absolutely ancient—nor simply the fact that life as such becomes a principal object of the projections and calculations of State power. Instead the decisive fact is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the realm of bare life—which is originally situated at the margins of the political order—gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, *bios* and *zoē*, right and fact, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction (2017a:11).

What ghost here haunts the margins of Agamben's theorization is the question of why some peoples, some bodies, find themselves more likely to be exposed to violence, to have structural and ontological relationship to violence than others under signs and

regimes of post-Fordist neoliberal capitalism, imperialism, racism, borders, cisheteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism, as well as the assemblage of debility-disability-capacity that Jasbir Puar identifies (2017a). This fact of the political world, of the world as it is, seems to stand in stark contrast with how Agamben views bare life and the zone of indistinction.

What is of course obviating here by Agamben is that capitalism, imperialism, racism, borders, cisheteropatriarchy, debility, and settler colonialism, as stated above, are signs that are placed above structural relationships to violence, and which represent really-existing material relations between people, to return for a moment to an older Marxist analytic. Thinking still also of Byrd and Butler, I cannot help but find myself in agreement with Weheliye regarding these Agambenian theorizations when he states, matter of factly, that:

Bare life and biopolitics discourse not only misconstrues how profoundly race and racism [and here I might also add our other isms: capitalism, imperialism, settler colonialism, etc.] shape the modern idea of the human, it also overlooks or perfunctorily writes off theorizations of race, subjection, and humanity found in black and ethnic studies, allowing bare life and biopolitics discourse to imagine an indivisible biological substance anterior to racialization.

Much as Agamben sees his project at the completion, or the correction, of Foucauldian analytics, I contend, with perhaps much less self-aggrandizement, that, if bare life and biopolitics, are to be of any meaningful use to this project that they must also be further corrected. Chiefly here is, following Byrd, Butler, and Weheliye, sorting through the

question of why some bodies are more proximal to violence, and thus more likely to be cast into the zone of bare life, than are others.

Working in and through coloniality and the colonial order of things I believe that aid in this matter can be found in assemblage theory, in particular how it has been deployed in recent years within Black, Critical Ethnic, and Queer Studies. Drawing on the conceptual tool box of Deleuze and Guattari, in particular the second volume in their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* series, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), Manuel DeLanda posits assemblages as an approach to social ontology in which the basic ontological status of various social beings is not stable, but process-oriented and process-based, relational, and contingent (2006; 2016). While I am not as concerned with the philosophical issue of ontological realism as DeLanda is, nor do I wish to raise up additional European and white theorists as the solution to the problems within the work of another, I do think there is something within a deployment of assemblage theory that can help further flesh out this work. In particular, I am interested in Jasbir Puar's descriptions of what assemblages do (which she points against the definitional question of what an assemblage is), one of the points of which for her is that "categories—race, gender, sexuality—are considered events, actions, and encounters, between bodies, rather than simply entities and attributes of subjects" (2012:58).

From here, the way that I think of assemblages work in the background of this dissertation follows what Weheliye, drawing from the Black Feminist theoretical work of

Hortense Spillers and Sylvia Wynter, calls “racializing assemblages.” Thinking of assemblages as contingent processes, Weheliye describes how they construe “race not as a biological or cultural classification but as a set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity in full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans” (2014:4). This, quite importantly, disrupts not only the proposition that race can, or should be, treated as any kind of fixed ontology—though we may still discuss ontologies related to race, or, I believe more correctly, political projects to create ontologies of race and racialized peoples, and indeed, as discussed earlier in this work explicitly engages the question of the ontological—but the notion of racializing assemblages also functions as a critical intervention against the prevalent view amongst critical social scholars and theorists that race, racialization, and racism are generally solely problems of ideology (again, not to dismiss the importance of ideology). Not just ideology, and not just ontology, but also networks of bodies, desires, forces, velocities, institutions, interests, intensities that ultimately benefit some, those who are raised up into the category of fully human, and cast others, those disqualified from full humanity and rendered either not-quite-human or nonhuman (Weheliye 12; 26), into the zone of bare life in which violence can be wrought on bodies with impunity or left simply to wither and die within (post)modernist political economies of slow death and letting die (Berlant 2007; Byrd 2011). “Thus,” Weheliye notes, “rather than entering a clearing zone of indistinction, we are thrown into the vortex of hierarchal indicators” (40), disrupting the deracinating tendencies of

eurocentric theories of bare life and biopolitics.

With particular regard to settler colonialism and the situation we as Indigenous peoples face, I also believe that the concept of racializing assemblages, as a network of various sites and processes, also provides a line of intervention into the at times confusing, and at other times deeply frustrating, discussion of racial Nativeness as a fundamentally visual qualification, which is the topic taken up in the third chapter of this dissertation. While for Weheliye “racializing assemblages translate the lacerations left on the captive body by apparatuses of political violence to a domain rooted in the visual truth-value accorded to quasi-biological distinctions between different human groupings” (40), for Indigenous peoples subject to the technologies of settler governmentality, racializing assemblages are part of how Wolfe identifies that the settler-colonial logic of elimination plays out through a myriad of seemingly divergent and contradictory processes (2006; 2016). As I discuss in more depth in Chapter 3, part of the post-frontier biogenic extension of frontier homicide (Wolfe 2016) is the supremely biopolitical way in which Nativeness is racialized through the juridical apparatuses of both nation-states within the northern bloc such that it is hyper-soluble. That is: Nativeness will always eventually become invisibilized in any process of racial miscegenation. Within the tripartite social ontology of the northern bloc settler colonies, with its hegemonic ideologies of white supremacy and antiblackness, Lewis Gordon notes that “Indians mixed with blacks are simply black and those mixed with whites are

simply ‘less colored’” (1995a:96). I argue, ultimately, that what happens within the racializing assemblages of settler colonialism, especially as Nativeness is primarily, though not solely, a juridically defined category of governance, is a detachment of Nativeness from visibility as the principal signifier of importance, while not displacing visibility as still important for my understanding of the experience of anti-Native violence.

The discussion of racializing assemblages and biopolitics as they relate to Native people within the northern bloc, also cleaves closely to the work of Scott Lauria Morgensen (2011) who, in combining an analysis of biopower with Wolfean insights on the settler-colonial logic of elimination, points to how the drive to eliminate Indigenous peoples is strongly manifested *within the principal aspect of biopower*: the power to cause life to flourish.. Again further taken up in Chapter 3, this functions through the biopoliticized nature of Nativeness as hypersoluble, in which miscegenation and the bringing forth of new life functions to bring about the slow statistical annihilation of Indigenous peoples, not as Native Nations constituted amongst themselves, but as juridically coded categories of population governance within the high-resolution algorithmic regimes of the modern settler-colonial State and societies of control.

In this regard, my thinking could perhaps be thought to occupy a conceptual space not entirely congruent with, but ultimately parallel and complementary to, Achille Mbembe (2019), Roberto Esposito (2008), Judith Butler (2003; 2009; 2016) and Jasbir Puar

(2017a; 2017b), all of whom point to the notion that there is a flipside to biopolitics, which Mbembe calls necropolitics, in which power is also defined via the ability to deal out unmournable, ungrievable death. Not against those important theorizations, I argue that this is indicative of a different paradigm of power unique to the biopoliticalization of Indigenous peoples under settler colonial domination¹⁷. Again, following Morgensen, as well as Jaimes, Ladner, Wolfe and others, this is because it is in the function of biopower itself to let life flourish that in this instance—linked within the logic of elimination and the racialized hypersolubility of Nativeness—it works to cause what may be considered a mass Indigenous death, or extinction. I consider this additionally further distinct from Puar (2007), Agamben (2000) and Esposito's (2011) claims that, in the current juncture, the power to let life flourish and to deal out death have become muddled and harder to tease apart.

1.4 Decolonization as Methodological Praxis

Before answering the question of what direct methodological techniques and tools have been central to this research, it is necessary to briefly discuss the overarching

¹⁷ I argue that this be situated alongside of, rather than against, the concept of necropolitics because, I believe, there are most clearly necropolitical aspects to what I would argue is the bare life of Red life in modern North America. In particular both of these aspects, biopower and necropower, are folded within what Nicolás Juárez identifies as the grammars of suffering of Indigenous peoples: clearing and civilization (2014). The necropolitical aspects are also included within Wolfe's logic of elimination (2006). Fruitful examinations of the creation of Native death-worlds have also been carried out not only by Juárez, who draws on the theoretical insights of Afropessimist theorist Frank B. Wilderson, III (2010), but also Billy-Ray Belcourt (2017a) who links it with the work on economies of abandonment by anthropologist Elizabeth A. Povinelli (2011) as well as that of Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou on dispossession (2013).

methodological concerns that will have guided me over the course of this research. In particular and linked strongly and directly to my theoretical orientation within indigenous critical theory, I chose to root myself in what Kaupapa Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith refers to as “decolonizing methodologies” (2012). In opening her work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* Smith lays out the charges against traditional social scientific research techniques by Indigenous peoples:

From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful...It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity...It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples’ claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems of living within our environments (1).

Decolonizing methodology, however, is more than just an awareness of the failures of traditional western methods of investigation. Drawing on, though also moving beyond, established social scientific methods of participant action research, Smith’s decolonizing methodologies place firmly at the centre of research the values and priorities of

Indigenous peoples and communities, allowing them to frame the research, its instruments and its analysis. Decolonizing methodology, including as I have taken them up in this research, are driven by desires for Indigenous resurgence, refusal and resistance. Decolonizing methodology is an explicitly political orientation to research, and it is firmly anticolonial/decolonial. As Smith observed, if research could play a role in subjecting Indigenous peoples to empire, then it can help us on our road to liberation and resurgence as well (2012), a methodological concern which I deeply share.

In this regard, and here returning to my older Gramscian concerns, I hold no illusions to scientific modes of social investigation, most particularly the notion of value-neutrality, and thus make clear that this work has an explicit political-ethical framing to it. My writing here must be necessarily understood then as ultimately seeking to advance a programme for the generation of decolonial Indigenous futurities and attendant goals of goals resurgence and decolonization. In this I am also always reminded of the words of the Black radical theorist Frank B. Wilderson III when he notes:

What are to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Give Turtle Island back to the ‘Savage.’ Give life itself back to the Slave. Two simple sentences, fourteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An ‘ethical modernity’ would no longer sound like an oxymoron (2010:2-3).

Ultimately then my methodology—or more fully my conjoined methodological-

pedagogical-praxiological concerns—in this work then has been one of both unmaking the world around me, as well as to dream of new ways of being. In my opinion that is the ultimate expression of decolonizing methodologies.

1.4.1 Articulation & Dialectical Framework

Alongside the explicit political-ethical framework of Smith's decolonizing methodology, my methodological and analytical perspective also draws on the concept of articulation, developed by sociologist Stuart Hall (1985; 1986a; 1986b), anthropologist James Clifford (2001; 2003) and Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser in his contributions to *Reading Capital*, written alongside a number of his students (2016b). For my own work, particular attention is paid to deployment of articulation by Kim TallBear in her research on DNA and blood politics in the United States (2013) and Alexander Weheliye's discussion of racializing assemblages (2014). Althusser describes the concept, traced back to Marx's notion of *Gliederung*, saying:

the structure of the whole is articulated as the structure of an organic hierarchized whole. The co-existence of limbs and their relations in the whole is governed by the order of a dominant structure which introduces a specific order into the articulation (*Gliederung*) of the limbs and their relations (2016b:245).

Building upon Althusser and his students, Hall elaborates upon the concept further, describing articulation as “the necessity of thinking unity and difference; difference in complex unity, without this becoming a hostage to the privileging of difference as such” (1985:93).

The essential contribution of the concept of articulation to my research is two-fold. The first is that it seeks to complicate, following TallBear, “overly dichotomous views of phenomena as either essentially determined or overly constructed or invented, thereby implying a lack of ‘realness’” (2013:13). The second is that it seeks to unsettle the overly eurocentric development of the notion of assemblage within the work of white european philosophers such as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Manuel DeLanda (2006; 2016), which, as critiqued by Gayatri Spivak, is one in which “desire, power and subjectivity” are often not thought of in relationality to one another, leading, dangerously I would contend, towards an inability of “articulating a theory of interests” (1988:273). Here I read Weheliye in holding that a notion of articulation, in particular as found in Hall, “emphasizes relational connectivity in much the same way as the Deluezo-Guattarian notion of assemblages while still retaining some of the political traction called for by Spivak and Hall” (2014:48-49). Bringing both articulation and assemblage together Weheliye asserts productively that:

a robust fusion of articulation and assemblage accents the productive ingredients of power, ideology, and so on. Articulated assemblages such as racialization materialize as sets of complex relations of articulations that constitute an open articulating principle---territorializing and deterritorializing, interested and asubjective—structured in political, economic, social, racial, and heteropatriarchal dominance (2014:49).

In terms of the everyday lived experience of Indigeneity, the importance of this dynamism is that it is “a sign of being alive, another key claim that indigenous peoples constantly make. They have survived. They are still here” (TallBear 2013:13). Here

articulation helps to keep in focus the fact that traditional Indigenous modalities of self-conception, while labelled “traditional,” are not stagnant, but rather fluid and living; or rather—given a cynicism of mine regarding the practice and thought around “tradition” explored in this dissertation’s final chapter—should be fluid and living. This then aids in the disruption of the settler-colonial imaginary, which locks Indigenous peoples and Indigeneity into the past at best, or fully out of time at worst; as a pure anachronism. It also helps us think through the ways in which “tradition” may not always work for some Indigenous people¹⁸ as well as how it must be thought that Indigenous futurisms are not just a reclamation of some notion of a pre-colonial past, but a living, dreaming, dynamic process of bringing new politics, new ethics and potentially even new modes of Indigenous existence into being.

In the work of Hall and Clifford, articulation represents cultural transformation, placing dynamism at the centre of cultural practice and cultural production. Articulation is also important for this work, especially insofar as it concerns the collision between my lived experiences of Indigeneity with the settler-colonial nation-state’s production of Official Nativeness, because it keeps as a central focus power. As far as this research is concerned, it allows for an analytical focus on the power of the dynamic, and occasionally

¹⁸ Speaking from the perspective of two-spirit and queer Indigeneity, as well as the liminal space between Queer Studies and Indigenous Studies, this discussion on how “tradition” just does not work for some Indigenous people is most challengingly and painfully brought into focus by Cree scholar Billy-Ray Belcourt (2016b).

discordant and antithetical, social processes which structure the lived experience of being Native under biopolitical, ontological and libidinal regimes of settler colonialism through the production of Nativeness. Taken together, both aspects of articulation keep in focus the dialectical tension that exists between Official Nativeness and the everyday lived experience of Indigeneity, a tension which lies at the heart of this research.

1.5 Autoethnography & the Giving of an Account of Oneself

As I have already talked about, the choice to engage in writing on the subjects outlined previously was both a simple one and incredibly difficult. This is the paradox of my colonized anxious aphasia within, and with regards to, the westernized academy. Beyond the contradictions of my own nervousness in exposing myself to a colonial, academic gaze, it has also been difficult because autoethnographic writings was, at the time, something I found myself unfamiliar with, while also being aware of its existence and deployment as a methodology by many other scholars, and as such have had to do much to learn-while-doing. It was also easy though because as I began to reflect on the project more, the better I could see that it would be most insightful and meaningful, academically, and personally, to engage the subject matter of this research through an examination of my own life's journey through the in-between spaces of contemporary Indigeneity.

Most immediately the choice to engage this project autoethnographically was given flight by the failure of previously planned ethnographic fieldwork. This project

was originally conceived of in part as a project that would have seen me engage several Indigenous communities in both the United States and Canada on the questions of what Nativeness, identity and community belonging mean to them. I had intended this work as a way of investigating how, if at all, the everyday thoughts and experiences of Indigenous peoples clashed and articulated with the biopolitical foundations of Nativeness as conceived by the settler-colonial state. However, for a variety of reasons, that original conception of the project did not pan out. The two communities I had attempted to engage in the Canadian side of the settler boundary line simply never returned my initial attempts at requesting to do research in their communities. I cannot speak to why this was the case, but it nevertheless shut down those avenues of investigation. However, the failure—in some ways a getting lost in a bureaucratic maze—to gain permission to carry out ethnographic fieldwork within my own community in the end not only put the final stop to that mode of investigation, it provided a significant personal push for my ultimate turn towards the autoethnographic and the general re-orientation of this project in a significantly different direction in terms of content.

Firstly, this was because the process of seeking approval from the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin for my intended ethnographic fieldwork provided me with significant, albeit unanticipated, autoethnographic 'data.' This is because not only the process itself, but the fact that I had to subject myself to it and be subjected by it under

tribal legislation directly grows from and speaks to my own embodied lived experience as an urban, diasporic and, most imminently, a semi-enrolled Indigenous person. Simply put, if I, with my 31/128th blood quantum, did not occupy the sort of liminal space between a fully enrolled member and someone fully outside of the Nation—which is how I have come to view my official tribal status as a 1st Degree Descendent—tribal legislation indicates that I would have been able to carry out the project without permission from the tribal government ever having to have been requested or required. This would, of course, have presented a contradiction with the ethics approval process of the University of Waterloo, which itself, for work with Indigenous communities, requires approval from the community to be studied in order to approve the work on its side of the equation. While that is a bridge that ultimately did not have to be crossed, the contradiction there is perhaps due to the fact that universities, including the University of Waterloo, despite formal commitments to so-called ‘indigenization’ processes and programmes are unable to reckon with the notion that Indigenous students may wish to carry out work on their own communities, and that that might require a modification of the ethics process in those kinds of instances. However, while that might be an interesting point for debate, and perhaps ones that Canadian universities should undertake, especially as Indigenous students do exist, even if only as an exceedingly small statistical group at institutions such as this one.

That said, it was thus in the very process of attempting to carry out the work for

this project as originally intended, on Indigenous perspectives on Indigeneity and communal belonging, that I became entangled yet again in a biopolitical algorithm functioning as a kind of *identity interrogation programme*. As I have noted previously, this has of course been a major facet of my life experience as I have sought to navigate this in-between space—not quite a full Menominee in the eyes of the tribal government, but not rejected by my family and other members of the community either.

Undergoing this quite unexpected experience, and the significant blocks that it created to the original formulation of this dissertation, necessitated a radical reconceptualization of the entire project. Ultimately it would result in a near-total shifting of the content away from a more legalistic examination of identity, towards more onto-existential, and ultimately somewhat esoteric, concerns, but in the most immediate moment it provided what was really a need, but also a desire, to undertake it in an autoethnographic fashion. While this dissertation now perhaps bears little formal resemblance to its original conception, I believe it does retain, and thus builds upon, the desires and goals that were already present in its previous iterations.

Now, more than in its prior forms, this work seeks to, in some form or another, interrogate my own lived experience, and to then centre that lived-experience in an attempt to make wider analysis and provide sociological and political theorizing. Here I take significant and direct inspiration from the work of Audra Simpson (2014) who combined original ethnographic work amongst her home community, the Mohawks of

Kahnawá:ke, with the production of Indigenous political theory in her work *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. But perhaps even more so I take direct inspiration from Lewis Gordon, who argues that too much of theory work and theory production by non-white, colonized, and subalternized peoples takes the form of deploying theories created by people—usually men, usually cis het, usually white—at the centre of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system to explain our lives as non-white, colonized, and subalternized peoples (2018). To recall my discussion of the insufficiencies of the Marxist theorization that was once central to my worldview, I believe that Gordon and I arch towards the same point: it is not that the theories that make up the standard euro-western canon of philosophy, social and cultural theory does not contain useful, or even powerful tools, but that those tools, because of the geopolitics of their formulation often fall short in their ability to explain our lives, our situations, and our struggles to find ourselves out of them into new future. So rather, Gordon enjoins us to use our lived experiences to create, and elaborate, theories to explain those experiences. So rather than using white theory to explain our non-white lives, we use our non-white lives experiences to create non-white theory, and then, should we wish to, we put our non-white theorizations into conversation with white ones (2018). It is my hope that that is what this dissertation ultimately is able to accomplish.

Additionally, my failure of the process to obtain the approval of the Tribal government to carry out work on our reservation is also not my only experience with the

already deeply personal subject matter of my research that I have subsequently had and which I believe gives powerful weight to the autoethnographic methodology of this writing. The autoethnographic content of this writings reflects on these other experiences as well.

Most particularly I have a long history of involvement in Indigenous activist work and involvement in Indigenous community centres locally in Kitchener-Waterloo, both on the campus of the University of Waterloo and in the broader community. Even within these spaces, I have always had to find ways to navigate the in-between spaces and have had a multitude of experiences to reflect upon. Additionally, once this writing work was begun in earnest, I was also given the opportunity to teach by this university's affiliate St. Paul's University College in its new Indigenous Studies minor programme, specifically a course on Contemporary Issues in Indigenous Communities in Canada. Both my community and activist involvement, as well as my more recent teaching experiences in an Indigenous-driven environment, provide other sources of 'data' for reflection.

These events have provided me with powerful and recent life events that I have been able to reflect upon and theorize from via the mode of autoethnographic engagement. Subsequently, while this writing has been difficult, in large part because of the way it forces me to open my vulnerability up to the gaze of others as I have said already, it has also been immensely fulfilling at times in a way that goes far beyond the mere requirements for a research project within the westernized university. Following

this, I came to approach the subject matter of this writing similar to the work of contemporary radical Black scholar Tiffany Lethabo King. In King's dissertation *In the Clearing: Black Female Bodies, Space and Settler Colonial Landscapes* where she uses tools of autobiography, autoethnography and critical ethnography to reflect on her involvement with INCITE: Women of Color Against Violence (2013:180-181).

I believe that this has given me significant space for autoethnographic reflection on the onto-existential and phenomenological dimensions of living an Indigenous under regimes of settler state created and recognized Indigeneity, with its ultimately basal logics of elimination, as well as, on the other hand, the imagining of decolonial Indigenous futures and modes of critique. Importantly I think autoethnography quite powerfully has allowed me to engage the general Indigenous epistemic centring of storytelling (Doerfler, Sinclair & Stark 2013). The importance of centring stories as both Indigenous epistemology and methodology is made by Margaret Kovach when she notes:

Stories remind us who we are and our belonging. Stories hold within them knowledges, while simultaneously signifying relationships. In oral tradition, stories can never be decontextualized from the teller. They are active agents within a relational world, pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon ... they tie us with our past and provide a basis for continuity with future generations (2009:95).

Here I believe I make this dissertation's third and final contribution, this one aimed mostly at the discipline of sociology. Here I mean precisely the practice of autoethnography, but more specifically, as autoethnography is already a known methodology within sociology, as well as anthropology (though perhaps more so the

latter), what I mean here is specifically the kind of Indigenized usage of autoethnography that works to centre methodologies of storytelling of the kind described by Kovach, Doerfler, Sinclair & Stark. This is a contribution, and a methodological intervention, aimed much more so at the discipline of sociology, and to a lesser extent at anthropology, than it is at Native Studies, because, as should be reasonably apparent, within the latter of these three fields, autoethnographic, autobiographic, and storytelling methodologies have already found an acceptable niche, and indeed are well supported. Thus, this final contribution that I make, to be somewhat bold, is to aid in the making of space within sociology for storytelling as an acceptable methodology. This is part of my wider commitment to making Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies in general acceptable within this oh so colonized, westernized discipline for the study of peoples.

Indeed, it is because of this centring of personal narrative and personal placement within ethnographic work, that I believe that my work in this writing has been able to engage decolonizing methodologies even more critically (Smith 2012) than traditional models of ethnographic research and engagement would have allowed for. Indeed, given the very nature of autoethnography, and also of phenomenology, as not only raw first-person accounts (such as it may be within strictly autobiographical work; though I do admit at times the borders between what is strictly autobiographical, and what is strictly autoethnographic, can become blurred and even begin to break down) but accounts of lived-in and embodied experiences, as well as the structures and appearances of

experience, I believe that the very nature of those frame-works transform them into frame-works of storytelling. In this, the decolonizing, autoethnographic, and phenomenological contours of my work blur, motion, and melt together.

Autoethnography has allowed me to also much more strongly insert my writing and theorizing as a part into the wider sociological and political project of working towards the construction of “epistemic space for scholars to discuss indigenous processes of identity formation that challenge imperial discourses” (Nájera, Castellanos and Aldama 2012:1). In this sense I agree with King when she notes that autoethnography is:

[A]n agile method that can subvert the power relations that brought the practice into formation and continue to plague it. Autoethnography should also prove to be a helpful companion in my attempts to unmap and re-write geographies based on Cartesian dualisms and imperial subject positions that seek to discipline land, bodies, time, and space (2013:181).

In addition, autoethnographic methodology has allowed me to broaden further the theoretical packaging of this work. Moreover, I think that autoethnographic and storytelling-oriented methodology has allowed me to connect even more so with the work of Latin American & Xicanx decolonial thinkers such as Walter D. Mignolo (2012) and Gloria Anzaldúa (2012). In particular, I believe that autoethnography opens spaces for me to engage in what both Anzaldúa and Mignolo refer to as *border thinking*. Like how Anzaldúa placed herself and her lived-experience at the cross-roads of three traditions—Nahuatl, Spanish- and Anglo-American (2012)—working through border thinking via autoethnography has allowed me the ability to situate myself at the spaces-in-between

Native North America, Anglo-America, and, also, the urban diasporic West Indian community. For Mignolo—who combines the border thinking of Anzaldúa with the *gnosis* of V. Y. Mudimbe (1988) to formulate the idea of *border gnosis* (2012:12-14)—this kind of thinking allows for the formation of a “locus of enunciation where different ways of knowing and individual and collective expressions mingle” (1993:130). In fact, I would argue, autoethnography intersects deeply with the post-Anzaldúa turn within in Chicana/o Studies and its decolonizing interrogations of mestizaje, (re-)indigenization, border thinking, and the decolonial imaginary, a body of literature that has long deeply influenced my own journeys through, and interrogations of, the liminal space of diasporic, urban, and mixed Indigeneity.

Furthermore, and I believe quite importantly, King, drawing on Spry (2006), notes that autoethnographic methodology “emphasizes the way that the body is privileged as a site of knowledge production. As the locus of knowledge production, the body becomes a way to orient oneself to culture, research, the un/knowning self, and other people” (2013:184). This resonates deeply with the ideas of decolonial Boricua scholar Ramón Grosfoguel, in particular, his elevation of both the *geopolitics of knowledge* and the *body-politics of knowledge* over the *ego-politics of knowledge*, the latter of which he situates within a privileged position in the global epistemic hierarchy of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. Echoing in turn back to King, for Grosfoguel this represents a break with the “subject-object dichotomy of Cartesian epistemology” (2016:28), the formation of

which is essential to the ontological condition of settler-colonial (post)modernity. Ultimately, I believe it is within this undoing, or at the very least the complication, of the subject-object dichotomy discussed by King and Grosfoguel that Indigenous epistemologies—situated as they are within notions of stories and storytelling—can find a zone of emergence. With this ultimately being a central concern of my writing, this is one of the key reasons for why I ultimately chose to pursue this project as a fully autoethnographic undertaking, rather than autoethnography being only one part, or part of a constellation of other methodological undertakings.

Additionally, the centring of this work on autoethnographic techniques has still allowed for room for its combination with more traditional ethnographic methodologies. Towards this end, I have built upon long-running in-family conversations to carry out a small series of unstructured, conversational, and ongoing, multi-part conversations with family members on the questions that I directly explored in my own lived experience. While these conversations may not be always presented in the form of direct quotations, they have more often than not directly and deeply informed the approach I have taken in this writing.

In particular, these conversations have been with my mother and my brother. The choice of limiting the interviews to these particular family members was based both on personal closeness, as well as often shared life experiences. In particular my brother shares in occupying the same liminal spaces as I: urban, diasporic, raised-off-continent

but now living back on Turtle Island, and semi-enrolled. For my mother, the experience in her life has been similar, yet also importantly different, having been born an Urban Native in Milwaukee, who then made the life choice to move to the West Indies, where she has spent the majority of her life. A crucial difference is my mother's status as a fully enrolled member of our community, which is not shared by my brother and me. However, my brother and I would also not be who we are as Menominee without the experience of life with our mother.

I believe that these conversations have contributed important methodological, epistemological, axiological and praxiological interventions into my work which is otherwise fully autoethnographic. This is because while more individualist autoethnographic methodology would have allowed for me to deeply delve into my own experiences as author-researcher, this would necessarily have had to have been accompanied by the recognition that such a work is fundamentally rooted only in my own limited perspective. The incorporation of perspectives other than my own into the work via conversations with family members simultaneously expands the narratives and perspectives brought to bear, while not fundamentally displacing the methodological and theoretical centring of my own life experience. While not quite the same as what Heewon Chang, Faith Wambura Ngunjiri, and Kathy-Ann C. Hernandez describe as *collaborative autoethnography*, which for them implies multiple author-researchers, I do believe that it has been able to accomplish many of the same goals (2013).

Also, deeply important here is that while I may centre my own experiences, specifically my everyday lived experiences of being a liminal Native under regimes of settler colonialism, I am, as a human being, and all that that entails, ultimately an assemblage of social relations. I do not exist in a vacuum. While I may be a unique individual in so far as such a thing is broadly construed within theory and methodology, I am who I am precisely because of the context in which I came to be, and the network of kinship and social relations in which I have been embedded now and at various points in my life. As such, to know myself is to recognize that within me are at times imperceptible touches left by those webs that I have touched. This includes not only direct family and friends, but the entire totality of the current settler-colonial socius. Indigeneity, diaspora, liminality are all ultimately social and relational concepts. They cannot be understood outside of their opposite binary poles: settler, citizen and full enrolled or statused. As

Judith Butler notes in *Violence, Mourning, Politics*:

I find that my very formation implicates the other in me, that my own foreignness to myself is, paradoxically, the source of my ethical connection to others. I am not fully known to myself, because part of what I am is the enigmatic traces of others. In this sense, I cannot know myself perfectly or know my “difference” from others in an irreducible way (2003:32-33).

This brings to the fore the ultimate incoherence of attempting to give an account of oneself absent of also grounding the *I* within a broader web of social, political, familial, cultural, economic, ontological, existential, libidinal, and affective relations. Though this is not to say, as Butler elsewhere points out in her text that implies an existence as “a split subject,

or a subject whose access to itself is forever opaque, incapable of self-grounding”

(2005:64). Rather:

The purpose here is not to celebrate a certain notion of incoherence, but only to point out that our “incoherence” establishes the way in which we are constituted in relationality: implicated, beholden, derived, sustains by a social work that is beyond us and before us (2005:64).

To return to King and Grosfoguel, contained within this is a fundamental rejection of the old Cartesian dualism of subject-object, and ultimately therein ego-politics of knowledge of modernity/coloniality. To reach back also to Moten and Wynter, and the notion of Man as the overrepresentation of the human subject, this methodological-pedagogical-praxiological recognition of the incoherence of subjectivity absent the social is a sense a kind of death of the subject, or at least of that particular subject which has for so long now been a particularism masquerading as an undifferentiated universalism.

Finally, I believe that the combination of autoethnographic techniques with unstructured, conversational interviews situated within decolonizing methodologies and critical ethnographic frameworks has deepened this research’s already stated commitment to the Indigenous epistemic centring of storytelling telling. The creation of space within both this research and within the westernized academy for the elaboration of Indigenous epistemic perspectives takes place not just through the telling of my own story, but in the weaving together of narratives from across the generations of my family of our own similar yet different life-journeys. While this writing always fundamentally centres on the narrative of my own lived experience, this combining of my story with the

stories of my close family members as *our stories* has been more fully able to answer the question of what it means to live a liminal, diasporic and urban Native life under late settler-colonial regimes that lies at the heart of this work.

1.6 A Word on Complex Personhood & Low Theory

To begin to close this discussion of theory and my methodological-pedagogical-praxiological concerns in writing this dissertation I want to return briefly in time to when this project was in its earliest phases of gestation, during the proposal phase, and more specifically my oral defence of the proposal. To tell the story rather briefly, as the minutia are unimportant here, it required two defences, not because of a failure upon a first attempt, but because of the deep shift that the work had to undertake upon the movement away from a strict ethnographic and structuralist project, necessitated by the failure of my own community to approve of the project. Thus, there was a defence of the original proposal, and then another one in defence of a shorter proposal to shift the work in an autoethnographic direction.

That, however, has already been recounted and is not what is important here. What is though is that during both defences, by different committee members, I was asked the question of what exactly I intend to prove in the course of my work. While my answer both times was worded differently, the essence of both can perhaps be best summarized as “that things are complicated.” I sometimes, in a half-joking manner, say that I am less concerned with *proving* something than I am with being able to write, say

and, ultimately, theorize something interesting. However here this is for myself and my writing no simple playful jest, but an important methodological-pedagogical-praxiological, perhaps even axiological, as well as theoretical point that I want to tease out.

This simple statement, that things are complicated, is something that while *prima facie* correct, to the point of almost being trivially true, it is also one that is no doubt at odds with the more epistemologically scientific and methodologically empirical corners of the social sciences and humanities, and with strongly represented contingents within sociology specifically. Yet there is a precedent for this within the sociological literature as it exists. Patricia Williams in her autobiographical reflection on the intersection of race, gender, and class states quite simply that “that life is complicated is a fact of great analytic importance” (1991 10). She continues, speaking specifically of the law, saying:

Law too often seeks to avoid this truth by making up its own breed of narrower, simpler, but hypnotically powerful rhetorical truths. Acknowledging, challenging, playing with these as rhetorical gestures is, it seems to me, necessary for any conception of justice. Such acknowledgment complicates the supposed purity of gender, race, voice, boundary; it allows us to acknowledge the utility of such categorizations for certain purposes and the necessity of their breakdown on other occasions. It complicates definitions in its shift, in its room for the possibility of creatively mated taxonomies and their wildly unpredictable offspring.

I think, though, that one of the most important results of reconceptualizing from 'objective truth' to rhetorical event will be a more nuanced sense of legal and social responsibility. This will be so because much of what is spoken in so-called objective, unmediated voices is in fact mired in hidden subjectivities and unexamined claims that make

property of others beyond the self, all the while denying such connections (10-11).

Beyond the law, though I believe that the implications of this for a sociological examination of life, my life, is profound. Speaking from directly within the milieu of sociology, and drawing on Williams, Avery F. Gordon notes:

That life is complicated may seem a banal expression of the obvious, but it is nonetheless a profound theoretical statement—perhaps the most important theoretical statement of our time. Yet despite the best intentions of sociologists and other social analysts, this theoretical statement has not been grasped in its widest significance (2008:3).

She says elsewhere on this point, elaborating:

That life is complicated is a theoretical statement that guides efforts to treat race, class, and gender dynamics and consciousness as more dense and delicate than those categorical terms often imply. It is a theoretical statement that might guide a critique of privately purchased rights, of various forms of blindness and sanctioned denial; that might guide an attempt to drive a wedge into lives and visions of freedom ruled by the nexus of market exchange. It is a theoretical statement that invites us to see with portentous clarity into the heart and soul of [northern bloc] life and culture, to track events, stories anonymous and history-making actions to their density, to the point where we might catch of a glimpse of what Patricia Williams calls “the vast networking of our society” and imagine otherwise. You could say that this a folk theoretical statement. We need to know where we live in order to imagine living elsewhere. We need to imagine living elsewhere before we can live there (5).

And indeed, it is a kind of folk theoretical statement that borders on the banally obvious, but I believe that is essential to state upfront in order to make my ultimate purpose in the pages of this dissertation clear. Returning to my elucidation of my cynicism and mistrust towards epistemologically and methodologically scientific sociological endeavours,

rooted in my recalcitrant attachment to a kind of decolonially and postmodernly infused Gramscianism, I am not setting about in the pages and chapters to come to “prove” some basic sociological, anthropological and historical statement about Nativeness that can be reduced to a pithy statement of “Nativeness is...”. In essence what I set about to do in these pages is to show the complexity of Nativeness as it has been manifested in my own life path, something which cannot be reduced to a mere statement of “Nativeness is....” This is central to Gordon’s deployment of the statement that life is complicated, and in particular with what she identifies as the second of two dimensions to the statement: what she calls *complex personhood*. Complex personhood, for Gordon, functions to remind us:

That even those of us who live in the most dire circumstances [NB: which, under conditions of settler-colonial domination, I believe that Native people are a qualifying population] possess a complex and oftentimes contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing them as victims or, on the other hand, superhuman agents (2008:4).

As I have worked towards this writing one question that I have rolled over and over again in my mind is a lyric from the British post-metalcore band the Architects: “Am I just a victim drifting in the raging sea?” (2018 “Damnation”). And indeed, am I? In some senses yes, or at least life as a Native under the biopolitical, ontological, cultural, and governmental domination of a foreign settler-colonial force which seems to only be content with my disappearance can certainly feel so. But I am also not. My life is not solely coded and overcoded by the machinations of genocide and elimination. I survive,

and while it may be a struggle at times, I try my best to also thrive. I think this is important not only for my readers to remember, but also to constantly remind myself, to not become lost in only the miasma, discomfort, and pain of Red Life.

Gordon perhaps most fully of complex personhood says it:

Means that all people (albeit in specific forms whose specificity is sometimes everything) remember and forget, are beset by contradiction, and recognize and misrecognize themselves and others. Complex personhood means that people suffer graciously and selfishly too, get stuck in the symptoms of their troubles, and also transform themselves. Complex personhood means that even those called "Other" are never never that. Complex personhood means that the stories people tell about themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and about their society's problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching toward. ... Complex personhood means that even those who haunt our dominant institutions and their systems of value are haunted too by things they sometimes have names for and sometimes do not. At the very least, complex personhood is about conferring the respect on others that comes from presuming that life and people's lives are simultaneously straightforward and full of enormously subtle meaning (2008:4-5).

I could not think of a better summation of my life, and the autoethnographic and theoretical investigation of my life and its movement through systems of domination to thoughts of liberation. My life exists on the border, in the intestacies and in-between spaces, moving in and out of past-present-future, remembrance and forgetfulness, enunciation and aphasia, the colonial and the decolonial, structures of domination and dreams of liberation. It is, in a word, *complex*.

My usage here of a kind of sociological folk epistemology and theory also dovetails

not only with an Indigenous decolonizing methodological concern for storytelling, as emphasized in the above quote from Gordon, but also with what queer theorist Jack Halberstam calls, in turn borrowing from Stuart Hall, calls *low theory*, a form of theorizing about the world that seeks to locate and to dwell in those very in-between spaces that animate Gordon's notion of complex personhood, and which are so important to my conception of this project (2011:2). Low theory is, for Halberstam, a kind of "theoretical knowledge that works at many levels at once, as precisely one of these mode of transmissions that revels in the detours, twists, and turns through knowing and confusion, and that seeks not to explain, but to involve" (15). For myself, as I consider the arch of this dissertation, while on many levels it may seem to examine autoethnographically my life and my experiences towards theoretical abstraction at the highest planes, a kind of *high theory* production par excellence, the very fact that it also abjures what some might consider more rigorously scientific, empirical or even materialist explanations of the condition of Nativeness under settler colonialism, and to draw the reader in, to involve them, in the twists, turns, detours, hills and valleys of the map of my Native life, places at the very least on the boundaries between high and low theory.

Halberstam says again, "we might consider the utility of getting lost over finding our way, and so we should conjure a Benjaminian stroll or a situationist *derive*, an ambulatory journey through the unplanned, the unexpected, the improvised, and the

surprising” (15-16). In many ways, the project of authoring this dissertation has been an exercise of putting into praxis what Halberstam says here. Not only has this project undergone a sea change in its shift from traditional ethnography to autoethnographic theoretical production, but even after that point the shift from chapter to chapter also charts a course through a narrative terrain without a map, as much as a chapter map may have been provided in the introduction. Most starkly is the shift this dissertation undergoes roughly one-third of the way in, when I reject the telling of further damage narratives, and instead move towards examining and theorizing the placement and role of Native damage narratives within settler-colonial popular and civil society. Much of what comes after that bridging point is exactly a wandering, at times feeling improvised on-the-go even, trek through an unexpected and unplanned personal and theoretical terrain.

Returning to the question of my methodological-pedagogical-praxiological concerns, I would say that ultimately theory and technique are inseparable. Theory informs technique and, I believe, the technique that one employs foregrounds the kind of theoretical production that a work is capable of. In this, my writing’s rootedness in decolonizing autoethnographic methodology is not only deeply wedded to a kind of *decolonial postmodern neo-Marxism* informed by contemporary indigenous critical theory and settler-colonial critique, as well as radical Black and decolonial theory, that rejects the euromodern privileging of scientific and empirical research, but is also deeply

intertwined with the complex personhood of Gordon and the low theory of Halberstam. I do not believe that an autoethnographic examination of my life, and of Nativeness, with an eye towards some kind of theoretical production regarding the former could be methodologically and theoretically embroiled with anything other than these constellations.

I may not prove anything for certain, but I will involve you. I may not epistemologically orient myself towards science and the empirical, but I will tell you story. I may not methodologically base myself in the general, but I will show you the particular that is myself. And perhaps, through all of that, I can come to something that might be called a theoretical production of some aspect of what it means to be a Native.

Chapter 2. The Coloniality of (My/Our) Being

I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.

– Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*

Nekuanahkwat mesek kōnēwew yōhpeh. It is grey outside, and snow is beginning to whip past my window as I sit down to try and write this chapter. That is what nekuanahkwat mesek kōnēwew yōhpeh means in Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen, the Menominee language. Or at least that is what I think it means: I have been trying for several years now to reinforce my skills in Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen by trying to incorporate it into the mundane aspects of my everyday life, such as when I look outside today and see the weather. Lacking immediate access to Menominee language resources, which are almost entirely located on our reservation in northern Wisconsin and in some other select locations in that state, I have to make do with the online dictionary given to me by a cousin several years ago, and have to construct several sentences such as the one above to the best of my ability.

It weighs on me often, this fact that I do not have regular, or rigorous tools for learning my language (in the sense of being tools for learning a language, rather than just the vocabulary that makes up one portion of what a language is). To state otherwise would be to tell a lie, and while perhaps in the course of a hypothetical version of this

project, which I have stated previously is both an exercise in opening myself up to the gaze, as well as simultaneously guarding myself against the gaze, it might be ethically justifiable to tell a lie, in order to shield myself, I can assure the reader that here there are no lies contained within. It weighs on me because so much of who we are is bundled up in questions of language and language usage. I encounter this across many points of intersection in the graph of my lifeline.

As my cousins Lisa Wakau and Lauren Wakau-Villagomez recall in their book *Teaching Native America Across the Curriculum: A Critical Inquiry* (2009) there was a time in the not so distant past of Menominee history when many of our people spoke not only Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen but also Anishinaabemowin, the language of our Ojibwe, Pottawatomi, Odawa, Algonquin and Mississauga kin, allies and co-habitants. So, in effect, due to the forces of settler colonialism that drove the generation of nemaēhsoh and nōhkomaeh¹⁹, as well as the generations before them, into boarding schools, as well as the machinations of global capitalism combined with personal romantic choices that saw my mother make her adult life on the shores of Bermuda, I have lost not only one language, Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen, but in fact two, as I do not speak Anishinaabemowin either. I am not the only Menominee though who faces that, and so I count my blessings that I at least have access to an online dictionary, and through the

¹⁹ “My grandfather” and “my grandmother” respectively (Mn).

connections I have built with Anishinaabe residents of southern Ontario I have been able to piece together elements of that language as well.

But I still do not *speak them*. At best I can look out my window and through a loosely pieced together sentence I can perhaps give an approximation of a description of the weather. Or I know enough that when I see certain animals, I can greet them with the name for them in our language. But that is not speaking a language, any more than binge-watching a PBS series on dark energy or string theory gives me the ability to speak the mathematical language of quantum mechanics and astrophysics. As it stands now, my best efforts amount to rote memorization, not true understanding.

Not understanding of the language, itself, or understanding of what lies behind the doorways that true Menominee language would open up to me. For example, my inability to speak my language(s) makes participation in ceremony at best difficult. I can, and have, sat in a sweat lodge conducted by an Anishinaabe elder, and I can feel the content, the meaning, of the words spoken in the Ojibwe dialect as much as I can feel the heat radiated by the grandfather and grandmother stones. But there is a horizon to my understanding of ceremony that I am locked out of now in my life.

And that I think is the real loss in the loss of my language before I was even born. As I discussed in this dissertation's prolegomena on language and territory, so much of who we are, what makes us Menominee, or Anishinaabe, or any other kind of Native is tied up in our language. In the web of words, semantic structures, and syntax one can

find the entirety of the cosmological-ontological-epistemological complex that we might call the Menominee worldview. I am not a linguist, and I do not pretend to be, so I am not here attempting to make an argument for the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, that language itself structures worldview and cognition, but what I am trying to say, I think, is that how we see ourselves, how we see our place in this world, how we see our human and other-than-human relations, how we come to know the world around us, is deeply informed by our language.

Language then, I wager, is intertwined with basic ontological questions. Who am I? What am I? And thus, the loss of language has bearing on those same questions. In other words, the loss of my language then is something that weighs on me not only psychologically, in the sense of distress caused by diaspora and dislocation, of the anxiety-induced aphasia of trying to present myself to a world that probably will never understand, but in fact weighs on my actual Being.

Regardless, it is another typical day during the Winter of 2018's last gasp in this particular part of southwestern Ontario that I have come to slowly call home, a piece of territory between the shores of Naadowewi-Gichigami, Niigani-Gichigami and

Waabishkiigoo-Gichigami²⁰. Despite warming for several weeks, this day has forced me to turn on my heater and put an extra layer on under my sweatshirt. This is nothing like the winter days I knew growing up in Bermuda. There, in the land of my father, during this time of the year it rains constantly, but it remains comparatively warm thanks to the currents that pass the island, flowing north from the Gulf of Mexico. As such, snow is unheard of there, and to most of us who spent our winters entirely on that small island, it carried almost a mythic quality, seen only in movies, videogames, and television shows, and blared from speakers during Christmas, when the seasonal musical classics produced in the United States are imported.

The locals of the city in which I live, Canadian settlers mostly, remark that I must be mad when I tell those around me that I enjoy days like this. I am asked always, especially by those I have only just met, “Why on Earth would you move here, and trade warmth and sun for this?” I automatically assume it would be hard for them to

²⁰ Lakes Michigan, Ontario and Erie respectively. These are the names for these bodies of water in the language of my Anishinaabe cousins. It’s been a general practice of mine these past few years to fill in the gaps of my knowledge of Menominee terminology with Anishinaabe ones. I think of this as a many-fold daily act of decoloniality. For one, this is because, as I am told by members of my family, until the generation of my grandparents, many Menominee were fluent in not only in Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen but also Anishinaabemowin, which is closely related. So, I feel that by learning bits of pieces of Anishinaabemowin, even as I put my primary focus on reclaiming Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen, I am connecting to the practices of my ancestors, and with a dream looking forward to how I want my children and my grandchildren to also be. Also, I live on the joint lands of the Anishinaabeg and the Rotinoshón:ni, what is called Gdoo-Naaganinaa in Anishinaabemowin, *The Dish with One Spoon*. So, in using terms from the Anishinaabe language I show respect to my relatives on whose territory I live as a guest and acknowledge the names that have been used to mark place here since time immemorial. This switching back and forth between Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen and Anishinaabemowin, and even Kanien’kehá:ka (the Mohawk language) when appropriate is my practice throughout the writing of this dissertation.

understand my true feelings, so I generally remark that when it is cold out you can just keep piling on more and more clothes until you are warm, but when it is hot you can only take so many clothes off before you are breaking some law. People laugh, and they say something like “yes, you’re right” or “I guess that’s true.” That, or I play the role of spoiler and pass on the meteorological knowledge that, contrary to north american dreams of year-round sunshine and beaches, it does rain for most of the winter in Bermuda. However the question is dealt with the subject invariably passes as quickly as it arises, and our conversations move on to topics more pressing or interesting than the wintry weather outside of my windows.

But the true reason that I enjoy days like this, to such an extent that I will almost always go and stand on my porch when I begin to see those first few flakes of snow beginning to drift down from *kēsek*²¹ is because in a strange kind of way seeing those flakes and feeling the cool temperature reinforces my feeling of connection to this place and the sense of home that I have slowly begun to feel over my off-and-on decade and a half of residence in this city. These falling flakes of frozen water root me in this territory, on the shores of these lakes, in my ancestry and our ancient relations to those nations on whose land I am a gracious guest. This is exactly because it is not like the cool-but-not-

²¹ “The sky” (Mn).

frozen, always raining winters that lash Bermuda, *but* it is exactly like the winters in Omaēqnomenēw-ahkīheh²².

I feel connected because I know that on these cold wintery days in southwestern Ontario that the weather here is much the same as it is in northern Wisconsin and the upper Michigan peninsula, just on the other side of the Nayaano-Nibiimaang Gichigamiin²³. Indeed, every time I have spoken to my grandmother this winter much of our conversations have revolved around the question of the weather. She often tells me about how cold it is there, and she tells me almost every time how much snow has fallen, and how it has begun to build up everywhere in the small town of Shawano, just south of the Menominee Reservation in which she lives. This winter cold is one of my many anchors in my constant transit back-and-forth between Omaēqnomenēw-ahkīheh and Gdoo-Naaganinaa. When I feel this cold, when I walk through the forests that continue to survive despite the constant encroachment of ongoing settlement and the colonial drive to tame the Wild land, when I see these lakes and rivers and think about how my Menominee ancestors most certainly used to transit them themselves by way of canoe in order to come here to visit relatives, to trade and to continue our old political arrangements with the Anishinaabeg and the Rotinonshón:ni, and how their shores once teemed with manōmaeh²⁴, the very grain from which our most well-known name derives,

²² "The land/country of the Menominee" (Mn).

²³ "The Great Lakes (The Five Freshwater Seas)" (A).

²⁴ "Wild rice" (Mn). Also, *manoomin* (A).

I *feel* that I am home, even if Gdoo-Naaganinaa is not quite Omaēqnomenēw-ahkīheh. I am grateful to my Anishinaabe relatives and the Rotinonshón:ni for allowing me to be a guest in this territory, and by way of that, to help me find myself in a world that seeks to induce and reinforce only feelings of disconnection and alienation from who, and what, we are.

2.1 Being Native

These snowy thoughts of home, of making home, of what it means to *belong home* has also brought me to a line of thought on which I often find myself dwelling: what does it mean to be Native? Is it possible to even speak of some kind of authentic Indigenous experience or lifestyle? And if so, how much of this is rooted in gaze and the world-building project of the colonizer, without whom the category of Native would not even exist. I come to these kinds of places because throughout my own life I have often wondered if I look “Native enough,” if I sound Native enough if I carry myself Native enough. Essentially the question that unites all of these other questions is whether or not I fit in when in the company of other Natives. This is a question which has always inevitably impacted my ability to feel comfortable or not comfortable when in the company of other Natives. In other words, when trying to make home do, I actually feel like I belong? Growing up in Bermuda, where many people do not know exactly what a Native person looks like, sounds like, dresses like etc., and where racialization functions firmly within the coordinates of a Black-white binary, it was not common for me to be recognized for what

I thought myself to be. It was however simultaneously common for people to remark that I looked Mexican, a Venezuelan or some sort of Latinx person more generally²⁵. In terms of physiological appearance—especially under the influence of the sun in the hot Bermudian summers—my skin, as well as that of my younger brother, is a healthy shade of brown.

I am always brown, sun-drenched, or not. But this brownness in Bermuda has led many times to a racial misrecognition as Latinx, rather than Native American or First Nations. Indeed, even in Kitchener-Waterloo, I have not always been able to escape this misracialization of myself.

A quick story: I cook a lot. My mother is a gourmet chef of some skill and recognition in Bermuda, and I probably on some level inherited those skills, but I have spent most of my adult life trying to hone and perfect those skills on my own. I have been hired to do welcome dinners for the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre, as well as many other unpaid lunches for them. I do not inflate my own ego all that often, at

²⁵ Given that most of the population of Mexico is of mixed Indigenous and European, mostly Spanish, descent, during my early 20s I came to a degree of peace with often being mistaken as such during my childhood. I came to figure that Bermudians saw in me the same thing that they saw in many Mexicans and other Latinx peoples, which is an Indigenous American background, though they perhaps did not know this then or now. I recognize now, in my early 30s, that this is not an unproblematic view, which skews or smothers the contradictions between Natives of Latin America and the Indigenous-descended mestizo majority of many of those countries. I've learned and been corrected through online interactions about overly simplistic and unknowingly mestizo nationalist-tinged views that tend to collapse these two categories in problematic and oppressive ways, but I would be lying if I said that in the past that they did not bring me a degree of comfort. Untangling the comfort that these ideas brought to me as a diasporic Native North American youth and young adult, with what I see now as something that is far more complex than I had previously realized that been a personal, political and theoretical journey.

least in the open, in front of others, but it is a skill I not only cherish but one that I am generally recognized for, alongside being a heady critical theorist (at least amongst my friends and kin). Most recently being recognized through an interview with an article about myself and my culinary journey in the local *Grand Magazine* the winter of 2019.

