

**UNSETTLING REVITALIZATION IN TORONTO:
THE FANTASY AND APOLOGY OF THE SETTLER CITY**

BY

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Abstract

At a time when social movements for Indigenous resurgence in Canada are as powerful as ever, and are coupled with state-sponsored reconciliation and recognition efforts (focused primarily on residential schools), it is crucial to examine the ongoing systemic processes unique to the settler colony that continue to dispossess, enact violence, and deny Indigenous sovereignty. Also, it is pertinent to ask – driven by Jordan Stanger-Ross’s assertion that cities have played a strategic role in the settlement process – how these processes play out in urban spaces. Specifically, what is the role of urban planning and urban revitalization in the ongoing settler project? In this dissertation, I examine the large-scale revitalization project underway on Toronto’s waterfront and argue that settler colonialism is a structure revealed through what I define as the *fantasies* and *apologies* that manifest in the revitalizing of settler cities. I contend that revitalization projects reveal the *fantasy* that the settlement dispossession / violence is long over now, and that there is a ‘pastness’ to the injustices of settler colonialism. Therefore, the *fantasy* that informs how we plan and envision our urban spaces positions settlers legitimately and unquestionably on the land – in perpetuity. This *fantasy* is related to, and in tension with, the *apology*, which I argue is also revealed in urban revitalization and works to foreshadow the search for state-sponsored reconciliation in the present day. The *apology* represents the way in which urban revitalization makes insincere attempts to address the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples and to apparently facilitate Indigenous agency in the present day. As a result, the *apology* ends up marking the erasure of Indigenous sovereignty in urban space. Threaded throughout the *fantasy* and the *apology*, however, is

transformative resistance in settler urban spaces which present ways to authentically address settler state violence.

Dedication

for Micah & Louis

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INTRODUCTION

Murder of Chief Wabikinine: Indigenous Presence and Absence on the Waterfront

In the early hours of the morning of August 20, 1796, there was violent murder on Toronto's waterfront. The Mississauga-Anishinaabek (Mississauga) Chief Wabikinine, with his band and family, came to the Town of York (now Toronto) to sell salmon. During this time, the Mississauga lived along-side the Credit River, which edged the growing town of York. Indigenous traders fed the settler villages with fish and game at very low prices, conducting much business at St. Lawrence Market (the same site as the one, built in 1803, that still stands today). That evening, Wabikinine, his wife and sister camped on the waterfront just southeast of the market. With two other soldiers, a Queen's Ranger named Charles McEwan dragged Wabikinine's sister from the canoe she had been sleeping under and attempted to assault her. Chief Wabikinine, roused by his wife, woke and went to defend his sister. McEwan bludgeoned the Chief with a rock and violently beat him; both Chief Wabikinine and his wife died in the attack.

Donald B Smith, a prominent historian on the Indigenous history of the region has written extensively about the tensions at the time, most notably in the *The Dispossession of the Mississauga Indians: A Missing Chapter in the Early History of Upper Canada*, and I draw from his work to illustrate this history of the Mississauga and Chief Wabikinine. During the early settlement of the City of York, Smith discusses the increasing conflict and tensions over land disputes between the settlers and the Mississauga of New Credit. Chief Wabikinine had been considered a powerful ally to the Crown in the late eighteenth century as he supported the British effort in the American

Revolution and brokered land agreements for the loyalists after the war. News of his murder on the waterfront created rumours of an uprising in the Mississauga community. After an enraged crowd of Mississauga arrived at Niagara (the capital of the settlement at that time), the senior colonial administrator Peter Russell, in apparent fear of an uprising, addressed the crowd with an apology of sorts and a claim that justice would be served: “A man who is capable of murdering one of you,” he told the crowd, “is also capable of murdering one of us, it is therefore as much our wish and interest to find him as it is yours, so that you need not be afraid that we will not do our utmost to find out the murderer and punish him as he deserves” (Smith, “The Dispossession” 37). Despite this seemingly genuine address, justice for Indigenous people killed by white settlers was unevenly applied and cases rarely ended in a guilty verdict (38). McEwan was acquitted later that year. While an uprising never did occur, in fact, as I will detail later on, the relationship between the Crown and the Mississauga continued to deteriorate after Wabikinine’s murder. In 1847 the Mississauga were “moved out” of their remaining two hundred acres on the Credit River, (the final story in a process that came to be known as the “Toronto Purchase” which I detail later in Chapter One).

The murder of Chief Wabikinine and his wife is a violent and telling event that frames the prominent themes in this dissertation. I argue, building on Patrick Wolfe, that settler colonialism is a structure revealed through *fantasies* and *apologies* manifested in the very building and revitalizing of cities. In undertaking my examination of contemporary waterfront “revitalization” efforts, I explored the following questions: (1) What are the mechanisms through which revitalization projects like the Toronto waterfront further the project of settler colonization? In other words, how is settler

colonialism a living, breathing thing, a structure that is revealed in urban renewal?; (2) How are often violent historiographies of the settler state obscured, or erased through revitalization projects and how do they come to the surface in the present day?; (3) How can contemporary urban revitalization projects authentically come to terms with past and present settler violence? Does the culture of reconciliation, or apologies, aid or impede this process?; (4) Can resistance be both unifying and transformative in the settler city in the present moment?; and finally (5) What are the broader implications for Indigenous sovereignty found in urban revitalization efforts like the Toronto waterfront project?

I explore these questions through an examination of the large-scale revitalization project happening on Toronto's waterfront. I detail how on the waterfront, contemporary revitalization projects reveal the *fantasy* and *apology* that sustain settler colonialism in the past and present. In the murder of Chief Wabikinine, we see the rupture of the *fantasy* of an amicable and mutually respectful relationship as a precursor to settler belonging on the land—which was inherently impossible under the shadow of continental genocide and dispossession—and exemplified by the violence inflicted on the Chief and his family. In this work, I will further expand on this notion of fantasy and will demonstrate that there are two fantasies found on the waterfront that are crucial to the ongoing settler project of dispossession. The first fantasy is the establishment of settler *belonging* on the land. This belonging is predicated on the continual erosion of Indigenous sovereignty, but as it is in fact *fantasy*, it requires ongoing maintenance and reaffirmation. Urban renewal and revitalization provide an ideal platform to re-assert settler belonging and at the same time, acknowledge vanished Indigenous

sovereignities. This is achieved by claiming the land to be yet again a *terra nullius* and re-narrating the land, again and again. The chief tool, therefore, in this fantasy of settler belonging is the use of the concept *terra nullius*; the empty land. I will argue throughout this dissertation that the concept of *terra nullius* is stitched into the revitalization of the Toronto waterfront.

The second fantasy crucial to the settler mandate is the notion of a post-racial settler state. As I will argue in Chapter Three, revealed in the projects underway on the waterfront is the fact that not only is Canadian slavery and historical examples of white supremacy conveniently left out of our public space, but the language of inclusion is proffered in a city that is increasingly divided along economic and racial lines (Hulchanski “Three Cities”). A telling example how that apparent inclusion informs the identity of Toronto is its official slogan, “Diversity our Strength.” These two erasures work to affirm the white supremacy that is central to the settler project by denying the history of indentured labour, the ongoing processes of racialization that was used to settle the continent.

The *apology* given after the murder of Chief Wabikinine and the promise that justice will be served foreshadows the coming search for reconciliation in the “age of the apology”¹. Instead of justice, we witness the inevitable acquittal of the officer involved, the subsequent fraud of the Toronto Purchase agreement, and the ultimate dispossession of the Mississauga of the land that is now Toronto. This apology and promise for justice and “restored” Indigenous agency, as I will demonstrate, is

¹ I am influenced here by Mark Gibney et. al's book, *The Age of the Apology; Facing up to the Past*, as well as Alice MacLachlan's, “Government Apologies to Indigenous Peoples” in *Justice, Responsibility and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict*

embedded in the revitalization project itself and also frames the contemporary relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples through the troubled politics of recognition and reconciliation. The apology found in the revitalization of the waterfront is a tenuous ‘welcoming’ of Indigenous people *back onto the land* through a housing development project for members of the community who are homeless or low income. I argue that this housing project is a necessary effort to keep within the defining Canadian liberal democratic identity of being ‘progressive’ and fundamentally a ‘decent’ people (Lawrence). However, apologies such as these, as I contend in Chapter Four, are somewhat hollow, and actually result in the *marking* of Indigenous peoples precisely *for* their loss of sovereignty. For the apology to be authentic it necessarily requires the restitution of power, land and resources. Where apologies such as the one offered on the waterfront fail to achieve restitution, then the loss of sovereignty remains, and is in fact reaffirmed.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One

This dissertation describes the fantasy and apology of settler colonialism found in urban revitalization, through the use of two contemporary case studies of waterfront revitalization projects in Toronto. Before delving into these cases, however, in Chapter One I lay out the historical context of settler colonialism in Toronto, employing archival material and select historical accounts. The archival material comes from the Toronto Archives as well as the Toronto Harbour Commission Archives. In both of those archives, I found rich detail of how the Toronto waterfront has, through time, been

positioned as a *terra nullius*. I found this in newspaper editorials, personal memorabilia, political speeches, advertisements and correspondence letters. In these accounts, I found that the waterfront, along with the rest of Toronto, was a site cast as a place where 'Indians' simply vanished, or were never truly there to begin with. Building on the notion of empty land revealed in the materials, I also found that the waterfront has been a site where dreams, fantasies and stories of what Toronto *could* and *should* be were persistently mapped onto the site. It is here in the archives where I discovered the roots of the fantasies and apologies of the settler state that continue to shape the north shore of Lake Ontario. I conclude the chapter with a look to contemporary descriptions of the land and the revitalization project. To do this, I look at grey literature from Waterfront Toronto (the organization heading-up the revitalization), media accounts, blogs and popular interpretations of the space to reveal the ongoing framing of a *terra nullius* and subsequent loss of Indigenous sovereignty. My aim in Chapter One is to show how the waterfront has been a site where broader processes of dispossession and erasure of Indigenous presence and sovereignty is evident.

Chapter Two

The theoretical foundation for the work is explained in Chapter Two where I present contemporary discussions and tensions in settler colonial studies coupled with critical Indigenous theory. In this Chapter, I engage with the relatively "new" field of settler colonial studies focusing on Lorenzo Veracini, Patrick Wolfe, Penelope Edmonds and those who have worked on settler colonialism as it is manifest in cities, such as Coll Thrush, Jordan Stanger-Ross and Victoria Freeman. While this is an exciting time in

scholarship focused on settler colonialism, thinking about, and struggling against, settler colonialism is hardly “new”. Indigenous communities and thinkers have been doing it for hundreds of years. Accordingly, I also frame my theoretical approach around Indigenous scholarship in Canada. I engage with Taiaiake Alfred, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Audra Simpson and Glen Sean Coulthard. By combining these contributions, I found robust discussions pertinent to my research questions. In this Chapter I attempt to make a modest contribution to the literature on settler colonialism in cities by illustrating the role that urban renewal plays in furthering the settler mandate of dispossession, I employed two detailed case studies on Toronto’s waterfront.

Chapter Three

It must be stated here that although this dissertation begins with a focus on settler colonialism and Canada’s relationship with Indigenous people, as mentioned, I move on to explore the interconnected and broader context of racialization and settler colonialism with a look at Canada’s forgotten history of slavery and the myth, or rather, *fantasy* of Canada as a post-racial ‘North Star’. I do this most explicitly in Chapter Three, demonstrating how the dispossession of Indigenous peoples is related to the erased historiographies of Black Canadians and echoes in the continuous fantasy of racial harmony under official multiculturalism. In Chapter Three I will then show how the *fantasy* of settler belonging is exemplified through the doctrine of *terra nullius*² and is twinned with another fantasy, that of multiculturalism and a post-racial Canada. I anchor

² *Terra Nullius* is the doctrine of ‘empty land’ that formed the basis of settlement of the America’s. The notion that the land was clear of sovereign nations was used as justification for settlement.

this case in the now iconic waterfront public park, Sugar Beach. Sugar Beach is a small patch of land at the foot of Jarvis Street. It is an artificial Beach that sits beside a fully functioning sugar processing plant, Redpath Sugar. The Beach has white sand, lounging chairs and candy-pink umbrellas. It was one of the first projects initiated in Toronto's twenty-five year-long revitalization project and has become one of its flagships. I chose Sugar Beach for its playful recasting of a commodity that is deeply linked to indentured labour. I also chose Sugar Beach because it is a place that is designed to distract the visitor from the industrial, "unsavory" use of the waterfront. It is a public space that therefore ultimately plays a "trick" on those who visit the site, and one that places a utopian gloss over the land. In doing so, I argue that Sugar Beach glosses over the white supremacy that both historically and presently informs settler colonialism.

My conclusions stem from a series of interviews in 2014 with some of the key actors involved with the design and implementation of the Sugar Beach project. To support my interview findings, I draw on scholarship that exposes Canada's history of slavery. I also engage with the critiques of multiculturalism to demonstrate the fallacy of a post-racial Canada. Sugar Beach is also not a far distance from the murder-site of Chief Wabikinine and therefore an ideal place to illustrate the hidden violence of the settlement of Toronto and the ongoing attempted erasure of Indigenous sovereignty. Informing this chapter is the work of Abigail Bakan, Sherene Razack, Afua Cooper, Katherine McKittrick and Himani Bannerji among others.

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, I will show that the *apology* I argue is crucial to settler colonialism is being performed a few kilometers away from Sugar Beach at the site of the Pan American Games Athletes Village (henceforth the Pan Am project). After the Games ended in the summer of 2015, the athlete's village was turned over to two affordable housing providers: one focuses on Indigenous communities (Wigwamen) and the other serves a broader reach of low-income people in need of housing (Fred Victor). These affordable units are but a small fraction of the otherwise luxury homes that form the majority of the residences being built on the waterfront. In this chapter I do four things: (1) I describe the Pan Am Project and its place in the broader waterfront revitalization; (2) I explore what it means to "revitalize" land and its implications on the intertwined politics of recognition and distribution; (3) I describe the housing crisis on the ground with a particular focus on Indigenous peoples; (4) and last, I introduce literature on state-sponsored reconciliation processes and argue that revitalization projects such as Pan Am housing can be seen as part of ultimately hollow attempts at reconciling Indigenous populations' loss of land with that of the Crown's sovereignty and contemporary city building efforts. To do this, I conducted a series of interviews in 2014 with some of the key actors involved with the design and implementation of the Pan Am project along with interviews with Indigenous housing providers and housing advocates.

In this chapter, I argue that the Pan Am project is an attempt to bring Indigenous peoples *back* onto the land that they were historically vanished from. This bringing-back effort aligns with liberal ideologies of Canadian identity and progressiveness, even amid the increasingly diminished efforts at redistribution of wealth. But this apology does more than that. I argue in Chapter Four that because the Pan Am project does not

go far enough in that it fails to renew Indigenous sovereignty, restore power and control over resources, the Pan Am project, much like state-sponsored reconciliation and recognition, simply *marks*, yet again, the Indigenous person for *loss* of sovereignty. I am greatly influenced here by Glen Sean Coulthard and his compelling rejection of “the politics of recognition”. I also look to James Tully, Eva Mackey and Audra Simpson for critiques of reconciliation and recognition.

Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, I follow my case studies with a crucial reflection on resistance and resurgence and how social movements are offering an alternative and more authentic vision of ‘revitalization’ along the lines of David Harvey’s ‘right to the city’. I look at two prominent social movements of the present moment, Idle No More and Black Lives Matter, to demonstrate how these movements are challenging the fantasies and apologies of the settler colonial state of Canada. In this Chapter I provide the genesis of each movement and illustrate how, although they are diverse struggles, they are taking aim at the same structures that support the settler project. Further, I show that through the process of occupying urban space, contesting urban space and offering alternative histories and ways forward, these movements are working towards an authentic revitalization. Importantly, I examine how these movements build solidarity with each other in Toronto, (even though both are distinct, global movements), and I argue that what binds them in the context of this city is the drive to tell different narratives about the past, present and future of the city and nation.

Methodology

My research is informed by a mixed-methods approach. I reviewed relevant scholarship, grey literature and media accounts focused on the waterfront. I conducted interviews with individuals involved in the Sugar Beach and Pan Am Projects. I utilized archival research to inform my historical analysis of the site. Lastly, I performed dozens of site visits, took photographs, and participated in a formal 'waterfront tour'. Below I detail the importance of each approach to the formation of the contribution I make in this dissertation.

I conducted a multi-discipline literature review which included work from Indigenous studies, history, political science, settler colonial studies (and postcolonialism), critical race theory, critical geography, urban planning and feminism. I employ scholarship from this range of disciplines throughout the dissertation. Where possible, I attempted to centre the voices of Indigenous and Black scholars in the theoretical framing. The interdisciplinary approach to the literature review has enabled me to wrestle out my own contribution precisely in the gaps *between* disciplines. Specifically, I seek to provide insight into the under-studied role that urban planning and more particularly, urban renewal plays in the settler colonial project. While the strategic importance of cities to the settlement of the land in Canada has been established mostly in the field of history (Thrush, Stanger-Ross, Edmonds and Freeman), less attention has been paid to *contemporary* urban renewal in this process. This literature review provided the theoretical parameters by which settler colonialism has been framed in multiple disciplines enabling me to situate my own theoretical contribution.

In order to build my historical analysis, in combination with a literature review on the history of settler/Indigenous relations in the City of Toronto, I also employed archival

research to illustrate how the waterfront has been produced and re-produced through time. The archives provided a crucial piece to my analysis as they offered first-hand accounts from early settlers of the motivations, ideologies and sentiments while settling the land and dispossessing those who were here when they arrived. These archives provided a fascinating account of the early and formative time in Toronto's settler history.

To further generate my empirical contribution, I conducted interviews to inform my two case studies in Chapters Three and Four. For these interviews, I spoke to key people in the design and implementation of both the Sugar Beach project and the Pan Am project. For Chapter Three, the Sugar Beach case study, I spoke with six people for approximately one hour each. I conducted these interviews according to the questions presented in Appendix 1 and engaged in free-flowing conversations and as such, modified the questions depending on the role of the subject in the project. The goal of these interviews was to identify how the space was conceived, is perceived, how it comes to terms with its past, and how it mediates or shapes social interactions in the present. I recorded these interviews with permission.

I conducted five interviews for the Chapter Four case study; the Pan Am project. In a similar fashion to the interviews for Sugar Beach, I had one hour long free-flowing conversations. I used the interview questions presented in Appendix 2 and made modifications depending on the interview subject's role in the project. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge the intention of those driving the housing development project, how it was conceived and perceived, and to also hear about the broader picture

of housing in the city, specifically for Indigenous people. I recorded these interviews with permission.

To complement my literature review, archival work and interviews, I spent time on the waterfront itself. I took photographs and notes to document my observations. I visited the Redpath Sugar Museum and attended a community meeting (on the Portlands, an area not formally included in my work here as the community planning meetings for my case studies were complete). I participated in a bus tour hosted by Waterfront Toronto, that showcased the revitalization efforts to date and shared plans for the future of the project. I sat on Sugar Beach and watched the sugar boats come in and walked through the new neighbourhoods flanked with sky-high condo buildings. I read plaques, and work-permit notices, and saw advertisements for future projects. These site visits helped to capture the *feeling* and experience of being in the space as it was being dreamed up and transformed. My individual experiences with the site helped to deepen my analysis and sharpen my ideas around my own settler subjectivities.

Finally, for the last four to five years, with great personal interest, I have followed the two social movements that I discuss in the final Chapter of this dissertation; Black Lives Matter and Idle No More. I followed both movements online, read popular and independent media accounts of them and have attended solidarity actions and protests put on by both. This ‘tracking’ of Black Lives Matter and Idle No More not only helped to shape my analysis, but also provided the inspiration to privilege resistance in the concluding parts of this dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE

Emptying the Land, Dispossession, Dissolving and Replacing

With the use of historical scholarship and archival research, the following Chapter will present the history and legacy of the settlement of Toronto and the dispossession of the Mississauga of the New Credit. Specifically, I will draw attention to how the waterfront has been framed and its strategic importance, since contact, to the settlement of the land. As such, I will show that the waterfront has been a site where the driving force of *terra nullius* is seen while also being a site where the dreams and fantasies of settler belonging began. I begin however, with an examination on the role of research in the colonial project itself.

The Problem with Research

In 1999, Linda Tuhiwai Smith wrote a seminal book that demonstrates the deep and persistent relationship between research and colonialism. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, she explains the crucial need to recognize “the ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism” and notes that such research “remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized” (1). Smith attempts to not only expose (and cast a shame on) the ways in which Western research has aided in the colonization of Indigenous peoples, but also to bring the conversation into the present day where the marginalization and violence experienced by Indigenous peoples must be tied to the ongoing effects of colonialism. As Smith writes,

Within these sorts of social realities, questions of imperialism and the effects of colonization may seem to be merely academic; sheer physical survival is far more pressing. The problem is that constant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical formations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claims to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope. (4)

In the writing of this dissertation, Smith's words have resonated with me as a settler researcher looking at city building and revitalization in Toronto. First, the disappeared colonial history of Toronto has only recently been documented within the academy (Freeman). According to Frances Sanderson and Heather Howard-Bobiwash in their crucial collection of Indigenous-informed history of Toronto, *The Meeting Place*, this colonialist history is still relatively unknown or unincorporated into public urban history. It is certainly not reflected, beyond what seems to be compulsory mention in introductions, in the contemporary research on Toronto's Indigenous populations.³ The fact that colonial history has been largely ignored in the story of Toronto highlights Smith's assertion that the erasure of these histories at the hand of the state, and also the academy, works to perpetuate and deny opportunities to decolonize Canada's and Toronto's relationship with Indigenous people. By ignoring the city's colonial history, governments, societies and (research) institutions of Toronto have aided in the persistent belief that Indigenous people and the city simply do not mix. The obscuring of Indigenous presence in Toronto has had more sinister ramifications which I explore through my case studies in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. The effects of this denying

³ I want to note here that until more recently, Toronto's Indigenous population was not well reflected, not only in urban history, but in general contemporary urban research. This has changed with The Toronto Aboriginal Research Project, a large-scale study conducted by the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC). TASSC's stated mandate is to address the dearth of research on the community despite its annual growth.

and obscuring of the distinct forms of dispossession that occurred in ‘municipal colonialism’ (Stanger-Ross) also prevents researchers looking at urban development in the city today from locating their work within the context of colonialism. As Smith argues, this in of itself is a colonial act. Therefore, by interrogating contemporary urban revitalization projects from the perspective of these erased histories, I make a modest attempt to address this grievance in this dissertation.

Second, as I read Smith’s work alongside the writing of Gayatri Spivak, I am moved to, rather self-consciously, face the personal and political issues of “doing” research that aims to contribute to critical scholarship that argues for social justice. I must recognize my position as a white person, my resulting privilege, and my role as a settler, as well the social and economic benefit that this research and degree will bestow on my own life. The effort to do this self-positioning not only reveals my complicated relationship with studying settler colonialism as a settler in settler institutions, but it also drives my aim to explore how city building can authentically and truly lay bare the violence of colonialism, which remains present in our cities. The attempt to link my own personal complicity with the research goal is an effort to move past a simple acknowledgement of my settlerhood; rather, I want to sketch out what a collective acknowledgement of settler colonialism might look like in our urban environments. Fundamentally, I believe that we cannot, in Canada, talk about any type of land without talking about settler colonialism.⁴ Therefore, the process of planning with

⁴ This work is particularly important as prominent voices deny such a need exists. At a G20 meeting in Pittsburgh, past Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated that Canada was to be envied because, “We also have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them” (“Canada has no history of Colonialism, The Globe and Mail”).

its explicit focus on the use of land and resources must also fall under this scrutiny (Dorries).

In Chapter Two I focus on the scholarship of settler colonialism. I argue that while the tools offered by the Western elements of this scholarship are useful, it is Indigenous knowledge and scholarship that should be privileged. Returning to Smith here, “for indigenous people, the critique of history is not unfamiliar, although it has now been claimed by postmodern theories” (33). Settler colonial studies and environmental justice studies have become academic sub-disciplines in the last few decades, but it is important to acknowledge that they emerge from generations-long Indigenous knowledge and activism.

Archival Research

Before embarking on a sketch of the settler colonial history of the city of Toronto, I must address the politics of the methodology in the pursuit of telling a “history.” The act of archival research into a colonial past is not an unproblematic one. As Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler establish in *Tensions of Empire*:

Colonialism has come under new sorts of scrutiny as the production of what constitutes scientific, ethnographic, and colonial knowledge has been given more sustained consideration [...] *it is clear that the colonial archives on which we are so dependent are themselves cultural artifacts, built on institutional structures that erased certain kinds of knowledge, secreted some and vaporized others.* We are confronted with the obvious fact that every document in a colonial archive—no matter how ignorant its author was of indigenous society or how unimportant his ideas were to future policy—is layered with the received account of earlier events and the other cultural semantics of a political moment. We cannot just do colonial history on our given sources: what constitutes the archive itself, what is excluded from it, what nomenclature signal at certain times are themselves internal to, and the very substance of, colonialism's cultural politics. (17, emphasis mine)

In this chapter, I analyze the “colonial cultural politics” in the archival material I consulted in the research for this project. I do this by highlighting how the space of Toronto is described (and therefore perceived). As well, I examine how the historical accounts reveal a settler colonial language that, as I will argue, has not abated through time but has worked to empty the land of Indigenous peoples by dispossessing, dissolving, and then replacing them.

In this chapter I explore the histories of settler colonialism and dispossession in Toronto with particular attention to the waterfront. I use sketches from archival research throughout to illustrate the settler notions of the land (most notably relating to *terra nullius*). I illustrate that the process of emptying the land and imagining new futures on it has been particularly exemplified on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The waterfront is a site that has continually been seen in two ways that are both crucial for the settlement process. First, it has been a space inscribed with “perpetual opportunity,” requiring what Nick Blomley calls the “active doing” of clearing, making and remaking the land (i.e., changing land to property) that defines settler cities (106). The foundational act of settlement, for Blomley, was the transformation of land from Indigenous settlements used for resources harvesting and divided by custom-based property rights predominantly (although not uncontested at times) coercive and legalistic management of land into property. This property is thus brokered by the colonial state with private interests being paramount. Through my archival research, coupled with a look to contemporary descriptions and planning of the waterfront, I have discovered that this opportunity for settlement is “perpetual” in that it is never truly tapped into—at least not

in any determinate way—and that is precisely Blomley’s point. Revitalization is the rebirth of opportunity over and over again. Second, and perhaps the precursor to the “active doing,” the waterfront is consistently reproduced also as a wasteland, a *terra nullius*.

I will begin by looking at the literature focused on urban settler colonialism. Most of this scholarship is coming from the disciplines of history and settler colonial studies. I will then sharpen the focus on Toronto by examining Indigenous accounts of the area, the contested ‘Toronto Purchase’ and finally turn my gaze to the waterfront. I end with exploring how the waterfront is being framed in the present moment.

The literature on settler cities, or as Jordan Stanger-Ross calls it, “municipal colonialism” (451), tends to emphasize that the erasure of Indigenous history was crucial to city-making in settler colonies “back then,” and that cities are central sites of the enactment of colonial relations (543). Using this literature, I will argue that compelling parallels can be seen in the revitalization efforts on the waterfront today. I will present that through urban revitalization, a similar enactment of settler colonial relations plays out in the present day. From there, I move to archival research to illustrate how the space has been discursively produced through time. I will show that the waterfront has long been a site where settler anxieties and preoccupations with exhibiting productivity along with the triumph of empire can be found. Included in this storytelling of the land is the Toronto Purchase. This “negotiation” was crucial to the dispossession of the Mississauga and the first narrative fiction storying the land. I conclude with Indigenous accounts of the land.

To Settle Is To Be

What does it mean to “settle”? In this dissertation I look at the act of settlement as the pre-figurative act of colonialism in Canada. At the heart of settlement in this context is the transformation of *land* into *property*, the turning of a wasted space into a site of perpetual opportunity. Blomley provides an instructive definition of the act of settling and explained how it contributes to the various definitions of property:

To settle can also denote stability after a period of flux. Thus, we talk of settlers as those who, like me, migrate and then “settle down.” Similarly, dominant treatments of property assume that ownership rights are created at one moment in time and immutable thereafter. However, it seems useful to recognize that property is not a static, pre given entity, but depends on a continual, active “doing.” As settle is a verb, so property is an enactment. (xvi)

Blomley’s assertion that the act of settlement “depends on a continual, active “doing”” presents a useful starting point for the following sketch of the settlement of Toronto and the changing perceptions of its waterfront. In fact, the understanding of “active doing” is crucial to the central thesis of this dissertation. Of course, acknowledging this continual, active doing goes against the settler objective of finally terminating the project of settling and arriving at a state of fully being “settled.”⁵ Similarly, revitalization is, by its definition, an active doing in the re-making of a place. Waterfronts present an interesting site to examine this re-making of place as they are sites that often reflect the shifting social, economic, material and political realities of a city. As Gene Desfor articulates, “waterfronts have been and continue to be spaces where an ensemble of actors, both societal and biophysical, and representing global, regional and local forces, engage in

⁵ I draw on Patrick Wolfe’s idea of settler colonialism as inherently contradictory. It requires the constant act of “settling” (a central frame for national identity), while maintaining the goal of being permanently settled (which never actually occurs).

intense struggles that change the urban” (3). In the context of settler colonial waterfronts, these “intense struggles” are forever imbued with colonial politics and dispossession. Before examining this “active doing” of settlement, in particular in the space of the waterfront, I present an overview of the scholarship of settler cities in order to ground my argument in the current literature.

The Final Frontier: The City as a Settler Formation

Coll Thrush, Penelope Edmonds, Jordan Stanger-Ross, and Nick Blomley all argue that urban colonialism (or municipal colonialism) has been a crucial, and perhaps under examined, element of the settler project.⁶ Cities were and remain the epicenters of economies and therefore are sites where colonialism is enacted with the grandeur of glass and steel and where there is also the greatest expression of settler/ Indigenous contestation (Edmonds “Unpacking” 4). As noted, however, Indigenous populations in the urban arena are readily disappeared from urban history and Indigenous populations are often overlooked in contemporary urban life. Edmonds suggests that this disappearance occurs because: “[r]ecognition of Indigenous historical presence would be to assert that indigenous peoples are not newly arrived immigrants to cities, but owned and occupied the land well before settler cities were established and were implicitly part of their physical and imaginative creation, raising issues of sovereignty” (7). For Edmonds, the imagined and built settler colonial city that has long been deemed incompatible for the Indigenous “other” was grounded in the stadial theory of progress,

⁶ See Thrush’s *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*, Edmonds’ *Urbanizing Frontiers: Settler and Indigenous Peoples in Pacific Rim Cities*, Stanger-Ross’s, “Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928-1950s,” and Blomley’s *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*.

most notably from Adam Smith and the Enlightenment (8). Blomley articulates a similar understanding of the use of Adam Smith and stadial theory in the dispossession of Indigenous land (Blomley “Unsettling” 117). Recognized as distinct phases of production, in the four stages of the stadial theory humans become hunters, pastoralists, agriculturalists and finally commercialists. The stages are considered in a hierarchical and progressive way, with European-style commerce considered the “highest and best use” (Edmonds 9). For Edmonds, these notions work to legitimize the entitlement to the land felt by settlers and colonialists around the world. In this hierarchy of production, Indigenous societies were considered hunters and therefore were “stalled” and assumed to have little, if any, right to or ownership of the land.

Critical scholarship across disciplines has extensively pursued the themes of liberal notions of progress, the Enlightenment and modernity in relation to the colonial project. Barbara Arneil, in *John Locke and America*, argues that the majority of Locke’s philosophy on reason, property, nature and civil society was based on the settling of the Americas. She writes:

We see, therefore, in Locke the first elements of modernity; a central dichotomy between nature and civil society which, by the power of a single universal reason, will ultimately resolve into transcendence of the latter state over the former. Reason can leave no room for polytheists. At the heart of Locke’s argument with the Amerindian was a power struggle. For three centuries since the publication of Locke’s *Two Treatises* the choice for non-European peoples has been defined by this dichotomy between the state of nature and civil society. Because aboriginal people were never truly “natural men” nor could they ever accept the precepts of “civil society,” their very existence undermines the duality inherent in liberal thought between nature and culture, between passion and reason, between wasteland and private property. (21-44)

Interestingly here, Arneil suggests that despite the dualism put forth by liberalism, apparently framed so well by the history of conquest and the civilizing mission, Indigenous people inherently disavowed and disrupted this duality. This is perhaps, why, then that Stephen Howe proposes that Locke's duality of natural man versus civil society did not play as primary a role in the dispossession of Indigenous people. He would emphasize instead the doctrine of discovery in tandem with the notion of *terra nullius* (*Native America* 107). Blomley, however, disagrees with Howe, as he argues that without consent, the taking of "Native lands, (with some exceptions) that were deemed as 'unimproved' could be justly appropriated by those capable of reclaiming waste" (116).

Whether employing the stadial theory of stages of progress and commerce, or Locke's dualism between natural man and civil society, the city is the prime site of colonial settlement. As Edmonds claims, the city is the "apotheosis of commerce, progress and civilization...and the triumph of empire" ("Unpacking" 8). Edmonds goes on to call the apparent shift from wilderness, Edenic and unpopulated land (or commonly held land) to a privately held, commerce-infused city the "powerful syntax" of settler colonialism. She writes, "the settler city has pride of place; it is the space of progress and commerce, predicated importantly on the absence of Indigenous peoples" (8). These new world (settler) cities were *planned* and not simply spontaneous. Part of that planning, therefore, is the need to disappear an Indigenous history as an ongoing political project (Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism" 547). In fact, the building of cities and towns was imperative to the marking of progress of colonization to the Crown. As Coll Thrush writes in his study of the Indigenous history of Seattle, cities were (and

are) seen as “the avatars of progress” (*Native Seattle* 11). Toronto, in particular, has been the centre of English (Protestant) Canadian culture with its abundant imperialist undertones. Victoria Freeman argues that Toronto has stood in for Canada, representing the nation’s lived values and economic progress, all the while, going to great pains to ignore its own (Indigenous) history (6). It was through the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth that the city morphed from strategic outpost to the symbol of Canadian identity and settlement and a metropole onto itself. That was made possible, in part, by the string of events known as the Toronto Purchase, which solidified the dispossession of the Mississauga peoples.

