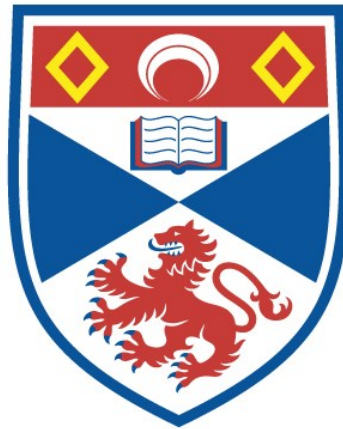# MORALISING DISPOSSESSION: TRACING ETHNOGEOGRAPHIES OF SETTLER COLONIAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2023

Moralising Dispossession: Tracing Ethnogeographies of Settler Colonial Environmental Governance in the United States

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University of St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

at the University of St Andrews

December 2022

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Abstract

In this age of climate crisis, 'the environment', and its governance, has become a more active juncture of critical critique and discussion. This thesis specifically understands environmental governance in the United States as a reflection of a Liberal settler colonial governance rationality, and its historical precedent of dispossessing and displacing Indigenous peoples to primitively accumulate their lands for its populace and structures. As this thesis will explain, the history of environmental governance in the United States has tended to revolve around responding to its own contrived crises with solutions that help create settler ethnogeographies. The creation of such geographies not only help erase Indigenous ontological relationships, they also result in the materialisation of a settler nativism. Using critical discourse analysis, this thesis will specifically look to deconstruct three projects of settler colonial environmental governance that have resulted in the creation of settler ethnogeographies: the creation of the national park model; the impetus of the large dam; and the innovation of green technology. This thesis will argue that these projects, which have come to help define the global environmental governance apparatus, are reflective of a white possessive settler colonial desire to tame Indigenous lands for settler futures.

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
AIJ	Alaska Institute for Justice
BIA	Bureau for Indian Affairs
BOR	US Bureau of Reclamation
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CRIT	Colorado River Indian Tribes
DAPL	Dakota Access Pipeline
DAR	Daughters of the American Revolution
DOI	US Department of the Interior
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EJ	Environmental Justice
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FDR	US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
GND	Green New Deal
HUD	US Department for Housing and Urban Development
ICA	Indian Citizenship Act
ILTF	Indian Land Trust Foundation
IRA	Indian Reorganization Act
LCMP	Louisiana Coastal Master Plan
NPS	National Park System
OWS	Occupy Wall Street
SCS	Settler Colonial Studies
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
US	United States of America
WNCC	Washington National Conservation Conference

Introduction

Preface

'Trespassing'

Warning signs dot edges of woods, rocky coasts and tell us NO
with letters in red, black, reflective silver and gold.
They are nailed on fences, hang from ropes, or planted
in the ground – something that will never grow.

My mother used to pull them like a spoiled root vegetable
from their staked claim of land and use them for kindling
between logs to make the fire burn longer and hotter.

The next morning, only ashes and maybe an orange
ember or two remain to be soaked with water and gathered
up with a shovel and thrown back to the earth we only think is our own.

- Stacy Pratt[1] (2020: 408)

The above poem by Mvskoke poet Stacy Pratt has been a touchstone mentor for this thesis. The warning signs maintain a sole and lonely purpose of refusing access, dotting landscapes and designating who is trespassing and who is not. Their message stakes possession and threatens a consequence, simultaneously walling off and excluding access to anyone who the sign deems unworthy. At the same time, Pratt shows how easily these signs are undone, her intergenerational tradition of uprooting them, giving them more meaningful purpose, and returning them back to the earth to begin again.

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[1] Dr Stacy Pratt is a Mvskoke art writer specializing in Indigenous arts and literature and is a contributing writer and editor for First American Art Magazine.

These signs dot the landscape of the world today in many forms: public land markers, industrial site fencing, carceral barbed wire, country borders, white picket fences. Their multiple colours, angles of position, and various languages of warning all communicate claims of possession. The ongoing climate crisis has made clear more than ever that these warning signs are directing their message not for the well-being of those looking on from the outside, as if to protect them from harm if they were to cross the invisible lines they mark. Rather the message of 'NO' is for the deliberately excluded; the sign-maker wants them to know that everything and everyone sitting beyond the invisible lines is claimed, and that the signs designate where there is value. The implied message of 'NO' from the warning signs is violent. If your lands were beyond this sign yesterday, these lands are no longer yours today. If you seek sustenance from the lands designated, you cannot do so here.

Fundamentally, this thesis is an inquiry into these warning signs as a reflection of a Liberal and ongoing form of governance – one that is dependent on invisible lines and staked signs. The discussion ahead seeks to engage in a wider conversation as to why they are there in the first place and what reasons the sign-makers use to justify excluding their viewers from their staked land claim.

I bring Pratt's poem into this thesis, designating the sign-maker ultimately to be settler colonialism – a form of colonialism that makes desperate attempts to frame its colonising population as native and autochthonous to lands they seek to objectify and accumulate for themselves. As this thesis will argue, such signs are representative of a white settler colonial possessivity that has told racialised peoples targeted for their land and labour that they are ultimately unworthy to enter, let alone govern, demarcated lands.

This thesis will demonstrate that the sign-maker has continuously positioned Indigenous peoples where they are worse off, making use of more warning signs, more colours, more angles, more reasons to say 'NO' to keep them immobile. As this thesis concludes, I look to inquire about and underline the future work that must be done in pulling these signs and their colourful variations of 'NO' from the lands the sign-maker purports to claim as their own.

Clarifying the Scope of Indigeneity

Overall this thesis focuses on the dynamic between settler colonialism and Indigenous Nations and communities whose relationship with lands, composing what is now known as the

United States (US), predates European colonial arrival. This thesis focuses on the experience of Indigenous Nations and communities as cultural collectives, whose lifeways have been connected to the lands that compose the United States. With this understanding, this thesis moves forward with a few considerations in mind. First, definitions of Indigeneity[2], after all, speak to the collective and intergenerational practice of land-based cultural lifeways that are practiced around the world, and do not confine themselves to the question of race. In the context of North America, as Yellow Bird (1999: 2) notes, '[h]istorically, and even in contemporary times, Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada have not regarded themselves as one monolithic racial society'. While there is not a universal definition of Indigeneity, former UN Special Rapporteur Martinez Cabo's (1987: 29) definition remains one of the most cited:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.[3]

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[2] Gilio-Whitaker (2019: x-xi) remarks that the terms 'Indigenous' and 'fourth world' signal originality to place and provide context for a more global category of people who share similar struggles against states. However, for the purposes of this study the term 'Indigenous' is used to refer to the descendants of first inhabitants of the Americas, and all of those they consider their kin and a part of their respective communities and Nations. 'Indigenous' is capitalised because it is used as a proper noun, signifying the cultural heterogeneity and political sovereignty of these groups. 'Peoples' is specifically used to respect the plurality of Indigeneity and to not assume that there is a monolithic experience. The labels 'Indian' 'American Indian,' 'Native American,' and 'Alaska Natives' are used only in specific contexts involving settler colonial usage, often governmental parlance, to allude to peoples descended from the original inhabitants of lands now known as the United States. Yellow Bird (1999: 5) states '"Indian" and "Native American" can also be loaded words and institutionally oppressive to Indigenous People's identity'. For this reason, these terms will not be used. While this thesis recognises that other Indigenous peoples in Alaska, Hawai'i, and US territories are subject to the same structures of settler colonialism of the United States, this thesis places its analytical focus largely on the contiguous 48 states of the US. Also, see Nakano Glenn (2015), who examines how settler colonialism interacts with different racial demographics in the United States and the unique form of settler colonialism found on the islands of Hawai'i. When referring to specific individuals or governments, their specific Nation will always be used. Gilio-Whitaker (2019: x-xi) notes that as the 'rule of thumb, the most appropriate terms are specific Native nation names, such as Lakota, Diné, or Anishinaabe'. The term Nation will be used in preference over Tribe, unless the latter is specifically referenced in the name of the particular Indigenous Nation or community. See Yellow Bird (1999) for a discussion on the usages and preferences of such terms.

[3] One of the most cited descriptions of 'Indigenous people' was given by Jose R. Martinez Cobo, the former Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in his famous 'Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations' (1986). 'This historical continuity may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present of one or more of the following factors: Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them; Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands; Culture in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous

The understandings of Indigeneity are premised more on connections to land, maintaining historical continuity in the face of colonialism, and also a self-determined membership,[4] as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP 2007).

Second, in the case of the United States, there are exceptions that challenge the notion of Indigeneity being tied to lands extending to pre-European arrival. Fuller points out the example of the Gullah Geechee people, who live along the coast of the south-eastern United States and self-define as culturally Indigenous and racially Black. Fuller (2020: 121) notes that their relation with Indigeneity represents an epistemic break with its understanding in the United States and the Americas at-large:

> Their identity confounds conventional constructs of race and indigeneity in the Americas. Long-standing occupation of the land, a common language, a history of struggles against dispossession, and a collective memory constitute indigenous identity and more broadly indigeneity, the basis of autonomy. This definition typically describes Native Americans, yet the Gullah Geechee's long-standing history in a specific place and their continued cultural practices underlie their ongoing, uninterrupted autonomy.

As already mentioned, a common thread through many definitions of Indigeneity is an absence of racial qualification, focusing on, instead, a person's or group's intergenerational close proximity to collective land-based cultural, economic, and political practices in spite of historical oppression. In the case of the United States, and North America at-large, there have been various attempts and instances where Indigeneity has been appropriated or co-opted by settlers and their institutions, as this thesis will discuss. Separate from this, there is a burgeoning scholarship on the co-existence of the Indigeneity that exists in relation to pre-European arrival and Indigeneity that was brought over following the coerced arrival of enslaved peoples from Africa in the Americas, who were also Indigenous to place in their own right. In a blogpost, Jackson (2014) elucidates on this connection

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community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, etc.); Language (whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language); Residence on certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world; and Other relevant factors…On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who belongs to these indigenous populations through self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by these populations as one of its members (acceptance by the group)…This preserves for these communities the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference'.

[4] Article 33 of UNDRIP (UN General Assembly 2007) states that 'Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of Indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live. 2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.'

> To be anti-Black is also to be fundamentally anti-Indigenous. It is a rejection of Indigeneity (both in the New World and in Africa) as incompatible with the epistemic terrain of European modernity, its social and political structures, representative frames, and transformative processes. It is a rejection of what Blacks were prior to their forced removal from Africa and of what Indigenous peoples still are precisely because they were never fully able to be represented as colonial or postcolonial laborers.

The dichotomy that therefore presumes that Black people were used for labour while Indigenous peoples of the Americas were killed for their land fundamentally ignores the plurality of African Indigeneity, that lands in Africa were similarly colonised, and that Indigenous peoples of the Americas were similarly commodified for their labour. Wildcat (2009: 32, 33-34) defines Indigeneity cautiously and with reservation that 'to be indigenous has little to do with formalisation or legalistic constructions. Rather, it describes a person who draws on their tribal history and culture to find ways to improve their lives and the life that surrounds them in practical ways'. He qualifies that this definition 'will make problematic the issue of what it means to be indigenous for scholars, non-scholars, indigenous, and non-indigenous persons alike'. Though the scope of this thesis looks specifically at Indigenous Nations and communities who draw their ancestries, collective lifeways, and existence to the lands now known as the US prior to European colonisation, the larger question of how colonialism wages violence against Indigenous peoples around the world does not remain within a vacuum. The structures and tactics of Liberal, white settler[5] colonialism have not only waged violence against peoples who it has racialised in the United States; in many ways, like a scientist reproducing experiments after success, the American settler colonial project has managed to reproduce this violence on a global scale.

Aims and Objectives

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[5] Morgensen notes (2014) the reproduction of the settler vs. Native praxis poses the question of whether the concept of 'settler' allows a safe space for white people to see themselves and non-Indigenous people of colour as similarly implicated. He poses the question 'if white people self-define through an oppressor role with respect to Indigenous people, does our emphasis on this let us evade naming our oppressor roles with respect to peoples of color?'. This study will explicitly use settler to allude to those with white European descent, being the original and preeminent beneficiaries of settler colonialism in the United States. Byrd (2011:53) coined the term 'arrivant' as a possible label for non-Indigenous people of colour who inhabit Indigenous lands and yet experience colonial and racial violence. She also argues for a wider differentiated understanding of immigration and to see people of colour in the Americas as those forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe.

Today, the US remains a global hegemon, maintaining a position of power in the world that elevates the political and economic interests of the state and of non-state institutions. As the preeminent nation-state to emerge from the post-Second World War era, it has not only retained a privileged status as a founder and powerful actor in many influential international institutions, but also as an innovator of what constitutes the gold standard of Western development and modernity. Looking to the current climate crisis, the state and non-state institutions of the United States are clearly leveraging this status to innovate the world off a path that is leading to unsustainable and unliveable conditions.

This thesis raises questions around the ideological foundations that so many environmentally-focused American institutions operate around and whether this innovation is a means of proliferating Liberal settler colonial ideology. In the present day, this can be seen in current efforts of climate mitigation and the conceptualisation of the Green New Deal, as a proposed package of policy and public works that seeks a transition from a fossil fuel reliant economy to a green one, and how this has inspired similar legislation around the world (Ajl 2021; US Congress 2019). However, as this thesis will demonstrate, this notion of responding to crisis with solutions that promise sustainability has been repeated throughout US history. Indeed, at the heart of these responses is a biopolitics and geopolitics that centres the well-being of settler colonialism, its structures, populace, and their future. As another practical contemporary example of this, in the May/June 2022 issue of Mother Jones (Oatman 2022), the author of an article on the attempt to mine copper for renewable technology on Oak Flat, a land sacred to the Apache people, poses the question 'Can the US Go Green Without Destroying Native Lands?'. What follows is then an ethical proposition as to whether a country (one premised on settler colonialism) can transition to becoming a sustainable economy without continuing the project of colonisation and disregarding the sovereignty of the 600+ Indigenous Nations and communities within the borders of the United States. The issue remains that the promise of Liberal environmental sustainability, since its impetus in the later 19th century, has continuously come at the cost of Indigenous, Black, and Brown lives and lifeways. From national parks to dams to 'going green', settler colonialism has woven itself through the temporal demands for sustainability, longevity, and permanence, resulting in the grandiose desire to tame and harness lands and waters for a hegemonic American modernity.

This thesis engages with the geopolitics and biopolitics of settler colonial environmental governance, a form of governance that reflects an ontological approach to relations with the human and nonhuman world that relies on the domination, objectification, and perpetual accumulation of

lands, waters, and bodies. It does this in order to ensure the annihilation of Indigenous existence and the permanence of settler structures (Paperson 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012; Coulthard 2014; Wolfe 2006). This thesis looks to answer the overall question: 'how has settler colonialism in the United States used its understanding of the environment and the governance of it to able to further displace and dispossess Indigenous Nations and communities, in its ultimate quest to establish permanence?' This thesis aims to answer this through an examination of environmental responses to crises manufactured by Liberal settler colonialism.

When noting 'Liberal settler colonialism' I am referring to how settler colonialism engages with Liberalism, as a dominant political ideology concerned with globalisation, universalisation, and the normalisation of its own values. As Young (1995: 528-529) notes 'what has always lain at the heart of the Liberal endeavour is the claim to be able to uncover a "universal standpoint" - the "view from nowhere"'. He adds 'liberalism, in its claims to universal social and political truths is not *an* ideology, it is *the* ideology' (emphasis not author's own). Liberalism and its many institutions have dominated the wider conversation around the well-being of the environment, universalising the ideas that it is a spatial location under existential threat that requires the vigilance of the Liberal world to protect it and ensure if there is extraction from it, it should be sustainable. The irony remains that it is its own discursive and ideological concepts of development, progress, and a free market of perpetual growth that have resulted in the poor ecological health of the planet. Strategically so, Liberalism also develops the only solutions to the problem.

In many ways, Liberalism is a natural ideological partner for settler colonialism in their mutually shared quest to universalise their governance and stewardship of lands. After all, at its historical foundations, Liberalism assisted European colonisation in its quest to develop the world into modernity. In the case of the United States, Liberalism and settler colonialism have worked hand in hand to develop projects that govern and shape the environment and its natural resources for the wider settler colonial goal of permanence. As this thesis will demonstrate, Liberal settler colonialism has been able to take advantage of environmental crisis and urgency to yield development responses and moralising narratives to create its own geographies, or what will be called 'ethnogeographies' as Chapter Two will further explicate, which have displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples and communities, and established security for American settler colonial futures. This thesis goes off of Blu Barnd (2017: 6) and his suggestion that settler colonialism yields 'culture constructs that rely on layered and symbolic inhabitations beyond the legal repertoires of occupation and must be performed repeatedly'. This thesis examines – through a

series of three case studies - how this manifests through projects that respond to environmental urgencies, identifying individuals, knowledges, and institutions involved in their conception and implementation. Each of these case studies provides a piece of a puzzle which, when taken together, will articulate how U.S. settler colonialism has used environmental governance to displace and dispossess Indigenous Nations and communities, in its ultimate quest to establish permanence.

The thesis will do this by first demonstrating – through the use of two historical case studies - that settler colonialism in the settler project of the United States has produced its own national crises and has then responded accordingly with its own solutions. The first of these case studies will examine land management in the late 19th century and the elite-born concern around wasteful resource management that subsequently gave rise to the American conservation and preservation movements. Out of this concern, this thesis will examine how national parks and other public lands were born, forcibly displacing and dispossessing Indigenous peoples in their path and reimagining lands in the name of settler colonial nationalism. National parks and other national public lands (wildlife refuges, national forests, and national monuments) have since come to symbolise and romanticise environmental governance in the United States while simultaneously re-storying Indigenous lands. The second of these case studies examines various concerns over water management from the 19th to the 20th century, ranging from water access for settler settlements in arid lands to disaster mitigation for communities in settled flood plains, to the demand for hydroelectricity. These concerns gave rise to the construction of dams – namely monumental ones (also termed 'megadams') – as symbols of settler ingenuity, which have laid waste to Indigenous lands for reservoirs and especially those that had been designated under treaty as Indigenous governed.

Both of these case studies demonstrate the precedence of settler colonialism in conjuring nationalised environmental governance policies and projects in the face of natural resource scarcity or threats to its future supply of natural resources for its settler population. Through these examples, settler colonialism has shown itself to be opportunistic, using the language of resource scarcity and disaster mitigation to justify the dissolution of treaty obligations to Indigenous Nations. In the final case study, we see the ongoing, and contemporary, manifestation of this when this thesis turns to an examination of the case of settler colonial environmental response to climate change, demonstrating a new model of crisis that poses a more existential threat - one that is rooted in the environmental projects of the past despite the violence that is now widely associated with them. As this final case study will point out, the wider narrative of the Anthropocene epoch and the painting of all of

humanity as equally vulnerable helps to remove settler colonialism from its connection to the environment and its role in the creation of the present climate crisis. As a result, instead of targeting settler colonialism as a structure of oppression that has contributed to unsustainable resource use, this case study demonstrates that the authoritarian nature of settler colonial environmental governance has become legitimised in an era defined by existential crisis around resource scarcity and threats to national futures. A larger purpose of this thesis is this to demonstrate a historical continuity of a historical settler colonial psyche in environmental governance, one that does not value relations with lands, waters, and the non-human inhabitants who inhabit them in an understanding of reciprocity and respect. Instead this psyche prioritises the values of the free market in acquiring bodies for labour, in accumulating resources to dispossess, in nationalising and romanticising a white possessive identity, and in ending its own paranoia of temporality.

Finding Discursive Space between Settler Colonial Studies and Political Ecology

This thesis examines settler colonial environmental governance, the production of its own ethnogeographies, and the discursive moralising narratives it uses in order to achieve these end. Specifically, this thesis hopes to shine a light on a wider matrix of environmental governance that appears as benevolent and productive to the well-being of Liberal modernity, yet remains detrimental to Indigenous sovereignties[6] (Murdock 2021; Anson 2020). In doing so, I situate this study first within discussions taking place in Settler Colonial Studies (SCS). SCS is a unique branch of postcolonial discourse that focuses more on settler colonialism a distinct form of colonialism that seeks permanence, as opposed to franchise colonialism that serves an imperial metropole. Voyles (2015: 7) helps summarise this difference:

> Settler colonialism is a distinct form of colonial power, with a very particular relationship to resources and land. Whereas we might think of colonialism as tending to be mainly invested in the extraction of resources— labor, goods, or raw materials— for the benefit of a metropole, or colonizing home country, settler colonialism adds a layer of complexity: it is a form of colonial

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[6] The notion of Indigenous sovereignty will be expanded upon in Chapter One

power that involves the settler making a home in a land that is already home to indigenous peoples.

Outside of critical discourse, the framing of the United States as a settler colonial state remains on the periphery, especially within the politically- and power-oriented disciplines of International Relations and Political Science. Postcolonial, and other critical scholars from the 'Global South' and 'Fourth World', however, have long been steadfast in orienting the United States, and other Liberal Anglo-states (e.g. Canada, Australia), as white supremacist projects premised on the dispossession, displacement, enslavement, and annihilation of racialised peoples (Moreton-Robinson 2015). As Carey and Silverstein (2020: 1) summarise, SCS formed from postcolonial theory - as much of the literature produced concerned itself more with countries that 'formally decolonised' or 'never underwent the 'decolonising gestures…in South Asia, South America, and much of Africa' - but concerns itself with the study of where the 'colonisers never left' (Maddison 2013: 288). As Veracini (2010: 99-100) states:

> In marked contrast, settler colonialism mobilises peoples in the teleological expectation of irreversible transformation. Colonial and settler colonial master narratives thus mirror each other: individual settlers have an intention to stay and operate in a system that supersedes itself; colonists have an intention to return and operate within a system that reproduces itself. One can instinctively think of neo-colonialism but there is no such thing as neo-settler colonialism.

Indeed, in speaking about settler colonialism, it is impossible not to speak directly to it as a present multifaceted structure of domination that incepts itself into the everyday (Launius and Boyce 2021). As this thesis unearths historical narratives of the past, it seeks to not just contribute to the expanding discourse of SCS, and its relationship to the formation and idealisation of the United States, but also to how it continues to inform policy and action. The role of the United States in continuing to produce Liberal projects, premised on settler colonial logics and narratives, cannot be understated. While the scope of this thesis is largely within the present-day borders of the United States, its exceptionality as both a settler colonial state and as an imperial one has a profound influence on global regimes of land use and governance.

Focusing on the United States does not depart, however, from dominant practices in SCS. SCS has largely centred on Liberal Anglo-European dominated states, namely the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, where white European-descendent settler populations have come to significantly outnumber Indigenous populations and where land dispossession and settler colonial knowledges and structures have become normalised. SCS scholars (Belich 2009: 23; Crosby

and Monaghan 2012; Maddison: 2013) note that Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada are exceptional in their own form of colonialism and are collectively part of an 'Anglo-prone settler revolution'. Crosby and Monaghan (2012: 424) describe these four countries as 'Anglo-colonies' that 'consolidated transformatory power through the majority rule of white settlers, propagated by strong images of property, civilisation, and liberalism'.

As I will underline in this thesis, the United States and its many revered leaders, institutions, ideals, and projects have contributed to both a romanticisation and amnesia of the violence waged for its creation. Indigenous peoples and their presence are an inherent problem for settler colonial intentions. As Simpson (2014: 22) writes, Indigenous people remind nation-states such as the United States that 'they possess a precarious assumption about their own (just) origins'. Indigenous peoples, as famously noted by Deborah Bird Rose (1991: 46), get 'in the way' of settler colonialism 'just by staying at home'. Be it actions of resistance, of refusal, or of mere existence, Indigenous Nations today demonstrate both the incompleteness and the fragility of the settler colonial project as, to reference back to Pratt, a 'spoiled stake in the ground'. As a result of their racialisation, dehumanisation, and inherent resistance to settler colonial structures, the American Liberal, white settler colonial project has used policies of containment, rendering racialised peoples immobile. In the words of Wildcat (2009: 33), 'A careful reading of American history will confirm that we have not been "included" into this United States so much as enclosed within it'. Yet, as Pasternak (2017: 14-15) further adds, 'the perfection of settler sovereignty – that is, the fusing of sovereignty claims with the effective exercise of territorial jurisdiction over land – remains unfinished today'. Underneath this fragility is a desperation for collective amnesia and mythologisation of Indigenous existence and a desire to make the white settler native to colonised lands.

This thesis proposes, in line with many scholars (Whyte et al 2019; Whyte 2015; Anson 2020; Walter 2021; Middleton Manning 2018; Bacon 2019; Barnd 2017; Claire and Surprise 2022; Dietrich 2016; Eichler and Baumeister 2021) who have made similar commentary, that in the United States, 'the environment' as a discursive and policymaking space has been weaponised to serve settler colonial interests. This thesis seeks to unpack how Liberal institutions (e.g. state and non-state environmental entities), frameworks (e.g. governing laws and guidelines) and narratives (e.g. histories of institutions and frameworks and their founding) are embedded in the appearance of benign activities of protecting the environment. This will involve, historically and contemporarily, pinpointing the objectification, extraction, and distribution of natural resources and how they are all complicit in the temporal-spatial aims of settler colonialism. For this reason, I situate this project

within the academic and practitioner-based scholarship of political ecology, where the goal is to examine the ecological as political, presuming ideas about the ecological systems 'delimited and directed through political and economic processes' (Robbins 2020: 17). Today, there is a stronger push for political ecologists to locate the 'environment' as a space of injustice. Bridge et al (2015: 7-8) define political ecology as a field marked by a set of 'common commitments' with an orientation 'toward social justice and radical politics'. They note that political ecologists are committed to 'critical social theory', 'in-depth, direct observation involving qualitative methods', 'normative political commitment to social justice and structural political change'. While Indigenous scholars (Wildcat 2009; Gilio-Whitaker 2019; Whyte 2016a; Whyte 2018a), and peoples at-large, have seen the Western social construction of the environment as a space of injustice, there is now burgeoning literature on settler colonialism within political ecology (see for example Murdock 2021, and Claire and Surprise 2022).

This thesis looks not only to contribute to wider commentary, it more importantly attempts to highlight and problematise the aggrandisation, and its normalisation, of settler colonial environmental projects, ideologies, and individuals. This falls in line with the more impact-driven desires of political ecology. Robbins (2020: 17) offers a description of two things that studies of a political ecological nature aim to do.

> Political ecology presents a Jekyll and Hyde persona, attempting to do two things at once: critically explaining what is wrong with dominant accounts of environmental change, while at the time exploring alternatives, adaptations, and creative human action in the face of mismanagement and exploitation, offering both a hatchet to take apart flawed, dangerous, and politically problematic accounts, and a seed, to grow into new socio-ecologies.

This study engages in political ecology with the intent to locate where the hatchet could and should fall. Harris (2004: 180) notes, 'It is important to identify the powers in the settler colonial arsenal, map their positions, and sort out some of their linkages'. Political ecology also grounds this study and its commentary in wider international discussions on the environment and its historical and current political economy. At the very least, in intersecting settler colonial scholarship with political ecology, this thesis looks to contribute to literature that specifically frames and identifies a historical and ongoing settler colonial environmental agenda (Whyte et al 2019; Farrell et al 2020; Anson 2020; Murdock 2021), particularly in a country that has influenced other national environmental agendas worldwide through Liberal international institutions. In locating how settler colonialism has utilised environmental governance, as a Liberal regime, to displace and dispossess, the found reasons can

help contribute to wider literature exposing the human costs of conservation and preservation, disaster risk reduction infrastructure, and also decarbonisation development.

The critical examinations of normalised policies and projects is essential to understanding how settler colonialism and Liberalism accumulate lands. Scholars (Middleton Manning 2018; Barnd 2017) have argued that the 'mundane' is where settler practices and policy towards Indigenous peoples are most effective. Barnd (2017: 79) states,

> While these mundane practices are less dramatic, and seemingly small-scale, they are no less effective in continuing tribal dispossession and possession-taking. They are also crucial in constantly re-narrating dispossession. To cease colonial narrations and performances of dispossession would invite questions about settlement or, worse, question settlement altogether.

It remains that the colonial character of policymaking around lands and natural resources in the US has remained at the periphery of mainstream discourse. Middleton Manning (2018: 15) offers an example, using the displacement of the Maidu people in California that this 'institutionalized lack of attention to history in natural resource policy results in natural resource decision-making that continues to reinforce inequalities and exclude both Indigenous populations and the range of Indigenous ways of being in relationship to the land'. Additionally, Middleton Manning states that the decision-making process all occurs within a framework of 'neoliberalism and Euro-centric jurisprudence and values'. The disregard for the historical development of policy, then, helps contribute to the normalisation of settler colonial values. In heeding this call to better understand the historical development of policy, this thesis can also connect the dots as to how various Liberal technologies that govern the environment have assisted one another in ensuring the continuous, and ongoing, dispossession of Indigenous lands. In deconstructing settler colonial environmental governance, this thesis will also be able to draw conclusions as to how settler colonialism has simultaneously informed Western Liberal praxes of development (see Collins et al 2021).

Moreover, there are growing calls to articulate the eco-fascist nature of Liberal environmental policy (Murdock 2021; Anson 2020). After all, as Middleton Manning (2018: 17) notes '[v]ery little had changed in the arena of public natural resource decision-making since the frontier days of manifest destiny-based claims to land'. The premise of fascism is, as Murdock (2021: 30) notes, 'for the purposes of economic domination propped up by exclusive and hierarchical understandings of racial superiority/inferiority wedded to ideas of national (supremacist belonging)'. Eco-fascist ideology largely derives from Euro-Western environmental philosophies, encouraging misanthropic and binary understandings of the environment that determines where and how people

should be contained. These binary understandings demand that nature be respected as pure, Edenic, and absent of human involvement, especially races who are deemed 'as threats to economic and political hegemony of the "nation"' (Murdock 2021: 31). The white settler, however, remains the exception in managing the environment, dehumanising other racial groups in the process. Erickson (2020: 112) notes, quoting Braun (2002: 81), that in the settler state of Canada:

> productively working on the land has certainly been a part of the justification of this structure and its imposition. In recent years, this labour has included environmental protection, and conservation goals have been folded into the structure as one of the justifications of the settler colonial vision 'where Indigenous identities are defined and contained within the environmental imaginaries of European environmentalists'.

The case studies presented in this thesis support the notion that settler colonial environmental governance, and the policies through which it governs, reflect authoritarian desires while appearing to have the security and well-being of all people at its heart. This will be demonstrated with the inception of national parks in Chapter Three and of monumental dams in Chapter Four, as solutions to settler produced and perceived crises, whilst their construction forcibly displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their homes and ancestral lands. The final case study in Chapter Five examines climate change through the lens of the Anthropocene, a narrative which absolves Western and settler environmentalism of accountability – historic and contemporary - with the help of apocalyptic fears, and where the dispossession of Indigenous lands occurs in the face of a mix of governmental inaction and destructive climate mitigation measures.

As these case studies will demonstrate, urgency and crisis have become embedded in Liberal settler colonial governance in order to justify exclusion and appropriation thus, reinforcing its institutions as necessary in what it considers to be urgent. Middleton Manning (2018: 13) remarks that this urgency helps exclude Indigenous peoples from spaces of natural resource decision making: 'when challenged for their omission of tribes, the proponents of these natural resources bills or proposals defend their initiatives as necessary compromises in order to meet a frenetic timeline of responding to perceived environmental or economic threat'. Indigenous Nations and communities, as a result, find themselves asserting Indigenous sovereignty within settler law in order to contend with crisis-driven settler institutions that attempt to assert geopolitical and biopolitical authority within sporadic timeframes.

The control of Indigenous bodies and their mobilities has often been justified through a constructed sense of urgency that demands immediate action in the name of progress. Moreover,

through their racialisation and naturalisation, Indigenous peoples become sites of regulation. As this thesis will explain, Liberal settler colonialism interacts with a racialised economy to morally justify the control over Indigenous peoples and where to move them. Wildcat (2009: 32) remarks that today, many Indigenous peoples 'are living in ways and places that, strictly speaking, they did not choose, but that the US government's policies and laws chose for them'. The biopolitical control over the bodies of Indigenous and racialised peoples and their mobilities has been a tenet legacy of settler colonialism in the United States. Historian Blackhawk (2009: 4) notes: the 'indigenous body in pain is the ultimate symbol of colonial progress and modernity, indigenous land laid waste is its territorial corollary'. For Indigenous peoples, land and lifeways are inherently connected, and this relationship must be upheld to understand that biopolitical violence is waged through land dispossession. Middleton Manning (2018: 9) lays this out:

> The social impacts, cultural disruption, and destruction of communities represent incalculable and irredeemable costs, and yet they are dismissed as externalities in a narrative of national progress…

The veil of progress and its connections with the discourse of Western environmentalism hides the violence waged against Indigenous bodies. Land dispossession and invasive infrastructures, as Gilio-Whitaker notes (2019: 620), have 'netted very real harm to the physical health of Native peoples'. Harris (2004: 179-180) argues that colonialism dispossesses land not just through removal, but also through the coordination of physical violence, discursive justification, and ongoing physical occupation. As noted by scholars, both Native and non-Native, (Bacon 2019; Brave Heart and DeBruyn 1998; Brave Heart 2001; Walls and Whitbeck 2012: 2), the gradual accumulation of dispossession policies has left many Indigenous persons and communities in affective states, ranging from 'anger, depression, guilt, anxiety, internalised oppression, and feelings of inadequacy in parenting these roles'. Scholarship has even shown where the very threat of land dispossession is enough to induce collective trauma among Indigenous communities. Braveheart (1998), a Hunkpapa/Oglala Lakota social worker and scholar, and her concept of 'historical trauma', have qualified how these affective states have found epigenetic and behavioural ways of being passed down through generations.

The conceptualisation of environmental justice (EJ) has been one means through which scholars, practitioners, and activists have attempted to interrupt and prevent this violence from occurring. Gilio-Whitaker (2019) takes aim at the institutional understandings of EJ, such as that of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2022), who defines it as the following:

environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless

of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and

enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Such definitions that reflect Liberal values of universal equality without their contextualisation for different groups contributes to their erasure. Indigenous rights have arguably been sacrificed for the public good on numerous occasions throughout American history, and not explicitly addressing this only serves the colonial ideology of manifest destiny and other Euro-centric moral justifications used to claim Indigenous lands (Middleton Manning 2018).

Indeed, environmental policy, and those controlling it, exert power by manipulating and degrading the natural environment. Applying settler colonialism to the topic of environmental injustice provides 'irrefutable linkages' to 'all eras and aspects of settler and Indigenous contact, environmental injustice, and genocide; they are inseparable' (Gilio-Whitaker 2019: 39). Indeed, for some 'the most workable date for the founding of the Native [environmental justice movement] …is 1492' as European colonisation arrived in the Americas (Turner and Wu 2002: 2). Acknowledging that settler colonialism inherently wages environmental injustice against Indigenous peoples, as it primitively accumulates their land, 'means recognizing the larger historical arc of contact between Native and settler people and how the environmental disruptions imposed on Native people by that process linger today in myriad ways' (Gilio-Whitaker 2019: 51). At the heart of this thesis is the intention to critically examine and centre settler colonial environmental governance as both historical policy-making structure that has continuously helped moved the 'signs', as referenced in Pratt's poem, to further contain and control Indigenous peoples. In doing so, this thesis looks emphasise the need to interrupt cyclical processes of white supremacist and settler colonial oppressions at a time when radical environmental solutions from the United States are in demand. This thesis turns now to explain the methodologies of how this was done.

Methodological Concerns and Approaches: Practicing Refusal in the Covid-19 Pandemic

Mistakes, vulnerabilities, and lessons learned must be shared in the construction and implementation of qualitative research projects, and especially those that are not successful. Without doing so, academics risk masking research as a process that is somehow not reactive and adaptable

to fluctuating external circumstances, or to the personal needs of those engaging in the research, or of the researcher themselves. The research project that this thesis encapsulates does not reflect the initial one that was intended, which centred on completing an ethnographic study on climate-induced relocations in Alaska and Louisiana. This thesis is the result of a practice of refusal in the face of three major obstacles that occurred throughout project: first, the encountering research fatigue with researchers and journalists while conducting preliminary fieldwork in southern Louisiana; the personal stresses of the Covid-19 pandemic between 2020-21; and my own intent to complete any community-collaborative and -based research with integrity[7] (Kouritzin and Nakagawa 2018; Fessenden 2019). Tuck and Yang (2014: 225) have emphasised the need for refusal to be practised to place limits on what Liberal institutions will not.

> Settler colonial knowledge is premised on frontiers; conquest, then, is an exercise of the felt entitlement to transgress these limits. Refusal, and stances of refusal in research, are attempts to place limits on conquest and the colonization of knowledge by marking what is off limits, what is not up for grabs or discussion, what is sacred, and what can't be known.

Between Autumn 2018 until Spring 2020, this project was meant to centre around the management of ongoing climate-induced mitigated retreats of Indigenous communities in the United States, with the plan to rely on key informant interviews and on-site observation with those behind the policies of, and involved in the logistics for, these relocations. The project was not centred around Indigenous experiences, rather it sought to unpack and highlight the coloniality of bureaucracy and its failures, which are well-known and documented (Simms et al 2021; Dermansky 2019; Comardelle et al 2020), to aid Indigenous self-determined relocations. The project sought to refuse, as I have tried to attempt previously, 'the academic tradition and market of pain obsession' (Collins and Watson 2022: 5) and to avoid examining experiences at the receiving end of coloniality. Between 2018-2019, I conducted preliminary fieldwork in Alaska, Louisiana, and Washington DC to establish contacts who were directly involved in initiating and coordinating the relocations. This involved a mix of cold calling organisations and individuals in Alaska, while also snowballing contacts from

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[7] Kouritzin and Nakagawa (2018: 683) note that non-extractive community-collaborative or -based research is premised on the principles of intent, integrity, the focus on process, being socially 'hostage' to the work itself and maintaining a post-humanist outlook that considers the well-being of non-human participants. They specifically note that integrity 'is measured in terms of introspection, dignity, honouring obligations (mutuality), interdependence, ethical conduct by community standards, prioritising dissemination of the research to all interested communities (preferably in languages of the communities rather than the dominant language) and researcher positionality. When a researcher's ideology does not change, or when a researcher does not have the will to sacrifice personal gain to achieve what the community wants and needs, then this must be interpreted as a danger sign'.

pre-existing relationships in Louisiana and Washington DC. As a significant moment of revelation during this preliminary research, when I met with an individual from an organisation heavily involved in Alaska Native advocacy in 2018, they confronted me upon walking in their office with the question: 'Let me guess, you're coming to ask about Shishmareff, Newtok, and Kivalina?'. From this meeting, it was apparent that many from the relocating communities were experiencing research fatigue and wariness towards 'white people from the lower 48 [states of the US] asking them questions'.[8] I was already aware of this dynamic from my time living in Louisiana between 2016-2017. This same attitude towards researchers asking about the nationally-watched climate-induced relocation of the community of Isle de Jean Charles was even more pronounced. Despite the help of my pre-existing networks in Washington DC and Louisiana to investigate settler coloniality in the management community relocations, I wanted the project to have some input from the communities in case they wanted any questions answered. The evidence of research-fatigue, wariness, and distrust of outsiders at-large, however, ultimately raised an ethical quandary early on in the development of the project as to whether it would be able to be participatory and non-extractive.

Ranco (2006: 74) states that his baseline for his own research as an Indigenous anthropologist and researcher rests around the question 'how does this research endorse, elaborate, or enhance tribal sovereignty?'. While I saw the thesis as an opportunity to challenge settler coloniality, these similar questions surrounded this initial thesis proposal, especially if I was to do this work in a way that purported to be meaningfully collaborative or participatory in its development. If I felt I could not approach any of the communities to collaborate without risking or further exacerbating their fatigue, the question loomed: how could I claim that the project was anything more than an academic exercise that claimed to work on behalf of them? After all, Western researchers have tended to create grandiose illusions of their own role in producing knowledge *on behalf of* 'the other'. Indeed, it has become an accepted Western Liberal epistemological tradition to do so. Ranco (2006: 64) states that researchers often claim 'that we can understand the Other better than she can understand herself, because of our distance from her world, maintains the idea that knowledge is only brought to certain places by certain Western observers'. While it was not my intention to claim a better perspective, the assertion from Ranco has given me pause over my desires for collaborative research and who I really am serving through this approach.

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[8] This interaction was from a field visit to Fairbanks, Alaska in 2018. These interactions during the preliminary fieldwork phase of 2018-2019 have been anonymised to protect the identities of those with whom I spoke and to uphold the ethical integrity of situations where individuals did not explicitly grant consent to be quoted.

After these preliminary research visits in 2019, I was cognizant that my project might become a drain on the time and energies of those fighting for community self-determination around the conditions of the relocations. The aforementioned fatigue with researchers and journalists reflected a lack of long-term engagement from many in their intentions to highlight and publish on the lived experiences of the botched climate relocations. Without having resources and plan in place to promise long-term engagement, the thesis, at the time, risked contributing to the colonialism embedded in this short-term extractive research practice.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, this ethical quandary was brought front and centre. All in-person research was effectively shut down and remote research was brought forth as the alternative. Even prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, I already knew that any in-person research methodologies (e.g. interviews, focus groups, observation) that asked for time from those engaging with the project would require developing relationships and being transparent about the aims, outputs, and consequences of my research (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). The alternative of conducting research virtually significantly affected the nature of the project. Not only was there little discussion on the ethics of virtual research at the outbreak of Covid-19, but the premise of my own research ethos demanded a more complex reflexive process. I had not developed the relationships nor the means to ensure that my project would be of direct benefit to the relocating communities. The lack of ethics discussions around virtual research (Roberts et al 2021), particularly for research-fatigued communities, let alone ones that are facing numerous assaults on their collective self-determination, was particularly troubling. Kouritzin and Nakagawa (2018: 684) note that in being non-extractive, researchers must be socially hostage to the research to ensure that 'research participants'/subjects'/communities' well-beings must be protected, their futures safe from harm'. I was already relying on, and socially hostage to, my own relationships on the ground to begin this research and saw that my ability to ensure I maintained integrity throughout the research process was under duress and very uncertain. Roberts et al (2021: 10) validate these anxieties in their qualitative study on youth homelessness in Houston that switched from in-person to virtual: 'We find that switching to a virtual modality affected nearly all aspects of our research process, from designing our research questions to recruitment, data collection, analysis, and dissemination'. In maintaining a methodology that ensures low risk to participants and high benefits (Crooks et al 2021), the unknown nature of virtual research was something I was not willing to engage in, especially for a semi-developed study that was disconnected from assured funding and outputs. As a

result of these many uncertainties, I shut the project down in May 2020 and pivoted to exploring a new discourse-oriented and desk-based project.

Sultana (2007: 375) has noted that within critical scholarship, self-awareness around the subjectivities of the researcher and the possibility of enacting harm can be debilitating to research: 'where over-concern about positionality and reflexivity appear to have paralyzed some scholars into avoiding fieldwork and engaging more in textual analysis'. While she notes that this is an important concern to 'redress concerns about marginalization, essentialisms, and differences in representation', fieldwork can still be liberating and productive so long as research is 'politically engaged, materially grounded, and institutionally sensitive' (Sultana 2007: 375). In retrospect, the decision to not undertake the field I believe was ultimately the right one, despite the challenges that the project exhibited in this thesis presented over the twenty-nine-month period. The practice of refusal had not only spared real people from the mistakes I would have very likely made in attempting to continue with the initial research project remotely, but it also allowed me to understand that refusal as a practice also helps respect the integrity and humanity of the researcher. Conscious refusal also allowed me to be introspective on whether the research project could navigate the political, economic, social, and spiritual stresses exacerbated by the pandemic, not only on potential research participants but also on myself. The important questions that Kouritzin and Nakagawa (2018: 681) encourage researchers to consider, helped validate the concerns I raised with my advising team, my family and friends, and myself during this period:

> Any researcher who is officially entitled to do research can, with the consent of the ethics review board, enter into humans' hearts and minds, using them as research data without being asked important questions like 'Is this person fit to enter into peoples' hearts?' 'Is this researcher interested in the research participants' well-being and happiness?' 'For whose sake is this researcher doing research?' [Research Ethics Boards] do not ask the most important question of all: 'Whose approval is most important to this researcher?'

Retrospectively, that many universities would allow community-based qualitative research to continue on a remote basis, with little existing knowledge in-hand of the risks involved of remote research broadly-speaking, shines a light on the inconsistencies of university ethics boards. In the United States, the context of the pandemic clearly brought forth historical and new experiences of pain, which would need to be considered to conduct community-based research on an ethical basis. I agree with Tuck and Yang (2014: 229) when they note that,

[t]hough a variety of ethical and procedural protocols require researchers to compose statements regarding the objectives or purposes of a particular project, such protocols do not prompt reflection upon the underlying beliefs about knowledge and change that too often go unexplored or unacknowledged. The rationale for conducting social science research that collects pain narratives seems to be self-evident for many scholars, but when looked at more closely, the rationales may be unconsidered, and somewhat flimsy.

On another note, it is difficult to quantify the number of times and number of reasons I felt during this period that this thesis was out of my comfort zone. I do not state this to express grievance but to contextualise that this thesis required more than academic rigor. After all, historical and contemporary critical discourse analysis was something I was unfamiliar with, especially compared to my experience and familiarity with field-based research. In the end, the thesis challenged me to understand how colonisation can occur in academic discourse, and indeed, through my own production of discourse. As I will discuss in a later section, locating an ethical position in SCS as a white settler was a large part of this thesis work and one I am still contemplating.

Finally I would be remiss if I did not mention the more personal costs of this process. I eventually lost count of how often a breaking event would light up my phone or would be on one half of my computer screen, all while this thesis would rest on the other: from the loss of loved ones, the fast unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic, the national Black Lives Matter uprising against white supremacy that followed the murders of George Floyd and Brianna Taylor, to the January 6th Insurrection. These unprecedented moments conjured calls to action that I could simply not meet because of the constant financial, mental, and emotional precariousness that continuously loomed overhead.

I say this to note how the PhD process can undoubtedly be an extractive one, and one that is reflective of problems in the wider Academy. The completion of this project was not without deep emotional, mental, and spiritual expense; indeed, survival was the goal of the day on numerous occasions. I note this here in my methodology because I am cognisant that so many other PhD candidates and academics have experienced these emotions produced, ultimately resulting in an economically untenable and mentally precarious state becoming now an almost *de facto* methodology of the PhD process and a wider *modus operandi* of the academy. These conditions, of course, exacerbate the everyday marginalisation of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, women, Queer people, and those who have historically been excluded from the academy based on their identity. To have made it out the other end, thanks to the support of my community and the many privileges I

have received, I can only conclude that the intellectual rigour of this exercise becomes side-lined in such conditions. As I mitigate extractive practices from entering my own work, I must also call out the extractive expectations of an industry that only cares about prescribed, and at times unethical, academic rigour instead of the overall well-being of the academic.

Loci of Enunciation

As this thesis engages with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in its attempt to understand how settler colonial environmental ideology and policy inform one another, there must be an inherent concern for rejecting notions of objectivity from the standpoint of the researcher (McCartan et al 2022). Middleton Manning calls for researchers investigating power in particular to show themselves through *loci* of enunciation. In her work, she states (2010: 17): '[g]iven the division of the globe along the lines of this colonial difference, coloniality of power scholars underscore the importance of clarifying the geopolitical *loci* of enunciation, i.e. "where you are thinking from"'. As Middleton Manning (Middleton 2010: 18) notes, 'the concept of *loci* of enunciation is inherently both political and reflexive'. In articulating this we make visible what is considered invisible as we must analyse 'the mechanisms that produce such invisibility or distorted visibility in light of a large stock of ideas that must necessarily include the critical reflections of the "invisible" people themselves' (Middleton 2010: 18). Noting how Maher and Tetreault (2001: 164) understand positionality as when 'people are not defined in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed', Takacs (2002: 169) summarises that this mobility of identity is ultimately where one stands in respect to power: 'From this understanding, we have a standpoint from which to challenge power and change ourselves'. In answering Middleton Manning's 'where am I thinking from?', a question I have interpreted to locate my current position in relation to power, I have had to unpack my own changing identity development in a process of reflexivity. Sultana (2007) remarks that while this process of reflexivity has been accused of 'navel gazing' reflecting on one's relations to power, and how it impacts the research process and production of knowledge is integral to conducting ethical research. Being reflexive means that 'ethical commitments can be maintained' (Sultana 2007: 376). In locating my positionality, undergoing a process of reflexivity, and thinking about the coloniality of power and its politics of

determining what is to be visible and what is to be invisible over the course of this project has been incredibly humbling and discomforting.