When I cook, I focus a lot on four diverse kinds of cuisine: West Indian, Native, East Asian, and Latin American. This is not a dissertation chapter on my culinary adventures though, so the point is this: West Indian, Native and Latin American cuisines have a significant degree of ingredient overlap. Because of this, and because of the difficulty of finding many necessary ingredients in the major settler capitalist grocery chains in this country, such as Zehr's or Sobey's, I have developed a regular habit of frequenting this city's Latinx and West Indian grocers. The deeper point beyond that, and which connects back to my broader point, is that when I frequent these kinds of stores, most especially the local Latinx ones, I am often misrecognized as a Latinx person by the owners, staff, and other customers present. At one particular store, owned by a family of Salvadoreños, I have been asked many times if I am Mexican, Salvadoran and some other Latinx nationality. I have been told point-blank that the question has been asked because, like my youth in Bermuda, I am told that I look like I am Mexican or some other Latinx people, and in those occasions I have had to correct the person by telling them that I am actually a Native American or First Nations person.

If it has not come in the form of a direct question about a mistaken Latinx ethnicity or nationality, I am often greeted in Spanish, or Spanish is otherwise assumed as my mother tongue. Recently, I took a close friend, themselves an Anishinaabe person, to go shopping at one of these local Kitchener-Waterloo grocers and afterward they remarked that they had noticed that the people running the cash register when we checked out greeted me in Spanish and seemed to assume that I was a Latinx person. Ultimately, I have had many wonderful conversations with these people, about the secrets of Latinx cuisine, or about the connections between it and Indigenous cooking generally, especially in the central ingredients of corn, beans and squash that are so central to all of us. But these conversations have always been prompted by having to correct a racial misrecognition of my Native North American self as Latinx by members of the local Latinx community.

I am telling this story about cooking and grocery shopping for a reason. I am not internally blinded to the fact that I have experienced this particular kind of racial misrecognition many times in my life, from Bermuda to Kitchener-Waterloo. While I have never been offended by it, what this has often resulted in my taking actions to appear *more Native*.

For example, for most of my adult life I have made a conscious effort to grow my hair long and at times have braided it. Since about the age of 20, I have only cut my hair twice, both to mark significant life-changing events and an attempt to engage in self-

renewal and self-growth. For myself, this was, at least in the beginning, less of a pushback against the imposition of western thoughts around beauty and what men and women should look like, and more of an intentional taking on the stereotype of Indigenous men with long braided hair. While one may argue that perhaps those two feelings are two sides of the same coin, I would argue that it is important to consider to which end the emphasis is placed in my own complex life praxis.

My younger brother, who lives in New Hampshire, also grows his hair long. His reasons are much the same as my own. I asked him while writing this dissertation, during a conversation on Facebook, “why do you grow your hair long? Is it because it’s a Native thing, or just cuz?” He told me “I grow it *now* because it is a Native thing and it *helps me to look it*, I try and braid it as much as possible” [emphasis mine]. He adds further, that now he found reasons within our culture to grow and keep his hair long, beyond the drive to enforce a visual tell of his Indigeneity. On this, he said “I read that some tribes believe in powers in long hair. Some believe they represent living or passed on loved ones.” I also asked him if he thought that he looked Native, to which he said “I guess I look Native. I get people asking me often if I am an Indian or whatever.”

Of course, not all modern Native men grow their hair long or braid it. We come in all different varieties and styles. In my own life, I have been just as likely to meet Native men with short haircuts, or even a fully shaved head. It is all beautiful. I do not judge, because I am not that kind of person, that kind of Native. I do not shame people

who make a personal, individual aesthetic choice regarding how they wish to groom or adorn their bodies. We are all on our own personal journey through this post-apocalyptic landscape of coloniality/modernity. For myself, and for my brother, growing our hair long and braiding it is part of ours.

I have often found this interesting though, thinking through the journeys of my younger brother and me. My brother and I look quite a lot alike, the main difference being that I am a bigger person than he, and often grow my facial hair out in a more noticeable fashion. But the fact that we are brothers is instantly recognizable to most people. We, I think, look far more like each other than either of us looks like our older, and fully white, half-brother, though there is a general resemblance to our father's side of the family that the three of us share and which is often caught, and commented upon, by others, especially in Bermuda. While there is often also no doubt that we are the sons of our white Bermudian father, the Menominee genetics of our mother's lineage are strong, or so I assume. But I find this interesting because in New England, where he now lives, my brother tells me that he is often asked if he is Native by his co-workers and the other majority-white denizens of his region, though he is also often mistaken for Latinx as well. However, while I do not know his Bermuda experience, it has been the case for myself that in both Bermuda and Canada that I am regularly mistaken for Latinx.

My mother's experience is of course quite different from either of ours in its own regard. Her experience of racialized (mis)recognition has moved back and forth between

Nativeness to ambiguity depending on the context of time and place. She has always related to me that on her travels to Latin America—to Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, etc.—she has often met other Indigenous peoples, from those regions, who have recognized in her Nativeness and have at first tried to converse with her in their own languages. However, she also has related to me, as I have spoken to her during this writing, that when she has been elsewhere, including Bermuda, she has most often encountered confusion about “what she is.” She has never been misrecognized as white, but nor has she ever related to me an experience similar to my own of being misrecognized as Latinx. She tells me that in Bermuda, when she first arrived in the 1970s, she was met with significant confusion about what she was. To my honest surprise, she told me that she was often asked if she was a light-skinned Black person by members of the Black community on the island. Likewise, at the yachting club that my father has been a member of for some decades, the bartender used to ask my father about his “Chinese girlfriend.” Other times she often has been met with comments and questions of “I know you are not white, Black or Asian, but what are you?” At the same time as she is able to encounter Native peoples in Latin America and be mistaken as Quechua, Mapuche or some other, she has told me that when she looks at pictures of her and her siblings, that she thinks she looks less than Native than most of them.

Taken together though, this divergence in our experiences—myself, my brother, and our mother—leads me to speculate that the stereotype of what a Native person looks

like is not transnational, transregional, or even transhistorical. Of course, this to me is something that is obviously the case, to the extent that its truth is, or rather, I would argue, should be, a matter that is trivial²⁶. As my mother, who to me, and in her own sense of self-recognition, looks like an Indian, said “no shit, not all Indians look alike, nor ever did. It’s a long way from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.”

Perhaps it is also all of this snowy whiteness that currently surrounds me as I begin to piece this chapter together, being evocative of the whiteness of settler coloniality that also surrounds me, but it also hard to displace the discussion of my own wanderings through the visualized racial dimension of Nativeness within the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling from the question the basic question of what it means to *be Native*. Setting aside the question of visibility however, at least until the next chapter, and relating back to what I said earlier about the matter of language, language loss and world-building/world-making, what I want to take up in the rest of this chapter, and by way of doing that set the stage for many of the other discussions to come in the following pages, is what it means to be Native within the ontological and existential mappings of settler coloniality, and in particular within the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling.

²⁶ A more in-depth development of this discussion topic, and its relationship to other problems of theory and analysis is taken up in the following chapter, *#NotYourNativeStereotype & the Question of White-Passing Natives*.

2.2 The Problem of Being

In the previous chapter, I outlined how this work is rooted strongly in investigating and theorizing questions related to the ontological and structural formations of Indigeneity and Indigenous being. This particular line of questioning regarding ontology, again as outlined previously in the preceding chapter, necessarily is one partially rooted in the political ontology developed in and from the work of the German existentialist and phenomenologist²⁷ Martin Heidegger. The fundamental ontology Heidegger sketches in his magnum opus work *Being and Time* (2008) is a fundamental reference point for the conception of being that this chapter, and this broader work in general, builds upon. However, more importantly, the work in both this chapter and those to come takes the form of a *necessary critique* of Heideggerian ontology. And this is an important caveat to make. Discussions of ontology have become, if not all-pervasive, then at the very least widely influential in many fields of contemporary critical theory. Perhaps the most

²⁷ I describe Heidegger and his work here with these two broad stroke labels, however I do so not unaware that, as the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes, that “his thinking should be identified as part of such philosophical movements only with extreme care and qualification” (2011). For the sake of brevity, and as this is not a purely philosophical work seeking to analyze the contributions of Heidegger, I will use these labels. Relatedly, I find it often unfashionable amongst certain sectors of left-wing academia to cite Heidegger, or to draw from his work, because of his quite well known and established relationship with the German variant of fascism of the 1920s, 30s and 40s, national socialism. This is view is also often likewise taken with regards to the German jurist Carl Schmitt, whose work on the concept of sovereignty, especially as it has been interpreted and expanded upon by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, has become quite essential to many (post)modern conceptions of the State and Law. I however am less concerned with adherence to left-wing orthodoxy, as described in this dissertations first chapter, and find more interest in engaging with and drawing from any range of ideas that can be useful in some way in analyzing and theorizing about the state of Nativeness under regimes of settler colonialism, and thus find myself less likely to object to or reject potentially meaningful ideas, theories, analyses and philosophies because of the political allegiances of their long deceased founders or creators.

established field with an ongoing theoretical production that is widely and deeply rooted in the question of the ontological is contemporary Black Studies. A brief survey here can point to the works of scholars and theorists as diverse as Frank B. Wilderson, III in his *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (2010), as well as Calvin L. Warren's *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation* (2018), Jared Sexton's numerous books and articles (2008; 2011; 2016), Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2016) and David Marriot's *Whither Fanon?: Studies in the Blackness of Being* (2018)²⁸. Within Native Studies, however, essentially ontological investigations of Nativeness have also produced important works, such as Jodi A. Byrd's *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*.

Many of these works have deeply influenced upon me, seen not only in the recounting of my theoretical-methodological orientation and development in the previous chapter, but also in the way in which almost every page of this dissertation veritably seethes with their influences. However, and this is perhaps the result of cross-

²⁸ There are key internal distinctions to be made here however. In particular, Wilderson and Sexton are the two central theorists of the tendency that has come to be known as Afropessimism, a stream of thought in which they are variously joined by fellow-travellers such as Warren. However, Afropessimism, in particular as formulated by Wilderson, has been challenged as being structured such that it absorbs into itself other modes of thought and theorization that may be related to it, even if remotely, including those sources that Wilderson claims as inspiration. For example, in his various works Wilderson lists as Afropessimists not only himself and Sexton, but also Saidiya Hartman, Hortense Spillers, Lewis Gordon, Frantz Fanon, Joy James, David Marriot, James Baldwin, and Assata Shakur. Some of those included in Wilderson's various listings have been expressively critical, such as Lewis Gordon who challenges many of the basic assumptions of Wilderson (2018) and David Marriot, who has critiqued what he considers to be Wilderson's "ontological absolutism" (2014). Beyond that, Afropessimism is not without critique (see for example Greg Thomas's 2018 essay "Afro-Blue Notes: The Death of Afro-Pessimism (2.0)?"), and is a quite internally heterogeneous.

cutting theoretical and political influences, I am also careful with my own use of the concept of ontology, especially with regards to how it is deployed here in these pages, both in this particular chapter and beyond. My concern here is perhaps best described by the Martinican revolutionary, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon, who notes in his text *Black Skin White Masks* (a text which has had profound influence on the growing stream of ontological investigations) that:

In the Weltanschauung [worldview] of a colonized people there is an impurity, a flaw that outlaws any ontological explanation. Someone may object that this is the case with every individual, but such an objection merely conceals a basic problem. Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man (1967:109-110).

What does this mean for us in developing an ontological investigation of the settler colonized Native of Turtle Island? Essentially, while not rejecting that there are aspects of the lives of colonized peoples that survived the sociological catastrophe of colonization, Fanon here is saying that there is a profound impact on colonized people, by colonialism, that causes those peoples, Natives included, to resist classical ontological descriptions (Gordon 1995b:10). The Jewish Jamaican afro-existentialist Lewis Gordon, critiquing Jean-Paul Sartre's description of antisemitism, wherein the Jew is made in the gaze of the anti-Semite, says:

The situation of people of color is different. Although Jews may have existed before anti-Jews, it is not clear whether "blacks," "Indians," or "Orientals" existed as those identities before racist conceptions of these people were designated by such terms. ... In brief, it is possible that no

African, nor Native Australian, nor Native American, nor Asian had any reason to think of himself as black, red, or yellow until Europeans found it necessary to define him as such. **This power of defining required specific conditions that were external to those people themselves** (1995b:28) [emphasis mine].

He adds: “it is this aspect of the black condition that compelled Fanon to declare, as we have seen, that there is nothing ontological about antiblack racism” (1995:28). To this, drawing from Gordon above, we can also add anti-Native racism as something that has no ontological grounding. What is at stake here is that the condition of Nativeness if you will, is not a condition that is given rise to by the internal social development dynamics of Native societies. Rather, in agreement with Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor, the Native is something that comes into historical existence only at the contact event. Thinking this way, there are no Natives if we rewind the stream of time back to a point before 1492. The Native is an invention of the european colonial matrix of power. Nativeness is not ontogenic; it is what Gordon (2006) and Sylvia Wynter (2001) would call sociogenic. In Vizenor’s Native appropriations of Baudrillardian postmodernism, the Native is a simulation (1994). It is relational; Natives only exist by dint of the relationship with the european conqueror. To create something of a neologism here in an attempt to be even more specific about the social, cultural, political and philosophical origin of the Native, we might say that it is *coloniogenic*.

Unlike Gordon however, and unlike Fanon, I do not believe that this necessitates a jettisoning of ontology as a category of thought and analysis. It does, however, open a

door to a modified understanding of the concept, and especially how it comes to be and continues to function in a world dominated by white imperial power, settler colonialism and a parasitic capitalist world-system that requires the oppression, elimination and exploitation of most of the world's colonized peoples.

That said, understanding the Heideggerian basis for contemporary discussions of being and ontology though remains essential, and in this regard, I agree with Latinx decolonial philosopher Nelson Maldonado-Torres when he says of Heidegger and his work on ontology and the conceptualization of being:

I do not think that Heidegger's conception of ontology and the primacy that he gives to the question of being necessarily provide the best basis for the understanding of coloniality or decolonization, but his analyses of being-in-the-world serve as a starting point to understanding some key elements of existential thought, a tradition that has made important insights into the lived experience of colonized and racialized peoples. Returning to Heidegger can provide new clues about how to articulate a discourse on the colonial aspects of world making and lived experience (2010:103).

Having said that, to better understand the arguments made in this chapter, and the critiques of Heideggerian ontology that they build upon, I believe that it is also necessary to first give a brief overview of the conception of being as it is found in the philosophical oeuvre of Heidegger.

2.3 The Question of Political Ontology

In traditional Heideggerian political ontology centrality is placed on what is referred to as the *ontological difference*. That is, the distinction between *Being* and *being* (*Sein* and

Seiendem), which he defines through concepts and terms of constitution, disclosure, non-identity, displacement and absence (Saar 2012:79). From this, Heidegger also sought to move away from the use of the term *Man* to refer to the human being, believing that it, and all other known concepts, were marked by the traces of metaphysics and epistemologically-centred philosophy. Thus, he takes up the term *Dasein*, itself a transfiguration of Husserl's *transcendental consciousness* (1970), which means simply "being there," and is a fundamentally social and open entity (2008). *Dasein* is the both Heidegger's principal object of study, as well as his point of departure, a first step of sorts towards uncovering an existential analytic of everyday being. He notes:

whenever an ontology takes for its theme entities whose character of Being is other than that of *Dasein*, it has its own foundation and motivation in *Dasein*'s own ontical structure, in which a pre-ontological understanding of Being is comprised as a definite characteristic... Therefore fundamental ontology, from which alone all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the existential analytic of *Dasein*. (2008:33–34)

Maldonado-Torres summarizes this by saying that "For Heidegger, fundamental ontology needs to elucidate the meaning of 'being there' and through that, articulate ideas about Being itself" (2010:104).

What is most relevant though, in terms of the critical analysis to follow, is that, for *Dasein*, "authenticity can only be achieved by resoluteness, and that resoluteness can only emerge in an encounter with the possibility which is inescapably one's own, that is, death" (Maldonado-Torres 2010: 104). For Heidegger death is the individualizing

moment par excellence precisely because in death one can never be replaced via another and in large part this is because, phenomenologically speaking, we radically lack access to the death of others, to the loss of being that takes place when one dies:

The greater the phenomenal appropriateness with which we take the no-longer-Dasein of the deceased, the more plainly is it shown that in such Being-with the dead, the authentic Being-come-to-an-end of the deceased is precisely the sort of thing which we do not experience. Death does indeed reveal itself as a loss, but a loss such as is experienced by those who remain. In suffering this loss, however, we have no way of access to the loss-of-Being as such which the dying man 'suffers'. The dying of Others is not something which we experience in a genuine sense; at most we are always just 'there alongside' (2008:282)

Thus, again as Maldonado-Torres notes, "[t]he anticipation of the death and the accompanying anxiety allow the subject to detach herself from the They, to determine her ownmost possibilities, and to resolutely define her own project of ek-sistence²⁹" (2010:104).

The confrontation with death for Dasein as the channel for authenticity can also, for Heidegger, take place on the collective/national level, though here he posits the necessity of a leader-character: a fuhrer. This is the source of Heidegger's often, and rightly, critiqued relationship with the national-socialist state that arose in Germany in the 1930s and its fuhrer. Here, on the collective/national level, and in the name of the fuhrer, war takes the central position as the pathway to the confrontation with death. War

²⁹ It is worth noting, for those perhaps unfamiliar with Heidegger's thought, that the writing of "ek-sistence" is not a misspelling on Maldonado-Torres's part, or Heidegger's. Rather, it is part of the latter's attentativeness to etymological considerations, in which "existence is understood ... as standing out (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2011)

and the possibility of dying for the collective national body, driven by the leadership of the fuhrer, becomes the link between collective and individual authenticity.

However, there is an essential component missing within the Heideggerian tracing of the concept of being: colonialism, or more properly *coloniality*. This absent presence of coloniality within the Heideggerian genealogy of ontology and being forms the basis of the critique that this chapter mobilizes.

2.3.1 Anti-Cartesian Excavations & the Sub-Ontological Difference

Heideggerian political ontology emerged in large degree as a critical response to the subjective-epistemological tendencies that had come to find themselves firmly cemented within the thought of *European modernity*, which can trace their roots to the works of 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes. Whereas much of the euro-western and euromodern philosophical and critical canon of thought placed emphasis upon the Cartesian formulation of the *ego cogito*, ‘Cogito, ergo sum’, ‘I think, therefore I am’, for Heidegger this was based on a forgetfulness. For him, the fundamental element was not the aspect of the cogito, but rather ‘I am’, and thus within his programme of opposing epistemology (‘I think’) with ontology (‘I am’), the emphasis was shifted from the former onto the latter. Further, Heidegger writes that in Descartes’s presentation of the world it is “with its skin off” (2008:132), meaning that, according to him, Descartes presents the world as an assemblage of *present-at-hand* entities, which can be encountered as, and by, subjects, through raw sense data. Against this Heidegger positions his own existential

analytic in which Dasein's epistemic contact with the world-writ-large is mediated by what he calls "value-predicates," which are context-dependent meanings. A Derridian-Baudrillardian reading of Heidegger's critique of Descartes might say that Dasein's epistemic meeting with, and navigation through, the world is mediated through signs, forces of signification, which contain within themselves both a signifier and a signified (Derrida 1978; Baudrillard 2006). Heidegger lays out his challenge to Cartesian thought, saying:

What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling... It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to 'hear' a 'pure noise'. The fact that motor-cycles and waggons are what we proximally hear is the phenomenal evidence that in every case Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, already dwells alongside what is ready-to-hand within-the-world; it certainly does not dwell proximally alongside 'sensations'; nor would it first have to give shape to the swirl of sensations to provide a springboard from which the subject leaps off and finally arrives at a 'world'. Dasein, as essentially understanding, is proximally alongside what is understood. (2008:207)

However, within all of Heidegger's critique of Cartesian thought, there is a very crucial axis missing from this historical development in philosophical emphasis, from epistemologically-centred to ontologically-centred. Thinking through Gordon and Fanon's critique of ontological emphasis, what is missing here in the Heideggerian account of euro-western philosophy is, of course, the relationship between modernist european metaphysics and the colonial matrix of power (coloniality).

This is essential to consider and to re-incorporate into our philosophical anthropology, because decoloniality, and the push towards a decolonial critique and corrective, as outlined in the previous chapter, is as much a critique of modernity as it is one of coloniality. This is certainly because the two concepts are so deeply intertwined that they are often necessarily rendered as a conjoined and twinned concept: modernity/coloniality. In the case of the world-system, capitalism is also often added to the equation, rendering it the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system. However, while agreeing with much of the thrust of decolonial critique I also agree with Gordon when he appends the 'European' to modernity, rendering it as *euromodernity*, saying "I write *European modernity* to bring into question the presumption of modernity's only being European. Understood as a relational phenomenon, modernity could be read in terms of what human beings in a given region consider to be the future direction of humanity" (2013:68). Following Gordon, 'Europe' is also understood by me including not only the geographical context of the European continent, but also the settler colonies of the former British Empire, including Canada and the United States (1995b:6-7). The world of Europe then is the world of coloniality, and thus the world of modernity, understood as euromodernity. This includes the northern bloc, and all other settler colonies founded upon European imperial expansion.

Taking a step away from Heidegger's myopically Eurocentric account of philosophical anthropology and its historical development, coloniality is the silent, yet

very real, and very present partner in the process. The two are ineluctably linked. Coloniality is the hidden, deeply powerful, motive force that pushed forward the development of Cartesian philosophy, and thus subsequently the Heideggerian and post-Heideggerian development of the concept of being and of political ontology. This is a gap in the history of western/european philosophy that has been illuminated perhaps most significantly in the work of the Argentine-Mexican philosopher of liberation and liberation theologian Enrique Dussel.

Regarding the *cogito*, in his critical dialogues with the canadian political philosopher Charles Taylor and the German pragmatist Karl-Otto Apel, Dussel makes a critical intervention in the historical understanding of european/western philosophy by placing the Cartesian development within its proper historical context. He notes that the various elements of european modernity arose “from a continuous dialectic of impact and counter-impact, effect and counter-effect, between modern Europe and its periphery, even in that which we could call the constitution of modern subjectivity” (1996:133). The essence of modern subjectivity of course being, as discussed above, the notion of the ego cogito. In placing the Cartesian movement within european modernity within a context of the imperial/colonial conquest of the Americas, the enslavement of people from the African continent and the general european assault upon the rest of the world which began in the 15th and 16th centuries, Dussel brings us to the concept of the *ego conquiro* (1996:33).

The ego conquiro becomes the essential stage upon which Descartes was able to develop his philosophy. Again, Dussel notes:

The ego cogito also already betrays a relation to a proto-history, of the 16th century, that is expressed in the ontology of Descartes but does not emerge from nothing. The ego conquiro (I conquer), as a practical self, antedates it ... The “barbarian” was the obligatory context for all reflection on subjectivity, reason, the cogito (1996:33).

According to Dussel, the ego cogito can only arise from within a context in which one thinks of themselves as the centre of the world, precisely because they have in fact already conquered the world (2014). To the intense degree to which the coloniality of power distorts this relationship—between colonialism and modernity—it obscures the actual nature of the Cartesian perspective itself, and all others that would come to follow it, from the Kantian Rational-I to Heidegger’s political ontology. This is why Colombian decolonial philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez (2010) describes Cartesian philosophy as operating from a kind of “zero point epistemology”: that is, Cartesian and post-Cartesian philosophy is a point-of-view that does not see itself as a point-of-view. I am also reminded here, thinking of the zero-point epistemology as a naturalization of Cartesian philosophy, of the work of members of the neo-Lacanian Ljubljana School of Psychoanalysis on the distinction between the Real and reality, as it relates to the overarching ideology of society as a *reality principle*. In particular, Alenka Zupančič notes that:

The important thing to point out here is that the reality principle is not some kind of natural way associated with how things are ... The reality principle itself is ideologically mediated; one could even claim that it

constitutes the highest form of ideology, the ideology that presents itself as empirical fact or (biological, economic...) necessity (and that we tend to perceive as non-ideological). It is precisely here that should be most alert to the functioning of ideology (2003:77).

While the concerns of the Lacanian Marxists of the Ljubljana School mostly relate to the relationship of capitalism to the Real, this kind of thinking is, I believe, easily transferable to what I have already written, allowing us to speak of the relationship between (settler) colonialism and the Real, of the reality principle of (settler) coloniality. Either way, this of course remains a fundamental component of the scientism that remains at the heart of much of social scientific practise and theory within the westernized academy, with its Cartesian-derived subject-object dualism and the naturalization of a foundational ideology of possible value-neutrality found within the work and theories of disciplinary founding fathers such as Max Weber (2004). The “hubris of the zero point” (Mignolo 2011:22) is quintessential eurocentrism.

Pushing this analysis even further and tying it explicitly to the notion of *epistemicide*—the death of subaltern knowledge systems, in particular their murder as a condition of european expansion and colonial genocide—put forth by Portuguese theorist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014:92), Boricua sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel introduces the concept of the *ego extermino* (‘I exterminate’). The *ego extermino*, founded on genocide and concurrent *epistemicide*, is what gives rise to a fundamentally epistemically racialized and racist *ego cogito* of Descartes. For Grosfoguel, “[t]he *ego extermino* is the socio-historical structural condition that makes possible the link of the *ego*

conquiro with the *ego cogito*" (2013:77). Following Dussel, Grosfoguel places the emergence of the *ego extermino* and *ego conquiro* in what he refers to as the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century: 1) against Muslims and Jews in the Catholic Reconquista of Iberia, 2) against the Indigenous peoples of the Americas following the Colombian contact event, 3) against African people via the trans-Atlantic slave trade and 4) against Indo-European women accused of witchcraft (2013:77).

2.4 Sub-Ontological Difference: The Haunting of Political Ontology

Returning to a previous point, if we can place, and indeed must, place the Cartesian movement in euromodernist philosophical anthropology within its correct context as a movement whose condition of possibility was the sociological catastrophe of settler colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, then we consequently must do the same for Heideggerian ontology, emergent as it is as a critique, or perhaps more correctly, a change in emphasis, of the *ego cogito*. Taking up this direction of thought we return to the line of inquiry regarding Heidegger and being within the work of Maldonado-Torres.

What Maldonado-Torres sets out to question in his critique of Heideggerian philosophy of Being is that, if coloniality is the underside of the Cartesian articulation of the *ego cogito*, in the form of the *ego conquiro* (and we can add to this, via Grosfoguel, the *ego extermino*), then what is the underside of the ontology of Heidegger (2010)? He responds that this is the *sub-ontological difference*. Drawing upon the work of French-Lithuanian Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, himself a strident critic of Heidegger

(1979; 1981), Maldonado-Torres proposes the *sub-ontological difference* as an extension of the concept of *colonial difference* put forth by Argentine decolonial scholar Walter D. Mignolo (2002). Mignolo's colonial difference is epistemological in nature—the coloniality of knowledge, or *colonial epistemological difference*, as an extension of the coloniality of power—Maldonado-Torres borrows the concept to generate an ontological concept, the coloniality of being (2010).

For Maldonado-Torres, while the ontological difference found within Heidegger and post-Heideggerian political ontology, is the difference between Being and being, the sub-ontological difference, or the *colonial ontological difference*, is the “difference between Being and what lies below Being or that which is negatively marked as dispensable as well as a target of rape and murder” (2010:108)³⁰. It is the sub-ontological difference which is primarily legitimized and naturalized through racializing assemblages, and which marks certain populations and peoples as disposable, enslaveable and the subjects of genocide; cast into the zone of bare life to follow Agamben's parlance.

In developing the sub-ontological difference, Maldonado-Torres also requires a new subject, because as has already been demonstrated, the coming into being of the

³⁰ Again, turning to Levinas and his efforts to phenomenologically explore what lies beyond Being (1981), Maldonado-Torres also proposes a *trans-ontological difference*. This is the “difference between Being and what is beyond Being; or Being and exteriority” (2010:107). While both the trans-ontological difference and the sub-ontological difference are essential within Maldonado-Torres's wider decolonial critique of Heideggerian philosophy, I am not concerned within this work with the former simply because it does not have a central role in my examination and elucidation of racializing assemblages and the marking of certain populations of people as either eliminable or exploitable.

Dasein, with its search for its own authenticity in the anticipation of and confrontation with its own mortality, is a being that can only be when built upon a pedestal of sociological catastrophe for colonized and enslaved peoples. Here Maldonado-Torres introduces the concept of the *damné* (2010:108). Drawing from Fanon, Maldonado-Torres describes the *damné* as a being that “confronts the reality of its finitude as a day to day adventure” (2010:109).

For the *damné*, which the colonized, racialized multitudes of the Third World and, I would add, those encircled and entrapped within the territorialities of the northern bloc, Australasian and Israeli settler colonies, the thought of the European Dasein and its finding of authenticity in the particular instance of its anticipation and confrontation with death is thus an absurdity. It is absurd precisely because for the colonized, racialized *damné* death is omnipresent; a permanent marker of what constitutes its life-world in what Lewis Gordon refers to as the *zone of non-being* (2007). Fanon himself describes the life (or perhaps, non-life) of the *damné* most clearly when he says that for the colonized life is not a flowering of their essential qualities and ability to live life, but rather a permanent struggle against death that has become a day-to-day affair (1965). He notes that:

This ever-menacing death is experienced as endemic famine, unemployment, a high death rate, an inferiority complex and the absence of any hope for the future. All this gnawing at the existence of the colonized tends to make of life something resembling an incomplete death (1965:128).

This is the coloniality of being. This is the essential characteristic of the sub-ontological difference, which becomes legitimized and naturalized within the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system primarily through the various and differing regimes of racialization, which leave Indigenous and Black peoples as those who primarily suffer the consequences of being beings who are inherently killable and disposable. The convergence between the sub-ontological difference and Italian biopolitical theorist Giorgio Agamben's figure of the *Homo sacer* (1998) as that person who can be killed without being murdered should be clear³¹.

2.4.1 Colonial Hauntology: Being & its Ghosts

This can also be thought through a different, but complementary register: hauntology. Derived from the work of Jacques Derrida in his work *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, hauntology refers to the way in which what we encounter in the world as being are never actually fully present; the present moment is always hopelessly entangled with both the past and the future, wrapped up in absence (2006). Because of this, the present moment can only be made sense of by placing it in the context of what has both already been, and what is to come. Being, the category of ontological analysis, is never fully present in and of itself; it is haunted,

³¹ Indeed, as we have placed both Cartesian and Heideggerian philosophical developments within the context of a world-system founded on sociological catastrophe for non-european peoples, I would suggest that the same should also be done with Agamben. Refer to the previous chapter, in the sub-section entitled "Racializing Assemblages, Sovereignty and the Colonial Order of Things" for a more in-depth analysis.

carrying with it always spectres of past and future, just outside the margins of what is visible in any given moment.

Mark Fisher, speaking on the concept, tells us that “haunting is the state proper to being as such” (2013:44). And indeed, western philosophical anthropology and notions of being, whether we call that being *Dasein*, Man, *ego cogito* or the Rational-I are deeply haunted. But, perhaps more keenly, haunting is relational; the living-dead and dead-living are inexorably linked together in a symbolic chain of meaning in which one can only be made sense of with regards to the other. Like musical notes in a melody. These ghosts are also very real. They are everywhere, often just beyond sight, but many times, especially as the situation seemingly etching forward towards a sea change in the global arrangement of power, they stand ready to burst back in upon the pages of history, if they have not already begun to do so.

Past, present, and also future, begin to merge, their entanglement deepening as we excavate more and more. Avery Gordon says:

Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. These specters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view (2008:xvi)

It is not just a matter that the state of eurowestern being is haunted by a repressed past, or some imagined absence. Weaving together and between the postmodern, the Marxist and the decolonial, if the *ego cogito* is given to rise through its precursor of the *ego conquiro/ego extermino*, then we can say that the subject of Heidegger’s ontological

difference, the so-called *Dasein*, or what Foucault might call Man, and which Sylvia Wynter more correctly calls the ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man, is haunted by the non-beings who have been cast down by the colonial matrix of power in the realm of the sub-ontological difference. The question of the difference between Being and beings can only be made sense of in consideration of the terrain that lies below the entire edifice: colonialism; Red and Black death, and the spectral hauntings that they call forth, made manifest in this world by the lived lives of those not only oppressed, eliminated and exploited by the machinery of a global modern/colonial/capitalist world-system, but who persist, who resist, and who survive. Being, *Dasein*, Man, is only able to take its place as the normative subject of western humanism, as a European particularism disguised as a neutral universalism, relationally through the ghosts of the *damné*, entire peoples made spectral by the war-against-all that has been waged by parasitic colonial-imperial power for the past five centuries.

The being of Man, of its ability to be being-in-the-World, requires its ghosts for its ontological coherence, just as the regime of settler-colonial governmentality requires as its materialist basis Native land and Black bodies. The relational dimension of this haunted nature of the ontology of western world-making is also why, to return to Gordon and Fanon, it is difficult to speak of a Native, or an African, or an Oriental prior to that moment in time in which Europe stretched itself forth and laid claim to the rest of the globe. The ontology of the Native only exists under regimes of settler-colonial and global

power that require its existence as a negative pole against which to define what it is not. This is the Native as Jodi Byrd's *Indian Errant*, of Nativeness as linguistic, grammatical and ontological category upon which the northern bloc of settler colonialism brings itself forth and instantiates its ongoing existence in the world (2011:xxxv).

If hauntology is the true nature of ontology, of being's permanent entanglement with the past, with ghostly presence, and with what it is not, and the ontological difference carries with it always the spectral beings of the sub-ontological difference then, perhaps we can say that what it is that unites them is a kind of *colonial hauntological difference*. Colonial ontology is by its very nature, not only by the nature of ontology broadly, must be hauntological. It must be a colonial hauntology. To think again about something, I said nearer to the beginning of the chapter, about my concerns with the explosion of ontological investigations, this is ultimately what I am grasping at: ontology is never simply ontology. Carried within ontology is all manner of things. It carries relationally with it the ghosts of the past and of the past-in-the-present. But more so, those ghosts are not merely conjured by the exercise of abstract and metaphysical euromodern philosophical anthropology, but are material in their existence, both in the sense that they represent real beings with real lives, but also in that the that the colonial matrix of power that is the ironwork superstructure for western ontological mappings represents a really existing material relationship between peoples in this world: colonialism. Too often I feel

when I read the broad swathe of modern critical theory literature that the usage of the concept of ontology is such that it obfuscates this fundamentally materialist relationship.

I will freely admit that perhaps this is the lingering habits of my own prior Marxist orthodoxy—my own personal spectres of Marx—with its over-attachment to modes and means of historical and dialectical materialism. But I do believe that this is an important matter. The *ego conquiro/ego extermino* that provides the bridge from coloniality to Cartesian thought during the birth of the euromodern *épistémè* is not merely an abstract philosophical or critical theoretical proposition. The sociological catastrophe of settler colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade impacted real lives, and continues to impact real lives right now, on the hypersurface of the present. It is the real death of Indigenous and African peoples, the real theft of their lands and bodies, that provides the basis for all manner of euromodern philosophical, scientific and political musings about the state of the “human” and its relationship to the world. It is also this very real casting out of Native and Black subjects from the ontological space of full human existence and experience and into the zone of the exception that is necessary for the promulgation of the sovereign juridical order of the settler/master.

The relationality of the ontological and sub-ontological differences, united as they may be within a colonial hauntological difference, also breaks in many ways the hold of ontology on theoretical production. This is precisely because material relations in the world are inherently contingent, shifting, never fixed. This contingency and relationality

is the essence of my use of the concept of racializing assemblages. In a word, reaching back to my older Gramscianism, this should be read as the absolute historicism of these categories. Racialization, which is one of the chief modalities of the sub-ontological difference, and that which concerns me most when discussing the ways in which the shifting of colonized peoples into the terrain below and outside Man takes place, is not static. Race does not fall from the sky readymade, by forces outside of human agency, human action, upon the world. And indeed, there is one of my chief disputes which much of current ontological thinking, which, like Michael Dillon's critique of Agamben's ontologization of Law (2005), is disturbed by a lingering ahistoricity. As the late Patrick Wolfe noted in his work *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*:

Race, it cannot be stressed strongly enough, is a process, not an ontology, its varying modalities so many dialectical symptoms of the ever-shifting hegemonic balance between those with a will to colonise and those with a will to be free, severally racialised in relation to each other (2016:18).

Because "race is not a static ontology," but an "ongoing, ever-shifting contest" (Wolfe 2016:27) what we can perhaps say then is that there is a dynamic project, functioning through racializing assemblages, to *make an ontology* about the world. And as an inverse, such a system of world-making can also be unmade. Such ontological projects of world-making can be fought, can be resisted, and can be persisted against. And this is precisely the history of the world. Colonized peoples have never been passive subjects of a euromodern history of the world. We have always been active. Always defended our lands, bodies and nations.

Thinking through these burdens and relations that ontology carries from the plane of the real—of the actual material-colonial relations that give rise to the euromodern ability to even think of the *ego cogito*, Rational-I, Man, or *Dasein*—of the relationality that is generally hidden within political ontology, haunting its margins, I think of the political-philosophical project of Judith Butler in grounding the notions of precariousness and precarity. For Butler, precariousness, is an embodied and existential state that configures life, the ontology of which is only able to be grasped at within its social and political contexts (2004; 2009). As Isabel Lorey notes in her *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* regarding such an ontology:

These conditions [the social and political] enable historically specific modes of being, making it possible for bodies to survive in a certain way, which would not be viable without their being embedded in social, political and legal circumstances (2015:18).

Importantly though for us, for my work, it is also the case, as Butler (2003; 2009; 2016) and Lorey (2015) describe, it is also these conditions that render some life targetable, murderable, ungrievable, that put some life in danger. It is these conditions which both allow some life to flourish, as in the general contours of (post-)Foucauldian biopolitics and push other life into the realm of the colonial hauntological difference.

It is a dialectical enmeshment of ontological formulation and material circumstances and conditions through the processes of racializing and other assemblages. To think perhaps in those older Marxists ways, which I always believe that I had shed, yet constantly find myself returning to, this can perhaps be said to be the same dialectic

as that between the base and superstructure. Specifically, finding myself revisiting the vein of a particular Maoist-Althusserian structural dialectic (Mao 2001; Althusser 2005), it is a relationship where the base does not crudely and unidirectionally code and determine the superstructure, but where the two are mutually formative and informative upon one another.

This relationality is, as I have attempted to describe, precisely what I feel is lost in so much current theorizing around the concept of political ontology, though I make no assertions as to intentionality. At heart it is dialectical in its formation, that is, to speak of political ontology it is these things, with the material, social and political worlds. Thinking of ontology in a vacuum, or, also a dangerous proposition, as if it is the ontological that primarily is coded and overcoded upon the plane of the Real, ultimately obscures the central importance of the material and renders it interminably spectral. This is why, following Gordon, I speak of a project to render an anti-Native world, rather than a world that is always-already anti-Native. Thinking of the ontological in such a way, by which I mean non-relationally, non-dialectically, as not-an-assemblage, I contend also risks shifting racialization and the biopolitics of settler coloniality into some sort of hyperreal space of simulation, rupturing the symbolic chain, and making discussion of materiality moot by making unclear the difference between the ontological, the ontic, the symbolic, and the material.

The ontological world-building project of euromodernity, of the world of the

ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man, in his overrepresentation as the human, is coloniality and the colonial order of things. Nothing more. Nothing less. The purpose of anticolonial, decolonial, abolitionist, and even communist and communizing, resistance is not to defeat an ontology, but to turn back and overturn a project of ontological generation specifically the material, social, and political conditions that shift my life, Native life, the life of all colonized, racialized, and othered peoples, into a zone of ungrievable bare life, able to be exploited, eliminated and accumulated. The point has always been to change the world.

All of this is to say that this is what I carry out when I speak of ontology. I continue to find usefulness in discussing ontological formation, because I think there is something to be found at analysis and theoretical production abstracted to the highest level, but I do not believe that ontology functions alone in the world. So, when I speak of ontology, I mean all of these things. I mean the sub-ontological difference and how the ontology of Being, of Cartesian thought, requires the production of a terrain below it. I mean hauntology, how both the terrain below ontology, as well as those who inhabit that terrain, are made ghostly, and haunt the margins of ontology, allowing the latter to instantiate and make meaning of itself in the symbolic chain of signifiers. I mean how this is also contingent, subject to shift and change, to the dialectic, never rigidly fixed or permanent. And I mean how this is material, relating to real relationships in a real-world, perhaps hidden at times behind a colonial parallax gap, but nevertheless actually there,

structuring relations, society, culture, politics and the world. When I speak of ontology, here and throughout the dissertation, I speak of it with the weight of all of these things on top, below, beside and within it.

2.5 Ontology & Anti-Native World-Making

Bringing this understanding back home though to the lands of the Anishinaabe, Menominee and Rotinonshón:ni, I cannot help but hear the echoes of Ward Churchill's insightful description of the multiple, converging vectors of the death that are constantly arrayed against Indigenous peoples by the twin state apparatuses of the northern bloc of settler colonialism (1997). I also cannot help but also reflect on the Driftpile Cree scholar Billy-Ray Belcourt when he says that, for the Indigenous, the structural nature of settler colonialism:

Absents the possibility of making life unhinged by the rote of premature death ... a colonial ethos bent on disappearing Indians from the future, a rut whose chronic episodes of biopolitical tragedy are somehow still bearable by those who endure them. The goal is not to be better at life, but simply to keep at it, even if 'it' taxes and eschews happiness without becoming too conspicuous (2017a:2).

He adds: "misery circumscribes the body's potentialities. If misery is a part of slow death's arsenal, it hangs 'in the air like a rumor,' then there is no easy way out. Existence is what taxes" (2017a:2). Jodi Byrd describes the genocidal conditions of Indigeneity similarly, describing the states under which we continue to try and make life as

“unlivable, ungrievable conditions within state-sponsored economies of slow death and letting” (2011:38).

As I said above, relating to the contingent and materialist project of making an ontology of the world, as Natives we live in a world, or at least a world-system, in which the project is to make a fundamentally anti-Native world, a world in which we are subjected to death both slow and fast from all angles. In my thinking regarding this, that the project of coloniality/modernity is to make an anti-Native world, I am following the logic of Lewis Gordon in his disagreements with the emergent theorization(s) of Afropessimism, in which he asserts that the project of antiblack racism is the making of *an* antiblack world, and emphasizes the opposition of this view to those of the various Afropessimists who speak of *the world as antiblack*. He has outlined these differences in a number of public talks, but perhaps most recently in an interview with Jared Ball on his internet radio programme and podcast *IMixWhatILike* on the episode *Afropessimism, Africana Philosophy and Theory* (2018). The essential element for me here is that the project of the world, to make it anti-Native or antiblack, has never actually been fully complete, as I said above. It is a contingent process, not a fixed, permanent, ready-made reality. It is a dialectical process of world-becoming, subject to push and pull. However, unlike the teleological tendencies of much of Marxism, and the Hegelianism which preceded and infuses it, which view the world, and our myriad human societies, as on a path to *somewhere*, I reject that there is any such path that can be spoken of. There is no path, no

particular present or future horizon, precisely because of the contingent and dialectical nature of the world and the project to bring it into being. There is a project to make an ontology in which the world is anti-Native and antiblack to be certain. White supremacy, imperial white power, that continues to subject our communities, persons and bodies to violence from all angles continues to show us the hegemonic status of such a project. However, it is not fixed, not already-made, so long as the dialectic between push and pull continues. It cannot fully be precisely because colonized, racialized and oppressed people have always pushed back and resisted.

Our racialization, our place within the sub-ontological difference, both emerges from that in the most basic material way, and also, in a dialectical fashion, reinforces it. For us, for Natives, in particular here in the northern bloc of settler colonialism, we are forced to even more specifically contend with how these machinations of genocide and disappearance function through regimes of hypersolubility. This is the technique of biopolitical settler-colonial governance in which Nativeness is defined juridically by the colonial state as something which is both quantifiable, through an imaginary around the notion of Native Blood, and is eminently dilutable. Mixture between Nativeness and anything else within the governance regimes of the United States and Canada results in a new generation that is less Native or carries within it at least the potential to be less Native.

What does this mean for us as a people? What does it mean for us as we continue our trek through this post-apocalyptic, postmodern tragedy of the world? In particular, what does it mean when people speak of people who are otherwise Natives but are 'white-passing'? *Can* we even talk about that?

Chapter 3. #NotYourNativeStereotype & the Question of White-Passing Natives

The capacity to eliminate populations, geographies, ecologies, and ways of life remains the epochal potential at the heart of global racial modernity and its long historical present.

– Dylan Rodríguez, *Inhabiting the Impasse: Racial/Racial-Colonial Power, Genocide Poetics, and the Logic of Evisceration*

In the previous chapter, I noted how it was quite difficult to displace the discussion of my own (mis)adventures through the visualized racial dimension of Nativeness within the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling from what it means to be Native. In that chapter I considered it mostly through the logic of ontological thinking, and the problems and complications that come with path and mode of analysis, while still attempting to preserve some kind of meaningfully useful core. However, the question of the visualized modality of Native racialization also opens discussion for yet another, equally, if not more so, pressing discussion, and one which I believe has more immediate impact for how myself and others navigate the world. Returning to the metaphor of snow and snowy whiteness that I used in the previous discussion, this new, or rather not new, just *another*, complication is the possibility of being able to speak of Indigenous people who are supposedly “white-passing” or “white-coded,” and of the possibility of Indigenous access to whiteness generally. While informal social media discussions have seen much focus on the question of otherwise racialized people be(com)ing “white-

passing” I want to ask what this would mean for our understanding of settler colonialism and the particular manifestations of coloniality and the racializing assemblages associated with it. Towards that end, I want to take the discussions that have veritably erupted on social media and other new media and internet technology platforms on this topic as an essential leaping off point.

While I recognize that Twitter and other contemporary social media platforms may not be thought of as within the traditional realm where academic discussion emerges and commences, for many Indigenous scholars today—many of whom are connected to each other, and to non-academic Indigenous people from all walks of life, within the informal, broad grouping of #NativeTwitter—*it is* a site (as both a descriptive of locals within cyberspace, as well as in the offline world) of often intense working out of ideas regarding theory, analysis and methodology as we all attempt to navigate our way through the everyday lived experience of being Indigenous within the bounds of a genocidal settler state. Or at least that was how I felt when I first began to write this chapter. I wanted very much so to treat the discussions launched on the platform as highly generative. And in some ways, I still do. Much of this chapter takes the form of my response to those discussions happening in cyberspace. However, my perspective on the capacity for being generative of social media debate and discussions has become decidedly more cynical as my relationship to social media has continued to age forward in time since the original setting out to write this chapter.

To be quite blunt about it, against the tendencies of both my own rather verbose writing, as well as the trends across the social sciences and humanities in general: I disagree with the state of most online discourse of this issue, in so far as I have been able to encounter as much of it as I can within the algorithmic logics of Facebook and Twitter. Indeed, from my own admittedly limited perspective the cyclical discourse on the subject of so-called “white-passing” or “white-coded” Natives has become so horizontally violent and toxic that I have found myself on more than one occasion recusing myself from further participation in the discussion. At the cost of my own internet social capital and parasocial relationships, I have found myself forced to unfollow on the Twitter platform major names within the wide circle of what we call #NativeTwitter, in order to reduce the amount of virulent horizontal toxicity that I am exposed to simply through checking my news feed on the website. This has even gone so far as to see me deactivate my profile on more than one occasion, though I have always returned.

This itself—my seemingly endless cycle of declaring my desire to quit social media, following through with such a declaration, and then my eventual return—is itself worthy to consider, if only briefly, when thinking of the possible generative qualities of discussions taking place increasingly on the plane of cyberspace. There is a frenetic, almost panicked, temporal quality to cyberspace interactions. For myself, there emerges a serious anxiety that is induced by the kind of hyperfast temporal turnover within online discussions. It is maddening, to say the least. But it is not just the crisis of temporality

wrought by increasing enmeshment with cyberspace, with the internet-of-things, and with a burgeoning post-humanist First World; it is also the expectation that not only is one always connected, *but* also that one is always engaging in those connections. This is something that Mark Fisher discusses as a *cybertime crisis* (2017), the anxious malaise that seems to follow inevitably from this.

Fisher talks of the time before the internet—which I recall, having been a child when there was still no regular home internet connectivity in Bermuda, and long before broadband was the standard—in which while you may receive a letter, a bill or some other communication, through the mail, through telegram, or some other means, most never found themselves in a position in which we incessantly followed around the mail delivery person, constantly checking to see if they had something for you (2017). This has all profoundly changed. Email seems like almost Neolithic technology at this current juncture. Facebook too, as Fisher puts it, has become almost a gentile variety of social media.

To think of Fisher's example of following around the mail delivery truck, constantly checking to see if there is a letter for you, this is, I feel, precisely what digital interactions have developed into. It is, some ways I think, a manic, temporal crisis of the self. I know for myself, and I am sure I am not alone, checking my social media, text messages, emails and other forms of always-on communication has completely penetrated my day-to-day cycle. It is the first I think I do when I wake up in the morning.

I do not have an alarm next to my bed that needs to be switched off, but I do have a phone, which I am compelled to roll over immediately and check. It reminds me of that post-Fordist adage that you can check out, but you can never leave (Fleming and Spicer 2004). And part of it is work-related indeed: email is the principal means by which I communicate with my fellow students, colleagues, professors, and advisors, as well as other scholars with whom I have been able to develop a relationship.

However, it is also more than work: as I said, there is not just a panicked temporality with which discussion turns over digitally; there is also a constant, frantic drive to engage those conversations that are being had in cyberspace. As an Indigenous person, when I found myself first caught in the gravitational pull of the singularity that is the Twitter-Sphere, I found myself nudged into interacting with the sub-orbital social grouping that people call #NativeTwitter. And for a time, it was quite good. I also branched out and began to interact with the wide web of leftist activists and academics also present on the platform. However, what became slowly apparent to myself, as well as to other Natives on Twitter whom I have been able to speak with, is that so much of not only #NativeTwitter, but of many of the various sub-Twitter-Spheres, and indeed of the totality of Twitter itself, is a race to accrue social capital. The more followers one has, the more likes and reshares they can get, and the greater the response they can generate, whether positive or negative, all of which ultimately feeds back on itself as exposure breeds more followers. Put simply, this is an exercise in accruing social capital on the

Twitter platform in the purest Bourdieusian sense (Bourdieu 1977; 1986). Speculating based purely off of interpersonal conversations over the years, I believe that this is, at least in part, but certainly not the whole of, the source of much what I identified above as the kind of toxic horizontal violence that takes place within these various Twitter communities, #NativeTwitter being far from an exception. Along this line of thought, the more outrageous a statement someone can fit into a single, or string of, one hundred forty-character tweets, the greater the response to them, and thus the greater their gain of social capital.

Of course, as I said, this is purely speculation on my part. I have carried out no empirical or ethnographic research on it, nor do I intend to. But it is something that deeply interests me when I consider the possibilities of new medias as a source of discourse outside of traditional academic avenues. It is also interesting in that in many ways these frantic cyberspace-time interactions seem to be a contact point in which traditional capital accumulation, and the accumulation of social capital seem to break down. It has become a running gag between me and a handful of others that almost everyone in our digital circles now seems to have a link to their Patreon or GoFundMe sites on their social media pages. But the real side of this is that it is though who have been able to accrue the most social capital on these platforms who have the largest pool from which to pull potential Patreon or GoFundMe supporters. And in some ways, at least for those who have managed to climb to the top of the heap in their respective social

media ecologies, there is an implicit expectation that we will follow them, and eventually that we will transform that social media fellowship into monetary support.

So, the idea that one can clock out, but never actually leave I believe applies here as well. It is the beginning of a total ontological breakdown between real and social capital. And this is I think the inevitable result of the world in which we find ourselves today. The pressure to always be online, always checking one's messages, always engaging is the post-Fordist postmodern transformation of our means of communication and ultimate penetration and monetization of that by the forces of capital. I think here of Jodi Dean's idea of *communicative capitalism* (2009); it is one of the logical telos of the neoliberal techno-Empire regime of world power rendered in 4K and 7.1 surround sound, dialled directly into our phones, never escapable. It is also the deep state of economic precarity that this current iteration of the world-system has induced in the lives of many of us. Thus, not only must we always be online and engaging, we must also always be hustling, always looking to be entrepreneurial. A hyper-capitalist nightmare if there ever was one.

So, it is much more than a need to wake up first thing in the morning and check the news or check emails that can be set aside and responded to later. No, it is rather quite the case that one finds themselves always struck by a sense of "oh shit, what did I miss while I was [necessarily] asleep? I have to engage this discussion right away!" There

is a deep trough of woe in also realizing that one has missed out with regards to the latest online discourse.

It is this frenetic digital madness, induced in and by this age of capitalist realism and techno-tele-ponic permanent interconnectivity that drives so many of us to remain connected through the internet and new medias, even if our better judgement is perhaps telling us otherwise. And this is where I think a lot of the real madness of online discussion emerges from, from these loci where temporality and necessary engagement meet and become hopelessly intermixed with one another. For myself, it is a source of constant anxiety. I hate checking my email, such that I can at times actually forget to check it. But more so, I have come to quite honestly despise that I am never not able to be contacted by people. Text, email, instant message, tweets. There is always something, someway, somehow that I find someone digitally shouting in my ear through the internet. Quite often I long for the time, which was not all that long ago, when I had a simple clamshell cell phone with no internet connectivity, no Twitter, no Instagram, only a simple Facebook account

I am not a hermit though. There are some friends, colleagues, relatives etc who I genuinely love, genuinely enjoy speaking with, and that is perhaps a positive pull to remain on social media. These are people whom my own anxieties, depression, introversion and general aversions have perhaps engendered my personality (in the little sense I mean that I believe it is a kind of masculinist response that I struggle to shed) in

such a way that it is difficult me to tell them this. So, I do not want those communications to cease. This is all to say that I am not here attempting to paint a picture of myself some kind of simplistic anti-communication Luddite. Rather, I can try to speak of, in my own life, the push-pull // negative-positive dynamics of my own permanent, digital interconnectivity.