The Meeting Place

Toronto is the the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit (Anishinaabe)—and the land that is now the biggest city in Canada —had for some eleven thousand years been the site of hunting, fishing, social gathering and trade for not only the Anishinaabe (Mississauga) but also the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois) and, going further back, the Wendat (Hurons). It was known across Indigenous cultures as “The Meeting Place”. Rodney Bobiwash writes about the ecological significance of the region and also the spiritual significance to the Mississauga in particular. “They came from the east” he states, and were led by a sacred Megis shell into “the good land” the western Great Lakes area” (Bobiwash *The Meeting Place* 7). He goes on to quote Eddie Benton Benai who details the importance of the land:

In the time of the first fire, the Anishinaabe nation will rise up and follow the Sacred Shell...the sacred Megis will lead the way to the chosen ground of the Anishinaabe. You are to look for a turtle-shaped island that is linked to the purification of the Earth. You will find such an island at the beginning and end of your journey. There will be seven stopping places along the way. You will know

that the chosen ground has been reached when you come to a land where food grows on water (9).

The Toronto region including what is now known as the Toronto Islands, were thus considered a crucial spiritual stop in the migration of the Mississauga people. Later on, the Mississauga laid claim to the land as traditional territory and not solely a migration stop (10).

In the early 1700s, after many different battles over loyalties, territory and the corners of the fur trade, the Mississauga gained more permanent settlement of the North shore of Lake Ontario. By the 1730s, the Mississauga of Southern Ontario (there were groups further north) numbered between 1,000 and 1,500 people. They spent summers near the mouths of the nearby creeks and rivers that fed into Lake Ontario; the Cobecheonk (Humber River), Wonscotonach (Don River), Missinnihe (Credit River) and Adoopekog (Etobicoke Creek). The Toronto Islands at that time were a part of the mainland as a long peninsula east of the Humber River. This deep harbour was a place where the “Mississauga brought their sick to recover in its health-giving atmosphere” (Smith, “The Dispossession” 71).

As with many Nations involved in the fur trade, the Mississauga both generated wealth and grew dependent on the European goods:

By their participation in the fur trade, they gained access to European technology, such as weapons and ammunition, as well as other consumer goods. The acquisition of these goods came at a price, however. They became increasingly dependent on the trade goods for their survival and the competition for furs to satisfy the rival European mercantile interests eventually promoted strife between the Mississauga and other nations living nearby. (ICC Documents 236)

The precursor to this dependence was a central agreement between Indigenous peoples of southern Ontario and the Dutch. The Kaswentha Belt or the Two Row Wampum symbolized by a beaded belt with two parallel purple lines divided by three white lines, is an agreement between the Dutch settlers and Haudenosaunee in the 17th century in the Great Lakes region. It symbolizes the mutually desired coexistence of two contained and undisturbed boats riding parallel without interference from each other. The three parallel white lines running in-between the purple lines represent the Haudenosaunee principles of skennen (peace), kariwio (good mind), and kasastensera (strength) (Hill, "Travelling Down"). This belt was used (and still is) as a mnemonic and teaching device on how the original relationship was conceived from the perspective of Six Nations and is returned to often in order to underscore the importance of a nation to nation relationship.

Despite this and other historic treaties, and despite the long and varied Indigenous history in the Toronto region, the settlers, relying on the doctrine of *terra nullius*, described the land as empty, as a place where Indigenous bodies move through, but don't lay claim, as if being ghosts floating above the land. Here is an often-repeated description of Toronto and its harbour from 1793 by Joseph Bouchette, the Surveyor General of British North America:

I still distinctly recollect the untamed aspect, which the country exhibited when first I entered the beautiful basin. [...] Dense and trackless forests lined the margin of the lake, and reflected their inverted images in its glassy surface. The wandering savage had constructed his ephemeral habitation beneath their luxuriant foliage—the group then consisting of two families of Mississauga—and the bay and neighbouring marshes were the hitherto un-invaded haunts of immense coveys of wild fowl. (Scadding, *Toronto of Old* 325)

This is a narrative that not only informs the supposed genesis of this city—that it was built on near empty land, a *terra nullius*—but the “un-invaded haunts” that Bouchette observes sketch an apt metaphor for what I premise here as the settler imperative: The ongoing tension or link between the (continual) appropriation of indigenous land and the concomitant continual disavowal of the Indigenous “other.” I now turn to the land purchase agreement that made concrete the dispossession and denial of Indigenous sovereignty, the Toronto Purchase. To do this, I draw from archival sources at the Toronto Archives, the Indian Claims Commission proceedings from the Mississaugas of the New Credit land claim of 2004 and the unpublished dissertation work of Victoria Freeman.

The Toronto Purchase (1787 - 1805)

Toronto’s strategic importance for the settlement of the eastern part of Canada was the crucial underpinning to the Toronto Purchase. Before the Toronto Purchase and crucial to all treaties in Canada, *The Royal Proclamation* of 1763 was intended to set the tone of future negotiations for the acquisition of strategic land. The British recognized the need to soothe some of the Indigenous fears surrounding the lands surrender process. In 1763, King George issued the *Royal Proclamation* to lay the legal groundwork for the negotiation of treaties and the management of newly acquired territories. It states,

And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in purchasing Lands of the Indians, to the great Prejudice of our Interests, and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said Indians; In order, therefore, to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the end that the Indians may be convinced of our Justice and determined Resolution to remove all Reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of our Privy Council strictly enjoin and

require, that no private Person do presume to make any purchase from said Indians of and Lands reserved to said Indians, within those parts of our Colonies where, We have thought proper to allow Settlement; but that, if at any time any of the Said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of our Colony respectively within which they shall lie. (Royal Proclamation of 1763, 1-7)

Toronto was important because of its port. Port cities like it not only became the triumph of empire in that they displayed the great wealth generated through colonization, but also the means to defend the empire. In 1792, John Graves Simcoe remarked on the strategic importance of Toronto's waterfront:

It is with great pleasure that I offer to you some observations on the military strength and naval convenience of Toronto, now York, which I propose immediately to occupy. I lately examined the harbour, accompanied by such officers, naval and military, as I thought most competent to give assistance thereon, and upon minute investigation I found it to be without comparison, the most proper situation for an arsenal, in every extent of the work that can be met with this province. (Executive Council Letters 1792-1799 B/5,163)

The particular geography of the north shore of Ontario became valuable land after the American War of Independence (1775-1783). According to the Mississauga Land claim commission proceedings:

By the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended the hostilities between Great Britain and its former American colonies, a boundary dividing the territories of the two was drawn through the middle of the Great Lakes. As a result, the importance of the land north of Lake Ontario increased dramatically, not only for its strategic and military value, but also as the destination of loyal British subjects fleeing the newly independent United States. (ICC Documents 242)

The British Empire gave land to some 10,000 United Empire Loyalists who had fled to southern Ontario between 1783-1785. By the mid-1780s, the British authorities, in contradiction of the *Royal Proclamation*, began to illegally settle large tracts of Indigenous land.

In the eighteenth century, the ancient Indigenous portage route, the Carrying Place, became of great interest to the British. The Carrying Place, used long before the Mississauga had settled the land, began at the Humber River, continued to the Holland River, and then headed north via Lake Simcoe and all the way to Georgian Bay. It garnered British attention after they had lost territory to the Americans for it “was a safe transportation route to the vast fur-rich territories held by the British in the northwest interior of the continent” (ICC Documents 244). The interest in acquiring land along the route was first articulated by trader Benjamin Frobisher of the North West Company. In a communication with Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada Henry Hamilton, Frobisher made certain that there “would be no difficulty in making the necessary purchase from the Mississauga” (ICC Documents, 59-60). There was other growing interest in utilizing the Carrying Place, which spurred further attention on the site that was Toronto. However, as mentioned, the *Royal Proclamation* dictated that territory could not be purchased by individuals, but negotiated only by the Crown in a public way with the relevant Indigenous leadership. It was legally clear that any interest in the Carrying Place and Toronto must be secured through negotiation. In a letter to Deputy Surveyor General John Collins, Governor Dorchester wrote,

It being thought expedient to join the settlements of the Loyalists near to Niagara, to those west of Cataraqui (Kingston). Sir John Johnson has been directed to take such steps with the Indians concerned, as may be necessary to establish free and amicable right for Government to the interjacent lands not yet purchased

on the north of Lake Ontario, for that purpose; as well as to such parts of the country as may be necessary on both sides of the proposed communication from Toronto to Lake Huron. (ICC Proceedings 68)

John Johnson, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and his party attended a meeting at the Bay of Quinte on September 23, 1787. What happened at that meeting remains unclear. Not only had the document, or surrender, failed to describe the actual boundaries in question but it also failed to name the Chiefs of the bands that had surrendered the land. Instead of a singular and complete document with signatures, attached to the document, suspiciously, were the names of three chiefs: Wabikinine, Neace, Pakquan, and their signatory totems, representing their respective communities. A year later, the British, working from either assumption or assertion that the purchase was valid, began to survey the land. Deputy Surveyor General Collins hired Alexander Aitken to conduct the survey. During multiple attempts to establish the boundary of the apparently surrendered territories, Aitken encountered objection from multiple Mississauga Chiefs, at both the east and west points, that he was attempting to establish ownership over land that was never surrendered. On two occasions, meetings were held with the Mississauga and they allegedly sold new lands and agreed to the imposed boundaries. Aitken then halted the survey fearing more disputes with Chiefs (Robinson 166-168).

Doubt was cast on the 1787 surrender for a few reasons. As noted, the document itself was vague. Aitken's attempt to survey the following year also showed a large discrepancy in the land to be surrendered. A few other accounts had also claimed a much larger tract of land than originally assumed in 1787 as well. Most importantly, perhaps, as the great influx came to the region in 1787 and 1788, settlers began to

refuse Mississauga the right to passage on the land and, “the Mississauga began to understand that the purchases of the 1780s were not agreements to share the land but, rather were outright surrenders” (ICC Proceedings, 250). Freeman writes of a history of treaty making between the British and the Mississauga that had fostered assumptions going into the Toronto Purchase:

The Mississauga’s memory of British promises made to the Anishinaabek at the Council of Niagara in 1764 and the preferential treatment of local Mississauga Chief Wabbicommicot at that council underpinned the Mississauga approach to treaty-making twenty years later and formed the basis for Mississauga interpretations of their subsequent history with the British in the Toronto area. Conversely, the disregarding by British officials of the terms of the alliance ratified at the Treaty of Niagara contributed to later settler stereotypes of the Mississauga as a naive, childlike people who simply gave away their land. (51)

Historian Donald B. Smith, who has written extensively on the dispossession of the Mississauga, states that the British were well aware of the discrepancies and therefore worried about the tenure to the land (the value of which was far beyond what had been recognized by the 1787 agreement), especially given the plan to make Toronto the capital of Upper Canada (qtd. in ICC Documents 883).

With this concern and fearing the need to renegotiate the Purchase, in 1798 the Land Board wrote for an Executive Council meeting:

In order therefore to exercise that foresight which our Indian neighbours are but beginning to learn, and in which it certainly cannot be our interest to promote their improvement, we submit to your Honor’s consideration the propriety of suspending the promulgation of the plan which has been laid down for us until we can make a purchase sufficiently large to secure to us the means of extending the population and increasing the strength of the Province, so far as to enable us before our stock is exhausted to dictate instead of soliciting the terms on which future acquisitions are to be made - For we are satisfied that the purchase of 50 or even 100 Townships, if made now, will cost us less than the purchase of ten after the promulgation of the Governor General’s plan (ICC Documents, 286-87).

The Mississauga were beginning to realize the value of the land to the British and negotiations were starting to get tougher (ICC Documents 255). A meeting then took place on July 31, 1805 where the objective was to sign a new land agreement based on the 1787 Purchase boundaries. The then Chiefs of the Mississauga stated at the meeting that the leadership who had “agreed” to that original surrender were deceased, so they were unable to absolutely say how the boundaries were understood at that time. The British, taking advantage of this fact, presented a plan that had the boundaries extended beyond the original survey of 1788. The total land sold was roughly 250,880 acres of land for the price of ten shillings. After the 1805 meeting, the colonial authority was in control of the entire northern shore of Lake Ontario, and, as settlers continued to flow into the region, the Mississauga were relegated to smaller and smaller patches of land. As Mississauga leader Peter Jones wrote about this “trade” years later:

Our fathers held out to them the hand of friendship. The strangers then asked for a small piece of land on which they might pitch their tents; their request was cheerfully granted. By and By they begged for more, and more was given to them. In this way they had continued to ask, or have obtained by force or fraud, the fairest portions of our territory. (Smith, *History of the Ojibwa* 27)

As tensions rose and new settlers arrived, the at times amicable and allied relationship between the Crown and the Mississauga became a distant memory. Settler understandings of the Mississauga were rife with racism. Elizabeth Simcoe, the wife of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, was a painter and diarist in the early to mid-1800s. She wrote of the Mississauga as an, “idle, drunken and dirty tribe” (*Mrs. Simcoe’s Diary* 102).

The Toronto Purchase (which constitutes multiple vague agreements) has long been established as a treaty process that was legally invalid and ethically abhorrent (Freeman, “Toronto has No History”). The Purchase was in direct contravention of the stated goals of the *Royal Proclamation*, which established the need to have respectful and equitable treaty making with Indigenous peoples. The Toronto Purchase is not recognized as the beginning of the city, however, as popular accounts instead cite the Act of Incorporation in 1834. This willful forgetting of the Purchase plays a significant role in the commonly held belief that Toronto has no Indigenous history (Freeman). For instance, the official City of Toronto website writes about the seemingly uncomplicated and undisputed evolution of the city;

People have lived in Toronto since shortly after the last ice age. The urban community dates to 1793 when British colonial officials founded the Town of York on what was then the Upper Canadian frontier. That village grew to become the City of Toronto in 1834, and through its subsequent evolution and expansion, Toronto has emerged as one of the most livable and multicultural urban places in the world (City of Toronto, “Toronto History”)

Victoria Freeman’s research demonstrates however, that the Purchase was not in fact a discrete event as it is portrayed in the official history of the city and in popular Toronto history books. In fact, she states that it was a “complex, drawn-out, contested, and ethically murky process comprising a series of transactions in 1787 and 1788 initially and then through the next seventeen years, culminating in the joint ‘confirmation’ of the Purchase in 1805 and the British demand for the simultaneous cession of the adjacent Mississauga tract” (41). I will move from the contested history of Toronto to a more geographically focused gaze on the waterfront. To do this I draw from the Toronto Harbour Commission Archives. It was in the archives that I discovered that patch of

land on the shore of Ontario tells a unique story of settler colonialism. I then proceed to show, through contemporary grey literature describing the waterfront, how the settler narrative of the waterfront (and Toronto) remains intact.

The Waterfront

When thinking about the geography of waterfronts, the importance of them to colonial expansion and settlement is clear. As Moir writes, “European settlement in North America began at the water’s edge, where sheltered harbours offered protection for water-borne vessels essential for the basic needs of colonial expansion: defense and the movement of people, information, and commodities between empires and their outposts” (*Reshaping* 23). In fact, waterfronts and the cities that are built on them became the *centers* of empire. As Moir plainly states, waterfronts enabled the stuff of settlement—the people, the ideas and the resources—to exist. Simcoe remarked on the strategic importance of Toronto’s waterfront in 1792,

It is with great pleasure that I offer to you some observations on the military strength and naval convenience of Toronto, now York, which I propose immediately to occupy. I lately examined the harbour, accompanied by such officers, naval and military, as I thought most competent to give assistance thereon, and upon minute investigation I found it to be without comparison, the most proper situation for an arsenal, in every extent of the work that can be met with this province. (Executive Council Letters 1792-1799 B/5 page 163 Smith Collection of Manuscripts)

Through my examination of the available archival accounts of the building of Toronto, what I have encountered is that the “imagined futures” of the city were often laid out on the waterfront. The site seemed to be consistently described in ways illustrating what the space *should* be. Toronto’s waterfront has been a site of settler

reproduction since contact, but it is also a liminal space. I found these 'imagined futures' captured in maps, plans, op-eds, actions, and utopian/dystopian language. The archival research revealed a site that has been consistently thought of as blighted, under-utilized, or an embarrassment. The waterfront, then, has been a space that is in constant transition as different futures are imagined on to it. It is to this landscape that the *fantasies* and *apologies* of the settler state are written and rewritten through time.

Following is a review of V.M Roberts collection of "Memorabilia" concerning the Toronto Harbour. Much of this collection spoke to the promise held by the Port of York and how it required continued diligence and settlement,

Every resident or visitor, in the city of Toronto, who has at all cherished any desire for her prosperity, must have been impressed with the serious drawback her portal and shipping interests sustain in consequence of the tedious and inconvenient approach to her harbour, -- not only as it regards the loss of time, but also the increased expense and often danger occasioned thereby. (Taken from the Port Authority Archives. From New Volume V p. 6 Letter to the editor - Globe from "J.W." April 8th, 1851)

The waterfront, therefore, is seen as place where if a "desire for her (Toronto's) prosperity" is actualized, then the waterfront plays a crucial role for the enactments of the land as a reflection of that on-going shifting desire. Relatedly, the waterfront has been that site where shifting ideas of growth or prosperity have resided. However, the waterfront has never truly lived up to this potential, thus it constantly needs to be cleared and re-settled, cleared and re-settled. Ted Wickson writes,

There was little doubt that Toronto Harbour was one of the best natural harbours on Lake Ontario, but successive harbour authorities soon realized that this body of water required constant maintenance and improvement to keep pace with the expanding waterborne trade and burgeoning local economy (Reflections of Toronto's Harbour Ted Wickson p 12)

At the helm of the oversight of the waterfront was the Toronto Harbour Commission. Its archives offer rich details of the various transformations that have occurred on the edge of Lake Ontario.

The Toronto Harbour Commission

Since the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) has been the governing body of the Toronto waterfront, it was made responsible for overseeing the development of the land, and it also houses an archive related to the space. The Harbour administration has gone through three distinct periods of waterfront jurisdiction. The first starting before the Toronto Purchase, from 1793-1850, and under the control of the provincial government; the second from 1850-1911 under the divided ownership and control of a harbour commission, city authorities, railway companies and private individuals; and the third period beginning in 1911, which inaugurated control of port administration and waterfront development under the provisions of the Toronto Harbour Commissioners Act of 1911, a special statute of parliament. After 1911, the first massive revitalization of the waterfront began. The THC materials offer their history as, “when the Commission was formed back in 1911, at the request of the City and the Board of Trade, its task was to bring order to the waterfront which at that time was a disorganized harbour of ramshackle wharfs and boggy marshes” (Toronto Harbour Commission - The Passing Years 3). Since then, the Commission has added two thousand acres of land to the total waterfront and had massive expenditures planned.

After its formation in 1911, the THC had planned to spend twenty-four million on the waterfront and was doing it during not only a war, but also a North American depression.

The City of Toronto, Canada's premier city of an English speaking population, is doing more in the way of contributions both of men and money per capita than any other portion of the Dominion to meet the crisis which faces the Empire. But notwithstanding the extraordinary situation caused by the war and notwithstanding the fact that Canada is experiencing its share of the financial depression which covers the entire North American continent, Toronto, through the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, has proceeded as calmly with the expenditure of \$24,190,088.91 on the improvement of her harbour and the creation of a new waterfront as though she were a city with a population of 2,000,000 instead of possessing, as she does, a population of 500,000. (Christian Science Monitor (Boston) April 1915)

The archival research reveals that the waterfront is a site that comes with a hefty price tag. With that, claims to being massive undertakings (it claims today as being the largest revitalization project in North America), seem to consistently form the basis of the grey literature describing the development of the site. The THC writes, "The dredging operations undertaken by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners constitute the largest hydraulic dredging work ever undertaken in the world, the next largest being on the waterfront of Bombay, India" (3). Leisure spaces were planned in this first overhaul in 1911 to flank the industrial areas, with boathouses, bathhouses, restaurants, and amusements and to the east, cottages: "The entire development is one of the most complete to be found on the American Continent and when it is carried through will add greatly to the attractiveness of Toronto as a tourist resort as well as stimulating her commercial and industrial life" (4).

What my archival research revealed is that Toronto's success and prosperity was, and continues to be, pegged to the development of its waterfront. The Toronto Board of Trade at the time alleged,

Toronto will achieve, or Toronto will miss, in almost exact proportion to Toronto's ability or Toronto's neglect to connect the commerce and industry of this city with

the great waterways of the country. HOW CAN THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF TORONTO BE CONNECTED WITH THE GREAT WATERWAYS OF THIS COUNTRY, AND THUS WITH THE OCEANS OF THE WORLD, EXCEPT, FIRSTLY THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF A PROPERLY EQUIPPED HARBOUR, AND SECONDLY, DEEPENED CANALS? The first venture of the Norwegian steamship “Odland” to the harbour of Toronto is thus told in the words of Capt. Madaseen, “I have been in a good many harbors around the world, and this is one of the most beautiful I’ve seen yet, at the same time one of the worst for shipping business” THE HARBOUR QUESTION IS AN ISSUE OF LIFE AND DEATH (All caps in original) (President of the Board of Trade Gage’s Suggestion for Board for the Waterfront (Vaughn M Roberts Papers)

As the above quote so urgently states, the authoring of the waterfront has been a focus point of the success of the settlement of the land.

Gentrification on the Frontier: The Waterfront Today

On a tour through the extensive website of Waterfront Toronto, one encounters many taglines and slogans describing the waterfront project. It has a polished look and is clear and easy to navigate. It is easy to believe that Waterfront Toronto has the city’s best interests in mind as it is supported by three levels of government, is nonpartisan, and pledges to be “open and accountable as a top priority” (waterfronttoronto.ca). It is peppered with the language of inclusivity, access, environmentalism (via sustainability), and prosperity, on a global scale. The CEO John Campbell defines the central purpose of the development and again, Campbell begins from the premise that the waterfront is underutilized, unsettled land in need of being “populated”:

In 2001, Waterfront Toronto was given a 20-year mandate and \$1.5 billion of seed capital to transform 800 hectares (2,000 acres) of underutilized brownfield lands into sustainable mixed-use communities. But our mandate is really about more than just this. In addition to revitalizing our waterfront - *giving it back to the city* - our objective is to make Toronto a better city, more economically competitive and prosperous for the long-term. In an era where talent and capital

chooses where to locate, quality of life is a key factor in economic decisions. Waterfront Toronto is, in effect, leveraging an infrastructure project to deliver key economic, social and environmental benefits that enable Toronto to compete aggressively with other top tier global cities for investment, jobs and people (Campbell “Message from the CEO” – italics my own)

I was struck by the assertion here from Campbell that the waterfront would be “given back to the city”. The repurposing of a *terra nullius*, and ‘reclaiming’ of lost land appears to undergird much of the narrative around the waterfront and also works to support a central claim of this dissertation. The “giving back” of the waterfront to the city clearly positions the settler state as having the power to lay claim to land that is somehow lost, or somehow empty of meaning (or failing to be productive) and somehow vanished of Indigenous sovereignty.

The website also hosts a blog called *On the Waterfront*. The blog, written and “curated” by Waterfront Toronto staff, aims to discuss topics of “waterfront revitalization, urbanism and city-building”. The blog, apparently, is the organization’s place to delve into the deeper theory of its work in Toronto. One driving concept behind *On the Waterfront*, as articulated on the blog, and behind Waterfront Toronto, is Richard Florida’s concept of “quality of place.” Florida is perhaps best known as the public urban theorist who wrote the hugely influential book, *The Rise of the Creative Class* in 2002. He boasts about his work for cities, states, and corporations of all stripes, including the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto (creativeclass.com). Florida, with his corporation, the Creative Class Group and accompanying think tank housed at the University of Toronto Rotman School of Business, (the Martin Prosperity Institute), was welcomed to Toronto as a guru of city-building. In 2009, Mayor David Miller gushed, “Richard is one of the leading thinkers on cities, and his choice to live in Toronto shows

that we can compete with any city in the world” (Whyte, *The Star*). Florida’s arrival and presence in the city meant that Toronto was “world class” and that it should implement his ideas to be even better.

Florida essentially argues that cities *need* the “creative class types” (as he calls them) to drive innovation and for his three Ts of economic growth: technology, talent and tolerance. With his concept of quality of place, he adds a fourth T: territorial assets (Florida, “What draws”). For Florida, *quality of place* is coupled with quality of life. In an obvious sense, he is speaking about land and the continued “development” of said land. When Florida’s influential work is the focus of a critical gaze, his ideas can become a sophisticated call for gentrification. Florida has attempted to write the rulebook on the frontier of revitalizing cities in the age of globalization and service-based economies of the West. Perhaps foreshadowing Florida-style development, Neil Smith,⁷ in his classic work, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, plainly writes of gentrification and frontierism in New York City:

As new frontier, the gentrifying city since the 1980s has been oozing with optimism. Hostile landscapes are regenerated, cleansed, re-infused with middle-class sensibility; real estate values soar; yuppies consume; elite gentility is democratized in mass-produced styles of distinction. So what’s not to like? The contradictions of the actual frontier are not entirely eradicated in this imagery but they are smoothed into an acceptable grove. (13)

Florida has a unique spin on what otherwise could be considered gentrification the way Smith describes it as “smoothed into an acceptable grove” for the 2000s. In *Rise of the Creative Class*, using his “bohemian index,” Florida argues that when artists,

⁷ There is an irony of pairing these two scholars together in such fashion. Neil Smith sat on Richard Florida’s dissertation committee at Columbia University.

professionals, the technical creative class, gays and lesbians, and “diverse” people flock to a city, it thrives. In 2009, well known community advocate Uzma Shakir, at an event put on by the activist group Creative Class Struggle and art magazine *Fuse* said: “Richard Florida's exotic city, his creative city, depends on ghost people, working behind the scenes. Immigrants, people of colour. You want to know what his version of creative is? He's the relocation agent for the global bourgeoisie. And the rest of us don't matter” (Whyte, *The Star*). Shakir's observations provide a useful frame for how I position urban renewal in the settler context. However, I will reframe Shakir's “ghost people” to people who are “*ghosted*” from the storytelling of the land that is Toronto through the logic of *terra nullius*. These “*ghosted*” people also continually dispossessed through what Glen Coulthard calls *urbs nullius* (Red Skin 176) in the processes of urban revitalization and gentrification. In the subsequent Chapters, my intention is to draw parallels on the processes of urban renewal from a settler colonial lens and expose the ways in which this “ghosting” happens.

Conclusion

Along with being an Indigenous space, Toronto is also a settler colonial city: a site where the future of Canada has been sketched out, imagined, drummed up, bolstered and actualized. The former history is one that has been steadily “replaced” by the latter (Freeman) and this has been the colonial intent. The active ingredient in replacing one narrative with another is the attempt to impose the dominant conception of land. This process is first realized through the doctrine of *terra nullius*, and then through the violence of wholesale dispossession. Settler colonialization continues on with, as I will argue, processes of urban revitalization and city building. In the iteration of

of contemporary colonization that I examine, settlerhood is disguised as simply being a Torontonion, a Canadian or a city dweller. As Taiaiake Alfred warns, colonization is not just red coats, but it is you and me. This introductory chapter has shown that the waterfront is a piece of land where settler colonial storytelling that has created this city, can be witnessed in the past, present and future on waterfront.

In Chapter Two I lay the theoretical foundation for placing urban renewal and revitalization in both fields of settler colonial studies and Indigenous studies. Here, I aim to make a theoretical contribution to the field of settler colonial studies while also centering Indigenous scholarship in my unsettling of urban revitalization. In Chapter Three I explore the fantasy stories told at Sugar Beach of settler belonging and a post-racial Canada. These splintered fantasies form the mythology that the settlement process is long over and that Canada has arrived at a place where this history seems to no longer inform how we see ourselves in the present. Put another way, this fantasy of settler belonging works to erode Indigenous sovereignty. Coupled with this is the fantasy that slavery never happened here and that official multiculturalism ushers Canada into a post racial state. The fantasy therefore works to *erase* Canadian slavery and historical and contemporary examples of white supremacy, and conveniently leaves them out of our public space. These erasures work to affirm the white supremacy that is central to the settler project by denying the history of indentured labour in and (ongoing) racialization that was used to settle the continent. In Chapter Four I reveal the apologies made in urban revitalization with a look to the Pan Am housing project where I engage with critiques of reconciliation. It is through a critique of state-sponsored reconciliation

that we can come to understand what it means to apologize through acts of wealth redistribution all the while working to ghost a people from the land. And, in Chapter Five I conclude with a look to the resistance and alternative storytelling (and alternative revitalizing) found in the Idle No More and Black Lives Matter movements. By exploring these movements, I show that through the process of occupying urban space, contesting urban space and offering alternative histories and ways forward, Black Lives Matter and Idle No More are working towards an authentic revitalization.

CHAPTER TWO

Urban Frontiers and *terra nullius*: Settler Colonialism and Imagining the City

To get in the way, all the Native has to do is stay at home.

—Deborah Bird Rose (*Hidden Histories* 46)

At a time when powerful social movements for Indigenous resurgence are gaining momentum, coupled with state sponsored recognition and reconciliation efforts (focused primarily on residential schools), it is crucial to examine the ongoing systemic processes unique to the settler colony that continue to dispossess, enact violence,⁸ and deny Indigenous sovereignty. An examination of settler colonial “theory” buttressed by a focus on voices of Indigenous resurgence in Canada is elemental to this query. With this theoretical shaping, I employ two case studies, Sugar Beach and the Pan Am Housing Project, to argue that settler colonialism’s ongoing structure is revealed through (propped up with) fantasies and apologies. This continual process of fantasizing and apologizing is evident in urban renewal projects like the one underway on Toronto’s waterfront.

In this chapter, I explore the contours of emerging as well as long-held theories of settler colonialism. Underpinning this discussion is the premise that settler colonies are never “postcolonial” in the temporal sense and that dispossession is constantly being re-articulated in and through development of land. My analysis follows Patrick Wolfe’s (in his *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*) as I

⁸ Violence here is inclusive, referring to corporal violence, fiscal violence (Pasternak), cultural violence, sexual violence, and all other actions that are intended to create harm.

approach settler colonialism as an ongoing structure and not as a discrete event. At the same time, I emphasize that the movement for Indigenous resurgence and nationhood in Canada is as powerful as ever as has been forcefully argued recently by Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in her book, *Lighting the Eighth Fire*. According to prominent Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, colonialism cannot be the only defining or analytic frame used to story Indigenous lives. While (post)colonialism is at times useful, it is “a limited theory of liberation” as at its center is an unquestioned assumption of settler power (Alfred *Wasase*). Also, as Tuck and Yang argue in their influential 2012 essay, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor”, it is essential, then, that decolonization must go beyond the metaphorical. For Tuck and Yang, the term decolonization has been applied too broadly to capture the worthy aims of social justice, and thus actually works to obscure genuine decolonization of repatriating Indigenous land, life and culture.

Many Indigenous scholars argue that land is at the center of refashioning Indigenous identity, achieving Indigenous sovereignty, and actualizing a decolonized resurgence. In a time of a state-sponsored reconciliation process in Canada—which Leanne Simpson, in *Lighting the Eighth Fire*, calls a façade that deludes average Canadians into thinking things are getting better when in fact they continue to get worse—this articulation could not be more pressing. Relatedly, I argue, as a necessary precursor of settlement expansion (or, in the context in which I speak to it, urban revitalization), is the continued appropriation of land. Underlying the waterfront revitalization plans and city-building in Toronto is a Lockean conception of land, one where the structure of “land ownership and inheritance that constitute a legal relationship to the earth that indexes the near annihilation of Indigenous philosophies

and ways of life” (Mikdashi 24). The element of Lockean theory relevant here is the notion that private property is made *private* by the mixing of labour (capital) with land. In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, C. B. Macpherson argues, however, that Locke was aware that labour can be alienated, that property can be possessed through the labour of someone else, which means, therefore, that capitalist societies can be broken into two classes: owners of property and wage (or unwaged) labourers. For Macpherson, this is *possessive individualism* as it relates to land/property, and it runs counter to the conceptions of land theorized, lived and experienced for the Indigenous scholars and communities that I explore in this chapter. In particular, I want to expand on the relationship of mixing stolen land with indentured labour (again, I am influenced here by Wolfe) in Chapter Three.

What is Settler Colonialism?

Perhaps instead of asking, “What is settler colonialism?” it is better to begin with, “How is settler colonialism distinguished from colonialism?” This query has inspired new movements in scholarship that centre on the argument that the colonial and the settler colonial may in many ways be antithetical. Lorenzo Veracini argues that there is a need to draw an analytical distinction between the two concepts. This is not to say the colonial and the settler colonial do not work in conjunction with one another; but it is to say that treating them as distinct categories (albeit with overlapping processes and objectives or outcomes) is an important and productive practice.