In terms of how power relates to my own identity, I am a white, Queer, able-bodied male who grew up with the social and economic privileges and capital of a middle-class household, and the privileges afforded by white settler colonial systems of power. Here I underline that I do not claim some form of scientific objectivity and that my analysis is undoubtedly influenced by my own social values and presumptions. As Hodes (2018: 75) notes, such claims of neutrality or objectivity have long been critiqued by 'feminist, critical race, post and decolonial scholars for failing to acknowledge that all knowledge production is socially and historically situated in addition to being mediated by social values and presumptions'. However, in answering the question 'where am I thinking from?', I believe there is a call to articulate my own thought processes and how I came to be here. I remain in a constant state of both unlearning the ontological and epistemological presumptions of my upbringing, interrogating and filtering the advice of family, past elders, and community, and learning to sit in the discomfort of being critical towards the existence of my home on stolen lands, the legacy of my ancestors, and my own past, present, and future actions. In articulating the outcomes of this work, it is difficult to measure what has ultimately been a process of both self-discovery and unlearning.

Cary (2004: 70) notes on this reflexive piece: 'I move the emphasis away from the study of the victim to an analysis of the messy terrain colonization left behind that we are all embedded in I find me in the story, in the present manifestations of colonization (institutionally, culturally, socially, and spiritually)'. My relationship with my birth and home city of Buffalo, New York, for example, was interrogated through this project. At the turn of the 20th century, as a major period of focus in this thesis, there was indeed an 'imperialist nostalgia' for many white European Americans from Buffalo, and the Rust Belt region at-large. The 1901 Pan American Exposition is woven through the city and its sense of identity - despite it being the location where US President McKinley was assassinated, which resulted in a string of unfortunate events that tainted the success of the Exposition at the time. Nevertheless, despite mass state and private disinvestment throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the city has clung to the Exposition as a cornerstone of its identity. Today, there are restaurants that showcase Pan-American relics and buildings that replicate the temporary plaster neoclassical and beaux-arts venues erected for the Exposition. Indeed, for many Buffalonians, the Pan-American Exposition has become normalised as both a former glory and a potential destiny. It remains the case, however, that the Exposition was a celebration of a manifest

destiny and of a settler colonial state that became imperial. The Exposition also connected the city of Buffalo to a legacy of Euro-American expositions that saw Indigenous and racialised peoples from around the world put on display, and even caged, for the purpose of the white imperialist gaze.

Returning to Buffalo because of the Covid-19 pandemic provided the opportunity to undertake my own personal observational research and interrogate how settler narratives erase their legacy of Indigenous dispossession, in this case, with images of beautiful buildings made from degradable plaster. Ultimately, at the heart of this thesis is not an attempt to somehow present a work that is seminal to, or one that presumes to advance, knowledge. Rather the project became, as this section will further elucidate on, a personal journey and an opportunity to interrogate and see beyond settler colonialism and these beautiful plaster structures it creates, which have come to re-story and romanticise the past and future.

In continuing to position my own *loci* of enunciation, I believe it is important to situate why I seek to interrogate settler colonialism and its dispossession of Indigenous peoples in the United States. A large part of my motivation stems from my first research project (2013-2015), where I collaborated and learned from a group of Wabanaki and white settler women who initiated the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These women led one of the first collaborative Tribal and state inquiries, if not the first, into the state-sponsored abduction of Native children from their families in the United States. My research involved multiple visits and staying in so-called Maine and the homelands of the Wabanaki people. Throughout these visits, Wabanaki women taught me about their own existence, their daily resistance to the settler colonial violence waged on their bodies and minds and those of their loved ones, and their legacy of refusal to reconcile with settler colonial permanence. Meanwhile, white settler women taught me about their own experiences coming to terms with their own complicity in settler colonial and white supremacist violence, subtly holding up a mirror in the process that would reflect on my own complicities, too. These ranged from my own complacency in uplifting and perpetuating settler colonial narratives that aggrandized American exceptionalism and diminished its violence against Indigenous, Black, and Brown bodies, to taking a colour blind perception of my own accomplishments that was connected to my work ethic rather than white and class privileges. This project was my first 'critical turn' away from an uncritical relationship with research, academia, and my own identity. What is more, this project revealed the capability of both the state and wider settler society to corroborate and wage cultural genocide onto Indigenous peoples and their sovereignty in an effort to establish a more secure settler permanence and innocence.

My second critical turn came when I joined water protectors at the Oceti Sakowin Camp at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation from October to November 2016, where Indigenous peoples and allies from across the country, and the world, congregated to block the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). In October 2016, I was part of a convoy from Louisiana to Standing Rock to answer the call put out for more people in the wake of the violent, televised destruction of the 1851 Fort Laramie Camp, which was setup in the direct construction path of DAPL. Indigenous friends and contacts underlined that following the rules set out by Standing Rock elders and the Tribal Council was a necessary attitude to adopt before arriving at camp. From this experience, there were two important takeaways that inform the scope of this thesis. First, settler colonialism was pervasive and inherent in structures and the hearts and minds of settlers in the United States. The state and non-state violence waged against peaceful Indigenous and allied water protectors was committed under the Obama administration (2009-2017)[9]. The then-President Barack Obama, speaking at the 2010 White House Tribal Nations Conference, remarked:

> When I visited the Crow Nation during the campaign, I said my job was not just to win an election; it was to make sure that Washington starts focusing on you. I promised a true government-to-government relationship -- a relationship that recognizes our sometimes painful history, a relationship that respects the unique heritage of Native Americans and that includes you in the dream that we all share… (Obama 2010).

Despite the assertion from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council and President that DAPL was a violation of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty and the premise of the government-to-government relationship, the Obama Administration did not intervene at the worst and most violent moments of the blockade. The political spectrum of American politics did not see the blockade through the lens of continued colonial invasion, but rather through one that demanded the expansion of energy infrastructure.

In my experience, Standing Rock became ahistorical even when engaging those on the left of the American political spectrum, necessitating events to be framed in a way that avoided recognising the colonial complicity of the wider American political spectrum. It was a prominent talking point, for example, that the oil pipeline threatened the lives of tens of millions who relied on the Missouri River for water - the responsibility to restore and uphold the promises of the Fort Laramie Treaty felt deprioritised as something too complicated or too historical to mention. As Donald Trump was

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[9] Dates have been added next to key figures for historical context. For government officials, years in-office have been provided, for other historical figures of interest, years lived have been provided.

elected during my time at Standing Rock, I distinctly remember an Indigenous water protector announcing to visibly distraught white settler allies 'now you know how we feel'. National politics simultaneously felt irrelevant on a landscape characterized by armoured vehicles, hundreds of militarised police, and flood lights and barbed wire. Indigenous women were locked in dog cages, unarmed water protectors of all ages were shot with rubber bullets and tear gas cannisters, while private DAPL security continuously infiltrated and disrupted life at the camp (see Gilio-Whitaker 2019). It became abundantly clear, though, that the political left of the American government, which claimed to be the more concerned of the two-party system, was perhaps more loudly complicit in the violence waged. Democrats did not stage their own disobedience, nor did Democratic politicians come to stand in solidarity with the camp. It was a takeaway conclusion that the notions of Liberalism and progressivism that have come to characterise the American Left are just as rooted in settler colonial intentions as the Christian nationalism that characterises the American Right.

Secondly, I found settler colonialism appeared inside the blockade camps at Standing Rock. The overall blockade of DAPL at Standing Rock was first and foremost a nonviolent spiritual movement started by the youth of the Standing Rock Sioux people; it was not an environmental protest. Though this was continuously underlined as a premise to the gathering at Oceti Sakowin, over the course of only two weeks, I saw how environmental and social justice activists and non-profit workers, who were often white and settler, acted against the wishes of the Standing Rock Tribal Council, sometimes co-opting resources and non-violent direct actions for their own purposes. It revealed that white settler environmentalism and the movement to assert Indigenous sovereignty were not in line, and that the former was using the latter as an excuse to assert its own agenda while it also appropriated and monopolised on racial fantasies of Indigenous peoples protecting the earth. I found this sort of co-option revelatory of a double-agent mentality of settler colonialism – to appear benevolent to gain trust, only to undermine sovereignty at a later period.

The examination of the historical and ongoing forced immobilities of Indigenous peoples comes out of the initial iteration of this project which, as the previous section articulates, was shelved for various reasons. As noted earlier, the first iteration was premised on examining the coloniality present in managing climate-induced relocations of Indigenous communities in Louisiana and Alaska. When visiting Washington DC in 2019, I met with a former employee of the Department for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) who turned out to be a critical individual in arranging the funding for the relocation of Isle de Jean Charles, a predominantly Indigenous community on an island subsiding from poor infrastructure and climate change in southern

Louisiana. In the headquarters of an upscale non-governmental organisation, this person had the New York Times article (2016) about the mixed private- and government-funded relocation of Isle de Jean Charles, headlined as 'Resettling the First American "Climate Refugees"', framed on their office wall. 'That was the only project of mine at HUD that ever made the front page' they answered, when I asked why the article was in a frame. I was aware by that time that the original community self-determined relocation had been co-opted by the state of Louisiana. A month later, I was standing at the government-mandated relocation site for Isle de Jean Charles with a former Chief of another Indigenous community in southern Louisiana. It was a dry sugar field, a drive away from accessing water for fishing. The former Chief pointed at the drainage ditch outlining the site and joked: 'The government said the people would be near water, I guess that's their idea of a bayou'. The new site was for a community whose livelihoods had been based on subsistence fishing, at the very least since the 1830 Indian Relocation Act forced their ancestors to the island of Isle de Jean Charles.

Back in the office of the former-HUD employee, I had asked, 'has there been any initiative to respect the culture of the people being relocated? They responded, 'there will be a community centre'. They explained that nothing Tribal could be constructed since the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi Chitimacha Choctaw were not federally recognised and that anything exclusively built for American Indians would then be against the Fair Housing Act, a federal piece of legislation that prevents identity-based discrimination in housing. The historical injustices presented in this moment were caught in a web of bureaucratic and ideologically Liberal moralising narratives that have continuously protected the settler colonial project from accountability.

The former HUD employee saw the relocation already as a success. When I asked 'what if no one moves?', they responded, 'Oh someone will take the housing – whether Native or otherwise. No one will pass up a new home'. Again, while the original project was eventually shelved, this moment provided a seminal opportunity to see that the coloniality of assimilation was still alive and well as Indigenous communities remain on the frontlines of navigating how to collectively relocate from climate-induced natural disasters brought about through the colonisation and industrialisation of their homelands.

Attempting to Avoid the Pitfalls of Solidarity Work and Claims of Expertise in Settler Colonial Studies

While this project became a personal journey of interrogating my relationship to white settler colonialism, I am cognizant that my analyses might be interpreted as attempts to claim space within SCS in the process of challenging legacies of colonialism and racism. As Kouritzin and Nakagawa (2018: 283) state 'any person can conduct research that is intended for the betterment of human beings and other world beings…'. The Liberal coloniality of 'good intent' is very much alive and well. Lenape scholar Barker (2018) points to the failure of the 2011 Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in its attempt to instil solidarity among the '99%' of those disenfranchised by the global market while ignoring colonial histories. As New York City is built upon unceded Lenape land, Barker raises the contradiction embedded in a movement claiming to 'occupy' a place that has already been settler occupied, thus essentially claiming resistance while erasing pre-established resistance. As Occupy Wall Street proliferated across the United States, JohnPaul Montano (Nishinaabe) penned an open letter to Occupy activists (2011):

> I hope you would make mention of the fact that the very land upon which you are protesting does not belong to you – that you are guests upon that stolen indigenous land. I had hoped mention would be made of the indigenous nation whose land that is.
>
> I had hoped that you would address the centuries-long history that we indigenous peoples of this continent have endured being subject to the countless '-isms' of do-gooders claiming to be building a 'more just society', a 'better world', a 'land of freedom' on top of our indigenous societies, on our indigenous lands, while destroying and/or ignoring our ways of life.
>
> I had hoped that you would acknowledge that, since you are settlers on indigenous land, you need and want our indigenous consent to your building anything on our land – never mind an entire society.

White settler participation in SCS is not so different from the actions of the OWS. Many claim to resist power while erasing Indigenous resistance and refusal, and ultimately carrying the potential of contributing to colonial occupation. Despite being a subject matter produced in spaces of Indigenous resistance, as an academic discourse, SCS still remains a space, as Barker (2012: 1) states, whereby settler colonialism is also able to 'claim and transform' it through the exercise and normalisation of settler sovereignty.

Indeed, as many other scholars have already pointed out, two of its most cited authors are white settler men: Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini. The question has been posed in SCS whether the discourse has become a space for the 'white settler' voice to be heard in a conversation that was initiated by Indigenous people who sought to connect institutions, knowledge, emotions, and self into a similar framing (Strakosch and Macoun 2020; Snelgrove et al 2014). Whiteness and white supremacy skew ontological reasonings and without acknowledging the diversity in Indigenous commentary in this discourse, as Strakosch (2019: 120) notes, 'settler sovereignty can finally become what it already claims to be – completed, unified, authoritative, universal and neutral'. Chickasaw scholar Byrd (2016: 79) says that SCS, with its 'the dazzlement of shared vocabulary' creates the 'illusion that critiques of settler colonialism serve Indigenous ends'.

As Kauanui states (2016) 'to exclusively focus on the settler colonial without any meaningful engagement with the [I]ndigenous – as has been the case in how Wolfe's work has been cited – can (re)produce another form of "elimination of the native"'. This can occur in what Kouritzin and Nakagawa (2018: 683) call 'let me fix you' projects by dominant groups who insist on naming the world their way'. In essence, without considering the positionality of voice in SCS, projects may run the risk of contributing to epistemic violence and erasure of Indigenous critiques of colonialism. In outlining this, I reiterate my awareness that this project is not inherently good because of intention. Rather, this project acknowledges that SCS is a space created by Indigenous scholarship for the purpose of undermining settler colonialism, and that the only valid reason for non-Indigenous settler scholarship to engage in this space should be explicitly in solidarity with this aim.

Finally, this thesis is not about claiming expertise within SCS. The thesis is original in the theoretical and conceptual ideas it fuses together to better understand how settler colonialism manipulates the environmental governance as a means to serve its own purposes. However, to claim expertise in the study of settler colonialism, or even in this singular vantage point, falls outside of the remit of this thesis. Returning to the nature of academia, there appears to be an inherent irony in encouraging students to claim originality while also expecting students to claim the voice of expertise on their discovery of the purported unknown. Barnacle and Dall'Alba (2014: 1141) mention that the doctoral thesis is 'the site of a performance, a research performance'. In a field that was first begun by Indigenous scholarship, asserting a voice of expertise in SCS is a performance that I am not comfortable doing, and is certainly something I tried to avoid in this thesis. Casanave (2019: 4) comments on this conundrum facing dissertation writers that '[t]hey must know how to position themselves expertly in their own writing, so as not to appear like a total novice, but without

seeming overconfident or arrogant'. While attempting this balancing act of attempting a confident voice on many subjects that are fused into an original commentary, I certainly cannot claim expertise in an area that in many ways has been personally transformative, and has left me questioning my confidence in my own ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Historiographical and Contemporary Critical Discourse Analysis

In inquiring about the historical nature of settler colonialism, its environmental governance, and moral justifications to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands, this thesis adopts a more historiographical form of CDA in reviewing settler colonial institutions, groups, and individuals and how they have transformed ideology into policy. McCartan et al (2022: 2), in their novel survey of non-Indigenous use of CDA, write that 'CDA allows examination of settler colonial contexts, historical events, political decisions and policymaking that give rise to inequities and has emancipatory concern with injustice, domination and discrimination'. Returning to Tuck and Yang (2014) and their calls for conscientious 'refusal' in what we as scholars choose to look at and discuss, this thesis turns away from placing a critical lens on the Indigenous experience. Doing so without consent, or without Indigenous collaboration in producing the research project itself, goes counter to the ethos of non-Indigenous participation in SCS. The focus of this thesis instead centres on the rationality of settler colonialism, its ideologies, policies, and the languages it uses to justify dispossession.

First, this thesis understands discourse to be a composition of complex knowledge systems that inform, and are informed by, the 'context of everyday life and social institutions'. Hodes (2018: 74-75) notes, '[t]hey derive their power through the levels of truth status that accrue to them and are thereby key sites of struggle over identity, reality, belonging and entitlement'. CDA is characterised through interdisciplinarity, the development of changing circumstances, and a fundamental commitment to the principle of critique and critical theory. Hodes elucidates:

> The researchers who situate their work in terms of CDA are…bound less by common theories or methods than by a particular program of research. Many researchers who situate their work in terms of CDA take a pragmatic approach to theory and method by relating theoretical questions and concepts directly to the specific problems under investigation and choosing those methods that will equip them with the best tools to answer their research questions.

There are various approaches within CDA that uncover how ideology and history intersect. In locating these intersections, we can better understand how 'dominance, discrimination, power, and control' are manifested (Habermas 1971: 259; in Wodak 2011: 53).

While deconstructing the context of the past may make a distinction between past and present, there is also an opportunity to underline the continuity and cyclical nature of structures of dominance and power, for example. Achugar (2017: 299) explains the importance of adopting a more historiographical approach to CDA:

> Historiographical CDA has explored the representations of the past as content and practice. This dual aspect of discourses about the past entails investigating how they are produced and received, but also exploring those discourses that deal with contested pasts. The exploration of discourses about situations that have contemporary political and moral impact has provided a critical lens to our understandings of the meaning and uses of the past.

CDA, through a historiographical approach, also allows this study to understand how settler colonialism reproduces its logics in the contemporary world and its novel approaches to domination. This will be particularly important in the final chapter of the thesis. In doing this, dominant narratives are not only challenged to hear other silenced narratives, but the false innocence produced through erasure is also unveiled. I ultimately seek to brush 'history against the grain' (Achugar 2017: 299) to not only demystify settler colonial narratives but to raise 'critical awareness to provide alternative readings of the past'. In this thesis, I operationalise CDA to read against the grain of Liberal discourse used at the national level in the United States, and at the local level for relevant case studies. As Chapter Two will further elucidate, I use Paperson (2014) and their concept of *terra sacer* as an operational lens of CDA to understand how settler political elite leaders and institutions frame lands as accursed and requiring saving or as sacred and requiring preservation.

The case studies presented in Chapters Three, Four, and Five were produced from looking at a variety of resources, including and not limited to presidential speeches, articles in local and national outlets, speeches at national and local conventions, congressional hearings, community hearings, national legislation and policy, and literary works from the environmental movement leaders and activists. These resources were analysed to understand the moralistic framing of initial settler environmental responses in policy and practice, and the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous Nations from the late 19th century to late 20th century (Chapters Three and Four) to the early 21st century and present day (Chapter Five). The responses in environmental governance presented in each chapter needed to be critically analysed to also understand how Liberalism

shrouded settler colonial desires to annihilate and erase Indigenous peoples and their ontologies with land.

Outline of Chapters

The following chapters will practically demonstrate that the history of settler colonial environmental governance in the United States has ultimately been more concerned about the survival of the settler colonial project. The analysis is centred on a particular strategy of white settler colonialism: to accumulate lands through environmental projects, that claim to advance illusions of national progress and Liberal modernity. To do this, the first chapter will seek to locate how settler colonialism wields power, governs, and formulates its tactics of dispossession before looking in-depth at what these tactics are in Chapter Two. Fundamentally Chapter One is about power and the ways in which that power has been used to govern and assist in establishing settler colonial permanence. I will explain that, in accordance with Scott's (1995) understanding of colonial power and governmentality, settler colonialism wields power and governs to construct such physical and non-physical spaces of domination (Whyte et al 2019) that seek to both erase and undermine Indigenous capacities, self-determination, and sovereignties. This chapter will then move on to examine how Liberalism has been utilised under settler colonialism to produce the binary of modernity and the opportunity to intervene in what is 'unmodern' and create spaces and projects of domination. Chapter One will examine other structures and technologies of Liberal settler colonialism that have been used to dispossess Indigenous Nations and communities of their lands, including the historical development and role of racial hierarchies and the white possessive (Moreton-Robinson 2015). However, this chapter will expand more here on the concept of Indigenous sovereignty, how white possessive settler colonialism has often relied on policies of displacement, and finally, how it underestimates the ontological and epistemological value of Indigenous relationships with lands. The chapter will conclude by looking at how Liberal politics of recognition (Coulthard 2014) and the framework of rights help construct how it attempts to displace and dispossess.

Chapter Two turns toward a specific set of knowledges and strategies that comprise settler colonial understandings of the 'environment' by examining the concept of *terra sacer* (Paperson 2014), and how it produces moralising narratives (Whyte 2018a) around land use and helps produce

settler ethnogeographies. In accordance with Reibold (2022: 2), a settler ethnogeography is one 'where not only are Indigenous ontological relations and land-uses erased, but also where lands become shaped from settler relationships with the land'. This chapter will begin by first defining the concept of settler colonial environmental governance as an ideologically Liberal and seemingly benevolent framework of land governance. Following this discussion, I will then show how settler colonialism limits Indigenous mobilities in order to help physically and imaginatively clear lands for its settler populace. From here, the chapter will look at the Whyte's (2018a) idea of 'moralising narratives' as these will be key to understanding how settler colonialism has legitimised its strategies of dispossession and violence, how it has co-opted indigeneity, and how it produces its own ethnogeographies. I will then introduce the concept *terra sacer* in line with Paperson (2014), which in turn is derived from Agamben's (1998) *homo sacer*, as a settler logic of land use that frames Indigenous lands in a bare condition of being 'accursed' and in need of 'saving'. In doing this, I will show that settler colonialism produces its own ethnogeographies depending on its own versions of legitimate land use that are normalised into the everyday of the settler through a political institutions of recognition, such as the settler contract (Pateman 2007) and the US Supreme Court.

This thesis will then move on to the three aforementioned case studies demonstrating how settler colonialism has masked the moralisation of dispossession and production of its ethnogeographies behind environmental governance. Chapter Three seeks to highlight the practical theoretical application of Paperson's (2014) concept of *terra sacer* and its relation to national parks as a materialised ethnogeography and locates the moralising narratives and ideologies that settler colonialism draws upon to legitimise their foundation. First, I will examine the moralising narrative of creating national parks as symbols of Liberal nationalism and settler indigeneity before moving on to examine how the moral impetus to displace Indigenous peoples for the sake of civilising and assimilating them into the American populace complemented settler conservationist and preservationist efforts. This chapter will highlight the role of the preservation movement in the inception of national parks and how it propagated the myth of pristine wilderness and called for its protection in order to both protect Edenic 'temples of nature' and to feed an imperialist nostalgia for 'Indian Wilderness' (Rosaldo 1989). Finally, Chapter Three will look towards the alarmist and eugenicist discourses used by the white settler elite, which founded the conservation movement. The conservation movement was keen to establish more public lands not only to associate the American settler identity with grand vistas but to also establish more sustainable uses of lands and ensure the longevity of resource outputs for the white race.

Chapter Four establishes another case study and project of settler colonial environmental governance that produces settler ethnogeographies. This time I will examine the development of large dam and reservoir construction. This chapter will demonstrate the ways that dams and reservoirs, as they were constructed throughout the 20th century in the United States, are an example of invasive and violent infrastructure, or what LaDuke and Cowen (2020: 253) term 'Wiindigo Infrastructure', both in how they form settler ethnogeographies and the reinforce social structures of settler colonial society. I will begin this chapter by first examining how Wiindigo Infrastructure relates to the project of settler colonial environmental governance and *terra sacer*. The chapter will then move on to an understanding of the colonial legal frameworks of water possession that allocated water resources and lands to settlers for the purposes of land reclamation and settler expansion. The chapter will then examine how dams and reservoirs became preeminent solutions to economic and environmental urgencies from the 1930s through the 1960s. Dams and reservoirs became shrines to American settler exceptionalism, strength, and engineering capabilities and monumental dams, in particular, became shrines to America's engineering prowess, integrated into the American landscape as a new ethnogeographical feature. Following this, the chapter will unpack the final moralising narrative of dam and reservoir construction as aiding the government-framed benevolent aim of terminating federal relations with Indigenous Nations (also known as the Termination Era (1940s-1960s), and assimilate all Indigenous peoples into the American populace. Finally, I will argue that the fall of dam construction from popularity reflects a temporal binary of environmentalism that is contingent on whether the white settler class has the economic wherewithal to care about ecological destruction or not.

Finally, Chapter Five examines the current era of climate change, what many have called the Anthropocene. This chapter will argue that the Anthropocene epoch marks a shift in environmental governance where climate change allows settler colonialism to justify its *terra sacer* and dispossessing actions under the auspices of a global climate crisis, instead of a nationally contrived one. The chapter will define the Anthropocene as a 'master metaphor' (Anson 2020) that renders the settler unaccountable through DeBoom's (2021) *homines sacri*, or the notion that all of humanity is equally vulnerable to climate change. The looming fear of apocalyptic doom not only justifies the production of white settler innocence but also helps advance *terra sacer* using the Green Market to produce solutions to climate crisis. The chapter proposes that the Green Market uses *terra sacer* tactics to produce ethnogeographies that continue a legacy of destructive and dispossessing environmental practices. Finally, Chapter Five will consider how climate change in the

Anthropocene is assisting settler colonialism in rendering Indigenous peoples immobile and helping to accumulate more lands.

This thesis ultimately looks to make historical connections between present and past settler colonial actions that continue in the United States, challenging the linear praxis of progress that has come to define the American national narrative, and Liberal colonialism at large. This thesis aims to not just shed light on the inherent settler colonial nature of environmental institutions, knowledges, and technologies in the United States, but to also raise a metaphorical red flag on the ethical basis of the environmental projects coming out of the country, which have historically dispossessed, displaced, and waged violence on Indigenous, Black, and Brown bodies.

Chapter 1: Unpacking Liberal Settler Colonialism

Introduction

Through a multitude of governing strategies, the United States has branded itself as a bastion of freedom and opportunity, all the while primitively accumulating land and labour for its prosperity. This thesis is centred on one strategy of governance in particular: the Liberal framework of settler colonial environmental governance and its ability to displace and dispossess while appearing benign. The aim of this present chapter then is to understand the Liberal nature of settler colonialism and how it formulates its tactics of displacement and dispossession before looking at what these tactics are in Chapter Two. To do this, this present chapter will outline the necessary theoretical tools and understandings and specifically around power and governance, and why and how settler colonialism wields power in order to produce narratives that justify dispossession and ensuing the creation of its own ethnogeographies. Fundamentally then, this chapter is about power and the ways in which that power has been used to assist in establishing settler colonial structures and permanence and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples in the US. With that in mind, I will explain the concepts of power and governmentality in line with Scott (1995) and how these are operationalised under colonialism to dispossess peoples of their lands through physical and non-physical spaces and structures of domination. I will explain that, in accordance with Whyte et al (2019), settler colonialism uses political rationalities of colonial power to construct such physical and non-physical spaces of domination that seek to both erase and undermine Indigenous capacities, self-determination, and sovereignties. As Scott (1995) has alluded to, these political rationalities of colonial power, or governmentality, shift the rules of the game of political engagement to adapt to changing circumstances. This chapter will then move on to examine how Liberalism has been utilised under settler colonialism as a colonial governmentality to produce the binary of modernity and the opportunity to intervene in what is 'unmodern', creating spaces and projects of domination. The means through which settler colonialism, through its Liberal governmentality, engages

Indigenous peoples to coerce them into transformation will be discussed in the next sections. The construction of the white supremacist racial hierarchy and its use to coerce and even annihilate 'the unmodern' is a key technology through which modern colonial power operates. Moreton-Robinson's (2015) concept of the 'white possessive' will then be used to explain the rationality of how settler colonialism seeks, and fails in the face of Indigenous sovereignty, to dispossess in order become native to place. Subsequently, this chapter will examine the politics of recognition (Coulthard 2014) as a tactic that settler colonialism uses to protect its generative structures of colonial power. The politics of recognition also demonstrates the capacity of modern colonial power racialise peoples into a category Liberal settler colonialism can best regulate them. Finally, the framework of rights will be argued to be a tactic of settler colonialism that employs political tactics of recognition and land possession to legitimize dispossession. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to show the nature of settler colonial power and governance in the United States in order to better understand how the environment is weaponised as a means of dispossession.

Power and Governance

In analysing settler colonialism in the United States, there is a natural inclination to understand how its power is wielded through solely the state. Crosby and Monaghan (2012: 422) articulate the reasoning for this logic: 'whereas colonialism aims towards a permanent condition of management and exploitation, settler colonialism aspires to acquire (settle) land and establish an independent post-colonial state'. Porter (2010: 34) further adds: '[d]ispossession is a fact that state-based planning is not only confronted by, but complicit with'. State policy has unquestionably led to the legal dispossession of Indigenous Nations and communities in the United States, after all. The aspiration to become an autochthonous to land involves ensuring that no populace can attempt to threaten this assertion with historical and collectively-embedded ties to land (Wolfe 2006; Simpson 2014). This characterization of post-coloniality reflects Wolfe's (2006) logic of elimination, where settler colonialism seeks to annihilate Indigenous peoples in order to secure its existence and permanence. Morgensen (2011: 55) defines that the logic to eliminate Indigenous peoples remains an 'exception' to the Liberal values found in Western law, as the colony remains within the realm of exception 'amid European capital and empire'. This elimination, as Bruyneel (2013: 315) notes of Wolfe's commentary, is beyond the act of genocide:

> [t]he emphasis on the logic of elimination, rather than straightforward genocide, serves the
> purpose of being clear that settler colonialism involves active displacement of one population,
> the Native population, through which the settler population claims the land, and claims
> belonging to the land.

Settler colonialism is more than a state project. It demands participation and performance. There is a clear disadvantage in solely centring on the state and in not considering how its rationalities permeate 'normal, everyday operations of life and economy' (Launius and Boyce 2020: 158). Rifkin (2013) conceptualises such permeations as an insidious creation of 'settler colonial common sense', where settler colonial policy and practice become normalised and institutionalised for the ease of settler participation.

In de-centring the state, there can be an examination of how this settler colonial common sense is realised in settler colonial institutions, knowledges, and populations outwith the state, too. After all, settler colonialism has proven to exist without the state. The transition out of the settler colonial state of apartheid South Africa in 1994 offers a contemporary example of where settler colonialism continues to weave itself through various structures and relationships of power in the absence of the settler colonial-led state (Veracini 2010). For this thesis, the state must be de-centred as the primary site of colonial power, especially as settler colonialism permeates through various political structures and relationships. To understand how this permeation occurs, I turn towards the study of power and how it acts as a conduit for colonisation to weave itself through 'normal everyday operations', as Launius and Boyce (2020) state,

Foucault (1998: 93) remarks that 'power is everywhere' that it 'comes from everywhere' and that it is to be understood as 'productive' in its applications. He states, '[w]e must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes", it "represses", it "censors", it "abstracts", it "masks", it "conceals". In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault 1991: 194). Power in settler colonialism is wielded in a manner that is productive towards the survival of its structures. Producing its own narratives and geographies helps conceal this desire as it attempts to dispossess and wage annihilation. Simpson (2016: 440) explores settler colonialism as a construction that conceals itself:

> as an analytic, as a social formation, as an attitude, as an imaginary, as something that names and
> helps others to name what happened and is still happening in spaces seized away from people, in
> ongoing projects to mask that seizure while attending to capital accumulation under another
> name.

While Foucault provides a helpful start towards conceptualising how power is wielded and produced and how it is woven through the everyday, caution must be taken in integrating his scholarship uncritically (Stoler 1995; Spivak 1988; Robert 2010). In locating power and where it comes from, Nichols (2010: 133) and his survey of postcolonial scholarship criticises Foucault's unidirectionality of power that excludes 'space for resistance and counter-hegemonic knowledge production'.[10] If power is everywhere and comes from everywhere, then certainly settler colonialism must not be understood through a unidirectional lens, where power is simply wielded onto and against anyone who does not yield to its goals. In her concept of refusal Audra Simpson (2014: 330) highlights the ability of Indigenous peoples to reject existing external state and institutional structures and to instead call forward 'the prior' and all that preceded, and desires now to supplant settler colonialism. Indigenous peoples are then able to co-opt and refuse colonial power and find resurgence in their everyday actions (Corntassel and Scow 2017).

Scott argues that to understand colonial power, the 'character of its rationality' must be understood. Obviously, this goes beyond the purview of the state, requiring logics of dispossession and elimination through the production of structures, relationships, and knowledges to be understood. For Scott (1995: 214), power looks to construct and reconstruct colonial space to produce 'governing-effects on colonial conduct', which also includes containing resistance and encouraging accommodation to prevent resistance. Colonial power also seeks to ensure that both resistance and accommodation can only be defined in relation to its own categories and structures, providing an illusion of freedom that Scott terms as a 'false Liberalism', and an example of 'political rationality' (Scott 1995: 214-215). These rationalities, as he describes, are ways and tactics 'in which colonial power is organised' and is 'actively designed to produce the effects of rule'. Scott alludes to how the modern colonial state will create new political games and new rules in which 'the relations of forces between the colonizer and the colonized' and the 'terrain of political struggle' are changed. This is useful in understanding how settler colonialism produces new colonial projects and spaces depending on shifting rationalities, resistances, and external power regimes in its journey towards

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[10] As Nichols (2010: 139-140) remarks, 'Foucault himself has become a discourse, at least in [Edward] Said's sense of the term: a tradition of representation held together by the linguistic iterations within a specified domain of study…' This erasure is also noted by Spivak in her renowned essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988), where she critiques Foucault (among other scholars) for essentialising subjects of oppression to a point where they appear merely monolithic. See Nichols Robert (2010) 'Postcolonial Studies and the Discourse of Foucault: Survey of a Field of Problematization' for his collection of critiques of Foucault from key postcolonial scholars.

survival. In terms of how colonial power tactically governs through these political rationalities, including this 'false Liberalism', I now turn to the concept of governmentality.

'Governmentality' as termed by Foucault (1979), chronicles the historical evolution of the 'state', evolving from the centralised power of the sovereign state to the decentralized power of the modern governmental state. Scott (1995: 202) remarks that it is with the discursive emergency 'of "population" as an object of political calculation at the end of the 18th century' that there comes into being the historical conditions for governmentality to exist. In the perspective of Foucault (1979; 2007) 'governmentality' has been the preliminary means of power throughout Western states, where the survival and limits to the state are dependent on the tactics of governmentality. For Foucault, as Morgensen (2011: 54) suggests, governmentality manages persons and things with tactics rather than laws in the modern state, where the question of sovereignty is answered through a lawless approach. These tactics include complexes of knowledge and power that give shape to colonial projects that uplift political sovereignty. Within this context, governmental laws, then, can be understood as merely tactics of colonial power. Foucault (1979: 13) articulates that laws are a form of tactics that 'arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved'. Scott's colonial governmentality builds on, and develops, Foucault in applying the tactics of governmentality to aid colonial projects. Scott's concept helps to better name and understand settler colonial tactics to establish permanence both for their own structures, knowledges, and for themselves. Scott summarises that power accumulates and centralizes itself in particular spaces, but then also individualises and normalises itself among relationships, technologies, knowledges, and institutions of power. These tactics mutually inform spaces and projects of colonial power and the 'strategic relations between individuals and groups, relations whose strategies were to govern the conduct of these individuals' (Nichols 2010: 142). These tactics enforce not only what people can do, but also what goals and behaviours are considered socially desirable (Robbins 2020). Scott (1995) alludes to the important point that governmentalities can then operate below and above, internally and externally to the state and also how they are used on the population, are how they are all interconnected and at play. In a similar vein, colonial power is wielded through de-centralised tactics of governmentality in normalising colonial structures, knowledges, and relations, incepting the colonial into the everyday.

Settler colonialism applies tactics of colonial governmentality (e.g. as the next chapter will explain, the logics of *terra sacer* and moralising narratives of displacement and dispossession) to construct physical and non-physical projects and spaces of domination that seek to both erase and

undermine Indigenous capacities, self-determination, and sovereignties. Looking towards settler colonialism, its tactics are not so dissimilar from what Whyte et al (2019: 325) frame as other 'structures of domination', 'including imperialism, capitalist exploitation, and chattel slavery'. They (2019: 325) define these structures of domination as:

> [a]n arrangement of institutions that are designed deliberately to exploit one or more groups of people for the sake of one or more other groups of people's benefits and aspirations. Deliberate can refer to both explicit designs of control and numerous forms of behavioural complicity in the maintenance of power and privilege.

Whyte et al highlight two key factors present during settler colonial domination. First, one society seeks permanence by 'inhabiting the places in which one or more other societies already inhabit even though the Indigenous societies had already cultivated these places to suit their members' own cultures, economies, health, and political sovereignty' (Whyte et al 2019: 325). Second, settler societies 'engage in settlement by erasing the capacities of Indigenous societies that are relied on for the sake of exercising Indigenous collective self-determination in their cultures, economies, health, and political orders' (Whyte et al 2019: 325). Self-determination is thus both an assertion of political sovereignty and of the ability to maintain relations with lands and all inhabitants of those lands (Reibold 2022: 10). To summarise, settler colonialism, then, applies tactics of governmentality to produce physical and non-physical spatial colonial projects that erase Indigenous capacities (e.g. languages, family and community structures, adaptive traditions and histories) and undermine Indigenous self-determination and political sovereignty, with the aim of assuring its permanence.

Colonial Rationalities of Liberalism

The relationship, one that has been argued as inherent, between Liberalism and imperialism, is critical to understanding both the foundation and the normalisation of settler colonial institutions and discourses. Pekanan (2016: 1) points, for example, to the inception of the term 'Liberal Imperialism', revealing that Liberalism became the 'mainstay of the zenith of Imperialism…founded on assumed universal values'. If settler colonialism is a structure of dominance, this thesis understands Liberalism as a way for settler colonialism to achieve its ends, while simultaneously creating the illusion of goodwill in the everyday. This section will unpack the logics and language of Liberalism to better understand and identify settler colonial tactics and projects of dispossession and

settler permanence in the modern state. In doing this, the relationship between settler colonialism and Liberalism, and how the latter ideology helps justify the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples, can also be better understood. Foucault (2008) notes that Liberalism offers the illusion of freedom while simultaneously limiting it. He (2008: 65) puts forth that Liberalism, contrary to its name, does not allude to the laws of nature, but instead reinforces a disciplinary power and encourages self-autonomy and surveillance.

> The formula of Liberalism is not 'be free.' Liberalism formulates simply the following: I am going to produce what you need to be free. I am going to see to it that you are free to be free. …Liberalism must produce freedom, but this act entails the establishment of limitations, controls, forms of coercion, and obligations relying on threats… Freedom is something which is constantly produced. Liberalism is not acceptance of freedom; it proposes to manufacture it constantly, to arouse it and produce it, with, of course, [the system] of constraints and the problems of cost raised by this production.

For Foucault (2008), Liberalism assigns itself the task of determining whether the development of the individual requires more or less government intervention (or, for Neoliberalism, market intervention), which pushes and pulls at curtailing freedoms while ensuring oversight of the government. Foucault's conceptualisation ultimately falls short of connecting the illusions and oppressive limitations of Liberal freedom to its imperial history (Nichols 2010). Therefore, understanding Liberalism as a colonial ideology is a more appropriate lens of analysis.

There is already a significant amount of commentary on the colonial genealogy of Liberalism and its ability to collapse its means of violence into the ends of progress. Lowe (2015: 3), for example, states:

> [l]iberal forms of political economy, culture, government, and history propose a narrative of freedom overcoming enslavement that at once denies colonial slavery, erases the seizure of lands from native peoples, displaces migrations and connections across continents, and internalizes these processes in a national struggle of history and consciousness.

Produced out of the European Enlightenment, Liberalism was a departure from absolute notions of sovereign power and Church-informed pastoral power (Foucault 2008). Liberalism was able to rebrand European colonialism into a secular form to meet the development demands of Europe. Scott (1995: 192) notes that the 'the principles of good and humane government' have 'enabled a transition from a rule of force to a rule of law'. Conklin (1998: 422) points out that civilizational hierarchies, which are inevitably produced from the subjectivity of modernity and development,

have ultimately led to a colonial abandonment of brute force and violent subjugation as a primary strategy of colonisation: [i]t was this Liberal production, and constant re-production, of difference, rather than outright force or even naked greed, that enabled colonial hegemony in the modern era'. This is an example of Scott's idea that colonial political rationality will shift the rules of the game and the game itself. The colonial power produced under Liberal notions of modernity, what Scott refers to as 'modern power', reflects this game change. Ultimately, modern power looks to manipulate the political project where subjects and their conduct in the everyday are governed according to the demands of Liberalism (Scott 1995: 215).

For Scott (1995: 192), Liberalism has 'never entailed a political equality between colonizer and colonized'. Indeed, Liberalism as governmentality propagated through colonialism has been able to maintain a similar civilizational hierarchy and preserve colonial power relations through its own tenets of 'development', 'modernity', and 'universality'. Indeed, Liberalism has been widely critiqued as both an inherently prolific and judgemental governmentality. As Williams (2018: 112) states 'Liberalism almost always has universal aspirations'. It both presumes to know human nature and empowers its adherents – institutions, groups, individuals - to proselytise and assist the development of the 'undeveloped' into its own produced concept of 'modernity'. Liberalism, through its application of modern power, collapses itself into the everyday of the societies in which it integrates.

In terms of how Liberalism accomplishes this, we only need to look to how Europe transformed Liberal ideology into an imperial praxis. Lushaba (2006: 14) notes that '[t]he Enlightenment project does not end with Europe discovering modernity. By virtue of having discovered modernity, Europe incurs a "moral responsibility" to then extend modernity to the pre-modern world'. The claim of ethical duty to develop and modernise underlines a hidden *raison d'etre* of Liberalism, in that its isolation as an ideology becomes unethical for its adherents. Escobar (2003: 1), for example, articulates how this is realised:

> [o]ne thing we know for certain is that those who instrumentalise the dominant notion of development to their advantage care very little about whom or what they run over...
> Both modernity and development are spatial-cultural projects that require the continuous conquest of territories and peoples and their ecological and cultural transformation along the lines of a rational, logocentric order.

The demand for spatial-cultural projects is not so far removed from the language of the Church in the early days of European colonisation. Williams (2018: 107) locates the shift in discourse from the early era of Papal Bulls and civilising non-Christian peoples and lands to the colonising era of the

post-Enlightenment period: 'there is a change of language – "civilization" gets replaced with "modernization" or "development"'. It is these concepts of 'modernisation', 'development', and 'progress', that have become hegemonic, resulting in the devaluation and erasure of other knowledges, or epistemicide (Lushaba 2006; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Fletcher et al 2021: 21). In all of this, more crucially, Liberalism demands assimilation into a singular ontological mindset surrounding Euro-centric and market-bound principles and what it values. Scott (1999: 34) demonstrates how Liberalism informs the biopolitics of colonial modern power in that:

> modern power is concerned with disabling non-modern forms of life by dismantling their conditions, then its aim in putting in place new and different conditions is above all to produce governing-effects on conduct. Modern power seeks to arrange and rearrange these conditions (conditions at once discursive and nondiscursive) so as to oblige subjects to transform themselves in a certain, that is, improving, direction.

In declaring what is unmodern, Liberalism thus creates a vacuum through which it can govern collective and individual conduct through its own institutions, technologies, and knowledges. Indeed, for settler colonialism, using Liberalism to declare what is 'unmodern' produces an opportunity to intervene and employ spaces or projects of domination for the sake of its own permanence. If, in line with Scott, modern colonial power seeks to focus on the conditions 'in which that body is to live and define its life' (Scott 1995: 197) and that it 'seeks to arrange and rearrange these conditions so as to oblige subjects to transform themselves in a certain…improving direction' (1995: 200), then it clearly engages with a colonial power that governs and coerces the 'unmodern' to live within its knowledges, technologies, and institutions. What is more, with Liberalism, settler colonialism is able to mask this coercion as a means of improving individual well-being while relegating other social, political and economic ways of governing as less than.

The Liberal Production of Racial Hierarchies

In terms of how Liberalism, and modern colonial power, incept themselves into the everyday, the development of racial hierarchies has been one of the most effective means of ensuring its most devout adherents remain the most powerful while dehumanising those who may resist and refuse. Mbembé notes (2003: 17), 'race has been the ever-present shadow in Western political thought and practice, especially when it comes to imagining the inhumanity of, or rule over,

foreign peoples'. On the construction of race, Foucault (2003: 255) noted that the exercise of biopower can prioritise the well-being of one group over that of another in an attempt either to remove a threat or to strengthen its subjects:

> [t]he more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I - as species rather than individual - can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate. The fact that the other dies does not mean simply that I live in the sense that his death guarantees my safety; the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer.

This offers some grounding on the governmentality around race, its biopolitics, and the logics of racial dehumanisation. However, it is important here to underline, contrary to Foucault's analysis, within Liberalism, the racial hierarchy is not amorphous, but rather one informed by the ideology of white supremacy. Howell and Richter-Montepetit (2019: 6) comment on Foucault, specifically around his conceptualisations and analyses on modernity and biopower, and how he relies on this idea of an 'unspecified (white) body' in detailing how bodies are controlled. Howell and Richter-Montepetit (2019: 5) further note that 'Foucault neglected the constitutive role of (settler) colonialism in the production of modernity, as well as the fundamental role of the Black or savage Other in the ontological consolidation of man or "the human" necessary for biopower.' Moving forward, locating whiteness in amorphous institutions and policies that determine modernity and development will help remove presumptions of their innocence within the analysis of this thesis.

The social construction of race and its use to coerce and annihilate 'the unmodern' is a key technology through which Liberalism as a governmentality operates. In many ways, it carries on the baton from the civilising mission of the Church that sanctioned the killings of non-Christian peoples. Moreton-Robinson (2015: 49) locates and connects how race was activated and incorporated into modernity through European colonisation:

> [m]ost historians mark 1492 as the year when imperialism began to construct the old world order by taking possession of other people, their lands and resources. The possessive nature of this enterprise informed the development of a racial stratification process on a global scale that became solidified in modernity. Taking possession of Indigenous people's lands was a quintessential act of colonization and was tied to the transition from the Enlightenment to modernity, which precipitated the emergence of a new subject into history within Europe.

Moreton-Robinson identifies that Liberal modernity cannot be removed from the beginnings of global European imperialism and colonization. This genealogy extends back to pastoral doctrine, namely the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. The Doctrine alludes to a series of Papal Bulls, including the 1452 *Dum Diversas* and 1455 *Romanus Pontifex* under Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455), which permitted the 'perpetual' enslavement and annihilation of non-Christian peoples.[11] The Papal Bull *Inter Caetera* issued in 1493 under Pope Alexander VI, ultimately deputised all Christian monarchs and their heirs with the power to possess lands and waters not ruled by fellow Christian monarchs at a time in which the Western hemisphere became known to Europe.[12] As many European empires were interested in the search for raw materials to fuel newly emerging economies and militaries, throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, they sought to civilise and subdue and dispossess non-Christian peoples of their lands and use their bodies for labour (Scott 1995; Newcomb 2008). Thus, though non-Christian peoples were not yet racialised by colour, they were nevertheless dehumanised for the purposes of expansion of European civilisation.[13]

Looking at the early development of colonial racial hierarchies, European empires responded to the shift in 'the rules of the game', where the dehumanisation of non-Christian peoples was becoming less acceptable as a reason to wage mass violence. In the 16th century, the Catholic Church, for example, showed signs of succumbing to increased demand for the humanisation of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. In 1537, Pope Paul III (1534-1549) issued the *Sublimis Deus*, which stated:

> We, who, though unworthy, exercise on earth the power of our Lord an seek with all our might
>
> to bring these sheep of his flock who are outside into the fold committed to our charge,
>
> consider, however, that the Indians are truly men, and they are not only capable of

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[11] As Portugal sought to colonise and establish ports along the West Coast of Africa, the Bull specifically ordered King Alfonso (in Ajala 2013), 'to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery.'

[12] A key excerpt from the 1493 Bull (in Ajala 2013) states: 'With this proviso however that none of the islands and mainlands, found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, beyond that said line towards the west and south, be in the actual possession of any Christian king or prince up to the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ just past from which the present year one thousand four hundred ninety-three begins. And we make, appoint, and depute you and your said heirs and successors lords of them with full and free power, authority, and jurisdiction of every kind…'

[13] Noting that the 'English were always at war with non-Christians', Borch refers to the remarks of Chief Justice Edward Coke in Calvin's Case (1608): 'for between them [the infidels], as with the devils, whose subjects they be, and the Christian, there is perpetual hostility and can be no peace'. Borch notes that 'in a later passage Coke stated that after conquest of an infidel country their laws automatically ceased to exist because they were 'not only against Christianity, but against the law of God and of nature' (in Borch 2001: 225).

understanding the Catholic faith, but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it…

We define and declare…the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possessions of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should freely and legitimately enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved; should the contrary happen, it shall be null and of no effect.