But is there something positive, something perhaps meaningful that can be fished from under the storm tide of this communicative capitalist miasma? In this chapter, I will take up the issues raised within a small wedge of a particular Twitter sub-sphere: #NativeTwitter. Specifically, my goal is to engage the discussion around so-called “white-passing” or “white-coded” Natives, and to question whether it is possible to talk in any kind of theoretically and analytically meaningful way about people cognized as Indigenous by the settler-colonial state be(com)ing coded as *white*. This is a particularly important topic, not necessarily even because of my own life experiences with misracialization, or the experiences of my mother and brother in navigating the racialization of Native peoples, under contemporary regimes of settler coloniality, but because, reflecting back on the idea of the accrument of social capital, and of the monetized, capitalized toxicity and horizontal violences of new media platforms, this is perhaps one of the most poisonous topics that seems itself, like some kind of angry revenant, never quite seems to die, always rearing its head again and again and again.

It is a discourse that always seems to have two heavily inflated poles to it. The first are those so-called “white-passing” Natives who seem to take as a serious personal slight any critique of the social privilege that may hold vis-à-vis other Natives, as well as other colonized and racialized peoples, by dint of their unchosen phenotype. The other pole is what can best be crudely summarized as “fuck white-passing Natives.” There is of course also a spectrum that runs between these poles. I myself find myself outside of them almost as a default position. But it would not be a reflection of reality, or at least reality as I have been able to experience it through my own life, that these are the two major poles of the discourse, at the very least because they are the poles whose actors are able to generate the greatest amount of digital noise through tweets, status updates, blog posts and memes. They are also two positions with which I disagree profoundly. In fact, I would venture as far as to say that I believe both poles of this discourse generally miss the point of settler colonialism and the structures and means of Native racialization, and instead substitute them with superficially extremely distinct positions but which ultimately are reducible to simply two distinct forms of bourgeois liberal individualism.

It is for this reason that I find this discussion such a pressing one. I believe that this extreme distortion of the actual structures of Indigenous oppression risk missing the point by such a degree as to render incapable and ineffectual any attempt to actually theorize said oppression, much less open the doorway to imagining ways out of our current impasse. In this discussion, I bring together discussions on the sub-ontological

difference and racialization from decolonial theory with the structural governance techniques of settler-colonial biopolitics to come to a critique of the concept of “passing” as, insofar as the attempt is made to think of certain contemporary Indigenous North Americans in this regard.

3.1 In the Wake of #NotYourNativeStereotype

During the late summer of 2017, during the month of August on the Twitter social media platform, in response to the resuscitation of the hashtag #NotYourNativeStereotype³², Tzotzil-Xicano Indigenous scholar Nicolás Juárez launched a discussion regarding the role of the visual field with regards to the racial interpellation of Native subjects, the experience of racial discrimination and oppression by Indigenous peoples, and the relationship between Indigeneity and Nativeness as racial category³³. The discussion rapidly grew, becoming quite long and spanned the platform, crossing over and between

³² The use of the “#NotYourNativeStereotype” hashtag was itself in response to a flourishing of social media anti-Nativeness following the controversy over so-called “Chocolate Pocahontas.” What emerged was an attempt to resolve a troublesome dialectic between Black north american and West Indian appropriation of Nativeness (in particular as a fashion aesthetic), as well as Native gatekeeping of Indigeneity which recapitulated colonial antiblackness (up to and including, excluding, making invisible, or simply making difficult active presence, people of mixed Black and Native descent from our communities). For an excellent critique of both sides of this broad issue, though not using this incident as its leaping off point, see Black Anishinaabe scholar Kyle T. Mays excellent work in *Hip Hop Beats, Indigenous Rhymes: Modernity and Hip Hop in Indigenous North America* (2018).

³³ Nicolás Juárez, accessed August 12, 2017, <https://twitter.com/nijuarez/status/896404701587152896>

several Twitter users, including myself³⁴. I myself had also participated in previous iterations of the #NotYourNativeStereotype movement within #NativeTwitter (calling it a movement perhaps is a stretch, but I cannot think of a better word to describe it. Perhaps this should be grounds to consider a new language and vocabulary to describe such digital social media exclusive, or near-exclusive, grassroots collections of people in collective motion).

My participation prior to the August 2017 revival of the hashtag involved nothing more than sharing recently taken pictures of myself to the platform. This had been the bulk of its earlier thrusts. It was a demonstration that Native peoples lead a variety of lives, participate in a variety of subcultures, have a variety of habits and hobbies, live in a variety of locals, and look a variety of ways. It was, at its core I believe, a pushing back against a transhistorical, transnational colonial stereotype of Nativeness that in fact never really was. A pushing back against a certain simulacrum of the Native if you will. What we were trying to do was to show that Natives, or Native people more broadly, are living beings who exist in a present now, rather than an imaginary past from which we step out via time travel and temporal displacement.

³⁴ Enaēmaehkiw Keshena accessed April 25, 2018, <https://twitter.com/Enaemaehkiw/status/896508613019095041>. Also present in the discussion was Black american decolonial sociologist William Jamal Richardson, who's contributions are found in the comments and replies to Juárez's original post, rather than on his own page. While this chapter builds primarily on my own critique of Juárez's perspective, I also wish to highlight the contributions of Richardson to the discussion. Finally, this chapter largely builds on and recreates the content of a blog post I wrote during the discussion, which outlines my basic positions on the issue, entitled "What Makes the Red Man Red?: Comments on Indianness, Racial-Being & Visual Schema" (Robinson 2017).

However, alluding back to what I wrote above about the fractious way that these discussions often end up developing within social media discourse, this time the movement of #NotYourNativeStereotype brought forth the discussion of Nativeness as a racial-visual category, codified, and thus rendered identifiable, within a particular schema. This was the leaping off point involving myself and Juárez.

Rooting his argument in the work of Peruvian sociologist and theorist of coloniality Aníbal Quijano. Juárez argues:

They [racial formations such as white, Black, Native and Asian] really only come into being following the colonization of the Americas. It will be the Spanish casta system which solidifies them. Before this, race is really locally determined and often tied to nationality. However, skin color and phenotype will determine race after. Race, tied to the visual field, becomes the marker of a group of people's social location in the world and their "purpose" in the world order³⁵.

I think that much of what Juárez says is quite deserving of dissection and discussion. However, I want to premise this by saying also that I think this subject is already complicated exactly because, as I will argue in the words that follow, Indigeneity cannot, nor should, be mapped in a one-to-one fashion onto the status of the "racialized" Native within the visual field. While not dismissing as unimportant the role of visual schema in the racial regimes forced upon Indigenous people by settler coloniality, what I do want to do here is to bring together these discussions of racialization within the particular context of the governance techniques of the northern bloc of settler colonialism. Further,

³⁵ Nicolás Juárez, accessed August 12, 2017, <https://twitter.com/nijuarez/status/896404701587152896>

I also want to draw special attention to how these technologies develop and play out in a fundamentally biopolitical fashion, including as what Isabel Lorey describes as a socio-theoretical concept and political-economic framework she calls *biopolitical governmentality*.

Here I take quite seriously the insights of the late settler-colonial theorist and anthropologist Patrick Wolfe regarding the *logic of elimination* within settler colonialism, and most especially the hypersolubility of Nativeness as a category of racialized northern bloc politics and society. All people who are Indigenous to the northern bloc of settler colonialism have encountered what I mean by this, because all must live our lives navigating the hypersoluble, eminently biopolitical governance and control of Nativeness through either the American regime of blood quantum, or the Canadian regime of Indian Status laid out in the legalistic framework of the Indian Act. But I also believe that virtually every Indigenous person living within the geographical and political borders of the northern bloc, whether they are Indigenous to the northern bloc or not, have also encountered this outside of the official channels of the colonial state codification of Nativeness. In fact, I would venture so far as to say that it is a near certainty that virtually every Indigenous person has encountered this. I am here talking about the question that we are often faced with: “how Indigenous are you?” Perhaps this is sometimes worded in such a way that it demands specific percentages of Native racial quotient: “what per cent Native are you?” Sometimes, if an individual does not, for one

reason or another, meet an expected, simulated stereotype of what a Native supposedly is meant to look like, such a question is also prefaced with an exclamation of credulity: “really? You are Native? How much?”

We have all encountered this, I think. Whether from the apparatus of the colonial state, or from the everyday settler who helps to reinforce these structures in such a way that they are often, from an Indigenous perspective, difficult to differentiate from the colonial state itself (Wolfe 2016:41). Whether it is a question or statement, dripping with contemptuous credulity, or from a place of honest interest. This notion of hypersolubility lies at the heart of the history and ongoing racialization of Indigenous peoples in Occupied Turtle Island, and our structural position within the political and affective economies of slow death and letting die.

Further, combining a critique of the governance techniques of Official Nativeness within the juridical and philosophical imaginations of the northern bloc of settler colonialism with the insight that said imaginations work through the hypersolubility of Nativeness also takes this writing in the direction of a complication of the rhetoric, both academic and popular, of the concept of the ability for a member of an otherwise racialized community to perform whiteness, in other words, for them to be “white-passing” or “white-coded.” By “white-passing,” “white-coded,” and related rhetoric of “white-appearing” and “light-skinned,” I am referring to the supposed ability of mixed-blood Indigenous peoples whose visual phenotypical characteristics (skin, eye and hair

colour) cleave much closer to the standard of what is accepted as “white” than they do to cultural and societal perceptions of stereotypical, simulated Nativeness, or at least is much closer to whiteness than they are to Nativeness. This claimed proximity to whiteness is assumed to shield those individuals from some, if not all, of the worst aspects of settler racism and colonial violence, thus allowing them some form of escape not afforded to those who appear visually to be more Native within the visual schematic imaginarium of late capitalism/late colonialism.

3.1.1 Looking Native // Navigating Race

Returning to my discussion from the previous chapter, I would also like to preface the words that will follow by saying that I am someone who sometimes, but not always, can code as Native within the eyes of different people. As I recounted previously, stripped of other visual characteristics such as dress and style and length of hair, I often am racially misrecognized as Latinx. When my mode of usual dress, and my hair are considered, the likelihood of my being seen as Native, both by non-Natives as well as other Natives, tends to increase. Likewise, my younger brother, depending on context, can either be seen as Native, or, like myself, can be asked if he is Latinx. The shared experience between myself, my brother, and our mother is that we are never coded as being white. This is something which I am strongly inclined to suspect is regionally and temporally situated, as I argued before. In other words, what precisely a Native person is *supposed to look like* in the eyes of non-Natives varies both from place to place, as well as from time to

time. Regardless, I have brown skin and long dark hair, who often presents as dressed like the stereotype of a modern urban Native (woodland camouflage jacket, pro-Native iron-on patches, etc.). As such, from my own lived experienced I know the anxiety of seeing a group of young white settlers with their heads shaved bearing down upon me on the sidewalk. I know that that anxiety emerges from my appearance in the context of living in a city in Canada about which one of the first things I learned from friends I made, was that it has a problem with incident rates for hate crimes. In these moments of racial, mental, and physical anxiety I cross the street almost always.

Beyond my experiences in Kitchener-Waterloo, I learned from an early age that in Shawano, Wisconsin, which is the white settlement nearest to my reservation, it is much the same. Though perhaps this added anxiety that I still feel in my body from my times spent there as a young child tells me that it is possibly worse, especially given the location's status as a "border town."

Shawano is the place where my white Anglo-Bermudian father, in a story he and my mother have related to me many times over the years, first became aware of anti-Native racism in the United States. He is a white Bermudian. Though he is from a wealthy Bermudian family, the mixture of Robinsons and Greys, he grew up poor, raised by a single parent, because family disputes and complications had cut off his particular family enclave from the rest of their accumulated wealth. However, despite growing up poor, he still carried with him significant social and cultural capital in Bermuda because

he is white. He may have been disenfranchised by long-gone Bermudian voting laws that tied voting to property ownership, but he was never the primary target of that disenfranchisement; that legalized colonial crime fell squarely with the goal of eliminating or limiting the voting power of the island's Black majority. He may have grown up poor, but because of the social and cultural capital of whiteness in a Bermudian society that is still deeply mired in antiblackness and racial problems twenty-one years after the final end of white minority rule, he was able to attend the premier British-style private white boy's school on the island, Saltus Grammar School. In fact, my younger brother and I, who attended Warwick Academy, the oldest continuously operating English-language school in the Americas, are the only children, raised in Bermuda, from our father's branch of the Robinson family who did not attend Saltus, especially after 1992 when the school became fully co-educational.

So, my father carries this social and cultural capital with him. It is no doubt what allowed him, with perhaps some weight attached to his family name (and the family names of our close kin: Grey and Gosling³⁶) as if some kind of capitalist Jungian archetype, to become how my mother describes him: a self-made man, from poor white boy to taking mail-in RCA electronics courses and working at ZBM radio station, to

³⁶ As in Gosling's Black Seal Rum. Readily available in LCBO's across the Province of Ontario, and one of the most highly regarded rums in the world. A staple of almost all Bermudian liquor cabinets and kitchens, added to fish chowder, rum cakes, any number of cocktails, or just drunk straight. My family produces it and has for well over a century.

working for IBM selling analogue machine calculators and computers and receiving specialized marketing training, to transforming that specialized training through direct training under the Gallo family about wine, to owning his own wine and spirit company, to working as the Director of Wine one of the two largest wine, beer and spirit companies in Bermuda, working to rival the company of our cousins. He did all of these things, and in so many ways I would never have gotten to where I am without him. And he may have grown up poor. He may have grown up disenfranchised. He may have had to pull himself up by his bootstraps in a capitalist fairy-tale come to life. He may have done all of these things, faced all of those trials, but he did so with one overwhelming advantage at his side: he is also white in a deeply antiblack society. I can never discount the profound advantage that that granted him, no matter his other hardships.

My father is also not a racist. I do not think that he has a racist bone anywhere in his body. Indeed, I think that he would find the idea truly abhorrent. He has always been for me the exception that puts to lie the old phrase of someone or something “being a product of their time.” He is was born in 1938. But his experience with race was shaped in the deepest of ways by the Bermudian context. While Bermuda’s racial geography has nuance, including Portuguese people being white or non-white depending on context, and the presence of the people of St. David’s Island on the far east end of the island, many of whom are from old mixed-race families combining the bloodlines of enslaved Blacks, Irish indentured servants and also Natives from the northeastern seaboard, pressed into

colonial bondage in the wake of Metacom's War, its broad outlines have always been shaped by the dichotomy between Black and white. Setting aside the distant kin of the northeastern Algonkians on St. David's Island, my father had really no prior experience with people Indigenous to Turtle Island, much less the colonialism and racism that they face, prior to beginning his relationship with my mother.

However, it was during one incident in particular, when my brother and I were young children when our family was in Shawano, and we went into an antique store in town, and my father began talking to the clerk about how we were from Bermuda. According to my mother, this allowed the clerk the social space to be able to "go off" on a racist rant about "those Indians" and in particular "those uppity Indians with their casino." The clerk was, of course, speaking of my people, the people of my father's children, and of his wife, the Menominee. For my father, someone for whom, as I said, their only bona fide experience with racial tensions up to that period in his life was the white-Black racial issues that have so deeply scared Bermudian society and politics, this came to him as an early and significant shock. In this moment he learned that anti-Native racism in the United States is very real, and that it is very much an issue. I believe very much so that this shocked him profoundly.

Beyond casting a light onto the real-world truth about anti-Native racism to my Anglo-Bermudian father, Shawano, for my mother, has also been a site in which the contingent, mutable nature of Native racialization has also been demonstrated to me.

About a year onwards from my father's experience in the antique store we were back again in Shawano, this time because one of my uncles was getting married. In this story, my mother decided to step into a bar to have a few drinks. Upon entering she was immediately identified as Native, in particular, again, as "one of those Indians" but the white settler patrons of the establishment. She was told, in no uncertain terms, that this place was not for her. However, in a moment of deft social gymnastics, she replied back these racist Shawano patrons that she was from Bermuda. Needing to verify the identity of this woman, who they saw instantly as "one of those Indians," they demanded proof from her. Probably quite luckily for her, in her wallet was her Bermudian driver's licence. She pulled it out to show them that she was indeed from Bermuda. While this was not an open refutation from her that she was an Indian, it is quite likely the case that these racists from Small Town USA, lacked any relevant knowledge about Bermuda beyond the infamous oceanic triangle that bears its name. Because they likely did not know that Bermuda is a country with a Black majority (from my experiences, Shawano is as antiblack as it is anti-Native. This is likely a surprise to no one), or that an Indian could make their way to, and eventually their life in, Bermuda this, I would contend, produced a moment of both confusion and confirmation between my mother and the patrons of the bar.

A short-circuiting of the machinery of american racialization is what I believe happened in that moment. This calmed down the racial animosity the other patrons had

for her in particular, but again, as with my father's story above, allowed the white patrons to feel that they then had the space within which to engage in anti-Native racism.

I have always known about these stories. As such the lessons from them have been ones that I have always carried with me.

However, especially as I have grown older, I have also become acutely aware that many of my relatives who may fall into a category of "white-appearing" would also have to be careful when navigating the space of the border town. While it is certainly not the same kind of caution that my relatives and other Menominee who appear "more Native," in that simulated and stereotypical kind of way, that is, within the visual field, it is still there, and any of them has to be permanently mindful of that. Shawano is not a welcoming, or probably even truly safe place for Natives, especially in this era of creeping fascism, which is really just already existing settler colonialism with the dials pushes firmly towards eleven (Robinson 2017).

This is for one simple reason: there are other things that can give away the Native racial status of a person beyond simply being identified as such within the visual field. Names are a good example of this. Within our community, many families have been able to retain their traditional Menominee names, though of course they have often been transformed somewhat to fit within the western paradigm of a family name, and to accommodate european and euro-settler difficulty with the pronunciation of Omaēqnomenēweqnaesen. For example, many us, including my family, carry

Menominee names such as Keshena, Waukechon, Awanohopay, Muqsahkwat, Nahwahquaw, O'Kimosh, Pyatskowitz, Waukau, Waupoose, Besaw and others.

For relatives of mine who carry one of these names, if they were to make the trek into this border town—which they often do as our reservation lacks certain essential amenities such as a grocery store—and put down a piece of I.D., a credit card or something else that reads an obviously Menominee name, whether it is with the police, the clerk at the antique store, the bartender, the gas station attendant etc., they will be immediately identified as Native, and even more so as a Menominee, or as my mother put it, “one of those Indians.” This is immediate identification of one as Native absent visual confirmation of a person being such within the settler-colonial visual schema of race. And the possibility of experiencing anti-Native racism in that spatial and temporal location for these relatives is just as much as my mother when she walks into a bar in that town and is visually identified as Native.

And this is the case of names that are immediately identifiable as having their origin in a Native language. In our community in Wisconsin, names such as Corn or Deer also fit into the category of being coded as Native, even though we may think of them as words that are commonly found and used in everyday English speech of the northern bloc settler population.

Moving back this way, back to southern Ontario, in this story, I have heard similar tales from Native people here describing their lived experiences. During my time here I

have come to know well several members of the Six Nations of the Grand River community, and one friend, in particular, has related to me how throughout her life her family name has been one that is easily identifiable as Indigenous: Smoke. When I asked her about this during lunch one day, she told me that settlers in the region are even often able to specifically place her community affiliation with Six Nations simply because of the name Smoke. Smoke, Deer, Corn, these are all words of everyday use in the language of the everyday settler. Quite the case, they are not even of any Indigenous etymology, ultimately rooted as they are in Germanic and Romance languages, and further into the past than that, proto-Indo-European. Yet these words, when applied as names, in temporal and spatial locals immediately connote that their bearer is of Native north american background. There is a reason for this of course. There is a lot history of Indigenous names being translated into settler languages, here primarily english, and through time those translations shortening to a single word. One can think of the great Hunkpapa Lakota resistance leader Tǎthǎŋka Íyotake, who is best known by the settler approximation of that name: Sitting Bull. My family was lucky to retain our actual Menominee name, Keshena, yet it could have just as easily happened to us. Keshena roughly translates, so I am told, to Bird-Traveling-Swiftly-Over-Water, and if our name had been translated into an approximation and then, through time, been shortened it could have just as easily been that my mother's family would now be known by a name such as Bird, Swift or Water.

Such that it is that these names, even though they might be superficially thought of as words from the modern dialectics of English, they are ultimately rooted in our original Indigenous names. And so, in a sense, they still do carry the weight of those words that have been lost to colonization. Experience would seem to show that for the settler, especially the settler who is in regular proximity or contact with Natives, this fact is not lost upon them either. Thus, these names begin to function as an alternative, non-visual, means of identity interpellation. Not a visual hailing, but a hailing of the name.

Further, it not even strictly family names; increasingly Natives, Menominee, and others, are reclaiming traditional "First names" against centuries of imposed Euro-Christian ones. While they are often not given names on a birth certificate, many Native people in my own circle of friends of over the years have received so-called "Spirit Names," "Indian Names" or "Ceremonial Names" and have chosen increasingly to use them as a chosen name by which to be identified in everyday life. This is the case in my own life. As described previously, to many close friends, colleagues and family members who have known me from the time before 2011, I am called, and answer to, the European name of Rowland, but on social media, and increasingly since 2014 in the public sphere, I have made a conscious choice to answer to my Menominee name of Enaēmaehkiw. This is now the name by which many people exclusively identify me. This is, most certainly I think, less common than identification via family name, but it is yet another avenue that exists in the world, and it is one that I believe will only grow as more and more

Indigenous peoples shrug off the identifiers that have been imposed upon us, and begin to take up the mantle of our original names.

Additionally, there are also other factors other than having skin the tone of fertile soil or buffalo leather that can quickly identify one as Native within the visual field. These factors are quite important in areas where Natives, even prior to contact event, did not meet the stereotype in the popular settler imaginary of a Native who, or where there is a long history of hybridity (forced and unforced). These include things like the stereotypical facial features of epicanthic eye-folds and high cheekbones. Again, turning to my own lived experience, I have many cousins, aunts, and uncles who, for example, are much fairer skinned than I but who look far more like Natives in terms of these kinds of facial features. They are just as much as I am—based on my skin colour, hair length/colour and mode of dress—instantly coded and identified as Native by these phenotypic features.

However, these sorts of other physical factors have also led to the interesting experience of what can only be described as a kind of racial misidentification, and this leads into the problematic of passing, which is that what an Indigenous north american person is supposed to look like is not, and I would argue likely never has been. The idea of “what a Native person is supposed to look like” is I think pure simulacra; a simulated image of something without any actual grounding in reality, that reflects no true content. More to the fact, that it is a simulacrum, the image of this has never been consistent across

time and space. Again, thinking of my own family, in particular my mother's late brother Lee, when I see them in picture or look back on the many times, we have been together, to me they look very much so like what my mental image of what a Native is supposed to be is. I also believe that they look very much so what an "obvious Native" is, in terms of appearance, walking the streets of a Canadian city such as Saskatoon, which I had the opportunity to visit during the writing of this chapter, and from which I have gotten to know, to lesser or greater degrees, several Native people. However, despite this, to me, obvious racial-visibility as Natives, my uncle, and to a lesser extent his son, are often misracialized in Milwaukee as East Asians. In fact, my Uncle Lee would often be hailed on the bus with a "hey, Chinaman" call. I recently asked my mother about this and she related to me that "Lee was always known as the little Chinese boy." Alex, his son, used to mock this on the social media website Instagram by having the name "Slanty_Eyes_Keshena." Even my mother, as I talked about last chapter, often found herself in Bermuda misidentified as my father's "Chinese girlfriend."

This for me has always raised the question of whether that would carry over to a context such as here in Southern Ontario, a place where I believe my uncle and cousin look very much so like the Natives I interact with on a daily basis, and also where the community of various East Asian peoples and nationalities is heavily represented. Would people still have called my uncle "Chinaman" here? Or would he have been seen him and his son as Indigenous people? Unfortunately, with his passing over a decade ago it

would not be possible to test this hypothesis, so I am left with only speculation, but a speculation that is informed by the entirety of my collected lived experience and the stories and anecdotes passed on and down by my relatives and friends.

3.2 Power, Violence, & Racialization

And this brings me to what I ultimately want to discuss here, which is the notion of racial passing, specifically the ability to pass as white within any or all social, cultural, and political contexts. However I think that in order to do so we have to detach ourselves somewhat the individual quotidian experience of being visually identified as a member of some sort of so-called “Red Race” within the microphysics of power and the violence that that of course absolutely brings from the macro-structural power that defines one as legally being Native within a myriad of zones of contestation, and the violence that weighs so heavily down on our peoples and nations from that level. These are particular experiences that only those who are juridically coded as Native—that is to say, they are legally Native—by the occupational settler states of the northern bloc must endure, and not our southern relatives who may well be Indigenous, or even called Indios/Indians in their countries of origin, who are resident north of the U.S.-Mexican boundary line, such as Nicolás Juárez. It is important to make this distinction because, as I will argue, ultimately the arbiter of Nativeness, and thus who is coded and legally defined as a Native, is the governance technologies of settler coloniality within the northern bloc.

To be quite clear, this is not in any way a denial of the Indigeneity from relatives to the south. I would never imply that, nor would I ever attempt to, or seek to, remove that from them. They are as dear to me as my relatives from the United States and Canada, and my liberation and the liberation of all Indigenous people in the northern bloc must be understood, I passionately believe, as a single continent-spanning struggle from Baffin Island to Tierra del Fuego. But the fact that one may be Native in Mexico, Venezuela, Dominica, Peru, Brazil or anywhere does not become transferred when one is a resident of the northern bloc. What I think I am trying to say here is that they may be Natives, but they do not transform into the Natives who are the targets of U.S. and Canadian eliminative violence when the border is crossed. The logics of settler-colonial elimination within the northern bloc, especially in this post-frontier era of biopolitical governance and control, are not applied to them, though they may be just as exposed to the violence of racist settlers in a direct and very personal way as any other non-white racialized and colonized people within these artificial-yet-real borders.

Returning to the discussion though, it is precisely because of this difference between the micro- and macro-physics of power within the functioning of the settler state apparatus and its attendant civil society that I would argue, following Wolfe (2016) that the hypersoluble and inherently unstable nature of Native racial-content functions ultimately as a biogenic extension of frontier homicide within the racial, juridical and philosophical imaginings of settler power. Consequently, I would not go as far as Juárez

(2016) as to say that with regards to *White Natives* (to use a term I strongly disagree with but derived from Juárez's discussions) the technologies of genocide view the project as complete. This is because, via biopolitical governance technologies such as blood quantum in the United States, and the tiered and regulated system of Indian Status within the Indian Act in Canada, the state is still producing juridically-coded Indians, and therefore, I would argue, individuals who are racially-coded as Natives within the *macro-structures* of settler sovereign power, even if they do not have to bear the experience of visual interpellation as Native due to various phenotypic expressions, such as the already discussed skin-colour or stereotypically Native fascial features. Given these people's ability to continue to produce Native children within the legal field, the juridical technologies of genocide continue to be constantly arrayed against them.

And here there is an additional point to be made: if we follow, and I do, the thinking of Frank B. Wilderson, III, that the ultimate idiom of power is violence (2010) then we have to ask who or what is the ultimate arbiter of violence within the northern bloc of settler colonialism? I argue that quite simply the ultimate arbiter of violence is the sovereign power of the settler-colonial state. While I would agree with Wolfe (2016) that, from the perspective of the Indigenous, it is often difficult to tell the difference between the settler state itself and the individual or even community of settlers whom have often functioned as the former's principal means of expansion, ultimately the core of settler power lies within the relative autonomy of the state.

This renders the expressions of everyday street-level racism and violence by individual settlers still important to understand, but ultimately not *the* issue of greatest importance when it comes to investigating and theorizing the nature and *raison d'être* of settler-colonial violence. Again, this is not an attempt to belittle or to dismiss the violence of the street-level encounter with a racist police officer, a racist security guard, or just an everyday racist settler. I would never dismiss that. I could never dismiss that. Too many people I know and love have been victims of such violence. Horrible violence. I have seen how it has impacted their lives, and in turn how it has impacted everyone close to them, including myself. Even from my own experience, I know that unease of feeling that such violence is about to befall you. This is why I cross the street in downtown Kitchener. But as horrifying as that violence is, it is not, so I argue, the inner violence of the settler-colonial logic of elimination. Rather it is an outward manifestation of social, political, cultural, and yes, even ontological, structures that are rooted in the deeper violences that define settler colonialism proper to such: *the elimination of Indigenous peoples as peoples*.

Thus, it becomes even more important to recognize and be clear that those people who possess Indian Status, regardless of their phenotypic expression, are, in the eyes of the colonial state of the northern bloc, absolutely coded as part of the so-called "Native race." It must also be likewise noted that this is separate from, though not entirely

unrelated to, belonging to anyone given specific First Nations, Native American, Métis or Inuit community.

What is at the core of this issue is how discussions such as these—the issue, or rather even the possibility of, existing, and living, as “white-passing” Indigenous persons—occludes the question of the existence of people who, despite being readily phenotypically identified as Natives within the visual field (due to skin tone, hair colour/length/style, facial features etc.) are not juridically coded as Natives by the governance technologies of the colonial state in the northern bloc. These are people and lived experiences that are far more common than I believe the current discourse within the Indigenous community, both offline and online, gives credence to. Further, they are persons, communities and lived-experiences which find the roots of their existence precisely because the technologies of elimination function along the lines of a hypersoluble and unstable Native racial-content.

In excavating this I feel that it is also necessary to set aside the question of these people’s Indigeneity. In my own conscious everyday social, political, familial, and personal relations and actions I accept their Indigeneity. This is something which for me extends beyond not just non-Status and unenrolled Indians to include our relatives who are citizens of Nations that possess only state-level recognition and those who lack recognition because they never surrendered, as well as to our many, if not most, of our Genízaro, southern & Caribbean Native, Afro-indigenous, Freedmen and decolonizing

Mestizo/Mestiço family. I feel that it is important to bracket this question, while also recognizing and noting my own personal feelings on it, because I do not believe it is relevant to the broader discussion that I am making here.

3.2.1 Native Biopolitics: It is in the Blood

Looking at the specific question of non-Status Indians in Canada the reasons that these people exist within the kind of racial-limbo that they do ultimately traces back to colonial-state arbitration of Nativeness within this country and how that has been ever more deeply coded by regimes of biopolitical control. For example, as discussed extensively by Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson in her book *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, prior to the passing of Bill C-31 in 1985, a Status Indian woman who married any person lacking Indian Status lost theirs (2014). While C-31 did end what was a euro-patriarchal preference within the Indian Act's provisions of Status inheritance, the effects of the pre-C-31 era, and other, still existing legal constructs such as the so-called "Double Grandmother Rule" have continued to function by moving people out of the racial category of Native and merging them irrevocably into the settler mainstream, to borrow the phrasing of Wolfe (2013a). In this way, following Scott Lauria Morgensen, "Settler colonialism is exemplary of the processes of biopower" (2011:52),

and further that “Adjudicating life for Indigenous people defines settler law’s extension of elimination” (62)³⁷.

Non-Indian	1/16	1/8	3/16	1/4	5/16	3/8	7/16	1/2	9/16	5/8	11/16	3/4	13/16	7/8	15/16	4/4	
1/16	1/32	1/16	3/32	1/8	5/32	3/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32
1/8	1/16	3/32	1/8	5/32	3/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16
3/16	3/32	1/8	5/32	3/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32
1/4	1/8	5/32	3/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8
5/16	5/32	3/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32
3/8	3/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16
7/16	7/32	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32
1/2	1/4	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4
9/16	9/32	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32
5/8	5/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16
11/16	11/32	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16	27/32
3/4	3/8	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16	27/32	7/8
13/16	13/32	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16	27/32	7/8	29/32
7/8	7/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16	27/32	7/8	29/32	15/16
15/16	15/32	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16	27/32	7/8	29/32	15/16	31/32
4/4	1/2	17/32	9/16	19/32	5/8	21/32	11/16	23/32	3/4	25/32	13/16	27/32	7/8	29/32	15/16	31/32	4/4
1/32	1/64	3/64	5/64	7/64	9/64	11/64	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64
3/32	3/64	5/64	7/64	9/64	11/64	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64
5/32	5/64	7/64	9/64	11/64	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64
7/32	7/64	9/64	11/64	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64
9/32	9/64	11/64	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64
11/32	11/64	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64
13/32	13/64	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64
15/32	15/64	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64
17/32	17/64	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64
19/32	19/64	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64
21/32	21/64	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64	53/64
23/32	23/64	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64	53/64	55/64
25/32	25/64	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64	53/64	55/64	57/64
27/32	27/64	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64	53/64	55/64	57/64	59/64
29/32	29/64	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64	53/64	55/64	57/64	59/64	61/64
31/32	31/64	33/64	35/64	37/64	39/64	41/64	43/64	45/64	47/64	49/64	51/64	53/64	55/64	57/64	59/64	61/64	63/64

SOURCE: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal Enrollment, app. H.

Figure 1: U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Blood Quantum Chart. Source: *Caught in the Crossfire of Blood Quantum and Fallacious Reasoning*, Chelsea Vowel (2012).

³⁷ I feel it should be pointed out here that this discussion of the Indian Act, and the inheritance of Indian Status, within Canada applies only to those who are juridically recognized under the Indian Act as Indians, and not to Natives broadly conceived and inclusive of the Inuit, Métis and other Indigenous peoples. In this country much confusion tends to follow the fact legal fact that Supreme Court of Canada cases in 1939 and 2016 respectively ruled that Inuit and later Metis and non-Status Indians were “Indians.” These cases though did not deal with Indian Status under the Indian Act, but rather whether or not they were “Indians” with regards to s. 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and thus were to answer the question of whether or not they were the responsibility of the federal or provincial governments (Indians, defined as such, being the responsibility of the federal government). Thus contrary to what many in Canada have come to believe, these rulings, the 2016 *Daniels* case in particular, did not create new Status Indians (Vowel 2016:28). In the United States however both Indians and the Kānaka Maoli are governed under the discursively cognate logics of blood quantum (Kauanui 2008). Regardless, I take these juridical racializing assemblages of Official Nativeness to be paradigmatic of settler-colonial thinking regarding Natives regardless of whether they come under the Indian Act or are governed by blood quantum, because the logics of them have become deeply embedded in popular cultural thinking of Nativeness and what it means to be Native.

Today in Canada this primarily takes place through the still existing procedures of the Indian Act, which, like blood quantum in the United States, functions via constructs of a hypersoluble and unstable Native racial-content. In a, perhaps simplistic, breakdown, within the legal structures of Canada there are essentially two types of Indian Status: 6(1) and 6(2). For individuals possessing one or the other of these Status categories, both of them represent the possession of full Indian Status in terms of state cognition. From the standpoint of technical legal thinking in Canada, there is no such thing as being “half-Indian” or possessing some form of half-status. But there is a difference between these two categories of Indian Status though. Where this essential difference between them lies is in their ability to continue producing Indian children within a given reproductive context.

And I say a given reproductive context here, rather than familial, or kin, or parental pairing, or any other way I could phrase it, not to sound like a dry high school or Freshman biology textbook, as if to point out the purely mechanical aspect of human sexual reproduction, but rather to make the point that this is an eminently biopolitical process. It is the control of reproduction, of the ability to reproduce one’s colonized people, through the bearing of children. It is control over perhaps not of the mechanism of a particular group of people’s sexual reproduction, but certainly of the outcome. It is the exercise of biopower, pure and simple. And here we can see the fundamental unity of racialization and the control of human sexuality (Wolfe 2016:28-29).

Under the current algorithmic configurations of canadian Native law as governed by the Indian Act, a person possessing 6(1) Indian Status is the child of two Status Indians, while a 6(2) is the child of a 6(1) Status Indian and an individual not possessing Status. This is the key difference between these two kinds of Indian Status in Canada. While a 6(2) Indian is not a “half-Indian,” as both 6(1) and 6(2) represent “full Status,” in child-producing pairings between people a person possessing 6(1) Status will always produce another Indian. This is the case whether they have a child with a person possessing 6(1) or 6(2) status, or even someone who has no Status all together. However, the situation is quite different for individuals with 6(2) Indian Status. While a 6(2) within certain parental pairings will produce a Status Indian, namely if the other parent is a person with either 6(1) or 6(2) Status Indian, both of which will produce a child possessing 6(1) Status, in any kind of pairing with a person not possessing Status, their child(ren) will not be an Indian within the legal cognition of the canadian settler-colonial state. Figure 2 gives a visual breakdown of possible parental pairings and the status outcomes of their children within current canadian colonial law:

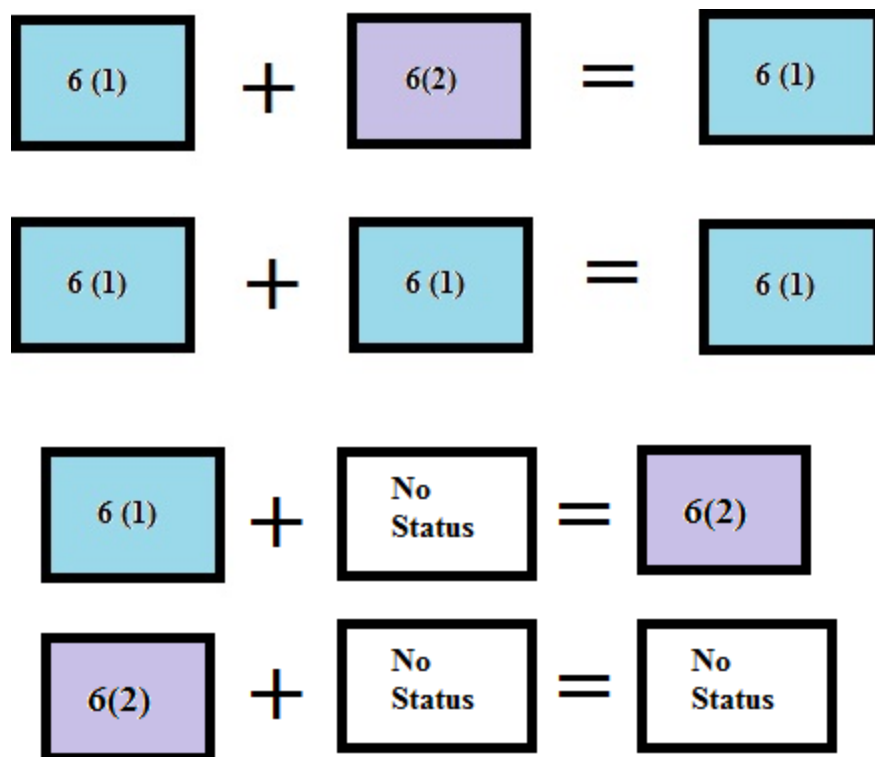


Figure 2: Chart of Canadian Indian Status Inheritance. Not seen here is the combination of a 6(2) parent with another 6(2), which produces a child holding 6(1) Indian Status. Source: *Got Status? Indian Status in Canada, Sort of Explained*, Chelsea Vowel (2011)

This is what I believe to be the essential trick of colonial Canadian law, which is that in the pure production of Status Indian children, the fact that a pairing of a 6(2) with a non-Status person creates a non-Indian child. The salient element here is that persons who are non-Indians in this regard includes many who may be racialized as Indians by the myriad of other means already discussed within this chapter—including the visual schema that Juárez would like to reduce Indianness into—but who for reasons of the Indian Act, past and present, are not in possession of *either* 6(1) or 6(2) Status.

For example, the child of a person possessing 6(2) Status and a person who lacks Status because of the Double Grandmother Rule or whose mother married a non-Status

person prior to 1985, will produce a non-Status child. This is something I actually consider when thinking about the future course of my life here in Canada. I am Menominee, a Nation from south of the Medicine Line. While the United States recognizes the Jay Treaty, meaning that Status Indians from Canada can cross the border, seek work, obtain citizenship and can even go through the motions to be recognized by the U.S. state as an Indian under certain conditions (meaning, if they can prove blood quantum above a certain degree), Canada's Supreme Court has ruled that this country does not inherit Britain's obligations stemming from the treaty (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal People 2016). Consequently, I do not have, and can never have, recognition as an Indian within the legal web of the Canadian state. Thus, if I were to have a child with an Indian of 6(2) status our child would be juridically coded as non-Indian, no matter their phenotypic expression³⁸.

The point I am arguing here is that, contra Juárez, within the racial, juridical and philosophical imaginings of the northern bloc of settler colonialism the technologies of the logic of elimination actually consider the project of removal to be more complete with regards to those individuals who, while they may more easily be visually identifiable as a stereotypical Native, yet lack official State recognition as Native, than it does with

³⁸ The situation would be similar on the other side of the border: if I would to have a child with a Status Indian from Canada, they would have to be able to account for their blood quantum from the Canadian side in order to be recognized as an Indian in the United States. However, as this is, in my experience, not something that many Canadian Indians account for, because they do not have to, it would be a difficult, though not impossible task.

regards to those people who may not quite fit the experience of easy visual interpellation as Native but who continue to possess official recognition from the settler-colonial State as Native. This is important. And this is why I argue it is essential not only to consider the micro-physics of settler-colonial racial power and how they may or may not be deployed during an everyday street-level encounter, but also, and more importantly, the overarching structures of settler sovereign power that covers the entirety of the State and civil society.

In fact, this also speaks in a direct way to part of the root of what I see as Juárez's misunderstanding: his thinking around racialization, and Native racialization in particular, takes its cues in large part from a Latin American context, seen in his reliance upon Quijano. While that array of scholars and theorists is profoundly helpful, to the degree that much of my own analysis is indebted deeply to the thinking around coloniality put forward by Quijano and others, it is a mistake to mechanically transpose Quijano or other's thinking on racialization in one context onto another. This is for the simple fact that the structures, functions, and underlying logic of the colonial matrix of power in Latin America are different from the settler coloniality of the northern bloc, even as they share much in common. This is Wolfe's fundamental point in referring to race(s) and racialization as a *trace* of colonial history; differing regimes of racialization and racial production are projections of distinct colonial experiences (2016). Simply put, the northern bloc as a totality exist as a settler-colonial regime, whereas it is the case in Latin

America that certain countries, or even different regions within countries, may manifest elements, if not a full-on project, of settler-colonial elimination and replacement, in other national and sub-national zones the regime is closer to forms of internal colonialism (Casanova 1965). Therefore, it would be folly to assume that the theorization of racialization found in the work of a Peruvian scholar such as Quijano could be easily drawn upon in order to understand the mechanics and manifestations of Native racialization in Canada or the United States and can only lead to all manner of mistheorization and misunderstanding.

What is at stake here in this argument is the need for a fundamentally materialist analysis of settler colonialism and its modes of racialization as they exist currently in the northern bloc of settler colonialism. What is the role of racialization? What kind of set of material relations between peoples does it emerge from? What role does it play? As above, I believe strongly along the lines of the Wolfe (2016b) that race, racialization, and racism are traces of colonial history. The fact that differential regimes of racialization exist, such as between peoples of Indigenous and African descent within the northern bloc—to say nothing of the differences between the northern bloc and Latin America—is representative of the differential colonial regimes faced by these two groups of peoples, one centred around elimination to facilitate the theft of land and the need to silence the continued existence of alternative and prior sovereign territorialities, and the other around the accumulability as physical human capital and labour exploitation (Wolfe

2016). That is, the differential racialization of Indigenous and African people, while emanating from the same source—the structurally and ontologically overlapped northern settler-colonial slave estates—reflects differential sets of material relations between those peoples and that source.

3.3 Again on the Problems of Ontology

This is something that I believe is lost in approaches to these issues that increasingly base themselves in a turn to the ontological as a method of investigation and theorization, as I attempted to outline and argue in the previous chapter. These kinds of arguments and analysis, such as those exhibited by at least some of the principal theorists of Afropessimism, namely Frank Wilderson, III (2010) and Jared Sexton (2008), can often begin to drift into the territory of a philosophical transcendental idealism in which the proverbial goalposts for analysis can be continuously moved in order to fit whatever socio-political and philosophical paradigm is being elaborated. It is not to devalue the role and the insights of political ontology in these matters, though as I have already discussed I feel that it is important that we consider strongly the problematizing of the concepts and categories of political ontology (including political ontology itself) put forwards by Maldonado-Torres, Gordon and others. For Maldonado-Torres, his elaboration of the concept of race and racialization as sub-ontological difference converges with Wolfe's concept of the trace of history, in placing emphasis upon the

materiality of the relations from which the ideology of race emerged³⁹. Indeed, the concept of race is *ideology par excellence*⁴⁰, though following Weheliye I caution that race is not *only ideology*, but a racializing assemblage that brings together networks of ideology, bodies, desires, forces, velocities, institutions, interests, intensities towards the differentiation of the biological species of humanity into full humanness, Man, and not-

³⁹ My usage of the concept of ideology here is explicitly Marxist in fashion. While all Marxist thinking on ideology in some way traces itself to Marx's own two texts that provide, in perhaps divergent fashions, treatments on the subject—*The German Ideology* (1988) and *Capital Vol. 1* (1977)—my particular thinking on ideology references the line of thought that emanates from French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, primarily in his work *On the Reproduction of Capital: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (2014), and has been continued into today by perhaps his best known interlocutor, Slavoj Žižek, who reads Althusser in combination with Lacanian psychoanalysis in *The Plague of Fantasies* (2009a) and *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2009b). Following this tradition of thinking, I treat ideology as something which obfuscates actual material relations between peoples. In this regard, the ideas of race and racialization, and more importantly the networked workings of racializing assemblages, occlude the material relations of settler colonialism, slavery, exploitation, and other forms of colonial domination. Beyond Althusser's direct work on the topic of ideology and their deployment within a hybrid Lacanian analysis by Žižek, my particular thinking on race as the ideological mask of colonialism is indebted also to Patrick Wolfe who, as Ben Silverstein memorialized him, "insisted on thinking about race as one element of the Althusserian totality, an overdetermined level of social formation," and who brought, contra the theoretical sectarianism of many latter-day Marxists, "poststructuralist rigor to bear on materialist approaches to ideology" (2016:319).

⁴⁰ I believe that an argument can be made that the concept of ontology, at the very least in its deployment as political ontology, is also a primary example ideology. I mean this in that while it may make explicit reference to material social relations as the source for the supposed ontological state of the world that it is attempting to illuminate, as in the case of the work of many Afropessimists or Juárez's Redness Studies, I believe it ultimately actually obfuscates said material social relations by elevating the superstructural to the level of the ontological. Following Lewis Gordon (2018) I consider this move to be an ontological leap which assumes, incorrectly, an ontologically complete social world. Importantly this ignores that the social world, the world of human activity, is *not* ontologically complete precisely because the world is always in motion and because colonized people have always resisted attempts to make the world truly anti-Indigenous or antiblack. Assuming, as some theorists like Jared Sexton (2011) argue we should, that it is easier to assume the world *is* ontologically complete leads to a myriad of problems. Hence its ideological function.

quite-humans and non-humans, and which benefit the former (2014)⁴¹. Regardless, what is key is that we unsettle the way which treating race “as ontological is to recapitulate colonizing thought, and to take colonial ideology as truth” (Kauanui 2017:258).

Thus, while I find the work of Juárez in elaborating what he calls *Redness Studies* (2014) to be extremely interesting and valuable, and further have gleaned significant insight from other Indigenous scholars whom I read as being deeply rooted in this kind of ontological turn, I believe that the same problems are present within their work. Thus, I believe that the foundational place of material relationships between peoples and the structures of power that mediate them is occluded in these kinds of political ontological approaches.

⁴¹ I make this caution, because there is a certain tendency with Marxism—primarily Gramscian, Althusserian, and various post-Marxist varieties—and Marxist-inflected Critical Whiteness Studies to understand the problem of white supremacy, and from that white working-class racism, as *merely* problems of ideology, hegemony, or false-consciousness. As Zak Cope notes, these theories, including how they are deployed within broadly lauded works—such as Ted Allen’s two-volume work on the “invention of the white race” (2012a; 2012b) or David Roediger’s analysis of the “wages of whiteness” (2007)—“typically understand working-class racism as ... inculcated by a cynical ruling class determined to sow division amongst an otherwise unified proletariat or the product of socio-epistemic myopia precluding accurate identification of ‘the enemy’” (2015:50). I agree with Cope that anti-racist attempts to focus on the hegemony and ideological state apparatuses of white supremacy has a certain pragmatic usefulness in disrobing settler state claims to liberal multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and racial inclusion, they ultimately fail because they rely on *a priori* and idealist onto-epistemic and methodological assumptions, such that “Racism, for example, is simply *presumed* to conflict with the real interests of all workers and, thereby, to be a set of ideas disconnected from material circumstances” (50). Not only in this chapter have I strived to demonstrated the deep materiality of the preconditions for the emergence of the sub-ontological difference, of racializing assemblages, and, consequently, whiteness as the hegemonic ontological space at the top of euromodern hierarchies, but I also believe, following certain strands of contemporary Marxist political economy, that the benefits afforded to those granted whiteness, or full humanness, are not just petty racial benefits, but serious and profound. In the economic sphere this is seen in the mass embourgeoisement of white society, even in the chaos of post-Fordist neoliberalism and the death of the Keynesian post-War arrangement of social democracy. Thus, while race is indeed an ideology, it is not just an ideology.

As alluded to earlier, I believe we must ask what the ultimate *raison d'être* for the deployment of the technologies of settler-colonial genocide within the northern bloc is? In answering this question, I think we have to understand the technologies of genocide to be fundamentally technologies of Native removal. Here it is impossible to escape the insights of the late Patrick Wolfe (2016), as well as Indigenous scholars such as Glen Coulthard (2014), Audra Simpson (2014), and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (2008) with regards to the central eliminative logic of settler colonialism. Building upon their lines of historical, sociological, and anthropological investigation I would argue that *Natives are removed to make the land ripe for settlement, which under settler-colonial rubrics is the ultimate goal of the colonial programme*. Ultimately, we can say that Natives are removed because the settler wants the land.

However, beyond this basal drive, there are two reasons why the eliminative logic continues to drive the settler-colonial project following the closure of the frontier period and the final territorial engulfment of Indigenous Nations towards the end of the 19th century. Firstly, and most obviously, there remains Native land that the settler complex wants access to, whether it be for mining and the fracking of resources that lie directly underneath Indian Country, or to build pipelines that cross traditional Native land. The reasons are myriad. While some scholars, such as Ward Churchill (2003) point to the fact that the continuing rump Native landholdings do allow for, in some ways, even greater exploitation given how the juridical constructs of Native land allow for resource

extraction projects to be carried out, and their leftovers and results to be ignored, in ways that would be legally inconceivable on non-Native held land, I would argue that this only delays the eliminative logic of removal, rather than permanently forestalls it. This is especially so in the case where Native self-determination runs counter to these projects in a particularly sharp manner. This was the reason that the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and the Klamath of Oregon were targeted to be the proverbial guinea pigs for the U.S. government policy of termination in the 1950s through to the 1970s.

The second is perhaps less obvious. Here I am referring to how the technologies of elimination continue to be driven forward because the settler-colonial project requires the quieting of the alternative and, more importantly, prior, sovereignties and territorialities of Indigenous Nations. This is because the continued existence of Natives and Native Nations produces a constant existential crisis regarding the legitimacy of settler-colonial sovereign power. Therefore removal continues apace not only because settler colonialism requires Native land as the material basis of its existence, but also because it needs Native removal as part of an ongoing project of substantiating its own legitimacy, even within its own juridical and philosophical imaginary.

Thus, for both of these reasons, the technologies of genocide will continue to be implemented until such a time that there are no more Natives being produced by the juridical machinery of the settler-colonial State. It is precisely because of this structural factor that hypersolubility and instability are the very heart of the nature of Native racial-

content, and the decreasing juridical Nativeness that it brings through the generations and increasing levels of hybridity.

3.3.1 Conquest & the Structural Triangulation of White/Settler/Master

Returning to the question of ontology though, and of the differing colonial regimes and their resultant racializations, there is also another brief point that I think is worth raising, which is that at the centre of this is the question of whiteness, or, as I prefer, white supremacy, and even more aptly, white power. I believe, and I have had this discussion with other scholars, as well as just everyday people, that this centrality is lost, or displaced, sometimes actively and intentionally, by these kinds of theorizations of race that are now being produced. The problem is ultimately a problem of whiteness, and the ability to gain proximity to whiteness.

Simply put, as I alluded to earlier, it is the case that within the political, economic, juridical (and every other "-al" and "-ic": libidinal, ontological, symbolic, epistemological, ideological, philosophical, sociological, historical, etc.) terrain of the northern bloc of settler colonialism, where the settler colony is fully co-extensive with the antiblack slave estate, that the ontological & structural positions of the Settler and the Master are effectively one and the same, notwithstanding the fact that they may have been at different spatiotemporal instances different individuals. In essence, because the settler colony and the slave estate (or whatever a better terminology would be to describe this congenitally merged entity) requires as its base ingredients both Native elimination and

Black/African enslavement. Thus, because these two things are completely coterminous in their construction, the categories of the settler and master become structurally the same. Attaching that to critical race theory and critical whiteness studies in the vein of David Roediger (2017; 2007), J. Sakai (2014) and Steve Martinot (2010), those categories are also key to delineating the boundaries of what we now recognize as whiteness. Thinking through this, what amounts to a structural entanglement, and what it means for any kind of social ontology of race within the northern bloc, I believe that what this amounts to is a conjoined entity I refer to as the "white/settler/master" instead of just "white" or "settler."