The emerging field of settler colonial studies gained momentum with the introduction of a journal by the same name in 2011.⁹ *Settler Colonial Studies*' purpose, according to Lorenzo Veracini¹⁰, (one of its founding editors), is to "respond to what we believe is a growing demand for reflection and critical scholarship on settler colonialism as a distinct social and historical formation. We aim to establish settler colonial studies as a distinct field of scholarly research" (3). In the journal's introductory article, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," Veracini strives to make clear the distinctions between the colonial and the settler colonial. He writes of the settler colony as having "a persistent drive to ultimately supersede the conditions of its operation" (3), and goes on to state:

The successful settler colonies "tame" a variety of wildernesses, end up establishing independent nations, effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities, and productively manage ethnic diversity. By the end of this trajectory, they claim to be no longer settler colonial (they are putatively "settled" and postcolonial—except that unsettling anxieties remain, and references to a post-colonial condition appear hollow as soon as indigenous disadvantage is taken into account). (3)

What I seek to demonstrate is that it is not only "Indigenous disadvantage" that renders the "temporarily postcolonial" claim hollow, but that it is also the persistent Indigenous *disruption* (along with the Indigenous resurgence touched on above) of the settler project. In fact, I argue that persistent Indigenous action and resistance is two pronged:

⁹ This is perhaps a contentious assumption, as engaging with the settler colonial, and its social, economic, cultural and political implications for Indigenous scholars, long predate the birth of settler colonial *studies*. I address this by integrating the two in the most productive fashion possible for my purposes in this dissertation.

¹⁰ Lorenzo Veracini is based at the Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University of Technology.

first, there is the refusal to “disappear,” and second, there is the refusal to be defined by the limiting frame of colonialism itself. Veracini is correct, however, in the foundational contention that settler colonialism is in the business of its own extinguishment (although this is never truly possible). The settler imperative, therefore, requires both the (continual) appropriation of Indigenous land and the concomitant continual disavowal of the Indigenous “other.” However, as I mentioned, cut through this disavowal of the Indigenous “other” is *disruption* by Indigenous peoples. It is from this continued *disruption* that we see state-sponsored apologies like the kind offered on the Toronto waterfront. I come back to this in Chapter four.

At the heart of the distinction between the colonial and the settler colonial is that the settler colonial state must be in continual disavowal of the Indigenous other while, at the same time, also appropriating land and the wealth accrued from that land. Although the settler colonial state it is an unfinished business, its objective is also its own termination, which, of course, carries conflicting desired outcomes and goals. For instance, the persistent need for the Indigenous other to “go away.” This ongoing displacement can mean myriad things: from actual genocide to the attempted extinguishment of culture, to the reserve system and residential schools, to Indigenous children in state care today, and perhaps most importantly, the extinguishment of authority and traditional laws and relationships with and over land. In tandem with this “going away” of othered peoples is the persistent need to dispossess Indigenous people of their land. The irony is that such a project necessitates, at least in liberal democracy, a recognition of the presence of the Indigenous other (and I will address the troubles with recognition later). This recognition does not mean, however, that there cannot be

different kinds of 'death' at the hands of the liberal state. Shiri Pasternak, in "The Fiscal Body of Sovereignty," argues that murder is now carried out through fiscal and reputational means. She draws on the example of Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike (used as a tactic to speak with the Crown about deplorable living conditions in her community, Attawapiskat) and the ensuing fiscal assault on her community and their ability to regulate their finances. Pasternak therefore concludes that Spence was 'killed' by an "economic rationality." So while settlement often means an extinguishment of a peoples through genocide or assimilation, death, or to "go away" at the hands of the state comes from a diversity of tactics.

Settlement, according to Wolfe, is also about perceived entitlement. For Wolfe, the settler, under the guise of Lockeanism, believes that he has an inextinguishable right to the land. It is not about sharing or diplomacy, and, despite the propaganda, it is not even about settler labour.¹¹ This right is born out of perhaps the most crucial concept in the settler colonial context, which is the doctrine of *terra nullius*. *Terra nullius* is the notion "empty land" that aides in the overcoming of the need to achieve conquest and provides a moral and legal basis for the claiming of land for settlement. As I will argue later, however, in the making of settler nationhood, is the making of what Sunera Thobani calls the exalted Canadian citizen, the 'Native', and the exogenous or diasporic "other." Despite proposing that the doctrine of *terra nullius* helps to create subjectivities in a multicultural state, I do not want to add to the continual essentializing of these identities. Rather, I hope to argue that these identity formations are from "above" and

¹¹ Wolfe, in "The Settler Complex," astutely points out that despite this Lockeanism, settlers tend not to use their own labour to extract wealth from the land. Indigenous and slave labour figures more prominently as a relation in settler colonies along with immigrant labour of the colonized.

are imposed by a colonial structure (as opposed to dynamic and multifaceted identities from “below” that truly make up Canada). I also contend that urban “revitalization” on the waterfront, like *terra nullius*, provides a basis for the continued claiming of land for settlement (which I will address in Chapters Three and Four).

The attempt to define settler colonialism is indeed a problematic one. Yet again, it is the process of labeling and marking that results in the settler (in this instance, the academy) creating the narrative, the categories, and ultimately defining epistemes. Addressing this difficulty in “What is Settler Colonialism,” Maya Mikdashi writes that “[i]n looking for answers to the question of settler colonialism, I have only a narrative, one that tries to resist the seduction of identity-based claims and yet writes through and pauses on identity’s shadows, reversals, and ambivalences” (23). For Mikdashi, the settler colonial is only found in the stories that colour its history. Similarly, Alfred speaks of the inability to define, historically, settler colonization. For him, colonialism is a living breathing thing, embodied in all of us:

So the problem of colonization, which true Indigenous struggles are confronting and not cooperating with, is not one of an historical era. Colonization is not just Redcoats, muskets and felt hats. It is not even just priests in residential schools. It is you. It is this continual living process of the renewal in the minds of Canadians and Americans of the ancestral fantasies of dispossession, domination and assimilation that were at the foundation of their forebears’ colonial enterprises. (*What is Radical Imagination* 2)

So for Alfred and Mikdashi, the ‘definition’ of the settler colonial is rooted in people, in the way all people live on the continent.

Settler colonial studies may in fact provide some useful tools in building understanding around the particularities of the settler state but it needs to be critically

positioned in the Western thought that also gave rise to the colonial project itself.¹² In her influential essay, “Can The Subaltern Speak?,” Gayatri Spivak addresses this positioning and questions the role of the Western intellectual in the relations of power that they seek to investigate. She does this by offering up meditations on the nature of representation in the era of gendered global capitalism. A fundamental theme found in postcolonial literature, representation, is for Spivak broken into two notions of representation (275-276). She argues that representation—in the sense of speaking for someone else and re-presenting them as in drawing a portrait—becomes the chief means by which the British (using her example), or the first world intellectual render, themselves invisible. Spivak goes on to show that, from the outset, even at a time when the third-world subject (and subjectivities in general) figures prominently in poststructuralist/postcolonial thought, “Western intellectual production is, in many ways, complicit with Western international economic interests” (271). Displaying her Marxist leanings (Kapoor), Spivak shows that these representations and re-presentations continue to play a role in imperial globalization today.

Spivak starts from the critique of the Cartesian subject, that of the universal and transparent subject born of the Enlightenment. She extends this critique to postcolonial studies itself (and the Western academy more broadly) for assuming (ironically using the Cartesian subject as its base) that the “subaltern” is homogeneous and that subaltern cultural experiences are uniform or that they can find solidarity simply fused by shared oppression/exploitation. Spivak goes on to argue that by encouraging the subaltern to collectivize, as Western intellectuals tend to do, the subaltern will, in fact,

¹² I hope to also recognize my own positionality here...but along with Spivak I recognize that, “such gestures can never suffice” (271)

aid in the continuation of their own subordination. In Spivak's understanding, collectivization is synonymous with Western logocentrism in that there is the assumption of a universal subject. However, Spivak is not "unrealistic" in the need to at times employ a *strategic essentialism* in order to fight against colonial violence. This strategic essentialism recognizes that while there may be difference in and between groups, that putting forth a collective identity is necessary at times (Spivak "Deconstructing" 204). For Spivak, the power to enact a strategic essentialism lies squarely within the subaltern themselves, and is employed for purposes of struggling against subordination.

While confronting Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault on their apparent rejection of the Enlightenment subject, Spivak illuminates two things that both philosophers fail to see: the inability to universalize the Western position or logos, and the role that gender plays in language of subject formation in terms of power, voice and agency. In her critique, Spivak turns the mirror to the radical intellectual, arguing that even those doing the supposed work of striving for social and economic justice are complicit in the act of reproducing hegemonic power. She demands, then, that any act of representation or re-representation require that the institutional, cultural, geographical and economic position of those doing the investigating fulfill a process of "unlearning" dominant systems of knowledge (Kapoor 641).

For the concerns of my project, Spivak offers great insight. The advent of settler colonial studies as a field of inquiry presents some useful analytical tools, but it runs the risk of "rendering itself invisible" by the continued essentializing of the Indigenous subject. Throughout the work of Wolfe, Veracini, and other settler colonial studies scholars, there appears to be missing praxis and a lack of integration of Indigenous,

subaltern scholarship about moving from this state of settler hegemony. This is not to say that the work of exposing and highlighting the distinct forms of hegemony in settler states is not worthy; however, in order to embrace and capture what Indigenous resurgence is actually *doing*, it is crucial to attend to the decolonizing act. With this framework in mind, I will now highlight these analytical tools offered by Patrick Wolfe, Lorenzo Veracini, Sherene Razack, Michael Omi and Howard Winant and attempt to integrate them with other critical and Indigenous thought from scholars and activists, Audra Simpson, Glen Coulthard, Leanne Simpson and Taiaiake Alfred.

Settler Geographies

Veracini asserts that through containment and assimilation, the alterities of the Indigenous subaltern are managed *within* the borders of the reservation and other segregated and racialized spaces. The idea here is that the settler body politic establishes and reproduces its sovereignty by “drawing different circles” of inclusion and exclusion in geographic way. For Veracini, however, he draws a distinction between migrants and settlers in that settlers come to establish sovereignty and a political order. Even with albeit conditional inclusion/exclusion of Indigenous and exogenous “Others,” the settler identity remains the primary national identity. Useful to my purpose here, then, Veracini articulates the difference between the colonial and settler colonial as typified by the triangular relations between the Indigenous, the exogenous “Other,” and the settler. Crucial to these relations are notions of race and racialization.

How is the process of racialization a component of settler colonial identity formation? Omi and Winant argue that the colonial encounter itself was the beginning of modern racial awareness. They write,

The “conquest of America” was not simply an epochal historical event—however unparalleled in its importance. It was also the advent of a consolidated social structure of exploitation, appropriation, and domination. Its representation, first in religious terms, but soon enough in scientific and political ones, initiated modern racial awareness. (62)

This “racial awareness” (which was biologically or phenotype-premised) and the resulting racial categories spawn from the colonial encounter (albeit not solely in the Americas) had a two-fold outcome. First, the racial hierarchy placed white Europeans (and their modernity) as the curators of progress. Genocide and slaughter were therefore “justified” as the colonized Other was seen to be less human, not Christian and therefore lawless. Second, the creation of the Canadian state and division of lands, rights and entitlements -- i.e. the material outcome -- was also premised on the racial Othering inherent in colonization. Building on *terra nullius* and *terra incognita* (title to unknown lands), Sunera Thobani speaks to this transition from a religious and racial justification for conquest to the creation of the Canadian sovereign: “This right of discovery, and the internationalization and subsequent secularization of European law, was the most pertinent factors in legitimizing the subjugation of Aboriginal peoples, of turning the violence of conquest into authorizing authority” (43).

The move to a secular Canadian state with the powers of elevating certain bodies to the status of citizen and the subsequent creation of the Other is firmly rooted in the settler colonial experience. Sherene Razack writes of the proceeding chapters in this national myth:

The land once empty and later populated by hardy settlers, is now besieged and crowded by Third World refugees and migrants who are drawn to Canada by the legendary niceness of European Canadians, their well known commitment to

democracy and the bounty of their land. The “crowds” at the border threaten the calm, ordered spaces of the original inhabitants. (*Race, Space* 4)

This elevation of certain bodies is exemplified here with Razack’s assertion. The settler identity of whiteness is thus the identity against which all others are positioned.

It is useful here to engage with Sunera Thobani’s notion of the exalted subject. The citizen is created discursively to embody the characteristics that define the national imaginary, therefore defining the nation itself (18). In her work *Exalted Subjects* which draws on Foucault and Hegel, Thobani traces the roots of the creation of the Canadian subject and the relations of power that work to create its opposite: the Indian, the immigrant, the refugee, the insider and outsider. She argues that the process of exaltation, in an effort to fix an innately unstable subject position of the “citizen,” belies that identity formation is relational (41). However, a racial hierarchy persists as “the national remains at the centre of the state’s (stated) commitment to enhance national well-being; the immigrant receives a tenuous and conditional inclusion and the Aboriginal continues to be marked for loss of sovereignty” (18).

The racial hierarchy that Thobani describes has specific spatial and geographic dimensions. In the following section I aim to show that *terra nullius*, the empty land, has worked as a constitutive doctrine in the attempted shaping of identities in the settler state. As mentioned, however, this doctrine and its limiting categories are continually contested by Indigenous rejection of the framing of their identities and land in this manner.

Land and Identity: *Terra nullius* as a Constitutive Doctrine

Ideas of race and ideas about land are the foundations of settler colonialism. The settler colonial project creates and perpetuates a racialized spatial culture that is both structurally and discursively produced (Cavanagh, “Discussing Settler Colonialism's Spatial Cultures”). These two intersecting ideologies—racial hierarchy and private property—are mutually constitutive and crucial to the ongoing project of settlement. But how exactly do they work together? How does land inform Indigenous identity? How does land inform settler identity, or migrant/diasporic identity? How do these identities shift and get manipulated to prop up existing hegemony or to disrupt it? How do these ideologies of land and bodies figure in the urban context? How and where are they revealed in revitalization of cities today? I address these questions in the following discussion.

Land, as its been already argued, is the centre of the settler colonial project and imagined *terra nullius* as the chief means by which the land has been defined is a central conceit of this dissertation. The imagining of the “empty land” (or underutilized land) animates much of how urban revitalization on the waterfront has been presented. I also argue that this concept of *terra nullius* animates and underwrites three relational and oppositional identities found in multicultural settler states, as well as presents them as actors in urban development. First, *terra nullius* has created settler identity—in the “making” of the land, the settler is born into being a Canadian. Second, *terra nullius* has attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to anoint the Indigenous body as being vanished. In this case, by vanish I do not mean “go away,” rather I refer to the idea that Indigenous sovereignty has vanished. This is despite the current politics of recognition that would have us believe that Indigenous sovereignty is respected and assured (and, drawing on

Glen Coulthard's writing, I will trouble these politics of recognition in the latter pages of this chapter). Third, *terra nullius* is a defining principle of the exogenous other—the racialized/colonized other that arrives in Canada, as Thobani argues, with tenuous and conditional¹³ acceptance—who does not have the original claim to the empty land, and who is only welcomed based on notions of apparent productive capacity in the continual clearing and working of the land.

In “The Settler Complex,” Wolfe boldly writes about the formation of settler identity and its essential relationship to land. He states:

Land is settler colonialism's irreducible essence in ways that go well beyond real estate. Its seizure is not merely a change of ownership but a genesis, the onset of a whole new way of being—for both parties. Settlers are not born. They are made in the dispossessing, a ceaseless obligation that has to be maintained across the generations if the Natives are not to come back. Along with the land, then, come identity, selfhood, family, belonging, all the qualities that make us fight. Thus the frequency with which settlers assert their industry is not surprising. The stakes could not be higher. The repetition is compulsive. It bespeaks a primal anxiety. The settler work imperative may or may not be Protestant, and it may or may not be ethical, but it is always exculpatory. (1)

Wolfe emphasizes the grounding principle that settlers are made *through* the settlement process. National identity (and nationhood) in the settler state is carved out in this way whereby *terra nullius* allows the settler to actually *become* the land. That land, for Wolfe, is value added (2). He argues that settlers come, stay, bring their own labour¹⁴ and claim land and resources that have been previously cultivated, mapped and explored by

¹³ At the time of this writing the case brought forth by the federal government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to ban the wearing of the niqab at swearing in ceremonies is a crass example of this “conditional” acceptance (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/conservatives-would-consider-niqab-ban-for-public-servants-harper-says/article26691717/>).

¹⁴ Indentured labour, despite the apparent Protestant work ethic that underscores the Lockeanism, much of the settlement process in most settler colonies was a result of slave labour. I explore this in greater detail in Chapter Three.

a Native population. The notion that the lands were an uncultivated “wilderness” is not only false but a part of the necessary “discourse of conquest” (3). Wolfe describes how land was “value added” with settlers often acquiring,

Territory that has previously been improved by Natives, whether through agriculture (whereby Natives endowed Europe with corn, tobacco, tomatoes, and other produce), through fire-farming (producing grasslands), through fish management through restraining predation (whereby the buffalo and, in their place, cattle prospered), or through any number of other technologies. (2)

To reiterate, there was no “frontier wilderness” in this sense as Indigenous populations augmented, farmed and changed the land for thousands of years before settler contact (Benton and Short, *Environmental Discourse and Practice*).

Cities, then, are also “value-added” land. Toronto for example, not only acts as a global city, but also a metropole for the resource wealth and labour performed over much of Canada (Gunder, “The Development of Underdevelopment”). This value-added land, along with the persistent phenomenon of settlers needing the labour of others to work that land, leads to what Raymond Williams argues is a settler subjecthood comprised of “distinctive structures of feeling, affective predispositions, and ways of being in the world that accompany the continuing dispossession of Native peoples” (as quoted in Wolfe 3).

For Indigenous scholars working in Canada, relationships with the land are complex and not easily captured in this dissertation. I do, however, want to highlight the relationship to the land as it relates to the settler colonial project as I have sought to

define it.¹⁵ In his piece “Radical Imagination,” Taiaiake Alfred addresses the fundamental issue when it comes to thinking about land:

We have never really resolved the problem of colonization and theft of our lands, its imposition of foreign sovereignties and laws on our nations, and its forced acculturation of our people to European ways of life. We have not resolved the problem of the European imagination of this continent as *terra nullius*, a land empty of civilization, culture, law, governance, and empty of people worthy of respect. (1)

“Radical imagination,” therefore, is re-envisioning one’s existence on this land without the histories of conquest and empire. Therefore, for Alfred, the relationship with the land is one in need of a renewal. For Leanne Simpson, the relationship with the land is about knowing creation stories. Speaking of her ancestors and land, “they resisted by holding onto their stories. They resisted by taking the seeds of our culture and political systems and packing them away so that one day another generation of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg might be able to plant them” (*Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back*, 15). A return to the land with a renewed framework of conceptualizing land combined with a privileging of Indigenous creation stories are two crucial pillars to Indigenous resurgence that both Alfred and Simpson articulate.

The Guises of Contemporary Settler Colonialism: Recognition and Reconciliation

I now want to move this discussion of the land towards radical critiques of the settler/Canadian State-Indigenous relations today by focusing on the politics of recognition as well as the formal reconciliation process. Many Indigenous voices are

¹⁵ I also recognize that crucial to a resurgence is a framing of the land differently from that way it has been farmed for two hundred years by the settler state. My attempt here is to illustrate this tension while recognizing the rich and diverse way land is understood in the hundreds of Indigenous Nations across Canada.

critical of both (and they intersect) and so it is important to give full attention to politics of recognition and reconciliation as the guiding pillars in the settler colonial state today. In the following section I turn to Glen Coulthard, Leanne Simpson, Sherene Razack, Andre Smith and Naomi Klein.

Glen Sean Coulthard, in his controversial article (published in 2007) and follow up book, *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* in 2014, argues that the path taken in the last thirty years by both the Canadian state and Indigenous leaders across the country, has been misguided. He argues the guiding force behind the various rights-claims, such as self-determination, self-government, cultural rights, and Crown treaty obligations have centered on claims for *recognition*. In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard, borrowing from the work of Richard J.F. Day, sees the “politics of recognition” as:

The now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to “reconcile” Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state. Although these models tend to vary in theory and practice, most call for the delegation of land, capital, and political power from the state to Indigenous communities through a combination of land claim settlements, economic development initiatives, and self-government agreements. (3)

A glance at the mandate of the Assembly of First Nations’ (AFN) encapsulates this centering of the politics of recognition,

This vision, the AFN goes on to state, expands on the core principles outlined in the 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP); that is, recognition of the nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and the Crown; recognition of the equal right of First Nations to self-determination; recognition of the Crown’s fiduciary obligation to protect Aboriginal treaty rights; recognition of

First Nations inherent right to self-government; and recognition of the right of First Nations to economically benefit from the use of their lands and resources. (Coulthard 18-19).

As demonstrated in the above mandate, Coulthard claims that recognition has “emerged as the hegemonic expression of self-determination” (438).

Relying heavily on Charles Taylor’s path-breaking 1992 essay, “The Politics of Recognition,” Canada, after the assimilationist policies of the 1960s, now espouses an approach of “mutual recognition.” For Coulthard, however, Canada’s claimed action of “mutual recognition” is deceiving as he observes that the politics of recognition further entrenches the colonial relationship and reproduces colonial power. He writes,

I hope to show that the reproduction of a colonial structure of dominance like Canada rests on its ability to entice Indigenous peoples to come to *identify*, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly *asymmetrical* and *non-reciprocal* forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the colonial state and society. (439)

Coulthard goes on to employ Fanon to argue that the terms of recognition are often defined by the master (colonizer) and also accepted and embraced by slave (colonized) who has formed “psycho-affective” attachments “to these master-sanctioned forms of recognition” (439). Interestingly, Taylor also uses Fanon, alleging that Fanon’s contribution of the colonized “psycho-affective” attachments could be overcome by a liberal politics of recognition (note that Fanon himself argued, in his later work, that only through violent conflict/struggle would the crucial “decolonization of the mind” happen). Additionally, for my purposes here, it is important to establish that large-scale recognition today is generally mediated and, in fact, initiated by the state, especially in multicultural societies, which departs from the articulation the master/slave parable

(Markell, *Bound by Recognition*). In light of this, recognition as state sponsored and defined is problematic in a state that fails to admit or come to terms with the colonial and racial hierarchies that prop it up.

Ultimately, Taylor argues, that liberal democracies have the ability (and, in fact, their survival rests on it) to recognize difference that is seemingly incompatible due to the fact that human identity is relational (Taylor 25). Taylor's claim is that we need those people who are different from ourselves to form our own identities (26). However, as Bannerji and others point out, Taylor's politics of recognition succumbs to essentialism and ignores the creation of difference itself. Bannerji writes,

Ours is not a situation of co-existence of cultural nationalities or tribes within a given geographical space. Speaking here of culture without addressing power relations displaces and trivializes deep contradictions. It is a reductionism that hides the social relations of domination that continually create "difference" as inferior and thus signifies continuing relations of antagonism (Bannerji 97).

Taylor (and, more distantly, Hegel), Coulthard points out, sees that identities can be deformed with misrecognition or non-recognition. To this *deformation*, Coulthard astutely argues:

The logic undergirding this dimension—where "recognition" is conceived as something that is ultimately "granted" (Taylor, 1993, 148) or "accorded" (Taylor, 1994, 41) to a subaltern group or entity by a dominant group or entity—prefigures its failure to significantly modify, let alone transcend, the breadth of power at play in colonial relationships. [...] Fanon anticipated this failure 50 years ago. (443)

Misrecognition and non-recognition, then, are problems for Taylor, Hegel, Fanon *and* Coulthard. In deciding on how to reach resolution, differences arise, and it is where Coulthard departs from Taylor. Returning to Fanon, he reminds readers that it is through conflict and struggle against the colonizer whereby freedom is found. This freedom is

from the “complexes” that arise from the colonial relationship, and without this struggle, authentic freedom cannot happen. For Coulthard, this violent struggle comes in the form of what he calls *transformative praxis* (153). When recognition occurs only under the terms of the colonizer, the subterranean colonial relationship does not change; it is only when the colonized come to take on these forms of justice *as their own* is there *transformative praxis*. Without this shift, the structure of domination may change, but the “slavery,” so to speak, continues. Relatedly, a return to Spivak is apt here. As I highlighted earlier, for Spivak, any act of representation or re-presentation requires the institutional, cultural, geographical and economic position of those doing the investigating fulfill a process of “unlearning” dominant systems of knowledge (Kapoor). Therefore, as Coulthard suggests, and Spivak supports, the politics of recognition falls under the same requirement. To put another way, to *recognize* also means to effectively *represent* and if both representation and recognition are authored by the settler state that fails to “unlearn” the “structure of domination” they succumb then to reproduce the colonial relationship instead of transforming it.

Under the current politics of recognition, in settler colonial, liberal, multicultural societies, “slavery” is ultimately going to be the fate because the settler never leaves and land is not returned. Coulthard gets to this stark conclusion, again by drawing on Fanon. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that mutual recognition between equals is not possible in the colonial setting because the colonizer wants, needs, and relies on the colonized labour (450). Essentially, Taylor’s politics of recognition (built on Hegel) is impossible in this context. Coulthard explains that:

In relations of domination that exist between nation-states and sub-state national groups that they incorporate (Kymlicka, 1995, 1998, 2001) into their territorial and

jurisdictional boundaries, there is no mutual dependency in terms of a need or desire for recognition. In these contexts, the master—that is, the colonial state and state society—does not require recognition from the previously self-determining communities upon which its territorial, economic, and social infrastructure is constituted. What it needs is land, labour and resources (Gordon, 2006). Thus rather than leading to a condition of reciprocity the dielectric either breaks down with the explicit non recognition of the equal status of the colonized population, or with the strategic “domestication” of the terms of recognition leaving the foundation of the colonial relationship relatively undisturbed. (451)

As Coulthard goes on, however, he rightly recognizes Fanon’s approach as a totalizing view of power that places Indigenous communities at the whim of dominance in perpetuity, which is a stifling and misguided conclusion.

Coupled with changing the terms of recognition to ones that are more *mutual*, in *Red Skin*, Coulthard argues that engaging with Marx and his notion of primitive accumulation can give Indigenous scholars and activists a useful tool of analysis. As David Harvey proposes, primitive accumulation has dispossession at its core (*A Brief History of Neoliberalism* 159). Dispossession of the land is the crucial beginning (ongoing to extend beyond Marx) of the process that underwrites the settler mandate. The *native* must be eliminated in order to justifiably recuperate their lands. It is that elimination that leads to and corroborates with the doctrine of *terra nullius* that is evident in the making of cities. Just as capital is a social relation of separating workers from the means of production, settler colonialism is the set of relations to separate Indigenous people from their land. Coulthard argues that this is how Marx can be layered over the settler colonial context, from “making the contextual shift in analysis from the capital-relation to the colonial relation the inherent injustice of colonial rule is posited *on its own terms and in its own right*” (emphasis in original 11).

He continues by suggesting “that by shifting our analytical frame to the colonial relation we might occupy a better angle from which to both anticipate and interrogate practices of settler-state dispossession justified under otherwise egalitarian principles and espoused with so-called “progressive” political agendas in mind (12). Coulthard then argues that left-materialist agendas of returning to the commons often ignore and forget the original colonial dispossession. That kind of redistribution, unless it is transformative of that colonial relationship, simply works to reinforce it.

As Coulthard articulates, Marx may be useful only after recognizing his developmentalism tendencies, his temporal fixation and that his attention to colonialism was secondary to his primary focus of analyzing the separation of workers from the means of production (achieved through colonialism as it were). For Coulthard, and for my purposes here, the colonial becomes the central node from which the analysis stems in settler colonial societies. Again, to engage with Wolfe’s contention that settler colonialism is a structure and not an event, then Marx’s temporal fixation also becomes out of place. Acknowledging this temporality is an effort to combat the notion that colonialism and imperialism tend to conjure dated images of European exploits centuries ago (Barker 325).

Building on Coulthard (and his critique of Marx and Taylor), I argue that in urban revitalization, posited as a “sustainable” renewal of land that offers mix-use and inclusive planning (via both the *fantasy* and the *apology*) necessitates a similar ignoring or forgetting. Even if revitalization espouses the ability to make a *better* city for all (often drawing on utopian models) without addressing the fundamental colonial injustice being continually re-committed (again, based on the imagined *terra nullius*), city-making and

revitalization, like recognition, fail to be truly authentic. In a settler colonial mode, these city-making processes must reproduce, both ideologically and materially, the colonial relationship.

Beyond Recognition

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson argues that dismantling the colonial must be the first step. Once this is done then the renaissance and resurgence will forge ahead. So while "settler colonial studies" is a progressive step in understanding the unique relations in this context, to move forward from it requires turning toward Indigenous traditions. Grounded in Anishinaabe thought, Simpson's feminist writings argue for a turning away from the colonizer to resurrect cosmologies of traditional thought and ways of being that are rooted in territory and conceptual meaning within language (*Lighting the Eighth Fire* 31). Resurgence comes from the contemporary embodiment of ancient stories and traditions. For Simpson, "western theory whether based in in postcolonial, critical or even liberatory strains of thought, has been exceptional at diagnosing, revealing and even interrogating colonialism" (31). Despite this, Simpson observes, these thought reactions, as radical as they may appear, have neither held nor resonated in Indigenous communities. So while settler colonial studies is an exciting emerging field for its promise to "diagnose and interrogate" settler colonialism, its project may end there. Simpson explains that storytelling is the central anti-colonial act in Nishnaabeg thought. She describes using art and performance and the transformative power of the creation stories. She writes:

The starting point within Indigenous theoretical frameworks then is different than from within western theories: the spiritual world is alive and influencing; colonialism is contested; and storytelling, or "narrative imagination" is a tool to vision other existences outside of the current ones by critiquing and analyzing the current state of affairs, but also by dreaming and visioning other realities. (40)

Similarly, in *Peace, Power and Righteousness*, Alfred argues that Indigenous politics is still framed in the context of state law. In this way, according to Alfred, Indigenous leaders pose no threat to the basic power structures, as "from the perspective of the state, marginal losses of control are the trade-off for the ultimate preservation of the framework of dominance" (71). He goes on to assert that Indigenous peoples need to reject this form of "continual domination by force" (72). He, like Simpson, proposes a return inward to recover Indigenous intellectual power and traditions as the way forward. Alfred writes that in reorienting, "Traditionalists, recognizing the risk of intellectual co-optation, have adopted a traditional solution: focusing not on opposing external power, but on actualizing their own power and preserving their intellectual independence. This is the Indigenous approach to empowerment" (72). Power in this way is analyzed as to whether it creates balance and peace and is in line with an individual's creation story. Power is therefore not about opposition and dominance, but about how it comes through ritual, through story and through the land. Humans have a responsibility to the universe to complement that power with knowledge, and such knowledge comes from the teachings of Elders and the passing down of (sometimes epic) creation stories (Alfred, Simpson).

Settler Colonialism and Gender Violence

Gender has been and still is such a central component of historical and ongoing settler colonial relations. While I do not engage explicitly with feminist critiques in my analysis of the case studies, I do want to articulate here that the intersectionality of both race and gender in colonial oppression and aggression forms a central pillar in how I understand settler colonialism and operationalize it this project. In the following section, I hope to highlight some of the important writing on the undeniable connection between the settler mandate and gender violence because, as Andrea Smith argues in *Conquest*, colonial relationships are both sexualized and gendered (3). For Smith, sexual violence is a crucial tool of colonial conquest so attention to the definitions of both is important (3). In the project of denying a people's connection to their lands, cultures, languages and family identities, sexual violence plays a pivotal role. Sexual violence in this way extends beyond acts of individual rape or assault to state acts of sexual violence on and to the land (4). Smith, along with many other feminists, argues that sexual violence and environmental racism are also inextricably linked.¹⁶ Indigenous women's bodies in particular are presented as dirty, polluted and marked with sexual perversity. These denigrating acts of discursive and epistemic violence encourage, excuse, and exonerate acts of physical and sexual violence as well as underscore the belief that Indigenous land is not inhabited by "real people" deserving of bodily integrity and rights.

¹⁶ See also Laura Pulido's *Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest* and "Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies" a joint report by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and the Women's Earth Alliance.

Smith's work has pressing importance for the very real and largely state-ignored issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. There are over 1200 Murdered and Missing women and girls across the country.¹⁷ Calls by many groups for a federal inquiry have been ignored¹⁸ despite the fact that Indigenous women and their allies have been marching on February 14th for the past two decades (along with a host of other actions and reports). Past Prime Minister Stephen Harper even claimed, "most of those cases were already solved" (Bronskill *The Globe*). At the international level, the inaction of the Canadian state has moved the United Nations Human Rights Committee to call Canada to uphold its civil and political rights commitments:

The State party should, as a matter of priority: (a) address the issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls by conducting a national inquiry, as called for by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, in consultation with indigenous women's organizations and families of the victims; (b) review its legislation at the federal, provincial and territorial levels and coordinate policy responses across the country with a view to preventing the occurrence of such murders and disappearances; (c) investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators and provide reparation to victims and; (d) address the root causes of violence against indigenous women and girls (United Nations Human Rights Committee 3)

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has made a similar call (para 44).

¹⁷ This has been the official RCMP "counts" of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. However, the number is contentious and as the inquiry begins, it has already been contested, even by the federal minister Carolyn Bennett ("Toll of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women").

¹⁸ At the time of this writing (2016), a new federal government under Justin Trudeau has promised to reverse this by bringing a federal inquiry.

Many Indigenous activists, artists and writers located in Canada (such as Simpson, Maracle, and Stewart) have made similar connections as Smith (writing from the United States) does in her seminal work *Conquest*. Indigenous women's bodies are victims of violence way above the national average (Amnesty Canada, "No More Stolen Sisters"). The federal government, provinces, law enforcement and many other institutional actors do not respond or act in a way that reflects a true concern for what has been called a "human rights crisis" (Amnesty Canada). Even when perpetrators are actually brought to trial for such acts, blame falls on the victim (such as in the now infamous case of Pamela George in 1995, where the judge instructed jurors to "keep in mind" the fact that George engaged in sex-work (Razack, *Race, Space and the Law* 125). Smith's argument of gender-based violence is a crucial element to the colonial mandate, as the atrocities committed against Indigenous women and girls work to reproduce the sexualized nature of settler colonialism in the present day.