Commenting on *Sublimus Deus*, Alaskan Tlingit scholar Paul underlines this shift where Europe would need to provide more rationalised reasoning to justify dispossession of lands and lives: 'the religious and academic leader of the western world felt he must twice admonish the exploring nations never to enslave and never to rob the Natives of the New World of their property. He knew his children!' (2007: 22). In the lead-up to European Enlightenment and beyond, the Christian vs. non-Christian dichotomy declined as a sufficient moral basis on which European powers, and non-Catholic ones in particular, could dispossess, enslave, and annihilate. Dutch philosopher De Pauw points out this shift in the game largely occurred since the Church saw that non-Christians were giving the Catholic Church more adherents. He notes this in his admonishment of *Sublimus Deus* (quoted in Church 1936: 186):

At first the American natives were not considered men but orang-outangs which might be destroyed without remorse and without reproach. Finally, to add ridiculousness to the calamities of that time, a Pope issued a bull in which he declared that, having founded bishoprics in the richest parts of America, he and the Holy Spirit were pleased to recognize the Americans as true men. So that without that decision of an Italian the inhabitants of the new world would still be, in the eyes of the faithful, a race of animals of doubtful nature.

De Pauw's commentary that the Papacy was complicit in animalising Indigenous peoples reveals the game shift between the first and second wave of European colonisation: the first wave dehumanised and animalised Indigenous peoples until they showed they would convert to the Catholic Christian doctrine. Meanwhile, the second wave of colonialism that occurred during the Enlightenment provided a secular modern system that upheld white European supremacy, whereby dehumanisation would be more inherent in race and not tied to religious persuasion. This can be seen in the language of De Pauw (quoted in Church 1936: 186):

[a]s for the natives, they are destitute of that physical strength which characterizes Europeans. The least vigorous European is more than a match for the strongest American. Their

constitution is weak, they succumb under the lightest burden. Their stature is smaller than that of the Europeans…

For Enlightenment thinkers, the white supremacist racial hierarchy, then, offered itself as a more promising reason for European domination and perpetual subjugation of non-European lands, all justified through a purported scientifically-informed Liberal rationale. The saviourism found within the initial civilising missions of European empires, which had justified the expropriation of Indigenous lands, the enslavement of the Indigenous peoples of Africa and the Americas, and the brutal violence waged against resistance, could then continue in the name of Liberal development and advancing modernity. Historian Seed (1995: 193) remarks that the patterns of the colonial projects amongst the empires 'had been laid down in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century…while economic, political, and philosophical reasoning developed, the core entitlement to land remained the same.' Seed comments on the second wave of colonialism: 'developing different rationales and more intense economic rhythms, nineteenth century colonialists clearly differed from their predecessors, but they considered themselves no less entitled to rule the rest of the world'.

The racial hierarchy became normalised into the everyday through the proliferation and influence of Enlightenment thinkers, particularly in the early days of the American settler colonial project. Key theorists of Liberalism, such as John Stuart Mill, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau,[14] have been paramount in this reproduction of difference and in the dehumanization of non-Europeans (Mills 1997; Hendlin 2014; Williams 2018). On Thomas Hobbes and his work on the anarchic state of nature, for example, Mills (1997: 66) highlights the subtle dualism within Liberalism where there are different rules for whites and non-whites:

[s]o the most notorious state of nature in the contractarian literature—the bestial war of all against all—is really a [non-white] figure, a racial object lesson for the more rational whites, whose superior grasp of natural law (here in its prudential rather than altruistic version) will enable them to take the necessary steps to avoid it and not to behave as 'savages'.

For Moreton-Robinson (2015: 56), both Locke and Rousseau 'developed their ideas of the state of nature using the American Indian as the quintessential example of "humanity living in its pure,

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[14] These scholars are certainly not the only ones that are complicit. Scottish philosopher David Hume (1777: 629) noted in 1753-54: 'I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all other species of men to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was any civilized nation of any other [complexion] than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation.'

unadulterated savage state'". Further she adds (2015: 155) that the commentaries on social contract of Rousseau and Locke, which remain foundational to Liberalism and its response to the state of nature were also part of this dualism: 'the white patriarchs who theorized about the social contract' and 'were primarily concerned with it being a means of agreement between white men to live together, make laws, and govern, incorporating white women into the polity as their subordinates through the marriage contract'. This is obviously apparent, for example, in the beginnings of the United States, whose constitutional frameworks were so heavily influenced by Locke and Rousseau that, for example, only white male landowners could participate in the formation of the American social contract.

The White Possessive and its Attempts to Possess Land

In the historical narrative of the United States and its justification for accumulated lands, dispossession cannot be solely reduced to a question of land use. It must incorporate the identity of the landowner, and certainly race has been inherently connected to the reasoning behind dispossession. On the subjects of possession and dispossession, this chapter turns to the notion of the 'white possessive' proposed by Moreton-Robinson (2015). Wolfe famously states (2006: 388) that 'territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element'. Coulthard argues that settler colonialism in North America has dispossessed land through processes of 'primitive accumulation', which remain premised on violent coercion to attain both land and labour with as little resistance as possible. This can be seen, for example, in the previous section on the politics of recognition and the ability for modern colonial power to attempt erasure unilaterally. Coulthard employs the Marxian concept of primitive accumulation, whereby the producer is divorced from the means of production, to frame the relationship between land and settler colonialism as one that is presently structured by both colonial social relations and capitalism. This divorced relationship assists in settler colonialism and its perpetual desire to acquire lands (Coulthard 2014; Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006). Like Coulthard (2014), scholars, such as Murphy (2018: 50) have analysed primitive accumulation as a process that is not solely an economic one that engages with the white supremacist and patriarchal hierarchy, where dispossessed land offers the foundations 'upon which a racialized, gendered, and class-based society can be built and maintained'. Coulthard (2014: 14) underlines this point in his commentary on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples in Canada:

there is much more at play in the contemporary reproduction of settler colonial social relations
than capitalist economics…Although it is beyond question that the predatory nature of
capitalism continues to play a vital role in facilitating the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous
peoples in Canada, it is necessary to recognize that it only does so in relation to or in concert
with axes of exploitation and domination configured along racial, gender, and state lines.
Indeed, examining the solely perpetual growth desires of settler colonialism, without considering the
roles of other colonial structures and ideologies for that matter, is likely to render an incomplete
analysis.

In the pursuit of land, Liberalism encourages what Moreton-Robinson (2015: 49) notes to be
a 'possessive individualism', that is focused on 'increasing consciousness of the distinctness of each
self-owning human entity as the primary and social value' and produces 'a new white property-
owning subject'. Using Moreton-Robinson's concept McCreary and Milligan (2021: 729) argue that,
in the racialised states of Canada and the United States, 'understanding settler colonialism as a
regime of territorial dispossession requires thinking about the racial logics that rationalise white
possession'. These racial logics are more than desires to accumulate land for economic prosperity.
The desire to dominate and maintain settler sovereignty over what is perceived property is also part
of settler governmentality. Similar to Moreton-Robinson (2015), Nakano Glenn (2015: 60)
emphasises the presence of patriarchy in settler colonial possession, where white masculinity
becomes a defining characteristic:

 [m]asculine whiteness thus became central to settler identity, a status closely tied to ownership
 of property and political sovereignty. The latter in turn articulated with heteropatriarchy, which
 rendered white manhood supreme with respect to control over property and self-rule. This
 entailed settler wives being denied an independent legal identity; instead, her identity was
 merged into that of her husband, and her property and labor were under his control.[15]

This reflects a more complex understanding of settler colonialism, where its power contributes and
relies on other modes and structures of oppression in order to wage colonial power and dispossess.

The white possessive becomes then an attitude and an embodiment of many privileges
among those who have the most to gain from settler colonial governance. To paraphrase Paperson
(2014: 116), from the right to claim land, to claiming people as property, 'to the right not to be

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[15] Moreton-Robinson notes that white women, while politically disenfranchised, nevertheless have held more power than
Indigenous women in their proximity to white sovereignty. She expands on this in the White Possessive (2015) but also
see *Talkin' Up to the White Woman (2000)*.

bound by borders nor bonded as property' the white possessive is centred on entitlements. Indeed, this attitude of the white possessive, its privileges, and its normalisation as Wolfe (2013: 1) shows, is a taught one:

> [l]and 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.

The culture of possession associated with whiteness and its everyday colonial power not only helps to convince new generations, but also non-settler white migrants to join the larger settler colonial project of normalising white possession (Moreton-Robinson 2015). For white settlers to commit, however, to this intergenerational handover of lands, they must also buy into the myth that they belong to the lands themselves or that the lands remain a mere commodity which they have a right and inherent duty to manage. The white possessive remains a central tenet of settler sovereignty.

Dispossession, however, seeks more than capitalistic turnover of owners and has rather sought an 'elimination of Indigenous peoples, polities, and relationships from and with the land' (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel 2014: 7-8). Whyte et al (2019: 325-26) underline that this is to ensure that settler societies are able to 'establish their own homeland in the homeland of another society.' This is so imperial societies are 'motivated to relocate and establish a new homeland for themselves', and without having to adapt to or compromise with Indigenous lifeways. Barker (2012: 1) adds that settler colonialism is distinct in its colonisation as it encapsulates 'the creation and consumption of a whole array of spaces by settler collectives that claim and transform places through the exercise of their sovereign capacity'. Whyte et al (2019: 325-326) go further, arguing that settlers seek to occupy lands by establishing their own colonial generative institutions that uphold settler sovereignty in physical and non-physical spaces:

> settler societies seek to make a homeland by creating social institutions that physically carve their origin, religious and cultural narratives, social ways of life, and political and economic systems (e.g. individual (Lockean) property rights) into the waters, soils, air, and other environmental dimensions of the territory or landscape. That is, settler mobility has to be inscribed into the landscapes or ecosystems of the peoples already living there (i.e. Indigenous peoples).

What Whyte describes is ultimately reflective of what settler notions of sovereignty seek to protect and control.

White settler sovereignty demands performance of its existence in the imagination and in physical spaces (Crosby and Monaghan 2012; Snelgrove et al 2014; Wolfe 2006). Barker (2016: n.p.) points to national parks, for example, and the 'wilderness' they proclaim to protect as a preeminent example of this. Barker comments on occupation, that it 'is to some extent irrespective of actual physical settlement; what matters is whether or not a place is occupied in the settler colonial imagination. Settlers consider a place occupied when it can be visualised as filled with the markers of settler society'. White settler possession demands spatial and imaginative transformation of what land means. Mbembé (2003: 25-26) adds that '[s]eizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographic area – of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations' (Mbembé 2003: 25-26) remains at the forefront of the white [possessive] settler colonial agenda. In essence, the white possessive seeks to perpetually undermine and eliminate Indigenous sovereignty when opportune. Within the process of white settler possession of Indigenous lands, Goeman (2008: 24) notes that 'with land dispossession the recognition of our personhood would also be denied'. Undermining Indigenous sovereignty,[16] however, is not as straightforward settler colonialism desires it to be.

Coulthard (2014: 60) points out that Indigenous struggles against settler colonialism are best understood as 'oriented around the question of land'. He specifically states that such struggles are 'deeply informed by what the land as a mode of reciprocal relationship (which is informed by place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge) ought to teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, nondominating and nonexploitative way'. In a 2016 talk at the Queensland University of Technology Indigenous Studies Research Network, Moreton-Robinson (2016) noted that the attempts at dispossession by settler colonialism across white Liberal settler states are inherently lacking: 'white people and what they have is surface. You are surface people. We are part of, in and of the land. You can put on the land anything you like but we and land remain sovereign'. Moreton-Robinson (2015: xxi) remarks that Indigenous ontological relations with their lands are 'incommensurate with those developed through capitalism'

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[16] The concept of Indigenous sovereignty is one that has many understandings and nuances depending on Nation and community. However, on the concept of sovereignty, Alfred (1999: 133-134), in *Peace, Power, and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto,* offers a working foundation in his transcribed conversation with Astenhaienton, a Kanien'kehaka (Bear Clan) working on Indigenous issues in the United Nations: 'It's easy to talk about sovereignty because I look at it as a state of mind. It means you think like a nation, like a sovereign people, or a sovereign person. We use those elements of nationhood – treaty-making, population, government. The non-Native yardsticks that are used to measure nationhood – I use them a lot…In the European System, the Crown is sovereign. In our system, the people are sovereign. Their concept of sovereignty is very different from ours historically.'

and unsettle the white settler colonial sense of belonging, which is best characterised through the 'logic of capital and profound individual attachment'. Herein lies a weakness of white Liberal settler colonialism: it presumes lands to be possessed on the basis of its own structures. Indeed, Liberal settler colonialism is mistaken in its understandings of land as commodity, as though land-based relationships are transferrable and, when threatened, do not conjure collective resistance. Goeman (2008: 23) remarks that land is pivotal not only to Indigenous identity and survival, but to maintaining relationships with land as a living being, something that is 'at the heart of Indigenous peoples struggles':

> [y]es, there is recognition of the important spiritual role, the necessity to protect land from environmental devastation, and a legal narration of its borders and boundaries, but too often we overlook the fundamental role of place-making in moving toward cultural sovereignty.

Settler colonial dispossession is one, then, that is not permanent and is consistently failing in its mission to prevent Indigenous peoples, and their continued existence, refrain from the act of place-making and practicing self-determination. Moreton-Robinson (2015: 11) qualifies this Indigenous connection to land:

> '[o]ur ontological relationship to land, the ways that country is constitutive of us, and therefore the inalienable nature of our relation to land, marks a radical, indeed incommensurable, difference between us and the non-Indigenous…This subject position cannot be erased by colonizing processes, which seek to position the Indigenous as object, inferior, other, and its origins are not tied to migration.'

Middleton Manning (2018: 18), in her commentary on the gradual displacement of the Maidu people in California, for example, documents the difficulties the architects of national allotment policies, most notably the Dawes Act (1887), had in assimilating Indigenous peoples after parcelling out lands into individual plots in order to break apart collective tribal ownership. This was largely due to the oversight of policymakers in understanding the connection between community and land. To summarise this relationship within the context of the Dawes Act, Pointdexter (1994: 71) remarks that 'the Land was not a source of pecuniary power…but a source of spiritual nurture to be shared and that 'the internal or policy motivations of the allotment process remained largely unrealized'. While settler colonialism objectifies land and accumulates it under certain rules of ownership, lands cannot be solely reduced to market-based relations.

For Indigenous peoples, land, after all, is not generalisable as if it remains characterless and transferable upon exchange. Paperson (2014: 124) helps articulate this relationship that ultimately

flies in the face of Liberal understandings of land ownership: 'Land is both people and place, that is, Native people constitute and are constituted by Native land'. Moving forward, it is important to note that in referring to the act of 'dispossession', there will be no presumption of successful completion. Certainly, capitalist and property-based notions of dispossession can be asserted outright, where lands may become legally inaccessible to the people, or peoples, with whom they have relations. However, Liberal settler colonial dispossession desires, as well, a non-physical and more permanent loss of Indigenous relations that leaves settler claims to nativism unthreatened. Indeed, the physical removal of people from place does not simply undo Indigenous geographies. This 'unmaking of Native space' (Barnd 2017: 79) remains ongoing and does not stop simply once Indigenous people are removed from lands. As the final sections will demonstrate, the politics of recognition and the Liberal framework of rights have been pivotal in physically regulating Indigenous peoples off their lands and out of existence.

Dispossession through Indigenous Racialisation and the Politics of Recognition

The Liberal politics of recognition is responsible for legitimising settler colonial reasonings to possess and to dispossess. The racialisation of Indigenous peoples into 'Indians', and the politics of recognition that surrounds this racialisation, has been a key mechanism through which Liberal settler colonialism in the United States has taken lands. Powerfully, it does this by determining who is and who isn't Indigenous. Examining this, as Scott (1995: 204) notes, is discerning 'colonial power's point of application, its target, and the discursive and nondiscursive fields' that it seeks to encompass. He (1995: 193) outlines these targets to be the point of colonial power's application – 'the object it aims at…and the instrumentalities it deploys in search of these targets'. In this case, the 'Indian' label is one that colonial power seeks to regulate, and to co-opt. This process of racialising Indigenous peoples into and out of existence is indeed a biopolitical one. As an instrument of naturalisation, regulation, and depoliticization, this racial politics of recognition can regulate Indigenous peoples out of the very lands and waters settler colonialism seeks to dominate and possess Dietrich (2017: 67). Monaghan (2013: 492) argues that this ordering and racialisation of Indigenous peoples has contributed to their elimination: '[w]hile no amount of adaptation to Liberal settler society can prevent indigenous peoples from being targeted for structural genocide,

biopolitical ordering produces initial categories for the governance and elimination of indigenous populations…' Simpson (2014: 138) describes the nature of this biopolitical ordering:

> the racialisation of Indian identity in the United States correlates to differing conceptions of Indian relationships to the state and to Indian citizenship through time. These were conceptions of recognition that moved Indian tribes away from the semi-sovereign status of 'domestic and dependent nations' and into the conceptual and legal ambit of racialized minorities.

What Monaghan and Simpson locate is ultimately a system that recognises Indigenous existence through its own lens, and one that reflects what it wants to see in order to govern and eventually eliminate threats to its existence.

This regulation of identity falls into the politics of recognition, as coined by Charles Taylor (1992). Coulthard (2007: 438-9) offers commentary on Taylor's (1992) original framework where he highlights that 'recognition' is ultimately a form of ordering and control, adding further:

> the reproduction of a colonial structure of dominance…rests on its ability to entice Indigenous people 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.

Simpson (2016) remarks on the dualities of this relationship: 'I love your difference (which I once wanted to kill), I will recognize and protect it (if it will not offend or kill me)'. Liberal institutions will only recognise what is not a threat to their existence. This also includes the relationship between Liberalism and justice-based reform, whereby it will only change in a way that ensures survival and dominance (Simpson 2016).

This settler colonial 'politics of recognition' is an example of colonial power creating non-physical colonial space to achieve the mission of permanence. Liberalism can operate through biopolitical reordering of Indigenous peoples that stays in line with Liberal principles of equality and efforts, not to destroy but to produce life by simply absorbing Indigenous peoples into the settler populace (Morgensen 2011). Indeed, Simpson (2014: 8) reveals the goal of settler colonialism in Canada and the United States was to 'eliminate Indigenous people; take all their land; absorb them into a white, property owning politic'. Murphy offers a prime example of this in the United States, specifically looking at when the State of Rhode Island sought to erase the Narragansett people by using a racialised politics of recognition. In his case study, Murphy (2018: 60; Adams 1880) analysed an 1880 report from the Rhode Island State Committee of Investigations to exemplify this:

[w]e learn that there is not a person of pure Indian blood in the [T]ribe and that characteristic features, varying all the shades of color, from the Caucasian to the Black race, were manifest in the several meetings of the Committee. Their extinction as a [T]ribe has been accomplished as effectually by nature as an Act of the General Assembly will put an end to the name. There will evidently be a feeling of regret when the name of a [T]ribe so long known in the history of our State passes from existence.

Here the lens of settler colonial interpretation of Indigeneity, based on notions of Indigenous racial features, permitted the State to withdraw rights of sovereignty and self-determination. Despite the fact that Narragansett integrated Black people into their Nation, which reflecting their own self-determination and sovereignty, the state only recognised Indigeneity through a racialised lens, let alone one that undermined these capacities.

The politics of recognition is also a colonial tactic of domination through division and further erasure. Tuck and Yang (2012) offer the trifecta model of the white settler, the chattel slave, and the Indigenous person to summarise this biopolitical division in American settler colonialism. Division remains a key tactic in dividing those experiencing settler colonial racialisation and marginalising more complex narratives that threaten to upend racial hierarchies. Settler colonialism in the United States specifically uses the politics of recognition to also separate Indigenous peoples from the African and American continents based on their relation to development of the settler colonial project. For example, As seen in Murphy's example with the Narragansett people, the state undermined Indigenous self-determination, refusing to recognise that Afro-Indigenous people had an ancestral claim to land.

Jackson (2014) notes that such politics of recognition that erase the relationship between Black and Indigeneity 'is a rejection of those dimensions of Black belonging in the New World that do not comfortably articulate with state power'. Instead, colonial violence is waged against African and descendants of the Black diaspora, reflecting a logic of elimination, while any promises or actions to structurally redress for enslavement and waged colonial violence continuously remain out of sight (Morgensen 2011; Mbembé 2003). Further, Wolfe (2001: 881) remarks on this division within American settler colonialism, stating that slavery pursued the elimination of Indigenous peoples by playing a 'difference between one group of people who had survived a centuries-long genocidal catastrophe with correspondingly depleted numbers and another group who, as commodities, had been preserved, their production constituting a singularly primitive form of accumulation for their owners'. The politics of recognition and the instrumentality of racial ordering

shows the capacity of modern colonial power to both divide and dispossess in a settler colonial context. Not only do such categorisations erase those who experience and display identities that complicate them, but it creates a hierarchy of belonging premised on the racialisation of Indigeneity. It is at this point that this chapter turns to understanding how this racialisation under the politics of recognition operates through the Liberal framework of rights and manifests into displacement and dispossession.

Liberal Rights and Dispossession

The rights framework remains one of the subtler tactics of settler colonialism that legitimises its political and socio-economic structures of power and their ability to determine the value of land claims and Indigenous personhood. For settler colonialism, the structure of rights helps rebrand colonisation as a legal framework that opts in favour of those that constructed it. Once again, the white possessive is found within the framework of rights as an instigating dispossessing technology of colonial power. Moreton-Robinson sees the Liberal framework of rights that protects white patriarchal sovereignty, one that, as she states (2015: 56), relegates 'Indigenous people to a state of nature without any sovereign rights'. Indeed, Liberal governance has historically appeared to autonomously assign rights to only those it values, shifting only when confronted (Simpson 2014). Speaking on the Liberal framework of rights, Moreton-Robinson (2015: 132) ties white possession to rights and power. Rights within the settler colonial state, as Moreton-Robinson remarks (2015: 157), are a form of white patriarchal biopower that denotes possession:

> 'right' should not be understood as the establishment of legitimacy but rather the methods by which subjugation is carried out. In this sense citizenship rights are a means by which subjugation operates as a weapon of race war that can be used strategically to circumscribe and enable biopower of patriarchal white sovereignty.

The framework of rights helps undergird the individual white possessive. In the context of Neoliberalism, which throws out traditional Liberalism's supposed naturalness and freedom of the market (Foucault 2008), the market can insert settler colonial knowledges and technologies into every facet of society to assist with meeting individual development and rights. Joseph (2013: 42) states that 'neoliberalism works through the social production of freedom' and the 'management and organisation of the conditions in which one can be free'. When combined with the market, this

illusion of self-autonomy becomes regulated through the 'generative structures of colonial-capitalist exploitation and domination' (Coulthard 2007: 438-9). In essence, Neoliberalism turns helps turn rights into a system through which the settler colonial market can regulate individual citizens.

The individualising of Indigenous peoples and their consignment to the framework of rights under the US Constitution could be understood as another example where the rules of the game are changed, as settler colonialism adapted to both Indigenous resistance and changing political circumstances. Scott (1995: 208) comments on the significance of such a move within the context of colonisers versus native populations:

> [t]he crucial point here is not whether natives were included or excluded so much as the introduction of a new game of politics that the colonized would (eventually) be obliged to play if they were to be counted as political. And one of the things the new game of politics came to depend upon was the construction of a legally instituted space where legally defined subjects could exercise rights, however limited those might have been.

Looking at key legislation that has led to the current political status of Indigenous peoples in the United States, both the politics of recognition and of land dispossession is clearly seen within the rights conferred on particular Indigenous nations and communities. The 1924 Indian Citizenship Act (ICA) granted a form of US citizenship to all recognized Indigenous peoples for the first time as US citizens, replacing their status as foreign-yet-domestic wards of the state. This quasi-citizenship was conferred only to Indigenous peoples who the federal government recognised as legitimate. Bruyneel (2007: 120) notes that the ICA 'expressed the American settler-state's dual orientation by simultaneously drawing Indigenous people into the American polity through the conferral of citizenship and then, in the next sentence, placing many of these same people at least somewhat outside by affirming their rights to citizenship in their own tribes'. Nevertheless, the very idea of dual citizenry upends the longevity of settler colonial authority. Citizens of Indigenous nations retain collective identities and relations that not only remind settler colonialism of its temporal nature in relation to the lands it occupies, but as citizens of the settler colonial state, this agency becomes a threat from within its borders. This is reflective of Simpson's take on the politics of recognition where the state recognises Indigenous existence (that it once wanted to kill) while simultaneously racialising that existence as a new minority of 'American Indians' within in its domestic citizenry (so long as they do not threaten the state). McCreary and Milligan (2021: 729) note that this is 'the normalisation of settler jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples and lands' where Indigenous peoples

become racialised as a minority who must advance through specific rights in the state, moving them away from exercising Indigenous sovereignty over their own lands and people.

The Liberal politics of recognition and a new changed game of politics was also practically reflected in the 1932 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). Through the IRA the US federal government ended the allotting of Indigenous lands, making some reservations 'permanent homelands', intending to show a gesture of goodwill that the government would cease land-grabbing. This was in spite of the fact that most reservation lands were intended to deprive Indigenous communities and to encourage their assimilation. The IRA shifted the game of politics from being one characterised as a strategy of elimination by starvation to one that privileged and recognised a limited sovereignty for some Indigenous Nations and communities as long as they assimilated political structures within Liberal settler colonial governance frameworks. The IRA was an opt-in piece of legislation where if Tribes did accept the IRA, they needed to draft 'constitutions defining their powers of self-government and establish business charters that permitted them to borrow money from the revolving credit fund' and whereas if a Tribe voted against or did not draft a constitution and business charter 'it could not borrow money from the revolving credit fund' (Philip 1983: 169). In doing this, the federal government limited the freedoms of Indigenous political self-determination whether or not they opted into the IRA; constitutions and charters included legal clauses, for example, that made all major tribal council decisions subject to federal review. What is more, as Philip (1983: 172) summarises, while intended, 'the Indian Reorganization Act did not forge a new tribal identity. Instead, it frequently intensified existing factionalism'. Farrell et al (2021: 6) meanwhile conclude that the Indian New Deal helped contribute to land dispossession:

> [t]he breakup of reservations led to jurisdictional situations of high bureaucratic and managerial complexity for some tribes because their lands involve fragmented trust and fee lands (for example, checkerboarding), as well as the presence of properties with fractionated ownership (for example, multiple owners).

From citizenship to property, the legacy of the Liberal framework of rights has aided settler colonial dispossession more than it has sought to enfranchise in returning land. Under settler colonial politics of recognition in the United States, there is clear precedent whereby systems of governance, while appearing banal and benevolent in upholding the principle of self-determination, ultimately justify dispossession through this same behaviour.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the relationship between settler colonialism and power as one that dispossesses in order to seek permanence for the American settler colonial project. In understanding Indigenous relationships to land, as ones that are storied and sovereign, the commodification and settler colonial occupation of these lands reflects the use of tactics, ranging from Liberal recognition politics of determining who has claim to land to racialising Indigenous peoples into a distinct minority to control within the framework of rights. The next chapter will unpack how settler colonial power and governmentality assist in what will be termed 'settler colonial environmental governance' and the creation of moralising myths to displace and attempt to dispossess Indigenous peoples. Settler colonial relationships with land will be further articulated and expanded upon, locating moralising narratives that reflect Liberal modernity and justify its reasons for removing Indigenous peoples from their own lands. In further unpacking the political rationalities and technologies of settler colonialism as a structure of dominance in the United States, this thesis can then approach its case studies to demonstrate how environmental governance contributes to settler permanence.

Chapter 2: *Terra Sacer* and the Production of Settler Colonial Ethnogeographies

Introduction

This chapter turns toward a specific set of knowledges and tactics that comprise settler colonial understandings of the 'environment' in the United States and how it moralises the creation of settler colonial ethnogeographies. Before moving forward, it is necessary to first define two key concepts that will lay the foundation of analysis in this chapter, and in the ensuing case studies: the concept of 'settler colonial environmental governance' and Reibold's understanding of ethnogeographies. Though settler colonialism is already an inherently ecologically disruptive set of structures (Bacon 2017) the use of 'settler colonial environmental governance' flags the intentionality to examine and critique projects and responses to environmental crises that appear normal, benevolent, and hallmarks of modernity. In the last chapter, settler colonialism was established as a structure of dominance in accordance with Whyte et al (2019) as one that exploits one or more groups of people for the benefit of another. Settler colonialism seeks to displace and ultimately dispossess Indigenous peoples and establish settler belonging to that land. The previous chapter also established that settler colonialism seeks domination through colonial power and governmentality, normalising its behaviours to tactically govern the 'everyday operations of life and economy' (Launius and Boyce 2020: 158) and to shift the rules of the game to adapt to the evolution of its own modernity and counter tactics of resistance. In the United States, a white possessive Liberalism operates as a colonial governmentality, ultimately obfuscating the intentions of settler colonialism through its own languages of development and modernity (Moreton-Robinson 2015; Scott 1995; Scott 1999). Environmentalism and its appearance of benevolence is indeed one of those discourses that helps hide settler colonial intentions. This thesis uses the concept of 'settler colonial

environmental governance' to concisely articulate how settler colonialism manages dispossession under the guise of 'environmental' actors, knowledges, and technologies. Here I seek to allude to the Western ontological understanding of the environment as a separate spatial geography and one that needs to be tamed and coerced into subjugation. The use of environmentalism reflects how many settler colonial structures in the United States perceive this concept – an anthropocentric, or human-centred, worldview that objectifies lands, waters, air, non-human beings as natural resources. The production of ethnogeographies is the practical means through which settler colonial environmental governance not only displaces Indigenous peoples, but also creates spatial structures that reflect settler colonial desires for permanence. In line with Reibold (2022: 2), this thesis will understand an ethnogeography to be 'composed of an ontology of land and land-use relationships that materialises settler nativism. The settler ethnogeography is one where not only are Indigenous ontological relations and land-uses erased, but also where lands become shaped from settler relationships with the land'. As the case studies following this chapter will examine examples of ethnogeographies created under settler colonial environmental governance, this chapter will move forward to unpack these settler colonial relationships with land and how these relationships are normalised.

With this in mind, this chapter will first look to briefly expand how settler colonialism understands the environment, contrasting its relationship with Indigenous conceptualisations to emphasise its divergent and colonial nature. The discussion will then demonstrate how settler colonialism limits Indigenous mobilities in order to help physically and imaginatively clear lands. From here, the chapter will look at Whyte's (2018a) idea of 'moralising narratives' as these will be key to understanding how settler colonialism has legitimised its strategies of dispossession and violence and how these have erased Indigenous peoples. Paperson's (2014) concept of *terra sacer* will be introduced as a settler logic of land use that frames Indigenous lands in a bare condition of being 'accursed' and in need of 'saving'. Expanding on Paperson's concept, this chapter will argue that the outlook of *terra sacer* reinforces the construction of settler Indigeneity, allotting settlers the decision that they may also lay waste to some lands to produce others, therefore creating their own geographies. With the tactic of *terra sacer* established, this chapter will then examine European early modern thought, and the ideologies established by it, that made lands in the Americas appear to be in a state of *terra nullius*, or 'no one's land'. It will further articulate how European forms of land use equated to justified ownership of these lands. Doing this will help ground the logics of *terra sacer* and the racialisation of lands to be misused until European cultivation. Finally, this chapter will conclude by locating settler common sense as a technology of settler colonial governmentality that helps

integrate *terra sacer* logics. Structures that uphold colonial Liberal recognition politics, like Pateman's (2007) concept of the 'settler contract' and key Supreme Court decisions have helped reinforce this settler colonial common sense mentality and the ability of *terra sacer* to incept itself into 'the everyday' (Rifkin 2013). The settler contract is a concept that helps explain the social order of settler colonial society in retaining lands and preventing their handover to Indigenous peoples. Moreover, Supreme Court decisions such as *Johnson v M'Intosh* (1823) further clarify how the ideology of *terra sacer* has been imbued into colonial structures of recognition. With this understanding of settler colonial relations to lands, as owners and rightful cultivators, in place this thesis will be able to look more closely at the modern ethnogeographic case studies of settler colonial environmental governance that follow it.

Contextualising 'the Environment'

Turning toward environmental discourse, Indigenous scholar Bacon (2019: 59) refers to settler colonialism as an 'eco-social structure, which produces/maintains drastic and enduring inequalities between settlers and Native peoples'. The logics of settler colonialism, as noted in the previous chapter, are premised on objectifying lands and erasing Indigenous relations to them. As Dietrich notes (2016), capitalist principles inherent to the United States objectify Indigenous lands and exploit, extract, and maximize profit from them in order meet market-defined needs. De Souza (2020: 223-4) explains, in contrast, how the objectification of the environment upends 'material space' and 'social relations' to it. The environment, he contends, is rather a 'space produced through the transformation of nature by social relations' and 'encompasses the totality of material space and social relations (geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, biosphere and anthroposphere)' and their 'complex overlapping and non-linear relationships'. When thinking about how social relations relate to what De Souza calls 'material space', Simpson (2014: 14), through a Nishnaabeg lens, describes how land is more than just a source of knowledge: 'we shouldn't be just striving for land-based pedagogies. The land must once again become the pedagogy'. These land- and place-based learning relationships not only inform but comprise Indigenous sovereignties; 'the environment' becomes part of individual and collective decision-making and daily life as opposed to being subject to it (Tuck and McKenzie 2014). The de-centring of humans within Indigenous land relations and place-

based ontologies and epistemologies is best reflected in Bang et al (2014: 45) and their invocation of Burkhart's (2004: 25) Indigenous revision of Decartes' 'I think therefore I am':

> Burkhart, in an effort to clearly articulate the difference in ontology between western and Indigenous knowledges, made a revision of the famous Descartes adage 'I think, therefore I am' to express something closer to an Indigenous ontology to 'We are, therefore I am.' Extending this, we might imagine that the ontology of place-based paradigms is something like 'I am, therefore place is,' in contrast, the ontology of land-based pedagogies might be summarized as 'Land is, therefore we are.'

Where lands are collective in Indigenous ontologies, settler colonialism seeks a power dynamic whereby land is excluded, objectified, and primitively accumulated and, in doing so, Indigenous sovereignty is undermined (Tuck et al 2014). For settler colonialism in the United States, a strategy that is assisted by racial capitalism, land is reduced to simply an object, or objects, of marketable use and transformed into natural resources. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 29) states 'the negation of indigenous views of history was a critical part of asserting colonial ideology, partly because such views were regarded as clearly "primitive" and "incorrect" and mostly because they challenged and resisted the vision of colonization'. Consequently, primitivity becomes a tool of convenient erasure, alluding to uneducated approaches to land management. Collins et al (2021: 5) note that this framing of Indigenous ontologies and by extension lifeways is reflective of a colonial and racialised knowledge-power nexus:

> [n]ot only did the colonial master have the power to create knowledge about the 'Other' that deemed them inferior, but that knowledge also served to demote [I]ndigenous knowledge systems and, thereby, preserve the primacy of Eurocentric thought. If [I]ndigenous people and by extension their knowledge systems were inferior, then so too were their cultural products resulting in the colonial distributions of power with which we are familiar today.

Jacob et al. (2021: 134) state succinctly 'settler colonial logics rooted in capitalism, individualism, racial superiority, ownership, and possession, will always position Indigenous people and the environment as inherently less-than, and disposable'.

Within a settler colonial governance context, I will be applying the concept of the environment in accordance with its European origins as an anthropocentric understanding of lands whereby humans and nature exist separately. This conceptualisation of the environment, in line with Bang et al. (2014: 44), is one that has allowed settler colonial environmental governance to displace and dispossess:

[w]e suggest that taking anthropocentrism as a universal developmental pathway privileges settler colonial relationships to land, reinscribes anthropocentrism by constructing land as an inconsequential or inanimate material backdrop for human privileged activity and enables human dislocation from land.

To understand how environmental governance has attempted to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands and relationships, and establish settlers as the new owners, it is important to discuss its strategies to erase Indigenous existence. As the next section will demonstrate, settler colonial environmental governance seeks Indigenous erasure through a strategy of restricting Indigenous mobilities.

Utilising Land Policy to Produce Immobility and Slow Violence

This chapter now turns to an examination of displacement and containment, and of Indigenous mobilities-at-large, as strategies of dispossession employed through the use of land policy. In the history of the United States 'movement cannot be thought of apart from removal' (Dietrich 2016: 508-509). It is a tactic of settler colonial environmental governance to assert both physical and non-physical domination over Indigenous relations with lands in waging a genocidal war of slow violence. Looking at displacement, first, this will be understood in this thesis as an immobility characterised by the forced physical and/or imaginative removal from place. Murdock summarises (2021: 242):

'[t]his settler colonial and imperial tactic of displacing the original inhabitants and stewards of lands fosters incredible violence, hardship, and harm not only through the loss of land through dispossession but also through the interruption of Indigenous lifeways that are tied to the lands themselves'.

The mobility and sovereignty of the settler is foundational to settler colonialism, which seeks to circumscribe and control 'the mobilities of Indigenous peoples' and 'to immobilize the former sovereign owners of those territories' (Clarsen 2015a: 42). This individualised settler sovereignty and mobility ultimately is produced at the expense of the Indigenous mobility through 'in part, ecological disruption (whether foreseen or not)' (Whyte et al note 2019: 326). The tactics of displacement and containment have been used to circumscribe and control Indigenous peoples since the impetus of the colonisation of the Americas. These strategies to physically and imaginatively sever place-based

connections reflect the settler colonial goal of dispossession and Indigenous annihilation. Byrd (2011: xv) asserts that the United States 'produced Indigenous peoples as a population that are to be made to move'. The notion of non-physical displacement, however, must also be considered. This is something Nixon (2011: 19) describes as a 'displacement without moving', where a community does not move yet 'its world is undermined'. While physical displacement refers to the movement of people from their place of belonging, for Nixon (2011: 19) displacement without moving 'refers rather to the loss of land and resources…a loss that leaves communities stranded in a place stripped of the very characteristics that made it habitable'. This clearly overlaps with the settler colonial strategy of containment, which renders Indigenous peoples as immobile (Veracini 2019: 121). Through the use of carceral techniques, containment results not only in rendering people immobile but it also subjects them to the intended and unintended effects of this immobility (Daulatzai 2007).

Nixon's concept of slow violence helps explain these effects and how displacement and containment operate as technologies in assisting Liberal settler colonialism erase Indigenous existence. Slow violence is 'neither spectacular nor instantaneous but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales' (Nixon 2011: 2-3). Its nature is gradual and out of sight, 'dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all' (Nixon 2011: 2). Nixon further notes that violence 'is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive, and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility' (Nixon 2011: 2). Compared to Galtung's well-cited concept of 'structural violence' (1969), slow violence, according to Nixon, is less static and is focused on causation and agency. It describes how various categories of violence are enacted over time. Nixon lists climate change, toxic drift, biomagnification, and deforestation as some examples of slow violence, noting that these disasters are 'long dyings' and 'mass forms of slow motion toxicity' that are unrepresented in strategic planning and in human memory. Slow violence reveals its insidious nature as it requires a 'rethinking' around 'conventional assumptions about violence as a highly visible act that is newsworthy because it is event focused, time bound, and body bound' (Nixon 2011: 3). In essence, slow violence remains seemingly mundane, uneventful, and therefore effective in its unimpeded continuity. Nixon (2011: 3) states:

> [s]low violence is often not just attritional but also exponential operating as a major threat multiplier. It can fuel long term proliferating conflicts in situations where the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly but gradually degraded.

As slow violence encapsulates multiple forms of violence occurring over a long space of time, each of which exacerbate existing threats to life, Indigenous scholarship offers frameworks that pinpoint how these forms are realised. Bacon (2019: 63) offers their framework of colonial ecological violence as 'a unique form of violence perpetrated by the settler-colonial state, private industry, and settler-colonial culture as a whole'. They offer the wilful destruction of bison herds, the poisoning of fresh water sources, the economic and health repercussions of resource depletion, the spiritual, emotional and identity impacts from the desecration of sacred sites, as some examples. Oglala Lakota scholar Brave Heart (2003: 7) offers the framework of historical trauma, defining it as the 'cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences'. Within historical trauma, Brave Heart draws parallels between high mortality rates, substance abuse issues, emotional and spiritual trauma and their connection to centuries of colonisation and waged genocide. It is important to note that these forms of violence fall out of the sensationalist lens of what constitutes violence. Such understandings of violence conveniently fall under the radar of Liberal mitigative approaches, not solely due to their temporal and intergenerational nature, but ultimately because, like with many other groups in the United States that have been subject to white settler supremacy, violence waged against Indigenous peoples has become normalised and is expected to be endured. Moreover, forms of slow violence have the potential to 'open the floodgates for other types of more direct "fast" violence', such as criminalisation, harassment, murder, as well as sexual assault and rape' (Penados et al 2022: 8). Indeed, slow violence has been justified against many populations in the United States under a normalised, and inevitable, guise of national development.

Displacement and containment have catalysed their own forms of slow violence over the course of rendering Indigenous peoples as physically and imaginatively immobile. What is more, the invisibility that is administered through settler colonial governance permits the effect of colonial ecological violence and historical trauma. As will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Four, Nixon uses the example of the megadam to describe how development projects found within settler colonial environmental governance result in peoples being 'severed from environments that have provided ancestral sustenance' and are 'stranded not just in place but in time as well':

> a megadam obliterates a flood plain whose ebb and flow has shaped the agricultural, fishing, fruit, and nut harvesting – and hence nutritional – rhythms of a community, it also drowns the past: the submergence zone swallows place-based connections to the dead, the dead as living

presences who move among past, present, and future, animating time with connective meaning'
(Nixon 2011: 162)

This also offers a practical example of how settler colonialism attempts displacement and curtails Indigenous mobilities, reflecting the settler colonial biopolitics of dispossession described in the previous chapter whereby there is a 'seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographic area' and a 'writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations' (Mbembé 2003: 25-26). Whether through the collective displacement of communities to the individualized displacement of families, elders, men, women, Two-spirit, or children, Indigenous displacement in general has been facilitated and regulated through the Liberal rights framework and development projects. Such projects have sought to conserve bodies for the purposes of national progress, such as in the forms of labour and reproduction. Reservation lands, for example, established with the intent to assimilate Indigenous peoples in the settler populace (Spence 1999), are perhaps the most obvious example of where Indigenous communities have been made immobile. Reservations, though made through treaty and negotiation, have been a means through which settler colonial governments monitor and control Indigenous bodies (Barker 2016). For Indigenous communities across the US, settler colonial policies of immobility resulted in consolidating communities into 'sedentary villages with central nodes, such as a post office, government school, and a mission' (Whyte et al 2019: 330). This centralisation made surveillance easier for the settler colonial government, which structured Indian agents to disperse and restrict resources to these communities (Keller and Turek 1998). Indigenous-specific institutions of displacement and containment ranging from the reservation system to settler-managed resettlements offered spaces for settler colonial governments to attempt intergenerational handover of knowledge and to neutralise resistance through punishment and isolation. The Dawes Act (1887) offers another example of displacement and containment under the Liberal framework of rights whereby Native communities living on tribal land trusts were forcibly split apart into individualized parcelled trusts on a per capita basis to assist with individual development (Watkinson Schutten 2022). Meanwhile, remaining lands were declared surplus and sold to non-Native parties (ILTF 2022). Within a single piece of legislation, 90 million acres of tribal lands were stolen and appropriated into settler hands. These containment-oriented policies aimed to separate, erode, and eradicate Indigenous communities through a slow, out-of-sight violence.

The Production of Settler Lands through Moralising Narratives

At this point this chapter begins to clarify how settler colonial environmental governance asserts power over the imagination through its own moralising narratives. Mobilities scholar Clarsen (2015b: 708) states that 'settler possession and belongingness requires much more than formal declarations of sovereignty and there is no single moment of indigenous displacement'. This settler-claimed sovereignty over Indigenous lands can be seen by critically analysing what Blu Barnd (2017:79) calls 'colonial narrations and performances of dispossession'. Within the context of Liberal governmentality, Whyte (2018a: 135) and his notion of 'moralising narratives' offers a specific framing, whereby settler violence is justified under the auspices of development:

> [s]ettlers create moralizing narratives about why it is (or was) necessary to destroy other peoples (e.g., military or cultural inferiority), or they take great pains to forget or cover up the inevitable militancy and brutality of settlement.

As Veracini (2010: 96, 102) reminds us, 'narratives and their availability matter'. They are part of the everyday and their production allows 'nations, communities, and individuals to make sense of the world':

> [u]ltimately, the settler narrative form is especially foundational and powerful in a multiplicity of contexts because it responds, reproduces and engages with one of the fundamental Western stories: Exodus. The basic narrative of journeying to the Promise Land involves promise, servitude, liberation, migration, and the establishment of a new homeland; all tropes that specifically inform settler colonial projects on a multiplicity of levels.

Moralising narratives have been quintessential to upholding Liberal governance and sovereignty, especially. Mar asserts that settler colonial spaces are not just sites of dispossession. Rather they are inscribed with 'historical narratives that naturalize and legitimize settler sovereignty' (Mar 2012: 176). Ultimately, these historical moralising narratives help the colonial settler to establish their own version of home on lands erased of Indigenous existence, and the violence waged to achieve these ends. Settlement becomes, in accordance with Whyte (2018a: 135) 'deeply harmful and risk-laden for Indigenous peoples because settlers are literally seeking to erase Indigenous economies, cultures, and political organizations for the sake of establishing their own'. Moralising narratives also justify why and how lands must be made productive, frame Indigenous uses of land as inferior, and objectify bodies in the process for the labour required. As Jacob et al. (2021: 134) state, 'settler colonialism

uses its own meanings…along with those of white supremacy, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy, to justify the destruction of the earth, the extraction of its resources, and the exploitation of humans and all beings indiscriminately'. These moralising narratives are helpful to understanding how settler and European capitalist accumulation have been built on this perpetual acquisition of land and its intergenerational turnover. Lands remain in the hands of settlers because they supposedly become the most expert in determining how to best objectify it and use it to advance their own settler colonial futures. For land to subsequently become deprived of any worth within settler colonial modernity and to become solely property and utility used to ensure settler colonial futures, it must construct moralising narratives that reflect and define its own modernity and justify the daily violence it wages.

Paperson (2014: 117) adds that this involves a colonisation of the imagination to reproduce an 'Indigenous-settler' where there is a 'a reimagining of who Indigenous peoples are and who are no longer physically present on the lands':

> [i]n this ecological dystopia, Indigenous Americans are largely extinct through regrettable genocide, or survive spectrally through the settler's Indian heart. Indigenous vanishing is essential for the twenty-first century ecological settler to become the new adoptive "native", and thus rightful re-inhabitant of Native land.

Through these moralising narratives, a settler homeland where 'permanence and inevitability of the way they wish to experience the world and live in that place' (Whyte 2019: 326) is born. As Murphy (2018: 50) states, 'there would be no American industrial revolution, for instance, without the acquisition of [Indigenous] lands and resources necessary for capitalist production'. Within this, Murphy also pinpoints this moralising narrative: that enslaved labour and dispossessed lands are mere footnotes to the value of the Liberal modernity produced and the white possession that results from it. Indeed, as Nixon (2011: 150) notes, communities 'that inconvenience or disturb the implied trajectory of unitary national ascent' are cast away in this process. This can be seen clearly, for example, during the passage of the Indian Removal Act (1830), which oversaw a military-enforced displacement and the forced relocation of over 46,000 Indigenous peoples from the eastern half of the United States while opening up 25 million acres for white settlement (Drew 2014). In his second annual message to Congress in 1893, the then-President Andrew Jackson (1829-1837) couched his defence of this legislation as a necessary development for 'unitary national ascent' not only for white settlers but for the benefit of Indigenous peoples themselves. He noted that the legislation would:

separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community. These consequences, some of them so certain and the rest so probable, make the complete execution of the plan sanctioned by Congress at their last session an object of much solicitude… (Jackson 1830).

The Indian Removal Act permitted the rapid expansion of both white settlement and enslaved labour, especially in the inland southern states, and what is more, 'it served as the great green light' that legislated and coerced displacement under a Liberal auspice of development (Drew 2014: 568). On the Indian Removal Act, Barker (2018: 29) states:

Indigenous nations were subjected to fraud in land sales, forced into treatied land cessions, and removed and incarcerated onto reservations. Their dispossessions provided for the unfettered acquisition of natural resources — soil, timber, game, fish, minerals — fueling multiple industries, including military, agriculture, transportation, construction, and energy, that upheld US expansionist efforts.