This is relevant and important to my thinking here now, on the racialization of Native north americans and the possibility of being "white-passing," because I would argue that structurally speaking, the triangulation of the settler, the master and the white means that it is impossible to speak at a structural level of white-passing Natives, because to say that would effectively mean that you are talking about Natives who are Settlers. Which within the borders of the northern bloc of settler colonialism would be, to be completely honest, total nonsense, and quite obviously so. The same applies to any of the racially taxonomic ways people try to think and talk about this, such as "white-adjacent" or the even worse, in my opinion, "white Native."

Essentially the triangulation of the white/settler/master bars, at a structural level, any real possibility of white-passing. This certainly should have an impact on the

language we use to talk about these topics. Because, going back to the fact there is an intense violence in the street-level encounter with a racist settler when you “look Native,” I do not believe that we can really talk about being “white-passing” or “white-adjacent” and have such a terminology carry any kind of meaning beyond the individual street-level into the actual structures of the settler/master State and its civil society.

Additionally, though this is also outside the bounds of my dissertation work, and perhaps even somewhat controversial given the state that “the discourse,” as it is often jokingly referred to as online, often finds itself in, I think this understanding of settler-colonial social ontology also has implications for how we talk about Native and Black co-entanglement in each other’s oppressions. Chiefly, because of the triangulation of the white/settler/master, and the locking out of Natives from the category of white/settler, then Natives can never really be masters, even as they be implicated in enslavement and antiblack racism, and likewise because of the locking out of Black/African people from the category of white/master, then they can never actually be settlers etc. The latter of these I believe are incredibly important in combatting the antiblackness that is often a very real, and profoundly serious, problem within many Native communities, and which often includes (but is not exclusive to) the mistaken belief that Black people are settlers. It is not to liquidate the fact that we, as colonized peoples, are in fact imbricated in each other’s oppression, but I think it brings back home that these facts are ultimately played out on a political, spatial, and temporal cartography which is coded and overcoded by

assemblages of whiteness. Again, this is a point which I think is lost in a lot of current theorization, which in attempting to de-centre white people (which is good and should be done) ultimately displaces whiteness as an important modality of power within the northern bloc from the actual ordering structures of society.

3.4 Returning & Closing Out

I will close off this chapter though by returning briefly to the question of the identification of one as racially Native within the visual field. In the context of what Canadian scholars Robert Davis and Mark Zannis aptly labelled “the genocide machine” (1973) those who, even as they may be visually coded as Native, lack Native status in the northern bloc of settler colonialism are individuals *who, I would argue, are already removed*. They are already cleared. They, more than individuals who may appear less readily identifiable as Native within some sort of settler visual racial schema yet possess Indian Status, have already been subjected to, and come out the other side of, the genocide machine. Thus, as far as the structural logic of the settler-colonial State are concerned, the biogenic extensions of frontier homicide have already run their course. They are not Natives, even if they fulfil every conceivable visual stereotype of what a Native is supposed to look like. The person is a non-Native, and subsequently not subjected to the same converging vectors of death as someone in possession of Indian Status is on a day-to-day structural level.

To be clear, speaking as someone who, at a bare minimum, presents as non-White in virtually all contexts, but who lacks Status in Canada, and who knows to cross the street at times, I am in no way here dismissing the micro-level experiences of racism and violence that come with racial identification as a Native within the visual field. These violences are very real, and they cause a significant degree of harm and trauma for those who have to constantly fear a street-level encounter with a racist settler. However, if anything, this chapter is a cautioning about the drawing of equivalences between that particular kind of precisely targeted violence, up to and including homicidal violence, upon a certain kind of Indigenous body whose identity is interpolated by a visual hailing under a visual sign, with settler colonialism proper to such as violence which seeks to eliminate Native peoples in toto. In this, I agree with Wolfe that “the confinement of eliminatory discourse to the frontier,” which is how I essentially view this reduction to the visual, as a kind of frontier artefact, “limits the equivalence between genocide and settler colonialism to the settler-colonial strategy in which that equivalence is most straightforwardly manifest” (2008:105). Further, I believe, as I think I have shown in this chapter, that Wolfe is correct again when he adds that “this inhibits—possibly even precludes—investigation of the relationship between genocide and other eliminatory strategies” (105).

Wolfe names just a few of these other strategies, some of which I have discussed here, while others will be taken up on the chapters to come, including, “officially

encouraged miscegenation, the breaking down of native title into alienable individual freeholds, native citizenship, child abduction, religious conversion, and a whole range of cognate biocultural assimilations" (103). Importantly, this is contra non-Indigenous theorists who have attempted to tackle Indigenous racialization without taking into account the specificities of settler-colonial modalities of domination and elimination, such as Jared Sexton, who, following this distorted path, is led into making the frankly outrageous assertion that Native miscegenation with whites is a signposting for racial affirmation and progress (2008:200-202). Sexton in this line of thinking also commits the same essential error that Juárez does early in his discussion, which is to seemingly ignore the distinction between a Luso-Hispanic model of colonialism and coloniality, with the settler colonialism of the anglo northern bloc. Indeed, Sexton leans heavily on the notion of *mestizaje/mestiçagem* from that modally distinct colonial experience, going as far as to describe it as the affirmation of libidinal desire and sexual contact between Natives and Europeans on the eastern seaboard (202).

There are many things that can be said here, not least of which is that the *mestizaje/mestiçagem* paradigm is not really applicable to the northern bloc, not even in the specific confines of Canada, where, rather than leading to proximity with whiteness, the cognate (linguistically that is) process of *métissage* lead to the ethnogenesis of a post-contact Indigenous group on the Plains with the Métis. What Sexton misses, in his quest to displace white supremacy, as a traditionally conceived hegemonic modality of power,

with a multiracial/intermixed antiblackness, is that miscegenation vis-à-vis Natives, which must consider the biopolitically governed hypersoluble nature of racialized Nativeness, actually affects elimination, as noted by Wolfe (2006; 2008; 2016), Morgensen (2011) and others. What Sexton misconstrues as racial affirmation for Nativeness through an assumed proximity to whiteness, supposedly through access to the sign of whiteness, is actually annihilation and engulfment under the sign of whiteness.

Speaking of Native access to the sign of whiteness under the legal regimes and racializing assemblages of the northern bloc, Alexander Weheliye notes aptly that accessing this sign necessarily comes at the cost of one's Nativeness, and that extending this supposed privilege to Indigenous people did not, and indeed has not, prevented either of the settler-colonial nation-states of the northern bloc from instituting and carrying out all manner of genocidal policies (2014:78). Indeed, as he and many others have noted, this access to whiteness for Indigenous subjects coming at the cost of the death of the Native—whether physically, culturally, politically, or symbolically—through different modalities of eliminative violence is perhaps best summed up in the oft-cited organizing motto of the American boarding schools and Canadian residential schools for Native children: “kill the Indian, save the man.” Indeed, Man here is an apt choice of words, considering Man's placement as the hegemonic form of human existence under universalized ethos of euro-western liberal-bourgeois humanism, and Weheliye, drawing on Wynter and Spillers, refers to the as the “genocidal shackles of Man” (2014:4).

Arguing against the perspective of Sexton, and more broadly Critical Race Theory which has often elided how racializing assemblages have been applied to Indigeneity, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui quite aptly notes:

By failing to consider how the racialization of indigenous peoples, especially through the use of blood quantum classification, in particular follows ... a “genocidal logic,” rather than simply a logic of subordination or discrimination, critical race theory fails to consider how whiteness constitutes a project of disappearance for Native peoples rather than signifying privilege (2008:10-11).

Indeed, as she continues to argue:

Mixed racial family histories have been routinely evoked to disqualify Natives who don't measure up for entitlements and benefits; thus this “inauthentic” status of Natives is both a desired outcome of assimilation and also a condition of dispossession (2008:11).

Indeed, even the contestably Indigenous Andrea Smith, herself a major target of critique for Sexton (2016), directly criticizes Sexton for simply not understanding, or disregarding, the fact that the United States and, I would argue, the northern bloc as a generality, is governed by a sign regime of white supremacy under not only logics of antiblackness, but also Indigenous genocide. She notes, regarding his move to displace direct white supremacy by a regime of multiracialism/multiculturalism, that “with an expanded notion of the logic of settler colonialism, his analysis could resonate with indigenous critiques of mestizaje, whereby the primitive indigenous subject always disappears into the more complex, evolved mestizo subject (2012:73). Bluntly, she notes that this is a result of an analysis where “Native genocide is relegated to the past so that the givenness

of settler colonialism today can be presumed" (72) and in this presumption of the genocide and elimination of Native peoples as a basic precondition for the establishment of settler society, these analyses can only "misread the logics of anti-indigenous racism" (72). Reading Smith, Kauanui, and Weheliye together with Wolfe, and against Sexton and Juarez, we can see that the pale promise of Native access to whiteness is not, in fact, racial affirmation, or even something that is genuinely possible as such access requires the death of the Nativeness proper to such, but rather is an example of what Denise Ferreira da Silva refers to as racial engulfment into the white self-determining subject (2007).

I believe that part of the theoretical problem here is a continuous recourse, to borrow a term from the toolbox of Deleuze and Guattari, to arborescent modes of thinking that insist on verticality, totalization, and binaristic dualism, rather than horizontality, connection, and relationality (1987). To think back to my discussion of Agamben's "scrupulous eurocentrism" in his theorization of the concentration camp as the Axis Mundi of modernity, I do not think there is, or can be, and thus do not attempt to establish, a reducibility in racializing assemblages in the northern bloc of settler colonialism to some originary act of racialization from which all others flow, being Nativeness or Blackness. Thinking of the frontier, the plantation, and the camp (whether Nazi, the prison industrial complex, or today's immigrant detention centres), none of them are reducible to any of the others, nor commensurable with one another, but they

are relational. Rhizomatically they are all mutually constitutive of the sign regime of whiteness, of the ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man, instituted through the declaration of the sovereign exception, and as Weheliye says, “different properties of the same racializing juridical assemblage” function to “differently produce both black and native subjects as aberrations from Man and thus not-quite-human” and anoint “those individualized subjects who are deemed deserving with bodies even while this assemblage continually enlists new and/or different groups to exclude, banish, or exterminate from the world of Man” (2014:79).

Further, while miscegenation for Natives affects the biogenic extension of frontier homicide through dilutable racial content in the racializing juridical assemblage of settler colonialism, its positive dimensions (as Wolfe always reminds us there are both negative and positive dimensions, in a non-ethical use of those words, to settler colonialism) allows the white/settler/master to absorb and claim the accoutrements of Indigeneity, up to and including claim over the land through genetic hypodescent (Leroux 2019; Gaudry & Leroux 2017; Morgensen 2011). Combined with the assumed total annihilation of Indigenous peoples, this element of the logic of elimination allows settlers to believe that they have “become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous—land, resources, indigenous spirituality, or culture” (Smith 2006:68)

For the Native, under settler-colonial regimes of biopolitical governmentality, there is only something to be lost through miscegenation. Though this is not a moral

judgement on my part against Natives who choose to engage in racially intermixed sexual and romantic relations—I am in no way opposed to people finding love, companionship, or even just sex where they can, especially at this stage of gig-ified, precarious, and anxious depression inducing late capitalism/colonialism, and, plus, sometimes there is just no accounting for who you fall in love with—it is a statement about the machinery through which elimination continues following the formal end of the frontier and its most insidiously violent forms. Indeed, the recognition of this machinery by Natives often affects a perceived need to “marry Native”, a pressure which is most specifically exerted upon Indigenous women (Charleyboy 2014).

At the same time as all of this, exclusion and alienation from our home communities that often comes with a lack of Status are also very real, and very violent experiences. This is also an aspect of the Urban-Reserve/Reservation divide that is a very real problem in Indian Country, but which is not the focus of this chapter. However, as a non-Status Indian, I have a much lower chance of my children being taken from me by a canadian settler-colonial State which in its cognitions labels a parent’s possession of Indian Status as a threat to child welfare. I do not, cannot even, live on a reservation or reserve where the water is undrinkable, toxins fill the air, birth ratios are skewed due to environmental poisons seeping into the very DNA of the community, homes are literally physically unstable, essential services are lacking in the extreme, and children as young

as 9 years old are taking their own lives because to be born Native is to be born into a life quite often defined by misery, alienation and hopelessness (Belcourt 2017a).

For those who do possess formal settler-colonial State recognition as Native, which means they are racialized as Native within the juridical machine of the colonial State, these are daily existential fears. “Will I die today?” “Will the air be breathable today?” “Will my children be taken from me today?” “Will the water not be flammable today?” “Will someone I love take their own life today?” These violences are real, they are crushing, and they are genocidal in their ultimate action and direction. They are what transforms Red Life into bare life and make the Native incapable of being grieved. They afflict everyone, whether they are, or are not, #YourNativeStereotype.

Chapter 4. Interlude: Community, Pretendians, & Heartbreak

Happiness in other people makes me suspicious.
Happiness in myself makes me apprehensive.

– Eugene Thacker, *Infinite Resignation*

I don't much like the word community, I am not even sure I like the thing ... If by community one implies, as is often the case, a harmonious group, consensus, and fundamental agreement beneath phenomena of discord or war, then I don't believe in it very much ... There is doubtless this irrepressible desire for a "community" to form but also to know its limit—and for its limit to be its opening. One it thinks it has understood, taken in, interpreted, kept the text, then something of this latter, something in it that is altogether other escapes or resists the community, it appeals for another community, it does not let itself be totally interiorized I the memory of a present community. The experience of mourning and promise that institutes that community but also forbids it from collecting itself, this experience stores in itself the reserve of another community that will sign, otherwise, completely other contracts.

– Jacques Derrida, *Points ... Interviews, 1974-1994*

My Nativeness, my Menomineeness, is complicated. That is very much the point of my writing, and why I follow so closely Avery Gordon's assertion that "life is complicated" is a statement of great theoretical and analytical import (2008). More than anything I hope that this is the lesson, the message, and "point of my research" that I am conveying, have conveyed, and continue to convey. I grew up in Bermuda; you know this by now. I was only able to spend time with my Native family, on my/our Rez, and around our culture during the summers of my childhood and pre-teen years; you know this by now. I have not travelled back to the Rez in over a decade, and the last time was a time of

family tragedy; you know this by now. I consider myself both Menominee, because of how I was raised and who I was raised by, as well as diasporic, reconnecting, and liminally enrolled with a kind of half-status that is complicated to explain to outsiders, especially non-Natives, and non-Menominee, again because of how, and where, I was raised. you know this by now also.

4.1 Native Affects

Being Native is not always easy. The unfinished projects of conquest, genocide, and settlement circumscribe and delimit the potentiality of Native life. They are arrayed as such to make a world where the basic ontological condition is that Natives must cease to exist. At times, speaking for myself, but also speaking of what I know to be experience of many, it is a project of world-creation such that the fires of what we experience daily can overwhelm us, and where there seems to be at times no real reason to get out of bed in the morning. Depressive, anxious, post-traumatic stress and obsessive-compulsive disorders seem to be the watch-words for many a Native's mental health, where youth suicide epidemics leave so many at a such a loss for words that any attempt to enunciate cannot seem to do anything other than understate and underwhelm.

Sometimes the only way that seems to work to keep one making forward progress through the muck and mud is to try and joke about it. A kind of morbid and dark Native humour. Here is one that I posted to Facebook regarding my own struggles with depression and anxiety while writing this interlude cum chapter:

Is it:

- A. Depression & anxiety as diagnosable, medicalizable, and chemically, as well as psychotherapeutically, treatable conditions?
 - B. The weight of professional pressures, creative anxiety, political hopelessness, and intellectual blockage that seem to be bed-fellows of finishing highly personal academic work?
 - C. The sense of "feeling bad" which constitutes the affective condition of a post-Fordist, neoliberal capitalist realism the colonizes all aspects of everyday life, even slowly degrading our ability to sleep, and which is seemingly set on racing over the anthropocene cliff towards climatic catastrophe and the memetic transmission of cancelled futures?
 - D. Trying to live life as an Native in the midst of a world-building project of conquest and settler colonialism that seeks the total cessation of Native life, peoplehood, territoriality, and worldviews—where death hangs in the air like a persistent rumour—in sign, political, and libidinal economies of slow death and letting die?
 - E. All of the Above?⁴²
- (The answer is E, "All of the Above")

Ann Cvetkovich writes:

for many of us (and "us" that includes a range of social positions and identities in need of specification), everyday life produces feelings of despair and anxiety, sometimes extreme, sometimes throbbing along at a low level, and hence barely discernible from just the way things are, feelings that get internalized and named, for better or for worse, as depression. It is customary, within our [NB: euro-western] therapeutic culture, to attribute these feelings to bad things that happened to us when we were children, to primal scenes that have not yet been fully remembered or articulated or worked through. It's also common to explain them as the result of a biochemical disorder, a genetic mishap for which we shouldn't blame ourselves. I tend to see such master narratives as problematic displacements that cast a social problem as a personal

⁴² I am making allusions here not only to Ann Cvetkovich's work in *Depression: A Public Feeling* (2012), Mark Fisher's *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, and Jonathan Crary's *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (2014), all works that are not always the easiest to read, but which have influenced my thinking on these questions.

problem in one case and as a medical problem in the other, but moving to an even larger master narrative of depression as socially produced often provides little specific illumination and even less comfort because it's an analysis that frequently admits of no solution. Saying capitalism (or colonialism or racism) is the problem does not help me get out of bed in the morning (2012:14-15).

I agree with her much in content, though perhaps less in feeling. I agree very much so with Cvetkovich that there is something larger at play in terms of depression, my depression, than just a mere biochemical or personal problem. Indeed, what she describes as the problematic master narratives in that regard find much confluence with Mark Fisher's "privatization of stress" that has taken root firmly under the current regimes of neoliberal and capitalist realist globalization (2009:19). I further agree with Cvetkovich that moving the frame of analysis up the structural ladder towards capitalism, colonialism, racism (and, I am quite sure, we can here add others things such as sexism, homophobia, transphobia and all of their possible permutations and crossings-over such as misogynoir and transmisogyny) does not help to provide a reason to get out of bed in the morning when one is suffering. However I do believe that it can lead us down a path of uncovering a deeper affective functioning within our current society, following Fisher's line of thought that "The 'mental health plague' in capitalist [NB: and, we should add here for our specificity: settler-colonial societies] would suggest that, instead of being the only system that works, capitalism is inherently dysfunctional, and that the cost of it appearing to work is very high" (2009:19). This is not an answer to why one should get out of bed in the morning, or even a motivation that one should, but I do

believe that this thinking helps to pierce the veil around the Real that is the current arrangement of capitalist and colonial realism. If our day-to-day sadness is not to lead down a road to future personal happiness, then perhaps it can at least lead us towards that point.

To return to my joke though, maybe that is a little too morbid for a dissertation, but I am far from the only Native person on social media who shares jokes like that. Indeed, I only post like that on exceedingly rare occasions. As I have said before it is difficult to split myself open in front of others. Some combination of settler coloniality and cisheteropatriarchy always tell me that others do not care, and that I would also be overly melodramatic to even broach the subject. Twinned demons to have on one's shoulders for sure. However, perhaps luckily for me, others, with far higher subscriber and follower counts, post materials such as that nearly daily and I am able to find something vicariously through them, through reshares, likes, and comments.

I spoke once before about the *affective burden* that afflicts Native life, and we find it here again. It is all so visceral, and it is omnipresent. Like a knot in the stomach, a weakness in the legs, a lump in the throat. What even is a life that bears such a weight? Where the last thought before sleep and the first after waking is often "what is even the fucking point?" One does not have to live within or be from Belcourt's site of bio-social and biopolitical catastrophe and perpetual mourning that is the Rez in order to feel this way either (2017). For many Natives, this is the basic affective preconditioning of living

a Red life under the regimes and technologies of settler coloniality. Perhaps here the problem is one of an expectation of happiness itself, or more precisely what we imagine happiness to be. Thinking through Sara Ahmed, and also back to the first epigraph for this chapter from Eugene Thacker, I certainly believe that there is a kind of *colonial melancholia*, or a *colonial pessimism*, that is part of the affective working of being Native under these colonial relations of power and knowledge. While it may come across as morose, and perhaps it is, I echo Ahmed in believing, at least insofar as these conditions of life are concerned, that the promise of happiness (and, to echo her in the form of a question, cannot the civilizing-colonizing mission itself be reinterpreted and re-described as a kind of happiness mission (2010b:125) not just for the colonizer, but in some twisted, horrifying way for the colonized also?) can become:

a technology of self-production, which can intensify bad feelings by keeping them on hold. Or, if someone feels bad and encounters somebody being cheerful, it can feel like a pressure and can even be painful: as if that person is trying to 'jolly you up.' ... Happiness is precarious and even perverted because it does not reside within objects or subjects (as a form of positive residence) but is a matter of how things make an impression (2010b:43-44).

And goddamnit does living a colonized life more often than not make a bad impression. Trapped in the dialectic between hope and hopelessness, it is a struggle to not become complacent (Duggan & Muñoz 2010). However, there is a point in telling that bad joke, and of talking briefly, again, about the struggles of myself and countless other Indigenous peoples, and that is because there is something that many of us turn to for support, help,

and just a simple feeling of not being alone. We turn, or at least attempt to turn if it is available to us, to our Native communities.

But what happens when we cannot? What happens when our relations to our community/ies are frayed and fractured in such a way that our continuing ability to access them is damaged? What happens when that fraying and fracturing is not because of us, or even because of our community/ies as some inherent condition of their existence, but because of the micro-physical intrusions of settler coloniality into our innermost and most intimate spaces?

4.2 Community and the Parasitic “Insider”

This is the real point here, that is not always easy, and not for the reasons that may seem most obvious to most, such as lack of proximity to a community, be it urban or rural, or the perhaps exceedingly small size of a community that might be present. Rather, the complication that I want to speak of here is also the final wrinkle in the first arch of this story that is this dissertation. What I want to dwell on is the not new, but seemingly growing, or at least growing in attention, phenomenon of what I and many other Indigenous people have for some time called *Pretendians*, as well as the related, and very

often overlapping, phenomenon of *Fétis*⁴³. This not-new phenomenon is, to put it perhaps overly simply, is the practice of settler individuals (and sometimes others, but primarily settlers) putting forth a false Indigenous identity, and placing themselves out in front of the world as Indigenous people, and sometimes even attempting to assert themselves in some way as a kind of voice of their supposed peoples.

Quite often this seems to be a cynical ploy towards some kind of anti-Indigenous political programme, as Darryl Leroux and others have demonstrated quite convincingly and handily regarding the explosion of groups in eastern Ontario, Québec, the Maritimes and parts of New England (2019) where quite often the absolutely astronomical growth in new claimants of Indigeneity can be clearly traced back to white supremacist, anti-Native, political projects in opposition to Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The assumption of Indigenous identity, through the growth of the so-called “Eastern Métis” movement, is clearly, at least in terms of its foundational leadership and organizational nature, antagonistic at a fundamental level towards Indigenous peoples and livelihoods. It is a deeply duplicitous move. What we are seeing now though in eastern Ontario, Québec, the Maritimes, and parts of New England is hardly new. For example, during the

⁴³Portmanteaus of “Pretend” and “Indian” and “Fake” and Métis, respectively. Pretendian, as a descriptive term, has been around most of my life, to the extent that I am not sure that placing its origin on the timeline is readily possible. *Fétis* on the other hand appears much more recent, being used as shorthand in discussions around the issue of so-called “Eastern Métis” and others who have appropriated Métis in the wake of the Powley and Daniels decisions in the Canadian Supreme Court. If there is a term to describe whites/settlers who falsely claim to be Inuit, and I know of at least one local Kitchener-Waterloo person who my Inuit friends are suspicious of, I do not know it.

allotment era in Oklahoma, when the collective landholdings of the Cherokee, Choctaw, and other nations that had been death-marched to the former “Indian Territory,” were forcibly broken up and privatized through the intervention of the U.S. settler-colonial State, many settlers engaged in deceit, claiming kinship to these nations in order to access the land (Debo 1973; Stremlau 2011). Over time many of these lies became forgotten as such, transformed into mythological family histories about supposed distant Native ancestors. But they remain lies just the same, lies that harm Indigenous peoples, and lies that only a settler could tell.

These myths can cling though, stuck to people before they are even conceived. They are born with them, raised with them, and for some, they can become a very core aspect of who they are. I make no claims to people of this sort being any kind of meaningful strata within the Pretendian milieu; I am probably far too cynical and jaded for that. However, much as I want to, I also cannot believe, because of this, that it is the case for all people that when they engage in Pretendian performance that they are intentionally setting out to harm Indigenous people. George Tinker (2004), Vine Deloria Jr. (1988), Stephen Pearson (2013), and Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) have all shown and discussed the fact that rumours of distant Indigenous ancestry are pervasive within settler society as family and community mythologies. While overall these mythologies converge with one of the positive dimensions of Wolfe’s logic of elimination, in the *self-indigenization of the settler*, and quite often function as what Tuck and Yang refer

to as “moves to settler innocence” (2012), at the level of the individual, I do not believe that it can be helped in some ways if one is raised to believe certain mythologies of place and origin. The hope, obviously, is that eventually they may come to realize the falseness of their beliefs, and additionally the impact that these false beliefs have on actually-existing Indigenous peoples, but I find it hard to make an initial ethical judgement in those kinds of cases.

Regardless, as I said, there is an affect, intended or not, malicious, or not, on Indigenous communities. And again, this is not something new, and neither is it all that uncommon if one knows where to look, knows the people to speak to, or the websites to follow. For those of us in academia with a foot in, or knowledge of, Native & Indigenous Studies, at least two major controversies come to my mind immediately. The first one I came to know was Ward Churchill, the now blackballed scholar who, still, claims Cherokee descent and a kinship relationship with the United Keetoowah Band of the Cherokee Nation on the reverse cover of all his published books. Churchill is the author of many books on a wide range of topics from the mechanics of genocide, to ongoing Indigenous resistance. He has been a high-level member of the American Indian Movement’s Colorado cell, and regularly finds himself listed on essential left-wing reading lists. While I have certainly taken a lot from Churchill over the years, and indeed

my shelf contains almost every book he has written⁴⁴, I have also been aware of the controversy surrounding his identity for almost as long. For much of my awareness of it, I did not want to believe, because his work was so key to my formative years as a political Native, so I simply compartmentalized it for a long time, unwilling to face it.

More recently, we have also witnessed the downfall of the formally well-recognized and well-respected scholar and Indigenous feminist author Andrea Smith, whose work on the interrelations between sexual violence and the genocide of Indigenous peoples was for so long absolutely essential reading for many an aspiring Indigenous scholar, or grassroots activist in the trenches of decolonial resistance (Smith 2010; 2015)⁴⁵. Like Churchill, Smith also claimed Cherokee descent, and also like him, controversies surrounding her Nativeness also dogged her for many years, though, at least in my experience, it was never as near the surface of discussions around and about

⁴⁴ A glancing look at this dissertation's bibliography will quickly show that I actually cite several. I, I will admit, always feel ambivalent now about citing Churchill these days. There were times that I would have done it without hesitation, but those days are long since passed. Now I only retain my personal set of Churchill's books (without having added any of his newer collections and newer editions of old titles) only really for reference purposes. Churchill's work, I maintain, remains potent, at least insofar as his various historiographies of genocide and settler colonialism are concerned. He always has had a way with words, and of viscerally placing one alongside the dead and injured victims of U.S. and Canadian colonialism, and so, for those reasons, and those reasons alone, references to his various works continue to find their way into my writing. Perhaps one day this will change; perhaps it should.

⁴⁵ My continued referencing of Smith's work follows similar contours, and evinces similar anxieties, as my uses of Churchill's work, as noted in the previous footnote.

her as it was for Churchill⁴⁶. I had heard the whispers because I knew people who knew or worked with Smith, though I myself never did. Still, the apparent truth of her non-Indigenous ancestry eventually caught up with Smith during the spring and summer of 2015, leading to the rapid dissemination of the hashtag #AndreaSmithIsNotCherokee on social media platforms, and the circulation of an open letter by a number of prominent Indigenous women, queer and feminist scholars addressing the matter (2015).

Beyond the walls of the Ivory Tower, these kinds of controversies have broken into, or been birthed entirely into the mainstream. One can think of the controversy that erupted over the acclaimed (I wish I could add “formerly” to that) Canadian author Joseph Boyden, whose account of his Indigenous ancestry has—unlike Smith and Churchill, who always stuck to a claim of Cherokee descent—shifted many times to many different nations over the years (Barrera 2016). The revelations about Boyden I can say

⁴⁶ This is, of course, strictly speaking from my own experiential perspective. Given my association for many years with a kind of haunted Marxist-Leninist activism, I was always aware of, and at various junctures rather supportive of, the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM split in the early 1990s into two competing factions, the American Indian Movement—Grand Governing Council, and the Confederation of Autonomous Chapters of the American Indian Movement. Churchill, along with other major figures such as the late Russel Means and Osage theologian George Tinker were associated with “Autonomous AIM” and due to the extreme bad-blood that existed between the two claimants to the AIM name and legacy, the AIM—GGC made their suspicions of Churchill’s of Nativeness explicit. For clarity though, AIM—GGC also has a long-standing bad-jacketing campaign against Churchill, by which I mean (using left-wing activist jargon) that more than believing, and making said beliefs well-known, that Churchill is non-Native, they believe him to actually be a government agent (AIM—GGC website n.d.). I consider this secondary claim to be much more spurious however, and consider it be a hold-over and manifestation of what I personally consider to be the worst elements of First World and northern bloc “micro-Leninism” (the tendency of very small left-wing organizations to believe that they are, and promote themselves as such, the vanguard organization which will usher in revolution). Regardless of such, this is why I was aware for much longer of the questions regarding Churchill. Perhaps if I had been more directly involved in Indigenous feminist activism or attentive to its associated scholarship then the suspicions regarding Smith would have reached me sooner.

from my own conversations, have really hurt Indigenous people, because he presented himself through his bestselling writings as a voice of the Indigenous experience in Canada, while all the while he lied about his connection to Indigenous people.

Politically, south of the border, it is also impossible I feel to have not heard or read of the debacle that has been Democratic Senator, and 2020 Presidential hopeful, Elizabeth Warren's claim that she is Cherokee⁴⁷. It is probably not necessary to recount that entire story, including President Trump's blithely racist act of calling her Pocahontas while speaking in front of a group of surviving World War II Native code-talkers (Merica 2017). Showing her own reactive tendencies, Warren, rather than responding in a heartfelt and meaningful way to concerns from Indigenous peoples in the United States, went as far as to take a DNA test to prove her Indigeneity (Johnson 2018), a postmodern settler-colonial practice if ever there was one, and which Indigenous scholars such as Kim TallBear have

⁴⁷ While Churchill claims a connection to a genuine Cherokee community in the form of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, and both Smith and Warren claim a kind of generic Cherokee identity, it is worth noting the scale of the problem in the United States in terms of actual organized groupings claiming some kind of Cherokee-ness. By my own last count, which is admittedly not carried out in any kind of manner other than in casual passing, there are over two hundred groups in that country making claims to being Cherokee, quite often organizing in states far from either the traditional Cherokee territories of the American southeast, or Oklahoma, the terminal point of the Trail of Tears. There are, for example, organizations such as the "Cherokees of California", the "Cherokee Tuscarora Nation of Turtle Island" in Washington, D.C., the "Cherokee Nation of New Jersey", and the "The Cherokee Delaware Tribe of the Northwest" in Oregon, amongst many others. Some states, such as Arkansas and Missouri contain well over a dozen such groups. While the Cherokee are the most overrepresented Indigenous nation whose identity is stolen and taken up by settler groups, there are, in addition to those ones, on the order of twenty-five groups claiming to be Lenape, seventeen Shawnee and twenty Anishinaabe. I sometimes count myself lucky that, unlike my fellow Algonkian kin those nations, there are no organizations falsely claiming a Menominee identity.

been harshly critical of (2013). That the controversy around her, at least within Indian Country, has not died down would be to put it somewhat minimally.

Finally, here in Canada, especially from Ontario eastward, there has been the rising issue of the Fétis. I will not go into extreme depth here, in part because scholars far more involved in the scene, knowledgeable of it, and thus equipped to speak on it, have already put in the work to do so, such as Darryl Leroux (2018) and Adam Gaudry (2017), and also because a full accounting of the problem is well beyond the bounds of this dissertation. However, to summarize it, the Fétis issue involves the complexities introduced to Nativeness in Canada via the presence of the Métis people of the Prairies and northwestern Canada. Linguistically, the French term *métis* is a cognate of the Spanish word *mestizo*, which throughout most of Latin America indicates a person or community of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. In much of French-speaking Canada this meaning of *métis* as purely relating to the racial mixture of Indigenous and European has been mixed up, likely with some degree of intent, with the idea of the Métis as a distinct Indigenous people who emerged out an original admixture of European and Native on the Plains, but which underwent a process of ethnogenesis, birthing a new national Indigenous community with strong ties to their Native kin (Leroux 2018; Gaudry & Leroux 2017; Andersen 2014; Vowel 2016). Politically, socially, and culturally though, what we have seen in recent decades is an explosive growth in groups in eastern Ontario, Québec and the Maritimes who, through an abuse of Supreme Court of Canada decisions

such as Powley and Daniels, are now claiming an Indigenous identity, challenging for their supposed rights in the judicial system (though, as of this writing, failing each and every time), and, probably most importantly, acting as a disruptive force with regards to the assertion of actual treaty and constitutional rights of Native nations in those regions. As Leroux recounts it, having spent hundreds of hours combing through archives, this is because many of these groups were founded on just such a basis, namely the failure to oppose treaty and constitutional rights on the basis of white rights, thus turning to an imagined Indigenous ancestry in order to attempt to find a better footing. More so, of these “Eastern Métis” as Leroux recounts, many of these organizations rely on small numbers of “root ancestors,” primarily women, in order to make these claims—ancestors, often upwards of four centuries ago, who their members claim descent from—however, as he has shown, in many cases these supposed root ancestors are verifiably not Indigenous (2018).

It is a mess. But that is not necessarily why I mention the issues of the Pretendian and the Fétis in this discussion around Native racialization. Not only have other scholars already done it in far greater depth than I could possibly imagine myself being capable of doing, but others, such as Patrick Wolfe (2006) and Eve Tuck (2012) have also demonstrated how these moves towards race-shifting and self-indigenization are entirely the outgrowth of the structures and ideology of settler colonialism. No, the reason I bring it up rather is because, like so much of my dissertation, the confrontation with the

phenomenon is something that I have had to contend within my own life. To be more specific, in my experiences it is linked back with the affective condition of Nativeness under settler-colonial regimes, and more particularly with the ways in which Indigenous people often try and escape these conditions: through community.

And in this, in my experiences, I have recently come to a breaking point. This past Winter 2019 term, while preparing the final writings of this dissertation and working on my first teaching experience, I decided I had finally had enough of the issue as it exists locally in Kitchener-Waterloo. It was not that I had suddenly become aware of the issue, because I had known about it, and been suspicious of certain individuals and their claims to Indigeneity for some time. Years in a few cases. However, something simply broke inside me, and I decided to break my silence on feelings that I had been harbouring for quite some time.

What pushed me past that point though was not obviously associated with the presence of within our community, in various positions of prominence, of Pretendians. Rather it was a failure to be able to take part in ceremony. During the Winter term, my nekōqsemaw⁴⁸ and I had intended to attend a sweat lodge ceremony, along with other members of the University of Waterloo's campus Indigenous student population. However, because our relationship with the community was already in a strained state, because of prior issues, we decided at the last minute to not attend the ceremony. Our

⁴⁸ Sister (Menominee)

reasoning was that while we both needed the medicine, the extent to which it would be actual medicine would likely be poisoned by the state of relations within the community. I decided to speak out on my feelings, because they cut very deeply.

During that winter, my father fell ill with lymphoma and had to begin radiation treatment for it, while my mother shortly after his diagnosis suffered a heart attack and had to be medevacked by air off of Bermuda to Boston for emergency surgery. I distinctly remember being jolted out of bed at 1:37 am in the morning from the ringing of my land-line phone. No one ever calls that phone except my parents, telemarketers, people taking surveys, and a variety of telephone frauds. Given the time I thought it could only be a con, so I did not answer and rolled back over to try and go back to sleep. I could not though because seconds later my cell phone, which I keep at my bedside (as so many of us do, driven by late capitalism/colonialism/liberalism to unhealthy connection with our personal, portable portals to cyberspace) also began to ring. So, I rolled over and saw that the caller ID was saying "Mom & Dad." I decided to answer and expected unwelcome news about my father, given his cancer, but it was actually him to tell me that he had just gotten back from the hospital, and that my mother was there. I do not think I was able to fall back to sleep that night until the first light of dawn. I spent those interim hours pacing my apartment, pulling drags from my vaporizer (I was, and am, trying to quit cigarettes; if any store near me had been open at such an hour I would have likely failed). I thought that I was very much on the verge of losing everything. During this

time, my own struggles with depression, anxiety, and loneliness were also beginning to slowly tilt downwards due to the endless and unrelenting pressure of being in academia and trying to push forward to completion. So, to say that my emotional state was troubled, and my stress level was high would be to make a gross understatement. Thus, I felt I really needed this medicine, but was denied it. I needed my community, but that limb was already in the process of being severed.

One issue that I latched onto during what amounted to a public explosion of my grief, anger, loss, and frustration was that in the years since my return to Kitchener-Waterloo in 2014 I often felt that community leadership cared little, and moved even less, to help those of us who were in need of it. What I felt I had detected and diagnosed was a condition of obsession with fame, or of being adjacent to fame. I myself have generally cared extremely little for such things. I even tend to recoil with a mix of shock, horror, and, to some degree, disgust when I am called a leader of some sort, and the same feelings follow me when writings of mine have been widely circulated. However, if I am being honest about my experiences and my feelings over the past several years, quite the opposite often seems to be default stance of many local Indigenous leaders, and this has a trickle-down effect with regards to other members of the community.

It has hurt a lot, and I have seen how it hurts others also. I have seen a lot of suffering in this community. People who have trauma. People who have depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. People who feel like their worlds are falling apart because

of family illness and other problems. People who are experiencing racialized anti-Native violence. I have seen these people call out for help and support, only to be ultimately echoing into a void where there is supposed to be community. I myself have had to step in on occasion to help care for people I love and care about, *not because no one else will*, but knowing that no one else has, is, or will. And this hurts a lot also. That I have already said. It is almost a pain without name, because there is supposed to be this thing, we call an Indigenous community, where the everyday rhetoric is one of coming together and healing, helping, and holding onto one another, but in truth appears to be little more than a lie. What has cut deeper though is watching the interactions of community members online, in the cases of people with fame or adjacency to fame, where they could simply be having a standard “difficult day” and the outpouring of sympathy becomes an absolute deluge.

Lauren Berlant, in her book of the same title, describes what she calls “cruel optimism” as that state, and a relation, that:

exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. It might involve food, or a kind of love; it might be a fantasy of the good life, or a political project. It might rest on something simpler, too, like a new habit that promises to induce in you an improved way of being. These kinds of optimistic relation are not inherently cruel. They become cruel only when the object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially [emphasis mine] (2011:1).

In many ways, it is a crisis of the ordinary, of the everyday, when life is shaped by ongoing loss. It is an impasse and an obstacle (2011:5; 10) in the structure of everyday

life. I mention this because I feel that my relationship to my community, or rather my *desire for* a relationship with my community, has become one of cruel optimism. I seek community because I was to feel shelter like I have entered a safe harbour in the midst of a storm. But that is not what happens. If it has ever happened it has not been for an awfully long time. My relationship to community is phantasmatic, incorporeal, spectral, or unreal; it is a nullity; it feels so real, but when I reach out to try and touch it my hand passes right through, and I am left unseen, unheard, unfelt. Perhaps I am the ghost in this relationship, and in trying to call-out from the other-side I strain, and strain again. My voice becomes hoarse and my body and spirit exhausted. My community becomes like a phantom limb; it feels present but is not actually there. And in all of this straining, the hurt that brought me to trying to find a sense of community only continues, like embers slowly burning, never being extinguished. But the promise is there, and I continue to reach. Maybe I should stop. Maybe I will. For me this is a relationship of cruel optimism par excellence.

And so, it began to seem very much so to me that the only peoples whose sufferings and calls for help that mattered were those who were most visible, or had the most access to power, fame, and recognition. And after the failure of the sweat lodge ceremony, a healing ceremony that we both knew we needed, I just could not stay quiet any longer about the issues in my/our community. While it began with a polemic against the state of community leadership, once the sluice gates were opened everything else

poured out into the open. Within days I decided that I also could no longer be silent about Pretendians and “Eastern Métis” types in our community.

When I decided to speak openly and candidly about my feelings and suspicions, I decided that I did not want to act like a shotgun and spray over the widest possible set of targets, and so I decided to only speak openly on three persons that I had, and still have, serious reason to be suspicious of when it comes to their claims of Indigeneity. Indeed, one person I can say is someone regarding whom I have a very high degree of metaphysical certitude about. This is because this is a person who was, at an earlier stage in my life, someone who was a close friend of mine, and someone who I thought I could lean on and call to for help. Indeed, they were there to help me pick my life up after I thought I had overturned all of it in early 2014. Because of this former closeness with this individual—including many personal and intimate conversations with his person on their porch—I came to know that they had some kind of remote Anishinaabe and Rotinonshón:ni ancestry. However, thinking to the last chapter and my discussion on visual schema, they always said that because they did not look it (that is, they are an individual that people would identify as white-passing) and, much more importantly, had never been raised to know it, that they would *never claim it* and call themselves an Native. I deeply respected that stance. I thought it was thoughtful and considerate to other Indigenous people. However, at some point, this person and I had a falling out and we stopped speaking for several years. I only came back into contact with them again

quite unexpectedly in 2018 as they had become the business partner of a white friend and colleague of mine, but in an Indigenous themed business. The theme of an Indigenous business of course immediately raised my eyebrows. After that I quickly learned that during the two or so years from when we had last spoken, this person had re-branded themselves with an Algonquin-Anishinaabe identity and was presenting themselves to the world as an Indigenous person, including being an invited speaker at a local Indigenous event for which I was present and also spoke, an event which was a public protest against government anti-Native violence. To say that I felt a pit form in my stomach, because of the fact that I knew this person, knew their story, and was now witnessing their act of racial-transformation, would be an understatement.

At the same time, I was also growing concerned about a local artist in Kitchener-Waterloo who sells themselves, and labels their artistic business, as being the work of a Métis person. This person, who dances in regalia at pow wows, and who always seemed to find themselves with the contract to create new works of Indigenous art for local purposes, despite the presence of a number of other local, and extremely gifted young Kwe artists, also raised my eyebrow initially when I saw them sharing the statements of Sebastien Malette, an assistant professor at Carleton University and militant functionary

of the so-called “Eastern Métis” cause⁴⁹. The content of their social media posts was to demonize the quite lauded and important work of scholars like Darryl Leroux, and to say that Malette’s settler-colonial theft of Indigenous identity, and functionally anti-Métis and Atlantic Native politics, verifies their supposed family history. At this point in my personal and political development I was already quite suspicious of the entire “Eastern Métis” cause, because of the work put in by scholars, members, and allies of both the Métis people of the Plains, as well as the various Indigenous nations from eastern Ontario, Québec, and the Maritimes who the Eastern Métis were beginning to encroach upon. I did not put much thought into this person’s social media posts, though, until I happened to be exploring this person’s website for their artistic work and noticed that they referred to themselves as an Anishinaabe Métis with roots in two specific Algonquin communities in Québec. By this point, I was aware enough that a claim to being Algonquin Métis, eastern Ontario Métis, or Québec Métis was cause for concern. So, I made a quite simple decision, and decided to do some quick investigations via Google. I found myself rather quickly, and also unexpectedly, on the ancestry.ca forums, looking at posts from 2005, and was able to verify, by way of personal information that they were giving out to the public, that this was local artist was a person posting on the forums,

⁴⁹ A true story about Malette’s role in this movement would be the great time and effort that he put in in attempting to have a friend of my nekōqsemaw and I, an Anishinaabe student, expelled from Carleton University for publicly calling him a “fake Native” and drawing attention to Malette and the movement that he is part of. But that is a story that can be detailed, with his permission, another time.

trying to dig up any possible Indigenous ancestry they could. They were talking about Cree, Anishinaabe and Métis potentially being in their family line, but their family story was seemingly a series of holes and, as pointed out by another seemingly more knowledgeable person who replied to them, apparently ancestors who did not even exist. Yet, here in Kitchener-Waterloo, fourteen years later, they have managed to ensconce themselves firmly within the local Indigenous community as not only an artist, but as an extremely prominent one, regularly featured, lauded, and treated as a person of significant local importance.

I should be clear about something though. When I engaged in these simple acts of internet research, my intention was *never to prove that the person was not Native*. Quite the contrary, what I always hoped to find was evidence that I myself was incorrect, had made poor judgements, or was expressing some sort of internalized bigotry against white-passing Natives. I had hoped, and always did hope, that they and other persons were in fact truly Native persons, but who perhaps were caught up in a misuse of linguistic identity signifiers. I wanted very much so to be wrong. To come out of the other side of it though with high certitude in my suspicions actually hurt much more than it made me feel vindicated. Those feelings have not gone away.

When I did mention these things, after choosing to no longer be quiet, it blew up, though not in any kind of direct way. It involved a lot of sub-tweeting and veiled posts that everyone knew was directed at me, and at others who had chosen to also speak up

at the time, or just after, including my nekōqsemaw and some other young Indigenous people that I know. We were accused—by Indigenous people with institutional power who, quite frankly, enable these local Pretendians and Fétis to get away with their race-shifting, and also grant them much of the prominence, fame, and recognition that they experience locally—of making this into a fight about blood quantum, or some other issue, choosing, as they did, to ignore what we were really saying: that these people are not actually Indigenous, and we should not be reaching for them hand-over-foot when we have our own people locally struggling, with mental health, with health generally, with depression, with trauma, with learning to reconnect, with finding themselves, with abuse and violence, and any other manner of things that Indians, Métis, and Inuit peoples face under the multi-modal regime of violence that is settler colonialism.

And that is the real reason that I have chosen to talk about this. I believe, very much so after many hours of conversation, face-to-face, online, over the phone, etc. with other Indigenous people—with my mom, my brother, with my nekōqsemaw, with friends and other kin—that the presence of what many of us bluntly refer to as “fake Natives” in our midst takes away from where the focus of our community efforts should really be, which is on helping our own people, especially the many young Indigenous people who are hungry to reconnect with themselves, their ancestry and their community. Quite often it has been my experience within this and other communities that it is those people, the Pretendians and the Fétis who instinctually push to the front

of the line to meet and speak with elders, take teachings, participate in ceremony, and get the best seats at community events. Where this leaves those of us struggling to reconnect, those who us who are disconnected for one reason or another, is to stand there, politely, quietly, waiting for our turn to come so that we might be able to strike up a conversation with an elder we had until then maybe only seen from afar.

4.3 Settler Self-Indigenization and the Desire for Native Suffering

Here is a more recent story about exactly this. I do not travel back and forth from the University of Waterloo campus much these days, beyond attending appointments or going to the library. However, I did recently find myself on campus and decided to walk around a little further than I normally would, rather than heading directly home after my business was complete. I eventually made my way over to St. Paul's University College, one of the University's christian affiliated colleges, and also home of the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre. As I walked around the halls of St. Paul's I came across a poster for a past event. It was for the "I Am Affected" campaign, which was one of the many post-Truth & Reconciliation Committee, pan-canadian efforts to educate settler individuals in this country about the effects and afterlives of this county's residential school system, which many people have correctly labelled as a violent and genocidal government policy (Starblanket 2018; Churchill 2004; Milloy 1999). While looking at this poster, which must have been there for some time, I noticed that in the bottom left-hand corner was a picture of the supposed local Métis artist I talked about above. Next to the

black and white image of them was the label “Algonquin Métis.” I simply huffed to myself, rolled my eyes, whispered “figures ...” and moved on.

Two days later however it slammed right into me seemingly from out of nowhere when the thought of the poster popped back into my mind: this really and truly offended me, that this person’s face, and, by their own social media admissions, “Eastern Métis” identity of “Algonquin Métis” had been on this poster, looking back into me, and saying “I too am affected by the afterlives of the residential schools.” It offended me because I live every day with the stated and unstated, affected and embodied, afterlives of the residential school system, or, to be clearer, the american iteration of it in the boarding school system which, while more military in organization, compared to Canada’s model which was more akin to a religious monastic order, had the same intent, purpose, and goal: to “kill the Indian, save the man.” Both of my mother’s parents attended boarding schools, as did my great-grandparents generation. As I have mentioned before, it was the stroke of an boarding school agents pen that changed my great-grandfather’s blood quantum from “full” to “3/4th”, which has resulted in my own liminally enrolled status with the Menominee Nation today as a 1st Degree Descendant.

Neither my mother or her siblings attended boarding schools. But the effects are, if we have learned anything in recent years, transmitted virally and mimetically from generation to generation. Perhaps even genetically. Because growing up a poor Native, raised by survivors of the boarding schools is hard, and because settler colonialism, in

general, makes being a Native a trying experience, many of my family members turned to drugs and alcohol to find escape. I will always have the deepest sympathy for them and will never hold them at fault for the choices they made, but I have lost many people that I love deeply because of this, even years after they got clean. I think about them almost every single day, and because of this, I make an active choice every day to not drink alcohol or engage in hard drug use. This is difficult, and at times alienating, when there is so little respect for such choices and people simply assume that they are welcome to bring alcohol to my apartment, or when I am simply in Bermuda, where the national pastime seems quite often, and indeed is even joked about, to be alcoholism.

I have to think about these things, and these choices day-in and day-out. They are never not impacting me, whether they are at the forefront of my thinking or not. Living a Native life is hard; living with the embodied, inherited, and intergenerational afterlives of the residential and boarding schools can make it that much harder.

And so, to back up slightly, I have to say that this black and white face of an “Eastern Métis” person staring back at me from this post-TRC event poster, proclaiming silently to me that the residential schools also affected them, doesn’t just offend me, but actually is something that I find profoundly hurtful. It is one thing to engage in race-shifting and the theft of Indigenous identity. That is old hat for many settlers. Indeed, part of the hyper-solubility of Native racialization, which diminishes actual Indigenous communities through generations of miscegenation, is that it also ideologically allows the

transference onto the settler the signifiers of Indigeneity, most importantly the claim to continental territoriality, through being able to make a claim to Native ancestry. And, as Leroux and others show, because this positive aspect of settler colonialism, as theorized by Wolfe, which is the self-indigenization of the settler and the naturalization of conquest, is so essential to the project of settler colonialism, when actual Native ancestry is not accessible, it is quite often concocted through the retroactive race-shifting of settler ancestors in order to facilitate settler race-shifting in the present.

However, it is another thing—and this is perhaps simply my own emotional, affective, and embodied response to this poster—to actually claim the hurt and the loss of Indigenous peoples as yours. This person, whose face bears down upon me in that image, is an “Eastern Métis” claimant, again by their own public admissions. Thus, my first instinct is to dismiss it in general, knowing how much the so-called “root ancestors” of these people are fictitious, or their Nativeness an act of myth-making. Even if I choose to be forgiving, and allow that yes, perhaps this person does have some degree of Indigenous ancestry, their own publicly archived and available discussions of the subject reveal that even by their grandfather’s generation it was whispered about as a family rumour, and that rumour was for an affiliation that is not the one this person now claims (having shifted from Cree to Algonquin). Thus, even if granted to be true, I am left wondering as to whether those Natives that may be in their family line lived and died long before the residential schools were even implemented.

What do the residential or boarding schools hold for them? What ghosts? What horrors? When I think of the residential schools, I think of Mi'kmaq musician Willie Dunn's 1971 song for 12-year-old Charlie Wenjack, an Anishinaabe boy who fled the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School near Kenora, Ontario, trying to make his way home to Marten Falls First Nation:

Walk on, little Charlie
Walk on through the snow.
Heading down the railway line,
Trying to make it home.
Well, he's made it forty miles,
Six hundred left to go.
It's a long old lonesome journey,
Shufflin' through the snow.

He's lonesome and he's hungry,
It's been a time since last he ate,
And as the night grows bolder,
He wonders at his fate.
For legs are wracked with pain
As he staggers through the night.
And sees through his troubled eyes,
That his hands are turning white.

Lonely as a single star,
In the skies above,
His father in a mining camp,
His mother in the ground,
And he's looking for his dad,
And he's looking out for love,
Just a lost little by the railroad track
Heading homeward bound.

Is that the great Wendigo
come to look upon my face?
And are the skies exploding

Down the misty aisles of space?
Who's that coming down the track,
Walking up to me?
Walk on, little Charlie,
Walk on through the snow.
Moving down the railway line,
Try to make it home.
And he's made it forty miles,
Six hundred left to go.
It's a long and lonesome journey,
Shufflin' through the snow.