The geographies and spatialized violence of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls has an urban dimension and they present as stark examples of how urbanity and Indigeniety in Canada have been framed. Most of the victims were and are living in urban centres (NWAC, "What Their Stories Tell Us" 24-25). In her book, *Street Sex Work and Canadian Cities: Resisting a Dangerous Order*, Shawna Ferris argues of the confluence of the city/urban identity with that of the "whore" has perpetuated this reality. Ferris writes:

Given that the majority of the missing and murdered women in Vancouver, as well as those in Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg are Aboriginal, or mixed-race, their kidnap and murder cases collectively underlie the sexual exploitation and socio-political exclusion of Indigenous women that mark the effects of historical and ongoing colonization (9).

This tragic and shameful picture falls in line with the many ways in which there has been an erasing of Indigenous identities in Canadian urban environments. Edmonds traces the ways in which the disciplines of geography and urban history have succumbed to what she calls a “colonial amnesia” when it comes to urban Indigenous populations (Unpacking 5). She argues that Indigenous populations had apparently all but disappeared in nineteenth-century settler cities (which is, of course, far from the truth as she reveals) and Freeman has echoed a similar “disappearing from history” in Toronto (which I addressed in Chapter One).

In contemporary social science and health research, and within geography and urban planning, there is still a considerable dearth of research on urban Indigenous populations in Canadian urban centres (TARP). The research coming out now, in Toronto, shows that Aboriginal women and families are hit tremendously hard with poverty and its related issues of access to housing, food, education and systemic racism (TARP 28). Smith’s assertion that violence against Indigenous women is a crucial element to the ongoing colonization project appears then to work in tandem with the phenomenon in scholarship of erasing Indigenous subjectivities from that urban landscape. Given this evidence, the urban geographies of settler colonialism seem reliant on the ongoing erasing of Indigenous populations most explicitly through gender-based violence.

Razack, in her piece on the murder of Pamela George by two nineteen-year-old white university students, argues that the spatiality of the case was this: Pamela George belonged to two racialized and violent spaces, that of Aboriginality and that of sex work (*Race, Space* 125). Going further, Razack says that it is not simply an act of patriarchy

which resulted in the not-so-shocking manslaughter verdict, but that due to the fact that both Pamela George and her two killers were “abstracted” out of the settler colonial context that created the racialized spaces in the first place. Razack writes that it was

[t]he history of dispossession, and its accompanying violence, that brought both Pamela George and her murderers to the Stroll; white people's historic participation in and the benefit from the dispossession and violence; and the law's complicity in settler violence, particularly through an insistence on racelessness and on contract, all remained invisible. (127)

Similarly, while exploring settler and Indigenous women's shifting gendered and racialized identities in that urban Victoria, Jean Barmen, in *Aboriginal Women on the Streets of Victoria*, writes about the personal journal of Indigenous woman Mary Salslawit. Salslawit was Cowichan and married to a white, non-Indigenous man. They farmed just outside of Nanaimo and Mary sold their goods in the urban centre of Victoria. Barmen documents, however, how:

Each time Mary Salslawit made the trip to the capital of British colony of Vancouver Island, she was transformed into something quite different than what she was in her everyday life. Aboriginal women on the streets of Victoria were, almost by definition, either “prostitutes” or “crones.” It was the presence or absence of physical desire in newcomer men that determined their identities. (205)

In this way, as argued by Ferris above and as represented by Salslawit, Indigenous women's bodies have had and continue to have the violence of colonialism (and the *terra nullius* required to establish and grow settler cities) inscribed on their bodies. They are simply vanished from some spaces or only permitted to legitimately occupy others in proscribed categories like the “prostitute” or the “crone.”

Indigenous bodies are physically vanished with the use of violence from the city and from much of the research that looks at cities. As I suggest in Chapter One, there is then a shifting presence and absence of Indigenous bodies in urban space more generally and on the Toronto Waterfront more specifically. One of the hundreds (possibly thousands) of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women is Bella Laboucan-McLean. Laboucan-McLean fell thirty-one storeys from a condo tower on the Toronto Waterfront on July 20, 2013. She was twenty-five years old. Laboucan-McLean was in the condo that night with five other people and none of those people called the police. The police did not release a media advisory, were “unable”¹⁹ to procure witnesses, and simply deemed her death “suspicious” (Zerbisias, “Six People”). The case remains open. Laboucan-McLean’s family insists that she had no history of depression, no drug use, and she left no note (to justify a verdict of suicide). Writing about Laboucan-McLean’s virtual disappearance, Naomi Klein aptly titled her editorial piece in *The Globe and Mail*, “How a Cree Woman Fell to her Death and No One Saw Anything.” In the angered and passionate piece (Klein knew Laboucan-McLean personally), Klein writes about the small gathering that took place to honour Bella Laboucan-McLean at the foot of the Waterfront condo building called “City-Place”. She remarks that during the ceremony to commemorate Bella, nobody stopped to ask about her or her death; “nobody saw anything. Again”. Klein’s words get to the heart of presence and absence of Indigenous bodies in urban space and on the Waterfront. Klein describes the site of Laboucan-McLean’s death:

¹⁹ A detective told the *Toronto Star* that he “couldn’t force people to talk” (“Six People in a Small Condo”)

“This place” is part of Toronto that feels very much like no-place. The official name is CityPlace—a barrage of glass-on-glass condo towers bracketed by the CN Tower to the East, train tracks to the north. The street where Bella died did not exist five years earlier. Neither did the building from which she fell. It’s not the density that makes this area strange. It’s the monotony of all that newness, the born-yesterday-ness.

A block from where Bella died is a brand-new \$8-million green space called Canoe Landing Park, filled with broad-stroke markers of Canadiana: an oversized fake beaver dam. Big bright fishing bobbers. An electric red canoe that looks as if it’s about to launch itself into the Gardiner Expressway. These nautical pieces of urban furniture—designed by Douglas Coupland—are meant to connect the city to the world that was here before the concrete was poured. Remind us that this land used to slope gently down to the lake, where people used canoes, fished and trapped. There is no mention, however, of the First Peoples—the Haudenosaunee, Nishnawbe and Huron-Wendat—who actually paddled those waters as a way of life. (“How a Cree Woman Fell”)

As Klein tells us, the condo building where Laboucan-McLean fell to her death is a part of a “revitalized” Toronto shorefront, steps away from artist Douglas Coupland’s Canoe Landing Park, a patently inauthentic example of “recognition” that remains a permanent reminder of the tragedies of imagining land in a way that excludes and erases Indigenous peoples.

The spaces of settler cities where the Indigenous body is seen as inimical can only be filled with Indigenous bodies that serve a settler desire, just as the giant red canoe fulfills settler desire like Klein describes. Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women today is unsurprisingly an urban phenomenon as the settler urban space explicitly exposes and unleashes the violence of the settler project. In the same way that Smith argues that history of gendered violence inflicted on Indigenous women works to commit a sexual and cultural genocide, when understood in the context of the colonial city, (sexual) violence is also used to “disappear” Indigenous bodies from the

urban space today. The continued minimization of the violence committed against Indigenous women is evidence of the systemic structure of settler colonialism.²⁰

Progress vs. the Indian: Settler Colonialism and the City

Cities—during early settlement as Penelope Edmonds informs—were positioned as representing the “future” of the nation (6). They are spaces that often attempt to showcase progress.²¹ Cities hold the promise of the future but they also are the places where the culmination of national and transnational wealth is most evident. They are the beacon of commerce, wealth, technology cultural sophistication and power. At the same time, cities and Indigeniety were (and arguably still are as evidenced by the dearth of urban research focused on Indigenous populations in Canadian cities) seen as inimical. Cities, then, capture the tension between an Indigenous past, and the state’s future located uniquely in the settler colonial state. But as Edmonds, Coll Thrush and Jordan Stanger-Ross argue Indigenous history becomes occluded under the towers of progress. At the same time as this disappearing of Indigenous history, settler colonial cities have also been the place where imperial ideologies and practices are enacted (Freeman and Careless).

As critics like Freeman, Edmonds, and Blomley argue, it is also pertinent to acknowledge that while settler cities share a bond of being central nodes for circulating

²⁰ At the time of this writing, for example, eight provincial police officers (SQ) in Quebec have been suspended for allegedly bringing Aboriginal women to the edge of town in Val’ D’or and forcing them to perform oral sex (“Eight Quebec Police Officers Suspended”).

²¹ This is obviously a contentious conflation, especially amidst industrial decline in the United States. Many North American cities suffer from great deals of “urban decay” with dying or already dead industries and mass unemployment. Detroit is often used an example of the city that’s getting smaller.

capital wealth from colonial expansion, each city has varied and diverse circumstances. With distinct economic, geographic and demographic histories, no settler city is the same. Land and dispossession, however, are the constants that remain the anchor to all discussions on colonial settlement. Indigenous people have been excluded from scholarly accounts of the building and settlement of cities in Canada (Edmonds “Unpacking” 4). For Evelyn J. Peters, and supporting my argument here, this has meant that for decades in Canada, “policies responding to Aboriginal urbanization have been informed by a discourse that defines Aboriginal and urban cultural life as incompatible” (qtd. in *Urbanizing Frontiers* Edmonds 7). However, in Toronto, urban Indigenous populations have been on the steady incline since the 1950s. Post-war migrations gained momentum in the last three decades and we have witnessed doubling populations since the 1980s (TARP 78). Perhaps not surprisingly given colonial settler interests, this trend continues largely unnoticed. In a context of missing demographic information and lack of social recognition (and the resulting lack of policy and services afforded to the communities), Toronto surges forward as a contested territory.

An ideal place to examine one of the many reasons for this contestation is the land itself. Nick Blomley, in *Unsettling the City*, has argued that the creation of settler cities is based on a “remaking of property” (106). The common perception (one influenced by the ever persistent myth of *terra nullius*), however, was that there was no prior property “ownership” before the settlers came (111). Map making, surveys and the implementation of the grid may have trumped prior notions of “ownership” ultimately by the workings of law itself. This remaking of land into property also went hand in hand with notions of progress. However, the Indigenous conception of land was a reciprocal

relationship, not one of private ownership but in the eyes of the settler state, reciprocal did not symbolize progress. For Blomley, property is most commonly thought of in these private terms and in what is also known as the “ownership model.” Quoting Joseph Singer, Blomley defines the model by first asking:

What is property? One might think this was a simple question. Property is about rights over things and the people who have those rights are called owners. What powers do owners have over the things they own? Owners are free to use the property as they wish. They have the right to exclude others from it or grant them access over it. They have the power to transfer title—to pass the powers of ownership to someone else. They are also immune from having the property taken away from them without their consent, or they must be adequately compensated if the property is taken by the state for public purposes. (*Unsettling* 2)

A city is therefore distinctly and neatly divided up into private and public property where ownership is rarely contested. This ownership model forms the basis of property law, and, relatedly, shapes the way people interact, socially, economically and politically in the urban landscape. Most important to note here, the rights of the “owner” trump all others, and this is most obviously applied to Indigenous “claims” to land. Claims to land can be made, but ultimately the ownership of that fixed, objective, and rational space remains unquestioned by the colonial settler state (who enacts authority over ownership).

Even “public” space is increasingly under surveillance and being contested. In response to the explosion of people who were visibly homeless and street-involved in Ontario in the 1990’s, the province passed the Safe Streets Act (SSA) in 2000. The SSA was designed to address panhandling, squeegeeing and other acts of solicitation. However, the SSA is vague enough to be interpreted broadly and the impacts have

been far reaching. Stephen Gaetz and The Canadian Homelessness Research Network, have passionately argued against the criminalization of being homeless in this way. Gaetz has noted the large amount of tickets issued to homeless people in Toronto alone reached almost 16,000 by 2010 (Gaetz, “Can I See Your ID?”, 9). I will return to this in Chapter Three when I explore public space in the settler colony in greater detail.

The spatial element of the property regime, therefore, begins with a notion that property (in terms of land) is a fixed, objective thing. In Henri Lefebvre’s path-breaking work, the *Production of Space*, he argues how space is socially reproduced. He writes:

Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be “purely” formal, the epitome of rational abstraction, it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and molded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies. (31)

Drawing and building on Lefebvre, Kipfer and Petrunia, in “Recolonization and Public Housing,” argue that in addition to Lefebvre, Fanon also presents a spatial component to his postcolonial thought that is relevant here. The grounding concept that forms Fanon’s understanding of the colonial is that racialized spatial organization is the chief means of hierarchy at all scalar levels (from the local neighborhoods to international destination). This racial spatial hierarchy for Fanon is a prime modality of colonization. To control a population, he suggests, the colonialist must racially territorialize. For Kipfer and Petrunia, the territorial relations of domination witnessed in post-Fordist urban spaces can be theorized the same way as Fanon ascribes to the spatial organization of Algeria. Coupled with Fanon, they assert that the understanding of the territorial

regulation of capital offered by Lefebvre offers a more robust picture (112). Their central argument is that the fusion of these two theoretical models offers a more dynamic way of looking at “urban renewal,” state rescaling and welfare-state retrenchment. However different, these two approaches are not incompatible with each other. Postcolonialism in this instance is helping to understand the spatial relations today: “urbanization as colonization” (113).

This is What Revitalization Looks Like

This Chapter has so far moved towards a definition or set of definitions of settler colonialism and the relations that work to sustain it as a structure. Without controversy, settler colonialism is primarily about land: the acquisition of land, the creation of the notion of the empty lands, the transformation of land into property, and the continual act of giving the land new stories. Second, settler colonialism is not an event, but a confluence of relationships with land and structures that promote the settlers access to this land in perpetuity. Additionally, settler colonialism in its liberal democratic form, for Coulthard, is about the politics of recognition. As Markell notes, while recognition gives our identities and our lives texture and meaning, it also works to create injustice by elevating some and subordinating others (25-32). It is also important to acknowledge that settler colonialism involves gendered and sexualized violence, with Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls most horrifically exemplifying the explicit urban geographies of settler colonialism.

My aim now is to explore the transformative power of Indigenous Resurgence. Resurgence is about moving beyond recognition. For Alfred and Simpson, it is about a turning inward to rebuild an Indigenous identity, one that is not based on a romanticized

view of traditional life, but one that acknowledges the power of Indigenous epistemologies and cosmologies to have tremendous meaning and transformative power *now*. This resurgence is also the freedom to live life according to traditional ways on traditional territory. According to Alfred, an important aspect of understanding this resurgence is to frame it in the way that it is simply what all peoples want but it is especially difficult to achieve for Indigenous people to actualize today. The problem for Alfred, then, has been defined in a way that it makes it impossible to find its solution. In line with what I have been discussing, the settler state is reliant on the solution never being truly found (at least, not by the state).

Resurgence, at its core, lays bare the lie of the doctrine of *terra nullius*. It also forces a re-imagining of land. For Alfred, it is about addressing that cultural disconnect—the anomie of communities that are no longer “technically” being oppressed (as in the days of residential schools) but that are nevertheless suffering the grief and loss of a grounding cultural connection, to each other and to their traditional territories. Alfred argues that the disconnect results from “a great disjuncture of what this country says it is, and what it offers in terms of opportunities for Native people” (“Presentation on Indigenous Resurgence”). Therefore, resurgence requires a redefinition of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. This begins with the aforementioned re-creation of the relationship of Indigenous people with their traditional territories and languages and cultures. Essential to this process is “the recreation of the identity of the non-native people who came to this territory” (“Presentation”). Resurgence, then, is a *change* in not only Indigenous identity, but in settler identity as well. Working with the argument put forth by Coulthard, this change

cannot happen under the existing politics of recognition, nor can it happen under the existing ideals of what it means to be Canadian with its *fantasies* and its *apologies*. The politics of recognition does not achieve the end goal, and it does not lead to the ultimate goal of transformation. Ultimately, recognition (and reconciliation) ends up leading Indigenous people to participate in their own colonization.

In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I return to this idea of resurgence and look to where it is taking place here and now in the context of Toronto, and how it is done through an anti-colonial lens. My aim is to suggest that “revitalization” could be an opportunity to lay bare the lie of the doctrine of *terra nullius* if it were an *authentic* process that both struggled with and attempted to come to terms with the ongoing dispossession of settler colonialism. In the following two case studies of Chapter Three and Four, I will show how liberal, democratic and multicultural states craft and imagine social policies and planning—and urban revitalization is included and central here—of historical redress in the form of *fantasy* and *apology* in an “attempt to repair the fundamental or un-narratable violences that bring them (the state) into being” (Audra Simpson, “The Chiefs Two Bodies” lecture). This revitalizing results in histories that cannot be vigorously lived in the present, but that take the form of “good” policy and good intention.

CHAPTER THREE

The Fantasy of the Sweet Life on Toronto's Sugar Beach: City Building, Settler Colonialism and Slavery

And that's one of the reasons Sugar Beach has been so successful—it grabs our attention and helps us imagine the future of our revitalized waterfront.

— (Waterfront Toronto, 2014)

That Canada should remain a white man's country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons but is highly necessary on political and national grounds —(William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1908)

The Dual Fantasy Thesis

The first time I went to Sugar Beach, I was struck at how playful and “light” the space felt. It seemed to have a bluish and a youthful sense to it. In noisy, car-filled downtown Toronto, this was an oasis—a white sand beach in the middle of the city! It felt like a fantasy. As I began my research and read more of the materials promoting the site, I discovered that was exactly the point, to create a space that was in stark contrast to its surroundings. Sugar Beach is intended as a space that offers a “break” from the reality of our busy urban lives. The beach is a small patch of land where the city meets the lake. It has fine, white sand, iconic Muskoka chairs, pale pink umbrellas, a fountain and a big rock painted with a red ribbon of candy coloured stripes. It sits beside the functioning Redpath Sugar refinery. The colour palette is perhaps the most obvious contrast to the city. The pale colours offset the dark, deep lake and the shadows of an

active but aged and rusty refinery. Sugar Beach is described as follows in *Dwell Magazine*, a monthly magazine devoted to modern design:

Pink Umbrellas by Claude Cormier. Canada's Sugar Beach, located in downtown Toronto, offers a whimsical way to experience sand and water in an urban environment. To ratchet up the fun, Montreal designer Claude Cormier dreamed up these pink umbrellas to shade visitors in an area also featuring a colorful fountain display. The hues at Sugar Beach fit the name and contrasts the downtown core. (Newcomb, "Street Furniture")

The beach is formally called Canada's Sugar Beach (it received tripartite funding from all levels of government). The plaque located on site reads, "Canada's Sugar Beach transformed a derelict parking lot into an exciting waterside destination." As I spent more time on the beach, I began to think about fantasy spaces. When we create fantasy, it necessarily is in contrast *with* something else (e.g., an alternate reality). In this case, I wondered, a fantasy from what? What was Sugar Beach trying to offer an escape from? In the most obvious sense, it is an urban park. A place for people to come and relax and play (although not swim!) in the core of a bustling city. It is not the first of its kind either: urban man-made beaches (or artificial beaches as they are called in planning) have popped up in Paris, Vienna, Amsterdam, Shanghai, Copenhagen, Dublin and Madrid to name a few examples (CityLab *The Atlantic*). In another sense, however, I saw the beach as representing the future of a massive development project on the waterfront and therefore attempting to set the tone that the city (or the elites therein) and the country want to be headed in. I wondered, then, what Sugar Beach could tell us about nation building in the settler context? What was the role that urban renewal plays in crafting that story? What was being forgotten or, more specifically, what was the fantasy escaping from?

Two things struck me as I wandered Sugar Beach. Here was the beach and underneath it was land that most recently (in the eleven thousand years of Indigenous presence on the continent) could be claimed by the Anishinabeg (Mississauga of the New Credit). Here also was a beach that played tribute to *sugar*, a valuable commodity and a symbol of the legacy of the slave labour of the Americas. I wondered then how the beach might be a site that both materially and symbolically remains colonial? In this chapter, I reveal how the fantasy that is Sugar Beach represents the intertwined histories of indentured labour around the continent (including the forgotten slavery of Canada) and the land theft and dispossession from Indigenous nations that occurred in Toronto and beyond. I will show that these erased histories have been replaced by creating desire for a post-racial land where the sovereignty of the Crown remains unquestioned and the present day forms of settler colonialism remain obscured. As I will argue, these fantasies not only aid in settler nation building but they can be found literally built into the local geography of the city.

Referring to a national identity premised on the erasure of Indigenous histories, Bonita Lawrence plainly writes:

In order to maintain Canada's self-image as fundamentally "decent" people innocent of any wrongdoing, the historical record of how the land was acquired—the forcible and relentless dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the theft of their territories, and the implementation of legislation and policies designed to affect their total disappearance as peoples—must also be erased. (38)

Building on the notion of fantasy that I lay out in the following Chapter, and affirming Lawrence's characterization of Canadian's self-image as "fundamentally decent", I will argue in Chapter four that there is an accompanying apology that complements the

fantasy. The apology of the settler state arises in many forms such as state-sponsored reconciliation or in the paltry attempts at redistribution of wealth in neoliberal revitalization projects like the waterfront. But the apology also forms a crucial part of settler identity. Through the 'age of the apology', the Indigenous Other can effectively be assimilated and her grievances can be erased by gestures towards recognition. This not apologizing in the authentic way of, say, returning land, power and resources, but apologizing as Coulthard says in a "non-reciprocal" way, affirming that entitlements are always and already granted or withheld by the colonial state". Ultimately then, these hollower apologies result in a *marking* of Indigenous people precisely for their *loss* of sovereignty.

Sugar Beach is named as such because, amid the larger waterfront revitalization project, it sits beside Redpath's fully functioning sugar refinery in juxtaposition of Toronto's history as an industrial port city. I propose that this site, while promoted as a public park that "playfully" embraces the past, is in fact in the business of denying (one might say sugar-coating) the ongoing legacy of colonialism, land theft and slavery that "is locked within the national closet" (Cooper, "Secret Slavery" 254). Sugar Beach puts a gloss over this contested land but we are nonetheless haunted by these untold histories, legacies and tensions. Throughout this chapter I will ask what it means to come to grips with the ghosts of this haunting in urban spaces and how we can mobilize them in actualizing an anti-racist decolonization and Indigenous and diasporic peoples' resurgence in the present. Ultimately, I argue, settler colonialism as a structure is anchored by the ongoing attempts to obliterate Indigenous stories through the creation of fantasies about and with the land.

Two Fantasies Revealed

In this chapter I argue that there are two national, colonial fantasies revealed in the geographies of Sugar Beach: one, the fantasy of settler belonging on the land, and two, the existence of a post-racial and multicultural Canada. To start, I want to address belonging as the precursor to subsequent settler colonial perceived entitlements like sovereignty, continued unabated enclosures, a collective national heritage (that is non-Indigenous) and resulting settler identity formation. Of course, this belonging is not evenly cast. There appears to be spectrum of a sense of belonging (or rather, acceptance), and, to borrow from Amar Bhatia, a *just right* citizenship or what he calls a “Goldilocks citizenship” (“We Are All Here to Stay” 48). By this “Goldilocks” measure, Indigenous people have been here *too long* and some immigrants not *long enough* (migrant workers existing at the extreme end). In the middle, however, are the settlers who “are authorities on citizenship and belonging” (48) as they have been here for *just long enough*. Bhatia’s assertion here is not simply about “time of arrival” or about a denial of the settler’s right to be here. For Bhatia, this current notion of belonging has trespassed on the actual “treaty right to be here” (41). The recent Idle No More movement, embraced the “We Are All Treaty People” mantra echoing also, as Sakej Henderson argues, treaties are the original Canadian constitution (as quoted in Bhatia 54). For my purposes here, in order to effectively critique the prevailing but distorted notion of belonging as articulated by Sugar Beach, I argue that the fantasy found there is emblematic of a *forgetting* that we are all, in fact, treaty people. In the signing of treaties and crucial to all treaties was a *relationship* of coexistence, or as Nihiyow (Cree)

lawyer Harold Johnson argues, “we’re are all relatives now; stuck with each other” (Bhatia 64).

What is the shape of this skewed settler belonging then? How is this belonging evidenced in urban renewal and public space like Sugar Beach as a departure from the treaty relationship? As laid out in Chapter One, the settlement of Toronto is rife with broken promises and dispossession. The history of the city is one of a broken relationship with the region's original inhabitants. First, because this belonging is reserved for only those just right citizens and often denied in full to racialized immigrants and diasporic peoples who are given only a tenuous acceptance. These not-just-right citizens do not accrue the full wealth from the land in terms of health, income disparity, labour market discrimination, and civic participation (Galabuzi, Canada's Economic Apartheid). This belonging is not that which was bestowed to original settler treaty people, and treaty people are neither bestowed with the right to “undermine the treaties” (Bhatia 60). The myth or fantasy of belonging found in urban renewal is a belonging in a different way than was articulated and agreed upon in treaty. It perpetuates a normalized, unequal and lopsided relationship between settlers and the land, and with Indigenous nations.

The second fantasy revealed on Sugar Beach is that of the North Star, a post-racial and multicultural Canada. This fantasy is premised on the ongoing denial of the history of slavery coupled with the collective back-patting that Canada is a safe haven for racialized migrants. This, as George Lipsitz writes in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, “denies the long histories and contemporary realities of segregation, racialized social policies, urban renewal, or the revived racism of contemporary neo-

conservatism” (viii). In terms of the fantasy of the North Star—as it is revealed in urban revitalization and public space such as Sugar Beach—similar processes of *forgetting* inform city building in Toronto. As I will argue, not only is Canadian slavery and historical examples of white supremacy in Canada conveniently left out of our public space, but the language of inclusion is proffered in a city²² that is increasingly divided along economic and racial lines (Hulchanski “Three Cities Within”). This less than ideal reality is continually muddled by official multiculturalism and Canada’s apparent contrast to our neighbours to the south. I do not want to suggest, however, that city-building in this sense is a top down process. Diasporic peoples and Indigenous peoples (as I explore in final chapter) are attempting to meet Coulthard’s call for moving beyond the politics of recognition with their “own transformative praxis to find their own liberation” (“Subjects of Empire” 6). I will return to this notion of transformation at the end of this chapter in order to examine ways in which parks and public spaces can be transformative spaces instead of spaces haunted by repressed histories and violence.

The forging ahead with the settler mandate to interpellate the land is only part of the story. In my analysis of Sugar Beach, I aim to expose the particular Canadian fantasy that racism never happened here. Canadians sometimes congratulate ourselves for the multiculturalism of today and define ourselves in opposition to the racism south of the border in the United States. Sugar Beach, the site itself, has, as Sherene Razack writes of settlers developing land, a “manifestly racial story” (*Race, Space, and the Law* 2). Furthermore, as the beach is part of the settler city:

Race has thus taken up residence, not just in the well-explored statutes, policies, language and other social infrastructures of settler colonial societies. It has also

²² The official slogan of the City of Toronto is “Diversity our Strength.”

found permanent residence in settler colonial landscapes and cityscapes, where racially coded legacies continue to generate contests over the ownership and belonging of space. (Edmonds 3).

While I am not interested in a demographic sketch of the beach's users, I do want to attend to the ways that the space has been whitened in its marketing and in the discourses around it. Sugar Beach, it seems, has been washed in whiteness, bleached like sugar. And beaches of course, along with recreation spaces in general, have long been places of exclusion for racialized bodies (Nixon, *Slow Violence*). Drawing on current research in geography focusing on parks and public spaces, I join the call for the need for further research on, as Byrne and Wolch note, the ways that "researchers rarely consider how ethno-racial formations might configure park spaces themselves—and how in turn ethno-racially inscribed park spaces may influence park-use or non-use" (33-36). I want to make a call, then, for the imagining and making of transformative parks, which give space to acts of transformation as the new fantasy in urban areas. I believe that the Canadian environmental justice literature/movement is a possible home for this literature/praxis to develop.

Threads and Themes from the Interviews

Along with a close reading of the promotional material, grey literature and media accounts of the site, I conducted a series of interviews in 2014 with some of the key actors involved with the design and implementation of the Sugar Beach project. I spoke to people who had both a business and design role to play in the beach's conception and implementation. The goal of these interviews was to wrestle out some themes that

ran through how the space was conceived, is perceived, how it comes to terms with its past, and how it mediates or shapes social interactions.

The design of the beach was the result of a competition put on by Waterfront Toronto. Three design firms applied with proposals, and it was a Montreal firm, Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes Inc., who submitted the winning bid. According to the jury report, the concept of “Sugar Beach” based on the “industrial heritage of the adjacent Redpath Sugar Factory” was very well received (Waterfront Toronto, “Sugar Beach Jury Report”). Sugar Beach actively “embraces” the industrial past and present of the site. As opposed to “pretending it never happened” (Interview 1), the beach celebrates the “fun element of watching the boats come in and smelling the sweet smells of the refining process” (Interview 1). Through these interviews, I found prevalent themes that aid in the authoring of fantasy and also hint at the ‘search for authenticity’. Fundamentally, the research reveals a space that was perceived as both unimproved—a wasted patch of commons land—and, in contradiction, a space that “had a history” that needed to be authentically captured in the re-design. Both of these two discourses surrounding revitalization and the creation of spaces like Sugar Beach in the context of settler colonialism reflect the national fantasies of settler belonging and a post-racial Canada.

A tertiary theme revealed in my interviews was the notion of a “grand vision” put forth by Waterfront Toronto. At first glance, this “grand vision” results from an assemblage of best practices in “sustainability,” public consultations, market demands, and planning scholarship. In order to execute this grand vision, Waterfront Toronto must be able to withstand the cyclical politics of the day which suggest that, in order to both

symbolically and materially change this space, the project needed to be taken out of a democratic process itself and into a corporate one.²³ One subject revealed;

We can withstand elections, we can withstand all sorts of different changes because we are a corporation, so just with that context in mind, we are able to look at the waterfront quite a bit more holistically with an aim to a long term revitalization project, because let's face it, this is not an overnight endeavor.
(Interview #1)

This quote reveals that in order to execute the “grand vision” of this mega-project and also *change* the conception and the materiality of the land, Waterfront Toronto must operate outside the confines of the traditional democratic planning structure and more in a neoliberal technocratic realm of managerialism. This is an example of what Erik Swyngedouw has called the *post-political city* where urban spaces become devoid of political debate and contestation and instead dominated by so-called pragmatism and neoliberal governmentality (Swyngedouw “The Post-Political City”). I argue that positioning Waterfront Toronto in this way, fosters a depoliticized and post-political framing of the space (Swyngedouw 604), works to negate contestation and thus further entrenches the settler fantasies of settler belonging and a post racial Canada. This is aided by a history of pathologizing the waterfront and therefore creating a site in need of perpetual change and revitalizing, a site needing to be scrubbed clean of both contestation and histories of violence.

Waterfront Toronto is therefore granted far sweeping discretionary powers with regard to its “development”.

²³ Having said this, Waterfront Toronto partners with government and is committed to a great deal of transparency. However, it must remain revenue neutral by selling land and development opportunities to the private sector. It is thus a quasi-public corporation, whose bottom line and ultimate survival is determined by the market.

I will now will further describe the geographic and historic site of Sugar Beach. I will then move to exploring the fantasies of settler belonging and a post-racial Canada that I argue are both materially and symbolically present in the revitalized site. Drawing on excerpts from interviews, grey literature and observations from site visits, I argue that these fantasies and their reflection in revitalization offer a distinctly urban mode of settler colonialism.

The Beach

“Sugar Beach has been engaging our imaginations since it opened in July 2010,” proclaims Waterfront Toronto. Located at the foot of Lower Jarvis Street, just south of the Oldtown and St Lawrence Market neighborhoods of the downtown core of Toronto, Sugar Beach is a small triangular-shaped artificial beach. Before 2009, the site was a parking lot and home to container storage of raw sugarcane coming in from South and Central America to be processed at Redpath (Redpath Sugar museum plaque). The beach was unveiled at the beginning of the waterfront revitalization project as one of the “public-realm” visions at a cost of fourteen million dollars to build (Waterfront Toronto, “Public Realm”) (a comparatively large price tag considering the size of the space). According to the documentary materials and interview data, the beach’s intended users would come from pre-existing local neighbourhoods and also the new housing development in the area, which contains mostly high-end condominiums. More importantly, as it was suggested to me on multiple occasions, the beach is intended to be a destination for those all around the city and tourists alike.

The surrounding neighbourhoods under construction are comprised of expensive condos flanking the Beach. Pier 27 Condominiums will be one of the adjacent neighborhoods. The promotional materials are telling and describe: “Pier 27 luxury condominiums—Where earth meets water, global perspectives converge” (CondoSky), and “Toronto's new landmark sculpture of glass and steel right on the water's edge, possessing a commanding international presence. The Presidential Collection has finally been released!” (CondoSky). Recently, *Toronto Life*, in their annual and self-admittedly unscientific analysis of the neighbourhoods in the city, call the housing stock on the waterfront as the “best” in the city.²⁴

Sugar Beach, then, presents a full sensual experience. One can sit and smell the “sweetness” of the refinery, watch and hear the boats come into harbour, and feel the sand in between your toes and the wind in your hair. One can also look around to the luxury that surrounds the beach and desire to be a part of the small fraction of the population who can afford to live near its white sand. This site, like sugar itself, attempts to create the desire for *more*. I wondered, what role does the past play in the creating of this desire? Why is desiring the land necessary to maintain the presence of settlers?

²⁴ Notably, the “worst housing stock” in the city is Regent Park, an often pathologized and racialized neighbourhood comprised of lower income and subsidized housing. For this disparity, poverty activists in Toronto have also criticized the waterfront development (OCAP). I explore this disparity in much greater detail in Chapter Four.