This 'cast away' displacement has resulted in incalculable costs and yet, as Middleton Manning (2018: 9) concludes, 'they are dismissed as externalities in a narrative of national progress'. Such nationalist narratives can be further amplified through the framing of overcoming hardship, regardless of whether it is self-inflicted or external. These narratives have been demonstrated to further assist the upper classes in cementing their own statuses as individuals who thrived in the face of hardship. Nationalist narratives also further help enshrine the successes of elites 'as a common national heritage, even as those successes are stories of genocide' (Cowen 2020: 471). Such narratives thus ultimately repress and erase experiences of violence for the sake of national success.

Many of these narratives residing at the fringes of the national settler colonial project of the United States fall subject to what Nixon (2011: 150-151) terms 'spatial amnesia'. Nixon (2011: 151) offers this crucial term to describe those who are 'physically unsettled, imaginatively removed, and evacuated from place and time and thus uncoupled from the idea of both a national future and national memory' all under the banner of a collective national development towards modernity. Bang et al. (2014: 41) add that 'manifest destiny and genesis amnesia' are indeed part of the formation of settler identity. Describing how this amnesia informs modern decision-making around

the environment and its continued objectification, Middleton Manning (2018: 16) underlines that 'the lack of attention to the histories of Indigenous peoples and their land rights is the direct result of manifest destiny – or doctrine of discovery-based approaches to European appropriation of Indian land'. This amnesia is connected as an outcome of such moralising narratives and their attempt to permanently dispossess. In the end, for liberal settler colonial environmental governance, violence under notions of development and progress is regrettable yet clearly justified, but also can be forgotten.

What becomes more insidious in the settler colonial attempt to become the rightful inhabitant of Indigenous lands is its reimagining and reframing of Indigenous existence as one that becomes symbolic (Wolfe 2006) and beneficial to settler colonialism (Rosaldo 1989). Through his concept of 'imperialist nostalgia', Rosaldo (1989: 108) articulates a yearning felt by white American settlers, particularly notable philosophers, artists, and politicians, who became nostalgic for pre-Columbian Indigenous existence and as a result, appropriate its own interpretations of it into settler identity:

> [m]y concern thus resides with a particular kind of nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed. Imperialist nostalgia thus revolves around a paradox: a person kills somebody and then mourns his or her victim. In more attenuated form, someone deliberately alters a form of life and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to his or her intervention.
>
> At one more remove, people destroy their environment and then worship nature. In any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination.

Rosaldo provides a valuable lens for understanding settler colonial desires to preserve what they claim to have tamed, be it lands or people, masking 'brutal domination' with 'innocent yearning'. This innocent yearning, however, as Voyles (2015: 24) notes, continues the desire for Indigenous resources, regardless of whether:

> the desired resources are the land of the North American continent, or uranium, oil, and natural gas, or more intangible resources like Native spiritual and cultural practices (here, think of "resources" as dream catchers, Blessing Way ceremonies, hippie beads, hipster headdresses, and the myriad other ways in which non-Natives have sought to constitute whiteness through "playing Indian" 101).

This is particularly relevant for settler colonial environmental governance as Braun (2002: 81) notes that 'Indigenous identities' have been 'defined and contained within the environmental imaginaries' of European and white settler environmentalists. Paperson (2014: 121) remarks that these erasures and extractions of Indigenous resources also allows the settler to claim Indigeneity and facilitates 'returning to the Wildman or demigoddess, claiming of one's natural or "native" self and thus the land, again'. Spence (1999: 3-23) points out that much of what underlies the conservation movement in the United States has to do with Indigeneity being a part of nature or 'wilderness'. He argues that 'Indians, understood through the lens of a "natural man", and wilderness were often combined into a single entity'. Chapter Three will expand on how early conservationists sought to collapse and profit from Indigenous peoples becoming part of national parks. At the heart of this remains a colonial biopolitics of recognition whereby the value of Indigenous life is determined under the gaze of settler colonial institutions and knowledge, often as a wilderness in need of taming.

The various institutions, technologies, strategies, and actors of the American settler colonial project work in tandem to establish the settler as not only the original owner but as the most capable and inevitable one. This can be easily observed through Moreton-Robinson's logics of white possessive. All of this occurs under the auspices of moralising narratives that frame Indigenous peoples as undeveloped populations who must be displaced and/or contained for them to acquire value within the settler populace, and for their final erasure to occur. These narratives replace 'brutal domination' with 'a regrettable genocide that occurred long along'   so long as development and settler colonial modernity have been achieved. To conclude, this erasure of Indigenous existence through the colonisation of physical and non-physical space is clearly aided by the production of moralising narratives.

Terra sacer and Moralising Settler Colonial Ethnogeographies

In looking at how settler colonialism re-stories, and in the process attempts to erase Indigenous relations with land, this section turns towards the work of Paperson (2014) and Whyte (2015; Whyte et al 2019) and their frameworks around settler relations with land. The settler logics of land use, which Paperson proposes through his concept of *terra sacer,* and narratives of Liberal progress, which help normalise the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples, have been fundamental to the creation of settler ethnogeographies.

Beyond the goals of the accumulation of land and the annihilation of its previous owners, Paperson outlines several key characteristics that outline settler relations with land. First, Paperson (2014: 117) notes, in line with the aforementioned arguments presented in this chapter, that Indigeneity 'is metamorphized into the settler's own adoption of and by the land'. Paperson (2014: 117) adds, as well, that 'settlers rewrite them/ourselves as ecological stewards'. As previously mentioned, this entails Indigenous erasure through moralising narratives or spatial amnesia where generative structures of colonial domination recognise settler uses of land as the only legitimate ones. Second, settlers work towards a sustainable settler future. This could mean maintaining generative structures of colonial domination that uphold moralising narratives (e.g. Liberal governance, property ownership and rights) that, again, legitimise settler land ownership. As Whyte (2015: 16) states, '[f]or settlers, Indigenous ecologies challenge settlers' claims to have honorable and credible religious "missions", universal property rights, and exclusive political and cultural sovereignty'. Here I extend Whyte's analysis to how Indigenous ecologies challenge how settlers deem land should be used, too.

Paperson offers the specific concept of '*terra sacer*' as the impetus for settler colonial land management. Paperson (2014: 117) describes *terra sacer* as 'land as desecrated, in pain, in need of rescue; and land as sacred, wild, and preserve-able'. Whyte et al (2019: 326) note that settlers seek to create their own origins stories 'that seek to justify or valorize their arrival and the development of land ownership'. To do this, they commemorate how their 'national, municipal, and subnational political systems protected the homeland creation process'. This tradition of colonising the imagination is not specific to the American settler colonial project as there was already historical precedent for this from their European imperial forebearers who had glorified their own methods of land appropriation.[17] Paperson describes urban landscape through his term of *terra sacer* based on Agamben's (1998) concept of *homo sacer*, or the accursed or murderable man. Similar to *homo sacer* and its notion that certain persons can be killed with impunity, Paperson (2014: 116-117) notes that *terra sacer* reflects a settler colonial relationship with lands, 'a virulent variation of the setter colonial ideology of *terra nullius*' that designates lands as being both sacred and accursed. Paperson specifically focuses on the concept of the ghetto as an 'interior frontier' and 'murderable nonplace always

[17] Historian Seed (1995) notes, for example, that particular European imperial powers looked to exhibit that they were the rightful heirs of Roman imperial legacy in performative ways. English colonisation exhibited this through integrating Roman principles into its legal system, French colonisation incorporated Indigenous peoples in solemn ceremonies marking symbolic handovers of ownership, while the Spanish and Portuguese used stone markers and crosses to mark the expansion of their empires.

available for razing and resettlement'. At the heart of the concept, *terra sacer* implies that land requires rescuing as it is sacred, wild, and preserve-able and crucially retains the potential to be productive to the goal of settler permanence. We can the logics of *terra sacer* in a speech from Abraham Lincoln prior to his Presidency (1861-1865) that connotes white settlers, or 'yankees', as the predestined and better managers of lands in America:

> [America] owns a large part of the world, by right of possessing it; and all the rest by right of wanting it, and intending to have it….But for the difference in habit of observation, why did yankees, almost instantly, discover gold in California, which had been trodden upon, and over-looked by Indians and Mexican greasers, for centuries? Gold-mines are not the only mines overlooked in the same way. There are more mines above the Earth's surface than below it…
> (Lincoln 1859: 359).

Through its own Liberal rationality and politics of recognition, settler colonial environment governance is given a moralising remit to displace, to contain, and to dispossess under the umbrella of producing and saving accursed lands to create its own homelands. *Terra sacer* helps achieve what Reibold (2022: 1) locates as, 'the three land-related harms of colonialism': 'land theft, denial of collective self-determination, and the imposition of settler ethnogeographies'. From public lands to energy infrastructure to even land loss from climate change, these are all examples of settler ethnogeographies as they result from *terra sacer* logics and the erasure of Indigenous ontologies.

It is significant to note here that part of these *terra sacer* logics are able to both produce and re-produce lands as being accursed. Dietrich (2016: 510) notes that once natural resources are exhausted and turned into profit, 'the same lands are marked as disposable'. In other words, settler colonialism is able to lay waste to lands it claims to have saved, or for those that need to be saved, so long as it is justified under its own logics. Before looking at the ideological underpinnings that answer the questions as to how settler colonialism produces accursed lands and proposes how to save them, this chapter turns towards 'wasteland-ing', a concept coined by Voyles (2015). Voyles (2015: 9-10) defines the 'wasteland' as 'a racial and a spatial signifier that renders an environment and the bodies that inhabit it pollutable'. Wasteland-ing is the result of the logic of settler colonialism that asserts its own wastelands as being sacred, having history, or being 'thought of as home' (Voyles 2015: 26). The term 'wasteland', which was used to designate lands that did not yield revenue in the British Empire, is still contemporarily applied as an official bureaucratic categorisation of government-owned marginal or degraded lands. As Stock (2022: 6) notes:

wastelands are a political construction that obscures the socioeconomic importance and agroecological productivity of these lands for different users…Wastelands function as a politically useful simplification by maintaining intentionally malleable and subjective bureaucratic definitions, often connoting under-capitalized or aesthetically messy lands that lack 'statistical picturing'.

Voyles (2015: 26) concludes that to make a space into 'wasteland', settlers must 'defend the notion that the land is, always has been, and always will be "empty except for Indians": to mark it and make it, ultimately, sacrificial land'. It is both a concept and action of settler entitlement – as it involves 'a deeply complex construction of that land as either always already belonging to the settler— his manifest destiny— or as undesirable, unproductive, or unappealing: in short, as wasteland' (Voyles 2015: 7). The notion of wasting lands is one of the more under-discussed settler colonial narratives on land use. In *terra sacer*, where the notion is that lands that are framed as wasted and then can be saved, Voyles' concept of wasteland-ing offers an amendment to settler colonial relations with land: if necessary, settler colonialism can keep or make lands in a wasted form. In accordance with Voyles, this can take on two forms: that non-white lands are inherently valueless or that these lands are only as valuable as their natural resources and thus can be devastated once these are extracted. In essence, wasteland-ing frames non-white lands and bodies – both human and nonhuman – as necessary for the advancement of industrial modernity 'to grow and make profit' (Voyles 2015: 10).

The 'sacrifice zone' is the more discussed framing within critical and political ecological studies as a 'segregated and stigmatized' space, where 'the physical and mental health and the quality of life of human beings are compromised in the name of "economic development" or "progress" – but ultimately for the sake of capitalist interests' (De Souza 2020: 220). Sacrifice zones are more often discussed in the realm of fossil fuel capitalism where 'residents suffer the devastating environmental health consequences of living downwind and downstream from major pollution hotspots – large industrial complexes of extraction, refining, energy generation, and petrochemical production' (Scott and Smith 2017: 371). Where wastelands and sacrifice zones overlap in settler colonialism is this notion that because settlers are remaking Indigenous lands as their home, they become the stewards to know which ones are valuable, which ones can be saved, and which ones must be laid to waste. Race is deeply complicit in wasteland-ing where only particular bodies are deemed more productive for labour via race, and in kind, some lands are deemed more resource rich (Voyles 2015). For both the sacrifice zone and wasteland, if land is cheap and disposable, so are the lives – human and nonhuman – that rely on those lands for survival (De Souza 2020; Voyles 2015).

De Souza (2020: 223-4) summarises that '[i]n the eyes of Lord Capital, everything can be sacrificed – it is just a matter of economic and political opportunity'. The measurement of sacrifice according to the well-being of solely humans within a sacrifice zone perhaps reflects a more Liberal understanding of the environment where nature is subject to human well-being. Rather, wastelands are places that are physically and ideologically designated for 'exploitation, resource extraction, and national sacrifice', which includes an inclusive 'ecological and social degradation of lands and their human and non-human occupants' (Voyles 2015: 15). In the wasteland, in parallel with the sacrifice zone, inhabitants are expected to endure injury – health, economic, social, political – that those with more privilege can avoid (Scott and Smith 2017a: 371). Civilisation has been 'constituted on and through savagery'. Wasteland-ing produces environmental privilege in rendering some spaces and populations as sacred and others as 'marginal worthless and pollutable', creating a void of protection for the non-human world (Voyles 2015: 9; 26) This is to say that wasteland geographies create conditions of slow violence that render relations between Indigenous peoples, as well as Black, Brown, and other 'pollutable' populations, and lands within which they are found to be immobile or contained to be untenable for their existence.

Providing a Genealogy of *Terra Sacer*

Looking towards the ideology surrounding settler colonialism and how it posited to save lands, it is important to first look at how the lands were made 'accursed'. As Paperson (2014: 117) states 'the problem is that no land is empty. It must be made empty forcibly and ideologically'. The concept of *terra nullius*, or no one's land, is perhaps the most straightforward in describing the behaviour and attitude towards a majority of Indigenous lands during the European colonisation of the Americas. Though it could be interpreted through Paperson's assertion that *terra nullius* was the 'founding covenant for settler colonial states', the 'precise term' of *terra nullius*, in the words of Hendlin (2014: 144), 'though not the concept—is of relatively recent coinage'. It was made an internationally known term through the *Mabo v. Queensland*[18] (1992) case where the settler colonial

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[18] At the time of the immediate aftermath of the ruling, Simpson (1993: 196) stated that the Mabo case 'is the Australian judiciary's latest and, arguably, most significant attempt to integrate the claims of justice, Aboriginal human rights, international law, and Australian common law in a single decision.' The case was brought to the High Court of Australia in 1982 by Eddie Mabo and four other members of the Meriam people who wanted a legal declaration that they held collective title to lands in the Murray Island under the doctrine of communal native title. Not only did the Court declare

court of Australia ruled that Australia was not *terra nullius*, unending the basis of its founding and opening the door for Aboriginal land claims. This does not imply that the relations of power that *terra nullius* describes, whereby lands were declared empty and uninhabited, did not pre-exist the coinage of the term. Historically, natural law was used repeatedly to justify dispossession. Fitzmaurice (2007: 14) notes that *terra nullius* was 'an approximation of the positive use of the law of the first taker in natural law to justify dispossession'. Between the 16th and 20th centuries, the idea that property and inhabited land were determined by use was pervasive throughout both European and white settler colonial expansion. As many historians have noted, *terra nullius* was not the direct justification, as it was not located within law yet. Nevertheless, it was both a description of legal and philosophical justifications and their product (Fitzmaurice 2007). I ascribe to Hendlin's (2014) viewpoint, in the sense that while the history of the word should be acknowledged in its application, there is a risk of somehow negating that *terra nullius* did not weave itself into settler colonial law[19]. As Borch states (2001: 238) 'it is equally clear that the extended doctrine [of *terra nullius*], which proclaimed land inhabited by hunters and gatherers to be ownerless, became fairly widespread in legal thinking in the nineteenth century.'

To summarise, *terra nullius* is ultimately an ideological framework of Liberal and Christian thought that emptied lands of Indigenous sovereignty. With this, the Doctrine of Christian Discovery ultimately gave Christian monarchies papal pastoral permission and the moral narrative of duty to dispossess, occupy, enslave, and annihilate. As Fletcher, et al. (2021: 2) note, '[i]nstead of providing an alternative to rigid and authoritative religion, the Enlightenment was built on the very central and religious tenet that humans are separate from nature'. Papal Bulls also gave the ideological grounding to European Christendom as a 'family of civilised nations' and that there was divine providence at play, in both the taking of the lands and waters, and the enslavement and annihilation, of non-Christian peoples. Looking at how this family of 'civilised nations' adapted to the Enlightenment, *ius gentium,* or the law of nations, was the ultimate result.

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that *terra nullius* did not exist when Australia was colonised, but that the inalienable right to Native title to land could be claimed where Indigenous peoples maintained their connection with their lands.

[19] Hendlin (2014: 144) offers an overview of literature, often coming from Australia, that addresses the validity and practical legal use of the term *terra nullius*. He states: 'disagreement over the origins of the term *terra nullius* and its usage have led to various interpretations; questions as to whether in fact colonists invoked *terra nullius* explicitly as a justificatory principle; and controversy over the validity of the term's contemporary assignment to historical circumstances…while these debates are important in articulating the history of the word itself, they have often obscured the history of the concept as it was theorized and practiced'. To see the problematization surrounding the use of the term and its possible misrepresentations, see Fitzmaurice 2007 and Borch 2008.

Ius gentium produced a customary code of 'civility and sociability', which was, as Hendlin (2014: 144) purports, the conduit through which the concept and practice of *terra nullius* was 'instantiated'. Boucher (2010: 70) summarises how *ius gentium* transformed in *terra nullius*, and the Liberal intellectual formulations on which it was premised, into a colonising code of conduct:

> *ius gentium*…was not a law enacted by an international legislature nor was it enforced in international courts; it was legal in the sense that it was inferred from the accepted practice of 'civilised' states as either directly derivative from the natural law or from international custom, but also from the opinions of learned theologians, philosophers, and jurists. It was a law that comprised a curious amalgam of moral, political and legal arguments in the justification of state and individual practice…

European nations already saw themselves first and foremost as a family of peoples bound by Christian faith and to a duty to industrial and cultural advancement, which was best articulated through the word 'civilisation' (Dörr 2013). The assumption of the early modern European intellectuals was that 'God gave the whole world to mankind'. Therefore, lands that were uncultivated were framed as the product of those incapable of cultivating which in turn justified European intervention (Boucher 2010). *Ius gentium* thus gave the right to occupy what Europeans deemed as unoccupied lands, even if under a recognisable sovereign. *Ius gentium* was particularly useful to the Protestant and more capitalist-centred empires of England and Holland who lacked the papal bulls and the Doctrine of Christian Discovery that Spain, Portugal, and France enjoyed as the basis for their title to acquiring land (Hendlin 2014: 145). While not explicit in commentary surrounding *ius gentium,* the *ius gentium* was critical in coordinating European conquest and dispossession and ultimately how Europe would interact with its settler colonies.

It is now that we turn to the question of how Enlightenment thinkers provided European empires and the American settler colonial institutions with the secular tools to justify Indigenous dispossession under the logics of *terra sacer*. The land-use has been the preliminary tool to determine the applicable validity of *terra nullius* (Boucher 2010; Tully 1994). Under the more commonly used *res nullius*, which refers to land without an owner, the question of property has been pivotal to the question of displacement and the settler colonial project of dispossession. In fact, *res nullius* and John Locke's agriculturalist argument,[20] as Hendlin (2014: 144) notes, 'were more routinely mentioned

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[20] Tully (1994) offers a further concrete example of how the Lockean agricultural argument incepted into early colonial law in New England. John Bulkley's (1726) 'An Inquiry into the Right of the Aboriginal Natives to the Land in America', which relied heavily on the Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1887), argued against the Mohegan Nation that they had any claim to lands in Connecticut.

before the twentieth century than the phrase *terra nullius* itself'. Fitzmaurice (2007: 8) specifies that it was not until 'the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the term *res nullius* became reified as a doctrine of the law of the first taker in the law of nations regarding the status of conquered property'. *Res nullius* was useful in the sense that it determined that Indigenous peoples could not be dispossessed of property if they did not own it, with the implication that they did not know how (Fitzmaurice 2007). This raises the issue, one that surrounds a Liberal politics of recognition, that was at play amongst European and American theorists and then later among policy makers, as to the distinction between occupation and possession; for many the former presumed the latter. This was not exclusive of racial dynamics and poses questions as to whether European philosophers were conceptualising Indigenous peoples out of their own lands, removing ethical quandaries around European settlement. Tully (1994: 156) states that '[o]ne of the leading problems of political theory from Hugo Grotius and Thomas Hobbes to Adam Smith and Immanuel Kant was to justify the establishment of European systems of property in North America in the face of the presence of "Indian Nations"'. For European and American early modern theorists, Indigenous peoples occupied lands but did not necessarily own them because they did not cultivate them or have appropriate sovereign governments to do so. As Boucher (2010: 71) contends, theorists ranging from 'Vitoria, Ayala, Surez, Gentile, Locke, Wolff, and Vattel' have argued that Indigenous peoples have an 'obligation to cultivate the land, and if they do not, they have no right to prevent those who would'. Alberico Gentili (1552-1608) (in Tuck 1999: 48), for example, states 'the seizure of vacant places is regarded as a law of nature…because of that law of nature which abhors a vacuum, they will fall to the lot of those who take them, though the sovereign will retain jurisdiction over them'. When referring to the law of nature (natural law), Arneil (1996: 49) states, 'Christianity and legal theory are fused and become, through natural law, the singular viewpoint for understanding the New World and its inhabitants'. Gentili identified America as a place of empty wilderness and, therefore, a place that showed threatening signs of regression 'from civilization to primaeval times' (Hendlin 2014: 146; Tuck 1999: 48). Through *res nullius,* Gentili framed America, and the world, within the framework of *terra sacer*: it was accursed, potentially sacred, and needed saving.

 Res nullius can be seen in the work of Swiss theorist, Emer de Vattel (1714-1767), who was also highly influential in the American colonies (Tully 1994). De Vattel put forth his theory around the 'benefit of mankind', which stated that people had the right to take land so long as it benefited

themselves. In turn, people could not prevent others from taking the land that they needed. He stipulated that the cultivation of soil was a key step towards civilising the 'wild'. De Vattel was radically biased against subsistence-based societies and criticised those who did not cultivate their land (Hendlin 2014). Tully (1994: 165-166) notes that De Vattel's *The Law of Nations, or the Principles of Natural Law* (*Le Droit des Gen, ou Principes de la Loi Naturelle*) (1758) was 'one of the most widely cited legal texts in America'. De Vattel paints subsistence-based societies as 'idle' and 'savages', their lands in need of European cultivation. Europeans were therefore justified in their colonisation of these lands. De Vattel expands on this reasoning, which remains relevant under the politics of recognition surrounding land-use and *terra sacer* logics to this day:

> [t]he cultivation of the soil deserves the attention of the government, not only on account of the invaluable advantages that flow from it, but from its being an obligation imposed by nature on mankind…Every nation is then obliged by the law of nature to cultivate the land that has fallen to its share; and it has no right to enlarge its boundaries, or have recourse to the assistance of other nations, but in proportion as the land in its possession is incapable of furnishing it with necessities. Those nations, who inhabit fertile countries, but disdain to cultivate their lands, and chuse [sic] rather to live by plunder, are wanting to themselves, are injurious to all their neighbours, and deserve to be extirpated as savage and pernicious beasts… (2008: 129).

> [T]he people of Europe, too closely pent up at home, finding land of which the savages stood in no particular need, and of which they made no actual and constant use, were lawfully entitled to take possession of it, and settle it with colonies (2008: 216).

De Vattel translates the urgency surrounding resource challenges facing Europe into ethical land-use practices, meanwhile deeming those who do not follow such practices as 'savages'. If Indigenous Nations were nomadic or subsistence-based or were deemed as requiring more than they needed, they were in violation of De Vattel's prescribed moral basis for land use. The theory puts into question what is needed to live, one that is inherently biopolitical and one that was meant to be answered by Europeans, who De Vattel believed had the right to restrict Indigenous peoples. The 'benefit of mankind' argument became strongly associated with Dutch and English colonialism, in particular (Hendlin 2014).

Despite popular early modern assertions that Indigenous peoples did not know how to cultivate land or politically organise, Tully makes the argument that European empires did indeed still recognise Indigenous peoples in nation-to-nation relationships; the use of treaties prior to the

establishment of settler colonial states is the clearest evidence of this relationship [21] However, this can be explained through the stronger militaristic power of Indigenous Nations over European settlements as opposed to presuming that European governments saw Indigenous governments as equals. Moreover, this assertion from philosophers, like De Vattel and Vitoria, that Indigenous peoples did have rights needs to be problematised to contextualise how they were still racialised as inferior.

As noted in the previous chapter, the concept of the state of nature presumed Indigenous peoples, and the non-white person at large, as inferior. This is evident in Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* in that Indigenous peoples were in a pre-political state of nature on the linear track of historical development that all societies must go through, while Europe was the most advanced in this process (Tully 1994). There are clear racial ideological undertones to the Enlightenment conceptualisations of the state of nature, where Indigenous peoples worldwide were collapsed into it. The state of nature alluded to Indigenous peoples of the Americas as being in a constant state of war while Europeans were predisposed with the tools of not only avoiding this but also of finding an enlightened sense of self within the state of nature (Hendlin 2014). This is to say, though the humanity of Indigenous peoples, and the Liberal-based value it encompasses, may have been recognised at times through the framework of rights, early modern thinkers also made arguments that undermined their application. Tully (1994) notes this is one of several arguments that Locke puts forth that 'misrecognises' the conditions of Indigenous peoples. Under these justifications, Europeans were free to settle vacant land by cultivation without consent.

Of particular import are Locke's ideas about land usage. It is important to make the connection that Enlightenment thinkers were not disconnected from the Empires under which they operated or from those that would offer them patronage. John Locke (1632-1704), along with other key Liberal thinkers such as Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), sought to assist the English empire in seizing more land, and was committed to facilitating colonisation for state and private interests. Locke used and developed natural law as an instrument of power to assist with colonisation. As Flanagan (1989: 593) notes, for Enlightenment thinkers 'the origin of private property was fully natural, not merely a product of human convention'. Locke understood land in

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[21] Boucher (2010: 73) notes that while there is 'widespread misperception that Europeans refused to acknowledge Indian land rights', it was 'often for the benefit of the settlers who ruthlessly exploited them, rather than from any altruistic motives or moral conscience. Even when land rights were granted to indigenous peoples, governments felt little compunction in seizing them if their value became reassessed'. Indigenous peoples had 'rights' to the land that they needed but could not prevent settlers from taking the lands that they needed as well.

the 'New World' to be eventually rendered private. For Locke, consent was required for enclosure in England, but in the state of nature, which Indigenous lands in the Americas were in, appropriating lands was permitted. Thus, if Indigenous peoples did not enclose their lands, those they both occupied and laboured, then the Englishman was able to appropriate them. Locke (1887: 14) states in his *Two Treatises of Government*:

> [f]or I aske whether in the wild woods and uncultivated waste of America left to Nature, without any improvement, tillage or husbandry, a thousand acres will yield the needy and wretched inhabitants as many conveniences of life as ten acres of…land doe in Devonshire where they are well cultivated.

Locke argued that that the European system of commerce, where one would have motive to acquire more than one needs was economically superior to the American Indian system of hunting and gathering. For Locke, European uses of land were more productive, produced a greater quantity of conveniences, and produced more opportunities to work and labour (Tully 1994). As discussed in the previous chapter, Liberalism restricts freedoms through its framework of rights, and in this case the right to appropriate uncultivated lands. Hendlin (2014: 146) points out that the notion of uncultivated land as 'unoccupied' was critical for the English and Dutch empires in competing with the likes of the French and Portuguese, who claimed lands without demarcation or settlement. It also meant that Indigenous peoples did not occupy the lands they used for hunting and gathering. For Locke and his contemporaries, Tully notes (1993: 156):

> the planning, coordination, skills, and activities involved in native hunting, gathering, trapping, fishing, and non-sedentary agriculture, which took thousands of years to develop and take a lifetime for each generation to acquire and pass on are not counted as labor at all, except for the very last individual step (such as picking or killing), but are glossed as 'unassisted nature' and 'spontaneous provisions'.

Locke (1887) underlined that Indigenous people had no recognisable systems of property and government, and that in the context of subsistence-based societies, their only property rights related to the products of labour.

To conclude, under the frameworks of *res nullius* and *ius gentium*, both of which helped enforce the doctrine of *terra nullius*, Enlightenment philosophers deemed Indigenous lands as accursed under Indigenous management yet sacred to European and European settler needs. This underlines the birth of *terra sacer* as a tactic of dispossession in the United States. Utilising their own system of property rights, European colonising powers would deem what was and wasn't proper

usage and, by proxy, ownership of land; in other words, maintaining the right to locate *terra nullius*. Historically speaking, from this point, Liberalism in the United States has continued to displace, contain, and dispossess through the logics of *terra sacer*. The concept ultimately helps describe the settler authority to declare not only which lands are accursed but also how to save them.

Making *Terra Sacer* Part of the Everyday

For an examination of how *terra sacer* has become a prolific mentality among settlers and their institutions, this chapter turns towards Pateman (2007) and her concept of the 'settler contract'. The settler contract looks to ultimately transform Indigenous homelands into settler ones under the Hobbesian concept of the social contract. Pateman notes in her analysis that the 'original contract' of settler colonialism calls settlers to civilise lands out of their 'state of nature'; essentially incorporating *terra sacer* into the initial social contract of settlers in the United States. Pateman (2007: 55-56) alludes to this being one of the moralising narratives to justify dispossession:

> [t]he 'state of nature' and the 'original contract' are powerful political fictions, and their power derives from the fact that they have had purchase on and have helped create the modern world. The colonization of the New Worlds took a long time; in a sense it can be seen as a series of origins, of settler contracts…A striking characteristic of the United States is the mythical political status [of its founding], with its concomitants of constitution and flag.

The creation of a new civil society for Pateman is a primary goal of emptying Indigenous lands. This helps, as Whyte et al (2019: 326) state, to 'eliminate themselves as a settler by remaking the land into their own social-ecological context'. For Pateman (2007: 36), the settler contract and its application find their power not solely within governing and domination:

> [t]he settler contract is a specific expropriation contract and refers to the dispossession of, and rule over, Native inhabitants by British settlers in the two New Worlds [of Australia and the Americas] …When colonists are planted in a *terra nullius*, an empty state of nature, the aim is not merely to dominate, govern, and use but to create a civil society.

With the original settler contract being reflective of the principles of *terra sacer*, this social agreement then, offers itself as a collective means to propagate the settler colonial mentality. Pateman (2007) asserts that contracts that ultimately undergird that land will be used in a socially-acceptable way that protects and encourages capitalist production. Other scholars take this notion of ownership

performance further, noting that use of land has to also be in a settler socially prescribed manner to qualify as legitimate (Maybury-Lewis et al. 2009). Making lands appear productive for the security and prosperity of settler colonial institutions and futures is one way of doing this. This leads to, as Pateman (2007: 77) notes to 'the creation of a new political legitimacy'. Through this performance, settlers become 'the natural figures of the thought experiment in the texts of political theory come to life' (Pateman 2007: 55). In other words, as a form of self-prescribed manifest destiny, settlers give themselves the mission to save or lay waste to accursed lands as their only true owners. This becomes part of the normalised 'everyday' of the settler and incepted as common sense (Launius and Boyce 2020: 158; Rifkin 2013). This is legitimised through the words of early modern Liberal theorists, who Moreton-Robinson (2015: 155) refers to as 'white patriarchs' in that they formulated their own concepts and realised them, becoming self-constructed and fulfilling prophets.

The adoption of the 'original contract' (Pateman 2007) in settler colonial society was evident even prior to the founding of the American settler colonial state.[22] However, its tenets were legally adopted in the 1823 *Johnson v M'Intosh* Supreme Court decision that ruled that 'the United States government had exclusive right to extinguish [Indigenous peoples'] interests in their lands, either by purchase or by war' (Kades 2000: 1068; Boucher 2010). This institutionalisation of the settler contract became a catalyst for a paternalistic relationship that would use displacement, in lieu of war, as the most effective form of land dispossession. Marshall, in his decision, recognised the legitimacy of *terra nullius* and reaffirmed the Enlightenment ethos of *terra sacer* in that Indigenous peoples only occupied lands of which they were not 'owners'.[23] Byrd (2011: 198) notes of this Supreme Court decision:

[i]n a stunning moment of law-making and law-preserving violence, the US government juridically transformed native nations from sovereign foreign states, whose governments and lands were independent of U.S. control, into domestic dependent nations existing within the

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[22] In 1629, John Winthrop, for example as one of the founding settlers of the Massachusetts Bay colony, articulates the ability of 'Christians' to save uncultivated 'waste lands' from 'savage people' (Crosby 1986: 208): the whole earth is the Lord's garden, and he hath given it to the sons of Adam to be tilled and improved by them…This savage people ruleth over many lands without title of property; for they enclose no ground, neither have they cattle to maintain it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion, or as they can prevail against their neighbors. And why may not Christians have liberty to go and dwell amongst them in their waste lands and woods, (leaving them such places as they have manured for their corn,) as lawfully as Abraham did amongst the Sodomites?

[23] Marshall (1823) stated: 'the United States, then, have unequivocally acceded to that great and broad rule [of discovery] by which its civilized inhabitants now hold this country. They…maintain, as all others have maintained, that discovery gave an exclusive right to extinguish the Indian title of occupancy, either by purchase or by conquest; and gave also a right to such a degree of sovereignty, as the circumstances of the people would allow them to exercise.' See Kades 2000 for further elucidation on the impact of the *Johnson v M'Intosh* case.

boundaries of the United States and occupying, by grace of their guardian's permission, lands

that rightfully belong to the United States…

This dependency, enshrined within settler colonial generative structures of recognition and rights, has upheld the colonial European view that Indigenous peoples did not know how to adequately cultivate or occupy their own lands and thus could not own them. The United States also refused to recognise that Indigenous peoples possessed absolute sovereignty that treaties with European empires had appeared to legitimise (Newcomb 2008).[24]

For Chief Justice Marshall (1801-1835), the discovery of what were deemed uncultivated lands, and the power to colonise and claim possession of these lands, was nevertheless legitimate (Newcomb 2008). The implications of the *Johnson v M'Intosh* decision made the ideology and practice of *terra sacer*, which was confined to a small portion of the country of today, a foundational pillar to American settler colonial law and the biopolitics of recognition to which it subscribes. The Indian Relocation Act of 1830 was only made a reality following this Supreme Court decision. In touting its benefits, an institutionalised *terra sacer* is heard through the words of the then-President Andrew Jackson (1830):

[w]hat good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand

savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished

with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than

12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion?

At a pivotal moment, this reflects the settler colonial timeline where lands were deemed to be legally in the ownership and occupation of the American government. Consequently, Indigenous Nations would be subject to this system of recognition and confined to a system of allotted rights that would involve their own displacement. The process of saving accursed lands through its own modern notions of development, which may involve the displacement of incapable occupants, would come

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[24] Marshall (1823) noted: 'an absolute title to lands cannot exist, at the same time, in different persons, or in different governments. An absolute, must be an exclusive title, or at least a title which excludes all others not compatible with it. All our institutions recognize the absolute title of the crown, subject only to the Indian right of occupancy, and recognize the absolute title of the crown to extinguish that right. This is incompatible with an absolute and complete title in the Indians'. John Marshall did attempt to rescind his initial decision in *Johnson v M'Intosh*, but the damage had already been done, as the Jackson administration was quick to weave the decision into law, as demonstrated by the Indian Removal Act. In *Worcester v the State of Georgia* (1832), Marshall (1823) stated: 'America, separated from Europe by a wide ocean, was inhabited by a distinct people, divided into separate nations, independent of each other and the rest of the world, having institutions of their own, and governing themselves by their own laws. It is difficult to comprehend the proposition, that the inhabitants of either quarter of the globe could have rightful original claims of dominion over the habitants of the other, or over the lands they occupied or that the discovery of either by the other should give the discoverer rights in the country discovered, which annulled the pre-existing rights of its ancient possessors.'

to define settler colonial environmental governance. The Pre-emption Act of 1841 furthered this reality, whereby Congress 'endorsed the principle that those who settled on land and improved it, whether or not they had any legal right to be there, should be offered the chance to buy it in a feel simply and own it as private property' (Burnham 2000: 18). This reflects yet another instance of the system of rights extinguishing Indigenous land claims and upholding the settler contract: '[t]he ethos of the land was "first come, first served" – provided the first to come wasn't Indian' (Burnham 2000: 18). Such legislation and policy over what constitutes the legitimate occupation and use of land was seminal in paving the way for the creation of the settler ethnogeographic projects in the proceeding case studies.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the second half to the theoretical premise of this thesis, which ultimately seeks to understand how settler colonialism appears in modern projects of American environmental governance and how/where Indigenous peoples have been displaced. In the United States, settler colonialism, as a set of structures and relations that seek to dominate and undermine Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, is informed by an inherent desire to make the settler the only owner of Indigenous lands. As established in the previous chapter, and at the outset of this one, for Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, lands are not generalisable as they ultimately remain specific to place and its histories. In contrast, settler colonialism in the United States understands the environment through an anthropocentric lens that keeps the settler at the centre of its development. Part of settler colonial environmental governance involves waging violence against Indigenous peoples through strategies of immobilisation that result in the onset of processes of slow violence. The moralising narrative that justifies and helps forget this immobilisation and violence in order for settler colonial modernity to exist is its saviour mission to rescue accursed lands and to also decide whether to lay waste to them if development deems it necessary. As argued, Paperson's concept of *terra sacer* offers a framework to understand that settler colonial objectification and accumulation of lands make them 'murderable'. The early modern philosophies and policies, which have come to describe the ongoing doctrine of *terra nullius*, were crucial to justifying the majority of Indigenous held lands as uncultivated and empty and the morality of European colonising missions that would then claim them. This chapter also presented *terra sacer* as a tactic of dispossession that

has become a part of the settler colonial populace through Pateman's 'settler contract' and part of the politics of recognition, thanks to the legal precedent of *Johnson v M'Intosh*. Moving forward, this thesis will examine three examples of how the logics of *terra sacer* have been employed in establishing new projects of settler colonial environmental governance and how these have resulted in Indigenous displacement. In looking at the initial founding of national parks, the era of large dam constructions, and the ongoing age of climate mitigation, this thesis will demonstrate that settler colonialism continues to employ the tactic of *terra sacer* in order to preserve its futures and to erase Indigenous existences.

Chapter 3: Moralising Dispossession and the Creation of National Parks and Conservation Lands

Introduction

> The problems of peace, like those of war, require courage and sustained effort. If we wish this Nation to remain prosperous, if we wish it still to be 'the home of the free,' we can have it so. But, if we fail to heed the lesson of other nations which have permitted their natural resources to be wasted and destroyed, then we shall reap a sorry harvest.
>
> For conservation of the human spirit, we need places such as Everglades National Park where we may be more keenly aware of our Creator's infinitely varied, infinitely beautiful, and infinitely bountiful handiwork. Here we may draw strength and peace of mind from our surroundings.
>
> - President Harry Truman (1945-1953) Address on Conservation, Everglades National Park (1947)

Famously noted by Stegner (1983: 4) as 'America's Best Idea,' this chapter argues that the national park model was incepted first and foremost as a settler ethnogeography that has excluded Indigenous sovereignty and frameworks of governance from their management, prioritising instead the preservationist and conservationist principles of settler colonial environmental governance. We can see these principles in Truman's speech (1947) at the opening of Everglades National Park where he managed to connect the park, and the National Park System (NPS) at-large, as a necessary means to ensure the preservation of the 'human spirit', sustained natural resource output, and democracy at large. As this chapter will demonstrate, Truman's reasoning was strategic, and ultimately reflective of over a century of moralising narratives that settler colonialism conjured to justify the appropriation of lands and the forced displacement of thousands of Indigenous peoples. Given pre-existing scholarship and commentary (Spence 1999; Murdock 2021), this chapter seeks to

neither historicise the creation of individual parks or examine the experiences of Indigenous peoples as they were forcibly displaced from their lands. Rather, it will highlight the practical theoretical application of Paperson's (2014) concept of *terra sacer* and the creation of national parks as settler ethnogeographies. First, the chapter will demonstrate specifically the logics of how settler colonialism deems lands as sacred or accursed and in need of modern intervention. Second, the chapter will identify the moralising narratives on which settler colonialism draws in order to legitimise its creation of its own ethnogeographies and ensuing processes of displacement and dispossession.

As this chapter examines the initial inception of the national park model, and the ensuing push for other public lands, as a project of settler colonial environmental governance, it will look at the actors, ideologies, and technologies of possession from the early 19th to mid 20th century. It will identify the four primary moralising narratives settler colonialism used to frame the national park as a legitimate use of land that required displacement. First, I will examine the moralising narrative of creating national parks as symbols of Liberal nationalism and settler nativism. I will then connect how the moral impetus to displace Indigenous peoples for the sake of civilising and assimilating them complemented the creation of national parks and other conservation lands. This chapter will then move on to look at how the concept of wilderness, and its connotations of *terra nullius,* has invited settler colonial intervention. Prior to the 19th century in the United States, wilderness was historically framed as an accursed spatial geography to tame into production. This section will explain that while this understanding of wilderness has remained, especially when seen as a threat to settler colonial permanence, wilderness also was discursively framed as sacred space. Following on from this, the chapter will turn to the preservation movement and how it propagated the myth of pristine wilderness calling for its protection in order to both protect Edenic 'temples of nature' and to feed an imperialist nostalgia (Rosaldo 1989) for 'Indian Wilderness'. Finally, the chapter will highlight the alarmist discourses used to establish more resource yielding public lands by the conservation movement over the concern for the permanent loss of natural resources, and by the intersecting eugenics movement over the need to ensure white settler possession of lands.

National Parks and Conservation Lands as Settler Colonial Ethnogeographies

National parks have been effective in providing symbols for settler colonial institutions around which to base their identities and locate contrived native relations with land. Mar (2010: 76) summarises the role of national parks as symbols of 'the landed affluence' and 'significant spatial institutions' of settler colonialism that not only contribute to Liberal nation-building, but act as both monuments and symbolic reservations of resources for future generations of settlers. The inception of the first national parks, indeed, helped further inspire the creation of other forms of public lands in the United States, as this chapter will further elucidate on later. These public lands, in the words of Clayton (2019: xv), demonstrate 'American society's relationship with nature'. The fact remains that this relationship with nature was dualistic and reflective of a desire for boundaries that kept the concept of wilderness contained and out of the way of modern civilisation.

The initial plans for national parks signalled a moral feat whereby the government could show its democratic virtue and affluence in setting aside pockets of wilderness for the enjoyment of the public (Patin 1999: 45). National parks were successful in symbolising the Liberal yet racialised concept of a shared commons, offering the illusion of universal accessibility. This helped frame national parks as democratic institutions, and therefore a more modern model of land management, than that seen within the aristocratic landowning institutions of Europe. Clayton (2019: 211) articulates the Liberal romanticisation of the national park and its contribution to the American national identity: 'with the 1872 declaration that Yellowstone was not merely a special place but a national park, America articulated and enriched its central theme: America is democracy, liberty, and natural wonder; America is a philosophy, a people, and a set of landscapes'. Of course, this narrative of 'democratic landscapes' helped make national parks a settler colonial ethnogeography and encouraged a justification for and amnesia of the widespread violent displacement for their creation.

National parks assisted in the generation of the 'native settler' that could conserve their own lands and resources better than Europeans could. Patin (1999: 41) conceptualises 'the museum effect' to describe how national parks are 'the result of a strategy that insinuates the museum into wilderness and produces a so-called "vignette of America", furthering the idea that natural wonders are part of America's cultural heritage'. These grandiose geographies and American vignettes could then counter the cultural monuments produced from European imperialism. What is more, American cultural elites suffered an 'embarrassment', as Patin emphasises (1999: 41), at the lack 'of a national cultural identity based on a long and established artistic, architectural, and literary heritage'. Burnham (2000: 19) remarks:

America's parks were designed to compete with the grand monuments of Europe. They offered up a sample of 'God's Country' as a rival to such man-made splendors as the Louvre and the Doge's Palace. What could have been more stunning proof of America's unique patrimony than the valley of the Yosemite or the geysers of Yellowstone? The creation of the parks, then, was closely tied to national pride.

The parks offered white settlers not only national pride but a sense of superiority to the white settler populace. European Americans were able to preserve and conserve unspoiled wilderness which flew in the face of 'despoiled' and 'plain artificiality of industrialised urban society in Europe' (Anderson and Grove 1987: 5). Then-President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) pressed this messaging in his speech at the laying of the cornerstone to the gateway entrance of Yellowstone National Park (1903):

[t]he Yellowstone Park is something absolutely unique in the world, so far as I know. Nowhere else in any civilized country is there to be found such a tract of veritable wonderland made accessible to all visitors, where at the same time not only the scenery of the wilderness, but the wild creatures of the Park are scrupulously preserved, as they were…'

We shall have a region as easy and accessible to travel in as it is already every whit as interesting as in similar territory of the Alps or the Italian Riviera…At present it is rather singular that a greater number of people from Europe come to see it than come from our own eastern states to see it.

There is a clear Euro-centrism demonstrated through Roosevelt's words, where national parks helped resolve a felt inferiority to Europe. Even when it came to the lack of Greek and Roman ruins found throughout Europe, the appropriation of ruins of Indigenous dwellings, such as those of the Pueblo peoples at Mesa Verde National Park, would be the settler colonial response in 'the New World'.[25]

This framing has also aided in the advancement of white possessive logics. Indigenous ruins became subject to Liberal scientific inquiry, which was largely unabated by Indigenous ontological relations with them. Sellars (2007: 270) articulates that this form of dispossession occurred particularly in the Southwest where most of the 'outstanding archeological sites' were on federal public lands. Sellers (2007: 270) states:

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[25] Legislation to preserve the lands forming Mesa Verde national park actively erased Indigenous possession, framing the purpose of the park to preserve 'from injury or spoliation of the ruins and other works and relics of prehistoric or primitive man…'

[t]he [T]ribes of the Southwest, many of whom had cultural and historical ties to the ancient

sites, lacked any substantial influence in federal policy. The Indians were generally relegated to

the sidelines, while non-Indians determined the fate of the ancient ancestral places.

These logics moralised scientific inquiry, and Western academia by extension, as an exception to the rule of human-less wilderness. In the legislation establishing these parks, the settler colonial state, engaging in its own politics of recognition, established that particular 'recognized scientific or educational institutions' could engage in examinations, excavations, gatherings , and even erect their own buildings for 'scientific purposes' (Department of the Interior ((DOI)) 1933: 127, 305).[26] This brings highlights how the Western academy, through framing national parks as valuable to scientific inquiry, helped legitimise national parks as settler spatial institutions. What is more, biological preservation for the sake of protecting species of flora and fauna, for example, had not come about until 1947 with the founding of the Everglades National Park (Cattelino 2009). The establishment of the first national parks were predicated more on the moralising narrative of spatial geographies for settler enjoyment and national glory than on the now popular idea of protecting biodiversity.

Protecting undeveloped scenic areas or those 'abandoned' by Indigenous peoples to represent settler identity became widespread, and the establishment of Yellowstone 1873 catalysed a wave of national parks and natural reserves across the Anglo-dominant settler states of the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. In 1880, the New South Wales government initiated the National Park south of Sydney; in 1885 the Rocky Mountains National Park (Banff National Park) was created in Canada; and the Tongariro National Park was created in New Zealand in 1887. Mar (2010: 76) notes 'the advent of national parks symbolised a kind of triumph of settler colonial appropriation' and the 'affluence of settler nations'. This appeal of national parks as both settler colonial ethnogeography of affluence, resource reserves, and sites of recreation also quickly spread to Europe. European imperial families would adopt the model within their own claimed lands, such as King Albert of Belgium (1909-1934) establishing the first in Africa with *Parc Albert* (now Virunga

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[26] Legislation for national parks legitimised academic intervention: '[e]xaminations, excavations, and gatherings are done only for the benefit of some reputable museum, university, college, or other recognized scientific or educational institution, with a view to increasing the knowledge of such objects and aiding the general advancement of archaeological science' (DOI 1933: 127). That the examinations, *excavations*, and gatherings are undertaken only for the benefit of some reputable museum, university, college, or other recognized scientific or educational institution, with a view to increasing the knowledge of such objects and aiding the general advancement of geological and zoological science (DOI 1933: 305).

National Park) in the then-Belgian Congo in 1926, leading to the forced removal of thousands of people from their lands (Schmidt-Soltau, 2010).