Charlie never made it home. I think of him, and all of the others like him who never made it home from the residential schools in which they were imprisoned and brutalized. I think of 14-year-old Lizzie Cardish of my nation, the Menominee nation, who in 1906 set fire to the Menominee Indian Training School, a boarding school on the reservation, a "crime" for which she was convicted and sent to federal men's prison (Davidson 2017). I think of my grandfather, who also attended the Menominee boarding school, and at 17-years-old decided to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps, which culminated in his involvement in the Iwo Jima landings. I think of the time I have spent in the Mush Hole, the former Mohawk Institute, down on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve near Waterloo, a place where if you know how to listen, how to see, how to feel, you will know is filled with ghosts. And so, the question comes back to me: what ghosts haunt this person, this black and white image of a face, that stares back at me from this event poster? What clings to them? What weighs them down? Who did they survive, and who do they survive for?

Perhaps it seems harsh, or too judgemental, but the face that looked back at me from that image was not the face of those living in the afterlives of the residential schools, and who are today subjected still to daily genocidal pressures. It may seem harsh, or too judgemental, but as Native peoples have to face these lived experiences daily, it is the only stance that I feel like I can possibly take, to safeguard not only myself, but also those who I love and care about. My ghosts are with me always, both those of my own design, and those who exist before, beyond, and after me.

In these late days of settler colonialism, our communities need healing more than ever. We need to heal ourselves and each other if we are ever going to actually find a path leading out of this situation. And this is my final point, thinking still of that “I Am Affected” poster: what does it mean for us as healing Indigenous people and communities when people such as this come into our spaces, or have space made for them by those who enable them, and claim that they have the same experiences as us? What seems to me to be the case is that space is made for them, and resources for healing re-allocated to count for their claim to needing healing experiences. This can only come at the expense of actual Indigenous peoples.

These are my experiences, and my thoughts, but I know that they are also the experiences and thoughts of many others. And so, the question should be, where are our community priorities? Should it be with trying to become visible and socially adjacent to well-known fakes? Or should it be with helping those of us in our kinship, friendship

and communal circles who often are openly crying out for connection and support? For myself, this is not even really a question, but it is one that I believe that our communities are truly faced with. Likewise, we must ask ourselves how allowing these people into our spaces, when there is so much of a growing country-wide backlash against “fake Natives” and “Eastern Métis” from within Native circles, affects those of us who perhaps do not have status, or who were scooped up by the colonial State into the quite misnamed child welfare system, or other similar experiences, especially when the conversation turns towards accusations of arguing over blood quantum. I know this mentally affects many of us who struggle with those issues. To even have to consider these things is, to be honest, absolutely heart-breaking.

But these kin should not have to even entertain those thoughts of “am I Pretendian?” Yet often they do, with the worry that they themselves may be “found out” one day. I know this fear, because I have shared it in the past. Because, as I have recounted already, I am 1/128th blood quantum short of being able to be a fully enrolled member of the Menominee Nation, instead being listed, alongside my brother and many cousins on the rolls of 1st Degree Descendants (what was called the ancillary roll when I was younger), I have struggled with this as well. This is one of the reasons that I have, for the past few years, every few months, called my mother to ask her how the “blood thing” is going, wanting to reclaim that 3/128^{ths} more blood that I should have, allowing

me to become a fully enrolled member, is because “I don’t want to be the next Ward Churchill.”

So, my long-standing worry about Pretendians, separating for a moment for the very real macro-scaled anti-Native politics and motives of many of the larger “Eastern Métis,” is how the presence of them within our community, and the enormous amount of space that they often consume and take up, may delegitimize the struggles to reconnect of those who are disconnected, whether statused or not. Or they may cause, and the conversation around them may cause, them to feel a sense that they themselves and the struggles that they face are not legitimate.

As the stories my friends and kin tell, that I tell, under such conditions of absolute colonial reality, in the dust of this white world, one simply cannot long-live sanely without help. Without others. Without love. This, it seems, is luxury few of us are able to access. As a community, in anything we do those who struggle to reconnect should be met with open and welcoming arms, and never made to feel like what they are is not their true selves.

Chapter 5. The Problem of Telling Stories to Some People, or Why Do We Tell of Our Damage to Those Who Damaged Us?

Damage narratives are the only stories that get told of me, unless I'm the one that's telling them. People have made their careers on telling stories of damage about me, about communities like mine. Damage is the only way that monsters and future ghosts are conjured.

– Eve Tuck & C. Ree, *A Glossary of Haunting*

As I sit down to write this chapter, we have already had our *kawāskahekaēw*—the First Snow that Falls in Autumn. *Suakan*: it is slushy under my feet as I walk the wooded area in the back of my apartment building, attempting to feel a closeness to nature and the land that is sometimes difficult, but never impossible, within the bounds of this concreted and asphalted over urban environment. Not impossible because even with all of the concrete and asphalt that accrued on top of it since the settler colonization of these lands, it is still exactly that: land. It is still Native land. Always has been, and always will be. The land of my relatives in the Anishinaabeg Confederacy, and our off-and-on again friends the Rotinonshón:ni. Despite all of the concrete, all of the asphalt, the planned residential development, proliferation of capitalist enterprise and industry, and the sprawling campuses of the two major universities in this city it is still *Gdoo-Naaganinaa*, the Dish with One Spoon.

I am trying to steal back something that has always been ours, by stealing time from my obligation to academia. When I steal my time back from the academy I know,

can feel rather, what Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2013) when they say that “the only possible relationship to the university today is a criminal one” (26).

I walk rather than write. I steal this connection back in the midst of these walks through these walks. When I walk, I touch and feel my other-than-human kin. I speak to them, to the plant people. I talk to the geese (an animal nation I have never had trouble with during my off-and-on thirteen years in this city contra what seems to be the stated experience of many settlers. I tell myself that it is because they are birds, and I am a bird person as well, through the family names of my Native mother and white father, through my ceremonial name, and through my clan). I talk to the squirrels and the birds, the fish, turtles, and deer.

When I walk, and when I talk, I can feel the connection across and through time to the primordial landscape that this land was before conquest, before settlers, before Christianity, before residential and boarding schools, before assimilation, and before the university. When I steal time to steal back this connection, I can hear the land breathing, muted, but still there. Still ours. And it always will be, and always has been, in the space below all the various propertarian regimes of the settler, whether of private property or the commons.

When I steal back this connection, I hold it tight. I never want to let go of it. But I must return to writing. That is the chosen fate, the chosen obligation, of the critical academic that finds themselves ensconced within the privatized, capitalized,

westernized, colonized University, trying always to steal away a space within, or perhaps more aptly, out-of-sight or below the sight of the academic gaze. Cut-off or below the sight of that onto-/auto-encyclopaedic apparatus of the State and State strategy that Jacques Derrida called the *universitas* (2002)⁵⁰.

And so, I turn back from the forest, without ever quite leaving it. I write.

5.1 A Time for Stories about Ghosts & Snow

It is actively snowing right now, and the ground is slowly becoming covered. There was snow on the ground as I wrote the original iteration of the previous chapter of this dissertation as well. But this is not the same. That time it was the last snow of spring. It is now autumn. Autumn is my favourite time of year, as I am sure it is for many people. It was the time of year in which I was born, a birthday separated by exactly one week from my mother's birthday. My father was also born this time of year. So, one could say that we, with the exception of my younger brother, are a family of autumn people.

It is also a time of changing leaves. It is a time for harvest feasts and hearty soups.

I myself have a pot of West Indian pumpkin and beef stew simmering away on my stove

⁵⁰ In his text *Who's Afraid of Philosophy: Right to Philosophy 1* Derrida describes this concept as such: "onto-encyclopedic universitas inseparable from a certain concept of the State; Cousin: "University is the State," "public power brought to bear on the instruction of the young" (2002:125). I here refer to the university as such because of its central role, as the pinnacle stage of education, in settler colonialism and the governmentality regime proper to such. Following the chain of social analysis from Gramsci to Althusser to Foucault to Deleuze, I recognize that for hegemonic society to flourish in all its cisheteropatriarchal, settler-colonial, antiblack, ecocidal and capitalist totality it requires such strong ideological and disciplinary institutions to shore itself up. Indeed, following Deleuze it could be said that we are always-already within the *universitas*, and indeed we can never leave.

as these words leave my fingers. It is a time for beginning to pull your warm clothes out from summer storage and breaking out your boots. As the night grows longer and the days dip colder, it is a time during which more and more people will find themselves inside, huddled under blankets. If they have a fireplace perhaps this is when they break out the logs (natural or unnatural) and toss them in.

It is time of first snow, which as my Anishinaabeg relatives tell me means that it a time for the telling of stories. Embedded, as all of us are now, within a westernized society, it has become for many of us a time specifically for stories about ghosts and hauntings. It is a time during which many believe that the veil between this life and the next becomes thinner and the spirits of the long and recently passed may speak to us.

But I did not wait until this time of year to write this chapter just because I wanted to talk about ghosts and hauntings, or because it is the time of year that I was born, or because I enjoy the first snow and the changing of the leaves and cooking soups and stews. The truth is that I have been writing and re-writing this chapter for months. I have tried, and tried again, in so many ways to tell you a story that I thought was going to be perhaps the most important one to the entire narrative arc that is this dissertation. But I just could not.

When I would try to write the words just would not come out right, if they came out at all. Often when I would try to write the words would get stuck in my throat, right at the point of enunciation. I would stumble and trip over my words. Delete them and

start again. And again. I know that that is the story of many a doctoral candidate, and that it is the more often than not the story of writers and storytellers generally. But this seemed like something more specific, more peculiar, to me and the project that I was trying to communicate.

This seems/ed to be more than a standard case of writer's block, something which I have touched on in previous chapters as well. It has often been a challenge for me to write, to put words in order, and to tell my story. But what was/is the case this time? Because I might even, if pressed in that direction, say that the words *could not* come outright. They refused my efforts to translate them into written form.

Why? Is it that this particular story that I wanted to tell you in these pages opens up the vulnerability that I have already said is something that I lay bare to you in this dissertation by way of it being autoethnographic? Perhaps. In thinking about this chapter, I have dwelled much upon Eve Tuck and C. Ree's discussion of *damage narratives* in their auto-poetic piece "A Glossary of Haunting," within which they write:

Damage narratives are the only stories that get told about me, unless I'm the one that's telling them. People have made their careers on telling stories of damage about me, about communities like mine. Damage is the only way that monsters and future ghosts are conjured. I am invited to speak, but only when I speak my pain (647).

So much of what I have written in the preceding chapters has come from somewhere between rage and pain, confusion, and sadness. The sadness and pain that comes with navigating a hostile world, where one pillar of the fundamental onto-political project is to make it fully anti-Native, and to make Natives disappear fully into the void of non-

being. The sadness and the pain that often comes with navigating such an onto-political project while also being a diasporic, urban and liminally enrolled Native trying to reconnect to themselves and to what it means to be a Native, what it means to be Menominee. The anger and rage against the State structures and State strategies that make Natives murderable, that steal our lands, our communities, and our senses of wholeness continuously. The anger and rage against a biopolitical regime of *Nativeness* that makes me have to preface my saying “I am a Menominee” by saying “I am a 1st *Degree Descendant* of the Menominee” even though everyone in my family is Menominee. What I have written also radically (in the sense of at the root) emerges from a place of voicing longing. Longing to not have to preface *what kind of* Menominee I am. A longing for my ancestors, for my family, for my culture and language and my land and all of my relations that were stolen away by the sociological catastrophe of settler colonialism. Stolen away from me, from my mother, from my brother, from my aunts, uncles, and cousins by the simple rub of an eraser and the mark of a pen by a boarding school bureaucrat that transformed my great-grandfather from being of “Full Indian Blood” into to only being three-quarters. A longing for a true sense of belonging and the wholeness of being that I know should be there, but which falls from my hand like dry sand on a Bermudian beach in a warm summer breeze.

This sense of damage to my being is, to borrow the phrase from Mark Fisher (2014), the ghosts of my life; the ghosts of my urban, diasporic, Menominee-but-not-Quite-

Menominee life. But I am not a medium or a medicine person. Talking to ghosts and spirits is not something that comes to me with any kind of sense of ease. And so, it is exhausting. Talking about damage and ghosts, communicating them to you, is exhausting. It is exhausting just as settler colonialism effects exhaustion on the body of the colonized, racialized Native.

I am tired of exhaustion, tired of anger and pain, sadness, and rage. So perhaps that is why writing this chapter has been something of a special challenge, why the words come and just get stuck, or do not come at all. That is almost certainly part of it. But there is something more here, something more to my growing tiredness of damage narrative. Something else spectral haunts the margins of these pages.

The truth is that I do not think I should be telling you the story that I wanted to tell you. Something is telling me that I really should not be telling you. I wanted very much to do so. As I said I thought this was the keystone to the total narrative arc of the story I have been trying to tell you across these pages, across previous chapters. But why? I wanted to tell you a story about how angry I am about something, how hurt I am, and how I felt that the experiences that I was going to tell you about had something to say about the interpellation of Indigenous identity and personal navigation through those structural forces.

5.2 A Skeleton of a Story about Identity Interrogation

The story I wanted to tell you about was one about my experiences in the summer of 2017

when, during a time when the original, more traditionally ethnographic, iteration of this dissertation was still the order of the day, I had to approach my nation, the Menominee, to seek permission in order to carry out my work. I had wanted to speak to fellow Menominee about what *Nativeness*, and more specifically Menomineeness meant to them. I wanted to ask them about their sense of communal belonging, and how they made sense of post-contact, colonial State constructs such as blood quantum. I wanted to ask them about how, if at all, they held to pre-contact constructions of Menomineeness and communal belonging, and how those pre-contact notions interacted, interfaced, and blended with the newer colonial impositions.

The reason for having to seek their permission in order to carry out that work was two-fold. On the one was the contemporary requirement of the modernized, westernized, colonized university to seek and obtain ethics clearance for any work involving human subjects. This is of course standard, and a process which I knew long before initiating this project that I would have to undertake. In particular, in the era of formal reconciliation, indigenization and the general move to push beyond and to atone for the colonial origins and methodologies of the university, this process often now requires formal clearance for such work from the objects of the study when said objects are an Indigenous community. Meaning that in order to gain ethics clearance from the University of Waterloo I had to first seek and obtain the permission of my nation.

The second reason was that, as a 31/128th of blood quantum First Degree

Descendant of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, and thus shy 1/128th the requirement for full enrolment in the nation (something which I have discussed in the previous chapters of this dissertation, and which is a running stream of thought throughout this text), I would have to seek permission from them in order to carry out any work amongst them, regardless of whether I was an academic ensconced in a system of formal ethics clearance or not. The Menominee want their own ability to have oversight and final say on any work being carried on or about them. Certainly, this has much to do with the negative history of research being done on, about and within Indigenous communities by non-Indigenous researchers. Thinking of this my mind drifts onto George and Louise Spindler's work *Dreamers with Power: The Menominee* (1984), one of the best-known ethnographic works on our community. However, the original title of the work, *Dreamers without Power*, offended members of the community. As such I could hardly fault them for having me undertake their own approval process in addition to that of the University's.

The key experience in all of this though was that despite the formal tribal, legal status that says that I am a First Degree Descendant of 31/128th blood quantum with many close relatives currently living in or near the reservation, who are fully enrolled members, including my mother, her mother and the rest of their immediate and extended family, I was to be, in accordance with tribal law, treated as a *non-Menominee* outside researcher. To me, in the middle of beginning work on a dissertation project on Indigenous identity,

biopolitics, settler colonialism and de/coloniality this experience seemed to be a microcosm of exactly what I wanted to examine in terms of living a life of an urban, diasporic, liminally-enrolled Native and what it means to belong to an Indigenous community. Then and now I see this process as a kind of formalized interrogation of identity.

And the approval process from the Menominee failed. After one postponed attempt at a conference call meeting with the Language and Culture Commission of the nation, I formally met with them via phone during August 2017. What transpired was that the motion died on the table. It was not formally voted against, but rather no member of the commission was willing to bring it forward for a vote. I was upset, but I think my mother and grandmother were even more upset. Angry would be the even better term. Indeed, when my grandmother asked me for the names of the members of the committee and she replied that she knew some of the members, my concern spiked that she was about to either start making phone calls, or even go to see people on the reservation.

5.3 Why I Really Should Not be Talking to You about This

This is the story I was going to tell you, summed up in short form. I wanted to tell you about my anger. About my mother's and my grandmother's anger. I wanted to tell you about how this experience typified in many ways the questions that I was asking more broadly in the earliest form and earliest chapters of this dissertation. I wanted to tell you about how the rejection of the tribal commission on this specific matter impacted my

sense of self and my sense of Menomineeness, especially given that, setting aside the university's formal ethics process, I was required to undergo this process by my community precisely because I was legally classified under tribal law as someone who stands outside of the community.

It was to be a story of hurt, confusion, anger, loss and feeling lost. I wanted to tell you about my mother's experiences of belonging. I wanted to tell you all of this, but now all I can tell you is this brief summary, which cannot give full breadth and appreciation to this experience. Indeed, I even wonder how much a story could even be appreciated by non-Native peoples. I cannot help but think of the line from the Iraqi-English rapper Lowkey's line about how "your hosts can't relate to your sense of dislocation; the type of pain that cannot be contained in a dissertation" (2019). So, I cannot tell you about all of this. I will not tell you story beyond what I have already said.

But at first, I did not know that I could not. I wanted to. I told you I was going to. I told others that I was going to. But I just could not. I would set aside time to write and do nothing or do something else instead. I spent months like this. I need to finish this dissertation, but I was doing nothing but stalling, wishing to be doing anything else but writing this chapter.

During this time, the Ocīpūhkiw/Anishinaabekwe that I call my nekōqsemaw, who herself is also in the midst of PhD work in philosophy, would ask me what exactly I was trying to do with this chapter. She asked several times across several conversations

across several months. And I could never really answer her in a way that was not only satisfactory to her, but more importantly satisfactory to myself. That was because her question of what I wanted to do with this chapter was more to prod for something beyond a superficial answer of what I was saying in proposals, chapter outlines, meetings with committee members and general conversations that the chapter was about. She knew fully what my experiences were because she was right there with me when I was going through them. She knew I wanted to write about the feelings of hurt, anger, confusion, loss and being lost, the experiences which the Menominee bureaucracy had left me with. She knew all of that. So, when she asked me what I wanted to do with this chapter, what my goal was, she was asking me what my truer, deeper purpose was. Why did I want to write about those things? And what did I hope to see come about by writing about them? She always pushes me towards finding what the generative, the transformative and the liberative is underneath and beyond the abjection. She shares the overarching goal of decolonization, decoloniality, refusal and radical abolitionism that is at the heart of so much of my own work. So, she knew that there was a generative kernel hidden somewhere within all of this, but she was not going to give me the answer, because that was not something for her to give. Rather she pushed me to find it myself.

So, she asked, and she asked, and she asked: “what is that you are trying to do here? What do you want to communicate?” Eventually, it hit me. To put into the parlance of the strongly christian island I was raised on, eventually I had my Come-to-Jesus

moment! What I came to understand was that the issue I was facing, why this particular piece of my story was such a special challenge, was not just that I cannot tell this story, but that I *cannot tell this story*. This is not a linguistic trick nor is it a malformed sentence. Rather what I am trying to communicate here is the movement from being in a place where I was unable to bring myself to write this chapter as it was originally proposed and outlined, to move the narrative forward as was intended, to coming to understand that I cannot tell this story because to tell this story in that way would not be generative. It was not decolonial. It did not serve my deeper truth, my deeper sense of what it is that I wanted to do, and it did not move me, my community, and Indigenous people towards decolonial liberation. Decoloniality is, if anything, a dialectical methodological-pedagogical-praxiological engagement of both doing-thinking and thinking-doing that is necessarily delinked from the western modern/colonial binary of theory vs praxis (Mignolo & Walsh 2018).

What I wanted to do with this chapter was to say something about what I am calling the *ontological gaze* or the *colonial ontological gaze*, building on my discussion and critique of political ontology in chapters 2 and 3. In particular I wanted to say something about engaging in a politics of refusal—in the line of thinking set forth in Audra Simpson’s work in *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (2014) and Glen Coulthard’s *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014)—about refusing that colonial ontological gaze, similar to refusing the

ethnographic gaze.

But part of that gaze is how being a Native, being an Indigenous north american *damné*, is to be located at a set of coordinates in a world whose ontological project is to create an anti-Indigenous world. As I discussed in the earlier two chapters, I follow the Africana existentialist Lewis Gordon's line of thinking on the question of it being *an anti-Indigenous world vs the world is anti-Indigenous*, because I agree that there is no true fixed ontological enclosure. The project of creating such a world has yet to be completed, socially and politically, and more precisely it is a project of world-building which has never been completed because of resistance and refusal. Colonized people have always pushed back against these enclosing ontological structures, and the result is that there have always been many lines of flight sneaking themselves over and underneath their walls. As such, as I also said previously, I do not agree with Jared Sexton's line of thinking who argues that it is theoretically or politically useful to assume that these projects are completed and thus are truly ontological. To engage in such a line of thinking does not allow for the elucidation of a critique immanent to the system, but rather works to actually reinforce its logics and structures by assuming that they are representative of the way the world actually is in a fixed sense.

5.4 When is a Story Not a Story (& Can it Still be a Story)?

And this is where I connect back to where I started this chapter: the question of damage narratives. It is also where that question meets with what I want to do in the chapters

that follow, which is talk about abjection, the problem with abjection, and the self-denigrating stories that we share about our own supposed abjection. So much of political ontology, whether it is called by that label or not, within various critical area studies and allied fields seems to be rooted in defining or finding the political subject through recourse to maximal abjection.

Lewis Gordon identifies this tendency within contemporary works of political ontology, given his own work as an Africana philosopher, in the writings and theories of key scholars working within the field of Afropessimism, such as Frank Wilderson (2010) and Jared Sexton (2016), as well as some of the key scholars towards which they function as interlocutors, chiefly Orlando Patterson in his work on social death (1985). For Gordon much of this problem is rooted in the inability of certain theorists to find a functional political subject on the terrain of (post)modern settler colonialism, late capitalism, and systemic antiblackness. Thus, there is a constant race to the bottom to be the most destroyed, most wrecked, hollow, damaged being possible. We are who we are because we are the dying, the dead and the undead. We are ghosts and monsters, temporal displacies haunting the existential margins of a white settler-slave colonial and decaying capitalist society (2018).

However, while Gordon locates these tendencies within certain strands of current radical Black theorizing, my focus is as a Native scholar, writing about Native life and Native experiences, moving towards Native theorization. That said, I would argue that

Gordon's insights here are applicable. In my own experience, navigating Indigenous scholarship and theory, I have come to recognise that this problem exists just as profoundly within our work. When I read the work, both scholarly and poetic (as if those two things should ever truly be separated, or deserve separation), of the queer Native scholar Billy Ray-Belcourt (2017a; 2017b), for example, I am deeply moved by the kind of pain that is expressed, and while they do often, importantly, gesture towards queer and Native, and queer Native, futurisms (2018) I also find that I can be overcome by the weight of the narratives and truths that they present, when he speaks of the reserve as "augured disappearance propped up in the wake of insidiously lawful world-breaking events" and of Indigenous worlds as "sutured by this sort of apocalypticism" (2017:3).

I experience the same sensations of loss, grief and abandonment when reading the scholarly work of Nicolás Juárez on the grammar of Red suffering (2014)⁵¹ or, as Wilderson commiserates (2010:9), also in the works of the "Red Ontologists" such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Vine Deloria Jr., and Taiaiake Alfred⁵², as well as in ways that are perhaps differently inflected in Jodi Byrd and Eve Tuck. These scholars and the

⁵¹ My semi-public debate with Juárez on the topic of Native racialization, settler colonialism and the question of visibility was the topic of this dissertation's previous chapter. Regardless of what I may think about that particular informal dialogue, or where I may disagree with him in other places, I find his work overall to be highly informative.

⁵² It may be an act of nit-picking, but I do agree with J. Kēhaulani Kauanui that it is curious that Wilderson not only includes the Native scholars Vine Deloria Jr. and Taiaiake Alfred, as well as the Native fiction author Leslie Marmon Silko, in his description of "Red Ontologists," but also Haunani-Kay Trask who Kānaka Maoli, and Ward Churchill, who as discussed in Chapter 4 is an author whose claims to Nativeness are contestable at best (2017:263). While I do not wish to fill this dissertation with too much in the way of speculation, it does make me wonder if this is perhaps a source of his misunderstanding of Nativeness, which is a subject taken up in more depth in Chapter 7.

voluminous works that they have generated are as deeply insightful theoretically as they are mournfully moving. Yet sometimes “the future” in these kinds of writings can feel something not entirely unlike Franco “Bifo” Berardi’s slow cancellation of the future (2011).

What is a liberated future when we not only re-inscribe—intentionally or unintentionally, clearly, or unclearly—the “truth” of an anti-Native world, but theorize as if that is an essential component, if not *the* essential component, of our being? I think here along lines emanating from what Anishinaabe theorist Gerald Vizenor thought of as our tragedy, our victimry and, occasionally, nostalgia for what once was (2000)? One can look to Ward Churchill for example, for whom Native positionality is fundamentally defined by genocide as a constitutive element, without which Native would not exist (1997). This analysis is taken up and further extended by Juárez, who marries it to, and likewise extends, Wilderson’s analysis of Native positionality, in arguing that Native life is fundamentally defined by a grammar of suffering of clearing and civilization⁵³ (2014). One could perhaps argue that this carries the same force, intention, and implication as Patrick Wolfe’s argument that in defining settler colonialism the basic constitutive fact is the fate that invasion carries and implies for Indigenous peoples (2006; 2016b). However, I believe that the error one would be committing in making such an argument would be

⁵³ This is here referring to civilization not as a state of social, cultural, or political attainment, or of it as an abstract concept of anthropological, sociological, historical, or philosophical thinking, but as a process of settler colonialism which is inflicted upon Indigenous peoples, bodies, and nations.

to cross, at the level of definitions, an understanding of what settler colonialism is, both in itself as a modality of domination, as well as a founding structure and logic of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system, with an understanding of what it *means* to be Native. What is often occluded or lost here, I believe, is the possibility of being Native for Nativeness's own sake.

Ultimately, I believe, and argue, that my being, my experience, my life, as Native person and as part of a community of Native nations is not something that is held in a vice-like death grip by my abjection. I do not believe that if that is our fate, to have our being always tied to our suffering, then we can ever truly escape this nightmarish hyperreality that is settler colonialism.

Further, I think that this is a fundamentally colonial narrative, the one of permanent Native abjection, and it is in a significant way maintained and fed into by our own damage narratives. We are the victims of centuries of genocide and dispossession, plagued today by all of manner of converging vectors of death: extreme rates of poverty, police violence, suicide, unliveable living conditions and the removal and detention of more of our children today than ever at the height of the residential and boarding school eras. Those stories, those facts of history and of the present, are important to tell. I would never argue against the practice of telling them because to know our conditions is to be able to think and chart our way out of them. So, I do not fault the people who tell them. Often the way in which they communicate about their personal, communal, and

intergenerational pain can be moving and hauntingly beautiful. They can be motivating, but they can also be deeply depressing, surging the seemingly never-ending well of Indigenous existential angst brought on by a world that wants us to cease being.

However, I also think that these kind of narratives, haunting and painfully beautiful as they often are, feed the colonial ontological gaze, which casts the Indigenous into a state of non-being, the sub-ontological position in which we are killable and unmournable, precisely because they can also prove that that is what we are: the walking dead and almost dead. As the American literary scholar Karl Kroeber wrote, regarding the work of Vizenor, "by accepting this white definition of themselves as victims, natives complete psychologically the not-quite-entirely-successful physical genocide" (2008:25)

I know because I also tell these narratives. I have been open over the course of this dissertation thus far about my own personal, communal, and intergenerational pain and my journey through it, even as I, to repeat the phrase from Tuck and Ree (2013) from the first chapter, use my own arms to determine the length of the gaze.

But like Vizenor I am active when I say that I do not consent only to be an abject being defined by my haunting and my victimry. I may be the walking dead, displaced from some time before the closure of the frontier, in the eyes of the dominant settler society, but that is not who I truly am. That is the simulacrum with no referent in reality. And that is why sharing my personal and familial damage narrative has become so exhausting. I am not only an abject being, and I am not only interested in telling you that

I am an abject being. I am curious about what lies beyond being abject. I refuse representation and recognition of my damage within the universitas and instead choose, activate, and centre my/our defiance, resilience, and independence.

I am interested in making, belonging to, and activating decolonial Indigenous futurities beyond, below and against the already post-apocalypse of settler-colonial and antiblack late capitalist (post)modernity and its living, zombie-like residues of coloniality, capitalist realism (Mark Fisher 2009) and manifest manners (Vizenor 1994). And so, as I reach for that end, to only tell the story of my pain, of my damage, drags me down.

That is why I cannot tell you the story that I was originally going to tell you. I cannot tell you that story because I do not want this narrative in this dissertation to be one about pain. I want it to be one that leads to a place of beauty, of wholeness. I am more than interested in the broken, the lost and abject, but I am also interested in what is generative and transformative. I am interested in what can lead us toward liberation. So that is why I am not going to tell you that story. That is why I have already begun to tell you a story about not telling you *that other* story.

Is this perhaps a kind of unstory? Is that a thing? Can telling you a story about not telling you another story still be a story? I do not know for certain, but I think so. Perhaps we can think of this as a way of articulating a kind of dialectical and Foucauldian counter-discourse against the dominant narratives, against settler colonialisms, and their

formation of civil society based on Indigenous abjection. A counter-discourse that seeks to move beyond abjection and the unliveable and that charts a course towards a place of contemporary Indigenous liveliness, vibrant and beautiful. A decolonial life if you will. I think I like the sound of that. So, I am running with it!

5.5 Talking Back to the Colonizer?

At the heart of this refusal to tell the story that I was going to tell is also a question: why do we tell these stories, often over and over again? Stories about residential and boarding schools, stories about alcoholism and drug abuse, stories about suicide and mental illness, the abject poverty of both the reservation and the red ghetto, stories about how Indigenous people face some of the worst rates of police violence and violent victimization. Stories about loss and displacement. Stories about how multiple converging vectors of death work in collusion to wipe about Native bodies and Native nations. Stories where the Native Savage is murdered over and over again, in the past, the present and the future. In these stories, Nicolás Juárez says "the statistics and the violence never end" (2014).

We *do* tell these stories. We tell them about ourselves as the modernist/colonialist constructed collectivity that we call "Native" and about ourselves as individuated Natives. We are of course far from alone in telling them, as is obvious to anyone after a brief tour through the canons of modernist and postmodernist colonial academia. Euro-western anthropologists, sociologists, historians, psychologists, and others have been

telling them for well over a century. In the European and Euro-western social sciences, the Native has always been a revenant, a ghost or some other spectral being haunting the imagination (Vizenor 1994; Byrd 2011; Tuck & Ree 2013).

But as I said, we ourselves tell them to the Western academics that lead our classes and sit on our committees. We tell them our stories of hurt and damage, hunting and gathering (as Savages are supposedly wont to do) for grades, publications, and thesis approval. And we also tell them to ourselves all of the time. I was going to, right here in these pages. I have already told you about how that was the original plan of action for what originally intended to be the concluding chapter of this dissertation, now reshuffled, re-formed, re-oriented and split into several more parts than before. I even gave you the skeletal outline of what was to be. So, you already know by now that I was going to tell you my damage narrative about how many of these forces have converged on my body, and my life.

And for what? For the completion of a dissertation. For that I was prepared to lay out some of the deeper parts of me, hoping that a supervisor and an academic committee of assembled "experts" would give me a passing approval, allowing me to continue on with myself and my life, already have stripped myself down to where little else remained. Indeed, I have already done this largely in the chapters that have preceded this one. About living a Red Life that is bare life. About liminality in the categories of settler State identity algorithms and the navigation of visibility. About blood quantum. I will not be

changing them in any way, in part because of the temporal and economic constraints that face a graduate student, especially a Native one, especially an immigrant one, and especially a Native-who-is-also-an-immigrant one. But also, in part because, like everything else, stories and theorizing change and alter themselves over time. In this case, a story that involved opening myself up as much as possible, in as controlled a fashion as possible, finds itself in a place of refusing to do that any further. I am also, unlike perhaps other writers and other academics, but, I imagine, unlike many storytellers out there, not opposed to changing the narrative midstream.

So, what you have gotten from me thus far is the extent to what you will be getting, at least in these pages. Enjoy them. Consume them. Because I will not be serving up any more of it.

But still, the question remains, why do we tell our damage narratives? Why was I going to tell them? Why have I already told so much? More so than why do we tell them, is the question of why do we tell them to certain people?

I think certainly for Native peoples, and for other colonized, racialized and otherwise “Othered” people sharing our stories of pain, sorrow, hurt, anger, madness, trauma, addiction, and everything in-between and that arises from those things can be part of our own collective and personal and healing processes. To know that you are not the only Native who has suffered in this or that way because of the machinations of settler colonialism on your body, your psyche and your spirit in a way, in my own personal

experience, can be the start of a motion in the direction of our individual and collective coming together towards healing and decolonizing the mind and psyche, and often times even the body. There is a power, as cliché as it may be to say, in being able to hear the story of someone else, and in knowing how it may be similar to yours, being able to have that moment of recognition that you are not alone in these experiences and feelings. You are not the only Native who has been through that. *I* am not the only Native who has been through that. There is a comfort in it. A confirmation that we, or I, am not alone in what can seem like a never-ending hurricane. This is the power of identification. And in that we can begin to come together, and perhaps begin to plot a way out of what it is that makes it so that it feels like there is no good reason for us to get out of bed in the morning. I am not asking why we tell our stories to other Natives, or even other colonized, racialized and Othered peoples. That is not the question I am asking when I specify telling the story to “certain people.” What I do mean to ask, quite plainly, is why we tell these stories to our collective and individual oppressor, or to follow from the title of this chapter, the ones who damaged us to begin with? Why do we tell our stories of damage to the settler and to the master, or to the normative cisheteropatriarchal man? What purpose does it serve us to do this, in the news, on social media, on a blog, or in a dissertation?

In my case, as in the case of many others, the self-justification for the telling, and re-telling, of these stories is the setting of the modern/colonial/capitalist university. I tell

my story, or rather attempted to tell my story, as a means towards achieving the milestones necessary for the completion of a graduate degree programme. And certainly, academia as a whole is a major site for the telling and circulation of these stories. Yet the material fact of the requirements of a graduate programme do not dissolve the ultimate question of why? I could tell you anything, framed and phrased in that way that academics in the social sciences always write, and fulfil the requirements of this dissertation.

I think another way that we can think about this question is also to ask ourselves, why are these stories so readily consumed and circulated within academia and the wider apparatus of settler-colonial civil society? Because they are. I have already said that they are consumed, and that is an important way to think of this: the circulation and consumption of our stories, of our damage narratives, within the academic marketplace of late capitalism/colonialism. The truth of that is all around, stalking around every corner and in every hallway of every department, at the very least within those artificially bounded disciplines this thoroughly modernist/colonialist/capitalist complex refers to as the social sciences and the humanities, or perhaps “the Arts” even more broadly. No studies are needed to be cited here to speak this simple, yet to many, seemingly elusive, truth.

I think this question of why is a different why than the one that was put to me regularly by my nekōqsemaw back when I was trying to still enunciate that story when

she regularly asked me “what” I was hoping to achieve, but it is certainly also adjacent to it. It is a why I have increasingly found myself contemplating, especially in the wake of my nekōqsemaw's insistent whats and my subsequent failure/unwillingness/inability to tell you my story of damaged Native life any further.

I have not been alone in this questioning. In conversations with a long-time colleague and friend—themselves from a Deleuzian cyber queer theorist perspective and my own perspective of mixed-up Indigenous critical, decoloniality and Fisherian Marxist cultural theory—the question of, essentially, “why do we always tell those who have damaged us how fucked up it is to live our lives? Why do we allow them to gaze into and, vampire-like, consume our pain, our strife and our struggle?” has been a regular topic of struggle and inter-personal theorization. Both of us, as disparate as our theoretical foundations and life experiences may be at times, are in the midst of navigating the above-mentioned requirements of a PhD within the social sciences, both of us studying and reflecting upon our Othered and damaged lives. And it has been exhausting, a physical and mental state only exacerbated when the fact of living our Othered and damaged lives within the coordinates of an already post-apocalyptic (post)modern, colonial, capitalist, cisheteropatriarchal terrain converges as we attempt to tell this to those who did the damage to begin with.

Many hours staring out at the rain or snow-flecked street in front of my apartment, and many cigarettes, have been spent contemplating these questions. But I think over

this protracted process of conversation and inter-personal theorization with my friend and colleague, as well as with my nekōqsemaw, the beginnings of an answer have begun to form. Attempting to put finger to keyboard in fleshing out something approximating an answer to this question of why our narratives of damage are so readily consumed within what I am calling the *imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling* is the arc of the chapters that follow.

Chapter 6. Digital Worlds, Native Ghosts, & The Socio-Existential Suturing of Settler Society

Words are trapped in the corporeal imagos that captivate the subject, they become marked by a colonial ideology of the referent: the petrification of speech and language, dream and desire, by which the *colonized* express the jouissance that discourse forms.

– David Marriot, *Whither Fanon?: Studies in the Blackness of Being*

As I sit here at this keyboard, mulling my thoughts on what exactly it means to be Native, and the how and why of the roles our damage narratives play within the domain of capitalist/colonialist academia, it is a warm, clear June day. To be specific, it is what this country, Canada, has recently decided is to be called Indigenous Peoples' Day. This is my second one, 2019, but so far today, at quarter to 2 in the afternoon I have not attended any of the multiple events that are being held across this slowly growing necropolis of a southern Ontario city. To be quite honest, I do not really care to, and I am asking myself the same question I did in 2018: what the fuck is the point of this?

Crude, yes, I know, but it sums up my feelings on this day. What exactly is the point of Indigenous Peoples' Day? To paraphrase the great abolitionist Frederick Douglas, I might ask: what is Indigenous Peoples' Day to Indigenous people?

I have to admit that I am pretty credulous to the socio-political content of Indigenous Peoples' Day. I am, for better or worse, a U.S. citizen and direct, immediate blood kin to an "american" Indian nation. I have also been involved in some manner of

left-wing politics, specifically what one might euphemistically call 'far-left' or 'hard left' politics more or less since I was 19 years old, when I first joined the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist Party USA. I do not adhere really to that sort of politics of any more, though not because I have abandoned the cause, but because I have given-up on those sorts of organizations. Still, those things, and my ties to an american political scene, even without being a resident of that country, taught me many moons ago that if there was to be something we were going to call 'Indigenous Peoples' Day', then it should be on or around October 12th, to mark the first day proper of the invasion that began in 1492 and changed the course of not only our collective historical development as a myriad of Indigenous nations, but also the course of global history. Indeed, across much of the so-called 'Americas' October 12th, which the americans call Columbus Day, is marked in some way as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Canada does not have Columbus Day, as any resident of this country should know. It has what I still call most of the time canadian Thanksgiving. So, while for much of the rest of this hemisphere Indigenous Peoples' Day, or whatever its regional or national variant may be called, is a direct disruption or inversion of the Colombian legacy of invasion-based sociological catastrophe, it would not quite have the same effect in this country. Or at least that is the arguement that has at times been tossed back at me when I have attempted to make the point that I believe that Indigenous Peoples' Day should be in October, rather than midsummer.

Of course, in the United States Thanksgiving has also often been marked by Indigenous people as a day of mourning, set aside to remember the true history of the slaughter of my Algonkian kin in New England that is now nightmarishly (from a Native point of view) rendered as a moment when we and the invader sat down for a hearty home-cooked meal to celebrate friendship, brotherhood etc. Yes, canadian Thanksgiving does not come quite as replete with direct violent colonial history as its five-weeks-later american cousin, but still. Thanks-taking, as many folks I know call it, is the same nevertheless. While the canadian long weekend may be more rooted in older european harvest festivals, it is still perhaps one of this country's three major days used to mark its national narrative, alongside Canada Day and Remembrance Day.

And that brings me around to the point of why I have always felt it is so much stronger to have Indigenous Peoples' Day on or around October 12th: it is a day in which Indigenous people can gather, in whatever way they might imagine to, and undermine a pillar of the settler-colonial narrative of this country. Indigenous Peoples' Day as it stands in this country does not, in my opinion, do this even remotely. It is proximal to Canada Day, being a mere ten days before it, and many Indigenous people I do know locally have chosen in the past couple of years to remove themselves from participation in officially sanctioned Canada Day events in order to give their times and energy to Indigenous Peoples' Day instead, but it is not like Indigenous Peoples' Day is a day that subversively coincides with the exact timing of Canada Day.

In fact, it is my opinion, somewhat cynically informed by trying to survive the post-apocalypse of settler colonialism for the better part of my adult life, that the June date for holding Indigenous Peoples' Day seems to be a cynical plot to celebrate the day in such a way precisely so that *it does not* happen to undermine one of Canada's major settler-colonial narrative chapter markers. I cannot prove that of course. It is just my jaded Native opinion on the day.

However, I also feel that by holding Indigenous Peoples' Day on a different day than essentially the rest of the continent, we also sever ourselves from the celebration of continent-wide survival and resistance of Indigenous peoples to five centuries of invasion, genocide and so much more. And that to me is important. Perhaps it is my old Marxist inklings towards internationalism, but it is certainly also because to me as an Indigenous person, the imaginary settler-colonial border, whether the Medicine Line or the Rio Grande, is just that: an illusory line drawn in the sand by a set of invasive colonial powers across lands they seized in the most insidiously legal and illegal ways. But by virtue of their being illusory that does not mean that they have no less force in our daily lives, even today in 2019. The U.S.-Canada border directly divides our peoples from one another, even when many of us were close kin before the coming of Canada or the United States and the borders their separate their nominally differentiated settler-colonial fiefdoms of stolen land.

As Indigenous people concerned with our own liberation, I find quite often that

there is an effectively standardized recognition of this, of the artificiality and illusory nature of the colonial border. Indeed, our activist and organizational history has long demonstrated this in terms of actual praxis. Natives from both sides of the U.S. and Canada showed up for Wounded Knee, Oka and Standing Rock. I know many Indigenous people who got in cars, pickups, minivans, and buses or even walked to Standing Rock. Our resistance against the expansion of the Black Snake across our lands is inherently trans-border in its methodological and praxiological implementations and theorizations (Estes 2019).

Beyond that, in our everyday lives, many of us demonstrate that border between these two halves of the northern bloc means little to us. Many times, over the past few years have I been in conversation with an Anishinaabe person in this country and they have remarked, upon hearing of my Menomineeness that they have travelled to our reservation in Wisconsin either for ceremony or for the pow wow. Of course, this does not surprise me, we are old kin, and we are close with several of the Anishinaabe communities in Wisconsin. The point is that for ceremony or the pow wow trail, the border means little.

Yet having Indigenous Peoples' Day on June 21st actually, in my thoughts, breaks with that ancient tradition. Rather than standing with our kin across the United States and so-called Latin America, by having Indigenous Peoples' Day on this day we corral ourselves to Canada and restrict ourselves to these borders. Intentionally or not it shirks

our internationalist duties to Indigenous people's south of the Medicine Line. It cannot even domestically function to undermine one of this country's chief narrative artefacts celebrated as holidays.

6.1 Colonial Holidays & the Myths We Celebrate

More than that though is that Indigenous Peoples' Day, specifically the formalized, official Indigenous Peoples' Day and associated gatherings, circle dances, drumming, film showings, concerts etc. that happen on this university campus, or are sanctioned to happen by the city's political and civil societal apparatuses to happen elsewhere in town, are always taken up under what has become so much the watchword for Indigenous-Settler relations in this country over the past half-decade or so: *reconciliation*. And this again returns us to my question: what the fuck is that?

What is reconciliation? Discursively, reconciliation is an outgrowth of recognition frameworks, which *Juris et de jure* emerged in this country following the 1982 constitution and its inclusion of discourse that claimed to have "recognized and affirmed" so-called Aboriginal Rights, and before them a series of other governmental and legal outcomes in the 1970s, in particular the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Calder et al. v. Attorney-General of British Columbia*, in 1973, and the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement of 1975, though in fact this particular form of liberal recognition rhetoric can be philosophically traced even further back to roots in a Hegelian dialectic.

In this vein, I agree with Mark Antaki and Coel Kirkby (2009) that Canadian State recognition of Indigenous peoples is actually a practice and policy of settler-colonial State lethality. At its most basic level reconciliation is a discursive ruse, an ideological feint that promises the reconciliation of nonindigenous and Indigenous Canadians, but without real movement on any policy or issue of import. Reconciliation is never about returning land, stopping the never-ending assault on Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirits, or about anything really.

As far as Indigenous Peoples' Day is reconciliation transmogrified into a semi-holiday, it is one that instead evokes a pure liberal, humanist multiculturalism that promises to "celebrate Indigenous people's contributions to Canada." What are we even saying here when we talk about both Indigenous and settler peoples gathering across this country to celebrate Indigenous peoples' contributions to it? I am reminded here of Roland Barthes' examination of a cover of *Paris-Match* magazine which featured on its cover a young, Black, colonial soldier saluting the French flag. He says of this

On the cover, a young [Black person] in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this [Black person] in serving his so-called oppressors. I am therefore again faced with a greater semiological system: there is a signifier, itself already formed with a previous system (a black soldier is giving the French salute); there is a signified (it is here a purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness); finally, there is a presence of the signified through the signifier (1972:115).

I think that in many ways this is the design of Canada's iteration of Indigenous Peoples' Day. We celebrate that Canada is a liberal, humanist multicultural society. We celebrate that Canada has moved on from its settler-colonial past, or at the very least it is sorry for the wrongs it committed and is working towards rectification and accountability. We celebrate that today in Canada, this society is no place for racists and racism. In other words, to borrow the title of the work by Barthes from which the above quote is taken, we work to create mythologies. Specifically, here colonial-national mythologies. We mythologize about Canada's past, and we mythologize about the current aims and policies of the Canadian government.



Figure 3: The Cover of Paris-March Discussed by Barthes. Source: *Rowland Barthes: Mythologies*, Jeanne Willette (2013).

This collective mythmaking, in which settlers and Natives join together (well, not all of us, I want no part in it) is a collective praxis of historical evisceration, however. It

splits open history and guts it of its actual content, renders it meaningless, an empty signifier which can be transposed onto a new signified. It appropriates colonial-national history across multiple planes. Of course, as should be expected, this mythologizing smothers over that the biggest contribution that Indigenous people provided to this corporate entity we now call Canada is the land which the settler appropriated, a process euphemized away from its fullness as an act of colonial brigandage by way of discursive recourse to the legalized apparatus of crown relations and treaty-making. Secondly, that initial act of materialist land appropriation is in turn appropriated by the myth-making apparatus of the settler-colonial State, re-shaped and re-signified as part of Indigenous people's contributions to Canada.

Indeed, reconciliation of this order inherently relies on invasion and settlement being a mere onto-historical event, or series of onto-historical events, but which is nonetheless something *that happened*, and which might have troubling and lingering echoes in 'our' (who is this collective?) society, but which is not *happening* today, and most certainly is not something that should, or even could be undone. And why would Canada choose to recognize that? I am not so deluded about the promises of liberal, humanist multiculturalism and the parliamentary democracy of an imperialist genocide-state to believe that Canada, or the United States also for that matter, would ever seriously move in any direction that would undermine its own existence. In fact, that is why I do not even particularly care about voting in said democratic process, not that I can vote in

this country, non-citizen that I am, and that is also a different story for another time.



Figure 4: Dancers and Attendees Stand for Pow Wow Flag Entrance. Visible are U.S. federal & armed forces flags, as well as the flag of Canada. Source: 2019 White Earth Pow Wow & Celebration, Crazy Crow Trading Post (2019).

Contra the core beliefs of the liberal, humanist multicultural project, settler colonialism is not merely a legacy from some dark national past; it is something that is ongoing right now, right here, and which affects Indigenous peoples towards shorter lifespans, often Third World living conditions, greater rates of interpersonal violence and risks of exposure to violence from both regular and irregular forces of the colonial State (whether police, or everyday settler taking police action into their hands), drug and alcohol addiction, suicide, deteriorated mental health, broken families, water on reserves that is undrinkable if not at times actually flammable, and all manner of other negative

sociological markers. What is reconciliation to us then when the final report of the inquiry into the horrific rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people, which was released during this writing, specifically, clearly and unflinchingly states that these cultural, sociological and criminological phenomena in this country “amount to nothing less than the deliberate, often covert campaign of genocide” against these of our kin (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019:5)?

What does reconciliation mean when this country’s Prime Minister one day declares a climate emergency only to seemingly turn right around and approve one of the primary arms of the Black Snake within these borders, one which the domestic armed wing of the settler-colonial State was sent in to enforce the construction of mere months ago? The Black Snake still sinks its poisonous fangs into our peoples, lands and other-than-human kin (Estes 2019), and Indian Country more than ever feels as though it has been cast into the zone of national sacrifice (Churchill & LaDuke 1996).

What does reconciliation mean when our lands, and quite often our very lives, remain stolen? What is reconciliation when Indigenous lives very much so remain what Mignolo refers to as “dispensable and bare lives” in the political-economic agenda of modernity (2009); lamentable yet not grievable, killable but not mournable. How can we even begin this conversation when it feels like everything that has been inflicted upon us, from Mayflower to modern, Indian Wars to residential schools, has never ended and

where an end does not appear to be in sight. In short, coming to survey this situation through the lens of my own life, it seems rather a lot like what my nekōqsemaw would call 'colonial bullshit.' In essence then reconciliation seems to have little to do with any kind of meaningful practice of decolonization, as much as that word is increasingly metaphorically deployed in everyday discourse, and more to do with ideologically shoring up the foundations of the colonial regime by ensuring that they are not challenged by any kind of emergent Native decolonial militancy.

Indigenous Peoples' Day functions within this context. It is a superficial demonstration and celebration of what is often spoken of as "Indigenous people's contributions to Canada" and seems to have more in common with a kind of country-wide pow wow than with anything else. It is a day where Indigenous people gather to sing, dance, drum, sell their "traditional" cultural crafts, paint chalk murals and share elder teachings more often it seems for the enlightenment of curious white onlookers than for any kind of real benefit for us who are the collectivity we call Indigenous peoples. It is non-invasive, unobtrusive and most certainly does not function to undermine the ongoing political and narrative fact of settler colonialism.

It does not seek, so it seems to me, to reconcile nonindigenous peoples, specifically the white settler population, with the continued survivance, resistance and quest for genuine freedom for Indigenous peoples. No, most certainly not. Rather, again to follow Antaki and Kirkby (2009), this discursive ruse is one in which reconciliation is something

that is inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in order to reconcile us to ongoing invasion and crown sovereignty, and the inherent foreclosure that has of any kind of decolonial future for Indigenous peoples, in which we will be able to say that we have become decolonized, because so long as the northern bloc persists in its existence that cannot ever be.

In that way, the ideological purposes of a formalized, and this always-already neutralized, Indigenous Peoples' Day lays itself bare. And in that, in my ways, it is a specific day that seems to contain within it so much of what it is that this dissertation is actually about.

6.2 Cohering Settler Colonialism

In this narrative aside about Indigenous Peoples' Day, brought on by the day of this writing, I mention a point that is salient for my quest to uncover the Nativophagic qualities of the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling when it comes to the telling of our damage narratives. And that is the point I made that settler-colonial nation-states always need to enact a programmatic regime of national forgetting. Forget Natives. Forget the land. Forget the past, kill it even if you must, to paraphrase a certain Star Wars character. Settler colonialism must engender such regimes of forgetting, which lies at cross-purposes with their nominal commitment to liberal, humanist, multicultural policies of reconciliation, because to remember, really remember, risks a ruptural event within the discursive and symbolic setting of the current colonial order of things. Towards that, forgetting rather than remembering must always be the order of the day.

And more to the point, when remembering does happen, because the bounds of settler-colonial space-time can longer contain its ghosts, and the spirits of the dead must be let loose to roam free, the regime of forgetting must always be there to remind you that what you are seeing is not actually of the present-now, but of the distant-then.

So, to begin to articulate this something-of-first-piece-of-an-answer to our question of the consumption of Native damage narratives, I want to briefly zoom out from the level of the auto-ethnographic and auto/biographic and return to the level of the structural and the national. By doing this I hope to link my thoughts on this question of why—why are these narratives of damage so readily consumed?—to thoughts that have already been articulated at the macro-level concerning the necessity of Indigenous dispossession and death (not only in the physical sense, but also in the sense of culture, politics, sovereignty and territoriality) and the stability and futurity of the settler-state in the post-frontier period.

It is well established within the canon of current-day Settler Colonial Studies and Native Studies that, at a structural level, “invasion is a structure, not an event” and that settler colonialism is a project that “destroys to replace” (Wolfe 2006:388). However beyond this, or rather as a consequence because of this, the fact of the continuing structuring nature of settler-colonial invasion, which is taken as a given throughout my writing in this dissertation, has necessitated an entire cultural industry and civil society focused on the constant assertion of invasion as *merely* an onto-historical event, locking

it, and the Native sovereignties and territorialities that it smothered and erased, consistently in the realm of the past.