Redpath Sugar and the American Sugar Refining Group

Redpath Sugar was originally located on the bank of the Lachine Canal in Montreal, and was the first refinery of its kind in Canada, using sugar cane imported from the British West Indies. Its construction was part of the economic boom that, during the nineteenth century, turned Montreal from a small town to the largest city in Canada and the country's economic engine (Redpath Museum). In 1857, Peter Redpath became a partner and, in 1930, Redpath Sugar merged with Canada Sugar Refining Company Limited of Chatham, Ontario. The Redpath Sugar Refinery was built at its current site on the Toronto waterfront in the late 1950s at the time of the completion of the Saint Lawrence Seaway. In the same decade, Tate and Lyle, the British sugar empire that consolidated the Caribbean sugar industries—an industry built entirely on the backs of slaves and indentured labour—acquired Redpath. In 2010, both Redpath and Tate and Lyle were sold to the American Sugar Refining Group (ASRG). Given its history, sugar is not only a metaphor for global colonial capitalism, as Sidney Mintz argues, but here in Toronto it signifies the remnants of Indigenous dispossession mixing with slave and indentured labour that was and continues to be rendered invisible on the waterfront.

The story of sugar is a story of labour, dispossession and a powerfully emergent globalized economy with empire at its centre. Anthropologist Sydney Mintz details the following facets in the story of sugar in his seminal; *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, published in 1985. At the time of its rise in the 1800s, sugar was as crucial to the economy as oil is today. It is also a story of the first global commodity that was produced in one place and shipped and consumed in another (49). This trade made possible a consumer who was not witness to the labour and

geographies that produced the commodity. Sugar exemplifies a commodity that played a role in the creation of empire, slave labour and metropolitan consumption. Mintz illustrates the impact of sugar succinctly here:

The English people came to view sugar as essential; supplying them with it became as much a political as an economic obligation. At the same time, the owners of the immense fortunes created by the labor of millions of slaves stolen from Africa, on millions of acres of the New World stolen from the Indians – wealth in the form of commodities like sugar, molasses, and rum to be sold to Africans, Indians, colonials, and the British working class alike – had become even more solidly attached to the centers of power in English society at large...What sugar meant, from this vantage point, was what all such colonial production, trade, and metropolitan consumption came to mean: the growing strength and solidity of the empire and of the classes that dictated its policies (157).

Mintz details the immense impact of the commodity here on global demographics with the ‘moving’ of millions of slaves to the new world:

Sugar – or rather, the great commodity market which arose demanding it – has been one of the massive demographic forces in world history. Because of it, literally millions of enslaved Africans reached the New World, particularly the American South, the Caribbean and its littorals, the Guianas and Brazil (71).

Therefore, the producing of sugar and consumption of sugar has led to the persistent need to displace and exploit a globalized labour force and has a remarkably massive impact on the economic, political, cultural and colonial shape of the world (Mintz, “Sweetness and Power”). The production of sugar today continues to be marred with horrendous labour practices.²⁵ On the Toronto waterfront, I posit that sugar continues to

²⁵ Although it is beyond the scope of this study, slavery and indentureship is arguably ongoing today as sugarcane production in Brazil—where most of Redpath’s raw sugar is sourced—has come under great scrutiny for deplorable labour conditions sometimes characterized as modern-day slave labour. Reporter Brazil, a national NGO, along with the International Labour Organization have been the most vocal on this point (ILO, Reporter Brazil).

work as a powerful meta-narrative as one of the many erased stories of settler colonialism in contemporary Canada.

Fantasy One: Settler Belonging on the Land and Clear Title

Sugar Beach, as it exists in its marketing, is a selective embracing of the past. It fits neatly into the overall goal of the waterfront revitalization of attracting investment and transforming “wasted space” (*terra nullius*) into “productive space”. There is an intimate connection between ‘destination’ and ‘desire revealed here. According to Waterfront Toronto:

We wanted to employ a sort of parks-first and public realm-first mentality. What that would do was enable us to build out public spaces, even before anyone was living there at the beginning of construction seems somewhat counter intuitive, but what it does is, it shows people that: (a) parks and public realm are a critical and important part of our waterfront; (b) but it does something very much on the business side, where it starts to show that the community is livable and viable and, and it's where we want to be. So Sugar Beach was one of the first parks identified under the precinct plan for East Bayfront, so that's our planning work that we did upfront, on how the community should be built, how it should be laid out, where the public parks would make sense, and Sugar Beach was one of those in the precinct plan. And, so it's a fairly small space, and we were able to move forward with designing it and building it pretty quickly. (Interview 2)

As the interviewee makes clear, following the desire to transform, hopefully of course, comes investment. The logic behind unveiling the beach at the beginning of the twenty-five-year-long project was to attract this investment. This showed that despite (and, in fact, *because of*) the site's industrial past and present, the area would be a sound place to both invest in and live. Further to this, the interview revealed that Sugar Beach was designed more to be a destination park instead of one for regular local use. While the

beach satisfied the 25% rule (25% of each precinct under the thumb of Waterfront Toronto is supposed to be given over to the public realm [Interview 2]), does it truly satisfy the park needs of the local communities?

Sugar Beach was designed and built quickly to attract investment and create a sense of place: “where people will simply want to be.” It was meant as a fun and “whimsical” way to garner attention for the waterfront development as a whole. The stated logistics of the project, however, are distant from what many critical urban scholars and those using an environmental justice lens see as the purpose of a public park. Instead of being a place where people can engage in recreation, where people can eat together, where kids from the surrounding neighbourhoods can come and play, Sugar Beach is a place with few trees, dangerous proximity to unguarded water and scant opportunities for recreation beyond sunbathing by privileged young adults. From an environmental justice perspective, which includes access to public green space, Sugar Beach fails to contribute the greening of the area. My time on Sugar Beach witnessed people coming in and out of the space, observing it more as spectacle, a destination “to be.” Destinations like Sugar Beach attract investment, and investment means the bolstering of property values.

In a deeper way, though, this desire and destination aid in the creation of ideology and meaning in a given space and work to create powerful discourses around the land. In particular, Sugar Beach speaks to the settler desire for ultimate legitimacy and sovereignty over the land. This “fantasy of entitlement,” as Mackey calls it (“Apologizers” 52), is born from the assertion that despite Indigenous claims to land, underlying title always belongs to the Crown. Desire and destination, in the settler

colonial sense, hinge on a *terra nullius*. The doctrine of *terra nullius* rested on the conclusion that land could be lawfully claimed by the settler who could render the land productive with labour (Culhane *The Pleasure*). This doctrine underpins the Canadian state today. Although presently *terra nullius* is not the governing legal doctrine in Canada, the debates over Aboriginal title, as defined by today's colonial courts, engender a closer look at this assumption.

Settler Desire and Dispossession

Julie Sze's recent work, *Fantasy Islands: Dreams and Ecological Fears in an Age of Climate Crisis* focuses on the Chinese island of Chongming near Shanghai, which was set to become the world's first eco-city, but it ultimately failed. Sze contends that the building of this "fantasy island" and the growth of the discourse of an "ecological Shanghai" was an attempt to mythologize and manage "worldwide anxieties about two major—and interlinked—transformations: the changing global economic order and the problems of climate change" (6). She goes on to argue that while these discourses are shaped by international actors and have national contexts, they "are operationalized in the local landscapes" (6). Sze places "fantasy island" in the language of "think global, act local," which in its simplest form is fundamentally about scale. Scale for critical geographers is a foundational concept by which to understand economic globalization and attendant global environmental issues. However, for my purposes here, employing language of scale aids in understanding the settler creation of desire on Sugar Beach. Sugar Beach animates the twin fantasies that I present here and helps to tell the "story"

of Canada and its need to continually assert settler belonging and underlying crown title while also asserting the second fantasy of universal inclusion.

To animate the importance of placing this tiny patch of beach into the scale of settler desire I again employ the work of Patrick Wolfe. While distinguishing settler colonialism from other forms of colonial relationships, Wolfe argues that “invasion is a structure, not an event” (274). He proposes that settler colonialism is a structure in two ways: as continuity through time and as a complex global network. In this sense, the structure remains long after the destruction and attempted elimination of an Indigenous culture. It remains in the act of replacement with a “new” society. I want to go further than Wolfe here, however, by arguing that this structure, as Sze contends, is “operationalized in local landscapes (8)” and therefore it has both a temporal and spatial manifestation.

The fantasy of belonging has been securely cemented into being through and with the law. Much of the contestation over Crown sovereignty and so-called Aboriginal rights have been played out in the courts—with mostly mediocre results for Indigenous communities (Coulthard). Ultimately, however the problem has been framed incorrectly in order to benefit settlement and entitlement to land (Asch “On Being Here”). In his description of the landmark case of Supreme Court of Canada case *R. v. Van DerPeet*, Michael Asch takes issue when the sovereignty of the Crown goes undisturbed and proof of Aboriginal rights is required:

This logically ought not be the case, if for no other reason than that the political rights of Indigenous peoples already existed at the time that Crown sovereignty was asserted and, therefore, it is the question of how the Crown gained sovereignty that requires reconciliation with the pre-existence of Indigenous societies and not the other way around. (*On Being Here to Stay* 11)

In this sense, and many have leveled the same critique, it is the Crown that gets to determine Aboriginal rights. On Sugar Beach, the ways in which Waterfront Toronto controls the narrative of the past use of the space and where the space is headed in the future, the sovereignty of the Crown that enables that storytelling remains undisturbed.

On Sugar Beach, and similar revitalization projects in the settler city context, the unquestioned sovereignty of the Crown is also intimately bound to Swyngedouw's post political city that I describe above. Contestation and political debate, or relatedly, questioning of Crown title, power and ability to narrate the land remains uncontested on the waterfront. Not only then do Sugar Beach and the waterfront revitalization more broadly fit into the post-political and neoliberal frame that Swyngedouw illustrates, this frame works in tandem with the definition of settler colonialism as a structure with Crown sovereignty undisturbed. The fantasy of settler belonging is matched then with emerging structures to silence democratic debate in planning and creates iconic sanitized spaces meant to draw investment to further develop and appropriate the land.

Fantasy Two: A Post-Racial Canada

Why was Sugar Beach one of the first sites unveiled in this twenty-five-year, multi-billion-dollar urban renewal project? Apparently, Sugar Beach brings a lost "soul" to the neighbourhood. After the ribbon cutting, John Campbell, the CEO of Waterfront Toronto, opined that a waterfront that does not embrace its industrial and "working" past and present lacks soul:

Industry is part of the "theatre of the harbour" and people like the authenticity that it brings. I've been to a lot of waterfronts around the world, and those that are the most boring are those that have raised everything and started from scratch, with

just condos and sailing slips. Boring. There's no soul. ("Redpath Sugar is Staying Put")

But what is the "soul" of which John Campbell speaks? What is the "authenticity" that attracts people to a particular place, or grounds and anchors people in a particular place? Despite what Campbell may suggest here, condos make up the majority of the buildings set to go up on the waterfront with 1,800 new condo units in the East Bayfront alone (Waterfront Toronto). Along with condos, the Beach is also neighbours with a large media corporation building. While integrating industry is said to revive a certain "soul", my site visits revealed a rather desolate and commercial space equipped with surveillance cameras and parking lots (see photo in appendix #). Regardless, one interviewee commented on how Waterfront Toronto is driven by this need to capture the "soul" of the sites it develops, and that drive informs the revitalization vision as a whole:

I think Waterfront Toronto is deliberately trying to set up a new model, going about things differently, not just sort of planning where you need to have a school, and have this or that like an abstract level of requirements. But it kind of responds to the site. There still has to be all those other things, planning is still important. But it's not just the generic, white washing everything to meet the planning. It responds to the site. And that's what Waterfront Toronto is trying to do. It's what we try to do! And totally the inspiration was on that first moment—the experience of that location (Sugar Beach). Not to trying to just generalize it. (Interview 2)

The "soul" however was not to be found in the "authentic" acknowledgment of the history of slavery, indentureship and land theft that gave rise to the settlement of the Toronto waterfront. The right of the white settler to occupy the white sand beach is never questioned. And yet, we count on industrial past to provide "soul" but even then it

is cleansed to produce a playful, sweet and candy-coated remembering of history. History is given a nod but not a full interrogation; industry provides the “theater” without acknowledgement of oppression and struggle. Thus, the ongoing settlement process that fuels the growth of Toronto as a global city does not question its shaky foundations. Sugar Beach in this sense becomes the promise of the new frontier, The Sweet Life. It achieves this by purposefully negating the excluded souls that also haunt the site. It is this erasure, I argue, that is an explicitly racialized endeavor. Such a selective embracing of the past is a crucial part of settler hegemony on the land.

Racial Space-Making in Settler Colonies

In their work *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* (2010), Banivanua-Mar and Edmonds open by stating that colonialism between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries has created “a profound and extensive rearrangement of physical spaces and peoples” (1). They proceed to describe the settler colony today as often multicultural and underwritten by a continued (if unbalanced) negotiation with Indigenous populations, which should be viewed as a “distinct form, with specific political and material effects” (5). With these effects in mind, they argue that “little scholarly work attends to the local, particular and often violent historiographies in settler colonies themselves on the ground, the very micro-conditions which underpin, produce and reinforce settler spaces in our nominally postcolonial societies” (2). My goal here is to address the “micro-conditions” found in revitalization projects.

Renisa Mawani argues that settler colonies were necessarily premised on racial comparisons, and the resulting hierarchies, in an effort to secure European superiority. The producing of superiority requires continuous attention and re-articulation. Moreover, Mawani (along with others such as Omi and Winant) argue that "race" phenotypes and markers of bodies were the result of, and crucial to, the colonial encounter and imperial rule. Therefore "race" in this sense becomes a byproduct of the imperial project and resides in our communities today, most pointedly as a problematic underpinning of Canadian multiculturalism (Bannerji 2000). As a corollary, in the context of racialization in the settler colony, Wolfe asserts that "racialization represents a response to the crisis occasioned when colonizers are threatened with the requirement to share social space with the colonized" (275). Along with the necessity of creating a racial hierarchy, when taking the land, the settler is in the process of creating a selfhood through dispossession. Wolfe writes that "the taking and the remaking as it were, helps define the settler and thus the nation" ("Settler Colonialism and Elimination" 390). At Sugar Beach, the fantasy of settler belonging and a post-racial Canada is forged in a past where slavery and racism did exist. Further, this cleaves closely to settler identity making and both reside in a racialized hierarchy.

Slavery in Canada

Part of this national identity-making project is the promotion of the belief that Canada was a safe haven for escaped slaves—this narrative is part of the bedrock of today's multiculturalism policy. To maintain this aspect of national identity there needs to be a great distance from the past and a wholesale forgetting of the slavery practiced

here in Canada. Well-known poet and historian Afua Cooper writes that “slavery is Canada's best kept secret, locked within the national closet” (*Angelique* 68). The myth that Canada was a safe haven—a place where American slaves escaped through passage on the Underground Railroad from 1830-1860—is included in school curriculums, Heritage Canada commercials (Citizenship and Immigration Canada), and various memorials and plaques throughout the east coast and southwestern Ontario. The public message is clear: Canada was the North Star to freedom. But, in fact, slavery did happen here.

The most comprehensive historiography of slavery in Canada is Marcel Trudel's work, *Canada's Forgotten Slaves: 200 Years of Bondage*. Now fifty years old, the text is still considered remarkable in that Trudel uncovers 4,200 slaves in New France and their histories through previously unpublished archival work. The book exposed the great pains that the church, academia and generations of governments took to cover up the history of slavery in New France, and it remains controversial in Quebec today (Everett-Green “200 Years a Slave”). Along with Trudel, some of the prominent scholarship working to expose the history of Canadian slavery comes from Afua Cooper, Katherine McKittrick, and the poetry and plays of George Eliot Clark.

Slavery was legal for two centuries in New France and Lower Canada under British rule from 1628 to 1833. Cooper reminds us, “the White settlers who colonized Canada during both the French and English periods were indeed slaveholders” (69). Indentured people were owned by people across the spectrum in Canada, governors, bishops, military personnel, and nuns. James McGill, the founder of McGill University, owned slaves (Trudel). While Canada did not know slavery on the industrial scale of

rural labour (in that its economy was not reliant on it as in the United States, although it still benefited greatly from it), the slaves in New France were often in cities working in homes. Seventy-seven percent of slaves in Canada lived in urban areas, and they, according to Trudel, were symbols of urban prestige. Despite this history, as Cooper argues, people of African descent, both free and enslaved, do not form the national history on the frontier or in cities (69). So while the freedom offered to escaped slaves from the United States is very much a part of the Canadian story, those slaves (aside from the deserved icons propped up by the story of the Underground Railroad) are also often excluded. Problematically, it is often the Canadian state and white abolitionists who are portrayed as heroes (as in the popular Underground Railroad Canadian Heritage Minutes video). In fact, as Abigail Bakan reminds us, it was slaves themselves that created the network: “the Underground Railroad was in fact the product primarily of the struggle for self-emancipation of American black slaves” (3).

Slavery in Canada had a different composition from the US as well. Trudel writes:

About two-thirds of the slaves in Quebec were native people, mostly from the Pawnee nations of modern-day Nebraska, whose French Canadian name—known as *Panis*—became a synonym for an indigenous slave of any origin. Black slaves were known as *bois d'ébène* (ebony wood), or *pièce d'Inde* if they were in prime condition. Blacks, being harder to get, were about double the cost of indigenous merchandise. Slaves of all kinds were sold at auctions and advertised in newspapers, including the Montreal Gazette, which had slaves in its print shop. (4)

Black slaves were considered more physically resilient than their *Panis* counterparts.

When settlers in New France came to the conclusion that they did not have enough labour to effectively settle the land and build the economy and seeing the prosperity from slave labour in New England, a petition was sent to King Louis XIV. Cooper writes:

In 1688, bowing to pressure from the settlers, the governor, Marquis de Denonville, and the intendant, Jean Bochart de Champigny, wrote to Louis XIV, requesting permission to introduce Black slaves into the colony. Their letter reflects the concerns of the settlers: “Labourers and servants are so scarce and costly in Canada that those who attempt extensive work are ruined in consequence. We believe that the surest means of obviating this difficulty would be to bring here Negro slaves. (72)

The King consented and, by 1701, slavery was more commonplace. Black slaves were not coming fast enough and so settlers relied on Native allies to capture and sell slaves from Americans (80). French colonists also legally bought slaves from their American counterparts, from New York, New England, and the Carolinas (73).

Slaves also came from the West Indies and Africa. The French empire in the West Indies was rooted in sugar production and the Code Noir regulated and legitimated slavery there. Although never binding authority in Canada, French colonists abided by it in their treatment of slaves, albeit in a selective fashion (75). Cooper explains that “Canada's colonial officials therefore used the Code Noir to give legal foundation to slavery. Under the Code Noir, persons could be declared as ‘movable’, that is personal property, in the same category as livestock, furniture, and trade goods” (75). New France did, in fact, have the longest and most developed slave economy. However, and despite historical assumption to the contrary, the British supported the ownership of slaves and it intensified once the British officially “claimed” Canada as theirs after defeating France. Slaves in Upper Canada were instrumental to settlement of the land as “they felled trees, made roads, opened highways and worked as domestics, nannies and farm labourers” (92). I will now turn to the mythology of the

Underground Railway and its use to bolster not only the continued settlement of the land, but also the Railroad's contribution to the fantasy of the post racial Canada.

The North Star

Despite this often ignored legacy of slavery, Canada has been long celebrated as the "North Star," the destination point and the rescuer of slaves through the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad is the network of people and safe houses that secretly moved 30,000 people to Canada in the nineteenth century.

Speaking of the period, in the 1967 Massey Lectures, Dr. Martin Luther King states:

Canada is not merely a neighbour to Negroes. Deep in our history of struggle for freedom Canada was the North Star. The Negro slave, denied education, dehumanized, imprisoned on cruel plantations, knew that far to the north a land existed where a fugitive slave, if he survived the horrors of the journey, could find freedom. The legendary underground railroad started in the south and ended in Canada. The freedom road links us together. Our spirituals, now so widely admired around the world, were often codes. We sang of "heaven" that awaited us, and the slave masters listened in innocence, not realizing that we were not speaking of the hereafter. Heaven was the word for Canada and the Negro sang of the hope that his escape on the underground railroad would carry him there. One of our spirituals, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," in its disguised lyrics contained directions for escape. The gourd was the big dipper, and the North Star to which its handle pointed gave the celestial map that directed the flight to the Canadian border. ("Conscience for Change" CBC 1)

This popular quote is retold in mainstream Canadian media almost on a yearly basis coinciding with Martin Luther King Day.

While King himself would likely have argued that the Underground Railroad was a product of American slaves themselves, and not as result of any actions from the

state including the Canadian one, that piece of history has long been co-opted by the Canadian state and works to eclipse the earlier practices of slavery. Cooper writes:

In the story of North American slavery, we associate Canada with freedom or refuge because during the nineteenth century, especially between 1830 and 1860, the period known as the Underground Railroad era, thousands of American runaway slaves escaped to and found refuge in the British territories to the north. Therefore, the image of Canada as “freedom land” has lodged itself in the national psyche and become part of our national identity. (xi-xviii)

The construction of the Canadian state as selfless helper, as a nation of benevolent peoples who are inclusive and multicultural, is comprised of many narratives like the Underground Railroad. In fact, those attributes, according to the fantasy, have been Canadian values since the beginning and have come to define “Canadianness.”

Katherine McKittrick, in *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, explains that:

In a post-slave context, this history has been extremely significant in the production of Canada's self-image as a white settler nation that welcomes and accepts non-white subjects. The history of the Underground Railroad has been one of the more important narratives bolstering perceptions of Canadian generosity and goodwill—of Canada’s and Canadians friendliness, neutrality and likability. (98)

There were clear political motives for embracing the notion of paternalistic British loyalists. Abigail Bakan argues that “as divisions among the colonies of the Americas threatened the hegemony of empire, Britain presented its role as not only colonial oppressor, but also as protector of its suffering subjects” (5). Bakan goes on to show that it is this paternalism that undergirds the loyalty to the Crown amongst the bourgeoisie of the time. Taking on a political economy lens, Bakan plainly states that the “British North American colonies served as a safe space for fugitive slaves as a result of *realpolitik*, meaning a pragmatic adjustment of political policies and ideological

norms to address immediate conditions, rather than as a feature of developed normative or ethical commitments” (8). For Bakan, along with Clarke, a rejection of racism, (never mind slavery or objections to the institution of slavery), had nothing to do with Canadian elite refusing to return the human “property” to the southern states. Instead it was capitalist competition that motivated Canadian elites to at least not “return” escaped human property. Bakan illustrates this economic motivation:

The benevolent despotism belied another reality. The emergent Canadian bourgeoisie was formed in identification with the British colonial and imperialist system. The emergent ruling class was eager to secure a defined market for a specifically Canadian capitalist and imperialist accumulation project. They opposed the encroachment of US capitalism not out of altruism, or goodwill to the victims of US expansion, but as capitalist competitors (Bakan, 6 “Reconsidering”)

McKittrick writes, “the history of the Underground Railroad in Canada is central to the nation’s legacy of racial tolerance and benevolence” (98). McKittrick goes on to note that the quest to “map” the Underground Railroad—to uncover the secret and subversive slave geographies—to bring forth “accuracy” and arrive at an end goal (i.e., the nation Canada) is a totalizing exercise that positions Canada (and the northern United States) as the stop to freedom. She gestures to the emancipatory language that surrounds the Railroad today:

This suggests then, that the historically present Railroad, once found, reveals sites of liberation, specifically within Canada, and/or the Northern United States. To put it another way, exploration, discovery, and gathering authentic facts are now, in the present, intimately bound up in the idea that we have mapped a route to freedom, and thus discovered liberation through unearthing spatial secrets, making black geographies purposeful, and with a clear concise, seeable direction. But in terms of geography, this means that liberty is necessarily coupled with seeable territoriality, the fixed primordial spots of finished business. (101)

On Sugar Beach there is this “finished business”. Sugar Beach sits on the shore of Lake Ontario in the Great Lakes region where many slaves “arrived to freedom” and where the struggle had apparently come to an abrupt stop. Sugar Beach is, as argued previously, emblematic of what McKittrick is suggesting: an uncontested geography that represents freedom. However, on this same site, we see the erasure of the history of slavery in Canada combined with the erasure of the slavery crucial to the building of the sugar industry. Despite this, slavery is present in every granule of sugar processed beside the Beach and also just up the street, at St Lawrence Market (where Chief Wabikinine came to sell his salmon), slavery prospered and “slave advertisements were circulated” (McKittrick “Freedom is a Secret” 105). Slavery then in the geographies of the Toronto waterfront, is everywhere.

The North Star and Contemporary Multiculturalism

Revitalization attempts an erasure of past time, and it produces a renewal and fantasy-infused geography where the histories of place are codified and marked by hegemonic forces. In fact, McKittrick suggests that urban space that is often pathologized is also indelibly linked to blackness; “blackness in the Americas is deeply connected to sites of environmental, social, and infrastructural decay” (“On Plantations” 5). These spaces are also the ones that get targeted for revitalization. In this process of revitalization, this process of “cleansing”, McKittrick argues these black spaces get transformed into “seductive and comfortable geographies of domination and ownership” (102). The revitalization at Sugar Beach draws on playful aesthetics and creates a fantasy geography to sugar-coat what is actually the culmination of historical processes

of slave labour and Indigenous dispossession which exists on multiple scales of labour and colonial geographies. Its use of the pale colours of sugary candy work to erase the interweaving legacies of exploited labour. It then becomes, as McKittrick suggests, the end point on the map of freedom. The beach creates desire for the undisputed territory of the “sweet life” that Canada can offer. It becomes a destination without a history of brutal slavery (like the United States); one that successfully comes to terms with its past and moves forward. The contemporary iteration of this imagined geography—where identities remain static, with no racist history to challenges or have been reconciled—is in the official policy of multiculturalism, which has become an effective tool to “manage” diversity (Bannerji “Dark Side” 22). Multiculturalism—with its euphemisms of ‘diversity’, ‘tolerance’ and ‘the mosaic’—is used in city slogans, Olympic games campaigns, in newspaper headlines and around the household. Unlike our British and American counterparts, who have no legislation in place, Canada officially designated itself with the Canadian Multicultural Act in 1971 and again in 1988. Below I will detail some of the central critiques of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism as a national policy has its roots in the demands of primarily European groups, the rise of Quebec nationalism and the desire to forge a national identity in the face of U.S. cultural dominance (see Goonewardena and Kipfer and Mackey). Lester B. Pearson commissioned the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission Report to deal with the festering tensions between French and English Canada. As a result of pressure from other Canadian groups, the Ukrainian-Canadians in particular, the mandate shifted from bilingualism to multiculturalism and was adopted as official policy in 1971. From the report, the two “founding” peoples were given equal

status while also recognizing the contributions made by other “ethnic” groups. As Mackey argues, however, the political undercurrent of the policy “extends the state’s recognition of multiple forms of difference, so as to undercut Quebec’s more threatening difference” (64). Multiculturalism officially mandated Indigenous populations as simply a third party with unique difference within the nation “founded” by the French and British (Mackay “House of Difference”). Once again Indigenous people were placed in a position where their communities and ties to the land were something of the past, locked away in treaties that, for decades to come, only lawyers and judges would interpret.

Multiculturalism as a framework resides at all levels of government with initiatives tailored to foster “diversity” in school boards, specialized grants to “ethnic” organizations, small businesses and the like. As Kipfer and Goonewardena point out, these initiatives and others like them, remain primarily fixed on ethno-cultural heritage, or the “visible and edible” multiculturalism co-opted by the marketplace (672). While the goal of the policy is to encourage, support and celebrate the “diversity” of the Canadian population, Kipfer and Goonewardena argue that both mainstream critics and supporters alike “operate with fundamentally culturalist conceptions of identity, while maintaining a symptomatic silence on socio-economic divisions” (674). They go on to state that the culturalist framework, which dominates discussion on multiculturalism, is one that clearly results from the commodification of difference, ignoring social divisions of class, gender and race (673).

Other scholars, however, see some potentially positive outcomes of multiculturalism as it is actually lived by people in the urban environment. Gilbert and

Wood, for example, argue that, “multiculturalism as practice holds the greatest potential for the expansion of the spaces of democracy” (686). In their spatial analysis, they assert that the urban experience in a place like Toronto, through the multiple interactions that occur in its public spaces, offers the chance “by forcing all of us, members of differentiated and dominant groups, to (re)consider our specific acts of recognition, gestures, accommodation, limits of our tolerance” (687). Although there is possibility for growth, as Gilbert and Wood briefly touch on, there are also the discourses of power and the racialization of public spaces that will condition those “interactions” of multiculturalism.

Towards A Radical Critique

Canadian multiculturalism is touted as a defining feature of “Canadian” identity. But how is identity shaped? How does a nation become defined? Who resides inside or outside of this discursive and “imagined community” (Anderson, *Imagined Communities*)? The radical critiques of multiculturalism offered up by Himani Bannerji position these and other questions raised by multiculturalism in a Marxist, anti-racist, feminist framework. Bannerji is a leading scholar in the areas of postcolonialism and feminist theory and is widely cited for her critiques on Canadian multiculturalism as they relate to gender, race and class. Bannerji begins her argument with the assertion that multiculturalism must be seen in one of two possible lights: one, the state-sponsored project of the elite (multiculturalism from above), and two, the bottom-up multiculturalism that offers a site of resistance to the hegemony of Anglo white-supremacy, class division and patriarchy (5-6). This counter-hegemonic movement from below relies on

the re-articulation of subject positions/identity in opposition to the aforementioned systems of domination.

In *The Dark Side of the Nation*, Bannerji focuses her critique of multiculturalism from above. She works from the starting point that national identity, race, gender and class are not natural phenomena that simply exist in static or fixed ways. They are the products of relations and systems of power that derive from ideological forces that seek to obscure the economic, social and political ways in which people are oppressed. Bannerji writes of the ethnicized nature of the apparent cultural pluralism that accompanies multiculturalism:

Ours is not a situation of co-existence of cultural nationalities or tribes within a given geographical space. Speaking here of culture without addressing power relations displaces and trivializes deep contradictions. It is a reductionism that hides the social relations of domination that continually create “difference” as inferior and thus signifies continuing relations of antagonism. (97)

Gunew echoes this point by stating that the word “multiculturalism” itself has become synonymous with racialized difference (41). If then, as Bannerji and Gunew suggest, multiculturalism signifies difference while obscuring power relations, then, as they also suggest, anti-racist work appears to be replaced by multiculturalism as it appears to celebrate diversity while creating difference and thinly-veiling systems of power and Anglo white supremacy. Bannerji articulates this point by further arguing that multiculturalism works to camouflage white supremacy in that it does not include objectives or instruments for actual anti-racism work (22).

Bannerji also seeks to unpack the language associated with multiculturalism such as “managing diversity,” “visible minority” and “tolerance.” All of these terms occlude whiteness while at the same time assume whiteness is the identity that the

Other is ultimately measured against. Whiteness is thus rendered invisible and unmarked, and, simultaneously, made the locus of power or the exalted-subject (Thobani). White bodies, therefore, become privileged and normalized. And save for an example like the Irish, white bodies have been relatively free from the burdens of racialization. Further, Frankenberg suggests that whiteness “is characterized by a set of cultural practices that are often unmarked and unnamed” (quoted in Mackey 93). This process of normalizing whiteness through multiculturalism is intimately linked to the argument I am making about the settler colonial fantasies present on Sugar Beach.

Where Two Fantasies Meet

I have argued that there are two national fantasies playing out on Sugar Beach. First, there is the fantasy of settler belonging on the land as underscored by the durable doctrine of *terra nullius*. Second, there is the myth of a post-racial Canada, a safe haven for diasporic peoples dispossessed from other lands and a place where slavery did not exist. These fantasies are not only intertwined but in fact reliant on each other as the labour was needed to settle the empty land. Proceeding one step further, and again drawing on Wolfe’s framing, I propose that these two mythologies are intrinsically tied to the persistent racializing that exists today. Wolfe argues that, in the American context, “it is no accident that the most durable names that have been applied to the two communities, Black (or Negro) and Indian, refer respectively to a bodily characteristic and a territorial designation” (“Settler Colonialism” 276). He contends that the processes of racialization as they applied to Blacks and Indians in the United States were means of designating the role that those bodies played in the structures of labour and land. To put it in other words, the “one drop” rule that deemed a person Black “blood” or if they

had any Black ancestry was utilized for the purpose of expanding the pool of slave labour. The greater the number of Black bodies, the greater the owner's wealth. On the other hand, while if an Indian had white blood, they lost title to land (the less the number of Indians able to claim land, the more land for settlers). In this sense, identity (blood lines) was marked for value (or elimination) in the colonial economy. Black blood signified free labour and Indigenous blood meant loss of land, both attributed to "settler colonialism's organizing grammar of race" (Wolfe "The Elimination" 387). Wolfe goes further to then establish that race is *made* through these identity markers thus helping to form the "logic of elimination". He writes:

Race cannot be taken as given. It is made in the targeting. Black people were racialized as slaves; slavery constituted their blackness. Correspondingly, Indigenous North Americans were not killed, driven away, romanticized, assimilated, fenced in, bred White, and otherwise eliminated as the original owners of the land but as *Indians* (388).

Wolfe goes on to contend that settler colonialism is primarily focused on territory and cultivating, often rapaciously, that territory is its prime objective. In order to do that, the twin "grammar(s) of race" have been applied to Black and Indigenous bodies.

Sugar Beach and the narratives that are lost beneath the imported sand tell a similar story. I have argued that these fantasies are in fact the necessary factor for identity formation in multicultural settler states. The fantasy of *terra nullius* (as it is seen in revitalization) works to achieve conquest of land and people in a way that is compatible with liberal democracies. To this point, Shiri Pasternak powerfully states:

From within what became the settler colonies, the inheritors of imperial sovereignty grapple with new moral problems brought on by the enduring eliminability of Indigenous peoples and their forms of life. They ask: how can people be rendered surplus to the national economy, even as their territories, resources, and jurisdiction remain central to its course? How can we blame

people for the poverty our dispossession caused, even while we deepen its source? How can we extinguish Indigenous nations while leaving their bodies alive?