The encouragement to diversify public land holdings also led to the establishment of national monuments to create ethnogeographies of settler historical meaning and the importance or sites that settlers deemed of 'pre-historic' or 'pre-Columbian' importance to be protected from development, with the caveat, similar to national forests and national preserves, that resource extraction would be allowed on such lands (Clayton 2019). While each of these parks was created under locally specific conditions and needs, what was a common thread to the rhetoric surrounding all of them: the desirability of preserving national scenery and resources for the benefit of, and as a monument to, the settler nation while simultaneously removing Indigenous title to such lands.

Displacing to Civilise and Assimilate

The aforementioned moralising narratives were key to justifying displacement. Nevertheless, framing Indigenous peoples as vanishing, inferior landowners that needed to be assimilated into the settler populace draws upon one of the first moralising narratives that settler colonialism would use to displace and dispossess. Within the framing of *terra sacer,* lands were accursed while occupied by Indigenous peoples and white possessive ownership could save them to be used in more effective ways. For the creation of national parks, the purist beliefs of preservationists, combined with the racial capitalist goals of conservationists, contributed to and exacerbated the displacement, containment, and forced assimilation policies of Indigenous peoples of the time. As Murdock (2021: 240) documents during the construction of national parks, Indigenous peoples have been 'constructed as foreigners, inept toilers, or vagrants on their own lands'. National parks were able to contribute to dispossession by utilising the labour of Indigenous peoples, especially for the sake of imperialist nostalgia, forcibly assimilating them into the settler populace. Though settler colonialism framed Indigenous knowledge as too primitive to manage lands effectively, it saw no problem compartmentalising Indigenous peoples as entertainment in, or labour for, national parks. The tourism yielded from the romanticisation of the 'vanishing Indian', be it through various stereotypes of the 'noble savage' or 'steward of the earth', was a major touristic hook to visit national parks and one largely perpetuated by the railroad industry (Keller and Turek 1998). Indeed, the integration of 'the American Indian' into the tourism of national parks became a reflection of the ability of settler

colonialism to generate its own version of Indigenous peoples as a dying race. This was often done through activating American Frontier imperialist nostalgia. The concept of 'Frontier' as Catellino asserts is 'hardly an innocent concept' (2009: 5):

> [f]or much of American history, the frontier was taken to be a space that divided settler from American Indian occupancy, and, in a misplaced Lockean view, divided productive and not-yet-productive uses of land.

In this sense, the national park model allowed for the imagination and romanticisation of the American Frontier for urban middle- and upper-class settler tourists of the time (Allen 2013). This form of tourism also contributed to the avoidance and erasure of violent truths of land accumulation. Cattelino (2009: 8) states, '"Indians" collapse into or erasure from nature is patterned. Insofar as Indians can be treated as harmless, apolitical, and traditional, they are collapsed into nature'. As Keller and Turek note (1998: 233), this pattern is born out of the fact that the position of being visibly Indigenous in spaces of conservation and preservation holds strict conditions, that Indigenous peoples can be 'idealized, even sentimentalized' but 'the moment they do something unprimitive, modern, and unnatural' they fall from settler colonial favourability. Preservationists and conservationists alike have been quick to act against Indigenous sovereignty and maintain a relationship, characterised by imperialist nostalgia, with Indigenous peoples. Keller and Turek (1998) describe how, during the establishment of the Everglades National Park from 1930, preservationists were at first reluctant to expel the Seminole people from their lands in order to create the park. After oil was found on the Seminole reservation, however, preservationists were quick to advocate for their complete removal from parklands. To prevent the Seminole from becoming political and profiting off a natural resource, as well as ruining Pristine Wilderness, the federal government was quick to collapse Seminole people into the 'imperialist nostalgic economy'. To solve 'the Seminole Problem', as it became known to the federal government and amongst preservationists, the government could collapse the Seminole people into the operations of the park itself (Keller and Turek 1998: 227). The DOI suggested that Native giftshops, tour guide positions, and tourist-oriented Seminole villages would be a better means for Seminole people to uplift themselves economically. This offers but one of many instances whereby national parks used labour and imperialist nostalgia as a means to pacify resistance.

For conservationists, like Madison Grant, the 'laws of nature' helped articulate the justification to 'obliterate' the 'unfit'. He states (1916: 51) that 'Man has the choice of two methods of race improvement. He can breed from the best, or he can eliminate the worst by segregation or

sterilization'. In essence, white supremacist eugenics proponents, who will be discussed later, were woven through American settler society, advocating for policies of containment as the ultimate goal in eliminating unfit segments of the populace. Preservationists also contributed to this discourse at the time with founding director of the Bureau of Ethnology John Wesley Powell (1881-1894) categorising Indigenous peoples, according to Koester and Bryan (2021: 15), 'on a continuum ranging from "savage" to "civilized"'. Racial eugenics helped paved the way for 'scientifically-based' legal racial segregation during the turn of, and into the mid 20th century (see Dorr 2008).[27] By immobilising and containing Indigenous peoples, the reservation system was key to enforcing and encouraging these policies that reflected a white settler Liberal modernity. The timing of national parks was, after all, a response to the closing of the American frontier, coinciding with the creation of the reservation system for American Indians that exists to the present day, and a new era of restricted mobility (Cattelino 2009). Indeed, in the context of facing formidable resistance from Indigenous Nations in the western United States, Burnham (2000: 27-28) summarises that the reservation system 'proved it was cheaper to wage peace than war on the Plains'. On the reservation system, Spence (1999: 28), quoting then-Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles E. Mix (1858), notes that 'government officials remained convinced that "concentrating the Indians on small reservations of and…[whenever] it may be necessary to displace" them was still the best method for "controlling the Indians" and teaching them "civilised occupations and pursuits"'. Burnham (2000: 27) adds that reservations became cost effective models of annihilation: 'Washington facilitated the turnover of Indian land by feeding hostile Indians into a state of indolence and debt'. The 'feeding system' – a policy that rationed food and supplies to reservations - was a primary tactic of exacerbating the forms of slow violence that came with the forced displacement and encouraged Indigenous peoples to leave reservation lands for urban centres. Indeed, towards the end of the treaty-making era between the United States and Indigenous Nations, treaties diminished from once-being an agreement between sovereign nations to becoming a means of promoting the reservation system. In 1879 During the early days of Yellowstone National Park, Indigenous peoples were completely removed from the park area as a result of a treaty that was never ratified from 1868

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[27] Racial segregation, a system premised on keeping white people and people of colour separate, was upheld as a legitimate system, as seen in the 1896 Supreme Court case of *Plessy v Ferguson*, which legally legitimised 'separate but equal' Jim Crow laws throughout the United States (see Hutchison 2011). The rise of the Indian Residential School system and the state-sanctioned abduction and assimilation of Indigenous children into Euro-American society (see Dawson 2012; Altvater Attean et al 2012) as well as the adoption of ableist- and racially-based sterilisation laws by over 30 states can also be traced to the pseudo-science put forth by racial eugenicists.

(Spence 1999). By 1880, the park superintendent negotiated the banishment of Indigenous peoples from most of Yellowstone, forcing them onto reservations. This national park practice of pacification, containment, and eventual forced assimilation carried on well into the 20th century (Kantor 2007).

National parks also had their own initiated means of waging slow violence against Indigenous peoples. Scholars (Spence 1999; Murdock 2021) have pointed out that the creation of Yosemite National Park and its asymmetrical negotiations with the Miwok, Yokut, Paiute, and Ahwahneechee peoples who inhabited the Yosemite Valley since time immemorial ultimately provided a model for a coerced and quieted removal for future national parks, both in the United States and throughout the rest of the world. This 'soft eviction' has become characteristic of Liberal-premised development and its ability to diminish the sovereignty of peoples and communities (Dowie 2006; Murdock 2021). The establishment of Yosemite National Park ultimately saw multiple waves of evictions, with the first, in 1851, led by the Mariposa Battalion in the Yosemite Valley, where the settler militia began a full-scale attempt to exterminate or remove all Indigenous inhabitants to the Fresno River Reservation (Bloom and Deur 2020). Spence documents that the tactics of Yosemite National Park and the federal government to remove Indigenous inhabitants shifted from violent extermination to becoming less conspicuous, with Yosemite permitting particular Indigenous persons to live on park lands. Dowie (2011: 10) notes, however, in a meeting with Miwok leaders and the superintendent of Yosemite that their residence was 'a privilege, not a right'. The park destroyed the village built by Indigenous inhabitants in the park and constructed their own housing units. As none of the Indigenous peoples who lived within Yosemite National Park had signed treaties with the United States, Spence (1999: 121) remarks that 'the Indian service could not directly aid the development of the new village or contribute to the support of the Yosemite Indians'. Spence (1999: 126) further articulates the resulting strategy of containment that park officials applied in building this housing site: '[t]he small size of the new village was designed in part to prevent the "riffraff or the Indian population of the surrounding country" from "swarming into the valley for work and residence"'. The size of location also permitted park officials to choose who could stay and who could leave. The housing policy developed in 1953 further restricted who could live in the park to solely permanent government employees and their families. By 1969, the last residents were relocated to government housing for park employees and the remaining Yosemite Indian village structures 'vanished in the flames of a firefighting practice session' (Spence 1999: 130). This gradual and slow eviction that relied on the settler colonial and Liberal structures of recognition

(e.g. treaties, employment) provided a tried and tested model for forcibly removing and assimilating Indigenous peoples for the creation of a national park. Murdock (2021: 241) summarises that Yosemite 'perfected the removal of American Indians in ways that disregarded American Indians' sovereign and unique political status and operated in a way that did not pique or alert broader American national public interest'. Especially under the guise of civilising or modernising Indigenous peoples, this 'slow eviction', like other methods of violent displacement, was not only justifiable, it helped frame national parks as also serving another wider purpose of assimilation.

From Taming to Saving Wilderness for 'the Public'

The federal government owns and manages approximately 640 million acres of lands in the United States, comprising about 28 per cent of the country's land mass. Under the DOI, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service manage 95 per cent of these lands, which rest mostly in the western United States and in Alaska, with the Department of Defense owning most of the remaining lands (Hardy Vincent et al 2020). While the NPS in the US comprises 85 million acres of 'commons', there now many other settler conservationist ethnogeographies, which include national forests, national wildlife refuges, national conservation areas, wilderness study areas, national recreation areas, wild and scenic rivers, national trails, and national seashores and lakeshores, national monuments, national memorials, and national battlefields. Taken together these constitute what is known today as the Liberal institution of public lands. The very concept of public lands within a settler colonial context dispossesses through a Liberal politics of recognition. Farrell et al (2021: 6) reinforce this in their seminal study qualifying and quantifying the historical dispossession of Indigenous lands in the United States:

> [h]istorically, these lands that would become US 'public lands' were initially viewed by settlers as empty land and of little intrinsic or economic value before the conservation movement in the late 19th century, which ushered in new institutions and legal regimes for their protection and management often predicated on the dispossession of Indigenous lands.

Framed as a democratic Liberal institution, public lands presume a false notion of equal access while erasing and de-legitimising the historical and culturally based relationships that Indigenous peoples maintain with their lands. Coulthard (2014) helps locate what is ultimately a Liberal institution of dispossession within settler colonial environmental governance. The very notion of a shared

commons, especially one based on counter response to the over privatisation of lands in Liberal settler colonial states, such as the US, is one that reframes dispossession through the dualism of human versus nature. Coulthard states (2014: 12):

> what must be recognized by those inclined to advocate a blanket 'return of the commons' as a redistributive counterstrategy to the neoliberal state's new round of enclosures, is that, in Liberal settler states such as Canada, the 'commons' not only belong to somebody – the First Peoples of this land – they also deeply inform and sustain Indigenous modes of thought and behaviour that harbor profound insights into the maintenance of relationships within and between human beings and the natural world.

Looking to the United States, the preservation and conservation movements were and have been pivotal in this advocated 'return to the commons' through the inception of the national park model and the ensuing creation of the aforementioned forms of public land.

Looking first at the early national park model, Mar (2010: 76) describes it as 'reserves of vast areas of scenery and wilderness' that 'occupied a chronological and ideological position at the apex of the 18th and 19th centuries' land rush in the settler colonies'. The concept of wilderness was key to helping settler colonial structures declare lands as accursed or sacred. According to Ferdinand (2022: 188) 'wilderness…refers to an ideology, a dualist conception of nature, society, and history embedded in the settler colonial and post(slavery) society of the United States'. 'Wilderness' asserts the colonial held belief that sovereignty over lands is defined in accordance with notions of civilized and modern uses of land. Ultimately, deeming what is 'wild' or 'wilderness' in an accursed sense, for Liberal white settler colonialism, has historically presumed lands and people to be in a primitive state of nature that invites intervention. As Cronon (1996: 8) notes, wilderness was presaged to be 'deserted, savage, desolate, barren-in short, a waste'. He further states that prior to the mid-19th century, wilderness and 'its connotation were anything but positive, and the emotion one was most likely to feel in is presence was "bewilderment" or terror'. Sicangu Oglala and Lakota Chief Luther Standing Bear (1905-1939) (1998: 201, 205) remarks on how this Liberal settler colonial framing and intervention contrasts with his own ontological understanding of wilderness:

> [w]e did not think of the great open plans, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth as 'wild'. Only to the white man was nature a 'wilderness' and only to him was the land 'infested' with 'wild' animals and 'savage' people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful, and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery. Not until the hairy

man from the East came, and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved, was it 'wild' for us…

Many times, the Indian is embarrassed and baffled by the white man's allusions to nature in such terms as crude, primitive, wild, rude, untamed, and savage…

The idea of taming the 'wild' and 'savage' plays into a more grandiose narrative of the American settler colonial identity. Ferdinand (2022: 197) articulates the contribution of wilderness to this narrative in mythicising the birth of the United States and erasing the violence waged in the creation of its settler colonial structures:

wilderness ideology has created the myth of the sacred birth of the United States in wild and pristine places, a myth that enables one to escape responsibility for his or her own actions and the collective history of the nation. Such a myth allows one to neither account nor atone for the violent colonial history on which the United States was created.

In Ferdinand's commentary, we can locate how settler colonialism and its interactions with wilderness contribute to Carole Pateman's (2007) concept of the 'original contract', as noted in the previous chapter, and the unwritten agreement of needing to Indigenize the settler to place. Wilderness frames the United States as a nation-state born amongst accursed unowned wild lands, and consequently erases the violent means required to tame them. In his book *Wilderness and the American Mind,* Nash (1967: 27) comments that the taming of wild lands has been a religious, racial, and social cornerstone of settler identity:

[t]hey shared the long Western tradition of imagining wild country as a moral vacuum, a cursed and chaotic wasteland. As a consequence, frontiersmen acutely sensed that they battled wild country not only for personal survival but in the name of nation, race, and God. Civilizing the New World meant enlightening darkness, ordering chaos, and changing evil into good.

This is to say that the production of wilderness as something to protect reflects a relatively new *terra sacer* mentality, one that is reflective of vanishing physical 'wild' geographies in the context of over-development and the proliferation of the human versus nature duality. The positive framing of wilderness as complementary to industrialised civilization, and not a threat to it, is reflective of a recent societal turn. Indeed, as Nash (1967: xii) put it '[f]riends of wilderness should remember that in terms of the entire history of man's relationships to nature, they are riding the crest of a very, very recent wave'. The preface to the conceptualisation of land management policies that sought to preserve or conserve particular lands and resources was not a collective to prevent ecological

destruction. Clayton (2019: 125) helps further visualise the milieu of crisis ongoing in settler colonial society at the time:

> As once-endless herds of bison thinned to the point of near-extinction, some people predicted that once endless forests would be next…Fueled by the innovations of the Industrial Revolution, the American economy was firing on all cylinders and consuming everything in sight

By 1850, it is documented that American settlers had cleared over 11 million acres of forests stretching from Maine to Florida and by 1910, over 197 million acres of forest were cut down (Hopson 2011: 64). There was concern, largely from the white upper class of settler society, over unmitigated resource use and loss of a romanticised nature. Cronon (1996: 7) summarises:

> [i]n the myth of the vanishing frontier lay the seeds of wilderness preservation in the United States, for if wild land had been so crucial in the making of the nation, then surely one must save its last remnants as monuments to the American past—and as an insurance policy to protect its future … To protect wilderness was in a very real sense to protect the nation's most sacred myth of origin.

Through the lens of *terra sacer*, settler colonialism called upon itself to save the wilderness that it was lying to waste, and to uphold its saviourism as a new form of modernity. In 1864, *Man and Nature* by George Perkins Marsh was one of the first alarms sounded from within settler colonial society on the need to conserve resources for future use, predicting the eventual extinction of the human species if extractive practices continued. Marsh used the barren landscapes he witnessed in the 'Old World' as a lesson for the 'New World', inferring that preservation and conservation needed to become part of modernity to avoid replicating the wasted landscapes of Europe (Spence 1999; Marsh 1967). Wulf (2017: 603) notes that the work was the first ever of nature history 'to fundamentally influence American politics', directly contributing to the language and passage of the 1873 Timber Culture Act and the 1891 Forest Reserves Act, which regulated settler foresting practices.

The preservation and conservation movements, which were woven through private and public settler institutions, helped frame the theft of Indigenous lands as necessary and as productive spaces that would rein in the over-industrialisation of lands: to yield natural resources for long term use, and to provide spaces for nature-worship on which to premise a national identity. As Preston (2013: 11-12) notes, 'settler people need only move through and interact with (and profit from) the land in order to consider it subsumed into the larger network of settler colonial spaces'. While the preservation and conservation movements differed on the key question as to whether wilderness

spaces should be preserved as shrines for settler nature-worship or commodified by the market, the movements complemented one another in working towards wider goals of settler colonial permanence. To summarise the seemingly divisive relationship of these two movements, biographer Clayton (2019: xix) remarks that the *de facto* leaders of these movements, preservationist John Muir and conservationist Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946), were 'rivals rather than enemies' and 'offered alternative paths to articulating a constructive societal relationship to nature'. Both movements had 'spiritual components', where preservationists brought religious faith into protecting a sacred wilderness while conservationists vested their faith into sustainable natural resource use and free markets. The two competing ideologies have been at play over the priorities of public lands, with Clayton (2019: xviii) noting that 'almost every dam, mine, grazing allotment, timber sale, proposed wilderness area, national park, or national monument' has been subject to the question of whether lands are best managed under preservationist or conservationist principles.

Preserving for Imperialist Nostalgia and Nature Worship

The conceptualisation of spatial wilderness as pristine and sacred in the US context was a product of imperialist nostalgia for a pre-Columbian America. The 'Pristine Myth', which presumes that lands prior to the 1492 arrival of Christopher Columbus were largely unaltered and sparsely inhabited, has been particularly popular for preservationists (Robbins 2020). Preservationists often framed Indigenous lands as wilderness that was allowed to flourish by neglect or lack of appropriate management under Indigenous governance. In essence preservationists were still applying *terra sacer* in noting that beautiful lands were the result of mismanagement. This involved the disappearance of Indigenous existence altogether. The Pristine Myth, of course, flies in the face of the fact that Indigenous peoples were active in ecological management, and that lands perceived as 'wild' were 'in fact deeply contingent on human involvement' (Hendlin 2014: 155). As Robbins (2020: 171) underlines, the Pristine Myth is constructed 'with little empirical support either in environmental history, where humans are implicated in the creation of many ecosystems long considered "natural," or in the contemporary world, where roads, people, and indirect human influences extend to the most remote areas'. The ideology of the Pristine Myth reflects what Hendlin (2014: 155-156) describes to be the output of 'human-nature dualism', upholding 'a romantic notion of a moment in ecological time, captured and frozen, rather than the processes of the landscape and the

ecoengineering of the people that made it that way'. If wilderness was to be imagined without humans, integrating Indigenous peoples into nature, but as *non-humans*, would (conveniently for the settler-colonisers) not only remove notions of ownership that would need to be respected under Liberal conditions of property ownership, but would also simultaneously justify the violence needed to govern wilderness.

Preservationists were key in reproducing the Pristine Myth, collapsing Indigenous peoples into nature and removing notions of sovereignty over their lands. Spence (1999: 13) quotes historian Tichi (1979), in noting that 19th century American romanticists and their ideas of Indigenous peoples being part of wilderness bordered on 'cultural obsessiveness' breaking 'boundaries of genre, caste, and philosophical persuasion'. Early American romanticists were particularly united in their obsession over 'Indians in the wilderness', or 'Indian wilderness' (Spence 1999). Early preservationists like philosopher Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), painter George Catlin (1796-1872), and naturalist John James Audubon (1785-1851) and their yearnings for a 'Nation's park' wanted Indigenous peoples initially integrated into the wilderness and protected from settler encroachment. Scholars such as Rashkow (2014: 826) note that this movement incepted an inclusive and yet waning model of 'biocultural diversity' conservation that advocated for the protection of Indigenous peoples worldwide.

However, the settler colonial roots of this movement did not look to acknowledge or protect the significance of Indigenous ontological relations with lands; American Romanticists helped propagate the idea that Indigenous peoples were spiritual ecological stewards, selectively bringing in Indigenous persons or ideas of and from Indigenous peoples to suit their romanticisation of the 'state of nature'. Spence (1999: 22) notes that Thoreau saw Indigenous peoples 'as the keepers of true wisdom, of wilderness itself' and therefore could become a reservoir of knowledge upon which the rest of the nation could draw'. Painter Catlin meanwhile collapsed Native people into his painted vistas of American wilderness with culturally inaccurate portrayals, while Audubon lamented that with the destruction of Indigenous peoples, 'nature herself seems perishing' (Spence 1999: 17-18). These romantic portrayals of Indigenous peoples from preservationists reflects what Whyte (2019: 326) notes to be a settler colonial tradition of 'mocking, romanticizing, and appropriating Indigenous ways of life' and an imperialist nostalgia that yearns for non-existent realities.

The framing of national parks as spiritual temples is not only premised on the Pristine Myth but was also mobilised through Judeo-Christian tradition. Indeed, Christian framings have assisted wilderness in becoming sacred, as opposed to being associated with 'waste lands to be tamed and

used efficiently by humans' (Sarkar 1999: 405). As Cronon (1996: 9) remarks, wilderness had previously been known as 'the antithesis of all that was orderly and good' and yet preservationists saw visually beautiful lands that remained uncultivated as temples of nature. Preservationists, like Thoreau who famously declared 'wilderness' to be 'the preservation of the world', saw a religious salvation in preservation. Adler (2006: 5) notes that advocates of preservation shared literacy in 'ancient literature, early church history, and a diversity of ascetic traditions' and thus grounded much of their language as to why conservation was necessary to see a more prosperous future for the settler nation. Even those preservationists who were not as devout were nevertheless influenced by Judeo-Christian ideology. The artistry, for example, of Catlin and Albert Bierstaft (1830-1902), who are so often credited with the romanticisation of American landscapes in settler imaginations and the ensuing rise in support for national parks, are among those who framed wilderness as sacred and, in turn, 'instilled a desire for parks as remnants of Eden and Acadia' (Keller and Turek 1998: 232). As Adler (2006: 10) further underlines, even those who critique anthropocentric environmentalism that is espoused especially through Judeo-Christian belief have succumbed to framing 'wilderness' and 'nature' as spaces and entities of salvation; one must only make 'a simple substitution of the word God for wilderness' to see the roots of this language. Adler (2006: 90) states the importance of engaging with the religious backgrounds of the movement's founders:

> [i]n failing to look beyond the rim of our own secular, university-based intellectual culture, historians of environmentalism risk overlooking religious motifs consciously engaged, or transcribed into secular keys, by naturalist and romantic writers of early generations.

For this reason, it is imperative to spotlight the influence of Judeo-Christian traditions on the discourse of wilderness and the human versus nature duality.

The spread of American Protestantism in the 19th century carried with it the right to decipher scripture separate from the authority of the church and it ultimately advocated for rebirth (Adler 2006). Clayton (2019: 115) paraphrases this mentality: 'this happened to me, it served me, save yourselves by letting it happen to you'. This preservationist nature-worship initially took hold with an upper class white urban elite at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, especially as national parks were often too expensive to visit for most American settlers. Sarkar (1999: 406) states that national parks held 'aesthetic appeal to transient visitors, who usually came from an urban elite rather than from the surrounding rural population'. Moreover, implicit within the Christian roots of many preservationists was their belief that there was a duty to protect what humanity did not have the self-discipline to preserve. Leading American preservationists, such as

Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), and John Muir were of the mind that nature could help save settler society. In *A Yankee in Canada,* Thoreau (1866: 11-12) states that American forests be cultivated for experiences otherwise available only through Catholic architecture. 'The Catholic are the only churches I have seen…which is not almost wholly profane…To be sure, we do not need such. Our forests are such a church, far grander, and more sacred'. Emerson, a preeminent founder of the American Romanticism movement, is credited for the 'first great awakening to wilderness values' at the same time as the Second Great Awakening of American Protestantism. This can be seen, for example, in Emerson's understanding of nature as a source of 'mute gospel' and 'moral law'. Emerson (1836: 77) states that 'the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it'. For John Muir, credited often as 'the father' or 'founder' of the American NPS (Clayton 2019), wilderness was sacred and Edenic. The Garden of Eden story helped frame wilderness as sacred space that needed to be saved. He stated in a speech to the Sierra Club (Muir 1896) that 'the smallest forest reserve, and the first I ever hear of, was in the Garden of Eden; and though its boundaries were drawn by the Lord, and embraced only one tree yet even so moderate a reserve as this was attacked'. Muir (1911: 170) noted of the Sierra Nevada when he arrived there that, 'no description of Heaven that I have ever heard or read of seems half so fine'. Moreover, Muir's perception of wilderness was pivotal in redefining lands that settler colonialism had designated to be 'wasteland'. Voyles (2015: 16-17) notes of Muir's reframing of desert landscapes after he visited what is now Petrified Forest National Park in 1905:

> This category of protected wilderness had, until that point, largely revolved around mountainous, or at least green, landscapes that more closely fit American aesthetics of the wild places of the Western continent. With that, the American environmental imagination began to see deserts as protectable wilderness too, a trend that grew as arid canyon country, particularly the Grand Canyon, became a centerpiece of environmental tourism and wilderness conservation legislation. The Canyon, in particular, went in a very short space of time from "an 'unprofitable locale' to the 'sublimest thing on earth.'

John Muir was also highly influential in developing the framing of the protection of wilderness into policy. Preservation in the form of federal protection was the only solution for Muir to 'keep God's first temples safe from the juggernaught of selfish greed' (in Hopson 2011: 67). Muir (1897: 155) wrote on the American forests: '[t]hrough all the wonderful, eventful centuries since Christ's time— and long before that—God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches,

and a thousand straining, levelling tempests and floods; but he cannot save them from fools, - only Uncle Sam can do that'. Muir reflects a purist dogmatism around unaltered nature that was found in the preservation movement. When the Hetch Hetchy Dam was in the Yosemite Valley to supply San Francisco with water, Muir (1912: 261-262) called its proponents 'temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism [who] seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and, instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty dollar'. In the midst of the many social crises of late 19th century capitalism, Muir was influential in incorporating the spiritual nature of wilderness as a solution to the poor living conditions and social relations of industrial capitalism. He helped frame nature-worship for the settler working class. 'Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity' wrote Muir in 1901 (Johnson 2020: 247). Human-less wilderness as reprieve and sanctuary for the white working-class settler became incorporated into American modernity as a necessary spatial institution to counter the ills of industrialisation. This was one of the most effective preservationist reasonings for the proliferation of the national park model throughout the United States, especially with the burgeoning of the middle classes in the post-Second World War period. The Wilderness Act of 1964 captured Muir's dogmatism, as Callicot and Nelson (1998: 3-4) both note that preservationist and activist Howard Zahnizer (1906-1964), who ghost-wrote the legislation, was a proponent of untrammelled wilderness. The renowned legislation, which immediately established nine million acres of 'wilderness', states (Wilderness Act 1964: 891):

> [a] wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

The legislation not only crystallized the binary understanding of nature vs. man and notions of pre-Columbian wilderness, but also importantly demonstrated the realisation of Liberal settler colonial ontological understandings of the environment into legal frameworks. This directly speaks to Coulthard's (2014) colonial politics of recognition, where, in this case, settler colonial environmental governance acquired the ability to distinguish what is and what should be 'untrammeled' wilderness and what is not and should not be.

This is all to say that the framing of 'wilderness' as sacred space is a very recent phenomenon as the United States switched from a laissez-faire and loosely regulated use of lands to conquer wilderness to one where wilderness was managed for its spiritual and social yields (Sarkar 1999). Indeed, the development of wilderness into a settler spatial geography to be protected produced

spatial amnesia that erased not just Indigenous relations with protected lands but also the violence perpetrated for them to be acquired.

Conserving Economic and Racial Sustainability

The mission of the preservationist movement to protect the sanctity of particular lands for national parks ultimately contributed to the demand to also set aside lands that would sustainably yield and conserve resources for generations of settlers to come. The mission of *terra sacer* for conservationists was to both transform wilderness into productive spaces that did not necessarily waste lands but also that did not leave lands unused. If preservationists wanted national parks to be sites for tourism, respite, and nature-worship, then conservationists wanted grazing lands, national forests, and wildlife preserves set aside to yield their own natural resources under federal protection. For the conservationist movement, which saw its influential height in the early 20th century, a main source of its influence was the panic over resource use and loss. This was a wider settler societal realisation of the limits of colonial geographic expanse and the damage settler colonial homesteading had incurred on the quantity of natural resources available.

The moralising narrative of setting aside lands for sustainable resource yield was produced also in response to the resistance to public land creation throughout the late 19th century. The advent of the national park model was at times met with apathy and disdain in circles of governance, as some believed setting aside lands for national parks and maintaining them was wasting resources. The lands that national parks 'protected' were initially framed by advocates as 'worthless' lands that could be made into use for their aesthetic appeal and as a draw for tourism, especially given that they were 'uninhabited' (Burnham 2000: 20). In the establishment of the first state park at Yosemite in 1864, for example, the federal legislation granted California the right to set aside its own lands for 'public use, resort, and recreation' and made 'inalienable for all time' (US 13 Stat. 325). Yellowstone's supporters' as Clayton (2019: 106) notes 'suggested that what they were doing was no big deal. They portrayed the establishment of the world's first national park as a reversible, trivial, cost-free experiment'. Burnham (2000: 26) notes this strategy was replicated in the subsequent creation of other national parks:

> [a]t parks like Badlands, Glacier, and Mesa Verde…the government claimed that certain Indian lands were more useful in a national park than a reservation. The 'worthless lands' rationale

proved as popular in negotiating with Indian tribes as it had long been useful in placating

business interest when the subject of parks came up on Capitol Hill.

This is significant given how national parks have been held up as a fundamental part of the American landscape and of settler colonial ethnogeography, yet at their inception, they were framed as a low-cost experiment that was better than giving lands to 'Indian tribes'. Brechin (1996: 234) remarks that plutocratic enthusiasm drove conservation to its height at the beginning of the 20th century, underpinned by an upper class 'sense of noblesse oblige'. He notes that 'the descendants of the men who had mown the forests, gutted the mountains, and slaughtered the seals grew ever more concerned with the long-term management of their assets'. From this concern arose the conservation movement that was devoted to regulating the private sector into managing the country's resources better. Johnson (2020: 247-248) notes that 'the belief that state power was needed to address environmental problems was the corollary of the belief that industrial market economies had caused them'. Gifford Pinchot was pivotal in advocating for a science-based conservation over a pristine wilderness preservation approach to public lands, framing sustainable foresting and grazing practices as the 'the productive use [of resources] for the permanent good of the whole people' (Allen 2013: 32). Long-term planning and controlled use of resources was a more sound and profitable strategy for land management.

The conservationist movement was ultimately an alarmist one, and used economic fear and, as the next section will point out, racial fear to persuade about the viability of sustainable land practices. One of the most cited and influential speeches that articulated this shift in settler colonial land ethic and the moral imperative to conserve resources came from President Theodore Roosevelt at the 1908 Gathering of Governors at the White House. This speech was embedded with dread over the state of resource use, drawing a connection between economic prosperity, resource conservation, and patriotism:

let us remember that the conservation of our natural resources, though the gravest problem of today, is yet but part of another and greater problem to which this Nation is not yet awake, but to which it will awake in time, and with which it must hereafter grapple if it is to live–the problem of national efficiency, the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the Nation.

Disregarding for the moment the question of moral purpose, it is safe to say that the prosperity of our people depends directly on the energy and intelligence with which our natural resources are used. It is equally clear that these resources are the final basis of national power and

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perpetuity. Finally, it is ominously evident that these resources are in the course of rapid exhaustion (Roosevelt 1908).

Similar to Muir's religious dogmatism for untrammelled wilderness, Roosevelt inspired economic and moral panic over wasteful land practices, connecting sustainable practice to patriotic settler nationalism. This embedded economic and moral patriotism found within sustainable resource use became effective messaging going into the 20th century, as echoed by then-Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur (1929-1933) (DOI 1930: 36):

> [o]ne hundred years from now, as people look back on our use of this continent, we shall not be praised for our reckless use of its oil, nor the weakening of our watershed values through over-grazing, nor the loss of our forests, we shall be heartily damned for all these things. But we may take comfort in the knowledge that we shall certainly be thanked for national parks.

Within this discourse emerges a settler colonial strategy for survival. It is one that articulates wasteful resource use as a risk to the permanence of settler colonial structures and sustainable practices as generative to the long term existence of the American settler colonial project. Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) was a critical figure in combining aspects of both the romantic notions of wilderness from preservationists and the need for wilderness to be productive from conservationists. He connected this land ethic to the American settler identity (Leopold 1925; Bacon 2019). Leopold's approach was one that waged colonial ecological violence, effectively erasing Indigenous epistemologies and practices in claiming that '[t]here is as yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it' (Bacon 2019: 4). Like Muir, Leopold's land ethic was premised on developing an emotional attachment to the environment in order to catalyse people to protect it (Goralnik and Nelson 2011). Leopold not only articulates colonial cartesian notions of discovery in noting his commentary to be the first formulation of a land ethic, but also completely erases the existing emotional attachment inherent in Indigenous land relations. Such settler colonial land ethics, as Coulthard and Simpson (2016: 254) state, is an attack 'on the relationality of Indigenous political orders through the strategic targeting of Indigenous peoples' 'relationship to land' and has been 'a site of intense white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, serving as a mechanism to submit Indigenous lands and labor to the demands of capitalist accumulation and state-formation'. Leopold's *Wilderness as a Form of Land Used* (1925) became a highly influential publication in articulating how the settler colonial state should manage the 'wilderness' of national parks (Callicot and Nelson 1998):

> [f]rom the earliest times one of the principal criteria of civilization has been the ability to conquer the wilderness and convert it to economic use. To deny the validity of this criterion would be to deny history. But because the conquest of wilderness has produced beneficial reactions on social, political, and economic development, we have set up, more or less unconsciously, the converse assumption that the ultimate social, political, and economic development will be produced by conquering the wilderness entirely – that is by eliminating it from our environment… (Leopold 1925: 398)
>
> …[w]ilderness as a form of land-use is, of course, premised on a qualitative conception of progress. It is premised on the assumption that enlarging the range of individual experience is as important as enlarging the number of individuals; that the expansion of commerce is a means, not an end; that the environment of the American pioneers had values of its own, and was not merely a punishment which they endured in order that we might ride in motors. It is premised on the assumption that the rocks and rills and templed hills of this America are something more than economic materials, and should be dedicated exclusively to economic use... (Leopold 1925: 404).

What is significant here is that Leopold states outright that 'wilderness' is not land that is wasted but a legitimate form of land use. He articulates the ideological turn of wilderness, defending that although 'civilization' conquered wilderness for the purposes of 'development', the 'unconscious' assumption that wilderness produces the ultimate development needed to be challenged. He alludes to American Romantic preservationist ideals of holy nature, alluding to 'templed hills' as a reflection of American pioneer values (Leopold 1925: 398, 404). Notably, he integrates whiteness into the development of wilderness as the means through which America was produced. Leopold's commentary reflects the interwoven ideologies of the economic and moral patriotic duty to sustainable natural resource management and the concern of the eugenics movement that linked resource use to white racial conservation.

The American eugenics movement, formed during the nineteenth century and active until the 1940s, offers a moralising narrative that directly speaks to Moreton-Robinson's (2015) white possessive, blatantly and violently articulating how the conservation movement needed to protect American wilderness as much as it needed to protect the white race. The eugenics movement became an active proponent of national parks, as a symbol for conserving America for future generations of white settlers. Like the conservation movement, the eugenics movement had spread through the US with the economic and social problems that arose from the rapid expansion of

industry, urbanisation and immigration (Allen 2013). Born at the same time as the preservation and conservation movements, the American eugenics movement was key in articulating the connection between population control and the conservation of natural resources for the white settler populace and its future generations. This moralising narrative remains under-recognised in its ideological contributions to modern conservation policy. Key conservationist policymakers, such as Gifford Pinchot and US President Theodore Roosevelt, subscribed to the works of conservationist and eugenicist Madison Grant, notably *The Passing of the Great Race* and Madison's proposal that the white 'native' American race was at risk of being dispossessed of America by non-white and lesser races. Indeed, Grant (1916: 5) framed the white Nordic-descended settler class as the native and destined rulers of the United States:

> [i]n many countries the existing classes represent races that were once distinct. In the city of New York, and elsewhere in the United States, there is a native American aristocracy resting upon layer after layer of immigrants of lower races, and the native American, while, of course, disclaiming the distinction of a patrician class, nevertheless has, up to this time, supplied the leaders of thought and the control of capital, of education, and of the religious ideals and altruistic bias of the community.

The eugenics movement was key in articulating a white nativism that was also inherent to the concern to conserve, while non-white peoples were framed as simply wasteful and unable to manage their own resources. Similar to using Western science to manage natural resource, Theodore Roosevelt framed eugenics as a science for managing the racial composition of American society (Tocci and Ryan 2021).

In the framing of Indigenous peoples as 'wasteful', we can see a clear overlap here with the puritanic ideologies of the preservation movement. John Muir, for example, believed that wilderness was 'clean' and had to be cleansed of Indigenous peoples who he thought of as 'dirty' (in Ferdinand 2022: 188). Egan (2011: 79) contextualises how this language of Muir was reflective of the burgeoning sanitarian movement:

> [i]t is no accident that the new understanding of germy theory and sanitary science happened at the same historical moment as environmental conservation and preservation movements…Both sanitarianism and environmentalism require the ecological understanding that humans affect their environment and are affected by their environment.

The eugenics movement found solidarity in the conservation movement's sense of 'impending doom' (Allen 2013: 35) and both were concerned with both the availability of natural resources,

which populations were wasteful in their use, and the contamination of populations of colour on the white settler populace. As Anson (2020: 62) states 'fictional appeals to the apocalypse that rely on a state-of-emergency logic are wedded to the exceptionalism of the white settler state'. Both movements, led by white wealthy settler elites (McGill et al 2022), saw the degradation and destruction of natural resources, including the loss of big game animals and songbirds, the 'menace of the feebleminded' and those unfit for citizenship, as well as the 'loss of Nordic homogeneity' as critical problems (Allen 2013: 55). Johnson (2020: 249) summarises the logical philosophical overlap between the two movements: 'eugenicists such as Madison Grant—a founder of the Save-the-Redwoods League and, alongside Gifford Pinchot and [President Theodore] Roosevelt saw the scientific "improvement" of the human inheritance as a logical extension of conservation to human reproduction'. Conservation, by all intents and purposes, was born out of both biopolitical and geopolitical concerns.

The Washington National Conservation Congresses (WNCC), which operated from 1901-1915 and articulated popular discourses from the governmental and private sectors in the early days of the conservation movement, showcased the settler contract amongst conservationists: white settlers, as those divinely destined to populate the lands of the United States, were in the best place to know how to conserve. Symbolically, the second NCC opened with a prayer articulating associations with manifest destiny (WNCC 1911: 1):

> We pray that under Thy abiding watchfulness, through our intelligent industry, America grows
> ever in fairness and in wealth, and be the first and most beauteous of the stopping-places
> allowed to men in their pilgrimage toward their abiding home in heaven.

Preservationists, conservationists, and eugenicists alike were united in the belief that they were the rightful managers of the lands in the United States. Whether preserving spiritual lands or yielding long-term economic profit from natural resources, these constructed systems of recognition were novel additions to American modernity. Indeed, the second NCC in 1910, Julia Green Scott (1839-1923), who was then President (1909-1913) of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a lineage-based membership group for women descended from those who contributed to American independence, gave a key speech that articulated the notion of 'privileges' and rights that future settler generations had to economic prosperity. She stated (WNCC 1911: 272):

> [i]t has been borne in upon me of late that there are two Conservation interests whose
> importance we have not fully recognized, and they are the conservation of true womanliness,
> and the conservation of the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race on this continent…The

Conservation of our natural resources is a subject of intensely practical importance to the [DAR]. Representing as we do the motherhood of the Nation, we feel that it is for us to see that the children of this and future generations are not robbed of their God-given privileges. It is our high privilege and mission to see to it that the future shall be the uncankered fruit of the past.

Here Scott articulates the priority for intergenerational white possession, or Pateman's (2007) 'settler contract', to continue in the United States, denoting that future generations of white settlers must not be impeded by development practices that lay waste to the future productivity of lands. In concluding, Scott makes the intentions of DAR, and the conservation movement, blatantly apparent.

Resource conservation was not premised on any relationship indicating reciprocity with lands, but for the sake of both the survival of future settlers and to ensure they would enjoy the same prosperity as their forebearers. White possession was a key priority being articulated through a vocabulary shared by the conservation and eugenics movements, and non-white population reduction was an advocated strategy to achieve this. Scott (WNCC 1911: 276) concludes in her speech:

[p]ersonally, I would be willing to reduce our population-boast by many millions, had the remnant the unadulterated Americanism conserved to this day in these mountaineers' descendants! We may be destined to see our cup of liberty, which we have so generously proffered to the whole world, grow to the proportion of a grand mixing-bowl of races; but if so, will it not at least be wise to see that our own race dominate?

We, the mothers of this generation—ancestresses of future generations—have a right to insist upon the conserving not only of soil, forest, birds, minerals, fishes, waterways, in the interest of our future home-makers, but also upon the conserving of the supremacy of the Caucasian race in our land. This Conservation, second to none in pressing importance, may and should be insured in the best interests of all races concerned; and the sooner attention is turned upon it the better.

Directly following this speech, Gifford Pinchot, who represented the National Forest Service at the conference, thanked DAR for their services to the national conservation movement. Ultimately, the concern over resources for the conservation movement was not driven by scarcity but fear of scarcity, and whether future generations of white settler families would have the same access to the abundance reaped during the 19th century. This is a clear departure from notions of becoming aware of the ecological impact of industrial development, as the conservation movement has often been portrayed, and reveals that the priority was an advocacy for the sustainable use of resources to

ensure settler prosperity. Though overtly eugenic legislation was largely limited to the first half of the twentieth century when the American conservation was growing political influence, the eugenics movement was pivotal in passing key legislation that limited non-white migrants, such as the Reed-Johnson Immigration (Restriction) Act of 1924. Ultimately, the early conservationist movement was effective in that it was able to mobilise the upper echelon of settler society over fears of permanent natural resource loss and the threat to the white possessive (Moreton-Robinson 2015) and its future.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the practicality of settler colonialism deeming lands as accursed or sacred in order to intervene, displace, and dispossess. Out of this application of *terra sacer* emerged settler ethnogeographic project of the national park. Whether framing lands to be wilderness, to be tamed or protected into modernity, the tactic of *terra sacer* helped legitimise the establishment of the national park as a project productive to settler permanence. American preservationists were key in feeding into ontologies of pristine nature, which continue to inform the wider conservationist movement to date, by glorifying notions of 'Indian Wilderness' and framing particular geographies as more sacred than others. Hendlin (2014: 162) succinctly connects and notes the global impact of such framing:

> [c]onservation of select areas in a desert of environmental inconsideration serves to legitimate the out-of-control unsustainable metabolism of the global economy. The surplus value of conservation is that it exculpates serious overhaul to global economic environmental unsustainability.

Meanwhile, the conservation and eugenics movements were key in articulating the moralisation of more sustainable land-based practices for the sake of both settler permanence and continued white possession. Both preservationists and conservationists have been key in framing national parks and public lands at large as somehow to balance, or offer the illusion of balancing, the wasting of other lands. As Gómez-Pompa and Kaus (1992: 272) point out, wilderness must be 'maintained to provide an acceptable quality of life in developed areas, as exemplified by current concerns about air pollution, global climate change, and deforestation'. Fundamentally, national parks are not an exceptional project, but rather another instance of Liberal settler colonial and white supremacist land governance that dispossess, displaces, and wages violence. As with the inception of public lands in

the United States, national parks have been complicit in eroding Indigenous sovereignty, curtailing Indigenous self-determination, and erasing Indigenous relations with the lands they propose to protect. From the purpose of preserving beautiful vistas that represent settler heritages and futures, to conserving forests in order to secure white settler futures, to the more recent conjured purpose of protecting biological diversity, national parks have ultimately enveloped *terra sacer* in deeming some portions of land as sacred wilderness, and everything else as lacking similar importance, and even as waste-able. Murdock (2021: 247) helps summarise the effects of the propagation of *terra sacer* in current times, remarking that the preservation 'of so-called "ecological hotspots" obscures how these places are constructed as exceptional in a world riddled with environmental degradation'. National parks have given purpose to the American settler colonial project, grounding a national identity as a divine heir to the illusion of uninhabited wild spaces. What must be remembered at the end of the day is that the national park model has caused irreparable harm, as generations of Indigenous peoples have been prevented by the settler colonial state from accessing and acquiring lands and waters that have been part of their collective memory. Indeed, national parks and public lands have been active in the settler colonial mission to contain, civilise, and assimilate Indigenous peoples out of existence. The next chapter will discuss the settler colonial environmental governance project of dam and reservoir creation, as another settler colonial ethnogeographic project, locating the moralising narratives involved in acts of displacement and dispossession.

Chapter 4: Moralising Dispossession and the Creation of Large Dams and Reservoirs

Introduction

This chapter establishes another precedent of moralising dispossession to create more environmental ethnogeographic projects, this time in the form of the public works projects of dam and reservoir construction. In the last chapter, we saw that the uninhabited Edenic myth of pre-Columbian America provided the basis for protecting and preserving lands for the benefit of settler colonial society, which resulted in the national park movement and its ongoing displacement of Indigenous Nations from their lands and waters (Keller and Turek 1998; Spence 1999; Hendlin 2014). Simultaneously, from the birth of the national park movement, the conservationist movement developed another moralising of *terra sacer* whereby lands under settler colonial management could produce resources sustainably in order to protect white settler colonial futures. As we move into looking at dam constructions, I will demonstrate that similar moralising narratives emerge, whereby settler colonialism justifies dispossession through discourses premised on settler rights to resources, economic and environmental emergencies, and desires to create physical and imaginative American settler ethnogeographies (Whyte 2018; Bacon 2019; Griffith 2018). In examining this particular project of settler colonial environmental governance, this chapter will demonstrate that large dam and reservoirs projects were underpinned by *terra sacer*-premised moralising narratives, ones that both build on those of the previous chapter and that navigate new narratives for settler colonialism to utilise in the quest to displace and dispossess.

Unlike national parks, which required other more productive public lands to complement their existence, large scale dams were self-sufficient in producing their own productive existence throughout the 20th century. Prior to Western scientific research on their ecological destruction, large dams and reservoirs were often framed as benevolent to the societies that they served, providing

hydroelectric power, irrigation, freshwater, and flood control. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, dams and reservoirs, as they were constructed throughout the 20th century in the United States, are nevertheless an example of invasive and violent infrastructure, or what LaDuke (LaDuke and Cowen 2020) terms 'Wiindigo infrastructure', both in how they were constructed and in the social structures they helped underpin in settler colonial society.