This is necessary for the ongoing instantiation and cohesion of settler society. The late theorist of Settler Colonial Studies Patrick Wolfe makes the following argument in his text *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*:

Thus the salient question to arise from the territorial dispossession of Native peoples is not that of whether or not it happened, since there can be no doubting that. Rather, it is the question of the subsequent career of Native ownership, which mere dispossession does not compromise. The question in other words, is one of strategy analysis: How do settler societies deal with autonomous systems of ownership that are not susceptible to forcible seizure? This question acquires particular urgency in the context of settler society's need to establish a rule of law with sufficient legitimacy to secure a viable level of consent to a recently promulgated set of social norms among an ever-aggregating and often diversely recruited immigrant populace. For their own internal purposes, there, quite apart from international consideration, settler societies seek to neutralize the extraneous sovereignties that conquered Natives continue to instantiate. ... So far as conquest remains incomplete, the settler state rests—or, more to the point, fails to rest—on incomplete foundations. For the settler state, therefore, the struggle to neutralise Indigenous externality is a struggle for its own integrity (2016b:35-37).

I agree with Wolfe. However, while his focus here is broadly on the questions of the continuance of Native sovereignty and territoriality in the ongoing face of the institutional and structural elements of settler invasion, what is essential in this argument that I want to draw out for my purposes here is that the continued existence of Native people poses a fundamental existential quandary for the settler-state and its own claims to sovereignty and territoriality. While the juridical order of the settler-state was created

exceptionally (Agamben 2017b; Schmitt 2006) through the homicidal and dispossessing violence of the frontier period, even once the frontier is cleared and its borders closed, the continued existence of the Native, as the Native, casts into doubt the legitimacy of the current settler-colonial order and its political claims.

A similar sentiment is expressed in the writings of the Osage theologian George E. Tinker. He writes in *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, arguing against the reduction of Native struggles purely to class analysis and class struggle:

*Our oppression and the resulting poverty are not primarily due to any class analysis at all. Rather, they are rooted in the economic need of the colonizer to quiet our claims to the land and to mute our moral judgement on the United States' long history of violence and conquest in north America [emphasis mine] (2008:23).*⁵⁴

In Tinker, as with Wolfe, the fundamental issue at hand here is the need of the settler-colonial State to silence the continued existence of Native nations. For both of them, the central pressing question is that of the settler-state's ability to continually instantiate itself as legitimate through concretizing its own grammar of sovereignty and territoriality. This by necessity equates with the development of a political order that *must* silence any

⁵⁴ Tinker's arguments in this work regarding the theoretical tendency of Eurocentric Marxists to reduce Native struggles against settler colonialism to class analysis—and even more so to justify the continued the dispossession of Native territory under the guise of a proletarian socialist movement and state—also find their reflection in the more recent work of the Dené Marxian and Fanonian scholar Glen Coulthard in his book *Red Skin White Masks* (2014), who comes to similar insights regarding the primitive accumulation thesis forward by Marx. However, while the work of Coulthard is in many ways influential on my own conception of a politics of refusal, it is not my intention here to take up space illuminating the ways in which Tinker and Coulthard's analysis on the question of Marxism, historical materialism and class analysis converge. I have however written regarding this subject elsewhere in my publicly accessible, more "activist" writings for a general, if decidedly political, audience (Robinson 2019; 2018; 2016).

other competing claim to sovereignty or territoriality within the geographic and physical mapping of the northern bloc. Especially when such competing sovereignties and territorialities are not only alternative, but prior, as Wolfe notes (2016b:15).

One can see this at play vis-à-vis competing imperial and colonial interests within the European world in the instance of the Monroe Doctrine, by which the United States asserted the entirety of the so-called western hemisphere as its corporate domain, locking out, or attempting to, the competing claims to access from the imperial powers of the Old World. More keenly, however, it is the persistence of alternative and prior Native claims to sovereignty and territoriality that present the most internal and pressing threat to the political order of the northern bloc. While this is certainly not the case in balancing the abacus of military force (or lack thereof) when compared to the rivalry between the dual settler-states of the north bloc and the European old world, or even the emergent inter-imperialist rivalry with the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China (a rivalry that in my most pessimistic and apocalyptic of nightmares, as I am sure for many others, seems to be inching this world ever further away from the post-World War II order of inter-imperialist cooperation and towards a renewal of direct inter-imperialist conflict), the prior, yet also continuously alternative, sovereignties and territories of the multitude of Native nations engulfed within the corpus of the northern bloc are those competing political orders which are most deeply tied to the symbolic ordering of settler power.

Native existence rests at the intersections of political economy and the juridical

order of things, to which Tinker also adds a moral direction (no doubt due to his training and vocation as a decolonizing Lutheran theologian), and to which I would add the condition that it is also essentially psychic and existential, reaching into the symbolic order of settler coloniality. That is, it relates more fundamentally to the ability, or rather the drive, of the settler-state to cohere its own being psychically. In the reigning *épistémè* of the settler colony, so long as the Native persists, given the unstable terrain that that persistence always-already generates, the State and civil society will always be at an ideological, ontological, symbolic, and libidinal impasse with regards to how it will mediate and concretize its ongoing existence qua itself.

6.3 Digital Representations of the Native Ghost

The essential consequence of this is the casting of echoes outwards rhizomatically, penetrating into multiple layers of the settler State and civil society. This is most readily visible (and audible, and readable) in the various multiplicities of settler popular media and culture: films, literature, music, comic books, and videogames. It is hard to not feel, for example, with the release of such a highly anticipated, and later award-winning, videogame as Rockstar's late-2018 Western action-adventure property *Red Dead Redemption 2*, that as a Native I live engulfed within a symbolic culture and digital artistic production in which the Native must be killed, and the "west won," over and over and over again. I am not a film, literary or media theorist or scholar, nor do I pretend to be, but to live as a Native in this era of late-colonialism, the era of the Trumps and Trudeau

2.0, it is hard not to conceive of the continued persistence of the Western form in film, video games and literature, as more than a simple re-enactment on a plane of escapism of the past glories of the settler, of the taming of the land and the making of a fully modern, colonial, capitalist and imperial nation.

This is especially so as the tropes of the Western find their manifestations in more than just the straight-forward Western, but also in such genres as science fiction, fantasy, space opera and many others. Jodi Byrd (2018) for example discusses how in another AAA video game release, in this instance Irrational Games' 2013 steampunk themed *Bioshock Infinite*, the successful closure of the frontier and settler victory in the Indian Wars is the essential narrative precondition. She notes how during the run-up to the title's release "the ads for *Bioshock Infinite* were full of the bombastic, adrenalin-rush swagger that celebrates frontier violence and first-person shooter aesthetics with a full arsenal of weapons" [emphasis mine] (602-603). She writes:

In keeping with the period justifications for the gamification of imperial racism within the *Bioshock Infinite* multiverse, designers populated the world with casual, overt, and extreme forms of racial violence. From the Fraternal Order of the Raven with its Ku Klux Klan overtones to the Hall of Heroes with its celebration of victories in the Boxer Rebellion and at Wounded Knee, the game circulates racialized caricatures of "foreign hordes" to world the game (609).

Eventually, within these games digital and algorithmic worlds, the player is invited, via the heavily armed avatar of the central character DeWitt, to take up arms and enact violent and righteous vengeance against all of the imperial white supremacy that they

have witnessed throughout the story thus far. Bleeding together the game world and the world of the real, this invitation and the violences that follow, work to enact a kind of temporal distancing between the player, situated in the colonial present, and the alternative early Twentieth-Century history setting in which the game world plays out. However, this logic of the game world fails at the level of settler colonialism. Byrd continues:

in the case of Wounded Knee, the game's mode of temporal distancing with no remediation possible places the event in stasis as forever primitively fixed within the colonial archive. The game designers also fail spectacularly at history. First of all, Wounded Knee was not a battle, as it is constantly referred to throughout the game script. It was in fact a brutal massacre of three hundred unarmed Lakota men, women, and children who were in Big Foot's band and were already in custody of the US Seventh Cavalry when the shooting started on December 29, 1890. Throughout the entirety of *Bioshock Infinite*, Wounded Knee is implied to be an unfortunate, if violent, mistake on the part of the US military ... Wounded Knee is an uninterpretable event surrounded by generic nineteenth-century Indianness. It is evoked, as it often is within standardized history books, as a mnemonic for the supposed colonial break, the moment when the Indian Wars end, the frontier closes, and twentieth-century modernity begins. Its presence in the game is a relic, a marker of a flattened historicity that continues to evoke Indians as lamentable, but not grievable (609-610).

The ghost of the lamentable, but not grievable, dead, but not murdered, Native is the foundational ontological precondition for this fantastic digital world, much as it is for *Red Dead Redemption 2*. In so much of settler popular culture the ghosts of Natives past and present lurk at the margins, just out of sight, waiting to break in and rupture the hypersurface of the settler-colonial present. Indeed, it is a common, half-serious, half-

joking occurrence for my Anishinaabe nekōqsemaw to assert that most films we watch together are in some way about settler colonialism, and in particular about settlers and others from white imperial nations attempting to work through their collective pasts, and the moral injuries accrued in the acts that populate them, by re-imagining these violences with themselves taking the positionality of the victim.

This is I feel the case in even the most counter-western videogames that I have experienced. Here my mind drifts immediately to the long-running production by French and french-canadian studio Ubisoft of the *Assassin's Creed* series. Taking as its plot device the exploring of fictional submerged histories of real-world events via the use of the genetic memories of characters in the present day, in many ways the *Assassin's Creed* series has been subversive—at least in so far as a major contemporary AAA game produced by a large capitalist game creation firm is capable of being genuinely subversive—at least up until its eighth mainline instalment, *Assassin's Creed Unity*, which took place during the French Revolution, and which I believed, in all my leftism, to portray the proto-proletarian movements that burst forth at that time as the villains. Before that however, in the mini-game side-quests of the third mainline entry, *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, the players could even uncover an image of protestors from the Revolutionary Communist Party-Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire, the major canadian Maoist organization, at a May Day rally accompanied by the slogan “with each passing day, the people get stronger, freedom ascends, heralding a revolution.”

Between that, I imagine jokingly, hidden slogan about protracted people's war, and the more reactionary eighth iteration there was perhaps what has been for me one of the more personally relevant and meaningful videogames I have played, *Assassin's Creed III*. Or more specifically, *Assassin's Creed III*, *Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag*, and the spin-off title *Assassin's Creed Freedom Cry*. All of these games take place in the Americas, unlike the previous Italian and Levantine settings, with *Black Flag* and *Freedom Cry* featuring the 18th century Caribbean, my second home, and often took the time to directly address the racial tensions and colonial histories that still deeply scar the region to this day. But it is really *Assassin's Creed III* that always struck me, and for one simple reason, the principle player character is Indigenous⁵⁵. He is the son of an english settler, and primary antagonist of the title, and a Mohawk mother, and it is his mission over the course of the game to undo the works of his father in the midst of the so-called "American Revolution." Indeed, quite often the game did not shy away from telling it like it is, about settler

⁵⁵ There is something to be said of the problematics of non-Native videogame developers (both AAA and others) using Indigenous characters and attempting Indigenous representation in the medium. Most recently there has been a small uproar over the game *This is My Land*, which has you play as a generically Plains Indian character who is defending their land against the encroachment of white american settlers. The game, currently in an early access phase, is developed by Ukrainian developer Game-Labs. A number of Indigenous friends of mine raised the issue on social media about a non-Indigenous developer, in particular a european one, attempting to represent the Indigenous experience in the game. I understand this, as I likewise understand people's trepidation of Indigenous representation in *Assassin's Creed III*. However, as a diasporic/displaced Indigenous person, who grew up overseas, I must say that these representations have always meant something to me. As problematic as they are, it would be a lie to say that I did not jump at the opportunity to play as an Indigenous character, and more so, play as an Indigenous character who fights against the tide of colonial settlement. I know I am not the only person who feels this way. *This is My Land* came to attention because my younger brother quite excitedly sent me information about the game during summer 2019. He couldn't wait to get his hands on it. While it may sound pithy, and perhaps even liberal, I think these issues are nothing if not complicated.

colonialism and what it means for Indigenous people. I will always remember the lines of the game's fictionalized rendition of Sir William Johnson, who says to your character just before his death:

Do you think that good King George lies awake at night hoping that no harm comes to his native subjects? Or that the people of the city care one whit about them? Oh, sure, the colonists are happy to trade when they need food or shelter or a bit of extra padding for their armies. But when the walls of the city constrict—when there's crops that need soil— when there's... when there's no enemy to fight—we'll see how kind the people are then.

But even in this game, ultimately this is the realm of the past. In the end, your player avatar Ratonhnhaké:ton, while successful in tearing down the fictional mystical conspiracy of the Knights Templar to disrupt society and define the American Revolution to its own ends, he is unable to stop the forceful displacement of his nation from their lands. In the end, he is just a Native, and no matter how powerful he may be, no matter how many white/settler/master soldiers and villains he lays low, that is all he will ever be. A ghost of what could have been, and a signpost to what is, a past that can never be done. In any iteration, in any nearby possible world, the Native will always be fated to fade into the night.

This assemblage that is current settler society, in all of its dystopic, accelerated and accelerating, deterritorializing capitalist realist glory is in reality not as detached from modernity as some theorists have attempted to posit, such as the late Mark Fisher (2009). While I agree with much of Fisher's diagnosis of capitalist realism as an extension of Frederic Jameson's critique of the postmodern condition (1991), from the temporal and

spatial geography of the Native, it comes into view more of a critique of the internal cultural and political logic of decaying settler-colonial, imperial, white capitalist society that is staring down the barrel of its own demise as the world it has created inches closer and closer to one apocalypse or another, whether technological or ecological. While for Fisher the pastiche and revivalism which Jameson first foresaw as coming to consume more and more of late-capitalist cultural production is founded on the notion that society has unlearned how to invent the future, in light of Berardi's slow cancellation of the future (2011), and thus it must constantly return to the past in order to mine it for lost visions of the future, even as technological growth and development increases at an ever greater pace, this cannot be the whole of it.

Indeed, if the cultural production of game worlds such as those of *Red Dead Redemption 2* and *Bioshock Infinite* demonstrate anything to us, it is that the capitalist realist present is the logical telos of the frontier. The anti-Native violence of the frontier period has undeniably never stopped; it has merely been transformed and reconfigured itself. From a Bahamian beach in October, 1492 through the Indian Wars to residential and boarding schools, to the ongoing sterilization of Native women, to #MMIWGTS, Oka, Ipperwash, Wounded Knee II, Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en, from blood quantum to the Indian Act, eliminative and dispossessive anti-Native violence continues to be a necessary animus for the world in which we live.

Rather than escaping the frontier, leaving in the dust bin of a long distant history,

settler colonialism and its violence continues to haunt the present of capitalist realism. This is why the Native must be defeated, murdered, and pushed back again and again at all levels of the settler-colonial symbolic order. It is precisely this that ultimately destabilizes the ontological and symbolic worlds of the white/settler/master, creating a world in which, straddle the globe as they might in a predator's pose always ready to strike, they are never able to be fully secure.

In this sense, the moment of settler-colonial capitalist realism is doubly hauntological. It is haunted not just by the lost futures of cultural formations past which continue to echo within the imaginations of the settler who is unable to dream of a world beyond the capitalist event horizon, but also by the present-yet-absent whispering of the ghosts of massacred Native and enslaved Africans. These spectral entities are always there, always watching, always waiting.

The settler must continuously defeat these ghosts so as to sustain their own instantiation and sense of self-legitimacy. To repeat Wolfe's maxim: "invasion is a structure not an event" (2006:388). The murder, conquest and casting out of the Native is not only the fundamental ontological precondition for the project of settlement, it remains the fundamental ontological and symbolic pre-condition for its persistence in the era of capitalist realism. Various strands of nominally critical thought birthed at the heart of modernity/coloniality, such as Marxism and poststructuralism, may attempt to dislodge or deconstruct this, to posit something else in its place, yet it, like the shadow

figures of some waking nightmare, remains.

Chapter 7. Settler Colonialism & the Incommensurable Cartography of the Native Savage

Every science is necessarily based upon a few inarticulate, elementary, and axiomatic assumptions which are exposed and exploded only when confronted with altogether unexpected phenomena which can no longer be understood within the framework of its categories.

– Hannah Arendt, *Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps*

Carrying forward the discussion from the previous chapter, I imagine that you are wondering right now what exactly does our fire-side tale about the chronic requirement of the settler-colonial order of things to silence Native ghosts, both living and dead, in order to always be able to (re-)instantiate its own sense of legitimacy have to do with the question of Native abjection and the telling and consumption of our damage narratives? I understand that question, which is why I pose it here in the body of these texts. I know what you are probably thinking as you try to decipher this story at arm's length, because while this may seem like an interesting aside about AAA videogames, and certainly something that is worthy of its own dissertation length examination, it does not immediately seem to have much to do with the question posed in Chapter 4 about the consumption of our damage narratives within the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling. So, what does any of this have to do with why settler-colonial society is always so ready to consume our stories of haunting and trauma?

But I argue back, somewhere in my prior discussion of Western tropes and the Native spectres that haunt the margins of settler-colonial and capitalist realist imaginaries-of-the-present-and-future lies the path that will lead us down this rabbit hole. And the deeper we fall, the Weirder the monsters that will appear.

At the heart of the ongoing ontological and symbolic requirement of continuous Native death and dispossession, is a fundamental question of the construction of *The Native, Native*, and of *Native sovereignty* and how it allows the Native to be both cast out, and to *a priori* always-already be cast out, that is to say: always-already abjected. For the purposes of my argument here I take sites of multiplicity of the Native, of Natives-as-persons, and of Native sovereignty and self-determination as indicative of, as well as manifestations of, the same, primordial ontological condition within, against and before the social ontology of settler colonialism. To use the words of Billy-Ray Belcourt, perhaps then we can think here of *Nativeness* as a kind of ante-ontology, in that “it is prior to and therefore disruptive of ontology” (2016a:24), or as Jodi Byrd’s *Indian Errant* which foregrounds the ontological formation of all else (2011).

This state of being is one that is always-already cast out, always-already outside of the conception of Man, of Man-as-the-human, born of coloniality with its taxonomic boundaries delineated by the binary of white/not white, what Aníbal Quijano called the racism/ethnicism complex (2010; 2008), as well as male/not male, cissexual/not cissexual, heterosexual/not heterosexual. Indeed, what Sylvia Wynter referred to as the ethnoclass

of (bourgeois) Man's overrepresentation as the human, central as it is to the reigning modernist *épistémè*, cannot be separated from co-constituted and co-productive dualism of modernity/coloniality. Wynter's potent corrective of Foucault's genealogy of Man displaces and destabilizes the latter's Eurocentrism by centring the Columbian encounter and processes of elimination, enslavement, conquest, and subordination (Wynter 2003; Foucault 1994)

While these binaries no doubt play a significant role in the ordering of the settler-colonial world and the Native's relationship to it, for us here I want to aim at two additional binary oppositions. Firstly, Man versus the Savage, which might render also as Man versus the Wild, or more simply and more classically recognizable, Man versus Nature. And secondly, and perhaps more abstractly, being-inside-settler-time versus being-outside-settler-time. I want to posit that these two binary oppositions are not only fundamental to understanding the relationship of the Native to the world of the Sovereign and the settler (and the sovereign settler) but are themselves deeply interrelated.

Both of these oppositions—Man versus the Savage and being-inside-settler-time versus being-outside-settler-time—entail a project of world creation in which the Native is always-already an exteriority vis-à-vis the white/settler/master, its States and civil society. While I believe that Wolfe is correct in his argument that in a political and juridical sense it is the case that in the post-frontier era of total territorial engulfment of

the Native that the living Native has been transferred from a cartography of the outside to one of the inside (2012), I argue that this is only in the sense of State-oriented governance and regulations of populations in juridical and biopolitical spheres, and that this situation is not reflected in the fundamental social ontology of contemporary settler colonialism.

Here I argue that the always-already casting out of the Native functions along these two different yet related lines of thought: The Native as outside-settler-time and the Native as the Wild. While the question of the Native as outside-settler-time clearly articulates itself around questions of temporality, in particular around what Mark Rifkin refers to as *settler time* (2017a), I also read the Native as the Wild as a form of spatial cartography that functions through and across multiple registers to delimit the boundaries of settler habitability.

Both of these are necessary to understand not only the form and content of Native abjection, but also ultimately the question of the how and why of the colonial-capitalist consumption of our damage narratives, and thus it is necessary to explore them within the pages of this chapter. What they mean is not that the Native is abjected from, cast out of, the fold of Man and its overrepresentation as Man-as-the-human—the world of the white/settler/master—but rather that the Native was never part of *that* world to begin with. This also converges with, and draws from, Nicolás Juárez's ontological investigation of Red Life (2014), and thus also necessarily unsettles assumptions in certain

theorizations of Native positionality which posit a partial commensurability of the relationship between the Native and Man cum settler, such as that articulated within the work of Frank B. Wilderson, III (2010). It is also thus a further sketching out of the Native positionality as theorized by Byrd (2011) within a triangular social ontology of settler colonialism of Native-Settler-Arrivant⁵⁶.

7.1 Being-outside-Settler-Time

In his text *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*, Wilderson provides us with an ontological taxonomy of life under settler colonialism of human-Savage-Slave⁵⁷. Within his necessarily arboreal theorization the white/settler/master occupies the space of the 'human', alongside all other non-Native and non-Black people of colour, while the Black Slave is the abjected non-human. Between these two positions

⁵⁶ The theorization of the category of Arrivant for Byrd (2011) is an attempt to sketch out the positionality of those who, while not Native, are also not settlers. The chief characteristic here is that Arrivants did not arrive in the Americas of their own free will, but rather found themselves on these shores by dint of force. A similar social taxonomy of settler-colonial society is made by Iyko Day in the form of Native-Settler-Alien (2016). However, neither of these social taxonomies are without fault. Primarily in this regard it must be said that the categories of Arrivant and Alien unintentionally obviate the specificity of the Black experience of chattel enslavement and the ongoing after-lives of it that continue to mark as inherently criminal, containable and killable-without-justification the descendants of those who survived the Middle Passage and the plantation. At the same time, I am not entirely convinced of Wilderson's own trifold taxonomy of Human-Savage-Slave (discussed below), in part because I do not believe that there is sufficient ground within the imaginary of settler-colonial order to fold all non-Black and non-Red people of colour into the category of human alongside the white/settler/master. While I accept these criticism and thus do not deploy either of these categories throughout this work, it is also not my intention at this present moment to provide an alternative social ontology, though I will note that I believe such a fuller and more accurate taxonomy of life under settler colonialism must be necessarily quadrilateral rather than triangular.

⁵⁷ While Wilderson, as well as Fred Moten (2017), Nicolás Juárez (2014) and others, speak in this regard of *the human*, I, as noted earlier, cleave much closer to Wynter's Fanonian understanding that this particular human that they speak of and theorize around is actually an overrepresentation of the ethnoclass of (bourgeois) Man (2003).

is the Native Savage, which for Wilderson occupies a liminal position of half-humanness (2010). The reasoning for the half-human positionality of the Native Savage for Wilderson is found within his understanding of the grammars of Native life: genocide and the loss of sovereignty. Within his theorization of the structure of U.S. antagonisms, the former is unable to be made legible within the rhetorical world of the human cum settler, and rather finds articulation with the grammars of Black suffering: accumulation and fungibility. However, so Wilderson theorizes, the latter, which is the loss of sovereignty, is able to be reincorporated and made legible within the human's register of structural re-adjustment (2010). Wilderson notes:

On the semantic field on which the new protocols are possible, Indigenism can indeed become partially legible through a programmatic of structural adjustment (as fits our globalized era). In other words, for the Indians' subject position to be legible, their positive registers of lost or threatened cultural identity must be foregrounded, when in point of fact the antagonistic register of dispossession that Indians "possess" is a position in relation to a socius structured by genocide. ... [T]he Indigenous position is one for which genocide is a constitutive element, not merely an historical event, without which Indians would not, paradoxically, "exist" (2010:9-10).

He continues this line of thinking elsewhere, writing:

whereas the genocidal modality of the "Savage" grammar of suffering articulates itself quite well within the two modalities of the Slave's grammar of suffering, accumulation and fungibility, Native American film, political texts, and ontological meditations fail to recognize, much less pursue this articulation. The small corpus of socially engaged films directed by Native Americans privilege the ensemble of questions animated by the imaginary of sovereign loss (2010:28).

As powerful and insightful as Wilderson's ontological mapping of white/settler/master and Black life may be, there are certain theoretical miscues within his analysis which cause him to misallocate the Native Savage as liminal to human life, as not-quite-human, rather than fully outside of it. Indeed, in later work, Wilderson completely abjures this formulation under the influence of Jared Sexton's work in "The Vel of Slavery" (2016)⁵⁸, and places the formerly liminal Native Savage fully inside of the category of the Man qua the human (2011). Focusing on his earlier and more textually substantial work however, for Juárez—who's own work repositions Wilderson's grammar of Redness from genocide and sovereignty to clearing and civilization—this is because Wilderson:

compartmentalizes the Red ontological position of clearing into genocide and (the loss of) sovereignty, ultimately failing to recognize the nature of Red life as the condition of being cleared a priori to existence, what Wilderson articulates as the shift from clearing as a verb to clearing as a noun at the moment of the "discovery" [emphasis mine] (2014).

This essential element of recognition for Juárez is the entry point of the Native as out-of-settler-time. In drawing this development out of the settler order of things, we turn to the Marshall Trilogy of decisions at the U.S. supreme court in the early-to-mid-19th century, seminal decisions in the juridical reckoning of the Native within the northern bloc. *Johnson v. McIntosh*, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, and *Worcester v. Georgia* were three of the single most important decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court with regards to Native

⁵⁸ Tiffany Lethabo King interviewed Wilderson twice on this subject in 2017, and discusses it in her book *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (2019:228)

Law and Indigenous rights, setting forth the legal terrain upon which much the proceeding governance of settler colonialism would be built. For example, the Court's unanimous decision in 1823 in the *Johnson* case, despite no actual representation for Indigenous peoples, re-inscribed into the law of the new, secular American republic the older, Christian European "doctrine of discovery", which decidedly relegated Indigenous peoples to secondary status on the question of their possession of their own land, which was transferred into the realm of being squabbles over territory by competing European and settler actors. *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, and *Worcester v. Georgia* continued this legal colonialism, refining the process over the period of these two subsequent Supreme Court cases (Williams 2005).

Lumbee critical legal scholar Robert A. Williams, Jr. says of their foundational role in the settler order of things that:

the Marshall Model of Indian Rights plays much the same kind of inaugural and paradoxical organizing role in the Supreme Court's Indian law as Bhabha's wondrous "English book" plays in the cultural writings of English colonialism (2005:50).

In particular, these three court decisions have had a profound and lasting implication for any understanding of Native sovereignty and the loss thereof. In this regard, Juárez notes, "The Marshall rulings ontologically determine Redness from the moment the Settler meets the Savage (2014). The temporal dimension of the Marshall rulings is likewise noted by Wolfe, who states:

Native sovereignty existed out of (or at least, prior to) colonial time,

which is to say, it did not exist at all—or rather, it only existed in order to be diminished. Paradoxically, therefore, Native sovereignty was a creation of discovery. Propositionally, it was an imperative generated by Marshall’s commitment to diminution, which required an undiminished prior state that could be diminished from (2012:10-11).

Finally, Mark Rifkin describes the cognition of Native sovereignty in light of the Marshall Decisions as a “peculiar status.” In particular, he says of the place of Native sovereignty within the juridical worlding of the settler that it is “less as a way of designating a specific set of powers than as a negative presence, as what Native peoples categorically lack” (2017b:297). The notion of Native sovereignty is a void, a nullity, a simulacrum par excellence; it does not hide some genuine truth, some deeper reality, that Natives are, or were, in fact, sovereign self-subjects and that this status was lost within the cognition of the white/settler/master. As Baudrillard himself notes, in a simulated reference to the new testament, “The simulacrum is never what hides the truth—it is truth that hides the fact that there is none” (1994:1).

This is, as Juárez articulates, the essence of “*being cleared a priori to existence*” (2014).

On the ontological implications of this, and of the resultant construction of the Native within the symbolic order of the settler, he notes:

For the concept that the United States had eminent domain over the land to gain coherence it must presume, in the a priori, that the terra nullius of the Americas always was. Here, Native Americans emerge barred from sovereignty at the ontological level, and thus can only be regarded as non-human occupants. This a priori clearing becomes the necessary grounding for the Marshall ruling to make sense because the clearing of land must be scaled to the level of a hemisphere in order for colonial land-grabbing to even begin to play out within the Americas. ... as far

as the Settler is concerned, as far as the world is concerned, the Red Indian never had sovereignty, never had any claim to the land at all (2014).

The above discussions of the Marshall Rulings in the United States also reveal an additional problem with Wilderson's theorization of the Native as a kind of liminal half-human or not-quite-human. This is that while he sees the loss of sovereignty for the Native as a point of articulation with the grammars of suffering of the human, what he fundamentally misses is that where the same linguistic taxons may be used to seemingly describe a notion of Native sovereignty that is superficially similar to the sovereignty of the white/settler/master, it is, in fact, something of a categorically, and fundamentally different, and inferior, kind. While not in my reading a direct critique of Wilderson, Wolfe makes this distinction clear, noting:

In keeping with the doctrine of discovery, the Marshall judgments presuppose, and can only consistently be read as presupposing, a fundamental asymmetry between Indians' right of occupancy and the property rights that white settlers could obtain once Native title had been extinguished. Under certain conditions, Natives' immemorial occupation of their land entitled them to a right of soil or usufruct, which was understood as hunting and gathering rather than as agriculture. This right was inalienable. It could not be sold to private individual or corporation but, under the principle of pre-emption, could only be surrendered to the crown. Once Native title had been surrendered to the crown and extinguished, however, the crown could transfer to settlers an entitlement (fee simple) that was greater than the right of occupancy that the Natives had surrendered. Thus the process yielded more than land for settlers. It also yielded sovereign subjecthood: they became the sort of people who could own rather than merely occupy. The asymmetry between occupancy and title reflected a thoroughgoing discrepancy whereby Indian and white were categories of a different order (2012:10).

Thus, the trap for which Wilderson falls in his discussion of (the loss of) Native sovereignty as one of the two modalities of Red suffering, and as a point of articulation with the alienation and exploitation of the white/settler/master, is one of language. As he claims in *Red, White & Black*:

At every sale—the soul, the body, the group, the land, and the universe—they [the settler and the Indian] can both practice cartography, and although at every scale their maps are radically incompatible, their respective “mapness” is never in question. This capacity for cartographic coherence is the thing itself, that which secures subjectivity for both the Settler and the ‘Savage’ and articulates them to one another in a network of connections, transfers and displacements’ (2010:181).

Wilderson’s predicament is made clearer in his more recent essay “Afro-Pessimism and the End of Redemption,” in which he creates a juxtaposition between Simon Ortiz’s poem “Sand Creek” (2000) alongside his own, “Law Abiding” (2013). Through his reading of Ortiz’s poetic work he claims:

[T]he relational status of both the Indian victims and the White oppressors is established—a reciprocal dynamic is acknowledged (between degraded humanity, Indians, and exalted humanity, White settlers). This reciprocal dynamic is based on the fact that even though one group is massacring the other, both exist within the same paradigm of recognition and incorporation. Their relation is based on a mutual recognition of sovereignty. At every scale of abstraction, body, family, community, cosmology, physical terrain, Native American sovereignty is recognized and incorporated into the consciousness of both Indians and settlers who destroyed them. The poem’s coherence is sustained by structural capacity for reciprocity between the genociders and the genocided (2016).

Speculatively: Wilderson’s trap of language here and elsewhere is perhaps as a result of the insufficiencies in, and inherent ideological and affective working of, settler juridical

and philosophical linguistic taxonomies⁵⁹. In essence he mistakes the outward linguistic conceptual coverings of these two concepts of supposed sovereignty for their actual ontological content; two things which in fact could not be more distinct—thus allowing for his argument that Natives and the white/settler/master share a mutual cognition of the sovereignty of the other, united in a joint paradigm of “recognition and incorporation.” As Wolfe notes, however, “The same words meant different things when applied to either” (2012:10). Tracing a similar path Joanne Barker likewise notes that:

There is no fixed meaning for what *sovereignty* is—what it means by definition, what it implies in public debate, or how it has been conceptualized in international, national, or indigenous law. Sovereignty—and its related histories, perspectives, and identities—is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning. ... The challenge, then, to understand how and for whom sovereignty matters is to understand the historical circumstances under which it is given meaning. There is nothing inherent about its significance (2005:21).

⁵⁹ While I will not make any serious gestures here regarding claims as to the intentionality or unintentionality of Wilderson’s taxonomic dichotomy, in the above example it is curious, to put the case somewhat minimally, that Wilderson, in his juxtaposition of the two poems, makes one of them his own. “Law Abiding” was published in 2013, in the edited volume *Stand Our Ground: Poems for Trayvon Martin & Marissa Alexander*. This is a full 3 years after the publication of *Red, Black & White*, and also post-dates Wilderson’s Sexton-influenced movement away from treating the Native Savage as a liminal being of “half-humanness” towards one fully commensurate with, and incorporated within, the category of the human (as the overrepresentation of Man). It is also a full decade after his dual 2003 publications of “Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?” and “The Prison Slave as Hegemony’s (Silent) Scandal”, two texts that brought him to the forefront of the heterogeneous movement within theory and analysis known as Afropessimism. The point here being that one can, I would contend, reasonably presume that Wilderson’s own poetics are reflective of his explicitly stated theoretical and political commitments. Thus, again without staking a claim to intentionality or unintentionality, and while still holding Wilderson to be quite valuable for a number of important insights, there is quite clearly a rhetorical movement in Wilderson’s piece “Afro-Pessimism and the End of Redemption” in comparing his own writing with that of an Indigenous writer in order to state his point about the non-relationality and ultimate incommensurability of the violence faced by Red and Black bodies.

We can follow the old structural linguistics of Saussure (2013) through Baudrillard (2019; 2006; 1994) and Derrida (2016) that any sign within a given assemblage gains its meaningful content in their relationships to other signs and other concepts; through what it is not. Native sovereignty is not, and never has been the same thing as the sovereignty of the white/settler/master. This is born out explicitly within the juridical judgements of the Marshall Trilogy and the legal rendition of prior Native possession as *mere* usufruct, rather than the fulsomeness of free-holding private property—true sovereignty—something which, via a technology of settler governance that appears more as a form of the alchemy, it could be transformed into and granted forthwith to genuine human (ethnoclass (bourgeois) Man) subjects through of the sovereign power of the Crown or the Republic.

Wilderson is hardly alone in this movement, however, which seeks, as Wolfe notes, “to minimize Indian difference and assimilate it to Whiteness” (2016a:8), or more specifically, to assimilate it to Man in its overrepresentation as the human, and thus make it inimical to all other forms of life and decolonial, abolitionist and liberation struggles. For Wilderson’s close fellow traveller Jared Sexton this is most explicit (2016), as it is in the work of Migration and Transnationalism scholar Nandita Sharma (2008-09; 2015). Thus, for them, as Melanie K. Yazzie and Nick Estes describe, moves towards a critique of settler colonialism as a distinct modality of domination and towards a decolonial

Nativeness are, “in their recent assaults on Native sovereignty and nationhood, racist to the point of treachery against all oppressed people” (2016:20).

What is certainly the case here is that, as critical as their thought may be with regards to the struggles of racialized and colonized peoples, all three of these theorists, within the bodies of their work, effectively re-inscribe and recapitulate a settler-colonial order of things. As Wolfe puts it, speaking specifically of Sharma, but easily applicable to all, colonial resonances pervade their work (2013b:266).

Quite on the contrary to this kind of world-building, counterpoised as they are to white supremacy, rather than form a point of legibility and articulation between the human and the Savage, as Wilderson argues (2010), Native sovereignty and the sovereignty of the white/settler/master ultimately occupy fundamentally different and incommensurable registers, on planes of linguistics, the political and the ontological. This in and of itself upsets much of Wilderson’s theorization that sovereignty its loss places the Native in the liminal state of half-humanness—or his later moves to simply fully assimilate the Native into the human—without necessary recourse to Juárez’s shift of the grammars of Native suffering from genocide and (the loss of) sovereignty to clearing and civilization, though I do prefer his general outline for the depth it pursues. In short, the void and the fulsome are neither coeval nor coterminous and can never be. And this is the ultimate trap that Wilderson and similar theorists face when they find themselves confronted by the personage and the position of the Native Savage and mistake

superficial linguistic outer-trappings for the inner ontological and political content of the sign. As Juárez eloquently, if painfully, states:

The pain and anger over a loss without name is the formation of the social group, it transforms all narratives into narratives of surviving, every act of “culture” by Native Americans becomes a survival strategy in which the dualism between the overwhelming violence of being a Being of nothingness and the deathly comfort of alcoholism and drug use is put off. Wilderson’s concern with the irreconcilable “worlds” of the Settler and the Savage is far too reductionist in the intricacy of the violence inflicted against Red bodies. It is not that there is a Savage world that stands in irreconcilable opposition to the world of the Settler, but rather that Red life (as far as it can be called life) is a survival strategy that no longer possesses the potential for world creation. ... He ignores that the violence Red bodies face extends far beyond the reservation into time and space because it is a violence that silenced languages, burned books, obliterated people, erased history, and shattered families (2014).

In this project of worlding, of world creation by the white/settler/master as Man as its overrepresentation as the human, there can be no reckoning, no casting of a decolonial face into the future anterior, where there is present something that we might recognize as a genuine Native sovereignty so long as the world of the settler persists. Any futurity which preserves settler colonialism with its civil society, governmental, ontological, and symbolic orders is one that by its very constitution voids any notion of Native self-determination, not only from the present but from the past and the future as well, as anything other than pure simulacra.

Returning to the results of the Marshall Decisions⁶⁰, what they mean for any ontology of *Nativeness* are profound. On the question of temporality, they must be taken as key to my understanding, because they not only evacuate any possibility of Native sovereignty from the spatial coordinates of the northern bloc of settler colonialism, but indeed from all possible coordinates of temporal cartography as well. Native sovereignty is not just a sovereignty that was lost, in that it is no longer part of the present-now but is, in fact, a sovereignty that never was. While the Native—or, more correctly, the myriad of diverse Indigenous nations that would come to be confined within the legal category of the Native through the governance techniques of settler coloniality—may have been self-governing and self-determining prior to the arrival on these shores of the european, within the worlding of the euro-american/euro-canadian settler the Native qua the Native is not, and never has been, sovereign. The extent to which we can even begin to discuss Native sovereignty and the Native as containing a cogent meaning under the rubrics of settler governmentality, we must first recognize that they have been, and always have

⁶⁰ While the Marshall Trilogy are part of the U.S. legal canon, their reliance on the Doctrine of Discovery and the prior Royal Proclamation of 1763 is ultimately a republican uptake of a shared lineage of legality with the British Empire. This lineage, as well as the spatial cartography that it is played out upon, is also shared in by Canada. Indeed, one can cast the juridical net wider to also include Australia, itself also a settler colony founded by the British Empire. However, it is enough to say for the purposes of my writing here that while Canada is assumed to present its own independent political and state order, separate from the United States, in terms of the juridical treatment of Natives and Native sovereignty, the difference between the two countries is decidedly narrower. This is part of the essential point of collapsing these two nominally separate settler colonies resting upon Turtle Island into the label of the northern bloc of settler colonialism.

been, determined by and through the prerogative of the settler. There is no possibility of structural re-adjustment; only a relationship of aporia and antagonism.

This brings into sharp relief Byrd's two-headed questioning of "do Indians live the ordinary life in the contemporary now?" and "are Indians part of the present tense?" (2011:37). In short, for me, the answer is a resounding no. For Byrd herself, in her reading of Alexis de Tocqueville and the removal of the Choctaw from their traditional homelands in the southeastern United States, she notes that "Even in the present of their removal, the Choctaws are always already past perfect: they had left, they had stepped, they had been promised" (2011:37). Beyond questions of pure legality, as in the questions of sovereignty in the Marshall Trilogy, these issues of temporal abjection for the Native are significant. Mark Rifkin in his work *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* asks, "What does it mean to be recognized as existing in time?" before going on to note that:

The representation of Native peoples as either having disappeared or being remnants on the verge of vanishing constitutes one of the principal means of effacing Indigenous sovereignties. Such a portrayal of Indigenous temporal stasis or absence erases extant forms of occupancy, governance, and opposition to settler encroachments. Moreover, it generates a prism through which any evidence of such survival will be interpreted as either vestigial (and thus on the way to imminent extinction) or hopelessly contaminated (as having lost—or quickly losing—the qualities understood as defining something, someone, or some space as properly "Indian" in the first place) (2017a:5).

In the worlding of the white/settler/master, the Native is always, and has always been, "was" and "were," never "is" and "are." Certainly, if we take this line of logic through

its terminal point, not only is the Native was/were and not is/are, the Native can indeed never truly be, so long as the world of the settler continues to be. This is precisely why Byrd, building upon Judith Butler's articulation of when life is grievable (2016), asks whether the Native is able to cast a life into the tense of the future anterior "in which Indians will have been decolonized" (2011:38). The Native is a being-out-of-time if ever there was one.⁶¹

7.2 The Wild Native and the Native Wild

Yet this temporal cartographic mapping of a world in which the Native not only does not belong, but which in fact can never belong, is just one aspect of this issue. The other part

⁶¹ I have often wondered about this and how it may relate to the Jamesonian-Fisherian discussion of the postmodern condition. Specifically, Jameson, in his diagnosis of postmodernity—which is extended and rendered all pervasive in Fisher (2009)—finds one of the constitutive features to be the weakening, if not the complete failure of historicity, "both in the relationship to public History and in the new forms of our private temporality" (1991:6). However, what can we make of this weakening, or complete loss, of historicity, as it marks the transition from modernity to postmodernity, in light of beings who already fail to cohere temporally? This may seem like an obtuse point, but I do believe it is a meaningful one, for the simple reason that conquest, the sociological catastrophe of settler colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, was/is a process which render/s/ed both Natives qua Natives, and enslaved African peoples, as non-subjects lacking temporal coherence. It is not possible to speak of Native or Black history prior to conquest, because they did not exist prior to conquest. Thus, it seems to me that the Native as a being-out-of-time, to say nothing of the status of the enslaved African, was essential to the making of the modernist *épistémè*, most especially in its apex as settler coloniality. From this, if the weakening or failure of historicity is one of the primary markers of the transition from modernity to postmodernity, then I must wonder about the degree to which such a transitional distinction is actually meaningful, when viewed from a Native perspective. Indeed, the loss of historicity that supposedly marks this phase shift in the world-system appears to only be the return upon the euro-modern world of that condition which it had already inflicted upon Natives and Black people; historicity can only be lost if one was at some point already rendered via power into a subject with the ability to mark oneself historically. This is not to say that the condition of postmodernity, or late capitalism, or capitalist realism, is not meaningful. Certainly, there is something going on here, which I believe both Jameson and Fisher deftly theorize. However, what it appears to be, once one strips away all of its layers, is a universalization of an essentially European condition, in the sense that it maps on to all of the world something which only now has erupted as an affliction in the European psyche onto peoples for whom such a cultural, social, and political shift would bear little actual meaning.

is the Native as the Wild, what Williams, Jr. refers to as an “organizing iconography” (2005:39) of the settler order of things, or what Belcourt suggests is the way that “indigeneity circulates as a feral signifier in colonial economies of meaning-making” (2016a:23). But what does it mean to be-Wild or to be-of-the-Wild? And what are its implications in thinking the ontological mapping of the Native on our way to deepening our discussions of damage narratives and their consumption within the society of the settler?

An essential starting here is by way of locating this question as emerging from the old trope of the white/settler/master which sees the Native as existing within a kind of primordial unity with nature, or the Wild. For those of us raised as part of, or engulfed within, a western cultural paradigm, our minds, or at least my mind, is immediately here drawn to the old literary trope of the *noble savage*, which in its more positive (“positive” being used here extremely loosely) register represents some kind of primeval, Wild outsider, unmoored, or uncorrupted, by civilization, one who has not yet left the proximity of the state of nature, and embodying some kind of innate goodness or nobility which has been lost on civilized “Man” within the current modernist *épistémè*.

Minus the moralizing or ethnological baggage of that particular literary trope, this is the literal meaning of the concept of the Savage, which is essential in understanding ontological mapping of the Native and Native sovereignty within the world of the white/settler/master. As Belcourt traces, “The word savage comes from the Latin

salvaticus, an alteration of *silvaticus*, meaning ‘wild,’ literally ‘of the woods.’ Of persons, it means ‘reckless, ungovernable’ (2016a:23). Speaking specifically to the taxonomic and map-making projects of settler colonialism, he continues, saying that:

In the space-time of settler states, savagery temporarily stands in for those subjectivities tethered to a supposedly waning form of indigeneity, one that came from the woods, and, because of this, had to be jettisoned from or assimilated into the national body (23).

Going further, he suggests that “savagery always-already references an otherworld of sorts: there are forms of life abandoned outside modernity’s episteme whose expressivities surge with affects anomalous within the topography of settler colonialism” (24). Noting a divergent tendency internal to the signifier of the Savage, yet ultimately converging in the sign’s meaning, Byrd states that:

The enfant sauvage, as one possible signification of the savage in the state of pupillage, and the homo ferus, as that savage child resignified as the werewolf, have both served as metonymy for Indians within Enlightenment philosophy (2015:125).

These points by Belcourt and Byrd regarding the memetic otherworldliness, which we can read as a kind of outsideness and exteriority, of Savagery, maps onto Agamben’s understanding of the state of exception and the machinery of the biopolitical. In particular, drawing on Heidegger’s *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (2001), in which *Dasein*⁶² is partly defined relationally to the animal (Oliver 2007:2), Agamben

⁶² I discuss the Heideggerian ontology of *Daesein*, and the Native and decolonial critiques of it in the first chapter *The Coloniality of (My/Our) Being*.

argues that, the history of euro-western and euro-modern philosophy and science has been that of an anthropological machine (2003), which:

Functions by excluding as not (yet) human an already human being from itself, that is, by animalizing the human, by isolating the nonhuman within the human: *Homo alalus*, or the ape-man (2003:37).

Already here we see something of the Wild, the animalistic, the primordial, and the pre- and non-civilized in “the machine of the moderns” (37), “the machine that governs the conception of man” (92), in its biopolitical organizing of the boundary zones of the fully human sovereign. This machine animalizes some humans into nonhumans who are able to be excluded from the terrain of fully human and sovereign life, a zone into which Agamben’s argues is cast the neomort, the Jew as “the non-man produced within the man,” as well as “the slave, the barbarian, and the foreigner⁶³” and “the enfant sauvage or *homo ferus*” (2003:37).

These figures, for Agamben, are those of “an animal in human form” (37), however, the ultimate product of the anthropological machine “is neither an animal life nor a human life, but only a life that is separated and excluded from itself—only a *bare life*” (37). The bare life of those cast into the zone of not-quite-human and nonhuman—the Savage, the Slave, the Jew, the foreigner—becomes *Homo sacer*, their flesh itself becoming a site of the exception against whom violence can be wielded outside of the

⁶³ Here quite clearly, I believe we can see also cast into the zone of the nonhuman and the not-quite-human those marked under the sign of Blackness, as well as Jasbir Puar’s ‘terrorist monster fags’ (2017) and Iyko Day’s ‘aliens’ (2016).

juridical order (Agamben 2017a). The transformation, through racializing assemblages and mediated further through anatomies of gender and sexuality (Weheliye 2014), of some otherwise members of the *Homo sapiens* species into *Homo sacer*, *Homo alalus*, and *Homo ferus*—the transformation into bare life—is essential for the manifestation and continued instantiation of settler sovereign power within the geographies of the northern bloc. As Byrd notes with specific regard to the Native, settler sovereign power “in the new world required Indians as the sign of the external savage in order to cohere an internal ordering of the nomos” (2015:124).

Provocatively, Jacques Derrida in his final public lecture series on *The Beast and the Sovereign* suggests a dialectic between the beast—here *Homo ferus*, the human-as-Wolf—and the sovereign, as both are constituted exceptionally as being-outside-the-law. He explains that:

Sharing this common being-outside-the-law, beast, criminal, and sovereign have a troubling resemblance: they call on each other and recall each other, from one to the other; there is between sovereign, criminal, and beast a sort of obscure and fascinating complicity, or even a worrying mutual attraction, a worrying familiarity, an *unheimlich*, uncanny reciprocal haunting (2009:17)

Building on this late Derridean musing, as well as Agamben, Byrd argues that “as antipodal beings outside, beyond, and above, the beast and the sovereign function as antinomies, as the outlaw and the ontological prior through which the law is established and enacted” (2015:128). What should be pointed out here though is that this dialectical enmeshment of the sovereign and the beast as being-outside-the-law, and the

mimegraphic mirroring of each other in the exceptional declaration of the nomos, is not the same thing as the point that Wilderson attempts to raise, in my assessment, when he attempts to argue that sovereignty is a locus of articulation between the not-quite-human Native and the fully human sovereign settler/master. Rather, should we read Derrida, as well as Agamben and Weheliye, with Wilderson, there is a certain unsettling of Wilderson's argument that happens, in that it is not only the beast—the Savage, the *Homo ferus*, man-as-Wolf—that stands with the sovereign as being-outside-the-law but also the slave, the Jew, the criminal, the foreigner, and all of those cast out of fully human existence into zones of not-quite-human and nonhuman. I believe that can only lead to mistheorization, and misunderstanding, of the exceptional instantiation of the sovereign nomos, to argue that any of those cast into not-quite-humanness and nonhumanness have any kind of meaningful articulation with the sovereign, with the human, but rather that they represent dialectically necessary ontological priors others for the declaration of the rule of law.

Speaking of the *Wild* and *Wildness*, which here based on etymological linkages I am treating as synonymous with the Savage, Jack Halberstam and Tavia Nyong'o argue:

That first encounters with wildness are intimate and bewilder all sovereign expectations of autonomous selfhood. To be wild in this sense is to be beside oneself, to be internally incoherent, to be driven by forces seen and unseen, to hear in voices and speak in tongues. ... But even as wildness is internal in a psychic sense, we also sense it as an extrahuman, suprahuman force. ... Wildness is where the environment speaks back, where communication bows to intensity, where worlds collide, cultures clash, and things fall apart (2018:454).

This iconography within which the Native is coded and overcoded as the Native Savage has been a structuring component of the U.S. settler-colonial project since its earliest days. Reading Byrd, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo speaks of the “reiterative signification” of *Nativeness* as “ethnographic savagery” and “pathological sovereignty” (2016:35).

In what we might consider—if we are to again be perhaps overly generous—its more banal or passive manifestations this unity of the Native with the *Wild* is also seen in the disappearing of prior Native stewardship of land and territory into the background noise of the natural landscape upon which the white/settler/master has set about the construction of his society. That is, in many ways, it is outside of the conceptual apparatus of the settler to recognize that the Native has manipulated and altered the physical geography of space prior to the interventions and disruptions of European invasion and settlement. Speaking of the European colonization of Australia Wolfe describes how:

Invading colonisers regularly marvelled at the local environment’s park like aspect, counting themselves multiply blessed that ‘nature’ (including divine providence) should have come to furnish them with ready-made grazing runs. In fact, the Australian landscape’s benign aspect was the cumulative consequence of millennia of Indigenous management, in particular the use of fire to reduce undergrowth and to contain spontaneous conflagrations within local limits (2016b:22).

For Wolfe, “In replacing Indigenous agency with that of the cosmos, the concept of nature enabled improvements effected by Natives to figure as serendipity. *This is an enduring settler theme* [emphasis mine] (23). Here the Native becomes nothing more than a literal force of nature, to the extent that their contribution is recognized at all. This enduring

repose of the settler is also hardly limited to the context of the Australian settler-colonial project. Reading Fredrick Jackson Turner's turn of the Twentieth-Century historiography of the U.S. frontier, Saldaña-Portillo notes:

Certainly, indigenous peoples appear in Turner's historiography only to eventually cede ground and vanish from the landscape in the face of white settlement's superior order. And yet even in this quintessential tale of American conquest and character, indigenous peoples do much more than simply disappear. Turner locates Indians in landscape so that "Americans" may acquire their proper 'Americanness' (2016:9-10).

The disappearing Native; disappearing into the ground upon which we walk, is thus not only a basic ontological foundation for the project of settler colonialism, but also a geographic and physiographic one, one which the settler, in his status as the representative of truly civilized Man, is able to reap the rewards, declaring the rest to the work of God or of the cosmos.

I say that this is outside of the conceptual apparatus of the settler, because the entire construction of the settler-colonial project *must* be rooted in a conception of *terra nullius*: empty land belonging to no-one. Only properly civilized Man is able to engineer the terrain, to bend "nature" to *his* will. The Savage, by dint of never having shaped the land through application of his labour is nothing more than a non-human inhabitant of the geography, thus unable to claim property rights of possession on anything of the same order as the settler-qua-civilized Man. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson notes of *terra nullius*, it "gave rise to white sovereignty" and "national identity," without which "the white nation cannot exist" (2015:30).

Thus, the material fact of this presupposition of the settler worlding's fundamental untruth—for Natives have shaped the terrain through stewardship of the land, by building cities such as Cahokia and the various sites of the so-called "Mound Builders," by farming, planting of orchards and maintaining gardens etc.—has the potential to profoundly unsettle a central element of settler legality and regimes of self-justification. The settler simply *cannot* recognize the prior stewardship of the territory by the Native. The conceptual apparatus that allows for this worlding flows through euro-western theology to modern juridical and ideological deployments of the concept. While the average, individual settler may not be that person which constructed this worldview, they are fully ensconced within it as a conceptual apparatus. Thus, what labour the Native did apply to the land prior to invasion is evacuated and agency placed with god or nature.