Here, Pasternak astutely reminds us of the violence (and in this example, Pasternak focuses on fiscal violence) that faces Indigenous communities that appears, at first glance, to gel with liberal democracy. Similarly, I argue that contributing to this settler colonial mandate, “logic of elimination” (Wolfe) and enabling the continued “gelling” with liberal democracy is the maintenance of the twin fantasies as evidenced on Sugar Beach. As I proceed to Chapter four, I will contend that adjacent to the fantasy, in order to remain in line with liberal democracy, comes the apology. I conclude here with a look to how public spaces and parks such as Sugar Beach can instead be places of rebellion and resistance.

Parks as Transformative Spaces

‘...as we produce nature, so do we produce social relations’ (Katz and Kirby 268)

At the outset of this chapter, I asked what it means to come to grips with the ghosts of this haunting in urban spaces and importantly how can we mobilize them in actualizing an anti-racist decolonization and Indigenous resurgence in the present. In the concluding section of this chapter, I look at how parks have historically been theorized in geography in order to offer strategies of how move towards to a radical park-making project. I begin with an explanation of the benefits of parks, their distinct role in the settler colony and conclude with how parks themselves could be transformative spaces.

The benefits of urban parks on the health and well-being of a city's population is well known (Wolch, Byrne & Newell 234). Not only does green space promote physical

activity but it also promotes psychological well-being and general public health. In fact, the benefits are extraordinary. A recent study on trees in Toronto claims that garnered plenty of news coverage about the health benefits of tree cover asserts:

It is a known fact that urban trees improve air quality, reduce cooling and heating energy use, and make urban environments aesthetically more preferable. Importantly, several studies have shown that exposure to green spaces can be psychologically and physiologically restorative by promoting mental health, reducing non-accidental mortality, reducing physician assessed-morbidity, reducing income-related health inequality's effect on morbidity, reducing blood pressure and stress levels, reducing sedentary leisure time, as well as promoting physical activity. In addition, green space may enhance psychological and cardiovascular benefits of physical activity, as compared with other settings. (Karden et al 1)

However, the disproportionate benefits for white and affluent urban dwellers in terms of distribution of green space in North American cities is also well documented (Wolch, Byrne & Newell 235). The building of parks—and I would argue especially “destination” parks such as Sugar Beach—increases property values as well (Kardan 2) thereby creating a more affluent neighbourhood. Additionally, the building of parks in low-income neighbourhoods has led to gentrification in many urban contexts (Wolche, Byrne & Newell 235).

Many of my interview subjects spoke to the ‘innovative’ nature of Sugar Beach. For instance, it was seen as “new and fresh and European” (Interview 3). As Loukaitou-Sideris writes in “Urban Form and Social Context,” “past ideas and values about parks continue to dominate and determine their present design and programming” (89). Adding to this, as Byrne and Wolch and Newell argue, “park-making ventures have molded socio-ecological and ethno-racial relations of power within cities” (745). With these factors at play, space is often conceived of as a fixed container in which social

relations and practices play out in communities. It has often constructed then as a neutral, geographic entity that is depoliticized and passive (Stanley 1000). Space is thus normalized as being a reflection of the “experience of a usually white, masculine, heterosexual, bourgeois subject and therefore harbour(s) and reproduce(s) a liberal master subject whose unmarked and invisible body navigates through the world with all privileges intact” (Stanley 1000). Following Stanley’s line, a more critical understanding of space as being reproduced (both materially and symbolically) and including the impact of spatiality on difference-making has been explored in the last few decades by people such as Lefebvre, Soja, and Harvey. Echoing the contention of my thesis, then, public spaces and parks have had a long history of being whitened spaces that aid in the reproduction of inequality. I discovered on Sugar Beach, that a similar normalizing of whiteness was occurring at the same time a sanitizing of the legacies of violence that had previously authored the site. In this sense, I will build on Stanley’s assertion above and add to it that Sugar Beach is not only a reflection of the “experience of a usually white, masculine, heterosexual, bourgeois subject” but also reflective of the experience of the *settler subject*, with privilege to narrate and reap the benefits of the land remaining intact.

Parks: The Fantasy Unveiled

The history of parks is complex. Like any space, parks are often imbued with meaning and politics both in design and in use. “In the Nature of Things,” Katz and Kirby share that the essence of parks is “nature’s artifice—elaborate simulacra” (260). Beyond being a simulation of “nature,” parks were and remain today a mode of social control

(Katz and Kirby). While that control has ranged from healing the infirm to an attempt to increase democratic inclusiveness with a mingling of the classes, through time, state-built parks have often become places of exclusion and conflict (Byrne and Wolch). In Europe and across the Atlantic, many park-making projects have been contested by poor and racialized populations, most often due to displacement (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*). Central Park, as a notable example, was designed with the “Jeffersonian pastoral values—family, nature and social bonds” all the while excluding black and Hispanic people from the design of the park and also displacing the city’s poorest” (Byrne and Wolch 746).

Park-making also has a distinct history in the settler colony. The making of larger pristine parks has a long intertwined history in North America with the dispossession of Indigenous people and with putting settlers on the land. The ideals of wilderness and terra nullius aided in the large-scale national parks movement, especially in the United States. Mark David Spence writes in his book, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*:

Preservationist efforts did not succeed until the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, when outdoor enthusiasts viewed wilderness as an uninhabited Eden that should be set aside for the benefit and pleasure of vacationing Americans. The fact that Indians continued to hunt and light purposeful fires in such places seemed only to demonstrate a marked in-ability to appreciate natural beauty. To guard against these "violations," the establishment of the first national parks necessarily entailed the exclusion or removal of native people (4).

As Spence articulates above, Indigenous people’s existence became antithetical to preserving the Eden of National Parks. Their relationship to the land did conform to the ideals of the terra nullius that the settler state employed so broadly. With its history of creating or imparting a certain morality and civilizing ethos, parks are political spaces

in the settler context. The settler colonial project continues as park-making has and continues to rest on the myth of terra nullius, the continued presence of settlers and absence of Indigenous bodies. Ultimately, parks in this sense have been raced White. Byrne and Wolch write that “park makers constructed the park’s image as natural, sanctifying, wholesome, and White, counterpoising it against a city constructed as artificial, profane, insalubrious and coloured” (747). Parks also have and continue to require large-scale transformations of space, which is almost always disruptive of local flora and fauna (despite claims of harmonized natures of the “ecological parks” contemporary planning) (750).

In my analysis of Sugar Beach, I argue that while the space is positioned as a “public realm project” and a “whimsical park” (Waterfront Toronto) it is also, to borrow Byrne and Wolch’s notion, “neutral, sanctifying, wholesome and White” in the ways in which the fantasies of settler belonging and a post racial Canada are stitched into the geography of the space.

Conclusion: Parks as Transformative Space

In David Harvey’s *Right to the City* he writes,

Far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. *The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.* (2)

I want to focus further on Harvey’s assertion that “it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city” by arguing that parks—instead of fantasy moments frozen in time like

Sugar Beach—can be places of multiple, shifting, contested and lived identities resulting in inclusion and transformation. They can be places where people challenge and resist dispossession and decolonize city space. A recent realization of this radical transformation of public space was the 2011 Occupy movement. Occupy was a movement that began in New York City and primarily focused on the increasing and dramatic inequities produced by the market, the deregulation of the market, and the role the market plays in the authoring of public policy. David Harvey has called this “The Party on Wall Street” (“The Party of Wall Street”). Harvey does not shy away in his description of that “Party” here:

The Party of Wall Street has one universal principle of rule: that there shall be no serious challenge to the absolute power of money to rule absolutely. And that power is to be exercised with one objective. Those possessed of money power shall not only be privileged to accumulate wealth endlessly at will, but they shall have the right to inherit the earth, taking either direct or indirect dominion not only of the land and all the resources and productive capacities that reside therein, but also assume absolute command, directly or indirectly, over the labor and creative potentialities of all those others it needs. The rest of humanity shall be deemed disposable (1).

Beginning in Zuccotti Park near Wall Street in New York and spreading across North America and then to many places around the world (including St. James Park in Toronto), in David Harvey’s words, the Occupy movement went:

From city to city, the tactics of Occupy Wall Street are to take a central public space, a park or a square, close to where many of the levers of power are centered, and by putting human bodies there convert public space into political commons, a place for open discussion and debate over what that power is doing and how best to oppose its reach (“On Occupy” 1).

Occupy provides an example of the possibilities of transforming public space into places that recognize struggle and injustice and become places that bring forth, into the public realm, the history and present day realities that face many communities not benefiting from the spoils of the neoliberal city. Like Harvey and others, I argue then that parks, instead of being places where history is erased and contested, could be sites where memory as a *multiple* narrative is embraced. Public space envisioned and transformed in the ways that Occupy did, is a shifting canvass of storytelling that aids in the transformation of settler hegemony. Stories told in this public space are unfinished and fragmented, where the past can intermingle with the present in meaningful and anti-oppressive ways. Public space in revitalization projects is often cast in a similar way as museum space: a place to remember. Like museums, parks can be places where history is negotiated and present day life is reflected. It is important to remember that a public space that is in the business of forgetting the past, however, is also in the business of making the present more palatable. Therefore, to align with Coulthard's view of transformation and resurgence, the parks I imagine will be fashioned by people turning away from conventional public spaces to make their own. Occupation of public space is the primary step in this process as was witnessed during Occupy in 2011. Taking this one step further, this radical park-making could be an opportunity to enact a geographic rejection of the politics of recognition. In Chapter two, I look to Coulthard's critique of the politics of recognition. In his critique, he speaks to what recognition, when authentic, could look like. While engaging with Fanon, he reminds readers that it is through *conflict* and *struggle* against the colonizer whereby freedom is found. This freedom is from the "complexes" that arise from the colonial relationship, and without

this struggle, authentic freedom cannot happen. For Coulthard, this violent struggle comes in the form of what he calls *transformative praxis* (153). And it is here too where I see the potential of radical park-making. To put another way, when public spaces are places where contestation happens, where the multiple and fragmented stories of communities are laid bare, the spaces could become not authored by the state, but a living, breathing reflection of Coulthard's *transformative praxis*.

CHAPTER FOUR

Apology, Reconciling and Revitalizing: Pan Am/Para Pan Am Housing as a Symbolic Act

The settler's town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans can swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about...The settler's feet are protected by strong shoes although the streets of his town are clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly always full of good things. The settler's town is a town of white people; of foreigners. The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built on top of each other. The native town is a hungry town starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire.
(Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*)

Symbolic acts are crucially important, but they must not be confused with substance. When terminology, costume, and protocol are all that change, while unjust power relationships and colonized attitudes remain untouched, such reform becomes nothing more than a politically correct smokescreen obscuring the fact that no real progress is being made.
(Alfred, *Peace Power Righteousness*)

The Tour

In the fall of 2013, I took a bus tour of the waterfront revitalization project. The tour was a breakout session organized by an urban planning conference I attended at the University of Toronto. Waterfront Toronto hosted the tour and provided the commentary. We piled into a bus and snaked through the downtown core of Toronto to various points along the project. We were told about sustainable LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings, accessible parks, schools, condominiums, and walking promenades lined with cafes and boutiques. Our guide made it sound like

we were witnessing an unprecedented urban renaissance, and that the previous blight on the image of Toronto was being reborn and would usher the city into the future. It was made clear on this tour, as it is a twenty-five-year-long project now at its midpoint, there is still plenty of imagining on the waterfront being done. At the close of the tour, the guides from Waterfront Toronto solemnly shared that we must not forget that the land we stood on was once the Mississauga of New Credit's land. It was as if we had just stumbled on a funeral—and then suddenly the tour was over. This moment struck me. It felt like the Indigenous history was simply tacked on as a quiet footnote, or an apology, to the sparkling newness of the “revitalized” land.

The narrative of the tour was immediately obvious: the settler comes, clears the land, he imagines, he builds and then he apologizes. Coulthard elaborates on this ongoing process:

In this respect, Canada is no different from any other settler power: in the Canadian context, colonial domination continues to be structurally oriented around the state's commitment to maintain—through force, fraud, and, more recently, so-called negotiations—ongoing access to the land that contradictorily provides the material and spiritual sustenance of Indigenous societies and the foundation of colonial state formation, settlement, and capitalist development. (57)

The tour, along with much of the time I spent on the waterfront, reminded me that in many ways Waterfront Toronto *had* succeeded in creating beautiful spaces. I too found myself feeling like the land had truly been transformed into places that were inviting, fresh and of the future. I also began to recognize that my distinct sensibilities are ones that belong to a *settler*. That I, along with many people in the city, found myself liking the feeling of a “renewed” land. As I explored my own feelings around being in the

spaces of the revitalized waterfront I wondered what it meant to be on the side of the population that has a malleable, fleeting and comparatively brief connection to the land? I grew up in Toronto, so it is “my” city, but as a settler, what is my *actual* connection to this place? What does connection to land mean when one’s tenure is eleven thousand years versus mere hundreds? I wondered again about the erasure of Indigenous presence on this land and the lingering ghosts of Chief Wabikinine and his family. The thing was, Indigenous people have never truly vanished off the land of Toronto and despite this, Indigenous communities were being “brought back” onto the land through the Pan Am Housing Project in the West Don Lands neighbourhood on the waterfront. As I detail below, The Pan Am Housing project was the sale of the athletes housing units used during the Pan American Games hosted by Toronto in 2015 to two affordable housing providers, one of which is an Indigenous-focused provider. Effectively, these units would be reserved for low-income or street-involved homeless people or, those *made* vulnerable by settler colonialism (Simpson “Chiefs Two Bodies”). As I stood there at the end of tour, I wanted to explore what it meant to experience the shifting presence and absence of Indigenous people on the waterfront. What could it tell us about the settler project more generally?

In the following chapter I will frame the Pan Am Housing project on the waterfront as an *apology*. In keeping with notion that we are in the “age of the apology” (Gibney et. al “The Age”), I use this comparatively small patch of the revitalization project to explore contemporary reconciliation efforts (as apologies) and argue that given the housing crisis in Toronto, like official reconciliation, the apology being enacted on the Toronto waterfront with regard to housing is not only paltry in the face of need, but actually

works to “excuse” the continued appropriation of Indigenous land that undergirds the settler mandate. I also draw from Alice MacLachlan’s work where she examines the official apologies offered to Indigenous people in Canada and Australia. MacLachlan argues that due to the increase in political apologies, theorists must, “navigate between a course of piety and cynicism” when thinking about what official apologies truly mean (“Government Apologies”, 4). In an effort to navigate this course, I do not abandon the possibility of reconciliation, but simply join the call with those who say that it will require much more than what is currently on offer.

As I did for my study of Sugar Beach, I conducted three interviews with members of the affordable housing community in an effort to reveal the various political and market forces of the settler state that work to perpetuate the housing crisis in Toronto. I also interviewed two individuals from Waterfront Toronto who spoke to the motivation for the project. Within this housing crisis, I focus on Indigenous populations who are over-represented. Drawing on the interview data, I do this work in four parts: (1) I describe the Pan Am Project and its place in the broader waterfront revitalization (2) I explore what it means to “revitalize” land and its implications on the intertwined politics of recognition and distribution; (3) I describe the housing crisis on the ground with a particular focus on Indigenous peoples; (4) and last, I introduce literature on state sponsored reconciliation processes and argue that revitalization projects such as Pan Am housing can be seen as part of ultimately hollow attempts at reconciling Indigenous populations’ loss of land with that of the Crown’s sovereignty and contemporary city building efforts.

The Project

The Pan American (Pan Am) Games athletes' village in the West Don Lands site on the waterfront is comprised of six residential buildings. After the games finished in August 2015, a portion of the new housing units was given over to two housing non-profits, Fred Victor and Wigwamen, to house Indigenous and lower-income individuals and families.²⁶ The project is a flagship for affordable housing on the waterfront and the West Don Lands will be home to one of the biggest residential developments in the city. Below I will introduce the timeline and the central actors in the athletes' village conversion.

The West Don Lands is a thirty-two-hectare former industrial site on the waterfront just east of Toronto's downtown. It is bordered by the Don River to the east, Parliament street to the west, and King Street to the north. It will be home to six thousand new residences, an elementary school, and commercial spaces. Prior to being an industrial area the site was a large public "common" in the Old Town of York. In the 1850s the land was transformed into an industrial area with the William Davis Company pork processing plant as the centerpiece. In the 1970s, manufacturing began to decline and the area became a brownfield site. In 1988, the City and the province appropriated the land to build a mixed-use neighbourhood but the plans were abandoned due to the cost of the environmental cleanup (City of Toronto "Affordable"). In 2001, Waterfront Toronto was created, and in 2005, the West Don Lands precinct plan was approved with an apparent 20% affordable housing as a part of the approved plan (City of Toronto, "Waterfront Renewal").

²⁶ At the time of writing this chapter, the conversion process had begun. The units were undergoing the conversion process. Move in dates are unknown.

In 2009, the province earmarked the West Don Lands as the home to the 2015 Pan American/Para Pan American Games Athletes Village and Dundee Kilmer Developments won the project bid. Dundee Kilmer has been active in the Toronto real estate market since 1988 and has seven billion dollars in assets today (Infrastructure Ontario). They work across Canada, but in Toronto most of their residential land development holdings are mid- to high-level condominiums. Dundee Kilmer has worked in conjunction with Dream Development on multiple projects on the waterfront. In the West Don Lands neighbourhood, Toronto Community Housing will operate three affordable housing buildings with 243 units total and the Pan Am Athletes village will be handed over to two nonprofits, Fred Victor (with 108 units) and Wigwamen (with 145 units). Fred Victor focuses its work on improving the lives of homeless and low-income residents of Toronto, and Wigwamen is a housing provider with locations all across Ontario with a focus on Indigenous communities.

Waterfront Toronto partners with big players in real estate development, but they claim to put people first. A central tenet to their overall mission is to “centre people” in the project (Waterfront Toronto “Vision”). An attendant part of this language is the inclusion of *all people*. Peppered throughout their materials, press releases and annual reports is language such as the following:

A wide variety of housing types will be available to ensure that the neighbourhoods are home to people of all income levels and life stages. Residences will include large three-bedroom units designed for families with children, as well as units that suit the lifestyle of singles and seniors. Approximately 20 percent of all residential units will be affordable rental units. Parks, child-care centres, schools and other amenities will be carefully woven into the fabric of the neighbourhoods. (“Vision”)

Admittedly, that Waterfront Toronto—which according to one interview “is a tiny slice of building in the city” (Interview 4)—shouldn’t shoulder the burden of solving the affordable housing crisis. It is important to note, however, that the project positions itself as inclusive and contributing, through revitalization, to make Toronto a fairer city (and it openly promotes the notion that this is an act of benevolence).

Waterfront Toronto attempts, through its literature, to create the idea that it is not required by law to have 20% of new housing stock be affordable. They write, “Waterfront Toronto’s approach ensures that a minimum of 20% of residential units on land within its control is designated for Affordable Rental Housing. An additional 5% of units will be low-end-of-market units” (“Vision”). The City does not have the authority to impose affordable housing requirements—otherwise known as inclusionary zoning—on all new builds. But on bigger developments such as the West Don Lands, the picture changes if only slightly. Large Sites fall under “Policy 9” found in Toronto’s Official Plan (City of Toronto “Official Plan”). Toronto’s policy asks that 20% of new units be affordable (called a “community benefit”), but instead of setting its threshold to buildings with a minimum of 10 units (like other jurisdictions such as Montreal), the policy is applied only to buildings sitting on five hectares of property or more. While this policy rules out the majority of new builds in the city, it does include the Waterfront development. Waterfront Toronto, then, is abiding by Policy 9 and not creating affordable housing out of altruistic intentions. Furthermore, Policy 9 allows developers to opt out of creating affordable units by choosing to establish other “community benefits”—such as public art, parks, and heritage conservation—which is less risky for

them than creating mixed-income high rises. It is here where Waterfront Toronto has opted to include affordable housing.

Despite the inclusion of affordable housing, the building of units priced for the upper half of the income levels in the city (the majority of Waterfront Housing) has an effect on other lower income housing in surrounding neighbourhoods (changing those commercial and housing markets). The West Don Lands is close to lower income neighbourhoods (Moss Park, Regent Park, and south Leslieville). As one interview subject remarked when asked about this potential outcome on the Waterfront, this subject used an example of another mid- to high-level development project that is over 10 years old:

People for example talk about Parkdale, which is mixed but on the whole a lower income community, where we see quite a lot of gentrification, and quite a lot of loss of lower cost, affordable units you know because they move up market and so on. So in a context like that we can say that, some of the new development that is happening next door that is happening in Liberty village, is affecting the market there, is effecting the positioning of real estate owners in South Parkdale there, so you could say that new development is affecting in a negative way the affordable housing options in the neighbourhood next door. And so some element of that exists across the central city where as gentrification proceeds, and more houses get occupied by middle to upper income households, the whole neighbourhood gets kind of priced out of reach for lower income people and you're going to have fewer houses that have flats, apartments in houses that are affordable to people that don't have upper incomes. (Interview 3)

Although Waterfront Toronto may claim to be building an inclusive community, the reality of the majority of residential units being priced for the upper half of the market will mean that surrounding inner city neighbourhoods could also see greater gentrification as the waterfront transforms.

What Does it Mean to Revitalize?

Urban revitalization can be thought of in two ways. On one side, there are revitalization projects where the focus is on “renewing” a neighbourhood that has been thought to be left behind due to disinvestment in terms of quality of housing, amenities, transportation, street life and culture. In this vein of revitalization, slum clearance would have been the more dated notion (although similar processes are present) and slum clearance has been an active way of appropriating land in Canada since the 1940s (Carter, “Neighbourhood Improvement”). These neighbourhoods are often pathologized, as was the case with Regent Park, the oldest social housing complex in Canada and one that was recently revitalized (Kipfer and Petrunia). In the words of one of the interview subjects, it was, “a project of state-sponsored gentrification” (Interview 2). Much critical urban research has looked at projects of revitalization as the neoliberalization of urban space (Rosa “Remaking the Nation-State”). The second type of revitalization, and more central to my purpose here, is the revitalization and brownfield remediation of unused or unoccupied industrial lands – those positioned as *terra nullius*. These projects sketch out new communities from the ground up. So while the powerful social and political narratives involved with urban renewal of pathologized and low income neighbourhoods has been seen as colonial (Rosa), I argue here that the second iteration of revitalization as brownfield remediation is also colonial in the process of clearing land for settlement.

I first anchor this analysis of the politics of revitalization in the West Don Lands neighbourhood. I then will use critiques of state-sponsored reconciliation as a way to position revitalization projects in the larger context of settler colonialism. The ways in which revitalization efforts have been framed on the waterfront offer a tenuous inclusion

of Indigenous peoples in a way that fails to truly address disparities of social, economic, political and land-based power in the city. However, the language around revitalization suggests a sort of end-of-history ideal, in that the renewed city will be inclusive to everyone and therefore potentially poses to end, “thoughtful antagonism and contention” (Simpson, “The Chiefs Two Bodies” lecture). In a similar vein, revitalization projects and the discourses surrounding them acknowledge inequality in the city and aim, at least in part, to address it. Revitalizing urban areas is posed to “solve” problems of marginalization and offer inclusion to all communities in the city. Unfortunately, this is done in a depoliticized and managerial manner, employing managed public “consultation” and public relations campaigns, and not through political agitation and contestation as Simpson suggests is necessary.

Waterfront Toronto describes its social responsibility as “creating an inclusive, diverse, and equitable environment designed for everyone” (Waterfront Toronto “Affordable”). In the same way that reconciliation attempts to lead to the “end of history” or a “closing the chapter of colonialism in Canada,” revitalization in this mode leads to the notion that the city has *changed* and has made amends for its past and current exclusions. The idealized message is that the city has “cleaned up the past” and moved on to a sanitized and non-agonistic form of urban existence where everyone's needs are supposedly met. The waterfront, in particular, has consistently been framed in a way that boasts its revitalization as a cure for the pathologized wasted space. The power to author such an “end point,” though, comes with the maintenance of the economic, social and political status quo. This maintenance is an inherent facet of state dominated reconciliation efforts and, relatedly, revitalization that supports hegemonic economic,

political and ultimately, colonial power. If the projects offer apparently diverse and inclusive aspects (like a certain portion of otherwise luxury housing given over to affordable housing), the attempt then is move closer to the point of ending contestation over equity in the city. The irony being, in Toronto, the disparity between the rich and the poor has grown continuously since the post war period of rapid industrial building (Hulchanski, *Three Cities*).

Revitalization as Domination

James Tully's recent work bears some importance to this incongruence of a seemingly equitable and inclusive project that may have good intentions but nevertheless fails to get to the heart of systemic injustice. I use Tully's work here to set a frame for approaching revitalization and the Pan Am project. In *Public Philosophy in a New Key*, Tully writes:

The dominant forms of representative democracy; self-determination and democratization promoted through international law are not alternatives to imperialism, but, rather, the means through which informal imperialism operates against the wishes of the majority of the population of the postcolonial world. (158)

Tully argues in his groundbreaking and ambitious double volume book that, while the words freedom and democracy form the language of resistance and struggle against oppression, those words—and in fact the institutions they are also synonymous with (the state, the military, markets)—have at the same time become the tools of domination. Therefore, for Tully, relationships of power are better transformed not *through* these institutions, but rather through practices by which citizens *think* and *act*

differently. This is not achieved with the imposition of ideals run through material and institutional structures but by asserting this foundational change of how citizens both know and enact freedom and democracy themselves. Here, Tully is in line with the movement of Indigenous resurgence that I explored in Chapter Two. Jeff Corntassel writes of Indigenous insurgence in a way that supports Tully's claim here:

By focusing on “everyday” acts of resurgence, one disrupts the colonial physical, social and political boundaries designed to impede our actions to restore our nationhood...Indigenous resurgence means having the courage and imagination to envision life beyond the state.

Here Corntassel places the acts that support Indigenous resurgence into the realm of the personal. He suggests that resurgence, in line with Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, exists in the reviving of Indigenous ways of being on and with the land. This is “life beyond the state”. It may also represent life beyond the current politics of recognition as suggested by Coulthard. I contend that Tully is suggesting a similar, perhaps more broadly applied, tact above.

In addition, as conveyed in the title of his book, Tully is arguing for a “public philosophy” with practical lens—one that can be brought to life through practice and that practice is exercised by the subaltern. Concomitantly, with this is the foundational idea that reconciliation cannot be achieved without a resurgence of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in and through education, legal traditions, economies and family life. Resurgence then, by its definition, implies a “ground up” movement (as opposed to state-led one), a reconciliation that seeks to be transformative rather than affirmative. I will add to this that not only is land (as a physical and geographic entity) crucial for this resurgence, but also our understanding and contesting of particular spaces (this is what

gives Tully's assertion here a spatial component). While urban revitalization may be touted as a product of public consultation and inclusive to all, similar processes of "informal imperialism" continue to operate as exclusionary and growing marginalization and poverty are not often "removed" by urban renewal but remain fundamentally unchallenged.

Reconciliation and Distribution

As a precursor to discussions about hollow reconciliation (or one that does not fundamentally change relations of power), a look to the relationship between the politics of recognition and distribution is apt here. In "Struggles over Recognition and Distribution," Tully argues that recognition and distribution are both "aspects of political struggle, rather than distinct types of struggle" (369). For Tully, each aspect may be dominant at any given time, in any given struggle towards freedom, but that they are forever interrelated. I read Tully here as implying that one cannot talk about recognition without also addressing distributive issues. Of course, the group seeking recognition and the terms by which is negotiated differs if those groups are nations and Indigenous people with claim to land. Tully writes, "The constitutional recognition of unrecognized nations and indigenous peoples within larger constitutional democracies by means of legal and political pluralism, land redistribution, and complex federalism entail the redistribution of political and economic power" (370). If recognition is to be actualized, it cannot be parsed out from redistribution of social, economic and political power. Tully states that: "Issues of distribution and recognition should be seen as *aspects* of political

struggles, rather than distinct types of struggle, and thus a form of analysis is required that has the capacity to study political struggles under both aspects” (469).

From the outset of his seminal work *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in the Age of Diversity*, Tully studies political struggle, not with the intention of seeing it as constitutionalizing specific forms of recognition and distribution, rather as it being about “agonic democratic practice” where respectful political conflict over recognition and distribution can exist unimpeded. In other words, Tully argues for minimum domination on democratic practice. He writes: “The aim should be an account of democracy in which the freedom to question and challenge, as well as to reply to and defend, the prevailing norms or recognition is taken as one enduring aspect of democratic activity among many” (472). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this formulation of democratic practices is not that which is practiced by the large institutions in liberal democracies like Canada or the United States. Rather, increasing participation and contestation for Tully allows political struggles to achieve transformation of oppressive relationships. He explains in “Struggles over Recognition and Distribution”:

Consequently, the various types of political struggle typical of our time exhibit both recognition and distribution aspects. A challenge to a prevailing norm of Intersubjective recognition to which citizens are subject also challenges in some way the prevailing relations of political, economic, and social power that the norm of recognition legitimates, and vice versa. What is required, therefore, is a bifocal form of critical analysis that clarifies empirically and normatively the recognition and distribution aspects of contemporary struggles and their interaction without reducing one to the other. Indeed, the complex interaction between distribution and recognition appears to be characteristic of political struggles today. (472)

I am now moving towards questioning the role that reconciliation plays in the current form of recognition of Indigenous peoples that is distribution of social, political and

economic power (and in keeping with Alfred's assertion that reconciliation without land redistribution is a hollow affair). To do this, in the remainder of this chapter I will use Tully's notion of "a bifocal form of critical analysis that clarifies empirically and normatively the recognition and distribution aspects of contemporary struggles and their interaction without reducing one to the other" (472). I assert that a potential "moment" of reconciliation, like the Pan Am project, must include this critical bifocal gaze. In the end, I argue that Pan Am project ultimately fails to move beyond being a performative gesture of recognition to one that thoroughly confronts distributive issues.

Housing and Homelessness in Toronto

In Toronto, as a part of a larger housing crisis, there is a well-established need for increased Indigenous-focused housing (Toronto Aboriginal Research Project [TARP]). As is the case for all communities, stable housing is the foundation for any attempt at social and economic justice for Indigenous communities. More than one-third of street homeless are Indigenous even though they represent a tiny fraction of the overall Toronto population (The Wellesley Institute). To address this, it is crucial to begin by asking, 'what is affordable housing'? It is a broad term, which does not necessarily mean subsidized or Rent Geared to Income (RGI) housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation give the following definition for affordable housing:

To be affordable, a household should not spend more than 30 percent of their gross income on shelter costs. The definition in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) issued under section 3 of the Planning Act is based on this commonly used definition. Municipalities must be consistent with the PPS in their land use planning and development decisions. Currently in the province of Ontario, 20% of renters spend over 50% of their income on rent. (MMAH)

With explosive urban growth after the end of the Second World War, in 1946 the Canadian government began to fund affordable housing for veterans and their families with the creation of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Through the 1940s and 1950s, the federal government embarked on social housing and shared the cost at first with the provinces and then increasingly involving cities. The 1960s saw the rise of the affordable housing movement in Canada along with rising standards of living but also growing income gaps and influx of immigration (CMHA). In Ontario (as in most provinces) affordable, rent geared to income (RGI) housing was provided by the Ontario Housing Corporation and operating costs were divided among the federal government (at 75%) and the province (at 25%). Growth continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s until the 1990s saw the beginning of a decline in federal monies for housing and the provision shifted to community organizations in the form of co-operatives and non-profit housing corporations. As such, much of the housing stock in the province and the city of Toronto today is geared to income.

Housing evolved in the 1980s and 1990s to adapt and provide for distinct needs and populations such as those with developmental needs and survivors of family violence. As mentioned, the 1990s also witnessed the federal government downgrading significantly its contribution to housing, leaving the task to municipalities and community organizations (and, to a lesser degree, the provinces). This was a seismic shift that has been central to the movement for housing ever since. Much of the activism in the housing movement in Toronto argues for greater federal and provincial monies. The current breakdown in Toronto is the City of Toronto funds 40%, the province of Ontario 21% and the federal government pays 30%. Affordable housing is provided through

non-profits and through the city owned Toronto Community Housing, which runs two-thirds of the affordable housing stock in the city.

Since the 1980s, like many jurisdictions in Canada, Toronto has had a severe shortage of quality, affordable housing. The decline in availability of affordable housing affects many Canadians—young people, single parents, people working for low wages and the elderly. It also adds to the homelessness problem in a sizable way. The federal and provincial governments have, to varying degrees, disinvested from affordable housing programs, failed to consistently invest in new units, and left social housing stock in an often dangerous state of bad repair (St. Michael's "Housing First" 6).

Stephen Gaetz reports that each night in Canada, 35,000 people are visibly homeless (i.e., sleeping on the street) and the number of those experiencing homelessness rises to around 50,000 when including the "invisible" homeless comprising of people who couch surf, or who may also come in and out of temporary housing. Women and children often form the majority of those who are the "invisible" homeless (4). In their widely cited recent report, *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2014*, Stephen Gaetz, Tanya Gulliver and Tim Richter succinctly summarize the context that brought on the crisis:

The rise of modern mass homelessness in Canada can be traced directly back to the withdrawal of the Federal government's investment in affordable housing and pan-Canadian cuts to welfare beginning in the 1980s. In 1982, all levels of government combined funded 20,450 new social housing units annually. By 1995, the number dropped to around 1,000, with numbers slowly climbing to 4,393 annually by 2006. Over the past 25 years, while Canada's population increased by almost 30%, annual national investment in housing has decreased dramatically, by over 46%. In 1989, Canadians contributed, through taxation, an average of \$115 per person to federal housing investments. By 2013, that figure had dropped to just over \$60 per person (in 2013 dollars). (4)

Not only has the real investment into housing become paltry in face of the need, but since 1998, private market units in Ontario are no longer rent controlled (through active legislation) at the same time as minimum wages and social assistance programs are set below the poverty line by the provincial government (St. Michael's "Housing First" 6).