I will begin this chapter by first examining how LaDuke's concept relates to this project of settler colonial environmental governance and *terra sacer*. In doing this, we can begin to understand how settler colonial environmental governance adapted to accumulate land as the colonial perception of unused or under-used lands became less in the 20th century and struggling settler populations also required assistance in their development (Govaerts 2016; Murphy 2018; Schneiders 1997). The chapter will then move on to understanding the colonial legal frameworks of water possession that allocated water resources and lands to settlers for the purposes of land reclamation and settler expansion. Conservationist legislation, like the Reclamation Act, helped moralise the construction of dams and reservoirs under the guise of democratising water development during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The chapter will then examine how dams and reservoirs became preeminent solutions to economic and environmental urgencies from the 1930s through to the 1960s. Dams and reservoirs became shrines to American settler exceptionalism, strength, and engineering capabilities, moralised as national symbols that helped engineer lands into settler colonial ethnogeographies. Monumental or showpiece dams, in particular, became shrines to America's engineering prowess and were integrated into the American landscape as a new ethnogeographic feature. Following this, the chapter will examine the final moralising narrative of dam and reservoir construction as aiding the framed benevolent national goal of terminating federal relations with Indigenous Nations, also known as the Termination Era (1940s-1960s). I will use case studies of the Garrison and Kinzua dams to show how the aforementioned moralising narratives of the urgent economic and environmental needs of settlers supported government efforts to terminate treaties with the Three Affiliated Tribes and Seneca Nation, respectively. Termination was premised on a Liberal-centred ideology that sought to dissolve reservations, what were framed as segregated communities, in order to modernise and assimilate Indigenous peoples into settler colonial society. Finally, this chapter will conclude in highlighting how dams and reservoirs have become unpopular as Western science and settler society became more preservation-minded towards the end of the 20th century. I will argue that this fall from popularity reflects a temporal binary that is contingent on the economic well-being of the majority of white settlers. Water access and the economic well-being of

the ruling white middle settler class was largely secured in the 20th century, allowing more preservationist ideals to come to the forefront and framing dams and reservoirs as wasteful. This perhaps is simply temporary until another urgency frames dams and reservoirs as necessary for the survival of the American settler colonial project.

Wiindigo Infrastructure, Ethnogeographies, and *Terra Sacer*

While dams and reservoirs have been used for thousands of years, the advent of their use to engineer rivers over the course of 150 years has helped secure the economic and political security of settler society and its futures. This, of course, has come at the explicit cost of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty, underlines their role in dispossession. Dams and reservoirs represent yet another project of settler colonial environmental governance that reflects both a white possessive and settler colonial logics of land accumulation. The initial genesis of 19th and 20th century dam constructions and the dislocation and dispossession of Indigenous peoples is one tied to a conservationist desire to tame accursed wilderness in order to make efficient use of natural resources for the sake of both urgency and progress (Spence 1999; Griffith 2018). As noted in the previous chapter, proponents of conserving natural resources, in comparison to those who sought to preserve nature, did not want to 'undermine development' but rather 'questioned short-term private gain at the expense of long-term public benefit' (Fink 1993: 412). As a result, settler colonial engineering addressed the perceived waste of water through the use of dam building, reservoirs, and other water storage facilities (Billington et al. 2005). Though the initial construction of dam development throughout the 19th century in the US was largely for reasons of navigation, dams and reservoirs were also able to provide cheap electricity, water, and food to growing populations of settlers as arable lands were either settled or cordoned off in order 'to preserve wilderness' (Gilio-Whitaker 2019: 48; Billington et al 2005; Di Baldassarre et al 2021). Ultimately, what makes the dam and reservoir a settler colonial project is they appropriate Indigenous land and waterways but they also provide the means through which settlements can expand and also dispossess (Griffith 2017).

Dams and reservoirs represent a different kind of project of settler colonial environmental governance, and a particular kind that LaDuke and Cowen term as 'Wiindigo infrastructure'. Indeed, particularly in the dam building era, Indigenous peoples became an impediment to this progress or were a target for this development project to purposefully dispossess. LaDuke and Cowen (2020:

253) introduce the concept of Wiindigo infrastructure. The concept is premised on the Ojibwe/Anishinaabe story of the Wiindigo, a cannibalistic, self-consuming monster that LaDuke states represents 'the spirit of excess'. LaDuke and Cowen (2020: 253) define 'Wiindigo infrastructure' as:

> the material systems that engineer and sustain that violence. In other words, Wiindigo infrastructures underpin social organization and its reproduction in logics of capital, property, and accumulation over life. Wiindigo infrastructures are not only built upon the predatory foundations of finance capital, they are cannibalistic—they feed upon their kin, and through them we are 'combusting ourselves to oblivion'

They list other infrastructure that Liberalism has framed as necessary for development (e.g. railroads, roads, oil/gas pipelines), all of which contributed to carving up the continent into 'preserves of settler jurisdiction, while entrenching and hardening the very means of settler economy and sociality into tangible material structures' (LaDuke and Cowen 2020: 244-245). In materialising settler relations with land and the erasure of Indigenous ontological relations and land uses, Wiindigo infrastructural projects contribute, in these ways, to settler ethnogeographies.

LaDuke and Cowen (2020) also note that these forms of infrastructure are tied to an economic ethos of disposability and accumulation. These types of infrastructures, which have come to be associated with settler colonial modernity in the United States, have effectively waged a slow violence against disposable bodies, with Indigenous, Black, and Latinx communities largely bearing the brunt of this violence (McCreary and Milligan 2021). In the construction of dams, 'Indian Country' as Middleton Manning (2018: 9) notes 'became the unacknowledged "sacrifice zone" for a national economy based on virtually unrestrained extraction'.[28] The overall justification for the construction of dams and reservoirs, as a Wiindigo infrastructural project reflecting this 'unrestrained extraction', is premised on a *terra sacer* logic: to transform poorly managed or 'accursed' lands, settler colonialism would lay waste to some in order to preserve others. Dams and reservoirs both ultimately demand lands to be sacrificed in order for extraction to feed industrial modernity (Voyles 2015). White possessive logics are at the forefront of determining who must be forcibly displaced and dispossessed of their lands, devaluing land and place-based relations, and the overall well-being of communities that are deemed insignificant to the long-term survival of the white supremacist settler project. As the Garrison Dam was approved for construction, legally

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[28] There is an increasing scholarship articulating the felt impact of dams and reservoirs and Indigenous resistance against them, see Hauptmann 2014, Griffith 2017, and Middleton Manning 2018.

dispossessing the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold reservation of their lands, these logics were named by Tribal Councilman Mark Mahto (US Congress 1947b: 887) of the Three Affiliated Tribes as he testified in front of a Congressional Appropriation Committee in 1947:

> [a]t this time, I want to state we have something that you do not have. I am referring to the white people. We have sentimental attachment to our lands which you don't have. That is one of our natural reasons to stay there forever. But it is different with you. That is a thing you do not understand…

With resources mined to construct dams and lands flooded to fill reservoirs, settler colonialism frames these sacrificial and racialised lands to seem 'uninhabited or unimportantly inhabited' and 'systematically stripped of their material and ideological worth' (Voyles 2015: 10-11). Fleming (2017), using the Wiindigo, what she notes is another name for 'colonization', articulates the impact of this 'wastelanding' (Voyles 2015) on the Ojibwe of Leech Lake Nation in Minnesota:

> [i]n 1880, dams were constructed on Leech Lake and Lake Winnibigoshish. Our reservation is currently 50% water. In Minnesota, the third, fifth, eighth, and twelfth largest lakes are on our reservation. The lakes are now reservoirs, no longer natural. We are water people. We harvest wild rice and eat fish. We gather swamp cranberries. Our homes and villages were next to the lakes and streams. They were our 'roads.' Our gardens and graveyards were also next to the water. Water levels on these lakes were raised 9 to 11 feet and flooded 42,000 acres of our land. The water destroyed our rice beds that grow best in two to three feet of water.

This loss and violence experienced by the Ojibwe of Leech Lake Nation and many Indigenous Nations across the United States was widely seen, if not hidden, by a settler colonial banality, as ultimately justified (LaDuke and Cowen 2020). Griffin (1996: 23) states that 'the social-cultural effects as a result of relocation and resettlement can be far more damaging and long-term' when put up against the effects of dam constructions on land. She notes that dams and their reservoirs alter the courses of rivers, destroy flora and fauna, trigger earthquakes, and submerge lands. What Griffin does not mention here is that these effects perpetuate a slow colonial ecological violence waged against Indigenous Nations. Beyond the lens of the means of production, the altering of ecological environments waged violence against Indigenous knowledge systems, the relationships of familiarity between Indigenous Nations and their lands, and subsequently on Indigenous peoples themselves (Bacon 2019; Whyte 2018). Dams and reservoirs, like other Wiindigo infrastructure, actively laid waste to sites critical to Indigenous knowledge and lifeways, creating spatial geographies that fed into settler colonial claims to place and their own ecological stewardship.

Taming Water for Western Expansion

Unlike national parks, where the preservation movement helped capture the public imagination through invoking the myth of sacred wilderness and ultimately transforming it into a settler spatial geography, reclamation was born of the conservationist mindset that water was being wasted in letting it flow into oceans and was a resource that needed to be used more efficiently. Steinberg (1991: 16) states:

> [a]s the [19th] century progressed, a consensus emerged on the need to exploit and manipulate water for economic gain. A stunning cultural transformation was taking place, a shift in people's very perception of nature. By the latter part of the 19th century, it was commonly assumed, even expected, that water should be tapped controlled, and dominated in the name of progress – a view clearly reflected in the law.

Land and water are treated separately across Liberal colonial governance structures. We can see this from Enlightenment scholarship that saw that land had to be parcelled to fall under ownership, as Locke asserted. Meanwhile, Grotius laid out that the open seas remained commons that could not be parcelled; a convenient argument for seabound European empires and a tool that attacked water sovereignties of peoples worldwide (Hendlin 2014). Liberal governance of fresh water, however, has grown to increasingly seize it away from common access, and in the case of the United States, from Indigenous peoples in particular. Reclamation reflected a government-led desire to 'breathe new life into rural America' by providing 'economic assistance to a region where investment capital had dried up during the depression of the 1890s' (Pisani 2003: 391). As noted in the previous chapter, the notion of public lands, and of the commons at-large, when used by settler colonialism, acts as a tool of erasure. As this section will demonstrate, the rights-based frameworks of riparianism and prior appropriation both inform the Liberal framework that instigated dams and reservoirs.

Many Indigenous lands that were condemned to be flooded for the creation of dams and reservoirs had this done by invoking what Middleton Manning (2018: 68) terms 'legal fictions of government and industrial land and water rights' and 'manifest destiny'. The application of *terra sacer* in the instance of dam and reservoir construction engages the notion of taming waters in order to 'reclaim' wasted semi-arid lands and wetlands into settler colonial productivity. Indeed, the very notion of 'reclamation' reflects the white settler colonial self-image and its self-aggrandising

tendencies as a people able and destined to tame a wilderness bereft of humanity into sacred land (Griffith 2018). The story of dams and reservoirs and their inherent dispossessing nature is very much one embedded in the Liberal evolution of water accessibility and in recognising who has rights to it and who does not. For example, the doctrine of riparianism, a tenet water rights framework of English common law, reflects the understanding of water as common property and a natural right. The use of this framework is geographically relevant as it reflects the temperate climate of Great Britain where fresh water is widely accessible and was therefore a natural fit to the temperate geographies of the eastern United States. In essence, riparianism prohibited the diversion of water from natural channels to benefit non-riparian land, and as developed by the United States court system, landowners with fresh water running through their lands could make 'reasonable use' of water so long as it did not affect downstream proprietors (Bromley 2001). It establishes a perceived system of equity that commodifies water into a communal good of riparian owners. As riparianism prohibited diversion from the natural stream to suit individual needs, settler colonial governance developed a new system of recognition, changing the 'rules of the game' (Scott 1995: 215) to fit its own need to expand and dispossess further through water diversion.

The prior appropriation doctrine was one way to exit the limits of riparian water usage in the largely arid western United States. The prior appropriation doctrine, which governs water usage in the western United States to date, is a Liberal water rights framework that allocates the use and ownership of water resources on a first come, first served basis, and is one that relies on the logics of *terra nullius* to remove Indigenous sovereignty and relations from waterways. There had already been legislation in the 19th century to encourage settlers to rescue arid and wetlands in exchange for ownership. Most importantly, if these lands could be saved, or framed in a way that they had the potential to be saved, then they could be settled and claimed under the American settler colonial banner. The 1855 Swamp Lands Act and the 1877 Desert Lands Act represent attempts made by the state to increase settlement of a perceived uninhabited West. Eventually adopted in some form by all western states,[29] prior appropriation ultimately aided these acts and led to the development of arid lands as it allowed individuals to divert water away from the courses of waterways in order to 'reclaim arid land'. Claire and Surprise (2022: 160) also note the civilising mission of reclamation, quoting William Hammond Hall (1846-1934), the first State Engineer appointed in California in

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[29] These states include Oregon, Washington, California, Nevada, Montana, Idaho, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, with nine adopting prior appropriation as the sole water-use doctrine (Billington et al 2005).

1878-1889: 'to convert arid environments and wetlands to agriculture was…necessary for "civilisation" to flourish'. Developed during the mid-19th century, the prior appropriation doctrine appeared to 'democratise' western development, as a settler did not have to be a landowner with riparian water rights to access water. This would have confined development of the only to natural water ways and make such properties only affordable to large landowners and corporations (Bromley 2001). Simultaneously, prior appropriation led to a heavy commodification of water and was premised on a 'first come, first serve' basis, thus disadvantaging settlers who came to the west later on in its development and developing water monopolies where new settlers had difficulties in accessing water. Ultimately this shows that the prior appropriation policy was more concerned about growing land ownership of western lands than it was about the production of the lands themselves.

Prior appropriation 'placed a great deal of value on the work ethic of the individual to appropriate water and reclaim arid land quickly', as Bromley states (2001: 212). 'The rationale of the prior appropriation system is to protect the expectations of those who invest in water diversions from interference by those who enter the picture later.' Claire and Surprise (2022: 156) note of California and its own water politics that 'reclamation in California cannot be disentangled from the settler colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples, as all agricultural and water development of the state is contingent upon the expropriation of land'. With prior appropriation, water became currency to see success in western settlement, as land was only valuable if it had water rights attached to it. While prior appropriation drove quick individual settlement, and the economic expansion of the west, the market was not able to sustain large populations, especially as community water rights were secondary to individual ones (Bromley 2001). Claire and Surprise (2022: 161-62) summarise that 'the limits of capitalist reclamation and water management required the state to intervene in, remake, and expand the "conditions" of capitalist production'. The scholars locate two crises unfolding for the settler colonial project: 'a fundamental economic crisis for agricultural capital, and a politico-ideological threat to the expansion of the settler colonial project' (Claire and Surprise 2022: 161-62). These crises demanded direct intervention by the settler colonial state. The Desert Lands Act, for example, was not complemented by solutions to collective water access (Claire and Surprise 2022). The technology of dams and reservoirs engaged directly with this concern, and their ability to control and demonstrate the capability to tame fresh water would assist in providing necessary resources for population centres to grow, especially where resources needed to be extracted.

In key ways dams and reservoirs interacted with, and reflected, the agenda of the conservationists discussed in the previous chapter. With limited resources also being a concern, the

argument of preservationists to allow rivers to be left in their natural state for aesthetic reasons was not an efficient use of water. For conservationists and American Progressivists, who adamantly believed in the protection of individual rights, rivers would need technology to ensure that water would not be wasted in entering the ocean without human usage first and that population growth would continue in the West to support the extraction and production of resources. Then-President Theodore Roosevelt (1907) conveyed this urgency in his 1907 State of the Union Address, where he stated:

> [i]n the arid region it is water, not land, which measures production. The western half of the United States would sustain a population greater than that of our whole country to-day if the waters now run to waste were saved and used for irrigation. The forest and water problems are perhaps the most vital internal questions of the United States.

For Liberalism, the availability of water is but a mere obstacle 'to be overcome with improved technological control over the landscape' (Claire and Surprise 2022: 161). As Jackson (2013: 201) summarises, for American Progressivism and its conservationist leadership 'nature could be tamed through acts of technological will'. This culminated in the Reclamation Act of 1902, launching one of the 'biggest public works programs in American history' (Pisani 2003: 393). The legislation reflected a white possessive agenda, one articulated through an ethos of manifest destiny and furthered what the New York Times stated at the time as 'the impulse which has carried our vigorous race from the little fringe along the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific and far into Asian waters' (in Pisani 1992: 319-320). What is more, though, the 1902 legislation was intended to democratise water out of fear that the working settler class would rebel, given the revolutions seen in other countries, citing the then-recent Filipino revolution against the Spanish amongst others. Through this lens, it also saw water democratisation, or at least its illusion, as necessary for long term survival. Roosevelt was consistent in his messaging that the poor efficiency of land-use was challenged as an existential threat to the nation. Roosevelt (1907) connected efficient water usage and the 'permanent' settlement of the West to the prosperity of future generations of settlers:

> there must be the look ahead, there must be a realisation of the fact that to waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed...

The legislation provided the funds for not just the sale of large swathes of public lands in the western states, it also took lands from reservations and allotments that were deemed to be 'poorly managed'.

Reservations, as noted in previous chapters, were a primary means of limiting Indigenous mobilities, concentrating Indigenous sovereignty claims, and assimilating Indigenous peoples into the settler workforce. The beginning era of dams and reservoirs was contextualised by a barrage of assimilationist policies like the 1887 Allotment Act and the 1883 Code of Indian Offences, which were purposefully designed to denigrate and dismantle Indigenous sovereignty on reservations across the United States. The Reclamation Act of 1902 began efforts to further displace and dispossess Indigenous persons who had been put on allotments through the 1887 Act. Pisani (2003: 393) notes:

> [t]he legislation provided that money from the sale of public land in the western half of the nation, including the Great Plains, would be used to build dams and canals to lure, in an expression of the time, 'the landless man to the manless land'.

In accordance with the *Johnson v M'Intosh* (1823) Supreme Court decision that enshrined *terra nullius* in settler colonial law, the federal government has remained the only entity permitted to sell Indigenous lands and thus was able to cancel the allotments to allow for infrastructural development and settlement. The lands that many allottees were put on were considered untenable, designed to encourage Indigenous peoples to abandon their lands. These lands only became more valuable through the eyes of conservationists and industrialists (e.g. hydroelectric, timber). Middleton Manning (2018: 99) notes:

> [m]any allottees were initially allotted forested or rocky lands, only to have those lands canceled due to their timber or hydroelectric value and then purchased or claimed by either agencies or private companies for hydroelectric development or public conservation by the US Forest Service.

The Office of Indian Affairs in California saw Indigenous peoples becoming 'land rich and cash poor' in the allotment system. Though the 1908 *Winters v United States* Supreme Court decision upheld that reservation lands had rights to the waters on their lands through the prior appropriation doctrine this was seldom recognised and was violated on numerous occasions with various justifications. Middleton Manning (2018: 68) notes that in 1910, 'to remedy this situation for Indian people that the government deemed "noncompetent" to manage their own affairs, the secretary of the Interior assumed the authority to sell Indian allotments'. In 1912, the Indian Office made a

report that Indigenous peoples 'were not concentrated upon a given area of public land' and 'were not maintaining tribal relations' – and would be better served by the sale of their lands based on 'their value for agriculture, timber, and power purposes' (Middleton Manning 2018: 68).

Of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), historian Pisani (2003: 391) claims that 'no federal agency began life with a bolder mission, and none has done more to shape the economy and society of the arid West'. The BOR came out of the 1902 Reclamation Act initially as the 'US Reclamation Service' and was tasked with responding to the water needs of settlers in western states (Govaerts 2016). While BOR's name officially refers to the reclaiming of inarable land for settlement and the more common use of reclamation to allude to irrigation, the double entendre of its name stands as a stark reminder of its active role in dispossessing lands and waters away from Indigenous Nations and 'reclaiming' it for new white settler populations (Griffith 2018). The significance of the BOR at its beginnings was highlighted in the words of Theodore Roosevelt:

> [t]he work of the Reclamation Service in developing the larger opportunities of the Western half of our country for irrigation is more important than almost any other movement. The constant purpose of the government in connection with the Reclamation Service has been to use the water resources of the public lands for the ultimate greatest good of the greatest number; in other words, to put upon the land permanent home-makers, to use and develop it for themselves and for their children and children's children. . . (Roosevelt 1907).

From 1902 through the 1970s, the BOR built dams and other western water projects to control and commodify water based on various community-based needs (Bromley 2001). Simultaneously, the BOR extended the reach of settler colonialism from land grabbing to water robbing, whereby the BOR held say over where water was diverted and how water was stored (Griffith 2018). Griffith (2018: 134-135) links the work of the BOR to settler colonialism, pinpointing the BOR's monthly publication titled 'The Magazine' as a window into the settler colonial intentions of the BOR's projects. She notes its reporting of a 1925 Reclamation Conference entitled 'Smoothing the Path of Colonization' that advocated applying 'our vast colonisation experience to our present day problems' to quoting a pro-reclamation congressman who saw that the arid lands of the West 'have been kept there, no doubt, under some divine provision as a residuum awaiting the necessity for their development to constitute homes, rural life, and economic development'. Indeed, the BOR relied heavily on the messaging of *terra nullius*, that the lands were barren and empty for the taking and relied on the urgency to develop to expand its purview. This is to say that despite the desire of progressivism to hold up individual rights, the Reclamation Act still benefited largely spectators and

corporate farms. Pisani (2003: 398) states that federal reclamation provided as much as 'an experiment in social Darwinism as an object lesson in the wise and efficient use of natural resources…As the first director of the reclamation program, Newell profoundly believed that some farmers had to fail so that others could succeed'. Ultimately, reality reflects a priority of settler colonialism in the United States to quickly accumulate and develop lands over the economic security of individual settlers. As Bromley (2003: 223-4) remarks, 'dams failed to promote the rights of the majority, as envisioned under progressivism. Instead, dams provided water to the benefit of only a minority of the population'. The Reclamation Act and the BOR were produced from a conservationist sense of urgency to use and distribute water more efficiently. In response, it proliferated the dam and reservoir as Wiindigo infrastructure to expand settler reach for the economic prosperity and survivability of the settler colonial project.

Responding to Economic and Security Demands

Like the urgency conjured by both preservationists and conservationists to create national parks and sustainably yielding public lands, dams and reservoirs addressed newfound urgencies created by the settler colonial economy. As discussed in previous sections, dams and reservoirs addressed the urgency of national and economic expansion in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Great Depression of 1929 and the economic spiral of the settler economy posed an existential crisis to the survivability of the American settler colonial project. In the wake of the Great Depression, the administration of then-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) (1933-1945) produced the New Deal – a package of new legislation, bureaucratic offices, and public works - as a government-led response to securing the economic well-being of the American settler project. As Smith (2006: 258) notes, the New Deal asserted a vision of 'a development-oriented state', and one that saw the government take a lead in proposing and constructing Wiindigo infrastructure across the country. The conservation movement of the New Deal would follow the same ideology of that of the conservation movement in the early 20th century headed by the likes of Theodore Roosevelt and white supremacist eugenicist Madison Grant. Tocci and Ryan (2022: 237) comment that both conservation movements 'involved beliefs in scientific management and a deep connection between nature and man…In a clear connection to the early twentieth-century eugenics movement, both conservation movements argued that land and society could be engineered carefully and

purposefully'. Following the Great Depression, the demand to tame large waterways through large public projects skyrocketed. The vision of unemployed workers and struggling farmers helped propel large dam projects into the settler colonial psyche as both an urgency and a necessity. Through the implementation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which helped construct dams, proponents of the New Deal even believed that white immigrant groups labelled as 'ethnic' and 'degenerate' could redeem themselves and be of benefit to society by re-engineering unoccupied or 'poorly managed' lands into the American settler ethnogeography (Tocci and Ryan 2022: 242). Smith states (2006: 258-259), '[v]iewed as producers of infrastructure, it is clear that the public works programs built an astonishing variety of projects: roads, dams, highways, bridges, airports, sewage systems, housing, and military bases'. Within all of this, the New Deal also provided a settler colonial development framework that the state could implement across the country and abroad as an exportable standard of American modernity. What is more, the construction of these public works mainly targeted the economic rejuvenation of the white settler population, while excluding Indigenous, African American, and racialised populations, leaving them largely unemployed and at the side-lines of national progress (Smith 2006).

From the Public Works Administration, produced out of the New Deal, large dam projects provided for various needs of the colonial settler: socio-economic security through the provision of jobs and hydroelectric power; flood mitigation and protection for white settlements downstream; and engineering projects that would be held up as symbols of American destiny. The dams of the New Deal were constructed from the 1930s to as late as the 1970s. Though dams offered jobs to an underemployed white settler workforce, they did not contribute in helping to reignite the economy and yet were continuously promoted as an essential part of the nation's expanding industrial infrastructure (Jackson 2013). Until the Great Depression, the BOR built 36 dams and water projects, whereas the New Deal catalysed federal agencies to construct more than 1,000 large dams between 1930-1980.

As reasoning to construct dams and reservoirs evolved, flood control and disaster risk reduction have become the dominant narratives under which they are constructed. At the heart of disaster prevention and risk reduction in the United States is a biopolitics of determining whose lives and lifeways are more important and are also most cost-effective to preserve. Simultaneously, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) infrastructure has at times disguised itself under a veil of ambiguous urgency, instigating Liberal settler colonial structures of recognition to determine which lives and lifeways must be sacrificed for national progress and survival. Unsurprisingly, in line with LaDuke's concept

of Wiindigo infrastructure (LaDuke and Cowen 2020), DRR is cannibalistic – forcing the relocations of hundreds of communities excluded from the white middle and upper class settler populace. Prior to the impetus of dam and reservoir construction in the late 19th century, the United States mostly used levees for DRR, which require continuous maintenance and were often rendered ineffective in flood control. Dams were seen as a more adaptable means of disaster prevention, in being able to contain and release flood water depending on the needs of those downstream. The structures, though multi-use to support irrigation, municipal water supply, or hydroelectric power, were inherently designed to first and foremost capture floods (Jackson 2013).

One of the main actors in the justification of dam construction for the purpose of disaster prevention and mitigation is the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE). To understand ACE as an actor that perpetuates settler colonial ecological violence, however, we must look at its founding as first and foremost an institution of national defence. ACE was established shortly after the declared sovereignty of the United States and was tasked with the duties of enhancing national defence infrastructure from improving rivers, harbours, and transportation systems, which would permit faster military mobilisation in case of war (Schneiders 1997). In essence, power was initially vested in ACE to design war infrastructure for the protection of the settler colonial populace and providing an efficient geography for mobilisation against threats to the state, which, prior to conclusion of the Nez Perce War of 1877, constituted Indigenous Nations. ACE's evolution to being a central figure in the creation of civilian infrastructure certainly reflects a lingering blurred line that comes with its role in assisting the expansion of American boundaries through offensive militaristic means. The mission of ACE was and continues to be explicitly scientific. The Corps has been historically led by trained engineers, 'schooled above the rank of military officer yet guided by military objectives' (Koester and Byran 2021: 6). In its own words today, ACE (2021) holds the mission to 'deliver vital engineering solutions, in collaboration with our partners, to secure our Nation, energise our economy, and reduce disaster risk'.

Massive federal investment into flood control initiatives would not come until the rise of the New Deal in the 1930. From the 1940s until the fall of dam construction in the mid-2000s, flood control became the preeminent narrative in building dams and reservoirs (Ho et al 2017). The construction of the Kinzua Dam was framed in the context of protecting the city of Pittsburgh downstream from the Allegheny River, which had come to experience worse flooding in recent years. The then-Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes (1933-1946) (1951: xiv), who was largely responsible for implementing the New Deal, stated 'no more lawless or irresponsible federal group

than the Corps of Army Engineers has ever attempted to operate in the United States, either outside or within the law'. At a Congressional hearing on the construction of the Kinzua Dam, following its construction, Congressman Cannon (1923-1964) from Missouri stated (Taylor: 1961a: 6-7) that ACE had misrepresented the costs of the entire project as a whole:

[i]n many instances when the Committee had under consideration the advisability of undertaking a project we discovered after it was too late that the cost of completion was a number of times the figures given us by the Corps of Engineers. I hope members of the House will find time to read through the hearings and note the discrepancy between the costs estimated by the Engineers when the project was initiated and the cost when completed…It is impossible to escape the conclusion that they were either incompetent or deliberately misleading.

The initial construction of dams and reservoirs fed into providing an illusion of protection, often catching settler populaces off guard when they failed to prevent flooding and contributing to water scarcity (Jackson 2013; Di Baldasarre 2018). This can be seen, for example, in the initial development of monumental dams and how their design provided the illusion of inherently providing safety. As Jackson notes (2013: 27), of the first engineer and director of the US Reclamation Service, Frederick H. Newell (1907-1914), he 'specifically sought to implement massive designs that – he hoped – would not provoke feelings of terror but, in fact, would allay public fears and inspire public confidence'. Newell stated (in Pisani 2003: 98):

[p]eople must not merely be told that they are substantial… but when the plain citizen visits the works he must see for himself that there is every indication of the permanency and stability of a great storage dam. . .. [H]e must feel, to the very innermost recesses of his consciousness, that the structure is beyond question…

The scale of dams was designed to create an idea and an illusion of permanence, when in reality they required constant maintenance. These massive designs became the hallmark of the western American dam, ultimately reflecting the settler ability to tame nature and ensure their own security.

Enveloping Dams into the American Settler Ethnogeography

For most of this century, politicians have eagerly rushed in, amidst cheering crowds, to claim credit for the construction of 75,000 dams all across America…That means we have been

building, on average, one large dam a day, every single day, since the Declaration of Independence. Many of these dams have [become] monuments, expected to last forever.

- Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt (1998)

Like the previous chapter, where national parks provided shrines to settler presence and permanence, dams and reservoirs remain active representation of settler colonial modernity and its ability to tame and engineer nature to support the settler population and economic growth. Through this understanding, dams and reservoirs become physical representations of *terra sacer*, where the saving of unoccupied, accursed lands by laying waste to others is realised in a grandiose temple form. As Bromley (2001: 218), notes they 'were objective symbols of manifest destiny and America's dominance over nature'. Settler patriotism, rooted in imperialism and the belief in manifest destiny, also helped inform the scale of dams and helped moralise their construction. This was in spite of their enormous costs that the government and businesses involved would seldom recover. As taming wilderness was inherent to the national settler psyche, dams grew in size to become a new validation of American settler land and water use. The monumental dam era, a period of constructing large scale dams at enormous cost that lasted from the 1900s to the 1970s, fed into the white settler American complex over the lack of cultural spatial sites in comparison to European metropoles in a similar manner as national parks. In the time immediately after the post-1902 Reclamation Act, for example, the BOR broke two world records in constructing the Shoshone Dam in north-western Wyoming, completed in 1910, which was the highest dam in the world at the time, while the Roosevelt Dam became the tallest masonry structure in the world after its construction in 1911 (Billington 2005; Jackson 2013). The desire, then, to build dams of unprecedented size was many times premised more on ideological fervour to engineer grand projects and landscapes than on economic need.

Jackson (2013: 218) notes that the dams took on a symbolic significance at a time where the economic stability of the country was brought into question, ultimately proving that the 'American spirit had not been broken'. The monumentality of dams became more than engineering landscapes but rather a celebration of a burgeoning new American economy:

[i]n the face of adversity, the United States and its citizenry could accomplish wondrous things. Monumentality became a driving force underlying the construction and celebration of the massive dams that, for many people, gave physical definition to the New Deal (Jackson 2013: 218).

As noted earlier, in the aftermath of the Great Depression, there was a rush of both monumental and small dam construction to provide jobs for unemployed white American workers and irrigation for farmers. For example, the Grand Coulee Dam in the state of Washington, which is host to the largest power station in the United States (BOR 2016a), was born from a settler desire to tame grand landscapes for the settler colonial ethnogeography. This culminated in the Columbian River Basin Project, which sought to yield arable lands for the largely arid eastern Washington State, as well as produce cheap hydroelectricity and create jobs for the near predominantly white settler populace of the Northwest. In this case it was damming the Columbia River as one of the largest and most significant rivers to Indigenous Nations in the region (Justine 2021). The constructions of dams in the Northwest were particularly laden with commentary reflecting the manifest destiny of the American nation in taming nature into its will. Prominent geographer Dr Russell Smith (1874-1966) (US Congress 1932: 217-218) articulated this sentiment in the *American Magazine*, noting:

> [i]t is in the Northwest where I expect American civilisation, in many ways, to reach its maximum…In this Northwest of which I speak, I anticipate that, man for man, Americans will eventually realise their greatest achievement; almost certainly their greatest physical achievement, perhaps also their highest mental achievement – in science, literature, and the arts…As to mechanical energy, the Cascades and the Coast Range, along with the Rockies, give the cities between Portland and Vancouver access to many millions of horsepower of hydroelectric energy. Nowhere in Europe nor in the Eastern United States is there any location for water-power resource that rivals it.

The framing of the Pacific Northwest as a white settler homeland was pervasive at the time (Griffith 2018). At the construction site of the Grand Coulee Dam, the then-President FDR (1934), reinforced this sentiment:

> [w]hen you cross the Mountain States and that portion of the Coast States that lie well back from the ocean, you are impressed by those great stretches of physical territory, just land, territory now practically unused but destined someday to contain the homes of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of citizens like us, a territory to be developed by the Nation and for the Nation. As we were coming down the river today…I could not help thinking, as everyone does, of all that water running down unchecked to the sea.

FDR's commentary clearly underpins both manifest destiny and *terra sacer*: without white American settler development intervention, lands and waters of the Northwest would remain 'unchecked' and 'unused'. This contrasts with the fact that the Columbia River was host to large populations of

salmon, an ontological and epistemological relation of guidance and a cornerstone of the traditional economies of many Indigenous Nations in the Northwest region of the US and in Western Canada. When the Grand Coulee Dam was constructed in Washington State and its reservoir filled in 1940, Kettle Falls was flooded, a fishing site central to Colville, Spokane, and other Indigenous creation stories across the region.[30] To mark the occasion as the Grand Coulee Dam was filled, the Colville peoples who saw their lands condemned by the dam, hosted the Ceremony of Tears, a three-day event attracting around 10,000 mostly Indigenous attendees to acknowledge, show respect for, and say goodbye to the salmon and the sacred site of Kettle Falls (Sprague 2011; McKay and Renk 2002). Senator Clarence Dill of Washington State (1923-1935), a long-time supporter of the Grand Coulee Dam, made a speech at the Ceremony of Tears, stating:

> [t]he Indians have fished here for thousands of years…They love this spot above all others on their reservation because it is a source both of food and beauty. We should see to it that the electricity which the great dam at Grand Coulee produces shall be delivered to all the people without profit, so that the Indians of future generations, as well as the white men, will find the change made here a great benefit to the people (Justine 2021).

The loss of Kettle Falls, along with many other traditional fishing sites, was reduced to being simply a casualty for the sake of national progress. The Columbia Basin Project categorically failed to economically stimulate the region of eastern Washington State, and those living on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Spokane Tribe of Indians Reservation saw higher electricity bills than the settler towns that spawned from Grand Coulee's construction (Griffith 2018; Sprague 2011). The dam was justified nevertheless for producing electricity in time for the Second World War and the bourgeoning American war industry.

The symbolic nature of dams as national icons perhaps peaked during the Second World War where their hydroelectricity and waters for irrigation were critical in supporting the American war industry while they protected cities from floods (Pisani 2003). In the aftermath, dams were framed as powering the 'arsenal of democracy' (Jackson 2013: 258). In the post-New Deal and post-Second World War eras, dams and their hydroelectricity were symbols of a new modernity that

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[30] Jim DeSautel of the Colville Confederated Tribes articulated similar sentiments (1977): '[t]he river was the central and most power element in the religious, social, economic, and ceremonial life of my people. Suddenly, all of this was wiped out. The river was blocked, the land was flooded. The river we had known was destroyed. Our homesites were gone. The fordings were made impossible. The far banks were beyond our reach. The root-digging prairies were cut off. The salmon came no more, and with the disappearance of the salmon, our traditional economy was lost forever.'

supported an electrified infrastructure. After the New Deal, electricity became associated with an American settler modernity and a 'birth right of national citizenship' (Jackson 2013: 258). Monumental dams also brought the federal government into the business of overseeing the production and distribution of electric power and has been a continued legacy of these dams. What is more, these monumental dams in the post-Great Depression period were built with multiuse in mind, yielding measures for flood control, power, irrigation, water supply, and recreational sites. The multiple use of dams fed into an 'American exceptionalism' and the belief of manifest destiny by practically displaying how American engineering could also repurpose dams that were dated from the late 19th and 20th centuries.

The association of dams and reservoirs with the American landscape is reflective of their realisation as a settler ethnogeography. While dams have somewhat faded as prominent symbols of settler American ingenuity in the past forty years, given their more widely publicised ecological destruction, it is still necessary to state the narratives that helped proliferate them throughout the country. Both monumental and pastoral dams were seen as beautifying the landscape and became symbols of Americana. Jackson (2013: 3) summarises this 'as strange as it may seem to some modern day observers, in the not so distant past dams were commonly perceived, promoted, and appreciated as a way to improve – and even beautify – the environment'. For example, small pastoral dams that blended into the surrounding landscape collapsed into the vignette of America, showing they could manipulate water ways to serve a human purpose but not detract from the environment they were simultaneously harming. What is more, dam reservoirs served to not only lay waste to Indigenous lands and sites, but also provided settlers with their own geographies and recreational spaces. Jackson (2013: 211-212) underlines that:

> small ponds and lakes formed by dams have often become so integrated into communities that people lose sense that they are actually artifacts of human creation. They are perceived not as interventions into but simply as attributes of the local environment…they can constitute more passive appreciations of an expanse of water surrounded by familiar trees, buildings, and cottages – a pastoral environment in which dams are not intruders but components of a cherished local landscape.

Like Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake that was created by flooding Kettle Falls, reservoirs have helped settler colonialism manipulate geographies to help create the illusion of their own stewardship. Indeed, many dams and reservoirs reflected figures significant to their creation, settler history, or to government appropriated Indigenous names in a way that paid homage to a seemingly vanished

people. This can be seen also in the case of the Garrison Dam in North Dakota and the resulting Lake Sakakawea, named after the Lemhi Shoshone woman who accompanied Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and Chief Joseph Dam in Washington State, named after the Nez Perce who resisted forced relocation by the United States government (Griffith 2018; Berman 1988). Speaking to this sentiment, Lakota/Dakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr. (1980: xvi) states that the white settler 'will never let go of the Indian image because he thinks that by some clever manipulation he can achieve an authenticity which can never be his'. The desire to engineer landscapes for the settler was then both to help dispossess Indigenous relations with their own lands and to celebrate their perceived indigeneity in the creation of their own geographies.

Aiding the Goal of Assimilation

Similar to national parks, dams and reservoirs catalysed the forced appropriation of Indigenous lands that were, within the colonial reservation system, under Indigenous legal ownership. The economic development that dams and reservoirs claimed to catalyse was also used as good reason to assimilate Indigenous peoples. Much dams construction did not offer compensation or assist with resettlement, but the framing of dam construction often offered the illusion of a democratic distribution of its economic yield. The construction of the Grand Coulee Dam forcibly displaced 2,000 members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville reservation and between 100-250 members of the Spokane Tribe (Ortolano et al 2000). During the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam in the 1930s, for example, the Work Projects Administration put out a press release (in McKay and Renk 2002: 31) articulating the benefits that Indigenous peoples from the Colville Indian and Spokane reservations would realise:

> [m]ost of the 3,000 persons who were forced to move accepted their fate philosophically…Many felt that this forced evacuation released them from a bondage that held them in the great canyon where tradition and custom bound them inevitably to a life of drudgery and poverty.

This forced displacement was often framed as liberation from segregated lifestyles that were stuck in cycles of poverty and an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to finally join settler society. The post-Second World War-era would see a dam-building craze that resulted in further 'civilising' through forced displacements and resettlements.

Indeed, the country saw the largest number of dams constructed during the 'Termination Era', a period that began in the 1940s and ended in the 1960s, where the US federal government was attempting to dissolve the remnants of the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous Nations and the United States (Fixico 1996). In line with Hauptmann (2014), the aims of Termination largely fell within four categories: to end federal treaty relationships and trust responsibilities with certain Indigenous nations; the repeal of federal laws that set Indigenous peoples apart from other American citizens; the removal of guardianship and supervision over certain individual Indigenous persons; and the transfer of power from the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs to individual states. While these policies were reflected in legislation, the mentality of termination was pervasive. As Rosier points out (1995: 361): 'Congress was…dominated by a 'termination' mentality when it came to Indian affairs in the 1940s through the 1960s, during which time monumental dams and reservoirs were ordered to be built'. Many members of Congress wanted Indigenous peoples stripped of their federal protections or wanted to help assimilate them, often framing themselves as 'friends of the Indian' (Wilkinson and Biggs 1977). Under the termination policy, it is estimated 109 Tribes lost their federal recognition and thus their legally recognised nation-to-nation relationship with the United States, which in turn affected 1,369,000 acres of Indigenous lands and over 12,000 Indigenous people (Gilio-Whitaker 2019). Indeed, the termination mentality assisted in the construction of monumental dams directly on reservations, permitting the construction of settler geographies for the moralising narratives, mentioned previously in this chapter, that would assist in the legal dispossession of lands. Termination, though, was framed as necessary in the name of national progress and articulated a settler *terra sacer* mentality that sought the 'trespass, extraction, and appropriation' of Indian Trust Lands held by the federal government as their trustee (Middleton Manning 2018: 10).

Like the allotment era, the government continuously found excuses to break law and appropriate lands that were legally under Indigenous ownership and governance. By the end of the 20th century, there were 17,537 reservoirs and impoundments alone on lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau for Indian Affairs covering around 507,139 surface acres of tribal lands (Reddy 1993). While some scholarship denies that dams were constructed to deliberately dispossess and injure Indigenous peoples and their lifeways (Scudder 2006), there are clearly documented precedents of this being the case. The aforementioned moralising narratives in particular helped propel dam constructions forwards, providing the US government with the justifications needed to dissolve treaty obligations when the opportunity arose.

As Indigenous Nations and communities negotiated treaties with the United States under the established legal authority of 'plenary power', or the notion that Congress retains the expansive power to regulate treaties (Steele 2016), treaties could be rescinded when circumstances deemed it urgent. This was especially true for purposes of flood control and disaster risk reduction where biopolitics valued the safety and modernity of settler colonial settlements more than 'unused' reservation lands or Indigenous settlements. The Pick-Sloan Plan, which called for numerous dams to be constructed on the Missouri River in the midwestern United States, saw a widespread resource grab that violated the legal rights of Indigenous Nations across the region. Collectively, the Pick-Sloan Plan took 352,000 acres of legally Indigenous-owned lands to construct dams and respective reservoirs. The Garrison Dam, built in 1953, flew in the face of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, which initially protected 12.5 million acres of reservation lands. In the case of the Garrison Dam, 'the need for the dam was manufactured' (Middleton Manning 2018: 6). Woehlke of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in the lead up to the construction of the Garrison Dam, condemned the Army Corps of Engineers and that they instigated the choice to cause 'irreparable injury' to the peoples of the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, home of the Three Affiliated Tribes. This was even though the construction of the dam was unnecessary for the purposes of flood control and irrigation. Woehlke remarked (US Congress 1945: 19):

> we have endeavored to point out to the Army Corps of Engineers that the taking of the best part of the land of the Three Affiliated Tribes would work an irreparable injury to them. We have endeavoured to point out that according to the record, the Garrison Dam itself was not favored by the BOR, that in its Sloan report the BOR took the stand that flood control and irrigation could all be taken care of by the other dams that had been proposed, and that the Garrison Dam was not necessary for flood control, that it would not produce any irrigation facilities, and that perhaps even navigation could be taken care of completely by the other system of reservoirs that were planned on that river.

According to historian Van Develder (2006) there was complete absence of protest from within Congress as the Fort Laramie Treaty was formally broken and the dam flooded 156,000 acres of reservation lands. Govaert (2016) concludes as well that the location of the Garrison, as well as other Pick-Sloan dams and reservoirs were indeed deliberately chosen to flood lands for purposes of dispossession.

The construction of Kinzua Dam, which was finished in 1965, is another clear example of dams and reservoirs directly dispossessing Indigenous Nations with the help of the Termination

mentality. The example of Kinzua offers the precedent of the lengths the federal government was willing to go to in order to moralise dam construction and the United States out of treaty obligations. The lands condemned by the Kinzua Dam were protected by the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, the oldest treaty between the United States government and an Indigenous Nation (Hauptmann 2014; Rosier 1995). The lands protected were also home to the last Seneca communities that practiced the traditional Longhouse ways of the Haudenosaunee (Hauptmann 2014).[31] Though then President-John F. Kennedy stated in 1960 that 'there would be no change in treaty or contractual relationships without the consent of the tribes concerned' and promised his administration would not 'discharge its moral obligations to our first Americans' (Atkinson 1961a), Congress and Kennedy broke the treaty, ultimately justifying that the decision was for the safety of Pittsburgh and its economic prosperity, as well as national security. Though termination was not articulated, the intention to further accumulate Indigenous lands was apparent. Cyrus Roberts Vance (US Congress 1963), Secretary of the Army (1962-64), who had oversight of Army Corps of Engineers, stated at the time 'there is no reasonable alternative to using the Seneca lands involved for the Allegheny project'. However, Arthur Morgan, an acclaimed engineer, had already offered the administration a way out of breaking the Treaty of Canandaigua. The plan was ultimately more cost effective, prevented flooding, and would also require fewer people to relocate, albeit for the fact that those relocated would be white settler communities in Pennsylvania (Hauptmann 2014).[32] Ultimately, the intent to terminate relations, dissolve Indigenous rights, and the moralising narratives of dam construction helped instigate a change of rules within the colonial politics of recognition that assisted the US government in severing its oldest treaty with an Indigenous Nation. In a 1963 community hearing (US Congress 1963: 25) over the construction of Kinzua, a discussion between Congressman Haley of Florida (1953-1973) and a local settler articulates this change of rules:

> Congressman Haley: I think it was a horrible tragedy, a horribly tragic thing that our powerful Nation would break a solemn and binding obligation between two nations. And that is what it amounts to.
>
> Mr Patterson: At the time this treaty was made, I do not think our President [George Washington], the other people concerned, could foresee what would happen this many years ahead.

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[31] See Hauptmann 2014 who qualifies the felt impacts of the Kinzua Dam on the Allegheny Seneca community.
[32] According to Arthur Morgan, the Senecas would more readily have moved if it was absolutely necessary: 'if the Kinzua Dam were found to be essential to the protection of a great city such as Pittsburgh, in his opinion they would not object' (Taylor: 1961a: 6).

Through this false narrative that the US government had no other means of recourse but to flood Indigenous lands for the purpose of economic and national security, it justified the violation of its own rules while also achieving the goals of Termination as its own separate moralising narrative of dam construction. The relocations and community resettlements in both cases were the other half of the strategy to force Indigenous peoples to assimilate.

As dam and reservoir induced relocations became more commonplace, the Termination Era saw the US government force relocation of Indigenous communities into newly constructed resettlement towns away from soon-to-be flooded valleys. In various instances, these settlements upended communities and individuals from land- and place-based lifeways, forcing them into subpar modern housing. The impact of these relocations was well-known at the time. At the time of the construction of the Garrison Dam, Bureau for Indian Affairs (BIA) agent Ben Reifle (1952) suggested that the relocation of 85 per cent of the Fort Berthold Reservation could even act as a model for terminating the relationship between the government and Three Affiliated Tribes. In his PhD thesis on the relocation, Reifle (1952: 17) summarised the historical implications and slow violence waged through the condemnation of the lands of the Three Affiliated Tribes:

> [t]his is an act that can mark a historical turning point of far-reaching importance. Here has ended the gradual evolution of an ethnic group that was slowly but with certainty moving toward complete assimilation with the larger American community. This is the first instance, since tribes have been placed on reservations, where, by one complete and sweeping stroke, there will be removed every single material vestige of the habitat of a people. They will be torn from everything they, and their fathers before them for generations, have come to know and cherish.

Reifle (1952: 21) concludes on the significance and precedent set by the forced relocation of the Three Affiliated Tribe citizens on the Fort Berthold Reservation:

> [t]he Fort Berthold case, if successfully carried out, could be presented to Congress as one way to get the Government out of this Indian business humanely. The cost at the outset may seem high but in the long run it should be much less than if it were done on a piece-meal basis.

The suggestion posed here obviously appeased the goal of the US government-at-large during the Termination Era. The relocation, however, exacerbated an already ongoing assimilation process by cutting apart the community: 400 residents remained on unflooded lands while around 1,600 were forced to move (Berman 1988). The relocation, disguised as a means of placing Fort Berthold community members into modern housing, became a further assimilationist attempt to wage slow violence and break apart the Fort Berthold community beyond repair.