At a fundamental level, *Wildness* and the Native as the Wild is necessary for the construction and reinforcement of the civilized world of the white/settler/master through the presentation of the negative image of what it is not. The paradigmatic *lack* of civilization necessarily defines the contours of what is itself *civilized*. This is in part why Juárez in his constructive shifting of the categories of Wilderson's social ontology places *civilization* and the *civilizing mission* alongside clearing as the dual modality of violence against Red bodies alongside *clearing*. In his book *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*, Michael Taussig says of this:

Wildness is incessantly recruited by the needs of order (and indeed this is one of anthropology's most enduring tasks and contributions to social order). But the fact remains that in trying to tame wildness this way, so that it can serve order as a counterimage, wildness must perforce retain its difference (1987:220).

This echoes with Juárez's claim "that the modality of civilization gives coherence to the Settler world by animating the Settler's ability to create civil society outside of empty space" (2014). At the same time, however, the encounter with *Wildness* and the Wild Native disrupts the civilized subject's symbolic order, because while it functions through a negative dialectic of image-counter-image, the necessity of its difference means that it can never truly be assimilated and re-inscribed. As Taussig notes:

Wildness also raises the specter of the death of the symbolic function itself. It is the spirit of the unknown and the disorderly, loose in the forest, encircling the city and the sown land, disrupting the conventions upon which meaning and the shaping function of images rest. Wildness challenges the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding the image to that which it represents. Wildness pries open this unity and in its place creates slippage and a grinding articulation between signifier and signified. Wildness makes these connections spaces of darkness and light in which objects stare out in their mottled nakedness while signifiers float by. Wildness is the death space of signification (1987:219).

However, as Jack Halberstam notes of the *Wild*, "failure attends to all attempts to make wildness signify as either the opposite of modernity or simply its underbelly" (2014:143).

This is a point that I will be returning to later on within this text, though I imagine that it will be a return with a different content and context than is intended here within Halberstam's musings.

Ultimately though, this is why for the Wild Native to enter into the civilized space of the white/settler/master subject, its culture, lifeways and Being, is to likewise enter into a death-space, a necrology, or a necropolis. This is also, to return briefly to Wilderson, why the shifting of grammars of Red life as articulated by Juárez away from Wilderson's liminal taxonomy of genocide and (the loss of) sovereignty into clearing and civilization, also shifts the relationship between the Native and the white/settler/master fully into the zone of antagonism.

7.3 The Dialectical Enmeshment of Temporality and Wildness

To return to the Marshall Trilogy again, this is why it is necessary to speak of two fundamental pillars in my understanding of the ways in which the Native and Native sovereignty are cast out from the world of the settler: The native as outside-settler-time and the Native as the Wild. Through the operation of what Moreton-Robinson refers to as the "fiction of *terra nullius*" (2015) these two pillars dialectically reinforce and allow the construction of the other. The Native as Savage, who has never departed from the state of nature is thus part of nature, unable to be sovereign. Yet for that concept to function in a coherent manner the Native as Savage must also be evacuated from linear, settler conceptions of time so that they not only were in the state of nature at the time of contact, but they remain so and will remain so. This evacuation from temporality then bars the Native from ever actually being able to leave the state of nature so long as they remain conceptually and paradigmatically a Native qua Savage.

The enmeshment of the Native as being-outside-settler-time and being-in-the-Wild echoes far beyond the Marshall rulings of the mid-nineteenth century, into the foundational philosophies of Western modernity, tied as it is to coloniality by Quijano in the dual concept of modernity/coloniality (2010; 2008). With particular regard to the Hegelian dialectic, formative as it is to much of so-called 'continental philosophy' from Marxism, to Lacanian psychoanalysis, to poststructuralism, postmodernism, and deconstruction, either by way of incorporation, inversion or critique and rejection, the Native, simply put, has no place in it.

For the Hegelian philosophy of the unfolding of history via the world *Geist*, it is a process that began in Asia, found its telos in Europe and against which both Africa and Africans serve as a perpetual stasis point against which, as Scott L. Pratt explains, the progression of said unfolding of the *Geist* as a "spirit becoming aware of itself by manifesting itself in the real world" (2002:4) can be judged. As Juárez explains, "Hegel later goes on to understand that, given that the Geist met its completion in Europe, Indigenous Americans are not only not a reference point for progress (such as the African) but are completely left out of the dialectic in any way, shape, or form" (2014). He continues, digging deeper:

Hegel's conception of the "off-the-map-ness" of Native Americans is so far reaching and absolute that when he articulates the condition of possibility to ability to enter into European law and be recognized he makes a noted exception for the Savage in that the Savage is just that: a savage that has not left the immediacy of nature and thus cannot be considered part of society any more than the buffalo and mountains that

co-populated the region. This rejection is an absolute rejection in that it is not that the Savage is recognized and then rejected as conscious or seen as lacking self-awareness, but rather the Savage is rejected from the possibility of being judged as either [emphasis mine] (2014).

Within the Hegelian dialectic, and the Lacanian psychoanalysis that draws from it, and which informs much of Wilderson's theorization of the tripartite social ontology of the human-Savage-Slave, the human represents life, while the Slave is transmuted into a personification of death. However, the Native becomes neither of these; ejected from cognition of either a being of life or a being of death, the Native is cast fully into Gordon's zone of non-being, becoming a being of nothingness⁶⁴. Thus, here again we see the dialectical unity of the Native's being-in-the-Wild with its being-out-of-time: the Native Savage's not only proximal placement to Wildness, but ensconcement within it, *a priori* precludes it from the unfolding of the historical *Geist*, of the movement of settler time. Savageness is thus a prior preclusion from the possibility of integration within the semantic and social fold of the white/settler/master. This is also the point of the transformation of myriad and heterogeneous Native nations into the homogeneous category of biopolitical population governance, the Native (Vizenor 1994:167). Only existing within the cognition of the white/settler/master, the generation of *Nativeness*, by way of permanent externality to the Hegelian dialectic, is a process in which "Natives are

⁶⁴ There is perhaps something Sartrean that can be said about this, but that is well beyond the scope of what I wish to do here. Though perhaps it can serve as a gesture to some form of later work.

wrenched out of their living cosmos and thrown into the dead world of the Indian Savage” (Juárez 2014).

Beyond Hegelianism and Lacanianism though, the spatiotemporal impact of this *a priori* clearing of the Native as a point of *nothingness* radiates outwards and casts its shadow upon even the ostensibly radical inversion of the dialectic of Hegel in the historical and dialectical materialism of Marx and the many who would later take up in his name in the form of a political and theoretical *ism*⁶⁵. Indeed, many Indigenous theorists have made the case that there is no place within the historical dialectic of Marxism for the survivance of Native peoples and nations. As Tinker writes, if:

Marxist thinking and the notion of a historical dialectic were finally proven correct, then American Indian people and all Indigenous peoples would be doomed. Our cultures and value systems, our spirituality, and even our social structures, would give way to an emergent socialist structure that would impose a notion of the good on all people regardless of ethnicity and culture (Tinker, 1992:15-16).

⁶⁵ I am not here attempting an in-depth analysis of the Marxist dialectic of history, as that is far beyond my intention in this chapter. My own critique of Marxist theory in this regard and others can be found in the introduction to this dissertation. However, partly as a reminder, it is worth gesturing towards the many attempts that have been made to unshackle the dialectics of Marx, and even Hegel, from its teleological and determinist moorings. A recent attempt at this has been elaborated by George Ciccariello-Maher in his work *Decolonizing Dialectics* (2017), and before him and in a different fashion by the late theorist of racial capitalism Cedric J. Robinson in his *An Anthropology of Marxism* (1983). Certain antecedents, though not with the same decolonial and anti-racist weight of Ciccariello-Maher and Robinson, can be read in the later works of Louis Althusser (2006) and Fredric Jameson (2010; 2017), and with much more weight of that type within the works of Frantz Fanon (2004; 1967). Thus, the Marxist dialectic that I am addressing here could perhaps be best described as that of ‘orthodox Marxism,’ or perhaps even better by using Moishe Postone’s labelling of ‘Traditional Marxism’ (1993), as much as such a thing can be spoken of, recognizing the maze-like divisions that exist within Marxism.

While some Marxists of a Leninist persuasion, with the anti-imperialist impulse towards superficially recognizing an “oppressed nation right to self-determination,” may object to this characterization, a century and a half of Marxist praxis within the confines of the northern bloc of settler colonialism has yet to demonstrate any serious political commitment to overturning the status of the Native or of opposition to political and philosophical regimes of settler colonialism. More recently Byrd has also reflected on this. In noting how the conditions of settler colonialism and the status of the Native continue to delineate what Jodi Dean and Bruno Bosteels refer to as the *communist horizon* (2018; 2014) she says:

Even within the fierce urgency of post-Fordist economic production and capitalist consumption, the hoped-for narratives of liberation depend upon the Americas as an already emptied, infinitely exploitable new territory and new site of a transfigured commons (2015:123).

Indeed, the dialectics of Marxism, as much as with Hegel, are replete with the kinds of modernist abstract universals and universalizing tendencies that Walter Mignolo warns us are the heart of *global designs* and are thus an inherent part of the worlding of coloniality (2012)⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ Even within the field of Indigenous, Native or First Nations Studies, as it is today constituted in the wake of new formulations and iterations of Indigenous Critical Theory, these considerations, I believe, have been fully appreciated. One can consider for a moment the theorizing of Coulthard in his book *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014), which, while a key text of this new movement, rests strongly upon Fanon’s critique of the Master-Slave dialectic within Hegel (1952). One might wonder then, and this is well beyond my intention to truly flesh out, what the impact may be for this kind of theorization if the more fully triangular conception of Hegel of *White Life, Black Death* and *Native Nothingness* might mean for a fuller appreciation

So, what do we make of this conceptual and ontological barring of the Native from the spatial and temporal cartography of the settler? And in particular, to repeat from my refrain from earlier in this chapter, as well as the previous two: what is the connection between this and the production and consumption of Native damage narratives within the *imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling*? In essence, Native exteriority is the point. What I am proposing is that the construction of a Native-Outside within the ontological, symbolic, and imaginary planes of the settler is essential in understanding the peculiar status of Native abjection, and the implications that that has for my understanding of damage narratives, including my own, and their ready consumption in an economy of horror.

of Coulthard's theorization, and of his own critique of the usefulness of Fanon as a mechanistic transplantation onto the Native condition under regimes of settler colonialism.

Chapter 8. Red Monsters: The Native-Outside & the Weird

We live in an age of monsters. Such a statement is hardly controversial anymore – from every aspect of culture monsters peer at us, we consume them, we profess our fear, yet the market is saturated with vampires, ghouls, demons, and ghosts. We loathe the monsters, we hide from them. But we love them too. How could we not? They are everywhere, and so enormously profitable too.

There are other monsters too – the news media is full of them. We're told to consume these monsters too – to fear them, these shadowy figures – them- that come from over there, that exist on the outside, that mean to do us harm and who threaten not just our lives but our way of life.

– Jon Greenaway, *Towards A Gothic Marxism, I: On Monsters*

Thinking of an epigraph for this dissertation's final chapter immediately above, I have to agree with the Marxist literary scholar Greenaway (2018). However, unlike the monsters that Greenaway is speaking of here, which are moulded and brought to life by the horrors of late capitalist economic crisis, social disintegration and the ever more rapid onslaught of alienation wrought by the deepening of technological colonization within everyday life, the monsters, ghosts, ghouls and revenants that I speak of, which lurk even behind those wrought by the regime of capital are those of the Native, a kind of Red Monster if you will. Capital and the mundane and quotidian rhythms of horror that it generates daily are indeed a kind of modernist monstrosity (McNally 2012), but the Native Savage is a spectre that has haunted modernity since its waking moments.

The Red Monster of the Native has always been there, whether seen or unseen; the

fundamental condition of the Native cast from time and space within the ongoing cartography of the contact event. Within the legal order of the United States, the monstrous visage of the Savage, always waiting, always hungry to shed blood and defile the flesh of the settler, is evoked within its founding document, the *Declaration of Independence*, which, as one of its principal grievances against the rule of the British Crown, the framers of American independence speak of their erstwhile King as having endeavoured “to bring on the inhabitants of the frontiers the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.” The Crown was guilty because it fell asleep on the watch, and allowed the monsters to slip in.

Likewise, following the completion of the settler “revolution” for independence, in proclamation of the first official Indian Policy of the new republic, the imagery of the Savage was the essence. As Williams recounts:

On September 7, 1783, just four days after the signing of the definitive peace treaty in Paris ending the war with Great Britain, George Washington, commander-in-chief, at the specific request of the Continental Congress, delivered what turned out to be the basic blueprint for the Founding Fathers’ first Indian policy for the United States. That blueprint is contained in Washington’s carefully considered set of recommendations “relative to Indian Affairs” in the “Western Country.” Notably, Washington’s entire plan for dealing with the tribes of the Western Country was organized around the basic idea that the Indians on the frontier were bestial, war-loving savages and should be dealt with accordingly as a matter of U.S. policy (2005:40).

For Washington and the early American founders, the Savage was the Wolf, the Wild beast

of the forest, differing only in outward physical shape. The Native like the Wolf was something Wild and monstrous to be feared; something to be driven out from the political, social and geographic of the terrain of the civilized society of the settler, and against which the palisades of the town and the city were to be built in order to prevent its monstrous, blood-thirsty return. Indeed, the ordering of the Wild and Savage Native under the sign of the Wolf is essential in the symbolic instantiation of settler sovereign power. Thinking back to Agamben's casting of the Savage out of the zone of full sovereign humanness (2003) Byrd notes that "Washington's 'the Savage as the Wolf' renders Indians intelligible as the *enfant sauvage*, the *homo ferus*, against which the United States asserts its own will to civility" (2015:127).

It is in this light that Arturo J. Aldama argues that "that the savage represented all that was not culture, civilization and European" (2001:14). More deeply, the Savage, along with the Slave, though functioning through different grammatical registers within the symbolic order and libidinal and political economies, represented all that was not bound within the category of the human-as-Man. Aldama links this explicitly with the Kristevan concept of the abjected object. He tells us:

The savage is the "abject" of the civilizing subject. The abject is the "horror" and the "defilement" of the imperial overculture. The death and mutilation of these symbolic and real "bodies generate and regenerate the imperial "I's" knowing of itself (2001:14).

Aldama's discussion of the Savage abject and its role in the generation and instantiation of the imperial I, of its ego-self, contains clear echoes of Maldonado-Torres's discussion

of the coloniality of being and the sub-ontological difference, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and with Byrd's Butlerian evocation of the Native as a being that can be lamentable, but which is not grievable. Here Native abjection is necessary for the consolidation of the settler self as a necessary ontological pre-condition, by way of a negative informing of what the human-as-Man is not.

But what here is Native abjection precisely? In the original concept as illuminated by Kristeva in her work *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982) it cleaves most explicitly to the Freudian conception of *das unheimliche*, the uncanny⁶⁷, perhaps not surprising given Kristeva's allegiance to a form of Lacanian psychoanalysis. The *unheimlich* for Freud and Lacan evokes a disquiet about a subject's interiority and internal cohesion. As Mark Fisher remarks regarding the concept in his *The Weird and the Eerie*, the *unheimlich*:

Is about the strange within the familiar, the strangely familiar, and the familiar as strange—about the way in which the domestic world does not coincide with itself. All of the ambivalences of Freud's psychoanalysis are caught up in this concept. Is it about making the familiar—and the familial—strange? Or is it about returning the strange to the familiar, the familial (2016:10)

This is why for Freud (2003) the *unheimlich* is best captured within notions of repetition and doubling: doppelgangers, artificial limbs and mechanical entities that have an

⁶⁷ "The uncanny" is the generally standard English-language translation of the German *das unheimliche*. However, a better translation is perhaps "the unhomely." Seeking to avoid a linguistic debate over meaning, when discussing this concept however I have elected to simply use the original German term as so to avoid any confusion.

outward appearance of humanity. In today's increasingly cybernetic and technologically enmeshed society, as our ability to produce and reproduce human likeness digitally and mechanically, we are awash in the *unheimlich*, perhaps best summed up by Masahiro Mori's hypothesis of the Uncanny Valley (2012).

The abject, in particular, can also evoke a sense of dread, and perhaps even horror, though for Kristeva the affects perhaps most closely evoked by it, as seen in her studies of xenophobia and antisemitism, are revulsion and disgust (Oliver & Keltner 2009). As an affective operation, the abject becomes that which must be cast out in order to protect the subject's coherence and understanding of self. Following Imogen Tyler (2013) abjection can be further extrapolated from the individual to the collective, where it emerges as both a lived as well as social phenomenon. It is what Fanon would describe as *sociogenic* (1967). Importantly though here, the *unheimlich*-as-abject performs not only an affective function, but also a key ontological one, in that it forms the boundary in the subject-object binary. While the abject is that which is cast out in order to produce and reproduce subject formation, we known from the old Derridean studies of binary oppositions in which "one of the two terms governs the other" (1982:41), that neither side of the binary is ever fully present, subsumed as it is within its other. To speak of it another way, we only can say what the subject is through reference to what it is not. The subject then requires its other in order to offer up its own meaning. The subject, in other words, requires its abject. This is the sociality of abjection to which Tyler points us towards in

her study of neoliberal society which considers not only those who are abjected, but also those who abject.

This, however, raises a fundamental question in my thinking. While the abject is that which is cast out in order to preserve subjectivity, it is still radically about the familiar as strange. This is conjured in Kristeva's classical example of the corpse, which evokes the binary opposition between life and death (1982). The corpse is something familiar, in this case, the literal human form, turned strange in the process of stripping off that which we most regularly associate with humans; animacy, movement, warmth, life and liveness. Evoking Kathleen Stewart's *Ordinary Affects* (2007), the ordinary human form is in the corpse rendered sterile, dead, nothing but flesh and an aching, inching decay. It is this that affects disgust and revulsion, and even dread and horror in the visage of the corpse; what is ordinary, the lived-in human body, becomes what it is not, and it reminds us of our own inescapable telos: the grave.

But, if the Savage and colonized object is abject, as Aldama, Byrd and Maldonado-Torres argue within their own respective registers, how does this mesh with Native exteriority? Reading this still within a kind of social psychoanalytic register, as I have argued both in this chapter and previously, the Native positionality, or more correctly *Nativeness*, is necessary for the formation of the human-as-Man and, more specific to the context of the northern bloc, the white/settler/master. But, *Nativeness* is not that which is cast out nor that which is the strangely familiar, or the familiar come strange, as in the

more traditionally theorized conceptualization of the *unheimlich*.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Native as a being-outside-settler-time and a being-in-the-Wild is already exterior to the white/settler/master subject, and thus, so I think, destabilizes the traditional *unheimlich* as the basis for the abjection of Nativeness. As much as the abject might be a point of disarticulation for subjectivity, Nativeness is a locus of destabilization for the abject as normally theorized. Building upon this, what I propose from here out is that rather than relying on conceptions of the *unheimlich* to understand the abject status of *Nativeness* we engage in a movement towards the Weird.

8.1 The Native as a Being that Does Not Belong

In his book *The Weird and The Eerie*, Fisher explicitly counterpoises the dual concepts of the Weird and the eerie with the *unheimlich*, under which they are usually reincorporated. The key for Fisher, in particular, the *Weird* as it relates to my rethinking of the abject status of *Nativeness*, is that while the *unheimlich* is about the familiar-as-strange, the strangely familiar, the Weird, as well as the eerie, are about kinds of exteriority. He notes regarding this, and its implication, that:

The folding of the weird and the eerie into the *unheimlich* is symptomatic of a secular retreat from the outside. The wider predilection for the *unheimlich* is commensurate with a compulsion towards a certain kind of critique, which operates by always processing the outside through the gaps and impasses of the inside. The weird and the eerie make the opposite move: they allow us to see the inside from the perspective of the outside (2016:10).

Where these two concepts diverge, and where I pick up the Weird, is in Fisher's articulation of the Weird as "that *which does not belong*" (2016:10). He elaborates, saying "the weird brings to the familiar *something which ordinarily lies beyond it*, and which cannot be reconciled with the 'homely' (even as its negation)" (2016:10-11). Later, he gives us a more specific and fulsome description:

What is the weird? When we say something is weird, what kind of feeling are we pointing to? I want to argue that the weird is a particular kind of perturbation. It involves a sensation of wrongness: a weird entity or object is so strange that it makes us feel that it should not exist, or at the very least should not exist here (emphasis mine) (2016:15).

So, in short, we might say that the Weird is something which should not exist or should not belong, within the world of the canny or the homely, and which comes from, and exists in, the outside with relation to the subject's interior. In the confrontation with the Weird, the subject becomes destabilized. The Weird, and Weird being, in particular, is an aporia to the inside.

Regarding the Native and Nativeness, I argue that the dialectically enmeshed dual status of being-outside-settler-time and being-in-the-Wild function firmly through a register of exteriority vis-à-vis the world-building of Man and its apex form within the northern bloc as the white/settler/master. This is, I argue, despite Wolfe's correct assessment of the territorial containment of Native nations since the closure of the frontier, and the ending of the Indian Wars, and the shifting political and juridical status of Natives from exterior to interior (2016b). Echoing backwards to Halberstam's

invocation of the “failure attends to all attempts to make wildness signify as either the opposite of modernity or simply its underbelly” (2014:143), this is because Wildness, in so far as I have treated the concept thus far as interchangeable with Savagery, and in its enmeshment with questions of history and temporality, is exterior to the modern subject of Man and the world of the subject/Man’s creation. While, as with abjection broadly, this is sociogenic, given that, as I maintained earlier in this dissertation, world creation is an ongoing project of politics and sociality rather than a given fact about the “the World,” the exteriority of *Nativeness* is also a matter of ontogeny, again within Fanon’s psychoanalytic register (1967), as it is *a priori* to lived-in Red Life, as it is a matter of the conditions that delineate *Nativeness* as *Nativeness*.

In terms of today’s temporal and spatial cognitions of settler-colonial popular and civil society, *Nativeness* is most certainly, in my own lived experiences as a Native navigating that very machinery, met with a cognition as a being that should not belong. The Native is a being that does not belong, a Weird being, par excellence.

8.2 Breaking out of the Temporal Prison

As I have described elsewhere, while I consider *here* to be home, it was not where I was raised. Though I spent much time in the Great Lakes region in my younger days, it was always alongside my mother’s immediate and extended family. While the reservation of our nation in northern Wisconsin was in many ways a shelter from the outside world of the white/settler/master, setting aside its role in colonial governmentality as a site of

biopolitical and affective immiseration for Natives, even the times spent in the city of Milwaukee were always spent in the company of other Natives. Thus, it was not truly until I moved to Kitchener-Waterloo as a young adult, and spent many formative years within this locale, and the attendant efforts I made to integrate myself within the mixed urban Indigenous population that is ordinarily resident here alongside daily exposure to quotidian canadian life (that is, the quotidian daily life of exposure to the canadian settler populace) that I truly came to experience the ontological and social deadness and displacement of *Nativeness*.

This is something that I believe is related to, but distinct from, the quotidian experience of anti-Native *racism* that is all too common an experience for Indigenous peoples within this country, whether or not they meet some supposed visual qualification schema for recognition of status as an Indian, Métis or Inuit (my critique of which was the subject of Chapter 3). This is also ineluctably related, but not wholly reducible to I believe, to the structural machinery of genocide that biopolitically annihilates Native peoples at the level of the cognition, and the technologies of governance deployed by the modernist settler-colonial State apparatus through which these logics function. Rather, I believe this outsideness, or exteriority, or to use Juárez's terminology in his critique of Hegel, "off-the-map-ness," of *Nativeness* or Indigeneity functions within an affective register that flows in part from the structuring mechanisms of elimination and which precondition the possibility of white/settler/master antipathy towards Native people in

the realm of everyday life in the sense that Henri Lefebvre described as that zone of intersection and interrelation between “illusion and truth, power and helplessness; the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control” (2014:43).

Most recently, in my first experiences teaching, in a strictly academic sense that is, which came in the form of a course entitled *Contemporary Issues in Indigenous Communities in Canada* within a nascent Indigenous Studies programme at the University of Waterloo, the expression of this off-the-map-ness washed itself over me much more than I would have anticipated. It did not come from me, however, nor did it come from the text which I had chosen to assign to the class. Rather, it was expressed by my students. In this experience there are two loci worth mentioning, the first being the written and spoken appreciation from students I received at the end of the term in April 2019, while the second came largely in the form of one of the class requirements I had deployed for the course, an online discussion component.

In terms of the first, as the term reached its endpoint, especially during the last two lectures in the first week of April, a number of students either approached me in person or sent me emails to thank for me the course, for the materials I had assigned, for the way I had taught and for what they had gained and grown from over the length of the course. This, of course, was quite affirmative for me. I had never taught before in a classroom setting where I had to create the syllabus, choose, and assign the text, formulate the exams and assignments etc. However, it piqued my interest when a number of my students

during this had expressed to me just how much they did not know about Indigenous peoples within the northern bloc. In particular what resonated with them was something we had discussed earlier in the course, which was the idea that for many members of the settler population Indigenous people are lost in time, or lost out of time, in the sense that the ongoing existence of Indigenous people is often forgotten, even as Indigenous peoples have always resisted settler colonialism, even militantly so as has been the case in this country since 1995 and the Oka Crisis. Many of these students related to me how all prior knowledge they had of Native peoples, often only from high school, but also often from university courses, was of a people who *were* or *had been*. Native people *had* been here before settlers. Natives *were* subjected to cruel and unusual hardships; that Natives *were* dispossessed of their territories and sovereignties (though often, they related to me, these issues were discussed much more euphemistically, as is quite often the case within settler-colonial classrooms). But, because of the coding and overcoding of the settler imagination from the ideological apparatus of the school, for many of my students, it had never crossed their minds that Native people *are*. This was especially so for my students, who were the majority, who were from geographic regions of the country and province where everyday proximity to Native peoples was not a regular part of their lives. This was the case doubly so for my students who, like myself, are internationals and ex-pats, and so did not even have the bare minimum of knowledge about Native peoples that could be gleaned from standard settler schooling.

This was also often reflected in the other portion of the class that I mentioned: online discussion components. I had assigned my students a portion of their overall grade based on posting a number of reflection pieces to a series of online discussion boards I had created for the class. They were to choose ten of the twelve weeks and their attendant readings and write a reflection or discussion of the materials. When I came to reviewing them, which also gave me a much wider “data” set to reflect upon versus the verbal and emailed discussions with students about their feelings about the course, I read that many more of students had been through a social process of enculturation that left Native peoples by the wayside in the past, never in the present, and never with a future. For myself, as an Indigenous person, as an international, and as a scholar, this shocked me perhaps more than it should have, especially, as I thought, in the wake of what I had taken to be a relatively socially and culturally wide recognition of the facts of the residential schools, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and (relatively) recent Canadian government apologies for the horrors of those institutions inflicted upon Native children and youth, and of their lasting effects. Our own institution, the University of Waterloo, is publicly and openly engaging a process of so-called *Indigenization*. While I am somewhat cynical about the process and its intentions and pretensions, it is something that I felt was quite visible to the student body. Likewise, the physical location of the classroom was not but a 30-second walk down a hallway from the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre.

For whom could such an Indigenization process and nearby and regularly staffed Indigenous Centre be for if not for living and present Indigenous peoples? *Nativeness* and Natives, in this regard, would appear to be a highly pregnant absent presence within the psychic and physical lives of the average settler citizen of the northern bloc. Though perhaps, and I readily accept this possibility, I assume too much of the settler population of this country, and of the southern region of the province in particular

The point however is that these twinned experiences in my first teaching experience demonstrate to me, in this one microcosm of a larger settler-colonial whole, that we, as living Indians, Métis and Inuit peoples, exist (and persist) within the confines of a settler State and surrounded by a settler population for whom everyday discourse in civil and popular society and culture codes and overcodes our bodies, lives, communities and nations as past, as *were*, as *had been*, much as in Byrd's close reading of de Tocqueville on the removal of the Choctaw (2011:37). Even though Byrd's reading was of events that happened in a previous time, and which took place on the other side of the dividing line between the northern bloc's two constituent elements, the discursive and affective conditions of settler colonialism are quite the same: Native peoples are firmly located, and locked, within the temporal past, rendering impossible presence within the present. As before, the Native is a ghost that haunts the margins of a settler-colonial State and society that, try as it must, attempts to forget and not notice.

8.2.1 On Native Cultural Production in the Era of Late Colonialism

Within the hypersurface of the settler-colonial present Natives are often thus, in my lived experience, treated as a kind of time traveller when we are encountered in the day-to-day lives of the white/settler/master. We are not supposed to be present in the present, we are thus beings who do not belong, and when we are found out, our presence in the now uncovered, the white/settler/master's conception of what is, and of their world, is disrupted and destabilized. How did these Natives get here? I did not even think that those people existed anymore? These are, I imagine, the thoughts that must begin to run through the minds of many settlers within the moment of this kind of encounter. I am of course not meaning to imply that members of the settler population believe that Natives literally stepped out of some kind of H. G. Wells-esque time machine or temporal vortex. However, given the philosophical, juridical, and political *a priori* banishment of the Native out of the settler-colonial time stream, a metaphorical time machine is often sought as the *raison d'être* for Native presence within the now.

This results in what I think of as a kind of temporal dysphoria. The discourse of modernity/coloniality is that we no longer exist, or that we should not exist, and where we continue to be, it is as, to resurrect a myth of anthropology's ripe past, the remnants of a dying people, soon to meet our end in the sands of time and be blown away as mere dust on the wind. For us, as Native people, this means that we must always be navigating this when outside of our own sociality and communal spaces. An effect of this is that we,

in our quotidian struggles to force our way onto the stage of the present and proclaim our present existence, is a submission, intentional or unintentional, to what Chelsea Vowel refers to as a kind of “allowable Indigeneity,” by which she means that kinds of performative acts and utterances of Indigeneity that have been made acceptable within modernist and liberal canadian multiculturalism (2016). One can think of acts of beading or “traditional” drumming and singing, the wearing of moccasins or mukluks, sage smudging, or the mass act of the pow wow.

Indeed, to borrow from Wilderson, these acts of performativity generally, in my experience, do not often engender “a renewed commitment to practice” (2009:119), even if they perhaps perform a commitment to renewal. This is because these practices become lost against an intersection of grammar (articulation) and ghosts (memory) coded and overcoded by “the syntax and morphology of structural violence” (119), within the sea of which they are often just acts reaching for a Vizenorian vision of survivance. As such, these performative acts of a kind of survivalist, rather than revivalist, Indigeneity are rendered sterile and nontransgressive within the worlding of the white/settler/master as

the apex of Man⁶⁸ through Juárez's grammar of civilization (2014). This ultimately deracinating aspect of the grammar of civilization is one that Juárez makes clear, noting:

I am inclined to understand this specific process as a "mining of our spirit" that serves to hollow out the integrity of traditions and lifeways to the point at which they become unable to be claimed as indigenous. Examples in this are most explicitly seen in the mass commodification of dream catchers, headdresses, sage burning as an act of cleansing, and the appropriation of Native American artwork by the fashion industry (2014).

Further, for Juárez, this immediately ties back into what I have referred to in this and the previous chapter as the Native as a being-out-of-time. He says:

This application of civilization is most important in the understanding that proclamations of ownership are firstly met with surprise that Indians even exist and are secondly pushed aside as so old that there is no way any indigenous group can claim it (2014).

Additionally, I share the worry expressed by Juárez when he discusses the ultimate impact that this "mining of the spirit" has for us as Indigenous peoples, right down to the core of our very identities, on which he states:

there is no longer indigenous culture that can be used as a safe haven away from the ravishes of capitalism, but must rather be understood in the context of a commodification of cultural accouchements so extreme that "Native American culture" becomes "tribal style." This "mining"

⁶⁸ To be clear: this is not moral judgement against any of these things. I enjoy attending pow wows, though recognize they are sometimes problematic in their celebration of the militancy of settler-colonial imperialism through the celebration of Indigenous veterans of those wars (though never, as my nekōqsemaw and I have remarked to each other more than once, the veterans of say the Oka Crisis or Standing Rock, which were just as much states of war). I also own Native jewelry and even possess my own hand- and self-made pair of moccasins. Indeed, I am strongly supportive of those I know who engage in the painstaking practice of creating such jewelry, with often stunning results, because in this era of the post-Fordist gig economy we all have to make money somehow. This however does not weigh against the fact that those are expressions of Indigenousness that are allowable and acceptable within settler-colonial liberalism.

serves not only to sever Indigenous Peoples from any spiritual connection to any tradition or lifeway available to them, but works in tangent with other facets of civilization in which the lifeway and the tradition of the Native no longer belongs to them because they are no longer Native, but have been emptied into a blank referent transposed onto the Settler, ensuring that any cultural production of the Indian is always already the Settler's to use and do with as they please (2014).

Setting aside though the circulation and consumption of this kind of Indigenous survivalist cultural production and performativity within the modern/colonial/capitalist sign and political economies and the white/settler/master, what is most important in my assessment, however, is that these performances are tied to visions of an often imagined past, and one that also is deeply tied to the agglutinating process described by Vizenor of shifting a complex array of highly diverse Indigenous nations into a modernist datum of the Native (1994). It is a raw simulacrum of Indigeneity precisely because it is a performative and productive re-enactment of a pan-Native past that never really was. It is thus a simulation of the past, and of what it means to be Native. Not all Natives beaded, not all Natives smudged with sage, not all Natives wore moccasins or mukluks, and most certainly not all Natives engaged in the practice of the pow wow, ceremonial or otherwise.

There is certainly nothing wrong with contemporary cultural innovation, I have certainly carried that over from my older anthropological training that taught me no real culture is stagnant. However, what concerns me is the use of a simulated and mythological past as a mirror for how we should exist as Native today, and consequently

how we should navigate the relations of power under which we currently live. Thinking of Louis Chude-Sokei's critical invocation of the use of a mythological Africa in the musical imagery of roots reggae (which was so much the music of my island youth, as it is today), I cannot help but think that these performances and productions of Indigeneity to be the generation of a nostalgia and trauma-born (and, indeed, a trauma-born nostalgia) recursive mythology of Indigeneity, shaped by the settler-colonial politico-cultural affective geography of the northern bloc (2011). It is an idea of Indigeneity which is relentlessly, I might even say militantly, celebrated for its supposed pre-colonial anteriority (2011:80), but which requires for its grounding a non-historical rigidity; in other words: stagnation.

It is also a specifically aesthetic non-historical stagnation that in many ways is in excess of the Jamesonian-Fisherian conceptualization of pastiche (1991; 2009). It is, to some degree, certainly a hauntological aesthetic, because it relies on constantly engaging in necromantic and necrophagic revivals of the past, disallowing the possibility of innovation, and of finding new, and more contemporarily genuine, ways of existing as Native for the sake of being Native on its own terms. However, that image of the past that it draws on, as I said already, is actually a vision of something that never actually was, to begin with; a vision of an imagined pan-Native prior. This, in my assessment, shifts the discussion beyond Jamesonian and Fisherian discussions of pastiche and hauntological revivalism—because there is nothing to actually revive when it comes to

these kinds of pan-Native imaginaries—and into a terrain best discussed in Baudrillardian terms of simulacra. In particular, thinking of Baudrillard's successive phase precession of the sign-order, this kind of pan-Native non-historical performativity of Nativeness appears, at the very least, to be a kind of third-order simulacrum, where the image (sage smudging, beading, pow wows, mukluk making, etc.) appears to be a representation of a profound reality, in this case, the prior of conquest, but which actually masks the truth that it, in fact, does not represent anything real at all (1994:6).

Further, what engagement in these practices of performative acceptable Indigeneity also mean for us as Native peoples is that our expression of *Nativeness* or of Nativeness is ineluctably tied to the cognition of the settler. This is at least in part because the terms of this simulated mythology of the Native past are set through the worlding of the settler. I do not suggest that this means that every single Native person living today in this country wakes up in the morning and declares to themselves “today I am going to meet the expectations of the settler for what it means for me to be a Native,” but that is what is rendered out of these practical engagements with the modern and liberal world of the white/settler/master. In a sense, it is perhaps a non-political form of what Coulthard so forthrightly criticizes and urges us to turn away from, which is the practice of seeking recognition of ourselves from the white/settler/master (2014). Following Juárez, it is also within and through this zone of acceptability that we discipline ourselves in the commodification drive of the capitalist world-system. We sell our beading and moccasins

for money. We dance and sing for money. And this even more deeply drives us into the dead-end dialectic of recognition with the settler, especially as many Native people have grown openly critical of the tidal wave of fake Native imagery that buries us under the weight of patterns on clothing, of capitalist branding and sign-value, and of curios to be bought and sold at any highway stop that now criss-cross our territories. To the degree that we do not turn away from these things though, we begin to shift the dramaturgy of kind of pan-Native, non-historical Nativeness further down the processional sign-order, from third-order simulacrum to fourth order, where the performance of Nativeness not only masks the fact that there is no reality being reflected in its image, but where it reflects only other signs, in this instance the signs of Nativeness as rendered within settler coloniality.

Bridging all of these concerns together with additional concerns for Indigenous sovereignty and colonial cisheteropatriarchy, Joanne Barker incisively says:

Because international and state recognition of Indigenous rights is predicated on the cultural authenticity of a certain kind of Indigeneity, the costumed affiliations undermine the legitimacy of Indigenous claims to sovereignty and self-determination by rendering Indigenous culture and identity obsolete but for the costume. That this representation is enacted through racialized, gendered, and sexualized images of Indigenous women/femininity and men/masculinity—presumably all heterosexual and of a generic tribe—is not a curiosity or happenstance. It is the point. Imperialism and colonialism require Indigenous people to fit within the heteronormative archetypes of an Indigeneity *that was authentic in the past but is culturally and legally vacated in the present*. It is a past that even Indigenous peoples in headdresses are perceived to honor as something dead and gone. The modernist temporality of the Indigenous dead perpetuates the United States and Canada as fulfilled

promises of a democracy encapsulated by a multicultural liberalism that, ironically, is inclusive of Indigenous people *only in costumed affiliation* (2017b:3) [emphasis mine].

Critical, as noted in Chapter 1, of *Settler Colonial Studies*, she continues, saying:

This is not a logic of elimination. Real Indigeneity is *ever presently* made over as irrelevant as are Indigenous legal claims and rights to governance, territories, and cultures. But long live the regalia-as-artifact that anybody can wear (3).

Within modernist and colonial liberal capitalism what it is to be Native has been so deracinated by the machinery of elimination and dispossession that it is hard today to even think of these performances as truly Native. Rather they exist for the consumption of the settler and exist for the settler to do with them as they so please. They have become part of the liberal colonizing assemblage that is the mosaic of Canadian multiculturalism. These things may be made by Natives, or worn by Natives, or done by Natives, but they belong to Canada, or the United States. This is the terminal point of Juárez's grammar of civilization (2014).

What is not allowable, though, are those expressions of Indigeneity that express a living presence of the Native within the current moment, and which evinces any desire for a decolonial face in the future-anterior. This is the truly Weird Native that exists beyond the temporal bounds of the white/settler/master's world-building project. Truly living Natives, not the socially and ontologically dead Natives that exist within the multicultural imagination of modernity/coloniality, are the Weird monsters waiting to rupture and destabilize this world. Natives who are Native within their own cognition

of themselves, absent the machinery of the settler-colonial State and the settler populace writ large, who do not seek a Lacanian reflection in the mirror of that society do not belong. They cannot belong, lest they, to paraphrase Joy Harjo (2008), break into this overcoding story by force, warclub in hand, and leave it with the smoke of grief rising, the world of Man dead beside them. In this sense, a Nativeness for its own sake, a decolonial Nativeness that defies the temporal streaming of the settler, which rejects its displacement from the movement of time itself into the zone of a being-outside-settler-time, is truly monstrous.

8.3 Weird and Wild Spaces

The other pole of the spatiotemporal dialectic of Native exteriority and Weirdness is of course place. In my own lived experience, which is the autoethnographic heart of this dissertation writing, this has perhaps been most the case regarding the question of Native urbanness. I have always been an Urban Native I suppose. Even when I was living in Bermuda, though I did not live in the region that passes for the capital city of Hamilton, or in the old capital of the town of St. Georges, Bermuda is entirely urbanized outside of protected parks and green belt areas. It is simply too small to really have an urban-rural divide (though there is, in popular everyday discourse a “town” versus “country” divide, though that ultimately pertains to whether you are from east or west of Hamilton, which is geographically dead-centre of the archipelago).

But this is a special case. There are few Bermudian Indians, much less Menominee

who happen to be from Bermuda. I am quite sure that only my mother, my younger brother, and myself represent within that demographic. However, during my adult life spent largely in southern Ontario, I have always been an Urban Native. Kitchener-Waterloo was for many years the bounds of my experience of living Native life in Canada. I have made and unmade community here, grown close to people, developed friendships and relationships with other Indigenous students, and within the wider tri-city region. We are all Urban Natives, or at least most of us are. Most of us, of the people I have come to know, are students. Only a handful of us have the experience of growing up on a reserve. Most of us have been born and raised in the cities. However, the status of student appends to us a kind of expectation of transientness; that we will be here one day and then gone the next, off to live life in some sort of other parts unknown. Whether this expectation is fulfilled or not, this transient nature of urban Nativeness is part of the cognition of it as such.

Beyond the student, I have found during my times here that this transientness is often expected of those of us who are not, or who are no longer, students. It is indeed the case, at least as far as Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge are concerned, that due to the relative proximity of this city to a series of reserve communities—such as the Six Nations of the Grand River, the Mississaugas of New Credit and the neighbouring and geographically enmeshed Oneida, Munsee-Delaware and Chippewas of the Thames First Nations—many people I have come to know in this region over the years have worked

in the city by day and returned home to a reserve community by night. This is, I think, a kind of rapid diurnal cycling of how urban Native presence is thought to be within the imaginary of the settler.

And this is I believe a critical point. As my nekōqsemaw and I have discussed, and as we have both discussed in conversation with Potawatomie scholar Kyle Powyss Whyte, urban Nativeness is often something that is occluded within the cognition of the settler. It is forgotten about, or perhaps more aptly, it is not seen. It is rendered invisible despite the statistics. Indeed, despite the fact that those statistics in both the United States and Canada increasingly bear out the fact that the majority of the Indigenous populace in both countries is now urban, the urban landscape is imagined to be a Native free zone by the settler. The Native is a being-of-the-Wild, and as with the Wolf against and with which Washington imagined the Native to be, the palisades of the city, the town or the village, the walls of settler habitation, are built with the intention of keeping the Wild outside. Urbanness, in this sense, is an apex marker symbolically and in terms of literal physiographic presence of the west's self-ascribed civilizing tendencies. Even absent the presence of actual physical barriers as the americans want to build along their southern border, or which the settler colony of Israel has built to hedge in the Indigenous Palestinian population, urbanness is defined in part by being not-Wild, and therefore not a zone of Native presence.

The reserve and the reservation are here then transformed into a kind of Wild

space, which, like the reserves of nature that have been constructed by settler governmentality to hedge in a “preserve” that part of the so-called natural world which has yet to be paved over by concrete, act to corral Native presence away from the city. It is certainly no accident that nature reserves and Indian reserves linguistically use the same metaphoric language to describe themselves in their titles.

Native urbanness then must be conceived of as transient, in order to preserve the sanctity of the settler inside. Natives may arrive in the city as students, study in that location for a few years and then leave. Or Natives may come to the city by day to work, but by night leave to return to their Wild spaces beyond the borders where settlers live and make their lives. Even more rapidly, as is the case with my Wild reservation community in Wisconsin, which lacks many essential amenities such as a grocery store, Natives may travel to the city or the town in order to trade, though in a modern reiteration of the old fur trading travels, it is not to exchange beaver furs for basic goods, but to exchange modern capitalist fiat currency for essentials like food and drink.

The point is that the Native cannot remain within the confines of the city. Every moment that the Native, or again to be more inclusive of our Metis and Inuit kin, every moment that the Native is present, is a moment in which the Wild is breaking through the boundaries of the ordinary, the everyday and the familiar. Thus, in much the same way that a Native who breaks through the walls of the temporal prison of settler time to assert their presence in the present is a being who cannot be, who cannot belong, a Native

who, like the Wolf itself in Derrida's analogy of the beast and sovereign (2009:4-5), sneaks in through the palisades dividing the city from the Wild surround is a being who simply cannot be, who cannot be t/here. And this is more than the return of the abject, in that the return of the abject is an uncanny return, a return of the *unheimlich*, of the familiar being who has been rendered strange by sociogenic processes. Because the Native was never part of the city, because the Native is the Wolf, is the Wild. The Native in the city, in their insistence on remaining in the city, is a Weird being who threatens to destabilize and rupture of the settler everyday cognition of the world.

Transient Native urban presence, or at least its perception as such within the worlding of the white/settler/master, locks the Native into the Wild space of the reserve and the reservation. "So, when do you think you will be heading home?" is the question I have often heard during my times here (or some variant thereof). Perhaps this is as much directed towards my status as a Bermudian/West Indian immigrant resident of Canada also, and all of the not-so-hidden layers of xenophobia and antiblackness (though I myself am not Black, the West Indies/Caribbean are, within the cognition of the white/settler/master, a zone of Blackness) of Canadian mainstream society and culture that are buried underneath such a question. But it brings me to reflect on how I know, through my many years of conversations, that this question is one that is often directed towards urban Natives. "So, when do you think you will be heading home?" assumes the ontological transientness of Native urbanity, and could just as easily be rendered as

“so when do you think that you will be leaving?”

“So, when do you think you will be heading home?” assumes that home can never be for the Native within the borders of the city. It also fails to assume, or rather forgets, that the city is also Native land. Despite all of the layers of steel, concrete, asphalt, manicured lawns and captive flora and fauna in city parks, it is fundamentally Native land that rests beneath this thing that we call the city. The city covers that, obscures that, and causes us to forget that, but it is the case nevertheless. The practice of territorial acknowledgements that have become so commonplace in Canadian academic and activist settings moves us ever so slightly towards a remembrance, but it would be a folly to assume that those circles represent the world perception of anything more than a small minority of broader settlerdom.

So, I can be just as much at home in the city as I could be on the reserve or the reservation. I myself can walk out of the backdoor of my apartment in the heart of Waterloo, Ontario, and step into a small forest, itself a presence of other-than-human kin's survivance and resilience and offer my tobacco to the trees and the small creek that runs through. This is not my nation's land, but it is the land of my Anishinaabe relatives, and I know that I am far from the first Menominee to walk this land, and I know that our other-than-human kin do not forget.

However, as with the performance of acceptable Indigeneity by Natives for the settler, of an acceptable pan-Indigeneity that is locked into a past that never even quite

was, the ontological cognition of the Native as the Wild and outside of the city also at times leads to a Native re-inscription of processes which combine to produce what I think of as a kind of Native ‘becoming being for the settler.’⁶⁹ Most toxically, in my experience in both inter-personal and digital spheres, this manifests in the division between the reserve or the reservation and the city.

How this takes place is the sometimes (often) judgement of Urban Natives as less than, in particular, *less Native than*, those who are resident “on the land,” something which is always made to be coterminous with being on or of the Wild space of the reserve and the reservation. We are thought of as being less than because we are perceived as having less access to ceremony, language, culture, and other accruements that are thought to mark out Nativeness. We are less than because we are not on the land, which is said to be the most proper place for a Native to be. More so, this often leads us to be considered as outsiders when, or if, we do undertake a journey of return. This is often incredibly hurtful and alienating. Given the rapid rate of cycling between outrages and controversies online, where I have often experienced this, it just as often quickly dies out, only to rear its head at some later date.

This is also something that my mother has shared with me about her own life story. As I worked on this writing and found myself dwelling on this question I asked her “do you feel like the other Menominee on the rez make you feel welcome?” Her short answer

⁶⁹ A borrowing of and a play on Hortense Spillers’ notion of ‘becoming being for the captor’ (1987:67).

was that no, they do not. My mother, who was raised in Milwaukee, but whose parents are from the reservation, and whose extended family have, for the most part, always lived on or in close proximity to the reservation, told me that the other Menominee on the reservation in Wisconsin make her feel as though she is an outsider, and that they always have. Even though she has the status of full enrolment, unlike my own liminal enrolment of 1st Degree Descendant, she has never felt like she belongs there. Indeed, rather than make the journey of return that is often expected of us it seems, she moved in quite the opposite direction, electing to move herself and her life to Bermuda alongside my father. She has never, however, stopped asserting her Menomineeness and Nativeness, and she raised my younger brother and I to know ourselves as such as well, but the toxicity is there.

Sometimes (and my apologies to my mother should she ever read this) I feel as though she hates other Menominee because of this, or at the very least has developed a shell of indifference towards them, though she also cares deeply about who she is and where she comes from. My own outsider status within the conceptual worldview and socio-politics of the Menominee was also reinforced for myself when I was denied access to the reservation for the earliest incarnation of this now autoethnographic project, after having to subject myself and my proposal to an approval process also undertaken by non-Menominee outside researchers. This was recounted in my skeletal review of a story that I was going to tell you for this chapter. I know because of this, I myself have to sometimes

wrestle with my own feelings of hostility, indifference, alienation, but also great love, care, and admiration for my nation⁷⁰.

One day I do hope to return, and I hope that I am able to return to feel the fullness of myself as a Menominee and not have to worry about my conception of self. But it would be a lie and I would be intellectually dishonest to say that this return to the source of my Menomineeness is not hampered by a fear of rejection and hostility because I am not of the reservation in the most immediate sense of having been born and raised there, much less ever having made my home there. This is, I think, perhaps the experience and struggle of all diasporic and disconnected peoples, Native or not. It also causes me to sometimes think of myself as *unheimlich in the eyes of my own nation; of myself as the familiar-but-strange, Menominee but not Menominee*.

As with the geographical conceptual world of the white/settler/master which forgets that the city itself does not erase, but only covers (both physically, and in a

⁷⁰ I wonder also, thinking again of the state of exception and primordial act of exclusion and inclusion in the instantiation of sovereignty, and also of Menominee membership (and tribal membership broadly), if we may entertain the idea that the ability to exclude from the tribal-national community on the basis of not only blood quantum or its cognate processes in Canada—which renders my mother a fully enrolled member but my brother, our cousins, and I 1st Degree Descendants—but also other means, not only in the sense that all tribes use blood quantum or structurally equivalent measures, is part of the generative act of instantiating this politico-juridical arrangement which many believe to be Native sovereignty under the current settler colonial épistémè. While colonial sovereign power excludes, and in particular represses, the prior and alternative sovereignties and territorialities of Native nations in order to render itself into existence continuously, I think the exclusion of certain people from tribal-national communities offers a smaller scale version of the same process to the end that so-called Native sovereignty is exercised and made legible as such.

Dusselian sense [1995]), the continued fact that the land it is built on what was and what remains Native land, this form of identity certification and gatekeeping—linked to the reserve and the reservation as the ultimate onto-geographic signifier of Nativeness—undertakes the same rhetorical and symbolic movement. Urbanness and Nativeness become mutually exclusive markers of identity. Those who are marked by both, who are not transient, are made ghostly.

Returning to the ontological making of the Native as Weird however, these processes converge on the bodies and being of Urban Natives. While the white/settler/master conceives of the Native as a being that cannot be here within the city, the discourse within Indian Country which posits a less-than-authentic Nativeness for non-transient Urban Natives also assumes, whether intentionally or unintentionally, the world-building project of the settler, and thus from both ends it is dually assumed that vis-à-vis the city the Native is a being who cannot be there. The Urban Native is thus doubly erased, doubly alienated, and doubly made to be Weird, an ultimate diasporic being with no fixed home and no ability to make one. Urban Nativeness is then affixed with the affective condition of never feeling welcome. It wears one down. It wears me down. I want to escape, to flee, to become (re)Wild, to return home, to be able to make home, and maybe one day I will, but right now I cannot.

Locked out of time as well or locked into a ghostly performance of a non-past in the process of becoming being for the settler, the abject-as-Weird status of the urban

Native reaches its apex. Urban Nativeness then becomes the ultimate signifier of nothingness within the world-building project of the white/settler/master. As Byrd remarks:

As the liberal state and its supporters and critics struggle over the meaning of pluralism, habitation, inclusion, and enfranchisement, Indigenous peoples and nations, who provide the ontological and literal ground for such debates, are continually deferred into a past that never happened and a future that will never come (2011:221).

8.4 The Jouissance of Damage Narratives Under Late-Colonialism

Reading the Weird Native in a psychoanalytic register we then finally come to a point about damage narratives, and why they are so easily made to be consumable in this postmodern era of late-colonialism and capitalist realism. Working through both Jodi Byrd's references to the increasingly overcoded obsession with the flesh-eating living dead of filmic and digital worlds, and how the same serves as a marker for the walking revenants of finance capitalism that barely survived the global crisis of the modern/colonial/capitalist world-system in 2007-2008 (2011:225), as well as Audra Simpson's musing of the sovereign death drive of settler-colonial regimes (2016) and the now-classic theorization of the *wetiko* psychosis that afflicts the same regimes by the late Jack D. Forbes (2008) I have often deployed new thinking around settler colonialism, and this era of late-colonialism and capitalist realism in particular, with their libidinal capacities of desire, as a kind of conspicuous, consumptive death.