According to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, housing is viewed as being on a continuum. Initially, it is divided into two categories, market and non-market housing. One end of the continuum starts with homelessness and then progresses to emergency shelter, to transitional housing, to supportive housing, to social housing, and finally to subsidized rental. Under this continuum, as mentioned, the majority of affordable housing is market-based rental. One my interviewees revealed, when left to the market, that affordable housing looks like this:

There is a mismatch between low-incomes and the price level in the market. Because market levels and prices are set by the general level of and reflect the general incomes and are set by the minimum threshold of what it takes to operate housing. To heat it, to amortize it and to pay the taxes and all that kind of stuff. There is an inherent mismatch in the market. And so then, what happens in the market or how does the market respond to low-income demand, or people whose incomes are 15, 20, 25k, you know so, what then? What happens? Well firstly people can't afford so they pay a high percentage of income on rent, but secondly, other things happen right, they get less housing, they rent a room, or share an apartment, or they crowd a bunch of people into a room that wasn't designed for it. Another thing that happens is quality, right? They sacrifice quality to get low rents, and usually always there are landlords who are willing to rent places on that basis. And another thing that happens, certain neighborhoods or locations become the places where these processes manifest, where people are crowded, where housing is cheaper, where landlords are operating on that kind of business model, where they aren't going to get an increase if they fix the place up, so they try and make their profits by economizing on maintenance, right? And so you get these patterns where middle class people don't rent in those neighbourhoods and poor people do. So these are the general issues. (Interview 3)

These market forces have an influence on affordable housing now more than ever. In the 1970s and 1980s much of the affordable housing fell into non-market housing stock. Since the devolution of housing responsibilities in the 1990s, the majority of affordable housing is market-based, thus making it more vulnerable to the “logics” of the market. According to the source above this results in a situation that is a chronic, systemic issue, which makes it more challenging to address. In Ontario, there are 168,711 people on the waiting list for affordable housing (and nationally the picture is no better) (The Wellesley Institute). Many advocacy groups working on the front lines call this lack of affordable housing a “national disaster” (Homelessness Hub).

Housing in the Toronto Indigenous Community

At the beginning of the chapter devoted to housing in the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP), a respondent comments on the unique housing needs of the Indigenous community related to kinship: “The day of the nuclear family is not here with Aboriginal people. When I lived in social housing in Scarborough, there were three of us that had seven dependents, a niece and nephew or an uncle. There isn’t social housing that embraces that style of housing” (TARP, “Kinship Relations” 29). The TARP report goes on to state, as Aboriginal people make up one-third of the homeless population (while only making up 1% of the overall population in the GTA), there is most certainly not enough housing that is designed to meet distinct needs of the rapidly growing community. Indigenous people are also eight times more likely than non-Indigenous people to be homeless across Canada (Patrick 13). Further, activists note that housing on reserves is also in such disrepair that those communities should be counted in national homelessness research and that disrepair has a considerable

impact on the housing and homelessness rates when First Nation's people migrate off-reserve due to lack of housing and related services (13).

While the unique historical and ongoing trauma faced in Indigenous communities plays a role in the breakdown of families, it is also important to challenge this persistent framing and factor in different conceptions of family like kinship, and extend it beyond individual trauma and western notions of family. It is necessary to look at systemic processes around land dispossession, racism and persistent lack of funding for social welfare programs. This historical trauma is the lived experience of a settler colonialism that rests on dispossession, cultural genocide, and present day racism that is alive and well in Canadian social service institutions and Canadian society in general. Although it is crucial to place homelessness in the context of individual trauma from residential schools, the 1960s practice of taking children and placing them in white foster homes (The Sixties Scoop), the current traumas arising from Indigenous children being taken into care by the Children's Aid Society (CAS), along with addiction and sexual violence trauma (often resulting from state-inflicted trauma) we must also factor in the broader context of settler colonialism.

As noted in the scholarship on housing (Gaetz, Patrick), safe and affordable housing forms the basis of any successful transition from domestic violence, addiction and mental health treatment. This reality is also true for Indigenous communities. In the transition from life on the street or shelters, to transitions from addiction or abuse, housing forms a key element of success. Concomitantly, health, addiction and employment are all contingent on access to quality housing and this importance cannot be overstated. One interview revealed that while Indigenous specific responses are

appropriate, the issues facing low-income people around housing are similar across the board:

Clearly the Aboriginal population is one that is disproportionately low income, so with the housing needs that relate to having low income, but now again the Aboriginal community is diverse, and you know it's more affluent than it used to be and it's better educated than it used to be and it's becoming more so, but it's still also disadvantaged to a considerable degree, so these issues are present. And I know clearly that some people identify a need for Aboriginal specific solutions, but I do think also that many of the issues are the same issues that non-Aboriginals face in the community. (Interview 5)

Currently, affordable housing and rent geared to income housing distinctly offered to Indigenous people is scattered across the city (along with the population) from the downtown core to suburban areas. Most of it is provided by various organizations that often do advocacy work as well. The question remains (and is it related to the larger issue of housing as a right), despite the growth of Indigenous-focused housing providers who build and maintain housing targeted to Indigenous people (both on and off-reserve), what is the federal responsibility for Indigenous housing? I explore this issue in the section below.

Treaty Right to Housing

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) report acknowledges that there are no specific pronouncements on the treaty right to housing by the federal government, and it states that “the federal government has not recognized a universal entitlement to government financed housing as either a treaty right or an Aboriginal right” (RCAP Chapter 4, sec. 2.2). Indigenous people, particularly in the numbered

treaty areas, hold a much different view. Generally, their view is summarized by Chief Blaine Favel, who says that “First Nations have always maintained and continue to maintain that the right to adequate housing is a right guaranteed under treaty” (qtd. in Brant 31). In asserting this right, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations further argue that housing provision be “consistent with the treaty right to shelter, and that the resources exist to fulfill the Treaty obligation, and that housing programs—from construction through to administration—be controlled by First Nation communities” (Favel 12).

Housing as a treaty right arises from the continually unfolding processes of settler colonialism. Indigenous people were forced to take up agriculture as a way of life (Brant 33). Therefore, to facilitate that change, Elders maintain, that communities need assistance including shelter. This need is necessitated because of the geographic, cultural and livelihood changes that settler colonial dispossession introduced into Indigenous communities and is thought to have been understood at the time the treaties were made (Brant 33). Coupled with the claim of the treaty right to housing is the broader housing rights movement. This movement has made some gains in recent history and has aided in bringing the issues of homelessness in Canada into the spotlight. I will now offer a sketch of the movement.

The Right to Housing, Charter Challenge and the United Nations

Over the last ten years, the right to housing movement and housing activism has gained significant momentum. With organizations like the Right to Housing Coalition (made up of community activists, Indigenous groups, lawyers, academics, and those

with lived experience of homelessness) and the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation leading the way, in 2010 a charter challenge was launched by Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation along with four homeless people from Toronto. They claimed federal and provincial inaction on homelessness and housing violates equality and security rights. The case, including 10,000 pages of evidence filed by the applicants, was never heard because lawyers for the Crown introduced a successful motion to strike in 2013. The Centre appealed all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, which, in June 2015 refused to hear the case, upholding the lower court's view that homelessness is an issue for legislatures and not courts. At the time of this writing, this coalition, led by the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, was bringing the charter challenge as a human rights issue to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) at the United Nations.

The Apology

Eva Mackey inspires me here when I ask, what is an apology? Many people around Canada asked that question in the summer of 2008. On June 11 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stood in the Canadian House of Commons and apologized for the residential school system. The residential school system, according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up by the federal government also in 2008, defines residential schools as:

Residential schools for Aboriginal people in Canada date back to the 1870s. Over 130 residential schools were located across the country, and the last school closed in 1996. These government-funded, church-run schools were set up to eliminate parental involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of Aboriginal children.

During this era, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were placed in these schools often against their parents' wishes. Many were forbidden to speak their language and practice their own culture. While there are an estimated 80,000 former students living today, the ongoing impact of residential schools has been felt throughout generations and has contributed to social problems that continue to exist. (TRC "Reconciliation")

Stephen Harper was not without his critics. His government had a long and extremely antagonistic relationship with Indigenous peoples. Therefore, the apology came under great scrutiny for perhaps simply wanting to "close the chapter" in order to move on to increased resource extraction and continued extinguishment of Indigenous rights (Idle No More). Upon release of the final report of the TRC in 2015, Chair Justice Murray Sinclair said of the Harper government:

We believe the current government is not willing to make good on its claim that it wishes to join with Aboriginal people in Canada in a 'relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together' as promised nine years ago. Words are not enough. (APTN News)

So, in this context, what does the apology really mean? Does it begin the path to decolonization, to Indigenous resurgence? To healing? To end white supremacy? Rolph Trouillot argues apologies "necessarily create pastness" (McKay, "Reconciling Canada" 49). Deepening this point, Audra Simpson takes this notion of pastness and critically explores what pastness means for present culpability, especially in the liberal politics of recognition. She writes about Harper's address:

Note the temporality of Harper's message. He cites 80,000 "forcibly removed" students and, in doing so, couples this with the temporality of "not knowing." Not knowing leaves open the space for a former certainty of purpose and its rightness and wrongness (we knew not what we were doing), and thus, a present exoneration even where there is former apparent error. Note as well the language of "recognition," coupled with temporality. To state that "we *now*

recognize that this was wrong” is to perform a gesture that again implicitly leaves intact and earlier rightness, an opening to a present mode of rendering justice in liberal governance: “recognition.” Rather than an intersubjective model of rendering justice that would be mutual recognition between peoples of seemingly unequal standing, this is one-sided recognition by the state. (“Whither Settler Colonialism” 1)

Relatedly, Andrew Woolford, in “The Limits of Justice,” makes the distinction between policies of ‘affirmative’ or ‘transformative repair’. In affirmative repair, the historic wrongs are addressed (or attempted to be addressed) and not the relationship that created those wrongs and allowed them to continue. Transformative repair attempts to delve deeper and transform the lopsided relationship, in the similar way in which Simpson describes above. Woolford’s straightforward analysis helps to animate my assertion in this chapter about *apology* and specifically the *apology* made on the waterfront. To achieve this *transformative repair* requires all parties to participate. It requires all parties to decide on what exactly needs to be apologized for and how that apology should go and what commitments are put forth by that apology. Therefore, if apologies are state-led and fail to truly and authentically transform relationships they can end up re-affirming the colonial relationship itself. Again, I return to Coulthard here and his understanding of the failings of the politics of recognition and the need for a transformative praxis which echoes a similar sentiment.

Reconciliation in Indigenous Societies

Reconciliation has a long history in Indigenous societies, most often practiced through condolence ceremonies that fostered a kinship and duties of care that reconnected tribes after conflict or great loss (Alfred). This spirit, as frequently argued,

was infused into treaty making with the Crown and was respected at times by the colonial party, albeit inconsistently. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) mandate brought modern-day reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous populations into the political and public realm. The commission was initiated in 1992 after the Oka crisis as well as constitutional debates at Meech Lake. The RCAP (as it was then known) went into significant detail. Despite the 'at times' respectful beginnings, the Crown went on for centuries to open settlement of Indigenous lands and resources, to sign and then violate treaties and to ultimately coercively claim sovereignty over Indigenous peoples. In this sense, if reconciliation is to be taken as relationship, RCAP was one of the first acknowledgments from the settler state of the devastating actions of the Crown and the subsequent Canadian governments in its relationship with Indigenous peoples.

The RCAP also detailed the grave abuses of the residential school system where, as mentioned above, Indigenous children were taken from their families and placed in Church-run, government sponsored schools where their language and culture were suppressed and sexual, physical and emotional violence was rampant. The commissioner went on to frame a multitude of recommendations around reconciliation of "past mistakes." They proposed "to learn from the mistakes of the past' and develop a national policy of reconciliation and regeneration" (RCAP 229). A Statement of Reconciliation by then Indian Affairs and Northern Development minister Jane Stewart followed the Commission in 1998. She concludes her official statement with the following,

Reconciliation is an ongoing process. In renewing our partnership, we must ensure that the mistakes, which marked our past relationship, are not repeated.

The Government of Canada recognizes that policies that sought to assimilate Aboriginal people, women and men, were not the way to build a strong country. We must instead continue to find ways in which Aboriginal people can participate fully in the economic, political, cultural and social life of Canada in a manner, which preserves and enhances the collective identities of Aboriginal communities, and allows them to evolve and flourish in the future. Working together to achieve our shared goals will benefit all Canadians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. (Stewart, Government of Canada)

Moving from official apologies like Stewart's, truth commissions have also become common state-sponsored tools of redress. Although they are much more in depth, require large-scale consultations, hearings and often generate tome-like reports,²⁷ Cindy Holder and Jeff Corntassel have found that of the twenty-four truth and reconciliation commissions that have happened since 1975 most "have not lived up to their potential for transforming inter-group relations when applied in those 24 countries" (469). Relatedly, in her book *Unspeakable Truths*, Priscilla B. Hayner examined twenty-one of those commissions and found that only three had measures that were intended to advance reconciliation with some lasting effects (in Chile, El Salvador and South Africa) (310). Hayner also asks importantly: (1) how is the past dealt with in the public sphere?; (2) what are the relationships between former opponents?; and (3) is there one version of the past, or many? (310). Many of these truth and reconciliation commissions happened in the context of transitional justice, moving from one governance regime to another.

In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was not the beginning of a shift in governance models in the profound ways such as South Africa.

²⁷ For example, the Executive Summary of Canada's TRC report was over 500 pages.

Having said this, the TRC in Canada has no light task. Paulette Regan, director of research for the TRC, explains that: “The TRC must provide critical pedagogical space wherein Indigenous peoples reclaim and revitalize the cultures, laws, and histories that colonizers attempted to destroy in Residential Schools” (“An Apology Feast in Hazelton” 43). But how meaningful can the TRC and its, at times, well intentioned mandate truly be? Simpson is not confident, calling the TRC Commission a “Reconciliation Hustler Tour” (Chiefs Two Bodies”) and one that is effectively limp in the shadow of states that are still premised on violence (both real or exercised through indifference), death and dispossession.

Reconciliation is Recolonization²⁸

Alfred writes: “The logic of reconciliation as justice is clear: without massive restitution, including land, financial transfers and other forms of assistance to compensate for past harms and continuing injustices committed against our peoples, reconciliation would permanently enshrine colonial injustices and is itself a further injustice” (*Wasase* 152). Again, Tully’s assertion for the need of a bifocal critical analysis searching for recognition and distribution is salient. In agreement with Alfred, Simpson and Coulthard, and using Tully’s frame, I have demonstrated how contemporary reconciliation, as it is attempted in the form of an apology on the Toronto waterfront falls short in the ways in which Alfred argues above.

As previously discussed, reconciliation has multiple meanings depending on the context. For Walters, the term can be understood in three ways. First, there is

²⁸ From the Alfred lecture at UQAM, April 26th, 2014 in honour of James Tully.

“reconciliation as relationship,” which is the healing of a conflict between two parties. Second, there is “reconciliation as resignation,” which is when one party accepts things outside of their control. And third, there is “reconciliation as consistency,” whereby previously incongruent things or processes are brought in line with one another (Walters 166). But, reconciliation as consistency can be one-sided or two-sided. In the former instance, one side has to simply accept a reality, without a fundamental change in relationship. Walters observes that “a common theme links the conceptions of reconciliation as relationship, resignation and consistency. They all involve finding within, or bringing to, a situation of discordance a sense of harmony. Beyond this however, they are very different” (167). Walters goes on to argue, however, that all three definitions of reconciliation are relevant in the political and legal discourse of Aboriginal rights in Canada (as quoted in Kymlicka and Bashir 169).

Walters’ conception holds that reconciliation as resignation can be understood by looking to Supreme Court of Canada *Van der Peet* ruling. In *Van der Peet*, a woman from the Sto:lo nation in British Columbia was charged for selling ten salmon without a license. In response, the woman claimed the section 35 right to engage in commercial fishing. Chief Justice Lemar comments that “what s. 35(1) does is provide the constitutional framework through which the fact that aboriginal people lived on the land in distinctive societies, with their own practices, traditions and cultures, is acknowledged and reconciled with the sovereignty of the crown” (*Van der Peet*, par 31). He then states that “aboriginal rights are those rights that are directed towards the reconciliation of the pre-existence of aboriginal societies with the sovereignty of the Crown” (177). In the *Van der Peet* case, however, the SCC decided that commercial fishing was not a pre-

existing right and therefore it was not considered a valid exertion of rights under s35 (1). As Walters points out, the Van der Peet case, if read literally in the context of reconciliation, it is a resignation. In other words, the Aboriginal people must be reconciled to the fact (in resignation) that the Crown now has sovereignty over them (as quoted in Kymlicka and Bashir 178). Undoubtedly, “for Aboriginal peoples who question the moral foundations of the Crown sovereignty, this may be troubling” (178).

Walters goes on to argue that “reconciliation of relationship” and “reconciliation as consistency” are also found in the complex relationship between Canada and Indigenous populations. However, reconciliation as resignation in this case looks mostly like a way to securing the sovereignty of the Canadian state. In general, Canadian jurisprudence, therefore, offers the legal foundation for a reconciliation that has at its core a centering of the Canadian state which has the final word on Aboriginal rights claims. Here, reconciliation as re-colonization becomes clear.

Walters draws another salient conclusion with his third type, “reconciliation as consistency.” This type of reconciliation can be one-sided or two-sided. He claims that if traced back the Royal Proclamation, contemporary SCC rulings on the duty to consult the Crown must live up to its honour while also exerting sovereignty. As I stated in Chapter One, The *Royal Proclamation* of 1763 was intended to set the tone of future negotiations for the acquisition of strategic land. The British recognized the need to soothe some of the Indigenous fears surrounding the lands surrender process. In 1763, King George issued the *Royal Proclamation* to lay the legal groundwork for the negotiation of treaties and the management of newly acquired territories, while also asserting unextinguished Aboriginal title to land. Building on this, to engage honourably

with Indigenous peoples must be consistent the Crown's assertion of sovereignty, and their actions must be *reconciled* with this fact. In this way, urban revitalization has components of reconciling—both geographically and spatially—the historically oppressed. This is of course perhaps limited to the case of “consolidated democratic orders” (Holder and Cornthwaite) such as in Canada where explicit racialized spatial organization is not found in urban areas, although found ingrained in the reserve system upheld by the Indian Act²⁹.

In the same collection, Kymlicka suggests simply that reconciliation (or the politics of) has risen in societies post-war that espouse values of human rights, non-discrimination and constitutionalism. However, the past wrongs committed in these places must be “righted.” This movement began when apartheid activists in South Africa made reconciliation a significant part of the transition to democracy (1). Kymlicka writes,

So debates about multiculturalism's inclusion are increasingly influenced by ideas of reconciliation; and debates about reconciliation are increasingly influenced by ideas of multicultural citizenship. In a sense, this evolution should not surprise us. It has become increasingly clear that there is something artificial about talking about diversity or pluralism in abstraction from historic injustice. (5)

For many here, however, reconciliation will always be about land echoing the unextinguished title to land laid out in the *Royal Proclamation*. As with reconciliation, I am arguing here that revitalization and urban renewal have the potential to be hollow, while perhaps well-intentioned. To borrow from Kymlicka, “there is something artificial” in seeking to revitalize a space and claim it as inclusive to all, as the waterfront has,

²⁹ It should be noted here that the racialized spatial organization of the reserve system upheld by the Indian Act is most certainly a crucial piece of the settler colonial realty in Canada. However, a full exploration of it is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

while failing to resolve the underlying tensions between unimpeded growth and the growing poverty of those *made* vulnerable by the settler state.³⁰

Conclusion

A reconciliation of Indigenous/Canadian relations that ensures that the future is not haunted by the past (Hayner 161) will necessitate an understanding of spaces themselves, not just actual “land,” in and substantive restitution ways. For a robust and just reconciliation, substantive and material realities must be addressed, but there must also be changes to the ways of knowing and understanding colonial spaces. Revitalization in its current iteration on the waterfront does not work to transform the space into one where multiple identities and contestations are evident, where people can challenge the meaning of the newly imagined communities. Instead, that meaning has been bestowed onto the people in yet an additional act of settler colonialism. While I argue that reconciliation must have deep substantive outcomes, where hearts and minds of settlers change along with material power and outcomes, I also insist that this must have a spatial element especially in the urban context. Ultimately this means that for revitalization to be decolonizing, settlers must relinquish power, space and resources. It is in this context that I argue that the Pan Am Housing project is an *apology*, a symbolic act, and an attempt at reconciliation for a settler colonial city that continues to remake, revitalize and recolonize the land. The apology, I propose, is being

³⁰ See Tully’s “Struggle over Recognition and Distribution” and Veitch’s *Law and the Politics of Reconciliation*. See also Stewart Motha for a colonial approach to the topic.

made not by a particular person or level of government,³¹ but it is in fact being made by *all* settlers and is thus a performative act in the creation and maintenance of settler identity and nationhood.

In addition to the settler complicity in this apology, it is also a justification for the dispossession of *more* land in the city itself. Without apologies such as the Pan Am Project, the espoused tenets of justice and fairness found in a liberal and multicultural democracy fail to be upheld. The attempted reconciliation found in symbolic apologies, such as the Pan Am project, offers what Edmonds argues is a “potent form of utopian politics” (*Settler Colonialism and [Re]conciliation*) where the history of land theft and cultural genocide (and their legacy) are somehow remedied by a few hundred affordable housing units. The revitalization project can now claim it has included Indigenous populations on the waterfront, on pieces of land to which Indigenous sovereignty is barely recognized as footnote in Toronto’s history (as observed in the closing remarks at the end of the waterfront tour that I described in the opening of this chapter). In this chapter, I made a modest attempt to “unsettle” this revitalization effort by employing a timely critique of reconciliation. I argued that similar critiques can be leveled at revitalization efforts such as the Pan Am housing units that are, to quote Alfred from the chapter’s start, “nothing more than a politically correct smokescreen obscuring the fact that no real progress is being made.”

Revitalization can be a part of this move for a deep reconciliation as it has the opportunity to decolonize the way urban space has been historically represented. But,

³¹ Individuals and governments have made apologies in Canada, most notably was Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s apology for residential schools which has been well analyzed by many critical of state sponsored reconciliation.

the Pan Am Project fails to live up to this authentic revitalization that I speak of. In the scope of the project on the waterfront, the Pan AM project is a symbolic gesture, an apology, to “welcome” Indigenous bodies back onto the land in a state-sponsored, mediated and uncontested way.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Black Lives Matter on Indigenous Land”: How Idle No More and Black Lives Matter Are Decolonizing Anti-Racism

Being black in Canada can sometimes be suffocating. This feeling does not only come from being subject to anti-black racism in multiple domains of social, economic, cultural and civic life in Canada. *It is overwhelmingly the result of carrying the exhausting burden of having to convince others of the truth of your lived experience.*

--Anthony Morgan (*The Star*)

Before we discuss reconciling, we need truth. -- Hayden King (*The Globe and Mail*)

The Suicide Contagion: Indigenous Lives Matter

In April of 2016, as I was writing this chapter, a news story broke that thirteen children and youth in the northern Ontario Indigenous community of Attawapiskat had made a suicide pact, the youngest member being nine years old. Attawapiskat is in the territory of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) a Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO) which represents forty-nine First Nation communities in northern Ontario. NAN communities are some of the most remote in the province and many have considerable and long-standing challenges arising from lack of funding for; infrastructure, clean drinking water, housing, all-weather roads, food security and health and social services (Nishnawbe Aski Nation “About Us”). According to Chief Bruce Shisheesh, on April 8th alone, there were eleven suicide attempts in the small community of 1,600 people and there have been 101 suicide attempts since September of 2015 (CBC “Attawapiskat”). Swiftly, the issue was deemed a crisis and a declaration of a “state of emergency” was made. Media, government officials and health care workers were flown in overnight. In the media, it was most frequently framed as a mental health issue, where there are

clearly not enough resources to deal with mental health issues facing Indigenous youth especially on more remote reserves. As I stated above, Attawapiskat, like many remote reserve communities, does lack the funding and infrastructure to have the same essential human services of urban communities. A few months prior to the issues in Attawapiskat receiving media attention, in January of 2016, Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations and Family Caring Society, along with the Assembly of First Nations succeeded in a ground-breaking and hard-fought claim against the government of Canada to the Human Rights Commission of Canada. Blackstock made the claim that the federal government fails to provide the same level of child welfare services to children on First Nations reserves than it does for non-Indigenous children. The Commission ruled that the federal government does in fact systematically discriminate against First Nations children in this way.

Despite the media frenzy and public outcry (that has now since dimmed), child and youth suicide has been a chronic and horrifying reality in Indigenous communities for decades. The framing of the issue solely in the terms of a health emergency instead of a chronic issue, struck me. As well, the fact that it was called a possible “suicide contagion” (CBC “Attawapiskat 2”)—where ideas of suicide spread from person to person like the common cold—connotes that this is an issue that, like a natural contagious virus, was not human-made, or perhaps out of our control. In the media reports, there is some recognition that poverty and despair can spur on “contagious” suicide behavior, but there is scant mention of, and willful national ignorance of, that poverty and despair.

To be fair, some of the more thorough media and government responses offer “the history of colonialism and residential schools” as the precondition to Indigenous youth in Canada having some of the highest suicide rates in the world. Yet again, as was made clear in the official apology given by Stephen Harper and as reconciliation efforts show, the colonial settler history is something that can be overcome by a benevolent government that expresses remorse for past wrongs but, that is, as frequently claimed, not currently responsible. In the government’s response to a crisis, there is an official language of the pastness of settler colonialism and the argument that the crisis in Attawapiskat is the “legacy” of something long over. Speaking to the actions that should be taken, legal scholar and Idle No More activist Pamela Palmater says that, “the best thing to do would be to not do what they always do” which is cry “crisis,” fly some people in, and perhaps visit the community or have an emergency session of Parliament (which did happen) (CBC “Desperation”). Instead, Palmater suggests that the root causes of Indigenous mental health issues be addressed, most notably racism, continued land theft, and the physical, cultural and fiscal violence at the hands of the state.

When asked about the ‘crisis’, former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien voiced a common refrain, that, “some people just have to move away” from these isolated communities to escape the conditions that render them vulnerable (CBC “Jean Chrétien”). Chrétien’s assumption, of course, is that continued dispossession is the preferred option, and that it is the isolated geography that is the problem. However, Audra Simpson importantly reminds us that communities such as Attawapiskat are “made vulnerable” (“Chief’s Two Bodies”). It is not just a lack of financial resources or

health supports that makes Indigenous communities vulnerable but it is the reality of current colonial violence, dispossession, and racism leading a small community such as Attawapiskat to suffer one of the most horrific things imaginable: their own children killing themselves.

In response to the suicide attempts in Attawapiskat, on April 13, 2016, in a show of solidarity, Idle No More (INM) protesters were joined by Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the Mohawk Warrior Society for a “die-in” at the Toronto office of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). INAC, the federal ministry “responsible” for Indigenous communities was occupied for nine days. The “die-in” sparked a national #OccupyINAC movement where federal offices were taken over in the cities of Toronto, Regina, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Gatineau (INM “News”). Protesters came with demands as they were articulated by the youth in Attawapiskat themselves in statement released on April 12 (INM “Facebook”). Despite the settler suggestion, none of those demands were about leaving the community or leaving the land. By centering the demands of the youth themselves, INM is, yet again, as they have often done in their work, demanding that it be Indigenous communities themselves who should author their own fates, who should decide what the problems are, and how best to solve them. As suggested the literature I have reviewed in this dissertation, the act giving the youth themselves the power to define the issues is an act of Indigenous resurgence.

In this chapter I will do two things. First, by exploring INM and BLM, I will show that in the urban context of Toronto there is at present a shift occurring in the “decolonization of anti-racism” (Lawrence and Dua) and an animating of what future relations between Indigenous people and Black people could look like in their combined struggles against

settler colonialism. I will argue that these two movements, while their explicit shows of solidarity may be recent and comparatively brief in the social justice struggles in Canada, represent a positive move in addressing the failure of recognition that Lawrence and Dua articulate. Second, I will show these movements are bound together in their challenge of the fantasies and the apologies of the colonial settler state of Canada. It is in recognition of how the fantasies of settler belonging on the land, terra nullius and a post-racial Canada, coupled with the apologies of reconciliation and official multiculturalism (as it derides anti-racism), that these two movements represent vibrant resistance and resurgence of diasporic and Indigenous identities in the present. I propose that this activist work is in an alternative “revitalizing of Toronto” and is in line with David Harvey’s notion of having the power to “change the urban.”³²

Cities have often been the location of social movement politics. Many struggles have been location specific, such as rallies against local issues within the city, but they also can turn cities into central nodes of larger more systemic movements (Miller “Social Movements” 453). The logistics, infrastructure, communications and sheer population make cities ideal places to politically organize. I will look at Idle No More and Black Lives Matter movements in Toronto and pay particular attention to how they are addressing the colonial settler fantasies and apologies in urban spaces. I will also illustrate in this chapter, that akin to the erasures on the waterfront that I have detailed, the erasure of Indigenous presence and the erasure of the legacy of slavery, these two movements are attempting to address these erasures and bring those histories and legacies into the present.

³² In his seminal piece, *The Right of the City*, Harvey writes, “the freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is...one of the most precious, yet most neglected of our human rights” (2).

I will begin with a description of both movements and their actions in Toronto. I will then show how they are challenging the fantasies that I found stitched into the fabric of the revitalization project on the waterfront. The fantasy of settler belonging and the fantasy of a post-racial Canada have for too long worked to erase or prevent contestation and discouraged counter and alternative storytelling. BLM and INM seek to subvert these fantasies. Further, both movements challenge the settler state to go beyond the hollow apologies offered in the past and like the one offered in the Pan Am Project that I detailed in Chapter four. I will lay out how both movements have and continue to engage in genuine debate amongst themselves, and how they have been discursively framed in mainstream media. I will conclude with an exploration of how both movements have ingrained in them diverse and at times conflicted approaches and stories to tell, but, as I will suggest, it is in these fractured narratives of decolonizing resurgence where their power lies.

It is a vibrant and energized time for activist movements addressing the connections between race, gender, labour, state-sponsored violence and land. Idle No More (INM) and Black Lives Matter (BLM) have been active movements across North America. Both started by women, INM began in 2012 and BLM a year later in 2013. Black Lives Matter was brought on by building activism around police brutality, racial profiling, and racism in the prison industrial complex of the United States. Canadian iterations of the movement have focused on police brutality, carding, and racism in the education system but are more representative of the politics in Canada. INM movement began in Canada and has since spread to the United States and across the globe. In the pages below I will provide the genesis of each movement and illustrate how through

those diverse struggles are taking aim at the same structures that support the settler project.

Idle No More (and partner group, Defenders of the Land) begins from the notion that much of Canada was not ceded to the settler, that further negotiations over use and protection of land must be had on a nation-to-nation basis (INM “Year in Review”). Idle No More asks for deeper systemic change based on the dispelling of the myths of terra nullius and settler belonging on the land and ultimately attempts to reverse the drive of settler colonial land acquisition which continues in perpetuity. Black Lives Matter also challenges Canadian fantasy, particularly that racism does not exist in Toronto with particular focus on anti-black racism. The fantasy of Canadian multiculturalism leading to a post-racial country is just that, a fantasy. For BLM, issues like carding and police brutality in communities of colour are rampant in Toronto, as is racism in the education system, and a general and often violent disregard for black bodies and lives.

The Other Occupation

Just a few weeks before, Idle No More joined in solidarity when Black Lives Matter, Toronto “occupied” the space in front of Toronto Police headquarters on College Street in downtown Toronto under the name BLMTO BLACKCITY. Activists slept overnight in snow and rain for fifteen days. The action was related to demands around the death of Andrew Loku, a forty-five-year-old man from South Sudan was shot and killed by the Toronto Police on July 5, 2015.³³ Loku was a father of five and had lived

³³ Around the time of the protest, other black men were killed by Toronto Police, Jermaine Carby (thirty-three years old), Kwasi Skene-Peters (twenty-one years old).

through the Sudanese civil war as a child soldier before he came to Canada. He was killed in his apartment building holding a hammer when he was shot by police. There are competing versions of the shooting. Witnesses who saw it happen claim that Loku was not threatening the police and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) claims Loku was approaching the police officers with the hammer raised. The SIU report claims that the police officer (who has yet to be named) had used justifiable force (SIU, City or Toronto). Black Lives Matter, along with many mental health patients-rights advocates, are demanding that the SIU report be released along with the name of the officer.

When local Indigenous Elders and Idle No More supporters joined Black Lives Matter for the two-week long occupation, according to both groups, this cemented their relationship of solidarity. While Attawapiskat is a long way from Toronto, in show of de-territorialized struggle—and one that is also simultaneously about land—together these groups are trying to expose, shame and call to attention to the same national fantasies and apologies that undergird the settler state of Canada. In this chapter I will show how these two social movements have challenged and complicated the colonial settler storytelling that narrates Canada in both urban and reserve contexts as they begin a longer-term partnership of solidarity. Idle No More are urban- and reserve (land)-based, and are active all over Canada and the United States; and Black Lives Matter is a predominantly urban United States-based movement with an active Toronto chapter. Describing the mutual show of support between the two groups, one of BLMTO's steering committee members and founders Janaya Khan says:

The Black and Indigenous solidarity that was on the ground is going to be instrumental in what mobilizing and organizing in Canada and that part of Turtle Island will look like moving forward. We challenged the myth of “stolen land versus stolen labour,” and rather recognized that these things happen

simultaneously. Our struggles are deeply, deeply linked through colonization and mass incarceration and police brutality and poverty. Our struggles are unique but our liberations are interconnected. (qtd. in Gray-Donald 1)

Khan's assertion captures much of the analysis I have attempted to offer in this dissertation. I have argued that while there may be "unique struggles" and histories of Indigenous people and Black people in the settler colonial context, that their interconnectedness is revealed in the fantasy geographies of revitalization and urban renewal on Toronto's waterfront. Through processes of revitalizing our cities, the interconnected struggles of these communities are yet again ghosted in the the re-acquisition of the land, the re-making of land, and the labour that made the land "productive". The promise of these social movements is thus, not essentializing their struggles to be the same, but recognizing the difference and also the connections. The explicit solidarity with Indigenous movements also differentiates BLMTO from the other 38 American chapters of Black Lives Matter. According to Khan, the American counterparts are focused more on a Black nationalism and on being a Black American, whereas Canada's BLM movement is more focused on diasporic communities inspiring conversations around global instances of anti-Black racism.