In the case of Kinzua, nearly 600 citizens of the Seneca Nation were removed for the flooding one-third of their reservation, amounting to over 10,000 acres lost (Hauptmann 2014). Some homes were ransacked and set on fire by ACE in preparation for the flooding of the Seneca Allegheny Reservation. Congressman Haley of Florida (US Congress 1963) articulated the paternalistic and infantilising view held by proponents of the dam:

> [w]e saw a number of homes and a couple of villages already demolished. We recognise that this destruction is being carried out in the interest of progress. I should say, perhaps, progress and safety. But I wonder if it is really progress when I see homes, villages, cemeteries destroyed, families uprooted and forced to scatter, all ties disrupted, and American citizens forced to be relocated…
>
> However, we move on, and let us face the future. The Seneca Nation will be paid for its losses…I also hope, and may I add, expect the Senecas to be careful and wise in the expenditure of the Federal funds they receive…It is quite possible that this tragedy may be turned into a blessing and that the members of this once powerful nation may develop their remaining holdings into a community of which they can be proud and pleased.

Haley not only paternally alluded to the Senecas as otherwise unwise and uncareful, but he also ultimately framed the Senecas out of their ancestral claims to land. In making them appear as average American citizens, their lifestyles could be replaced through financial compensation, which would even assist their development. The felt effects of dislocation underline the falsehood of this narrative. As the communities were eventually resettled into so-called modern housing, the planned community and resulting loss of their lifeways had detrimental effects on the Alleghany Senecas (Hauptmann 2014). The Garrison and Kinzua dams offer clear examples of a trend whereby the *terra sacer* moralising narratives of dam construction married with the settler colonial to annihilate Indigenous lifeways and existence.

Moving to the Other Side of the Colonial Binary

This chapter has looked to show how settler colonialism justified another project and an accompanying regime of environmental governance. Dams and reservoirs have come to define the American landscape as a settler colonial ethnogeographic feature, sustaining the narrative of manifest destiny to tame lands and waters into serving industrial modernity and settler nation-

building. Simultaneously, unlike national parks which have remained largely romanticised and unproblematic in the settler public eye, dams and reservoirs offer an example of a settler colonial environmental project falling from settler grace because of new and pre-existing moralising narratives around how the environment should be governed, ranging from economic security to spiritual preservationist to ecological concerns. For example, as dam construction slowly came to a halt towards the end of the 20th century, it was argued that dams even became a national security risk in case of a thermonuclear strike as they concentrated water and power systems while encouraging the growth of urban populations (Jackson 2013). Preservationists, however, have led the longest charge against the creation of dams for their own ideological and *terra sacer*-based values of preserving land for illusions of pristine wilderness. This debate between environmental preservationists and industrial conservationists has created a new space that further erases Indigenous existence, reinforcing the binary illusion that the environment is either a sacred space to preserve or an accursed space to save from mismanagement and make commodifiable; if lands must be wasted and made untenable to achieve these ends, then so be it. The compromise has been that both solutions can co-exist so long as Indigenous, place-based relations and stewardship of lands is not in the foreground of land and water governance. The outcome of this compromise is not just widespread ecological ruin, but another means of slow violence where nature becomes framed as a luxury commodity and wasted lands are used to further wage slow violence via containment against racialised populations, who are providing the labour for the white settler colonial economy to exist.

A seminal moment in this debate is the flooding of the Hetch Hetchy Valley in 1923 within Yosemite National Park to construct the O'Shaughnessy Dam to add to the water supply of San Francisco. Preservationists at the time, most notably John Muir, focused on the loss of scenic values and how the character of the valley would be negatively transformed by the dam and reservoir. As Bromley (2001: 218) underlines, 'a sense of how dams interfered with natural systems and ecological balance was not part of the Hetch Hetchy controversy'. The fact that the Hetch Hetchy Valley held significance to the Miwok and Paiute peoples was absent from the debate, made irrelevant by the more urgent arguments of preservationists and conservationists. While Hetch Hetchy was eventually flooded and considered a great loss to preservationists, the preservationist movement saw its first win in 1950 against the construction of dams and reservoirs in the case of the Echo Park dams. The two dams, proposed originally in 1941 on rivers in Colorado, threatened to flood Dinosaur National Park. For preservationists it was about the integrity of national parks, and in this specific case, Dinosaur National Monument. Again, the sovereignty and self-determination of the Shoshone and

Ute Peoples, the original inhabitants of the region, were of no consideration in the debate. The land was valuable based on settler colonial and Liberal sentimentalities for its own sciences, in this case palaeontology and archaeology. Notably, the example of Echo Park reflects a shift in settler colonial mentality in the post-Second World War era where people did not perceive water as a commodity 'to be taken out of its state and used for capital gains' (Jackson 2013: 4). Jackson insinuates a benevolence within this popularised dualism: '[i]n the case of dams, they reflect the values of a society that both uses natural resources to serve human purposes and, at the same time, has come to appreciate the social value of free-flowing rivers and natural landscapes' (Jackson 2013: 4). What Jackson ultimately alludes to is a settler colonial binary of land relations that has been present since the 19th century, where lands are conserved and extracted from for their resources or are preserved for reasons connoting an imperialist nostalgia for untrammelled wilderness. Bromley (2001: 219) states that the victory at Echo Park was reflective of a turn in settler society towards a post-materialism, where 'economic security enabled individuals to question whether environmental degradation was necessary for economic growth'. This is reminiscent of points made in the previous chapter, where the white settler upper class had a particular affinity for nature-worship and felt a guilt for being connected to destructive industries. It is worth considering, then, that the decision to preserve or commodify or lay waste to lands hangs on the economic well-being of the upper class white settler.

There is perhaps no better reflection of this sentiment than the BOR and the new identity it carved out for itself after the dam building era from the 1980s onwards. The federal agency claimed a victory in taming the rivers of the country towards the weed of the economy. The BOR (2016b) stated outright: '[t]he arid West essentially has been reclaimed. The major rivers have been harnessed and facilities are in place or are being completed to meet the most pressing current water demands and those of the immediate future'. However, Western scientific research (Di Baldassarre et al 2021; Di Baldassarre et al 2018) now deems dams as ecologically problematic and they are now associated with a host of environment problems including, and not limited to siltation, the destruction of habitats and migration patterns for wildlife, and the release of greenhouse gases as a result of land condemnation. Additionally, dams have been found to not only exacerbate droughts, but actively contribute to resource demand across the board. Di Baldassarre et al (2021: 1798-1799) conclude that 'by supplying more water, food, and energy, they enable agricultural, urban, and industrial expansion that, in turn, lead to growing demands'. They go on to state that ultimately dams and reservoirs catalyse a supply-demand cycle that can 'generate accelerating spirals towards

unsustainable water consumption, environmental degradation, and peak water limits' (Di Baldassare et al 2021). Of course, these critiques often minimalise the damage waged against Indigenous peoples, leaving traditional ecological knowledge that previously helped humans interact with lands, waterways, and its non-human beings out of the critique altogether. The BOR has now made a shift over the preservation of marshlands, which it devoted much of its time to draining and destroying, and also looks to protect wildlife and endangered species. Pisani (2003: 392) contextualises this radical shift of mission:

> an agency that once insisted that the prosperity of the West depended on providing an ever larger supply of water, until the last drop that drained into the sea or inland lakes had been put to 'productive use,' now seems content to reallocate the West's existing supply by serving as an impartial broker between competing interests.

Indeed, their newfound impartiality must be called into question considering the *terra sacer* mandate with which they were founded. After all, natural resource decision-making throughout the United States continuously engages environmental, corporate, and government interests, often excluding Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and participation altogether (Middleton Manning 2018). Pisani (2003: 392) remarks on this irony that 'an agency that for most of its life either ignored the water rights of Native Americans or tried to subvert them has now become a champion of those rights'. Meanwhile the BOR claims jurisdiction over 337 reservoirs and 475 dams across 7.1 million acres they manage in 17 states, many of which continue to contribute to slow violence waged against Indigenous Nations (in Middleton Manning 2018). The legacies of the BOR, as well as ACE, the state and federal offices of Indian Affairs, and the various industrial interests that pushed for the construction of dams and reservoirs, are connected to the invasion of Wiindigo infrastructure and concerted efforts to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands and waters. The question remains whether these entities who claim to be impartial and now conscious of ecological preservation and of Indigenous peoples' rights have simply shifted temporarily and are simply waiting for the white settler economy to be thrust into its own contrived emergency, where taming, commodifying, and dispossessing lands and waterways from Indigenous governance will be made popular once again.

Conclusion

Though dams and reservoirs were framed as offering security to settler populace in offering flood security and economic prosperity from irrigation and hydroelectric power; they also further dispossessed Indigenous lands and subsequently waged violence against the lives of Indigenous peoples and their future generations (Griffith 2017; Griffith 2018; Gilio-Whitaker 2019; Church et al 2016; Hauptmann 2014; Scudder 2006; Schneiders 1997). Dams and their reservoirs are but one of many projects of Wiindigo infrastructure used by settler colonialism to continue the primitive accumulation of land and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Dam constructions involved the violent acquisition of land and the taming of water sources for the sake of security and the prosperity of settler colonial populations peoples, all at the expense of Indigenous Nations. Dam constructions have received significantly less attention, yet this mode of settler colonial environmental governance contributed to more flagrant land appropriation and displacement of Indigenous peoples under the auspices of Liberal development and national progress. The displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples in the United States has indeed contributed to international standards of Liberal modernity given the country's influence on the global stage. The continued construction of monumental dam and reservoir projects around the world, with accompanying dispossession of rural, subsistence, and place-based peoples reflects this settler colonial influence. From the Madeira and Belo Monte dams in Brazil, to the Bakun dam in Malaysia, to the Gibe III dam in Ethiopia, large dams are still built as modern projects for economic growth and national progress, despite the detrimental short-term and long-term impacts on local, and often Indigenous and rural populations (Schapper and Urban 2019). The next chapter will look towards a dispossession of land that results from climate change in the 'Anthropocene' and how settler colonial environmental governance has continued to moralise dispossession up to the present day. As we will see, climate change has instigated a new forms of slow violence that exacerbates settler colonial legacies of dispossessing, displacing, and containing Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 5: Moralising Dispossession and the Ongoing Transition to a Green Economy

Introduction

This chapter represents, in a way, a culmination of the previous case studies. Ranging from colonial settlement expansion, to protected constructions of wilderness, to the invasion of Wiindigo Infrastructure, settler colonialism has instrumentalised environmental policy to produce its own ethnogeographies while moralising the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples. In the current era of climate change, what many have called the 'Anthropocene' (Suliman et al 2019; Whyte et al 2019; DeBoom 2021; Erikson 2020), this legacy of settler colonial environmental governance has come to the forefront of national discourse. This chapter will argue that the Anthropocene marks a shift in the rules of the game where climate change allows settler colonial environmental governance to justify its *terra sacer* and its dispossessing actions under the auspices of the climate crisis.

First this chapter will define the Anthropocene as a 'master metaphor' (Anson 2020: 61) that renders the settler unaccountable through DeBoom's (2021: 900) take on Agamben's *homo sacer* (1998)*, 'homines sacri'*, which states that all humans remain vulnerable to climate change. It will then be argued that the Anthropocene and its production of a *homines sacri* framing stokes fear of a vague, yet looming, apocalypse and supports the white possessive tendencies of settler colonialism. This looming fear of apocalyptic doom not only justifies the production of white settler innocence but also helps legitimise settler colonial environmental governance as a means of crisis management. This chapter will then go on to look at how settler colonialism is using a combination of looming crisis and the Green Market to justify *terra sacer* in its attempt to produce solutions. Such solutions also present the opportunity, as I will argue, to produce new 'green' ethnogeographies that continue destructive and dispossessing environmental practices. Finally, this chapter will explore how climate

change in the Anthropocene is assisting settler colonialism in exacerbating Indigenous immobilities, forcing Indigenous communities to attempt self-determined climate-induced planned relocations. However, to date, there are clear precedents of co-option of these self-determined relocations, ultimately resulting in untenable immobility and containment. In essence, climate change, under the guise of the Anthropocene, vindicates a historical continuance of the settler colonial moralising of its own ethnogeographic production.

The Narrative of the Anthropocene

Departing from what have been more historical analyses of how *terra sacer* was produced through different land-use ideologies and projects, this chapter looks at an ongoing crisis that is calling forth *terra sacer* solutions both within and outwith the American settler colonial state. The current rapidly shifting climactic changes around the globe have been linked to mass industrialization and high volume greenhouse gas emitting industries. In 2000, scientists Eugene Stormer of the United States and Paul Crutzen of the Netherlands deemed this human-produced unprecedented geological epoch and era of rapid climactic change activity 'the Anthropocene'. As many scholars have already argued (DeBoom 2021; Whyte et al 2019; Anson 2022), this labelling represents the latest coverup of a Liberal colonial modernity, its extractivism, and its impact on peoples who Liberalism has historically deemed undeveloped. As this chapter will discuss later, the label of the Anthropocene ultimately makes room for modern problem-solving to take place through the market, and with the wealthiest at the proverbial wheel of finding a solution.

The initial concept of the Anthropocene ultimately posits that humanity began to impact the climate of the planet within just over two centuries of fossil fuel-based industrialisation, with the invention of the steam engine in the 18th century as its starting point and the entire industrialising world as its present. As Erikson (2020: 14) points out, further agreement has 'coalesced around the middle of the 20th century' as the dawning of the Anthropocene. With the testing of the atom bomb as a starting marker, the post-1945 era witnessed the Great Acceleration, which catalysed the industrialisation of the past 200 years and 'put it into high gear'. In pointing the finger at industrialisation, and the fossil fuel industry in particular, the Anthropocene consequently deprioritises the colonisation that created the circumstances for the Industrial Revolution to occur in the first place (Ellis et al 2021). Moreover, the notion that humanity only began to influence the

global climate from the Industrial Revolution onwards has been proven to be a false narrative. To this latter point, a 2019 study produced from the ArchaeoGLOBE project (Stephens et al 2019: 1), which synthesised findings from over 250 archaeologists, plainly challenged the emerging Anthropocene paradigm and its presumption of 'large-scale anthropogenic global environmental change' as a 'mostly a recent phenomenon'. The study further articulates how 'global models and assessments of early anthropogenic influence on climate, habitats, biodiversity, and other environmental changes remain poorly characterized' due to the exclusion of empirical data from archaeology and paleoecology. Moreover, the seminal study by Koch et al (2019) further reveals how the Anthropocene, and the notion that radical climactic change is solely due to industrialisation, is blind to its own colonial roots. Their study reveals that the mass killing and deaths of what they estimate to be, over 55 million Indigenous peoples in the Americas and what Koch et al (2019: 1) call 'the Great Dying of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas', resulted in a decrease of 5ppm of CO_2 in the atmosphere. In the summary of their findings they note (Koch et al 2019: 30):

> [w]e conclude that the Great Dying of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas led to the abandonment of enough cleared land in the Americas that the resulting terrestrial carbon uptake had a detectable impact on both atmospheric CO_2 and global surface air temperatures in the two centuries prior to the Industrial Revolution
>
> …
>
> These changes show that the Great Dying of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas is necessary for a parsimonious explanation of the anomalous decrease in atmospheric CO_2 at that time and the resulting decline in global surface air temperatures. These changes show that human actions had global impacts on the Earth system in the centuries prior to the Industrial revolution.

This conclusion upends the very premise of the Anthropocene as something caused through industrialisation, suggesting that European colonisation would be a truer starting point of an era characterised by unprecedented anthropocentric influence on the climate of the planet. Lewis and Maslin (2015) have called this marker the 'Orbis Spike', suggesting that from 1610 colonialism has been its own ecological regime causing the current atmospheric conditions of the planet.

The Anthropocene is what Anson (2020: 61) calls a 'master metaphor' and provides multiple opportunities for settler colonialism in the United States to capitalise and manoeuvre itself out of state and societal accountability. The Anthropocene acts as a master metaphor in the sense that it, according to Anson (2020: 70), allows the white settler to become the 'master of climate change's

apocalyptic realities', while simultaneously offering a blanket moral veiling to declare and act on urgency, setting colonial historical context aside. As Erikson (2020: 113) notes, '[t]he Anthropocene becomes, then, not just the geological era of human impact, but the geophysical justification for a colonial environmentalism'. This is seen in its national climate policy, which as Farrell et al (2021: 2020) note, 'often takes an ahistorical approach to mitigation and adaptation activities'. Most notably, the Anthropocene contributes to an erasure of colonial harms. As DeBoom notes (2020: 900) 'the Anthropocene risks enabling collective amnesia about the even historical responsibilities for climate change'. The collective global role of modern industrialised and industrialising nations in emitting greenhouse gases has helped obscure the United States and its white settler society, as the demographic most responsible for the development of its high emitting economy, to the point of negligible guilt, if not innocence.

The logic under the notion of the Anthropocene is that if climate change is caused by human action, then all humans remain culpable. 'The Anthropocene', as DeBoom (2021: 900) remarks, 'risks enabling collective amnesia about the uneven historical responsibilities for climate change'. For its own population, the settler colonial government is also able to pivot from its associations with extractive and high emitting industry. Veracini (2019: 119) states 'the notion of "responsibility" is crucial to Neoliberal discursive orders, as it enables the state to neglect its responsibilities and welfare obligations by blaming others for its "irresponsible" behavior'. DeBoom (2021) draws on Agamben (1998) and his concept of *homo sacer* to show how the Anthropocene falsely frames all of humanity (*homines sacri*) as being sacrificial to the effects of climate change. It ultimately ignores 'the reality that not all of humanity is likely to be branded as equally sacrificial in the name of righting past and present planetary wrongs' (DeBoom 2021: 900-901). As Erikson (2020: 112) states, 'the Anthropocene…is dependent upon a universal image of the Anthropos, which is itself a colonial figure'. The Anthropocene notably comments that the universality of progress through globalised industrialisation also infers a universality of culpability in causing the crisis. This universality of culpability reflects similar core ideas of the commons. In the previous chapters it was discussed how lands and waters under the Liberal notion of the 'commons' ultimately obscures ownership. In this same sense, the atmosphere has discursively become a public commons more than ever in discussions on global responses to halting climactic change.

The Anthropocene conjures the illusion that all lands will be equally sacrificial to climactic change, yet it is ultimately providing a carte blanche through the language urgency for settler colonialism to respond with *terra sacer* logics. Through this understanding, settler colonialism can

help resolve which lands and who to save and which ones and who to sacrifice in the face of climactic disasters, for which, within the framing of the Anthropocene, it bears little responsibility. DeBoom (2021: 908) states:

> [t]he distributive geographies of climate change and its associated Anthropocentric imaginaries including which strategies for mitigation are pursued, where, and based on which priorities decided by whom—are likely to set the foundational conditions for the transformative potential or lack thereof of the Anthropocene's declaration.

For the national settler colonial project of the United States, industrialisation as the standard of modernity cannot not be sacrificed, particularly when settler colonial land relations continue to objectify and value lands and waters according to the market or settler colonial sentiment. Intensifying natural disasters have been deemed worth the sacrifice of mostly racialised communities and lands so that industrialisation and its growth remain a normalised priority. It is of no surprise that the Green Market has become a natural means for settler colonialism to assert its mastery of crisis whilst avoiding radical transformation that might threaten its jurisdiction over lands.

What is more, the opportunity arises for settler colonialism to add to the linear trajectory of modernity in determining how to become more sustainable and, therefore, more developed. DeBoom (2021: 902) makes the point that 'dirty' extractive industries have been rendered legitimate under the auspices of 'colonialism, nationalism, racial capitalism, or energy security', 'green extractive projects are often justified in the name of universal salvation'. The Green Market is still advancing all the aforementioned justifications, even repurposing 'dirty' industries like dams and nuclear power to appear as a means to salvation. Arid lands become more sacred for solar power, dams become remoralised as worth the ecological and social catastrophes they bring because of their hydroelectricity, and national parks stave off the sixth extinction for the biodiversity they proport to preserve. The gaze of Liberalism remains set on the effects of climactic change rather than on the causes, calling on the market and existing governance frameworks to respond accordingly. Climate mitigation has become the banner under which the market and governance frameworks work to fight for a world that remains unperturbed through the transition out of fossil fuel reliant economies.

Finally, the Anthropocene and climate change conceal Indigenous peoples as sovereign Nations with their own placed-based ontological and epistemological approaches to mitigation (Suliman et al 2019). In all of this Indigenous peoples are collapsed into *homines sacri*, whose Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) becomes even more valuable as Indigenous peoples are

framed as vulnerable and their knowledge possibly disappearing. After all, the value of Indigenous TEK in contributing to climate science and adaptation strategies is well recognised among Western Liberal institutions (Zentner et al 2019). However, settler colonial environmental governance, in seeing the value of Indigenous TEK in developing practices to respond to the climate crisis and to ensure settler colonial survival, looks to extract rather than collaborate with Indigenous peoples. As the principles of decision-making around natural resources remain Western and settler colonial, Indigenous frameworks, histories, and experiences with colonialism are often unrecognised and unutilised (Simpson 2001). Anishinaabe scholar Simpson describes this as 'scientizing knowledge', where the ecological component of Indigenous knowledge is prioritised over spiritual foundations. She states 'TEK data, or factual information is at the fore, rather than seeing our knowledge as worldviews, values, and processes' (Simpson 2001: 134). The sensationalism and objectivism that the crisis of the Anthropocene is communicated through, as Suliman et al (2019: 309) state 'simply reinforce colonial imaginaries' about the dangers of racialised others, the potential of western science to solve the crisis, and a superficial view of Indigeneity that objectifies its knowledge and ignores Indigenous worldviews.

Apocalyptic Urgency and the Production of White Settler Innocence

Within the Anthropocene, beyond hiding culpability and mitigating its effects, settler colonialism finds opportunity within urgency. Whether the late 19th century urgency to conserve resources or the 20th century urgency to democratise water, settler colonialism is adept at conjuring the imagination of crisis, scarcity, and apocalypse when it comes to the availability of natural resources. The illusion of a future crisis, especially one that ignores the crises experienced by Indigenous, Black, and racialised peoples at the hands of white settler colonialism, yet again produces the opportunity for settler colonial environmental governance. As discussed in both Chapters Three and Four, there is once again fear over the scarcity of natural resources for future generations of settlers and the ability for the settler colonial project to survive under apocalyptic duress. That white settler anxieties over the future and the present need to respond is one the of reasons for the 'popularity of the Anthropocene' as Erikson (2020: 112) notes, 'as it fits well within Liberal settler colonialism'. In the same way technologies of settler colonial environmental

governance, e.g. preservation, conservation, reclamation, or disaster mitigation, appeared to help in the past, they are brought forth as saviours in a time of uncertainty. As noted by Anson (2022: 67): '"[e]mergency" thus marks a historical cycle of colonial capitalism as it extends into the expanse of anticipated futures'. The Anthropocene ultimately enables the framing of the environment as a separate spatial geography in crisis, reflecting an 'event-obsessed apocalyptic environmentalism' (Anson 2020: 68) and calling upon 'colonial structures that privilege whiteness as the savior of our environmental future' (Erikson 2020: 112).

The logics of settler colonial environmental governance force populations to yield to authority in resolving environmental crises, demanding loyalty and selective austerity in preserving the sovereignty of the settler colonial project. Anson (2020: 69) notes that this connotes authoritarian and fascist tendencies and 'depends on stories of the past, present, or predicted apocalyptic environmental events – a once idyllic and pure but now threatened nature demands population control, fortification of walls, and the elimination of certain groups'. The 2016 election of President Donald Trump (2017-2021) reflected these logics. Though not explicitly tied to climate change, a bedrock policy stance of the Trump presidency was premised on the control of migrants coming across the southern border of the United States, with scholarship locating climate-induced displacement as a major reason for this migration north (Gonzalez 2020). However, the Trump administration buried this connection, framing migration from Latin America as a threat to national security and accusing migrants of coming to steal American jobs (Rodrigo et al 2021: 544). Simultaneously, climate migration is easy to suppress. It not only remains a multicausal in nature (Rodrigo et al 2021), but the narrative of the Anthropocene buries the slow violence (Nixon 2013) waged by the climate crisis. DeBoom (2021: 900) states that the 'Anthropocene recognizes the magnitude of human caused environmental violence—manifesting most notably as climate change—that has become so banal as to be rendered nearly invisible'. This attitude is not occurring within a historical vacuum. Part of the white Christian settler population have instigated an increasing amount of violence based on the fear of the Great Replacement, a white supremacist conspiracy theory that there is a master plan to eradicate the white race (Obaidi 2022). This is, of course, not the first time this paranoia has gripped the white settler population, as noted in Chapter Three where conservationists collaborated with the wider eugenicist movement to wage dispossession against Indigenous peoples in an effort to conserve for future generations. As seen in the 2019 mass shooting of 48 predominantly Latinx people at a Walmart store in El Paso, the white male settler cited Madison Grant's 1916 *Passing of the Great Race* in his four-page manifesto; Grant's

publication continues to be used as a white possessive warning of land and sovereignty under threat from the non-white, Western world (Anson 2020).

In conjuring the apocalypse, settler colonial environmental governance and its authoritarian tendencies tap into the fears of settlers and their future ability to fulfil their own contracts and obligations to the settler colonial project of permanence and intergenerational possession of lands, and the continuous efforts to dispossess Indigenous peoples. Buell (1995: 285) writes:

> apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal. Of no other dimension of contemporary environmentalism, furthermore, can it be so unequivocally said that the role of the imagination is central to the project; for the rhetoric of apocalypticism implies that the fate of the world hinges on the arousal of the imagination to a sense of crisis.

Contrary to the apocalypses that the structures of white supremacy and settler colonialism have waged on so many communities, apocalypse within the Anthropocene is a singular event. The looming singular apocalypse results in the production of an innocent white settler who, under the logics of *homines sacri,* is just as vulnerable. The imaginative event becomes a sensationalist distraction that upholds and protects white innocence, consolidating its power as Indigenous, Black, and Brown peoples continue to endure and resist contemporary and historical forms of structural and slow violence. The impending doom of scarcity, in particular, drives demand for totalitarian market responses, often seen in the wake of natural disasters and their aftermath (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes) where resources are distributed unilaterally, rapidly, and with little accountability to regulatory structures. Such responses simply contribute to the status quo and help to further displace marginalised communities (Anson 2020). Primitive accumulation of labour, bodies, and resources is permitted to continue so long as 'continuous consolidation of US settler capital' is assured and apocalypse avoided (Anson 2020: 67).

The innocence of settler colonialism is also protected by its own institutions of governance. Cases that have sought to hold the settler colonial state accountable for its own environmental governance have so far run up against institutionalist attitudes that reject responsibility, diverting accountability for the crisis for the American populace to decide in the election cycle. In the case of *Juliana v the United States*, twenty-one young people and children sued the United States government for actively putting the planet in danger given their knowledge of climate change science and their historical financial promotion of the fossil fuel industry. Ultimately the Federal Court of Appeals ruled that the Judicial Branch, as the government entity responsible for rendering justice, was not an

appropriate space to discuss matters of accountability. One of the judges of the circuit court concluded (9th Cir. 2020: 1170):

> [t]he plaintiffs claim that the government has violated their constitutional rights, including a claimed right under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to a 'climate system capable of sustaining human life.' The central issue before us is whether, even assuming such a broad constitutional right exists, an Article III court can provide the plaintiffs the redress they seek—an order requiring the government to develop a plan to 'phase out fossil fuel emissions and draw down excess atmospheric CO_2.' Reluctantly, we conclude that such relief is beyond our constitutional power. Rather, the plaintiffs' impressive case for redress must be presented to the political branches of government.

In the Anthropocene, direct blame cannot be levied onto the state since the crisis demands universal culpability and has clouded the need for a conversation over national solutions when the problem is international. Rendering the American electorate to judge the state as culpable, as *Juliana v the United States* did, ultimately shifts the conversation from an institutional responsibility to a collective national responsibility, ultimately allowing the white settler and upper classes to remain hidden. Denial and inaction have characterised a part of the American settler response to the global crisis. Indeed, white settler innocence and inaction are brought together with Judeo-Christian narratives of chosen peoples in the face of apocalypse. Purdy (2019: xxi) states that climate denialism is about 'who has claims on you and who rules you…a way of rejecting the claims of foreigners, international institutions (more imagined than real), and the global poor, and holding onto a narrow sovereignty that the tides are threatening to wash away'. It is also of no surprise that the erasure that the Anthropocene conjures is one that also brings forth a similar historical white possessive response to threatened sovereignty. As neighbouring regions, who maintain a fraction of the global wealth of the United States, become inundated with unprecedented crises resulting from natural disasters and the Neoliberal global market, the American settler colonial project has, and will only continue, to attempt to strengthen its sovereignty claims. This is already resulting in amplified white possessive and *terra sacer* logics, while simultaneously perpetuating imperialist amnesia that romanticises a past where white supremacy was less challenged politically. Such responses to climate change do not deviate from historical precedence of settler colonial environmental governance but are rather part of the 'same ordering logic', as Anson states (2020: 70).

The Anthropocene, and the political and economic crises it poses, is catalysing white settler colonialism to respond in a way that appears to decentralise the role of the state in providing

solutions that are symbolic to settler permanence or otherwise. The crises over land and water uses in the late 19th century and early 20th century both caused conversations among the elite of white settler society to produce visible solutions to alleviate the public sense of urgency. In the previous chapters, national parks and larger dams were ultimately project models that ultimately responded to economic uncertainty, political insecurity, and attempts to ground the American settler identity in 'taming nature' and producing patriotic ethnogeographies. Today, the national push for a 'Green Economy' taps into another imperialist nostalgia for times when the settler felt they had the agency and patriotic duty to 'tame nature'.

Terra sacer and the Imperative to Build A Green Economy

As the Anthropocene erases this culpability and places the onus on humanity equally, it is only natural of white possessive logics for the American settler colonial project to produce the solutions of which it can take ownership. Anson articulates (2020: 71) that '[t]he Anthropocene fossilizes an epistemological and systemic position that cannot imagine solving a problem any other way than cataclysmic redemption of a settled (settler) future, in yet another acquittal of white violence'. As noted in previous chapters, settler colonial environmental governance is well adept at responding to its own produced crises and urgencies within the borders of the United States. Climate change, however, under the veil of the Anthropocene poses a unique quandary to settler colonial environmental governance. First, since the Anthropocene provides a moral veil for the actions of extractive and oppressive structures to hide behind - settler colonial environmental governance does not see climate change as an issue resulting from the actions of white settlers. It is the outcome from the actions of the many, not just the white settler populace. Second, the logic of this framing that climate change was somehow brought upon the United States by others outside its borders erodes the desire to yield a collective, national solution, especially one that may challenge the legitimacy of settler colonial environmental governance.

If a new project was to emerge that replicated the monumental geographic projects of national parks and dams that helped resolve political and economic crises, it is likely to come from the development of the 'Green Market'. The move to a so-called 'green economy' is symptomatic of a wider Neoliberal Western effort to maintain a status quo of hoarded wealth and power. The green economy fundamentally does not depart from the extractive practices of the fossil fuel economy.

The green economy gains supporters amongst those who manage to connect to it while others become dispossessed and displaced 'by its voracious appetite for resources and land' (Dalby 2014: 13). Green energy infrastructure in particular will 'invariably migrate to communities that lack the political, social, and economic strength to oppose them, especially indigenous peoples and communities of color, often at the extreme social and geographical periphery of society and often reinforcing environmental injustices and degrees of environmental racism' (Brock et al 2021: 1762). The Green Market heavily relies on an ethos of sustainability to counter fossil fuel reliance, and in the context of the US, sustainability helps dissuade settler colonial anxieties around future survival. As I remarked in my analysis on the conservation movement in Chapter Three, the push for conservation reflected a fear of scarcity and the survival of the white race in the United States. Like this language denoting a need for continuance and survival, the question must be posed: sustainable for whom? Parson and Ray (2018: 69) state:

> the language of sustainability often conceals discussion around what is being sustained and for whom. The process of deciding what is sustainable has historically been undemocratic and deeply intertwined with systems of power. Since sustainability is often an empty signifier, its meaning can be filled by whomever is defining it, and as a political concept it often forecloses political debate.

Within the logics of the colonial green economy, sustainability serves the status quo, ensuring that social, political, and economic relations are maintained and there is stability 'against the disruptive consequences of climate change' (Günel 2019: 70). Sustainability and notions of green futures can fall into what Günel (2019: 70) conceptualises as the 'status quo utopia', where its proponents 'recognize the precariousness and fragility of contemporary social, political, and economic relations, and acknowledge the overwhelming impact of climate change and energy scarcity', noting further that these proponents do not 'take the present order for granted nor interrogate its validity and legitimacy'. The development of the green economy and the desire to maintain this status quo utopia of American settler exceptionalism in the face of the radical global climactic shifts has also relied upon the language of disaster mitigation to veil white supremacist biopolitics, which prioritise the settler populace over the well-being of Indigenous peoples and other racialised groups. Scott and Smith (2017b: 50) note that the policy emphasis on renewable energy development as climate "mitigation" will continue to produce burdens on marginalized communities…because the underlying structural relations of power remain unchanged'. However, there have been attempts, such as the Green New Deal (GND) to attempt to address such structural relations.

Made popular in the late 2000s by major environmental non-profits, the core of the GND seeks to feed from the imperialist nostalgia surrounding the New Deal of the FDR administration, replicating the production of a development state, but one that is more sustainable. One of the first to nationally coin the term was New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman (2007) who wrote:

> I am not proposing that we [Americans] radically alter our lifestyles. We are who we are – including a car culture. But if we want to continue to be who we are, enjoy the benefits and be able to pass them on to our children, we need to fuel our future in a cleaner, greener way … The next president will have to rally us with a green patriotism. Hence my motto: 'Green is the new red, white and blue.'

Friedman ultimately articulates Western and settler colonial desires to be unburdened in the Anthropocene, offering the green economy as an ideal solution. The GND, as a concept, is one attempt for the United States government to provide a nationally-based and -focused solution that conjures past images of New Deal large public works, invasive infrastructure, and civilian duty, while appearing to erase the aftermath legacies of dispossession and exclusion. The GND, as it has been presented in Congress to date, reflects a new mentality of *terra sacer* that both proposes developmental solutions and seemingly better uses of land while also reinforcing and reviving the obvious need for other past projects (e.g. expanding public lands, reinforcing the need for hydroelectric dams) of settler colonial environmental governance to mitigate crisis and make the settler economy more sustainable to climate change. The GND as it has most recently been proposed as a House Resolution (2019; 2021), however, rather reinforces white possessive settler capitalist structures than challenges them (Ajl 2021).

A key aspect of the GND looks to exceptionalise the American settler state, forming it to be a leader in 'green technology', and leading the world in climate mitigation strategies. Indeed, calls for the GND reinforce American settler nationalism and its manifest destiny-bounded exceptionalism. Ajl (2021: 376-377) asserts that many of the political forces behind the GND seek to ultimately make the United States a green-tech powerhouse while preserving 'capitalist property structures', assisting the 'déclassé middle class', ensuring foreign reliance on US aid to assist with energy transitions, and containing 'anti-systemic politics among largely the core petty bourgeoisie'. The GND makes no mention of climate debt to the Global South, as the part of the world most affected and least responsible for climactic change, nor does it allude to historic reparations (e.g. intern camps, slavery, land dispossession, massacres and extrajudicial killings) or Indigenous land sovereignty claims. At its core it is the attempt to utilise extractive practices for sustainable energy

output for the greater goal of settler colonial survival. Ajl (2021) states that the GND simply reflects eco-modernist desires, relying on an imperialist market to provide the necessary solutions to anthropogenic climate change where life can remain as normal for the global middle and upper middle classes. Ajl (2021: 376-77) writes:

> the 2018 draft legislation, situated itself as a response to wage stagnation, deindustrialization, and antilabor policies and the need to keep the planet below 1.5°C of warming, and urged a new national, social, industrial, and economic mobilization updating the original pro-systemic New Deal with a new corporatist, core-centered pact.

Indeed, as Ajl (2021: 377) adds, the notion of the US as a green-tech powerhouse 'foretells future and oncoming maneuvering' for control over energy transition technology, approaches, and the global market at large. Embracing the renewable energy industry has become the logical next step in the development of Liberal modernity, especially with the signing of The Paris Agreement (2021), which called for states to make the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions a top priority, stimulating 'massive new investments' in renewables (Scott and Smith 2017a: 372). Under the wider global climate regime, the allocation of responsibilities to make rapid energy transitions to states has only helped further legitimise and strengthen the settler colonial position to impose renewable energy infrastructure. Suliman et al (2019: 301) remark that '[t]he state-centric architecture of the climate change regime is more responsive to the vulnerability of entire states or regions than to particular groups within states'. Thus, Indigenous peoples and other marginalised and racialised populations become obscured as peoples to protect rather than Nations that assist in governance.

The technology proposed feeds into LaDuke and Cowen's (2020) concept of 'Wiindigo Infrastructure', which highlights how invasive infrastructure does not recognise the relations with lands and waters that pre-exist settler colonial arrival. Green energy technology, whether wind farms, solar technology, and, as discussed in the last chapter, hydroelectricity, rely not only on extractive practices in their production and use, but on the commodification and mining of resources from Indigenous lands within the United States or the lands of other peoples. As Parson and Ray (2018: 80) note, '[t]he standard approach of weighing environmental concerns against economic benefits does not adequately control the extent of damage caused by the extractive industries'. Rather, these technologies also demand the appropriation of lands and waters to solve the problem Liberal modernity has produced. In this sense, anthropogenic climate change has yet again offered another opportunity for the settler to become the best expert on the lands and waters they have accumulated for settler permanence. To maintain the status quo, the colonial Wiindigo

economy reverts naturally to racialised and exploitative systems that continue to devalue and primitively accumulate both land and labour (Stock 2022).

The US renewable energy sector is certainly not exempt from producing Wiindigo Infrastructure, as already demonstrated in Chapter Four where hydroelectric dams have historically waged dispossession and violence. There is an illusionary narrative, one that is familiar in the linear trajectory of Liberal modernity that renewable energy is exceptional, 'clean', 'environmentally-friendly', and a means to salvation (Yenneti et al 2016: 90). However, mainstream discourse on climate change often revolves around notions of reactive market-based solutions, many of which - ranging from windmill and solar panel farms to electric transportation - rely on continued colonial practices of resource extraction as well as primitive land accumulation and repurposing (DeBloom 2020). As McAllister et al (2014: 78) point out 'the very nature of the mineral industry does not readily lend itself to policy goals directed towards resource conservation, renewal, or effective environmental regulation'. The development of mass renewable energy projects, styled under the label of 'climate mitigation' across North America, are already contributing to Indigenous dispossession (Scott and Smith 2017a). Desert lands and open waters are seen in a new light, having gone from 'useless lands' to becoming valuable and helping to solve a crisis that stems from colonial land ontologies. Stock notes (2022: 1-2):

> the imperative to mitigate the climate crisis through renewables has exacerbated a global land rush already under way…the rush to enclose vast swathes of rural land has been characterized as *land grabbing* due to the dispossession of arable land and the displacement or partial proletarianization

The low power density of renewable power compared to fossil fuel power is something underdiscussed. Gross (2020: 3) comments that 'renewable power requires at least ten times more land area per unit of power produced'. Renewable power ultimately replicates plantation systems as a means of colonisation through imposing 'upon social landscapes a distinct regime of political, economic, and ethnic regulation'. On the subject of the solar plantations, Stock (2022: 7) concludes that 'central to these regimes is their monopolization ethic: the total elimination, marginalization, or exile of Indigenous people and small land owners'. Solar parks, wind farms, hydroelectric dams, nuclear power, and its waste reflect a continuity of these relations while reproducing the initial causes of climate vulnerability in a climate-altered landscape (Stock 2022: 15).

What anthropogenic climate change has come to show is that technologies of settler colonial environmental governance retain, and can grow in value, under the guise of 'sustainability' as

urgency is emphasised. The priority of settler colonial environmental governance is sustainability of its own status quo, and therefore inherently relies on the logics of land use it has always used in times of urgency. Public lands retain minerals that have now grown exponentially in value with the boom in 'green technologies'. Public lands also gain a sacrificial designation not solely for mining these resources but also for being a location for green technology to thrive. Sustainable farming of renewable resources becomes a valuable use for colonised lands. For those in conservative wings of settler colonial governments, public lands become a gift from settler forefathers who had the foresight to conserve. For preservationist's national parks have become symbols of a thin frontline of remaining wilderness against perpetual extraction, development, and consumption. For those of the political left of settler colonial governments, national parks are indispensable. In the face of climate crisis, Indigenous repossession of these lands becomes more complicated as settler narratives of land use are validated. Additionally, dams are now not 'subject to the same degree of government scrutiny of environmental or human rights restrictions, because dams constitute climate change mitigation efforts' (Scott and Smith 2017a: 374). Lands and waters that can host renewable energy have now become sacred, and the implementation of renewable energy projects will attempt to displace and dispossess Indigenous peoples in the United States (Scott and Smith 2017a). Meanwhile, many Indigenous communities and persons must reckon with the disappearing and shape-shifting lands, waters, and climate around them. McAdam and Ferris (2015: 143) articulate that, 'although relocation is not imposed by an external authority, a coercive element is nonetheless present: deteriorating environmental conditions make moving away more viable than staying put'. The lack of action produces an opportunity to both declare climate-effected and -wasted lands as settler ethnogeography (to save) and to mitigate with settler ethnogeographic solutions, all while preserving white settler innocence.

The Production of 'Green' Ethnogeographies

The use of the Anthropocene as a grand narrative of crisis offers settler colonialism the opportunity to lay waste to lands as it deems others as more sacred. A number of logics inform the application of laying waste to lands in the Anthropocene. First, there is the framing that land loss is inevitable in the Anthropocene. This is the power of place-making within the urgency of the Anthropocene. Gruenewald (2003: 627) notes that 'when we fail to consider place as products of

human decisions, we accept their existence as noncontroversial or inevitable, like the falling of rain or the fact of the sunrise'. Deeming which lands to abandon is a political process, one that reflects and emphasises the use of *terra sacer.* As seen in previous chapters, the sacrifice of some lands emphasises the sacredness of others. Unsurprisingly, geographies that have historically been deemed as 'wasteland' and 'unproductive' have been some of the first sacrificed as inevitable loss, such as salinisation and the resulting destruction of wetlands, increasing sea levels and the erosion and subsiding of coastal inlets, as well as the melting of tundra and ice.

Sacrificial zones are what Johnson and Lewis (1995: 229) call 'creative destruction', whereby the productivity of some lands is 'sacrificed' or destroyed in two particular ways: either sacrifice zones sacrifice their productive worth for a particular task (e.g. energy production) or lands are made 'sacrificial offerings' as a 'necessary cost of promoting progress and productivity elsewhere' (e.g. landfills). Within the Anthropocene, the inevitability that lands must be wasted in the name of progress and productivity is then already within the logics of *terra sacer,* where Indigenous geographies have been sacrificed for progress and productivity of settler colonial expansion. Whether conserving natural resources, stripping lands to extract them, or building a landfill to store and decompose what is deemed useless, there is an engrained expectation that waste must occur for settler colonial modernity to thrive.

Large-scale solar development is already showing its abilities to lay waste to lands and the negative socio-economic implications (e.g. loss of income streams from land; depletion of water sources needed to maintain solar panels; toxic chemicals leaking from solar panels)[33] that result from their construction (Yenneti et al 2016). As Scott and Smith (2017a: 381) comment,

> renewable energy development as climate mitigation should not be expected to overcome the 'sacrifice zone' dynamic that consumed environmental justice scholars in the fossil era. Instead, we might reasonably expect the benefits and burdens of the green energy economy to flow along the same familiar axes as climate change itself, because the underlying structural relations of power remain unchanged.

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[33] See Gawande and Chaudry (2019) who document the social and environmental impacts of India's transition to solar energy. Along with requiring large amounts of land, solar panels demand water resources, which is difficult when they are often located in places with little access to water. They (2019: 8121) note of the composition of solar cells: '[t]here are several pollutants occurring in solar cells and parts which include arsenic, chrome, lead and cadmium in batteries. Solar power plants are potential sources of two toxic chemicals viz. Cadmium Tellurium (CdTe) and Lead (Pb)'. The amount of e-waste from large scale solar developments has the potential to be enormous in the long term, a factor deprioritised in the renewable energy sector.

Looking at large-scale solar developments, there is the natural inclination for settler colonial environmental governance to allocate them on racialised lands that are deemed unproductive. The large swaths of land that are needed to justify solar developments and their energy yields reveal their inherent nature as territorially expansive and extractive sites of "clean" energy production' (Stock 2022: 6). Solar parks have furthermore been accused of disrupting the rural agrarian political economy and challenging property relations, exacerbating climate vulnerabilities of already vulnerable populations, and ultimately inserting a development that does not insure equitable benefits to the adjacent population (Stock 2022). Mass solar interventions hide behind development and environment discourses that they are necessary for the public good, nationally and internationally, as a means to saving the planet. Stock (2022: 13) states:

> [t]he state and solar developers articulate colonial wasteland discourses to dispossess smallholding and marginalized farmers of their land, under the auspices of modernizing the 'traditional' agrarian economy for energy security and for the remediation of global environmental crises. Yet the impetus to technologically repair 'wasted' environments is fraught with racializations that characterize local and marginalized populations as 'backward' people who 'misuse' their lands.

The means of the production of mass solar energy projects, however, involves both laying waste to lands through extractive mining of resources that solar energy requires, and 'saving' wastelands through their construction.

From the perspective of some (Yenneti et al 2016; Gawande and Chaudry 2019), mass solar developments become sacrifice zones for energy production, like dams and reservoirs that put large swaths of land underwater. Yenneti et al (2016: 97-98) state that 'while hydropower water reservoirs can be used for alternative ends (e.g. recreation, fishery, and shipping), ground-based solar parks normally involve a more exclusive land enclosure'. The attempts to dispossess Indigenous peoples through solar development is already underway. One of the more recent instances occurred when the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) filed a 2015 lawsuit against Riverside County, California and its attempt to build a 4,000 Mesa Solar Project on lands in the Mojave Desert, which is significant to the Mohave and Chemehuevi peoples. CRIT, which is federally-recognised, noted that the county failed in its Environmental Impact Assessment to analyse the impacts of the solar project on ancestral trails, landscapes, and artifacts (Susskind et al 2022). This was allegedly due to a rush to build the project (Sahagún 2014).

Meanwhile, nuclear energy continues to be prioritised in the market boom and urgency for 'clean energy', while its current inherent demand for lands to lay waste to through its radioactive yield is veiled in the apocalyptic Anthropocene. Nuclear energy simultaneously feeds settler colonial national exceptionalism, through the ideology of nuclearism, an ideology that frames nuclear power as seminal to national interest and security, normalising nuclear energy and the waste produced (Endres 2012; Taylor 1998). Nuclear power is ultimately not renewable, as uranium remains a finite resource and recyclable waste is still being explored as a remedy. Its large-scape adoption is also 'hindered by the rising cost of uranium and the problem of waste disposal (Chakravorty et al 2012: 372). Nevertheless, settler colonial environmental governance has openly embraced nuclearism as a strategy across its political spectrum, with then-President Obama noting, as reported by *The Guardian* (Goldman 2010), in 2010:

> [e]ven though we have not broken ground on a new nuclear plant in nearly 30 years, nuclear energy remains our largest source of fuel that produces no carbon emissions…To meet our growing energy needs and prevent the worst consequences of climate change, we'll need to increase our supply of nuclear power. It's that simple.

Then-President Trump, speaking at the event 'Unleashing American Energy' in 2017 continued this enthusiasm for developing nuclear energy. Trump stated:

> [f]irst, we will begin to revive and expand our nuclear energy sector — which I'm so happy about — which produces clean, renewable and emissions-free energy. A complete review of U.S. nuclear energy policy will help us find new ways to revitalize this crucial energy resource (Trump 2017).

Sadekin et al (2019: 515) outline that the World Nuclear Association has invested heavily in studies that articulate its low GHG yield compared to all renewable and non-renewable energy resources, noting '[s]o it is clearly visible that nuclear plant is more eco-friendly than fuel based plants along with hydro and renewable source plants. Nuclear produced electricity is the path to choose to preserve the integrity of the environment and avoid global warming'. Sadekin et al (2019) omit that for decades, the Shoshone and Paiute peoples fought the development of a high-level nuclear waste site in Yucca Mountain, a place with cultural and spiritual significance to the Shoshone and Paiute. Endres (2012: 337-38) articulates the *terra sacer* mentality of the federal government as it fought to place radioactive waste within the mountain:

> [t]he federal government… suggests that Yucca Mountain is unique because of its location in a remote desert 'wasteland' that is far from population centers. In describing Yucca Mountain, the

DOE Yucca Mountain website states, "No one lives at Yucca Mountain," and "There are no known natural resources of commercial value at Yucca Mountain (such as precious metals, minerals, oil, etc.)"…assuming that a nuclear waste repository would irreparably damage Yucca Mountain for Shoshone and Paiute people, the federal government's call for sacrifice is significant.