Settler colonialism has always been, at its heart, an eerily anthropophagic and

geophagic entity. It devours Indigenous peoples, lands, and territories to build its world and leave wreckage in its wake. And not just of Native nations and territories, but of the entire world. The colonialism project within the northern bloc, as Byrd notes, “worlded the Americas into a planet” (2011:222) and the effects are all around us. The First World—the settler colonies and their European sire; the world of the white/settler/master as the apex of Wynter’s Man—increasingly finds itself awash in a dizzying array of ever-greater technologies and forms of life. Each year seems to bring us new cyclical iterations of the latest smartphones, augmented-reality interfaces, virtual assistants, autonomous delivery drones and self-driving cars. It is increasingly the world of cyberpunk’s grimy futurism and of Donna Haraway’s cyborg (1985; 1991). These recent technologies offer the denizens of the anthropophagic world of Man the promise of a life that is more comfortable, more convenient, and less laborious. While an argument can, and should be made, regarding the colonization of everyday life by these new technologies and forms of life, and the new set of challenges that they present to us (Greenfield 2018), as in the ever-pervasive presence of deeply alienating cognitive capitalism, the gig economy and precarious labour, they also represent a social condition within the world of the white/settler/master that is progressing ever closer to a kind of utopistic futurism.

But the cost is great. Fanon, in the conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*, refers to this world, the world of Man, of what Lewis Gordon calls “European Man” (1995b), as one “which never stops talking of man yet massacres him at every one of its street corners,

at every corner of the world” (2004:235). We might say, agreeing with Fanon, that this is a world of Man which devours the racialized and colonized multitudes on every continent, on every land. While the world-building project of Man is reaching newer heights with networked objects, services and spaces, and is increasingly defined by them, the social ontologies that they are both creating and are created by them are dialectically linked with five centuries of horror in the form of the dual-headed sociological catastrophe of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and settler colonialism, as well as to what the cultural theorist Fredric Jameson correctly points to as the ever-increasing social disintegration of the Third World (2007).

In this cannibalistic world, the overrepresentation of Man as the human transforms that same globe-trotting being into Forbes’s wetiko spirit. It consumes insatiably, unceasingly, and the coloniocene cum capitalocene cum anthropocene burns the world, and the future, around the rest of us. And there is a certain desire embedded in that. Byrd remarks of this cannibalistic zombie imperialism that “there is a certain ghastly revelling in the not-quite-dead-yet-but-soon-to-be amnesias” (2011:225). She notes:

Zombie imperialism is the current manifestation of a liberal democratic colonialism that locates biopower at the intersection of life, death, law, and lawlessness—what Mbembe has termed necropolitics—where death belongs more to racialized and gendered multitudes and killing becomes ‘precisely targeted’ (2011:228).

However, this cannibal world, as much as it tries to forget, to occlude, to bury its other and other ways of being human beyond the teleological suspension of Man as such

(Gordon 2006) it cannot quite push them fully into amnesia. This is the nature of ghosts, of monsters, and other spectral beings who haunt the margins of thought and sight. Indeed, this remembering despite itself often manifests in what I have before, taking a cue from the discourse of Indigenous resurgence, referred to as the fear of Indigenous revenge (Robinson 2016). This is the fear, based on the suppressed knowledge of the horrors of their world-building project, that can take hold of the white/settler/master that there will be a great and vicious return visited upon them and their empires in repayment by the colonized and racialized of the world. This is the fear cum white supremacist conspiracy theory of #WhiteGenocide (Wilson 2018), put most succinctly by the alt-right protestors in Charlottesville, who chanted that “you will not replace us” and “Jews will not replace us” (Wildman 2017). Lewis Gordon says of this:

For the white man looks at the black man and wonders when it will all end, but the white man knows deep down that a just future is one in which he himself no longer exists in virtue of his ceasing to function as the End, or less ambiguously, the telos of Man. European man dreads, then, as Lenin once put it, what is to be done (1995b:12).

Byrd likewise notes, speaking of Lieutenant General John M. Schofield and his reflections of the Modoc War, that:

In his memoir: “If the innocent could be separated from the guilty, ‘plague, pestilence, and famine,’” he wrote, “would not be an unjust punishment for the crimes committed in this country against the original occupants of the soil. And it should be remembered that when retribution comes, though we may not understand why, the innocent often share the fate of the guilty. The law under which nations suffer for their crimes does not seem to differ much from the law of retribution which governs the savage Indian.” Imagining “plague, pestilence, and

famine” raining retribution on the innocent and guilty alike, Schofield presents us with the Indian deferred as zombie attack return of the repressed (2011:228).

But in all of this, in both the world that has been built, and which is being built, at the cost of ongoing settler colonialism, antiblackness and the parasitic disintegration of the Third World, and in the fear that those crimes may be repaid with fire, disease, death and great torment, there is also Byrd’s revelry in the face of this.

Again, returning to the psychoanalytic register, and shifting back again to the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling, which is the terrain in which our damage narratives as the ghosts of settler colonialism are both told and consumed, I believe that we can also begin to make sense of this through recourse to libidinal desire and the Weird. Following Fisher as I have, it is possible to be left with an impression of the Weird as a being who should not be, or who should not belong, and the destabilization and disruption that its presence brings, that it “primarily has to do with what is distressing or terrifying” (2016:12-13). Quite simply, while the Weird, and here specifically the Native as Weird, is not straightforwardly a pleasurable presence within the worlding of the white/settler/master, neither is it entirely unpleasurable either (2016:13). Rather, considering *Byrd’s revelry* in the face of the not-quite-dead-yet-but-soon-to-be, and the simultaneous vengeful return of the colonized and racialized, there is a mixture of pleasure and pain in viewing the Native. To be specifically Lacanian about it, there is a *jouissance* that the Weird invokes (1998).

This *jouissance*, this mixture of the pleasurable with the unpleasurable in the encounter with the Native, finds itself integrally linked with yet another factor: fascination. In describing the work of early 20th Century science fiction and horror author H.P. Lovecraft, Fisher describes:

Accordingly, it is not horror but fascination—albeit a fascination usually mixed with a certain trepidation—that is so integral to Lovecraft’s rendition of the weird. But I would say this is also integral to the concept of the weird itself—the weird cannot only repel, it must also compel attention (2016:17).

In many ways H.P. Lovecraft is an unintentionally (on Fisher’s part) exemplar of writing on the Weird because his own racism, xenophobia, and anglo-american supremacist views of the world meant that the Weird was not only manifested in incomprehensible cosmic beings and ancient-beyond-ancient civilizations utterly alien to, and beyond the scope, of human knowledges, but also within the racialized and colonized peoples of the world (House 2017). In many ways, reading Lovecraft, it can be said that the Savage Native, the enslaved African and other colonized people were more like Cthulhu than the fictional cosmic entity that actually bore that name. But Lovecraft’s integral racism here is something that can be set aside for us. What is essential here is that in Fisher’s rendering of the Weird is the notion that *jouissance* is not only integrally linked to what fascinates, but that fascination itself, in the face of the encounter with the Weird, becomes itself a kind of Lacanian *jouissance* (2016:17).

It in this register that I read the production and mechanical reproduction of

Indigenous damage narratives within the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling. Let me elaborate further by reflecting on the recent 2017 film *Indian Horse*, based on a novel by the late Anishinaabe author Richard Wagamese of the same name (2012). Shortly after that film was released, I was involved in the indigenization efforts at the University of Waterloo, as part of the Student Experience Working Group. In conversation with many Natives, I found there was excitement at the prospect of the film's release as it told the story of a residential school survivor who found hope through the sport identified with Canadian settlement par excellence, ice hockey! At the time, the country was still being rocked (if more gently than I believe many perceived) by the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its final report on the Canadian government's responsibility for "cultural genocide." In that context, the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre decided to show the film for those involved in the various working groups at the time. My nekōqsemaw, also on one of the working groups, and I were volunteered (one might say volun-told) to be on a panel for the film after its showing. I was, in a probably undersold sense, unexcited at the prospect. We, and many other Natives we have been in conversation with, often refer to these films as trauma porn. I have zero interest in subjecting myself to those kinds of materials. My nekōqsemaw often asks me how I can read the materials that I read, non-fictionally that is, but with regards to that, I often have the excuse or cause that it is for my work, either academically or in terms of activism. That does not mean I actually enjoy reading about

the horrors that we have had to suffer, much less those that have been inflicted upon other colonized and racialized peoples.

Similar thoughts have come up in conversation between myself and my mother. She has told me that she took several tries to be able to fully make it through the 2015 Alejandro González Iñárritu directed and Leonardo DiCaprio led film *The Revenant*. Her reasoning was both simple and explicit: she did not care to subject herself, as a Native woman, to the representations of the brutality and violences inflicted upon Native peoples in the initial stages of the film. While she did not describe the film as trauma porn, the feelings she expressed are the same that I felt regarding the *Indian Horse*.

While the *Revenant* is not quite of the same order as *Indian Horse*, because it is not a damage narrative (fictional or non-fictional) written by a Native person, in a sense, they are united by bringing together an audience to witness the inhuman horrors that their Native victims were subjected to. What we—my nekōqsemaw, my mother and myself—have often said is that these movies are not for Natives, rather they are for settlers.

But why do settlers want to watch them? Why do films such as *Indian Horse* receive such widespread acclaim? Yes, some Natives do find these films important—just as much as others (such as myself) might find them revolting—but that cannot account for all of it. Instead, as far as my conversational experiences during that time period showed me, much of the praise heaped upon narratives such as that of *Indian Horse* came from white/settler/master cinema-goers. Reflecting upon these conversations, as well as prior

ones around earlier, similar, materials, I believe that there is a sense of liberal bourgeois self-satisfaction at having seen, and then promoted the virtues, of such a film, of being one of those settlers who is “in the know” and not afraid to look away from filmic and literary depictions of the horrors that their country has inflicted.

For others, there is a kind of rubber-neck effect that happens, such as in the oft-cited proverbial passing of a vehicle accident on the road that one finds themselves unable to look away from. For many settlers, there is a *jouissance* to be had in watching these films and reading these kinds of novels. There is the shock and horror of seeing what has been done, and what is still being done, by Canada and the United States to Native peoples, but there is also fascination. They find themselves entrapped within these visions of colonial excess, and in the libidinal satisfaction that perhaps at the end there is some kind of resolution to be had, though, as in the case of *Indian Horse*, always one that, if it does not wholly endorse liberal multiculturalism as the answer, does not do much to undermine it either.

But *Indian Horse* is not a one-off experience either. Indeed, *Indian Horse* finds itself in the company of other films such as *The Revenant* and also digital productions as well, such as the previously discussed AAA videogames of *Red Dead Redemption 2* and *Bioshock Infinite*. While *Indian Horse* is the one that most clearly resonates here in my thought as a damage narrative, all of these filmic, literary, and digital productions cast settler colonialism cleanly into the realm of an irretrievable past, and whose resolutions, if there

ever can be one, never work to move beyond the settler-colonial present. Liberal democratic multicultural settler colonialism is the present and it shapes the ultimate horizons for these narratives.

They also demonstrate that there is something that continuously draws views, readers, and players into the worlds they construct. All of their worlds, whether fictional or nonfictional, fantastical or grounded, are worlds in which the Native is inescapably a being-outside-settler-time and a being-in-the-Wild, unable to enter the present or to cast a decolonial face in the future-anterior because its proximity and subsumption within the state of nature a priori preclude it from entering the proper forward flow of time of the world of Man. This worlding in which Savageness is always-already an exteriority interpolates the Native into the Weird.

There is a libidinal pull in them towards this form of encounter with the Native and the machinery of settler colonialism, either in the face-to-face or in the ghostliness of a past perhaps not quite spoken about, but which is a heavy present absence. When it comes to damage narratives, the most grounded of all of these possible renditions of frontier and post-frontier horror, that pull is the strongest. And the consumptive patterns of white/settler/master civil and popular society show no turning away from them when they surface in books, films, or other kinds of media. Behind the smugness of liberal bourgeois self-satisfaction in these presentations of our stories of damage to those who damaged us, there is the jouissance of fascination, a pleasure and displeasure that meet

and intermixes in the rubber-neck effect that makes them unable to look away from our damaged state, without truly questioning the processes of a world-building project that have left us damaged and consigned to the exteriority of time and space.

Perhaps here, as I begin to close this last chapter, there is something that can be said by way of speculatively gesturing about a process akin to a kind of Bataillean limit-experience (2001; 1993; 1991) for the settler upon viewing or reading these materials. Speaking specifically of the horror genre, I consider damage narratives to be a kind of horror, of which the media scholar Henry Jenkins notes:

The best artists working in the genre don't just want to provoke horror or revulsion, they want to slowly reshape our sensibilities so that we come to look at some of the most outré images as aesthetically pleasing and erotically desirable (2006:50).

The Weird as exteriority, and the Native Savage, in particular, does work to define what is outside the interior of the subject of Man, and thus in approaching the Weirdly abject Native in filmic, literary and digital representations as art, that which normally should not be can become transformed into an object for the subject's affirmation. There is indeed something aesthetically—somaesthetically if we follow Foucault on the limit experience (1991)—and perhaps even erotically, desirable within settler society for these kinds of images. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor approaches something similar when he recounts that one can experience that:

which unsettles and breaks through our ordinary sense of being in the world, with its familiar objects, activities and points of reference. These may be moments, as Peter Berger puts it, describing the work of Robert

Musil, when “ordinary reality is ‘abolished’ and something terrifying other shines through” (2007:5-6).

What could be more outré than the viewing or reading of true horror? One must begin to think for of damage narratives in the context of the successes of one true-crime docuseries after another that a digital viewing platform such as Netflix launch. What could be more terrifyingly other than those beings who, cast from time in a never-was past, and cast from space as the Wolf into nature, and who therefore cannot be honestly said to inhabit the present moment and to belong to the future? If spectral and monstrous beings are that which horrifies, then perhaps that which is most horrifying are those real beings rendered ghostly by the machinery of settler colonialism and its ontological and socio-existential worldings.

However, unlike a traditional limit-experience in Bataille’s thought, the viewing of damage narratives does not work to destabilize the boundaries of the subject of Man or open up space for new ways of being and living in the world. The market place of the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling and thus the role of damage narratives, as I am theorizing them here, are not to break down the regimes of difference between the Native and the white/settler/master, but to strengthen them and to work to re-instantiate the world of Man by demonstrating the degraded and dehumanized status of the conquered, the enslaved and the genocided. Damage narratives in particular, when made absent as they often are of a deep critique of the structure of settler coloniality and modernity, work to re-inscribe the boundaries of the subject, read as Man and most

especially as the white/settler/master. If viewing or reading or experiencing Native damages really did function as a genuine limit-experience, then perhaps they would work to shuffle the code and to push viewers to question their most centrally-held assumptions about Indigenous peoples, cultures, nations, lands, and histories. However, the copious books, films and other media presentations which tell and re-tell our stories of damage to those who damaged us demonstrably have never functioned to inculcate a broad-reaching anti-colonial and decolonial consciousness amongst the settler population. What is generated, when it is not the conservative or far-right reaction of the most recalcitrant and racist elements of settler-colonial society, is that liberal bourgeois smugness and self-delivered pat on the back, which may generate, in the most affected sectors of that population, on occasion the emergence of what Barnor Hesse calls “white confessionalism” but almost never into the territory of the White Critical, White Traitor, or White Abolitionist (2014).

Instead, Natives continue to be made Weird and locked into the past. Their damage narratives—including those circulated like a rumour through the corridors of the modern/colonial/capitalist academy—are like the forced movement of the Choctaw recounted by de Tocqueville: they did happen, they had happened. They are never those that are happening. This allows a settler-colonial imperial conglomerate such as Canada to engage in a discourse around the “cultural genocide” of the residential schools without genuinely attending to the ways and means by which this country continues to enact

policies of genocide and elimination against indigenous peoples in the form of forced sterilizations, #MMIWGTS, ecological racism and colonialism, and the State-driven and coded systems of Indian Status inheritance which produce a 3-lap race to disappearance (Wolfe 2016b; Vowel 2016).

The task then for Natives, for Indigenous peoples, is to follow Fanon and turn away from this project of world-building, of modernity/coloniality and settler colonialism, which continuously abjects us into the past and into the Wild; to turn away from the world of the settler as a mirror of recognition in which to see ourselves (Fanon 1967; 2004; Coulthard 2014). Our task is to break into the present and assert our (re-)existence; to, by way of that, lay a claim to casting a decolonial face in the future anterior. This ultimately is why I have chosen not to tell my damage narrative. I will not continue to exist in this moment ghostly. I will only tell stories of survivance, delinking, resurgence, refusal, fugitivity, insurgency and of living futurity.

Endings?: Towards Something of a Conclusion

Conclusions are the weak point of most authors, but some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation.

— George Eliot, *Letters*

I cannot stand writing conclusions. I truly cannot. Old writers' trope I know, or at least that is what I have gathered that through years of discussions with other writers and scholars. I cannot stand to write them because I always find them to be the most difficult to word part of anything I have ever written. I am always faced with a similar question, and this dissertation is no different: how does one even begin to sum a work such as this, which charts a course in so many different directions? Because summing up what has been said I am told is an essential component of any good conclusion. But I also do not want to reduce this dissertation to an inferior conclusion of its constituent parts, to paraphrase the YouTube literary theorist Grace Lee (2018).

I have always found it easier, more conducive to my mode of thinking and writing, to write without a plan, at times almost fugue-like as a stream of consciousness. Often, I have a general idea of what I want to say and simply allow the words to flow from that point. This is the nature, I think, of much actual conversational storytelling, and this is, as I stated in the first chapter, how I am thinking of this dissertation and the kind of conceptual, epistemological, and methodological space that I am attempting to clear with

it. Even as I write this, the first words that came to mind were the ones I started with: “I cannot stand writing conclusions.”

How does one sum up a story that comes to you, that came to me, in such a way? Certainly, I believe it can be done, but where does one start? Is it with a dry blow-by-blow recounting of the story, through its chapters and subsections? Or is it topical? What did we talk about? What did I tell you about? This is the dilemma that I always face when it comes time to pen the conclusion to anything I have written: academic, on my blog, or even on Facebook posts and long Twitter threads. Perhaps I find the writing of conclusions to be so difficult because this story, like most stories, never actually end. They continue well past the final page. Indeed, this story, while it takes the form of a PhD dissertation, is in so many ways the story of my life, my struggles, and my triumphs. It is the story of my life as an urban, diasporic, and liminally enrolled member of the Menominee Nation of Wisconsin. None of those things end at the final page. My struggles and resistances do not end because a back cover can be turned back over these pages. I do not stop being the Native, and the Menominee, that I am simply because the heading at the top of this final section contains the word conclusion in it.

My story will not end, at least not now. It will continue, as will the stories of my family, friends, colleagues, and other kin whose stories also populated the pages of this dissertation. Our lives will march on, and what I have told you in these pages will go on, perhaps finding resolution, perhaps never. There is no fixed future, of that I am certain,

only the future that we create. So, I do not believe that I really can have an ending here, even though the fundamental structure of a dissertation requires there to be one. Thus, I title this conclusion *Endings?* so that I may pose it as a question rather than some kind of definitive terminal point.

I cannot stand writing conclusions. I say that again because not only are they difficult to write, but because I also often find them the weakest part of anything that I have ever written. Perhaps that is because, as I said above, this is a story which has not yet reached its conclusion outside of these pages. Maybe it is for that reason that every time that I come to write a conclusion to something it feels too abrupt, as if it sped up to meet me without my seeing it. Conclusions have to come at some point in a dissertation, a book, or any other kind of academic writing, so it might as well come here, because if you do not stop me I might never stop writing (something which I am sure my committee members can attest to, as chapters have become longer and longer the more I have sat on them to revise them).

Endings are supposed to bring you to a point of wholeness, of a sense that a work is a cohesive whole (Lee 2018). Yet this writing is by its very nature broken, all over the place. When I began drafting this dissertation, I had a vastly different place in mind at the endpoint from where it ultimately found itself. The earliest chapters reflect that original path still. Yet, because I found myself unable to tell the story that I originally had convinced myself that I wanted to tell, I changed the narrative mid-stream and began to

speaking to you about something else. It is by definition then messy, not whole, or at least not whole in a superficial kind of way. It has always been a work in progress. It is still now a work in progress. All of my writing is always that way. I think of my blog, where almost nothing I have ever written has been a decidedly definitive or unalterable version. Almost everything that I have ever written on that platform has been revised, altered, or extended. I have never been able to simply let go. Even now, as my blog writing has become increasingly recognized, I have been approached twice by other people to both take some of my writing and produce them as zines (credited of course) or to translate them into French. I have always said yes, but even then, I have never let go of my drive to keep writing, keep re-wording, keep adding, keep extending, keep changing. Thus, now out in there in the digital world and for sale at anarchist infoshops and book fairs from Montréal, QC to Flagstaff, AZ are writings of mine that are now out-of-date because I simply have never been able to put the proverbial pen down.

So rather than a true ending I see this more of a negotiation towards an ending. I promise that this will be the endpoint of my writing. I promise to make no more edits, no more additions (besides what my committee will tell me to make). I promise to take my hands from the keyboard. But I also promise that this story will never end, that it will always grow, always mutate, always find new aspects, new secrets, and new iterations. I promise that this ending will also be a beginning. You, the reader will simply have to accept that, that there is no real final conclusion to this story. That is the negotiation that

you and I, as reader and writer, will have to make if we are to move this forward towards something resembling an ending.

I. Where We Were Back Then

So where do we begin this negotiated non-ending? I suppose then that the best place is to look back at where we have been, the path we have taken to arrive at the point right here in the present-now. When I first began this dissertation project it had a radically different form than the one that it has taken on. When I first entered this PhD programme, I thought that I had a firm grasp on what I wanted to be my endpoint. I wanted to write a Marxist-inflected structural legal analysis of the why and how of Native racialization. I was inspired by my lifelong tightrope walk between the inside and outside of being a Menominee because of blood quantum. In fact, it was not long before I decided to send in a late application for this programme that I landed on that idea because of real movement towards reclaiming the 3/128th of additional blood quantum that I should have finally seemed like it was happening. I remember in May of 2014 I was here in Kitchener-Waterloo on a solo vacation to visit friends, having originally left this city to return to Bermuda following the conclusion of my master's programme. On the final day of that trip, May 3rd, 2014 (I remember the date well because of other things that went on to happen that day) I met professor Jasmin Habib for lunch. She had supervised my master's thesis and would go on to co-supervise this dissertation. During that lunch, I told her that I was still considering going back to school for my PhD eventually, and I

told her about my interest in the structures of blood quantum because of what was going on in my life, and she encouraged me to pursue those studies and that idea in particular. But then the late Patrick Wolfe, grandfather in many ways of contemporary Settler Colonial Studies, released his final work before his death, *Traces of History*, a text I have cited more times in this dissertation that I would probably care to count. That book—while more expansive in scope than my own project, as it not only covered the northern bloc of settler colonialism, but also many other countries and contexts—was one that I felt stole my thunder, because it seemed to do exactly what I wanted to do, and a dissertation is supposed to be an original piece of scholarship is it not? I could hardly fault a luminary of the field covering such topics in his *magnum opus*, but I left to wonder, just a few months out from writing my second comprehensive exam, about what exactly I was going to write about. How was I going to alter this project so that it could again be something original?

My initial move was to reframe this project as a classical ethnography. On the one hand, I would consider the pursue the ultimately Wolfean analysis of Official Nativeness that I have originally wanted to, but I would pair that work with discussion and theorizing around Indigenous counter-discourses about identity as well as communal and national belonging. The latter was to form the basis of the ethnographic work that I had planned. My intent was to go to two Ojibwe-Anishinaabe communities here in Ontario—Chippewas of the Thames and Walpole Island First Nation—nations with

whom I knew at least a few members, as well as to travel to my own reservation community in northern Wisconsin to speak to members of the Menominee Nation. I wanted to ask the members of these communities what they thought about these issues. I was prepared for a range of answers, from those utterly opposed to the legislated settler-colonial regimes of Native identity governance to those who supported said systems without question, as well as those who were indifferent. I wanted to ask these community members about how they thought of these systems, and in particular about how they saw them in relation to our traditional pre-colonial modalities of belonging. Were they on completely different registers, or did they articulate, mesh, and co-mingle? From that planned ethnographic fieldwork I had wanted to move towards a decolonial articulation of Indigenous belonging against and beyond the genocidal State machinery of the northern bloc of settler colonialism.

But I have already told you about how that venture ended. In short, it never happened. Neither of the Anishinaabe communities in Ontario ever returned my communications, for reasons that I cannot only speculate about. I do not fault them either way. The people who run these communities are busy, and those two, in particular, have had to place much of their energy into facing down a number of challenges to their continued existence. So, in some ways, I am not surprised that they probably did not prioritize responding to my communications. My own community though was a different story, as I have already opened myself up to you enough to relate. The

Menominee did respond to my communications, and after some initial confusion about where to even send my project-approval request package, a meeting was scheduled for our Language and Culture Commission to talk to me over the phone. And then it was cancelled and rescheduled. That second meeting did not go as expected to say the very least. I was prepared for a possible no answer. My grandmother had already told me that she thought that I “was too smart for them to understand” (I did not necessarily share this, but it did make me laugh), while my mother cautioned that they could possibly reject the project on the basis of my being perceived as a 1st Degree Descendant seeking to upset and overturn the system of blood quantum, which, as a technique of governing community membership is a central plank of national self-government. She thought that they might see me as a semi-outside rabble-rouser who wanted to come to town to stir up shit and undermine the authority of the tribal government. That was not my plan per se, but I did recognize that my mother might be on to something, and so I braced myself. What I did not expect however was for the motion to approve or disapprove of my project to die on the table, with no member of the commission evidently willing to motion for a vote. I was likewise also angered by the evasive nature of both the commission chair and secretary when I attempted to ask them about whether that meant it should be treated as a no answer, or if there was something I could do to make it more likely to get a yes after a resubmission. The commission secretary, from my point-of-view could not seem to get out of the conversation fast enough when she called to tell me what had happened with

the vote, or non-vote I guess, after I had met via phone with them. So, I followed up by emailing the chairperson, who I had previously been in email contact with, only for him to never respond. After a week or so of no answer from him, I sent an email to the secretary, hoping this time that they would be less evasive with me. Again, no answer. I then, about a month later, had possibly the most bizarre conversation over the phone in my entire life. I was in downtown Kitchener and my phone began to ring, I looked at it and the caller ID told me that it was a call from Keshena, WI. I thought to myself “grandma lives in Shawano; who the hell in Keshena has my number?” So, I picked it up and it was the Language and Culture Commission secretary, and she said to me “oh, it’s you!” and I probably replied with something like “yeah, it’s me?” She said that she had been looking at her phone bill for the previous month and saw this number and did not recognize it, so she called it. The number was of course in her phone because it was her phone that we used via the speaker-phone function to have the meeting with the commission. However, just as I began to get the words out of my mouth to say “hey! Now that I have you on the phone ...” she once again got out of the conversation and hung up, leaving my sentence unfinished: “hey! Now that I have you on the phone, let me ask you about the meeting we had and what that means and if I can do anything to try again?”

I thought it was weird as fuck to be quite blunt about it. I still feel that way now, but I am no longer as angry about it as I was then. The Menominee Nation are a

(nominally) sovereign Indigenous community that can run their own internal affairs and allow whatever projects they want. And all power to them for that. Regardless, I think any hard feelings that I did have after that would have been lessened by a significant margin if the conversations that followed the meeting had not been so utterly elusive, abrupt, and avoidant. But again, I have come to accept that they do not owe me an answer.

So again, this project morphed what I thought would be one final time. Following the implosion of my originally intended ethnographic project, I campaigned to have it remoulded into something based in autoethnography. I would use my own journeys in life as an urban, Bermuda-raised, and diasporic, liminally enrolled Menominee Indian in order to investigate these topics. I decided that in fact, that is probably what the project should have always been. What I had wanted to write about as early as the original ideas that I was proposing back in 2014 when I entered this programme, through the failed ethnographic second form, had always been at its heart something deeply personal. I was never interested in these topics in some abstract, cold, and distanced perspective of an outside observer, because to be deeply within that web of State structures, law, popular and civil society imaginations had always been my life from the day I was born. So, as much as I may have tried originally for some kind of more scientific investigation, I could never have been neutral on the issue. So, I concluded that in fact an autoethnographic approach would not only be the best way to investigate what I wanted

to, but would also be the most personally fulfilling, as much as I also recognized how it would probably be the most personally challenging.

And that is the real point of departure that has led us to where we are now. But of course, if you have been reading up until this point, you know that there was still one more major change ahead on that road.

II. Saying Things in a Word

But here I am again, probably rambling on more than I should about these things. You already know them, because I have already told them. So perhaps then it best to try and swing this negotiated ending in another direction. I promised that I would attempt to knit together something that approached a summary, deficient as that may be of the emergent whole of this writing. With that in mind, I think a good challenge is to try and think of the key topic, the keyword, that unites together the varied parts that make up this messy whole. If I were to say things in a single word, that word is perhaps *ontology*. As I sit back now at my computer to survey this terrain, with all of its hills and valleys, the table of contents staring back at me from the margin, that does seem to be what has ultimately emerged as the core uniting factor in this writing. When I was first beginning to get down to serious work in planning some variant of this project, following the completion of my second comprehensive examination, a friend of mine from the United States, whom I knew through what many of us euphemistically call "LeftBook," introduced me to the work of Frank B. Wilderson, III which began a fascination of mine

with the idea of political ontology. It was peaked further when the same friend sent me an essay by Nicolás Juárez that extended and critiqued Wilderson's thoughts on Native ontological positionality. From there I began to read and explore wider and further. I read into the theorists and scholars who influenced the materials my friend sent me. I began to read decolonial theory, and I found myself, quite contra to how I felt during my Masters, and even when I returned to the University of Waterloo in 2014, reading poststructuralist and postmodernist material. I began to bounce these materials off of themselves, reading them with and against other texts. I was in a sense off to the ontological races.

But, quite quickly I also began to develop criticisms of the way that I felt that ontology, political ontology, in particular, was talked about and theorized. Criticisms which, the more I read of certain scholars, began to grow. However, I still retain my strong interest in the ontological, but it is not purely the ontological, of ontology as an abstract concept of philosophical metaphysics. Rather it is ontology as ontological creation, of projects of world-building, of projects that are not complete, and will never be complete, because of the very relational nature of what is the political. The ontology that unites these pages together is an ontology that is understood as incomprehensible outside of its social and political contexts. The ontology across these chapters is one that is understood to be firmly rooted in underlying material relations of colonialism, having not fallen from the sky ready-made. It is an ontology that is, at its root, an element of the

(settler) colonial matrix of power and can only be understood as such. It is an ontology that is not unassailable, but in fact readily resistible; that is already being resisted, and which has always been resisted.

From that, if I were to deepen the summary of this project as one about ontology, I would say that more than that it has been my purpose throughout this writing to present the onto-existential regimes of settler-colonial power and control so that we may move disrupt and undermine them. Thus I would like to believe that this writing also stands as an injunction against those theorists and those writings which would have you believe that the world is always-already a zone of death for Native peoples as an anti-Native world, who would lead you believe that our problems are in fact ontological, when that ontology is part of a deeper relationship of settler colonialism. With that explicit goal firmly in hand, this work took up a number of sub-topics so that I could investigate a number of several distinct aspects this settler-colonial ontological assemblage.

My first chapter, *Decolonization, World Building & Methodological Considerations*, articulated the theoretical and methodological basis upon which I would set sail on this ontological sea. In that chapter, I outlined the development of my theoretical perspective both during the writing of this dissertation as well as before. I outlined the marriage in current thought between several at times overlapping, and at other times quite disparate, schools: contemporary Black Studies-informed Indigenous critical theory and Native Studies, Decolonial theory, variations upon Marxist theory, Settler Colonial Studies, and

poststructuralist articulations of ideas of biopolitics, bare life, and racializing assemblages. In particular, I talked about my movement away from a kind of Marxist orthodoxy during my time writing. While I had formerly held to such a view, a kind of Third Worldist Marxist-Leninist analysis, the foundations of it were already beginning to corrode when I was first really encountered Settler Colonial Studies, and really the past decade's series of important theoretical texts in Native Studies. Once I really began down the path of this writing what previous doubts I held about kind of worldview widened into yawning chasms, and it could simply no longer be sustained. However, I never completely broke with Marxism, simply a peculiarly rigid, mechanical, and formulaic variety. I introduced to you the current and growing influence on this work by a number of Marxist theorists of the postmodern condition, in a condition Fredric Jameson and Mark Fisher, and I told of how I was longer unwilling to read them with and against principle postmodern theorists—Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard and others—as had been my past default position. Key to this, I also described my now total disavowal of scientific methodologies and interpretations, and my movement towards a more open epistemological perspective.

These theoretical and methodological tools firmly in hand, this dissertation was opened fully to the ontological direction that would consume the rest of the dissertation. In my second chapter, I explored the concept of the sub-ontological difference or colonial ontological difference. Following Nelson Maldonado-Torres I asserted that the sub-

ontological difference is material and metaphysical process that transforms Native life into a form of bare life, ala Agamben, meaning that it is able to be murdered and killed without being mournable. I argued how it is that this process, rooted in material relations of colonialism, which has allowed the modernist philosophical anthropological project of instantiating the Cartesian subject, of Heidegger's *Dasein*, and the Wynter's ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man. Wynter's sociogenic analysis of the origin of Man corrects Foucault's arguments regarding the subject, and exposes it not as an abstract universal, as liberal bourgeois humanism would lead us to believe, but as a disguised particularism. Once again, ontology, and ontological positioning, do not descend from on high, but emerge from below. Thinking along Derridian and Fisherian lines of flight, I extended this argument with the idea that haunting is the condition of ontology proper to such. From this, I argued that the normative subject of political ontology—be it *ego cogito*, the Rational-I, the *Dasein*, or Man—is haunted by the ghosts of the colonized. Seeing these connections, I argued that perhaps rather than speaking of a colonial ontological difference, that we should rather be speaking of a colonial hauntological difference.

The discussion of what I would come to call the colonial hauntological difference also introduced to this dissertation one particular aspect of the idea of Native belonging and racializing assemblages as they function on Native peoples: the visual field. These arguments were taken up and expanded upon in the chapter *#NotYourNativeStereotype & the Question of White-Passing Natives*. Here I took up the discourse around racial-passing,

specifically the idea of being *white-passing*, with regards to Indigenous peoples. What I wanted to do was to trouble the discussion, because during this writing I came to be slowly dismayed and disgruntled over the state of the discourse on the subject in terms of how I was watching, and reading, it be played out regularly on social media platforms. My goal was to trouble, and perhaps correct, if I may be so bold, this discourse by more clearly re-asserting and re-establishing the biopolitical governmentality of Official Nativeness, as it functions in superficially different, but at their core similar, means in the United States and Canada. This corrective intervention into the field was built around my discussion, blog writing, and Twitter correspondences with fellow Native scholar and student Nicolás Juárez. Against him I argued that because of the ways in which *logic of elimination*—the basic underlying process that defines settler colonialism as such and thus distinct from colonialism-writ-large—fundamentally functions at the macro-level the colonial State through biopolitical regimes of hyper-solubility, as well as what I argued to be the structural triangulation of the categories of white, settler and master, it is ultimately impossible to speak of Natives who possess a true ability to pass as white, and that taken together these movements function to dissociate Nativeness within settler-colonial racializing assemblages from the visual signifier as the most important mode of racialization in understanding the violences of elimination.

Examining all of this, in the fourth chapter, *Community, Pretendians, & Heartbreak*, I took up and built upon the nature of Native life as a way of living where, following

Belcourt, “death hangs in the air like a rumour” (2017a), and the affective burden that that has upon not only my own life, but the lives of many, if not most, Native people. I also discussed the necessity of community for alleviating this burden, of finding safe harbour amongst the storm. But, against the need for community I also introduced the discussion of white/settler people falsely taking up Indigenous identity as “fake Natives” and the implications that this growing social and colonial phenomenon heaves on top of disconnected and diasporic Indigenous people seeking to reconnect, as well as how making room for them within Native spaces can also profoundly disrupt them.

Up until this point, everything I had written about had been on the same track that I had planned when I re-proposed this project as an autoethnography. But as I said before, there was still one additional wrinkle that would worm its way into this dissertation.

That shift in direction became the basis of the fifth chapter, *The Problem of Telling Stories to Some People, or Why Do We Tell of Our Damage to Those Who Damaged Us?* and ultimately all of the subsequent chapters that followed. In this chapter I explained this further shift in direction, how after many months of no movement on the writing about my anger following my experiences with the Menominee Language and Culture commission I had my Come-to-Jesus moment, which ultimately told me that I could not tell you the story that I wanted to tell you, because to do so would not fulfil what I think is my deeper purpose here. Thus, in this chapter, I turned away from continuing to tell

you my damage narratives, my story of pain, loss, sadness, anger and all kinds of other negative thoughts and feelings which had previously animated this writing. Instead here I began a new arc. Here I posed a new question: why are our damage narratives so readily and quickly consumable within the settler-colonial capitalist marketplace? This chapter thus enacted and engaged an active practice of a kind of autoethnographic refusal. Instead of allowing myself to continue to eviscerate myself for the sake of an academic gazing into my life, I shifted my perspective and instead began to look at what I have come to call the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling: the market place where our damage narratives are told and eaten.

On this new path my sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters took up a number of theoretical errands in hoping to come to something of an answer to this new question. First in line, my sixth chapter, *Digital Worlds, Native Ghosts, & the Socio-Existential Suturing of Settler Society*, brought forth the drive of settler societies to permanently foreclose Indigenous alternatives of sovereignty and territoriality in an effort to existentially suture their own sense of self-legitimacy. So long as the Native persists there will always be an unstable terrain underneath the regime of the settler, and because of that, the settler will always find themselves at an impasse. Digging more deeply into this, I turned to an examination of the representations of the Native within popular and acclaimed properties within settler popular media, in order to show how representations of the frontier in video game and films more often than not function to move Indigenous

peoples, and our genocide, into the past. So long as the regimes of power under which we live remain colonial and capitalist, they will be not only haunted, but animated by, Native ghosts.

Thematically this discussion continued in the seventh chapter, *Settler Colonialism & the Incommensurable Cartography of the Native Savage*. Building on the arguments from the previous chapter, here I attempted to launch a more in-depth analysis of the ontological formation of Nativeness, in a clear echo of the discussion from the second chapter. I introduced two ontological conditions by which the Native is foreclosed from amalgamation within the world of Man: the Native as a being-out-of-time and as a being-in-the-Wild. This spatiotemporal outcast status is always-already a part of the colonial order of things, and as such are points of contestation with the theorizations of Frank B. Wilderson, III regarding Indigenous sovereignty and ontological mapping. What I attempted to show was that fundamentally Wilderson misapprehends and misunderstands Indigenous sovereignty and the ontology of Nativeness for one central reason: he mistakes the formal linguistic construct of these subjects for their actual substantive interiors. Following this, and against Wilderson, the loss of sovereignty is not a point of articulation with the settler, precisely due to the fact that the “sovereignty” that the Native possesses is in fact not the same as the politico-governmental concept bearing the same name within the world of the settler.

Having laid out that terrain in the sixth and seventh chapters, it is in my eighth

and final chapter, *Red Monsters: The Native-Outside & the Weird*, that I attempted to fully launch an answer to the question of the consumption of Native damage narratives within the imaginarium of late capitalist/colonialist storytelling. My most key point of articulation here was the theorization of the Weird by the late Marxist cultural theorist Mark Fisher. Looking at abjection as a concept related to the Freudo-Lacanian *unheimlich* I deployed the concept of the Weird to understand the Native is a being that does not belong within the cartographic worlding of the settler. Weaving through this abstract psychoanalytic terrain, I also took up the ways in which Natives through their actions function towards a reinforcement of a kind of Nativeness that, rather than being on the outside of the settler's world, is actually able to be tamed and made acceptable. My experiences teaching in the classroom, as well as the material and cultural production that many Natives may engage in, were my primary leaping off point. What I sought to excavate was a kind of performative Indigeneity which, rather than be for its own sake, functions towards reinforcing the settler-colonial locking of Nativeness into a simulation of a past that in fact never really was. Importantly, given my own life experiences, I also took up the urban Indigeneity and how it is often rendered invisible within popular and theoretical conceptions of Nativeness, relating this back to the ontological position of the Native as a being-of-the-Wild. A genuine Nativeness, that is to say, a Nativeness that exists decolonially for its own self, is made into a Weird being that does not belong and is reinforced by the negative space formed by acceptable performative Indigeneity and

the spectralization of the urban Native. Throughout all of this I read the psychoanalytic register closely to argue that there is a kind of *jouissance* in the settler's encounter with the Native as Weird, and as such the telling of our damage narratives is something that cannot be looked away from. Finally, I argued how, unlike the limit experience in the thought of Georges Bataille and Michel Foucault, rather than engender a breakdown of settler-colonial binary boundaries, this *jouissance* reinforces rather than liberates.

III. In the Dust of this Ivory Tower

Ultimately this work has sought to contribute to Native Studies, as well as to my home disciplines of sociology and anthropology in three principal ways. The first was to chart what I see as something that both builds on, but also reads between, and ultimately seeks to move beyond, the usual kind of genealogy of the Native: legal, anthropological, and literary. Rather, what I contribute in this dissertation work, if I may be so bold, is a genealogy of the Native that cuts not only across these modes of historical and socio-political analysis, but also beyond them. In particular, what I have demonstrated is how not only is the Native constructed through those modalities of settler-colonial State and civil society, but how these constructions bleed into and out of each other, mutually informing, entangling, and blurring between one another. I have argued that, ultimately, they are also profoundly necessary for settler society's understanding of itself, for its maintenance, and for its constant need to substantiate itself and codify its own existence. These constructions of the Native both rely upon, and mutually re-inscribe and reinforce,

discourses of Savagery, Wildness, and a radical outsidership with regards to settler cartography (both socially and geographically) and settler temporality, and the effect that this outsidership has when the Native and the settler encounter each other through performance, politics, and narrative. I have also argued that specifically this radical outsidership of the Native Savage is key to understanding not just why we as Native peoples tell our damage narratives, but why those damage narratives are so readily and easily consumed within settler libidinal, political, and sign economies.

The second of my contributions in this work I believe is the specific act of refusing to continue to speak of my own, as well as my immediate friends' and kin's, narratives of settler-colonial damage. If my genealogy of Nativeness is best understood, I argue, as a theoretical contribution, then I believe that this second contribution can best be understood as a methodological one. But it should be understood to be methodology born of exhaustion, and a specifically colonial exhaustion at that. As I worked through the writing of this dissertation, I found that eventually a breaking point was reached, because it just wore down on me too much, to speak again of the affective burdens of settler colonialism, and that to continue to speak on them just wrought far too much pain, and ultimately deep tiredness. It was a methodological intervention born of no longer being able to continue this dissertation as it had begun.

I propose this refusal to continue to speak of my damage as a contribution made in this work because methodologically this dissertation is grounded in autoethnographic

techniques. At its core, this dissertation sought to work through my own lived and embodied experiences of Nativeness, and specifically urban and diasporic Nativeness, towards the charting of a genealogy of Nativeness and theorizing about the value and role of our damage narratives within settler colonialism. Towards that end, the first arch of this work followed me in telling my damage narrative, through my discussions of colonial ontology, the disarticulation of Nativeness from the signifier of visibility within settler-colonial racializing assemblages, and the heartbreak that comes with communal loss and disruption. However, mid-way in this dissertation is when the affective burden, and the exhaustion that comes with it, of telling my damage narrative simply built up to such a degree that I reached my breaking point. So, I refused to continue that errand any further. To borrow and modify Audra Simpson's concept of "ethnographic refusal," (2007) I propose then that methodologically this dissertation engaged in a practice of *autoethnographic refusal*.

While narratives of Native damage are found throughout this dissertation, both before and after this textual break, my methodology moved in the second arch towards my refusal to centre them any longer, and thereby moved against any kind of continuing spectacle for non-Indigenous eyes made of them. I have more than once drawn upon Tuck and Ree's injunction to use the length of my arm to determine the length of the colonial-academic gaze, and in enacting a practice of my own agency against a world that would see me stripped of it, my autoethnographic refusal to continue to tell of my

damage is my living, embodied, and academic practice of limiting the continuance of the that gaze. In limiting the ability of the academy to gaze anymore into the deepest parts of me, I am able to, methodologically *and* theoretically, move away from telling of my damage towards a theorizing about that damage, and about the function that it carries out within the economies of settler coloniality.

A final contribution, this one aimed mostly at the discipline of sociology, more so than at Native Studies, where it is largely already acceptable convention, is precisely the practice of autoethnography. But more specifically, as autoethnography is already a known methodology within sociology, as well as anthropology (though perhaps more so the latter), what I mean here is specifically an Indigenized usage of autoethnography in order to centre methodologies of storytelling. At the end of all this, if I am allowed to take anything else away with me, I would like it to be that in some, perhaps small, way I have been able to be part of a movement towards decolonizing the westernized, colonized academy, and, more to the point, within sociology that I have been able to contribute something to not only making non-western, non-imperial techniques and methods acceptable within the discipline. More deeply, given my own trek through these colonial hallways over the past fourteen years, I would like to say that I have made it ok to be oneself as a Native within them; to have contributed something such that the next seven generations of Indigenous scholars who may also walk these halls together may not have to worry so much about who they are, what they do, and having to make them conform

in ways that conflict with ourselves, our views, and our ways of carrying ourselves out and into the world.

However, in the dust of this ivory tower, where does that leave us? Where do we go from here?

IV. What is to be Done?

I am not a Marxist-Leninist anymore. That kind of politics is long behind me, though I am still committed to a kind of radical postcapitalist and decolonial politics, and here understanding talk of postcapitalism and decolonial to be more future-oriented, rather than merely stating what they are against. Yet still, because so much of the work I do, academic and non-academic, and indeed so much of the life I have chosen to lead, is so tied up and committed to those kinds left-wing politics, I cannot avoid them. Everything I do is, in some way, political. This dissertation is no different. And so, I still find myself keen to take up that old question raised by the 20th Century Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin: “what is to be done” (1969)?

So, it is here, on this question, that I want to give you my last thoughts on this, my dissertation. Nearly four hundred pages and 100,000 words and we are here, just as I promised, our negotiated ending. And so, I ask this question to myself, what is to be done? And this is, in fact, the final question that has motivated me over the course of all of this writing, stress, late nights, and way too many smoked cigarettes and spent bottle of vaporizer liquid. And I have at times already alluded to what I think is the answer.

Another way of thinking about this last question, or another way of re-phrasing it, is to ask, “what is the point?” My answer is simple: resist, refuse and resurge. I have always maintained that what I wanted to centre in this work was the fact that we as Native peoples have never been passive victims over the course of the last five centuries, because we have always refused, resisted, and survived. We are still here because our ancestors resisted, and our grand-children will be because we resist.

The point for me has always been resistance. The reason that we speak in these pages of a project to make an ontology, to make an anti-Native world, rather than saying that the world-as-is is anti-Native is because of this past, current, and future resistance. It is not because of some abstract failing of the settler-colonial system that this project has thus far failed to reach its conclusion, but because our very continued presence, refusing to go quietly into the night, disrupts the world of the settler. But this resistance has never been against an ontological system really, but in all actuality against the material relations of (settler) colonial power which have allowed a euro-western project to work towards the making an ontology. We do not struggle to overturn concepts of being, but to overturn those relations which subjugate us, limiting us and our futures to ones of elimination, exploitation, and permanent colonization.

Of course, though the point of decoloniality, as I have come to understand it, versus a more modernist anti-colonial project is the recognition that those relations that flow from the material relations of colonization must also be overturned. This includes

the whole complex of cosmological-ontological-epistemological systems that make up the thought of the euro-west. The failure of all previous revolutionary efforts, in my meager assessment, has been that as much as they have struggled to delink from the capitalist world-economy and build an alternative political economy, usually around some concept of socialism or communism, they have failed to recognize that because they have often adhered to forms of political theorizing emanating from the european world, whether Marxism, anarchism, or something else, they have remained entrapped within other aspects of the coloniality of power. Indeed, in many ways, this has led to a deepening of the project of westernization in those societies.

Thus a project to overturn an ontology, read here by me as an aspect of the colonial matrix of power, what Maldonado-Torres calls the colonial ontological difference, and for me the colonial hauntological difference, can only be a dead-end, because overturning a system of thought, I believe, does not inherently lead to overturning a system of material relations. At the same time a project to overturn our colonial-capitalist political economy, without recognizing the need to combat just as fervently those ways that colonialism can persist beyond the formal end of colonialism, transformed into coloniality, is also nothing but a cul-de-sac, destined to lead us in circles endlessly as we fail to recognize the ways in which we are still colonized.

So much of ontological and structural analysis, to say nothing of poststructural thought, I believe limits the fact of human agency. But it is not just the structure, and the

structure is not just ontological precisely because humans, not the human as the ethnoclass of western bourgeois Man, has agency in this world. We as Indigenous people have agency. And we can move this world and shake it to its very core. As I always say, stealing a line from some Maoist organization I used to be in the orbit of (I forget which at this point, as it has been so long), I have great confidence in the strategic alignment of forces.

That said, it is more than likely a safe assumption that within the imagination of settler-colonial civil society, the repressive apparatus of the State and the white/settler/master population at large that the Native no longer poses a viable military threat to the coherence of the settler-colonial State. Scratch just beneath the surface however and much more seems to be amiss than meets the settler-colonial eye. Immediately my mind drifts to the apparently chronic failure of the settler nation-states of the northern bloc to contain quietly, much less successfully, the expressions of Native decolonial rage and intention over the past three decades—from Oka, Ipperwash and Gustafsen Lake in the 1990s, to Standing Rock and Wet’suwet’en in the late 2010s—not to mention expressions of the same emergent from within the Black domestic colony in Baltimore, Ferguson and elsewhere. As well, and just as importantly, the psychic ripples of these failures, felt both within the imaginary terrain of the white/settler/master population and also its colonized and engulfed Others, are something to take note of. Notable because, in this era that Chickasaw scholar Jodi A. Byrd aptly diagnoses as *late-*

colonialism (2018), it certainly seems to grant the appearance of a settler-colonial State that is no longer able to successfully contain the movements and moments of liberation from within these two primary colonized populations.

The literally spectacular level of force that has been leveraged against these expressions by the (post)modern security and surveillance apparatus, while not reaching the level of raw violence used by the still-frontier Israeli nation-state against indigenous Palestinians, appears to show a settler-state slowly losing its proverbial grip on the situation, and the general breakdown of its symbolic, juridical and political-economic orderings. The crystallization of these moments and movements within the geographic body of the northern bloc, must also be seen as coupled with the ongoing crisis of accumulation within the modern/colonial/capitalist world-economy since the mid-2000s, and the movements of resistance by colonized and racialized peoples within the Global South (Lauesen 2018; Smith 2016; Ciccariello-Maher 2016; Foster & Magdoff 2009). These apparent facts of the matter are why—as clinically depressing and anxiety-inducing as the arrangement of modern settler colonialism, antiblackness, capitalist parasitism, ecological catastrophe and the techno-surveillance State may be (agreeing here with what Mark Fisher deftly argues [2014])—I will always say that I deeply believe in the global alignment of forces to usher a better, freer, more equal and ecologically congruent world. The project of euro-modernity, coloniality and settlement may be to eliminate us, and to make us into abjected, Weird beings while we wait until that project reaches its telos.

However, I know when I look out and survey the terrain, not of only of Turtle Island, but of the planet in general, and see all of this, that we are already moving into and towards the beyond and the underneath of this world. It is not, and never has been, our future that has been slowly cancelled. While I vigorously reject the linear teleology of the orthodox Marxist historical dialectic à la the late Cedric J. Robinson (2019), as well as the post-Deluezo-Guattarian accelerationism of Mark Fisher (2010), Nick Land (2018), Nick Srnicek (2016a; 2016b) or the Laboria Cuboniks Collective (2018) (only a worldview rooted in the most deep of eurocentric geopolitics of knowledge could possibly argue that “that the only radical political response to capitalism is not to protest, disrupt, critique, or détourne it, but to accelerate and exacerbate its uprooting, alienating, decoding, abstractive tendencies [Mackay and Avanesian 2019]”), and preferring instead the combative, radically decolonized and contingent dialectics of George Ciccariello-Maher (2017), part of me knows that this movement and this moment is the essence of our prophecies of resurgence and new emergence. We will (re)build; we are (re)building. As

Audre Lorde once wrote:

These places of possibility within ourselves are dark because they are ancient and hidden; they have survived and grown strong through darkness. Within these deep places, each one of us holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling (1984:36-37).

I do not make any prescriptions as to how we should resist. I think I have in some ways become so jaded by nearly fifteen years of failure being involved in various kinds of

formal leftist organizing that I have become burnt out. But I will never burn out from the desire to see our people, our nations, our lands, and all of our relations free from this world that caused us so much pain. I will always centre our resistance until the day comes that it is no longer necessary, until I can honestly say that we can rest in a place of peace. Even if we believe that we may lose the battles that lie immediately before us, as this monstrous modern/colonial/capitalist world-system seems set on lighting this world aflame, I believe that our children, and our children's children, will live to see a world in which Natives do cast a face in what is to us in the present-now the future anterior, a world in which they will be able to say that Natives have been decolonized.

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