Khan's statement does the work that Lawrence and Amadahy (while referencing Razack) attempt to uncover in their now heavily cited article, which is to: Break through and deconstruct postures of innocence—the ways in which both Black and Indigenous people may insist that the primacy of their own suffering and powerlessness is so unique and all-encompassing that it erases even the possibility of their maintaining relationships of oppression relative to another group (Razack 2004,

pp. 10, 14). Similarly, to quote Lawrence and Dua in another piece that makes a call of “decolonizing anti-racism” pertinent here,

In continuous conversations over the years we have discussed our discomfort with the manner in which Aboriginal people and perspectives are excluded within antiracism. We have been surprised and disturbed by how rarely this exclusion has been taken up, or even noticed. Due to this exclusion, Aboriginal people cannot see themselves in antiracism contexts, and Aboriginal activism against settler domination takes place without people of color as allies. Though antiracist theorists may ignore the contemporary Indigenous presence, Canada certainly does not. (125)

They add that antiracism struggles and theory have, in fact, first failed to challenge the ongoing colonization and dispossession of Indigenous lands and rights to self-determination, and have also failed to integrate understanding of the Canadian state as a colonial state into their frameworks. Tied to this work is the complicated task of wrestling with the fact that Black Canadians, with their own history of land dispossession in Canada, while not “the quintessential settlers” in the white supremacist way, nevertheless have been involved in the settlement process (Lawrence and Amadahy, *Settlers or Allies* 107). However, they note that Black dispossession is especially present in the histories of urban environments like Toronto and Montreal,³⁴ and ask what does this mean for relationships in the present (Lawrence and Amadahy 107).

A potent example of Black dispossession outside of Toronto and Montreal is the story of Africville, in Nova Scotia. Africville was a 120-year-old Black community on the Bedford Basin near the city-centre of Halifax. Residents were mostly refugees that

³⁴ This “browning” of immigration policy happened after World War II; before then immigration (and settlement) was a predominantly Whites-only affair. See Myer Siemiatycki’s article, “Immigration, Diversity and Urban Citizenship in Toronto,” and Galabuzi and Edward’s *Canada’s Economic Apartheid*.

arrived in Nova Scotia after the War of 1812 and built a community that flourished with a school, a church congregation, post office and a steady supply of fish (Nelson “The Space of Africville”). As Halifax grew and developed around the vibrant community, the waste and industrial sectors in particular began to encroach on Africville. These industries included a city dump, an incinerator, a slaughterhouse, a bone mill, and an oil plant storage facility. More and more as these toxic industries moved in, the residents of Africville were pushed off the land, refused services and marred by outside attitudes that the community was “unsanitary and intolerable”. The last family home was bulldozed in 1970. Despite settlements made to residents, monuments made to “honour” the legacy, the City of Halifax has failed to take full accountability for the racially motivated “clearing” of the land. As such, Nelson argues “the site remains contested – a reminder to the city that burial of past injustices requires diligent maintenance” (214). The “diligent maintenance” that Nelson refers to speaks to the argument that I have put forth in this dissertation; that revitalization and urban renewal provide the settler state a renewed opportunity to re-narrate the land with its fantasies and apologies in the effort to “bury past injustice”(215).

Idle No More: AIM and Red Power

As noted in earlier chapters, Indigenous rights movements have been active globally for decades. These movements have been challenging colonialism, rapacious development, extractivism, cultural genocide and homogenization all over the world. In North America, “Red Power” in the 1960s arose alongside Black power, anti-Vietnam, feminist, and gay rights movements across the continent. Increasing encroachment on

Indigenous land for resource extraction, combined with lived experiences of systemic racism in the form of police harassment and poverty (especially in urban environments), led to the creation in 1968 of American Indian Movement (AIM) in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Weyler, Blood of the Land). Influenced by the Black Panthers, the AIM was an urban movement struggling against slum-housing and high unemployment, which then began to spread to reserves across Canada and the United States as a fight for treaty rights (Weyler, Blood of the Land).

The beginning of the Red Power movement in Canada can be traced to the “White Paper” released by then Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien under the Pierre Elliot Trudeau government in 1969. Largely thought to be an offensively assimilationist piece of policy, the White Paper proposed abolishing the Ministry of Indian Affairs and all distinct rights and entitlements afforded to First Nations people. This would have been a blatant extension of colonial cultural genocide and assimilation. As a result, an already burgeoning Indigenous rights movement was invigorated by the struggle brought on against the White Paper. What distinguished the Red Power movement in Canada was its use of direct action, something that Idle No More has continued today through blockades, sit-ins, flash mobs, public drum circles and online/social media/webinar campaigns. Of the Red Power actions, at a conference of the Manitoba Indian and Metis Conference, Jeannette Corbiere from Toronto stated in 1969, “the only way to gain equality is not to ask for it, but rather to lay claim to it...We will not only rock the boat, we will sink it if need be” (Lannon 1). Referencing the White Paper, The National Indian Brotherhood issued the following response, “We view this as a policy designed to divest us of our aboriginal rights. If we accept this policy, and in the process

lose our rights and our lands, we become willing partners in cultural genocide. This we cannot do” (Coulthard, *Red Skin Whites Masks* 5).

With direct actions targeting specific ministerial offices and other development projects across the country, the federal government officially shelved the White Paper in 1971. As a result, as Coulthard argues, the White Paper and the resulting Red Power Movement sparked the contemporary politics of recognition and reconciliation of “Native land and political grievances with state sovereignty” (5). As I explored in Chapter Two, drawing on Coulthard’s suggestion, the politics of recognition and state-sponsored reconciliation have not been adequate enough to counter balance the assaults on Indigenous sovereignty and rights (although the rights-based framework itself is flawed) (Dorries) that have continued on despite the shelving of the White paper. Although there were countless Indigenous actions and resistances in the decades in between the era of Red Power and Idle No More, for my purpose here, I want to directly look at the movement in its most recent iteration and as an example of an Indigenous resurgence on the ground.

In 2012, under the Stephen Harper government, the proposed omnibus Bill C-45, known as the Jobs and Growth Act, was a budget implantation act that weighed in at 400 plus pages. In the Bill, there were a multitude of comprehensive changes to existing federal legislation in an attempt to concretely implement the Conservative ethos across the legislative board. Among the many proposed changes there were significant alterations to the Indian Act, the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (Government of Canada Bill C-45). The changes to these key pieces of legislation threatened Aboriginal land and treaty rights,

weakened environmental protections of lakes and rivers, and made reserve land more vulnerable to settler investors looking to develop.

Opposition to the Bill in Indigenous communities was powerful. In the fall of 2012, momentum was kicked up by four women from the prairies—Jessica Gordon, Sylvia McAdam, Sheelah McLean and Nina Wilson—uniting under the name, Idle No More (INM). These women came together to educate the country on the far-reaching impacts that the Bill would have on Aboriginal rights and the environment (INM “The Story”). Within weeks, Idle No more had exploded on social media as #IdleNoMore. Almost overnight, INM became a national movement that attracted non-Native allies as well (“Year in Review”). A day of action was planned to protest the bill on December 10, 2012. Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat declared that she would go on hunger strike on December 11 in support of Idle No More and to protest the “Third World conditions” on her own reserve. Concerned with treaty right and obligations, Chief Spence demanded to speak with both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Governor General David Johnson in an effort to frame the meeting as one of a nation-to-nation basis (as the Governor General is the representative of the Crown). On December 10, actions happened all over the country consisting of drum circles in public spaces, flash mobs, sit-ins and teach-ins, public panels and round dancing. In the weeks and months that followed, INM began to use more direct action techniques like blockades of railways, traffic stoppages and, in the most publicized and longest running of those actions, was the blockade of the CN Rail Line by members of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation near Sarnia Ontario.

Under its successes, INM was able to connect remote reserves to urban Indigenous populations and non-Indigenous allies. It was the most significant Indigenous movement since Red Power with more than 300,000 people active in the movement as of 2014 (“Year in Review”), with 700 local groups and hundreds of events organized all over Canada and the United States. As the movement grew and the demands and actions became, at times, in conflict, there was a growing tension in IDM about the direction to take. For many Indian Act Chiefs, for example, the debate is more focused on sharing the profits from resource extraction. While crushing poverty in many communities is the backdrop to this demand, many in the grassroots felt that this direction represented a losing sight of the more transformative aims of IDM. Addressing the dilemma that this profound conflict presents, Leanne Simpson eloquently explains that it puts “people in the position of having to choose between feeding their kids and destroying their lands [and this] is simply wrong” (qtd. in Klein “Dancing the World”). For Simpson, this conflict is the result of a long chain of federal governments whose interaction with Indigenous communities was governed by the colonial Indian Act and not through treaty. As a way to address this issue, the grassroots of IDM is demanding that treaties form the basis of a renewed relationship.

Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter began in the United States in 2013. Like the Occupy movement before it and other social movements of the moment, BLM rejects hierarchy. As St. Louis rapper Tef Poe says, “this ain’t your daddy’s civil rights movement” (Hip Hop Blog, The Guardian). The philosophy and tactics used by BLM are similar to Idle

No More: direct action, teach-ins and other educational events, and online activism, which are all grounded in inclusion. Also similar to Idle No More, the BLM movement has had internal debates about directions to take the movement in its third year (Lannon 1). Black Lives Matter grew from a seeming increase in racially motivated violence against Black boys and men that came to a crescendo with the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting death of the unarmed seventeen-year-old Treyvon Martin in (BLM “Herstory”) on February 26 2012. On the day of the acquittal, July 13 2013, Oakland labour activist Alicia Garza wrote an open “love letter to black people” on Facebook where she concluded with the proclamation, “Black lives matter” (BLM “Herstory”). Partnering with two other women activists, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, the movement grew across the United States.

The following summer of 2014, when white police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed eighteen-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, the movement erupted. There were protests all over the country and BLM figured prominently in the organizing of them. Journalist Jelani Cobb writes in *The New Yorker*, “That campaign eventually exposed Ferguson as a case study of structural racism in America and a metaphor for all that had gone wrong since the end of the civil-rights movement” (“The Matter of Black Lives” 1). Black Lives Matter targets violence—which may come through economic, geographic, social, cultural and political means—against Black lives and remains a distillation of Black justice movements. By framing their directives in this broad way, BLM are challenging the many blatant and subtle ways that anti-Black racism pervades structures globally. Espousing radical inclusion, and going beyond the materialist claims or civil rights claims, they write:

Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes. It goes beyond the narrow nationalism that can be prevalent within some Black communities, which merely call on Black people to love Black, live Black and buy Black, keeping straight cis Black men in the front of the movement while our sisters, queer and trans and disabled folk take up roles in the background or not at all. Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements. It is a tactic to (re)build the Black liberation movement. (BLM “About”)

Utilizing social media, BLM became internationally recognized for its calls for radical reform of existing structures that “dehumanize and disconnect black people” (“Herstory”). It is important to note here that the critique offered by the BLM movement is aimed at structural racism and goes beyond the common “bad seed” framing of the problem of racism being enacting solely by individuals. In a piece in The Guardian, founding member Patrisse Cullors wrote:

The Black Lives Matter National Network and the movement at large are sophisticated. We’re not easily won over by talking points and campaign trail pledges. We want to see meaningful collaboration and a genuine transformation of American democracy. Racism has its boot squarely wedged on the neck of black communities, and we don’t want to be told that hard work and responsibility are the answer. (“Black Votes Matter”)

Black Lives Matter, while it welcomes allies and shows solidarity with other movements, is “unapologetically Black” (BLM “About”). Its work then targets anti-Black racism as a distinct historical and global phenomenon that is lived experience black people around the world (and I will return to this below). BLM, in a similar vein to Idle No More and the movement for Indigenous resurgence, also claims to be an affirmative movement. They direct lots of energy and resources to challenging the structures that endanger Black

lives while also seeking to affirm Black culture (and is diversity) and contributions to society and resilience in the face “of deadly oppression” (BLM “Guiding Principles”).

BLM-TO

The beginnings of the BLM Toronto movement focused on state and police violence by centering art, writing, and direct action to address, “issues that impact Black communities like labor reproductive and gender justice.” Policing has been a core focus for the movement and, as Akwatu Khenti states, “Unbeknownst to many Canadians, Black communities in Canada have been the targets of intensive policing since the inception of the War on Drugs (WOD) in the 1980s, especially in the province of Ontario where most Blacks reside” (Akwatu, “The Canadian War on Drugs” 190). As with the United States, incarceration rates for Blacks in Canadian is disproportionately high. In federal prisons, Blacks represent 9% of the population while only representing 2.5% of the overall population (this figure is a dramatic 52% increase from 2000 to 2011) (Khenti 190).

In a segment about being Black in Canada for TV Ontario, prominent anti-racist activist and journalist Andray Domise remarks:

Our story in this country, as reflected by white-dominated media and an education system birthed from the womb of colonialist white supremacy, is a story of existing only when we are granted permission. It is therefore a story of erasure...the story of Canada not only barring entry to black Americans fleeing pogroms in the south and Midwest, but sending emissaries to discourage black activists from rallying their people northward. The story of Canada breaking its promise to black loyalists not once but twice, shunting them to the least habitable lands available in Halifax. It is the story of Canada compounding the misery of Africville’s black residents by denying them potable water, dumping the city’s waste at their doorsteps, and tearing their church to the ground. The story of Canada that gives no recognition to the Afro-indigenous experience, that denies a race problem within its police forces, even while decades of lawsuits and

activism prove otherwise, and has but one black councilor in the city touted as North America's most diverse. This is our story—that we are born free, and steered towards shackles. We are all but barred from entry into the senior echelons of both the private and public sector, harassed out of teaching positions, and find the caltrops of various systems scattered in our path when we attempt any escape from poverty. (“What does the Absence”)

Domise's words here are emblematic of much of the assertions of the BLM movement in Canada. Domise's words also expose the fantasy of the white settler state that I have presented in this dissertation. Both BLM and writer activists like Domise are challenging this fantasy. BLM Toronto is actively challenging the notion that Canada does not suffer from the systemic racism that is often witnessed in the United States. By occupying a piece of public land and vocalizing an alternative story of Black history in Canada and Black present in Canada, BLM Toronto is not only challenging white supremacy and anti-Black racism but also challenging the official language of multiculturalism and how Canada defines itself.

Revitalize This

As I have stated previously, it is important to observe Coulthard's assertion that: The “politics of recognition” as a recognition-based approach to reconciling Indigenous peoples' assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity-related claims through the negotiations of settlements over issues such as land, economic development and self-government (“Red Skin” 151). Coulthard goes on to argue “that this orientation to the reconciliation of Indigenous nationhood with state sovereignty is still colonial insofar as it remains structurally committed to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of our lands and self-determining authority” (151). As I have stated throughout this dissertation, the “structural commitment” to

dispossession—as its embodied in *terra nullius* and the fantasies and apologies of the settler state—is not only evident in extraction and enclosure on Indigenous land, but in the erasure of Indigenous sovereignty on the land (the fantasy of settler belonging) and erasure of the slave labour (the fantasy of a post-racial settler state) that supported its settlement through urban revitalization and planning. Also embodied in this “structural commitment” is the apology, which I argue is also revealed in urban revitalization and works to foreshadow the search for state-sponsored reconciliation in the present day. The apology represents the way in which urban revitalization makes insincere attempts to address the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples and to apparently facilitate Indigenous agency. All of this is not going unchallenged.

Perhaps the strongest bond between BLM and INM is their shared (albeit unique) historic and ongoing oppressions. Both Black and Indigenous people have experienced devastation to their populations, cultures and land ownership through colonial dispossession, the Atlantic slave trade, and genocide. Here in Canada, there are tangible binding ties to these historic experiences as evidenced in the revitalization on the Toronto waterfront—both communities share disproportionately high incidences of poverty, incarceration and police surveillance (Wortley and Owusu-Bempah); education systems fail to accurately represent black diasporic and Indigenous histories; both are the recipients of structural racism across institutions like health services, education, policing, and society as a whole (Wortley and Owusu-Bempah); and both share contravening identities as compared to a perceived European mainstream identity. In Canada, both populations are harshly measured against multiculturalism and “the

powerful integration myths” (Galabuzi “Diversity on the Mean Streets”) that are working to occlude issues of systemic racism.

While INM has ecological roots based in a settler colonial context of land-based fighting for a nation-to-nation inspired Indigenous resurgence, BLM calls itself a political and ideological intervention. Both are unapologetically Black focused and Indigenous focused respectively. While there are explicitly recognized roles for allies, both movements are working to better the lives of those directly in their communities. They are transnational and have forged links with Indigenous and Black movements around the world (as many successful social movements need to do) (Miller “Social Movements”). Both are rooted in previous movements like Black Liberation and Red Power, but they also seek to subvert and change those previous liberation struggles to be more inclusive to women, the disabled, and gender non-conforming, queer, and two spirited folks. With women at the helm of both movements, state violence and colonial gender-based violence also play significant roles in each movement. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (as covered in Chapter Two) is a significant plank of the INM campaigns. Despite these similarities however, ultimately INM is perhaps a more explicitly land-based movement while BLM focuses more around an identity politics.

INM states that its central mission is to bring about “a peaceful revolution to honour Indigenous sovereignty, protect land, water and build sovereignty and resurgence of nationhood” (Idle No More “Mission”). While land remains a central and crucial component to the INM movement, land cannot, and is not, separated out from all other elements of social justice. In fact, Idle No More works to support all facets of Indigenous resurgence and so while land is crucial, INM is a far more encompassing

social movement., Despite the fact they may be more focused on identity politics, BLM and those arguing for racial justice also have land in their focus. In fact, returning to Patrick Wolfe and his theory of blood quantum that I explored in Chapter Two, identity and land are perhaps inextricably linked in both movements. Wolfe argues that identity is in fact made through relationship to labour and land and labour and land are also inextricably linked in the settler colonial context. Therefore, I contend that while both movements approach identity and land in diverse ways, they end up in the same place, that is contending the settler colonial mandate of mixing stolen land, with stolen labour. In the United States, the movement for reparations for federal policies of redlining in cities has gained tremendous attention in Black activism. Journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates, in his award winning and controversial article for The Atlantic, "The Case for Reparations" argues that amongst slavery, Jim Crow, Separate but Equal, red-lining and denial of property ownership in the form of discriminatory housing and lending policies of Black Americans warrants reparations. While Coates' argument for reparations is (and others before him) much about slavery and segregation, one dimension of his argument, (echoing that of INM's and most Indigenous movements), is about land. Coates argues that hundreds of years of racism in the form of government policy has resulted in a massive theft of wealth, most obviously the wealth generated through slave labour but also in the denial of Black people to own property. Coates does not have an explicit connection with BLM and the argument he is making is uniquely US focused. However, I think his point that Black Americans not only built the nation and did not recuperate the benefits of that labour in the form of property resulting in legacies of poverty and ghettoization has a parallel to the INM and BLM movements larger contestations.

Reparations, as Coates argues, demands going beyond a simple recognition of slavery, segregation or red-lining to a framework where there is a “reckoning with the compounding moral debts” of the slave economy that built the United States. Although Coates fails to acknowledge the twin horrors of mixing stolen land and stolen labour, his argument that it will be impossible to truly move forward without addressing “compounding moral debts” of systemic racism aligns with Indigenous movements like Idle No More. The return to treaty relationships where there is an authentic reconciliation on terms set by Indigenous peoples themselves presents the same urgency.

Treaties and the Right to the City

In an effort to theoretically bind BLM and INM, a return to Indigenous thought is appropriate here. In Coulthard’s article, “Subjects of Empire”, he makes a call for Indigenous societies in Canada to put forth “that our cultures have much to teach the Western world about the establishment of relationships within and between peoples and the natural world that is profoundly non-imperialist” (456). Here, Coulthard expresses the power of what he describes the ideals of coexistence, reciprocity and mutual recognition in redefining the relationship that Canada has with Indigenous peoples and also, perhaps, in how Canada re-imagines the land. Unless these ideals form the base of recognition (and, relatedly, reconciliation) then the current forms, “reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power” (457) that Indigenous communities have been railing against. These ideals were often the spirit of the original treaties. While the relationships between settlers and Indigenous nations have been characterized as co-operative and based on mutual respect (RCAP, Report of the Royal

Commission), there are contemporary calls to reinterpret the treaties as signed under an environment of deceit, forgery, and manipulation (Burrows). If the treaties are to be considered the original constitutions of Canada (Henderson, Treaty Rights in the Constitution), then the authority and sovereignty of the Crown is derived from the treaties and not something that exist prior (RCAP). Moving forward, therefore, with a sort of “treaty federalism” would ensure Indigenous land rights and a restoring of meaningful political authority (Henderson, RCAP).

As I discussed in Chapter Three, treaties were designed to encourage and foster a co-existence, a nation-to-nation relationship and a sharing of land. According to Heather Dorries, however, planning in the urban context has been used to extinguish Indigenous sovereignty and justify non-Indigenous continued dispossession and occupation of land (“Rejecting the False Choice”). How may a renewal of the treaty relationship happen in the urban context and how may that renewal impact anti-colonial efforts? The INM and BLM social movements present a first step in enacting the treaty relationship in the urban. To conclude my examination of settler colonialism as it runs through revitalization projects, I have explored these social movements as they are playing out in the urban context. To do this, though, it is necessary to move beyond the bounded city. BLM AND IDM, while they have chapters in Toronto (and in the case of INM, rural and reserve-bases as well), their impact spreads much further. I will not refer to them as “urban social movements” then, but as anti-systemic movements that, while making use of the benefits of organizing in the city, are not bounded by the geographies of the city. The movements are both place-based and systemic at the same time. I believe that ending my dissertation with a look at two movements that challenge settler

colonialism and the idea that Canada is a post-racial North Star, effectively demonstrates the notion that colonialism, although alive and well today, is not without its challengers, its alternative storytellers.

While Canada may espouse liberal, multicultural democratic rhetoric, the urban becomes the place where a range of strategies both purposefully or systemically are employed to separate and further dispossess. The social movements that I explore here help to animate the sophistication and passion embodied in the resistance that is found in Toronto. While there was little to no explicit resistance to the waterfront development (although plenty of resistance to issues around housing, poverty and social inclusion in Toronto more broadly), I chose to look at these social movements as they are seeking to change the urban. They are changing Toronto and offering splintered narratives of the city in contrast to the homogenized and sanitized “official” histories about Sugar Beach (where slave narratives have all but disappeared) and about the Pan Am Games housing, where amidst luxury condominiums, Indigenous peoples receive a tenuous inclusion.

Black Lives Matter reminds us that, as Amadahy and Lawrence write: “Black diasporic peoples today continue to be uniquely racialized by a discourse created through slavery, whereby everything from standards of beauty to notions of criminality hinge on degrees of phenotypic blackness” (“Decolonizing Antiracism,” 106). Black Lives Matter Toronto, outside of their dominant campaign against racial profiling and violence from the Toronto Police Force, is focusing on the education system in Toronto and are planning an alternative “Freedom School” for the summer of 2016 where Black histories will be explored using art and storytelling.

Similarly, Idle No More Toronto and Indigenous resistance all over Canada is moving beyond (and not accepting as good enough) the symbolic apologies offered in projects like the Pan Am housing project. Idle No More offers a living breathing history unlike the footnoted history that I witnessed on my tour of the waterfront development. And, in rejecting the call to simply “move away” from communities like Attawapiskat articulated in their recent demands in #OccupyINAC, Idle No more is instead rejecting the notion that Indigenous people must move to urban areas to have good lives. Reserves are the geographic apartheid of the Indian Act and purposefully in remote and distant places to further distance and deny Indigenous people access and sovereignty to their own land. Idle No More Toronto, in their bold move of occupation sent the message that allowing death to sweep through Indigenous communities again was not acceptable, but also that simply moving to urban areas is not a solution, instead having their own sovereignty recognized on traditionally territory and a renewal of the treaty relationship are the terms by which they will set.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion:

This is What Revitalization Looks Like

In this dissertation, my original contribution has been to identify the role of urban planning and urban revitalization in the ongoing settler colonial project. To make this contribution, I argued that examining urban planning and revitalization aids in the unpacking of systemic processes unique to the settler colony that continue to dispossess, enact violence, and deny Indigenous sovereignty. The central research questions guiding the work are: (1) What are the mechanisms through which revitalization projects like the Toronto waterfront further the project of settler colonization? In other words, how is settler colonialism a living, breathing thing, a structure that is revealed in urban renewal?; (2) How are often violent historiographies of the settler state obscured, or erased through revitalization projects and how do they come to the surface in the present day?; (3) How can contemporary urban revitalization projects authentically come to terms with past and present settler violence? Does the culture of reconciliation, or apologies, aid or impede this process?; (4) What are the broader implications for Indigenous sovereignty found in urban revitalization efforts like the Toronto waterfront project? And finally; (5) Can emerging resistance movements be both unifying and transformative in the settler city in the present moment?

I approached these questions from the understanding of settler colonialism as a structure and not a series of events (Wolfe), and I argued that this structure of settler

colonialism, and its new tools of dispossession, are animated in revitalization projects like the Toronto waterfront by a dual process of creating *fantasy* and *apology*.

In Chapter One, using archival research I was able to find rich detail of how the Toronto waterfront has, through time, been positioned as a *terra nullius* while also being a site where the aspirational fantasies of the city were mapped out. In Chapter Two, I worked towards a definition, or set of definitions, of settler colonialism and the relations that work to sustain it as a structure in the context of urban renewal drawing on settler colonial studies and Indigenous scholarship. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated the fantasies created in the revitalization of the waterfront, specifically on Sugar Beach, were; 1) the myth of settler belonging on the land as propped up by the doctrine of *terra nullius* and 2) the myth of a post-racial Canada. In Chapter Four I demonstrated the apologies that are revealed in the Pan Am project represent the inadequacies of contemporary forms of recognition and reconciliation that are not only necessary to uphold the settler identity of seemingly compassionate liberal democracy, but also an attempt at reconciling the fact that land dispossession and denial of Indigenous sovereignty continues with urban renewal. In Chapter Five, I offered a crucial look forward to the vibrant movements challenging settler colonialism and the myth of a post-racial Canada with a look to Idle No More and Black Lives Matter.

Throughout this dissertation, I resisted the binary of settler/native and sought to reveal the triangular relations between the Native, the exogenous Other, and the settler (Veracini) in the revitalization project. I did this with a focus on Black history in Canada and the related dispossession of labour in the form of Canada's hidden 'slavery' and how it intermingles with dispossession of Indigenous land. In framing settler colonial

urban revitalization as fantasies and apologies I was able to illustrate how these often pitted as ‘competing’ oppressions are in fact linked through settler storytelling.

Throughout this dissertation I also asked where and what form is resistance to the fantasy and apology of settler city building? In chapter five, I explored the current forms of resistance be offered up by Idle No More and Black Lives Matter. The scholarly material examining these movements is emerging. However, how they may relate to each other, or work together, or in opposition remains to be seen. My efforts in chapter five were to place these two movements into the conversation being had in critical scholarship about decolonizing anti-racism and the broader discussion of whether or not diasporic people are “settlers or allies”.

My mixed-methods approach consisted of a literature review of relevant, multi-disciplinary scholarship, grey literature and media accounts focused on two project sites a public park Sugar Beach, and a housing development, the Pan Am project. To conclude I explored Black Lives Matter and Idle No More movements. My review of a broad range of scholarship allowed insight into the diverse ways in which settler colonialism is framed and opened up avenues for investigating the critical geographies of urban planning in this context. My aim was to make a modest contribution to the literature on settler colonialism in the spaces between these disciplines. My central theoretical claim is that settler colonialism manifests in the fantasies and apologies that form the fabric of urban renewal in contemporary Toronto. I argue that the ways in which urban renewal is enacted through the fantasy of settler belonging works to continue the erosion of Indigenous sovereignty. I demonstrated throughout the dissertation that the driving concept of *terra nullius* not only informed the way the

waterfront has been conceived and perceived through time, but that *terra nullius* remains intact as legitimizing claim in urban revitalization today. To support this position, I conducted the following original research that I detail below.

In the archives, I reviewed first-hand settler accounts of the land positioning the waterfront as a *terra nullius* and as a result placing settler squarely and legitimately on the land. From the interviews I learned that the Sugar Beach represents a post-political space where histories and contestations are erased by a sugary gloss. In the interviews from the Pan Am Project, I learned that revealed in the paltry offering of a few hundred affordable housing units is the troubled politics of recognition and a lack of authentic reconciliation for the loss of Indigenous sovereignty in the space. Lastly, I performed dozens of site visits, took photographs, and participated in a formal 'waterfront tour'. These experiences added depth to my analysis as they challenged me to think about my own settler subjectivities.

Urban Indigenous sovereignty would be the crucial starting point for authentic revitalization to occur. The City declared formally that 2014 would be The Year of Truth and Reconciliation in Toronto. The City of Toronto also recently announced it would be implementing the TRC recommendations. However, further to that, Indigenous self-determination needs to be recognized in the urban sphere. The Toronto Aboriginal Research Project Report (TARP) discusses the challenges of an urban self-government but also suggests a strong desire for Indigenous communities to organize in this way, supported with an Indigenous public service. And, there is strong support within the Toronto Indigenous community to develop elected, representative political body as an expression of urban Aboriginal self-government (TARP, 330).

Although there have been multiple gestures on the part of the City and joining forces of various Indigenous social services organizations to create an urban Aboriginal governance framework as laid out by the 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP), according to the TARP and its large scale survey of the Toronto Aboriginal community, many initiatives have been “heavily controlled by all levels of government” (335). This is largely due to the shifting funding priorities of changing governments as well as jurisdictional gridlock. As a result, urban governance strategies and the organizations that they have been comprised of often compete for “piecemeal and inconsistent’ funding. These issues have been serious impediments to actualizing self-determination in any urban area in the country and they remain yet another reminder of the colonial yolk that dictates the planning and governance of settler cities. While I suggest here that self-determination in the urban environment will be the starting point for authentic revitalization, I also ask, how can authentic revitalization become a reality beyond urban governance structures?

Urban centers need to enact thoughtful, authentic, Indigenous-designed revitalization projects that go *beyond* recognition. The projects should work to actively centre the fantasies and apologies of contemporary settler colonialism. By erasing and denying the city’s colonial history, governments, societies and (research) institutions of Toronto have aided in the persistent belief that Indigenous people and the city simply do not mix. The erasing of Indigenous presence in Toronto has had more sinister ramifications which I explored in Chapter Three and Chapter Four of this dissertation. Therefore, it is of crucial importance for planners, governments, and those who also *contest* urban space and development, to locate their work within the context of settler

colonialism. Authentic revitalization could thus be an opportunity to lay bare the lie of the doctrine of *terra nullius* if it were a process that both struggled with and attempted to come to terms with the ongoing dispossession of settler colonialism. Moreover, intimately bound to this authentic revitalization would be the necessity to recognize the erasure of the slave labour and the related fantasy of a post-racial state.

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Appendix A: Sugar Beach Telephone Interviews

Design and Concept - Waterfront Toronto

- What role does Sugar Beach play in the overall Toronto Waterfront development (in terms of its design concept and intended use)?
- Who are the intended or perceived users of Sugar Beach?
- Did Redpath Sugar play a role in the design or implementation of the Sugar Beach project?
- Why was Sugar Beach unveiled early in the Waterfront revitalization process?
- How is Sugar Beach apart of the emerging Toronto Waterfront brand?
- Were the local established communities of residents involved in the design concept of Sugar Beach?

Design and Concept - Cormier Associates

- Can you describe your role in the project?
- What are the central design concepts behind the beach? Inspirations?
- How does the beach fit into the overall “brand” and intention of the waterfront revitalization?
- How and in what ways did (or did not) the design of the beach embrace the past use of the space? Mainly its industrial use? Why was this important?
- How has the environmental use of the land changed?
- Who are the intended users of the Beach?

Appendix B: Pan Am Project Telephone Interviews

Affordable Housing Advocates

- Can you describe some of the housing research you do?
- Can you give your perspective on the housing “crisis” in Toronto?
- What are the unique housing needs of the urban Indigenous community?
- Are the new developments/projects/revitalization efforts around the city helping or hindering the housing crisis?
- What do you know about the Waterfront revitalization project?
- In your view, is it an inclusive project that reflects the needs of the majority of Torontonians?

Appendix C: Pan Am Project Telephone Interviews

Fred Victor Housing Provider

- Can you speak a little about what Fred Victor aims to do?
- Would you mind touching on some of the major challenges in affordable housing in Toronto?
- Where does Pan Am fit into that? Can you talk about that project?
How does Fred Victor as an organization feel about social mix or a range of incomes within the same development – say like Regent Park?
- What are your thoughts on the waterfront development as a whole in terms of housing and homelessness?

Wigwamen Indigenous Housing Provider

- Can you describe a little what Wigwamen aims to do?
- Would you mind touching on some of the unique housing needs that face Indigenous people in Toronto?
- Where does the Pan Am project fit into that context?
- How do you feel about the notion of social mix in housing? It seems to be the goal of the Waterfront development.
- From a housing perspective, in terms of access and affordability, what are your thoughts on the Toronto Waterfront more broadly?