Nuclear waste is not the only form of wastelanding occurring under nuclearism. Voyles notes that in ancestral Navajo lands, part of which are deemed 'uranium country' (Voyles 2015: 5), the extraction of uranium both destroys ecosystems and non-human and human bodies in the process. The wastelanding of nuclearism means 'to wasteland Navajo worldviews, epistemology, history, and cultural and religious practices. In order for uranium mining to occur on the level it did (and still does), indigenous ways of knowing landscapes and their worth must be themselves rendered pollutable, marginal, unimportant' (Voyles 2015: 11). What is also worrying is how the Anthropocene may limit Indigenous self-determination where Indigenous Nations and communities may be forced to 'open their territories to resource exploitation to earn money' (Reibold 2022: 10) making it harder to follow traditional lifeways.

The logics of *terra sacer* can also see the inevitable loss of land as an opportunity to construct new geographies. *Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast* (LCMP) is a prime example of where settler mitigation to its own problems involves the restoration, and creation, of new wetlands and inlet islands that are deemed productive for their protection from storms and hurricanes. Notably included in the 2012 and 2017 versions of the LCMP are representatives from the oil and natural gas industries in Louisiana, while notably excluded are representatives from the Indigenous Nations and communities in Louisiana (LCMP 2012; LCMP 2017). Thomas Dardar Jr., Chief of the Houma Nation located in southern Louisiana, testified in front of Congress in 2012 and emphasised how the LCMP (2012) deemed coastal communities, primarily Indigenous working-class communities, as sacrificial:

when Louisiana passed recent legislation including a $50 billion plan over 50 years to restore the coast, the State in the planning phase disclosed that some coastal communities were going to be sacrificed or trade-off communities in order to save other communities. Many of our tribal communities, including our most treasured, oldest communities that the vast majority of our citizens trace their roots to, are left out of these plans. The State's explanation is that these communities are too costly to protect; however, our people contend that our culture and homelands were not duly valued. We do not believe that the State of Louisiana considered the

cultural loss. In contrast, had the United Houma Nation been federally acknowledged we would not be so easily dismissed and would be afforded federal protections guaranteed to state recognized tribes (Dardar Jr. 2012).

Chris Chaisson, a resident of Pointe-aux-Chenes and a member of the United Houma Nation, discussed the impact of the LCMP to *Houma Today* (Buskey 2012):

> [t]hese communities that you're willing to sacrifice are all predominantly Native American…We are not trading off any more land. We're not sacrificing any more land. We're not going to be bought out.

The loss of lands to unprecedented natural disaster in the Anthropocene is already being mitigated by the market on paper. Increases in insurance rates for climate vulnerable properties, the implementation of restrictive zoning laws, and individual buyouts have revealed the means through which settler colonial environmental governance will compensate land loss in the Anthropocene. In the discourse of 'loss and damage', for settler colonial environmental governance, there is conveniently no consideration or system of metrics for how climate impacts landscapes (e.g. ice fields, coasts), places (e.g. neighbourhoods, villages), place attachments, cultures, sense of belonging, material artefacts (e.g. burial sites), everyday practices (e.g. gardening), and occupational identities' (Suliman et al 2019: 304). Moreover, this formation of new lands via processes such as sediment diversion and reclamation of lands from the sea presents an alternative primitive accumulation of land, as settler colonialism frames the loss of Indigenous geographies as inevitable while prioritising production of their own as necessary and urgent. Whyte el al (2019: 331) elucidate that 'it is the new land structures, within which Indigenous peoples have small areas of land to live on and are denied their rights and responsibilities as sovereigns, that engender vulnerability'. In the context of the Anthropocene, settler governments assert that their own methods of land restoration provide a worthier means of disaster mitigation in forming barriers to sea level rise and future natural disasters. The Anthropocene in this case offers an excuse to both waste lands and to also create new settler geographies that protect settler populations while demanding the sacrifice and removal of others.

The Production of Climate Refugees and Failed Relocations

Settler colonial environmental governance and its interpretations of justice operate on the basis that 'lost' land is disposable and is replaceable or exchangeable. As Jacob et al succinctly note

(2021: 134) 'settler colonial logics rooted in capitalism, individualism, racial superiority, ownership, and possession, will always position Indigenous people and the environment as inherently less-than, and disposable'. This has already been demonstrated through the previously discussed case studies of dam construction and the ensuing involuntary relocations and compensation of money for land. Scott and Smith 2017a: 380-381) summarise:

> it becomes obvious that planned relocation is a response devoid of meaningful consideration for the ongoing, embodied practices of living on the land. The framework deploys abstract and universalist conceptions of land, labor, and livelihoods that deny the possibility of people's meaningful relations with specific places

The veil of white settler innocence and the lack of accountability for historical and ongoing violence, which the narrative of the Anthropocene provides, helps frame climate-induced community relocations as an exceptional humanitarian mission to save those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Whyte et al (2019: 319) state:

> [d]iscussions about migration, resettlement, and the Anthropocene in fields such as the social sciences/humanities and journalism are often premised on the idea that it is unprecedented climate changes that are driving brand new challenges of societal mobility.

Indeed, as the previous two chapters have already demonstrated, the idea of planned relocation being a new technology, as a product of settler colonial environmental governance, is simply false. Ranging from the 'Yosemite model' in Chapter Three to the planned relocation of the Allegheny Senecas for the Kinzua Dam in Chapter Four, climate-induced planned relocations are an old model with a new name. This is to say that the framing of relocation as being 'climate-induced' is a veiled colonial-induced removal from lands as settler ethnogeographies are produced. This opens a 'new mobilities paradigm' whereby Indigenous, Black, and other racialised communities must also cope with a 'mobility poverty' that results from collective 'histories and experiences of colonialism, capitalism, and climate change' (Suliman et al 2019: 305). The slow violence that is waged from climate-induced or -exacerbated deteriorating conditions makes the coerced sedentarism of Western Liberal modernity untenable in fostering a safe environment for present and future generations.

For many Indigenous communities located in environmentally precarious areas, climate change emphasises economic immobilities and historical strategies of containment that have been implemented by white supremacist and settler colonial structures. Both the ability and the inability of a community to endure enforced sedentarism and containment, historical economic and political marginalisation, and precarious environmental conditions resulting from Wiindigo economics and

infrastructure and climate change has resulted in further discourses of erasure. Suliman et al (2019: 304) remark that:

> for many Indigenous peoples, unequal geographical distribution of mobility rights compounds and conceals the ways they have been dispossessed of their right to self-determine their capacity to move (or stay) within or across national boundaries.

Remaining on lands that become framed as 'accursed' in the Anthropocene, whether by choice or not, Indigenous communities are couched in the Neoliberal discourse of 'resilience' (Joseph 2013: 38) rather than understood as asserting their self-determination or sovereignty, or as fighting their way towards the exit of an enforced containment. Notions of resiliency contribute to the Neoliberal political economic language of individualised responsibility and labour, insinuating that resilient communities are working hard to remain on their lands. Likewise, if communities decide to leave their lands, resilience is lost while their self-determination, sovereignty, and historical narrative become eroded by the concept of the climate refugee.

The 'climate refugee' is one of the most prolific complementary narratives of settler colonial erasure produced in the Anthropocene (Scott and Smith 2017a). Bereft of any legal meaning in international law, the amorphous 'climate refugee' of the Anthropocene, who is either physically displaced or displaced in-place (Nixon 2011), may be produced from the circumstances of climate change, the irresponsibility of others beyond the United States, or their own lack of will and resiliency (Whyte el al 2019). Scott and Smith (2017a: 375) comment that the climate refugee reflects an alarmist mainstream discourse of 'rising sea levels causing brown and black bodies to wash up on "our shores"'. Such alarmism is seen repeatedly in the issue of immigration from the Latin American countries. This is a mere reflection of the white possessive, one that looks to ensure, especially in the case of the United States, that whiteness is not supplanted or removed from power. As Erikson (2020: 15), remarks 'while the universal ([L]iberal) human subject is marked, the marked racialised body is always a nonwhite other that…has been expelled'. He adds 'Whiteness holds a position here not just as an unmarked race, but as the position that race can be understood from'. Its own alarmism is yet another production of the Western modernity that fails to intervene in the disruption caused by the climate crisis. In the end, the climate refugee is 'not dispossessed and displaced by climate change itself, nor its devastating impacts, but rather by government actions to mitigate it' (Scott and Smith 2017a: 375). Going further, white settler colonialism drops the accountability from both mitigating and preventing it, revealing that the racialised climate refugee was always an acceptable outcome of fossil fuel industrialisation. In summary, regardless of the narrative imposed

onto the community, the settler colonial project remains unaccountable for setting the rules of the game that resulted in forced relocation.

As demonstrated through the previous case studies of national parks and dam construction and the ensuing involuntary relocations, land loss and ensuing relocations in the Anthropocene are yet another settler means of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their land. Within the Anthropocene, dispossession is realised through land becoming physically lost to climate change (e.g. melting ice, subsiding and eroding lands) or becoming legally abandoned in the process of relocation. Keene (2017: 260) reveals that, '[t]he preferred option for many tribal communities is voluntary community relocation. As of 2016, at least ten Indian communities across the United States are seriously considering wholesale community relocation as a means of adaptation to climate change'. Practically-speaking, relocations framed as 'climate-induced', often labelled as 'mitigated retreat' or 'managed retreat', are being encouraged as a less expensive adaptation model for Indigenous communities. This is part of a developing 'neoliberal migration management' framework that seeks to build resilience to climate change (Scott and Smith 2017b: 44). Scott and Smith (2017a: 380) also remark that 'the World Bank's Involuntary Resettlement objective "to assist displaced persons in improving or at least restoring their livelihoods and standards of living in real terms relative to pre-displacement levels" makes livelihoods reducible to incomes and constructs them as independent of land'. Pinter (2021: 1), an advocate of mitigated retreat as a climate adaptation strategy, notes 'retreat is increasingly being discussed as an alternative to the current de facto strategy, which focuses on engineering protections and rebuilding in place after successive disasters'. The problem remains that relocations vis-à-vis natural disasters, in the United States and worldwide, have typically been involuntary and with 'maladaptive outcomes' (Simms et al 2021: 318). Whole community locations remain often confined to Indigenous communities, given that the United States government has normally funded individual property acquisitions and buyouts (Pinter and Rees 2021). This reflects the settler colonial logic of primitive accumulation where land is merely replaceable or at the very least able to be compensated if damaged. Scott and Smith (2017a: 380) summarise:

> [t]he implication is not only that any place is as good as any other, as long as all the amenities are provided, but also that any livelihood will do. It completely discounts the possibility that people will suffer a loss in relation to their inability to be on the land, or to undertake a specific livelihood in a specific place.

Mitigated retreats simultaneously exacerbate local histories of forced relocation and the slow violence waged from these forced relocations.

Indeed, they are connected to a history of government mandated Indigenous relocations in the United States dating back as far as the late 1700s (Maldonado et al 2013). Though the project of planned relocations[34] in response to climate disasters of the Anthropocene is a relatively new one to the current Liberal state, McAdam (2015: 95) has traced the beginnings of planned relocations to the 18th century where they were used largely in response to Malthusian concerns about overpopulation. She notes '[t]he core premise was that if populations could be transferred from high-density 'danger zones' to low-density areas, then land could be used more efficiently and conflict over limited resources could be avoided'. Planned relocation has been used as a pre-emptive solution by the Liberal state not just to protect people vulnerable to disaster, but to redistribute them for re-valuing the land. Scott and Smith (2017b: 49) remark that climate related planned relocations in the climate context 'has the effect of converting land labour to "higher" and more productive uses, understood in Lockean terms'.

Contrary to popular discourse on climate-induced relocations, the United States government has been relocating whole communities under the auspices of disaster risk reduction for some time. The Anishinaabe village of Odanah has been deemed as the 'great unknown' relocation (Hersher 2018) and the largest planned relocation of an entire community in the history of the United States. Pinter (2018) notes, given that the United States has seen over a century of planned relocations, facilitators of climate-induced planned relocations should be looking to the case of Odanah as an example of a successful relocation. 'Old Odanah' was an Anishinaabe village of the federally recognized Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Northern Wisconsin, which had been inhabited since at least the 1600s. Located on the flood plains, the village flooded regularly, but in 1960 a catastrophic flood catalysed a relocation of 1,600 Odanah residents, setting off a new era of more intense floods connected to climate change. ACE drafted a $600,000 relocation plan with the approval of the Bad River Band, though this was never implemented for reasons unknown.[35] With the funding of HUD, the Tribal Council moved its citizens to a newly government-owned

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[34] Expanding on the meaning of 'managed retreat' Pinter (2021: 1) explains that it 'refers to the abandonment of occupied land and the removal or relocation of population and/or infrastructure out of areas subject to repeated flooding, rising sea level, or other natural hazards. Synonymous terms include 'planned relocation,' 'managed realignment,' 'climate migration,' and increasingly, 'climigration'.

[35] Pinter (2021) has noted that details of the relocation are poorly documented for reasons not articulated.

constructed housing development just east of Old Odanah. While some scholars like Pinter have labelled the relocation a success (Pinter 2018; Pinter and Rees 2021), Anishinaabe residents of the new housing in 'New Odanah' have called it a 'forced relocation' that resulted in the erosion of the community's lifeways. Of course, Odanah is one of many communities to be relocated and face economic turmoil. Pinter (2021: 17-18) writes: 'visiting many relocated towns leaves the visitor with the distinct impression that those communities were starved of resources to the point that they never fully recovered their preflood vitality'. Even Pinter admits that Odanah offers the 'most extreme example' and given that the community's self-determination to relocate on their terms was upended by the ACE, the experience constitutes the first of many climate induced-mitigated retreats that have been co-opted by settler colonial bureaucracy.

Ultimately Odanah offers itself as a proverbial canary in the coalmine to the bureaucratic disfunction surrounding the planned relocation of an Indigenous community. The illusion of a voluntary relocation is something help up as a means to adapting to life in the Anthropocene, without contextualising the bureaucratic follow-through that has been consistent with community relocations. As the federal government maintains no agency whose remit it is to specifically assist communities relocating, the solution requires herding the cats that are multiple federal agencies and their budgets (Whyte et al 2019: 330). Maldonado et al (2013: 603) comment that 'forced relocation is compounded by the current lack of governance mechanisms, or budgets to support the communities, which intensifies community impoverishment, negative economic and health impacts, and loss of place, social networks, and culture'. This was blatantly articulated by the United States Congressional Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change (US Congress 2013: 18):

> [b]ecause the relocation of entire communities due to climate change is such an unprecedented need, there is no institutional framework within the U.S. to relocate communities, and agencies lack technical, organizational, and financial means to do so. The Administration should develop a program for assisting imperiled communities and inform Congress if additional legal authority and funding are needed.

This is obviously an issue considering Farrell et al (2021) underline that federal and state agencies also maintain little contextualisation of the forced relocations and land dispossession that characterise Indigenous communities who must, or choose to, undergo a planned relocation. Farrell et al note (2021: 7)

> [a]n implication is that climate-adaptive responses would involve addressing the particular climate-related issue, such as coastal erosion or extreme heat, but would also address factors

affecting landscape resilience that are rooted in historical land dispossession and forced migration. Yet those working at federal, tribal, state, or local government or working for nongovernmental organizations and universities often do not have an accurate grasp of the details, scale, and scope of dispossession and migration.

Suliman et al (2019: 304) note that climate-related displacement 'echoes removals that occurred as part of US colonial, capitalist, and industrial expansion', such as reservations and residential schools. The cases of Indigenous communities relocating in Alaska and Louisiana reveal the real violence being perpetuated by 'colonialism, capitalism, industrialization, and their connections to racism and sexism', obfuscating the 'current harms and violence than climate change impacts and a basic understanding of exposure' (Whyte et al 2019: 328). This violence waged in these one-off prototype climate-related relocations is compounded by both an absence of government organisation around the model and the lack of long-term monitoring of past relocations to guide the process of such relocations (Pinter and Rees 2021). The relocation of Isle de Jean Charles in southern Louisiana is a particular case of concern.

Isle de Jean Charles is perhaps one the most prolific and widely analysed cases studies of climate-related relocation in the United States. In the case of Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi Chitimacha Choctaw, the full history of land dispossession begins with European arrival and was amplified through the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that forced Indigenous Nations in the South and Mid-Atlantic regions west of the Mississippi River. Thomas Dardar Jr., testifying on the mitigated retreats of Indigenous communities along the coastline of Louisiana, underlined this history:

> [t]he irony of this situation is that our ancestors sought haven in this rich area to escape enslavement or forced relocation after French and Spanish settlers came to the area and Congress passed the 1830 Indian Removal Act. To avoid conflict from the increasing number of settlers and to escape the plight of many of our Indian counterparts who would be removed from their homelands, our ancestors chose to flee deeper and deeper south into areas that were believed to be uninhabitable by these settlers, but we called home (Dardar Jr. 2012)

Though the bayous and wetlands were wasteland to white settler colonial development, they allowed land- and place-based lifeways to continue. Simultaneously, for settler colonialism, the value of such lands clearly continues to be measured in Liberal productive uses, resulting in the sacrifice of these lands and the lifeways they support. Within the Anthropocene, these histories of colonisation are often erased or at the most deprioritised as an issue in the face of disaster risk reduction. Scott and Smith (2017a: 380-81) note '[f]or all of its emphasis on human rights and dignity, planned relocation

obscures the actual "loss and damage" that transpires when real, material, and ecological relations that ground people's connections with land are severed'.

Through the late 19th and 20th centuries, the Indigenous Nations and communities in Louisiana were continuously bought-out and displaced by the oil and natural gas industries, and either forcibly assimilated or forced into segregated communities. After over a century of dredging and cutting canals through wetlands, salinization has led to a gradual destruction of freshwater flora that sustained and protected coastal communities contributing to rapid coastal erosion. This was in addition to the slew of settler geographies constructed, ranging from 'the construction of dikes and levees, damming of the Mississippi River, other flood control measures, and large-scale agricultural development' that led to subsidence of lands (Maldonado et al 2013: 606). The island of Isle de Jean Charles, which, as of 2018, has shrunk from five by twelve miles to a quarter of a mile by two miles and has seen a decrease in population from 400 to 85 residents, exemplifies the intensifying erosion and its impact on Louisiana's coastline. The community of Isle de Jean Charles has increasingly born witness to more disastrous effects from hurricanes and flooding (Maldonado et al 2013; Pinter 2018). Chief Albert Naquin of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi Chitimacha Choctaw stated in a documented conversation amongst Tribal leaders from the Gulf Coast in Louisiana (Comardelle et al 2020): '[o]ur first considering of resettlement started in 1999. My first reaction was it was a modern day "Trail of Tears"'. He comments on how the Louisiana government bureaucracy co-opted a self-determined relocation:

> [t]he U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development had one billion dollars to help communities through the National Disaster Resilience Competition. We jumped on it and Louisiana's Office of Community Development said they would help us. To make a long story short, the state included our Tribal community resettlement plans in their application for funds, then the state hijacked the plans once they got the money. They are picking and choosing our plans and using it as they want, not to benefit the Tribe. Our plan would have cost about $110 million at the time so we figured the $48 million we received from HUD was halfway to our goal. The state took control of the resettlement, purchased the land we chose for our home, and now we can't get money to put our community back together as planned. The state uses our name, so now when we ask for money or support, we are told that we already got a grant for resettlement (Commardelle et al 2020).

In 2014, the Natural Disaster Resilience Competition, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and HUD, awarded the State of Louisiana 49 million dollars to relocate the community of Isle de Jean

Charles. In 2018, Chief Albert Naquin declared that the relocation had been 'hijacked' (Dermansky 2019) by the State of Louisiana on the basis that the Tribe, especially as one that did not have federal recognition, was being excluded from consultation within the relocation process. The community has not relocated to date.

From Odanah to Isle de Jean Charles, there is a discursive illusion in calling co-opted self-determined relocations in the Anthropocene 'planned'. As the Alaska Institute for Justice has pointed out, there is complicity in the lack of coordination and consent as climate change continues to make circumstances untenable for the present mobilities, and restrictions, of Indigenous communities who must move. What is more disturbing, is that 'climate refugees' and 'planned relocations' might be applicable under actions by the Green Market to implement climate mitigation policies. McAdam and Ferris (2015: 142) comment: '[i]ronically, the implementation of measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change may also increase the need for planned relocation. Most obviously, the construction of a hydroelectric plant intended to reduce reliance on fossil fuels may mean that communities need to be moved'. There are severe implications for widening the boundaries of who is considered 'sacrificed' for climate mitigation. Such implications might involve the communities and Nations of the prior two chapters, who were forcibly relocated, seeing their dispossession rebranded as necessary for climate mitigation.

The Slow Violence of In-Place Displacement and Containment

The determination of wasted lands in the Anthropocene is not dissimilar from sacrifice zones of the white settler economy, where racialised bodies are framed as an inevitable loss in the name of development. In the Anthropocene, the Wiindigo economy cannibalises its own labour in declaring them as inevitable loss under the guise of *homines sacri*. Climate change has assisted Liberal structures of settler colonialism to not only contain but further immobilise Indigenous communities from asserting their self-determination in increasingly uncertain circumstances. Climate change inherently undermines Indigenous self-determination in the settler colonial state as lands degrade, leaving few options for Indigenous communities to adapt. Whyte (2018: 59-60) articulates the impact of Liberal containment in the Anthropocene:

settler states are often firm in their legal and policy commitment to enforce Indigenous
jurisdictions as fixed and inflexible, such as treaty areas, reservation boundaries, and subnational
(e.g., state or provincial) borders and transnational boundaries.

As a result, Indigenous peoples remain unable to shift their cultural and economic activities that require mobility. Whyte (2018: 59-60) offers the example that if 'a valuable plant's or animal's habitat moves outside of a treaty area or crosses a transnational border' this would be problematic since 'settler states would oppose such plans as "illegal" even when the plans are within Indigenous ancestral territories'. As discussed in previous chapters, there has been a concerted and historically continuous effort from settler colonial structures to contain Indigenous peoples. Today, many Indigenous communities must live with and address legacies of genocide, dispossession, as well as forms of slow and fast violence, all while on lands that are becoming unable to support regenerative life. Farrell et al (2021: 6) qualify this:

> [o]ur results show that in addition to a significant aggregate reduction in land density and spread, Indigenous peoples were pushed to lands that are now more exposed to climate change hazards; less likely to lie over subsurface oil and gas resources; and many tribes saw an increase in proximity to federally managed lands that may limit traditional tribal movements, management, and uses.

The Anthropocene has waged a slow violence against communities who are confined to lands that leave them unable to self-determine long term adaptation strategies. DeBoom (2021: 908), building on Mbembé's Necropolitics (Mbembé and Meintjes 2003) and the notion of a colonial-enforced environment of slow death, asserts that climate necropolitical violence 'preceded the Anthropocene's declaration'. DeBoom (2021: 908), quoting Fanon (1968: 75), notes that 'the violence of colonialism did not disappear after the ceremony of trooping the national colors', noting that climate necropower is 'ultimately accumulative'. This 'slow death' is reminiscent of Nixon's slow violence (2013) where the nature of certain forms of violence is not confined within a finite timeframe. Farrel et al (2021: 7) forefront and contextualise historical dispossession to underline the violent containment that many Indigenous communities find themselves in today:

> …for Indigenous peoples, historical land dispossession and forced migration themselves have created the conditions that intensify climate change vulnerability and risks. These factors include confinement to lands with heightened vulnerability to climate change, restrictions on the mobility of Indigenous peoples to exercise important adaptation options, and degradation of lands because of heightened fossil fuel and other natural resource extraction activities. The

immense scale of land dispossession and forced migration provided the settler land base for widespread fossil fuel extraction across North America, which in turn has generated harms and risks to tribal homeland jurisdictions.

Beyond reservation and treaty lands, Wiindigo Infrastructure has played a critical role in also containing Indigenous communities to endure the forms of slow and structural violence in the Anthropocene. This includes disaster mitigation infrastructure and how the ACE has a legacy of constructing flood protections that are either inadequate or that completely fail to protect Indigenous, Black, and other racialised communities in the United States.[36] These conditions have ultimately challenged Indigenous self-determination, whether recognised under law or not, resulting in a forced integration of Indigenous peoples into settler colonial structures and the reinforcement of white settler colonial geographies (Reibold 2022).

In the current environment whereby settler colonial politics are veiled by the Anthropocene, the historical challenges that Indigenous communities must face are normalised and erased, while the challenges posed by climate change are met with Liberal developmental solutions, such as climate adaptation programming. Neoliberal climate adaptation programming has rarely been, in the words of Reibold (2022: 10) 'tailored to Indigenous communities' values and needs and often give them little say in how adaptation can be realized in such a way that the communal structures necessary for effective self-government can be preserved'. The federal government has to date failed to develop a governance framework that respects the self-determination of Indigenous communities seeking relocation. Keene (2017: 260) notes that with Indigenous communities that choose to relocate, it is 'increasingly likely that these communities will face either makeshift relocation or complete dispersal when they are evacuated due to an extreme weather event'. In their 2020 complaint representing five Indigenous communities in the states of Louisiana and Alaska to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displace Persons and the UN Special

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[36] AIJ (2020: 16; 22) notes in their complaint '[t]he United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the federal agency that is responsible for flood protections and infrastructure developments throughout the United States. USACE excluded IDJC from the Morgana-to-the-Gulf Hurricane Protection Levee…European settlers reconfigured the Mississippi River after they arrived, building flood control structures that diverted the Mississippi River. As a result the environment changed. As early as 1896, experts knew the effect of levee development on communities outside of the levee system. The government made a decision to protect some citizens, while ignoring others, specifically Tribal communities living on the coasts.' Maldonado et al (2013: 605) also note: 'In 2005, Congress passed Section 117 in the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations act, which allowed the Army Corps to carry out storm damage protection projects for Alaska Native Villages at full federal expense. A sea barrier was constructed for Kivalina by a private Department of Homeland Security contractor; the barrier failed the day before its inauguration, leaving the village temporarily unprotected'

Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, AIJ (2020: 40) noted that though Tribal governments made self-determined choice to relocate:

> the United States government has failed to implement the relocation plans so that neither community has yet to be relocated. As a consequence, the lives of Tribal citizens are threatened every time a storm occurs and the communities are inundated.

As noted in the formal complaint, the five coastal communities: Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians of Louisiana, the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe, the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Tribe, and the Atakapa-Ishak Chawasha Tribe of the Grand Bayou Indian Village, and the Village of Kivalina in Alaska – face similar circumstances because the US government fails to actively protect and support the self-determined climate adaptation measures. The AIJ (2020: 9) documents:

> [t]he government's inaction has gone beyond basic negligence where the government has failed to engage, consult, acknowledge, and promote the self-determination of these Tribes as they identify and develop adaptation strategies, including resettlement. By failing to act, the U.S. government has placed these Tribes at existential risk.[37]

This bureaucratic matrix that Indigenous communities must navigate to carry out a self-determined relocation contains them in a spatial geography of slow violence (Maldonado et al 2013). Hitherto there has been no articulation on a national framework to relocate climate-displaced communities.

What is more, the legacy of settler colonial recognition politics which determines who is and who is not racialised as an American Indian or Alaska Native, adds another major obstacle for unrecognised Indigenous communities to face. The lack of federal recognition of Louisiana's coastal Tribes has been a major impediment to asserting their own self-determined adaptation measures in order to protect their ancestral lands, villages, and lifeways (AIJ 2020).[38] Indigenous communities who are not federally recognised, for example, cannot receive federal funding to construct housing

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[37] AIJ (2020: 12) further notes '[t]he Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Pinheiro Principles and Peninsula Principles specifically articulate the human rights protections required for those who are displaced by natural or human-made disasters and places the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance on the United States government to displaced persons within their jurisdiction'.

[38] The complaint (AIJ 2020: 14) further noted that the '2014 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination report affirmed the Special Rapporteur's analysis and noted concerns with 'the ongoing obstacles to the recognition of Tribes, including high costs and lengthy and burdensome procedural requirements'. It further reiterated its recommendation from 2007 to 'take effective measures to eliminate undue obstacles to the recognition of Tribes'. The United States government has failed to address the broken federal acknowledgement process'.

that is solely for their Tribal members due to the Fair Housing Act. The Louisiana Government Office for Community Development directly stated (AIJ 2020: 53; see Appendix F):

> it is also imperative to highlight that the project cannot be to the exclusive benefit to any group in a manner inconsistent with Fair Housing Act (FHA) requirements, which prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability.

The survival of unrecognised Indigenous communities is, therefore, rendered a legally invisible issue, and a convenient one, for the settler colonial states as it becomes exempt from claims of ancestral lands and negotiating their loss and damage in the Anthropocene. As a result, Indigenous peoples without federal recognition risk becoming dispossessed of their land through a politics of recognition that determines whether climate change exacerbates a colonial history or not.

Conclusion

Unlike the previous case studies where settler colonialism conjured its own moralising narratives to dispossess and produce its own ethnogeographies, climate change and the master metaphor of the Anthropocene have offered a veil of urgency for settler colonialism exacerbating the dispossession and displacement already underway. Combined with *homines sacri* and the fear of a singular apocalypse, the white settler has been rendered unaccountable for creating the conditions leading to climate change. Meanwhile, settler colonialism is quick to commodify and appropriate TEK of Indigenous peoples in its own solutions to innovate itself out of the climate crisis. Green Market solutions, such as iterations of the GND and the development of renewable energy, have become legitimised under the settler tactics of *terra sacer*. As a result both old (e.g. dams) and new (e.g. solar parks) wastelanding technologies, deemed as 'clean energy projects' are producing more ethnogeographies. Meanwhile, the production of the climate refugee category and the co-option of Indigenous community-led relocations, reflects a continuation of containment and assimilation. In the end, *terra sacer* logics are clearly continuing into the present. However, as this thesis will conclude, there is a need to emphasise movements of resistance and refusal to the veiling of settler colonialism, its tactics of *terra sacer,* and its false innocence in the Anthropocene.

Conclusion

Raising a Red Flag on Liberal Environmental Governance

This thesis sought to place a critical lens over settler colonial environmental governance, highlighting the many moralising narratives of dispossession it uses to create an American settler ethnogeography. In the end, this thesis wanted to demonstrate that the colonial ideologies of land-use that originally displaced non-Christian peoples at the impetus of European colonisation is alive and well today in the form of the aforementioned environmental governance projects. Historically speaking, environmental governance in the United States has reflected a biopolitics that has prioritised white settler populations in particular, and their mobilities, above Black, Brown, and Indigenous populations. Agamben's concept of *homo sacer* helped lay the foundation to demonstrate that geopolitically and biopolitically, settler colonial environmental governance has deemed both specific lands and specific peoples as accursed and others as sacred. Indeed, in the face of looming urgency and crisis, settler colonial environmental governance has applied this rationality to determine who must sacrifice land, labour, and lives for those more valuable to the settler colonial project to live.

Applying Moreton-Robinson's lens of the white possessive and elucidating further on Paperson's *terra sacer*, this thesis looked to highlight the roles played by the foundational national institutions of America's national parks and America's monumental dams in the creation of ethnogeographies. In both of these ongoing historical and national projects, the catalyst for their inception was never reflective of a desire for modern civilisation to live cohesively with its environment. Rather, the separate space of the environment was bent to the will of the white possessive and coerced into the performance of settler nativism. National parks have acted as sacred spaces for the white settler colonial elite to remind them of a false Edenic Myth of Pre-Columbian times, especially before they were ever seen as sources of ecological preservation. Numerous articles and news reports have centred in recent years on the lack of people of colour visiting national parks. From Thoreau to Muir to Leopold, sacred wilderness was land to be largely removed from the tragedies of Liberal modernity, and even further removed those who were framed to make this rare

sacred wilderness accursed. To pretend that national parks, and the wilderness they constructed to protect, were designed for universal access is to whitewash their history.

Within settler colonial environmental governance is ultimately a blindness to the unsustainable destructive path that it sows both for its history and its future. The conservation movement, and indeed the need for populist infrastructure for a growing settler population, were born out of the realisation that unimpeded, perpetual extractivism would rob the United States of its future wealth. This is once again to underline that conservation, as a purportedly benign movement in the United States, was born to ensure colonial sustainability and affluence. While this thesis focused on dams as one project of environmental governance, others must also be considered as similarly destructive, and for future research consideration: levees, canals, landfills, superfund sites, pipelines, sewage treatment. Wiindigo Infrastructure remains an insidious means of dispossession that hides under the modern idea of civic duty for society. Much of this infrastructure and its slow violence remains normalised: from the carcinogenic waste disposal found throughout predominantly Black parishes of southern Louisiana (i.e. also known as 'Cancer Alley') to the over 500 abandoned radiation-emitting uranium mines on Diné land to the expansion of freeways across the country displacing Black and Latino communities.

Within these two case studies – national parks and dams - I found that the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous Nations, communities, and individuals was not only a common occurrence, but a phenomenon that had largely been buried in wider historical discourses around national parks and dams and their inception and gradual normalisation into the American settler psyche. The creation of settler ethnogeographies through these projects that claim to tame nature to the will of modernity is, indeed, not only an insidious process but an inherently violent one. In their infancy, these projects forcibly displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples in ways that reflected a continuation of the armed wars of resistance against American settler colonial expansion. Towards their maturation throughout the 20th century, displacement became framed as opportunity, especially as we saw in Chapter Four with Indigenous communities being forced to part with ancestral lands and lifeways and coerced into so-called 'modern housing' and the settler American way of life.

This thesis is a first step in a longer journey towards understanding how settler colonialism weaves itself into daily interactions with place and spatial geographies in the United States and its institutions abroad. As the world continues to contemplate solutions and to locate an exit from this path of exacerbating climate crisis, this thesis seeks to raise a metaphorical red flag on environmental governance measures generated from the United States, and arguably from the West at large. As this

thesis demonstrates, the desire for untrammelled wilderness is not only an ideologically skewed understanding of environmentalism, it is also one that has contributed colonial projects worldwide and the advancement of the market-obsessed state.

In the present day, as governments worldwide attempt to innovate their way out of the current climate crisis, environmental governance is becoming more and more pertinent to ensuring that global political and economic power in the international system remains untouched in this mass transition towards a 'green economy'. Unsurprisingly, national parks have accrued more value worldwide as institutions that protect biodiversity in the face of an era of mass extinction, further legitimising their place as national symbols in settler nation states, from the United States to Canada to Australia. The large dam era launched by the United States, similarly, continues to displace and dispossess rural, Peasant, and Indigenous populations for the sake of generating 'clean energy', developing energy autonomy, and fulfilling the state obligations set out by the 2015 Paris Agreement and underlined in the annual Congress of Parties. The issue remains that while the Western scientific industrial apparatus attempts to innovate ways to capture carbon, break down microplastics, and essentially resolve the ecological footprint of Liberal and Neoliberal modernity, Liberal environmental governance policy, one that separates nature and civilization into binaries, remains unperturbed as the preferred and expected approach.

If there is to be a critical turn away from this oppressive understanding of the human and non-human world, I believe there must be recognition that settler colonialism – its discourses, technologies, knowledges, policies, structures – has become embedded into global governance. When the World Bank funds a large dam project, like the Grand Inga in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it does so with the historical precedent that such dams, like those seen in the United States, contribute to national development, and their resulting dispossession and ensuing forms of slow violence, though regrettable, are nevertheless warranted. Despite protests against displacement and dispossession, from the Site C Dam in British Columbia, Canada to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in Benishangul-Gumuz, Ethiopia, large dam projects enjoy a new rebranding as a solution to carbon neutrality. Today, despite their histories of displacing populations around the world and the financial debt that they incur, a majority of these new large dams are planned in developing countries across Asia, Africa, and South America.

This can be seen with national parks, too. In fact it remains one of the most prolific settler colonial environmental governance projects to date. As the Guide to Managing the National Park System (2006: 8) states: 'the national park was an American invention of historic consequences,

marking the beginning of a worldwide movement that has subsequently spread to more than one-hundred countries'. In the Netflix documentary *Our Great National Parks*, its host Barack Obama (2022) repeats the same rhetoric on preserving space for future generations that started with early conservationism 'what began as a common desire to secure wilderness for people to enjoy has become a worldwide movement to preserve these areas for future generations'. He ends the documentary 'it's up to us to protect [wild spaces], to care for them, and to pass on these wild spaces to the next generation'. He does not mention the continued application of *terra nullius* implicit in the determination of what is and what isn't wilderness, the stories of violent displacement that many national parks across the world represent, or the white eugenicist elitism that was found in the inception of the national park models. In the age of climate crisis, the status quo is currently being upheld without critical introspection at great cost to millions.

Pulling 'Spoiled Root Vegetables' and Future Studies

Referencing the act of pulling signs of claimed land like 'spoiled root vegetables', as mentioned in Pratt's poem at the beginning, this thesis finishes by considering the power of decolonial action and its abilities to dismantle settler colonial structures. In understanding the decolonial, Daile and Ramírez (2019: 80) provide a helpful definition, understanding it as 'an affirmative refusal of white supremacy, anti-blackness, the settler colonial state, and a racialised political economy of containment, displacement and violence'. Certainly, while decoloniality and the question of how to dismantle settler colonialism were not subjects of focus for this thesis, it remains a pertinent question for future study. In trying to offer some preliminary insight through this thesis into how settler colonial environmental governance is manifested, I am left with more questions than answers as to how it can be dismantled.

The question of whether Liberal settler colonial governance structures and ethnogeographic projects can be meaningfully reformed to uphold Indigenous sovereignty, or at least to halt the quest to erase it, is a pressing one, and one that I would like to further explore in future research. This question arose more and more towards the end of the writing of this thesis as Deb Haaland became the first Indigenous person, as a citizen of the Laguna Pueblo, to oversee the Department of the Interior in the history of the American settler colonial government. What is more, Haaland has become the first Indigenous Cabinet member of the US Executive Branch, and thus the highest-ranking government official, in its history. The long-term implications of this have yet to be seen.

However, in the short term, we can already see that even settler attempts to manage lands through *terra sacer* logics are being challenged head on for the first time from an Indigenous Secretary of the Interior. The Trump administration, for example, attempted to shrink Bear Ears National Monument, a place of sacred importance to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the Navajo Nation, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah Ouray, Hopi Nation, and Zuni Pueblo, in order to open up lands for uranium mining and cattle grazing. Though Bear Ears largely consists of arid lands that settler colonial environmental governance has historically deemed 'wasteland-able' (Voyles 2015), Haaland already began to show the power of Indigenous refusal to these *terra sacer* logics when she was a Congresswoman prior to becoming Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI). In an interview with The Guardian (Tobias 2019), speaking of her plan to fight the Trump Administration, Haaland noted '[n]o one else can claim that they have been there any longer than our people, than the Pueblo people. I feel like perhaps my voice is important right now to testify to our longstanding care for the land'. In 2021, the Biden administration, with Haaland at the helm of DOI, not only restored the boundaries of Bear Ears, but enlarged them.

In another instance of undoing settler ethnogeographies, in 2021, Haaland declared that a derogatory term for Indigenous women would be removed from 650 geographical features federal lands, highlighting that for 172 years since the DOI's birth, no Secretary of the Interior, nor President saw the need to make such a move. In the past year, Haaland announced the establishment of the Indian Youth Service Corps, funnelling money from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the US Forest Service, and the National Park Foundation, with the aim of bringing Indigenous TEK into the conservation efforts of the DOI. While this appears as a move in the right direction, the question is posed how easily such moves can be undone in what is an inherently colonial structure. If the long-term aim is to uphold Indigenous sovereignty and mitigate the violence waged from white supremacist settler colonial structures against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, then it seems like more radical reform is needed.

If, as this thesis asserts, settler colonialism is a structure of domination that has had to evolve continuously to achieve its ends, there are questions of when and how it has been out-manoeuvred and what conditions led to this. Looking to spaces outside settler institutions, I am motivated by this thesis to better understand how social resistance in the everyday can dismantle settler colonialism. With a better understanding of how settler colonialism affects the everyday, I believe future research of mine, and of others, must pay attention to the complexities that come with intersectional

experiences of oppression. Snelgrove et al (2014: 2) underline that settler colonialism is after all, 'intrinsically shaped by and shaping interactive relations of coloniality, racism, gender, class, sexuality and desire, capitalism, and ableism'. In the end, I recognise that modes and experiences of oppression and resistance are intersectional and diverse and must be treated as such.

This latter point also inspires me to better understand how Black, Brown, and Indigenous movements of resistance, refusal, and resurgence have also outmanoeuvred and usurped attempts to establish a permanent settler nativism. I am conscious that an unintended and unfortunate result of this thesis is one that erases other Black and Brown decolonial geographies in North America and how non-Indigenous Black and Brown communities have been displaced and dispossessed by settler colonial environmental governance. In the future, I am keen to understand better how Black, Brown, and Indigenous decolonial geographies can relate and support one another. Simpson (2017) has called for constellations of co-resistance as a starting point, whereby Black, Brown, and Indigenous movements and co-conspirators, while stars on their own, must find relation to one another in the journey towards liberation. Daigle and Ramírez (2019: 81) underline also that this fabric must be woven between Black, Brown, and Indigenous decolonial geographies in North America 'to illuminate the interconnected struggles for land and space' in a way locate sites for self-determination and freedom. With this notion from Daigle and Ramírez, I am reminded of a moment of joint movement solidarity I witnessed at Standing Rock in 2016. The Chicano-centred Brown Berets and the Black Lives Matter Movement led a non-violent direct action in leadership with Indigenous-led organisations, all of whom highlighted that their own experiences with environmental racism and violence for Wiindigo Infrastructure. LaDuke and Cowen (2020: 255-256) conclude that we can kill the 'Wiindigo' by taking aim at infrastructure as its 'Achilles heel': '[k]illing the Wiindigo today is possible. Like in the past, it relies upon cooperation among people determined to survive'. For me this raises the point how effective constellations of co-resistance have been and where they have been systemically targeted.

There is also recognition here that settler colonialism is not the main character to focus on in the first place. In other analyses (Collins and Watson 2022), I have seen Indigenous peoples refuse to centre solely settler colonial structures as a way to decolonise and who have instead centred on their own communities. Barnd (2017: 5) raises an interesting idea where peoples who refuse to centre settler colonialism assist in a continuity and uncolonised existence of Indigenous geographies:

Indigenous geographies also emerge from relatively self-contained efforts firmly rooted in and ultimately constitutive of Native-centered worlds…[Indigenous] geographies can never be just a

response to settler colonialism if they signal the continuation of precolonial epistemologies, ontologies, and practices. To think otherwise is to assume completion of the colonial project, to freeze history and space, and thus to encapsulate and ventriloquize indigeneity solely via Eurocentric and state logics.

Within this lies what I believe to be a final prospect of future work. There is valuable work in platforming such geographies of continuity and in inquiring into the politics of cartography and its role in upholding or refusing Eurocentric state logics. I am, however, cautious that even centring assertions of Indigenous sovereignty, or self-determination from any racialised group for that matter, as resistance and refusal risks centring settler colonialism, and framing it as a somehow benevolent catalyst to romanticised notions of protest or, as Standing Rock, to be part of a healthy sign of democracy. Standing Rock was an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty in spite of the imposition of Wiindigo Infrastructure and attempts from within Standing Rock to co-opt the spiritual gathering for Liberal environmentalism. Through the colonial-gaze, I am cautious that Standing Rock may be less recognised for the sovereignty asserted and more for reasons of imperialist nostalgia around the imagery produced. At the end of the day, its precedence as the largest Indigenous-led blockade in the North America was produced from Indigenous existence, something that, as this thesis has repeatedly remarked, has remained a direct threat and source of paranoia for the settler colonial project of the United States. Additionally, I have noticed that similar, though smaller, assertions of sovereignty have been repeatedly dismissed, hidden, or framed as security threats from the Liberal gaze. From the Elsipogtog and Wet'suwet'en blockades to L'Eau Est La Vie Pipeline Camp, these smaller acts of sovereignty assertion were met with the same militaristic tactics as Standing Rock, and yet seem to have fallen out of the Liberal romanticisation of nonviolent resistance. Indeed, future work must involve refusing to abide by Liberal understandings of acceptable resistance, focusing instead on the assertion of Indigenous sovereignty.

A Critical Note on International Relations

In disciplines such as International Relations and Political Science that are looking to better understand governance in a time of unprecedented global crisis the gaze appears to remain largely on the global Liberal governance apparatus and its ability to solve what it began. The pull of such disciplines to understand a climate changed world appears to remain centred mostly on the issues to

come rather than understanding where solutions are found. Indeed, even this thesis is complicit in this tendency of academia to locate problems, leaving the provision of solutions for another day, or another industry.

A solution this thesis can at least recommend is to challenge Liberal, Euro-centric, and settler colonial ontological framings of the environment as a somehow spatially and imaginatively separate space. Perhaps, instead of conjuring images of pollution, conservation efforts, and the United Nations, the study of environmental politics could be centred on relationships and where we assign value and to whom or what. Liberal ontological framings of university courses around the environment remain adamantly concerned around resource use and the prospects of sustaining the market long-term. As this thesis has suggested that settler colonialism can be taught, I believe it is also something that can be unlearned. Many have encouraged alternative ontological and epistemological approaches within and outwith the academy that encourage more deliberate unlearning processes that sever relations with oppressive structures and opt in for community- and land-centred lifeways. Kimmerer (2011: 257), for example, suggests we can teach on 'cultures of gratitude' where 'people have a responsibility not only to be grateful for the gifts provided by Mother Earth, they are also responsible for playing a positive and active role in the well-being of the land'. Contrasted with notions of carbon neutrality, the shift of analysis becomes less on the status quo of Liberal governance structures in the face of climate crisis, but the status of ourselves as participants in an environment and the culture in which we live. In International Relations, the juxtaposition of the Euro-American centred theory of Realism, which focuses on the state existing in an anarchic 'state of nature', with Wildcat's 'Indigenous Realism' (2009: xi) could not be starker:

> to know [reality] requires respect for the relationships and relatives that constitute the complex web of life. I call this Indigenous Realism, and it entails that we, members of humankind, accept our inalienable responsibilities as members of the planet's complex life system, as well as our inalienable rights.

It seems the exclusion of ontological and epistemological diversity is reflective of a Western hold over the academy and its mission to avoid looking in the mirror to understand its self-imposed limits and lack of responsibilities. Challenging this hegemony to allow for non-Western and non-human centred lifeways and their outlooks enter the academy would certainly be a start (Tuhiwai Smith 1999).

I believe this call to action must also be extended to the environmental and climate justice movements, of which I consider myself a part, who have largely deprioritised Indigenous voices, and

who have often tokenised Indigenous peoples for reasons ranging from imperialist nostalgia and romanticisations of peoples living with nature to upholding Liberal notions and practices of racial diversity. Years ago, a Mi'kmaq friend told me that white people need to stop appropriating Indigenous cultures and instead return to land- and place-based lifeways. I believe this critical turn is crucial for those benefiting directly from white Liberal modernity. What is more, organisations and movements that purport to fight for justice must work to support and platform Indigenous-led resurgence at the same time as confronting colonial-informed notions of progress. Without doing so, movements risk uplifting colonial ethnogeographies and their projects for replication, export, and further dispossession.

Looking to the Past and Future

In March 2015, with my brother and father in tow, I attended a school board community hearing on the use of the 'Red****s' mascot at Lancaster High School near my home in western New York. We arrived to see that local proponents of the mascot had designed and distributed their own t-shirts and signs. Judging by the number of people who were wearing a red t-shirt in favour of the mascot, it was clear the opposition was already outnumbered. Almost all white people of all ages were in favour and were already starting their own chants as we moved through the hallways.

We were divided into tables to discuss the issue, to hear each other's opinions and experiences. Two white men and two white women were clad in their Lancaster uniform and old memorabilia on one side of the table, three men from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Nation whose lands comprise most of Upstate New York, and I sat on the other half. All arguments were heard from the two men and two women. The key points of the mascot's proponents centred on 'this is our history', 'this is about honouring Native Americans', and 'you're not even from here'. In hindsight, it was clear that settler colonialism demanded performance to ensure its mascot survived, and furthermore it could not be interrupted without reprisal. As each Haudenosaunee man spoke from their own experiences the hurt of the word itself, dispelling presumptions of its 'honour', and further reminded the people who sat opposite that their cherished history had continually come at the expense of the well-being of Indigenous and Haudenosaunee children and youth, tensions grew. One by one the people sat opposite stood up in anger and walked away, with the exception of one woman. By the end of the hearing, each table was asked to vote on whether to keep the mascot. Our

table, now outnumbering the proponents, was one of the majority tables with similarly empty chairs to vote the mascot out of existence.

Though it appears minute, this night reminds me that settler colonialism has failed repeatedly in its attempts to achieve permanence, just as it failed that night to retain a mascot of imperial nostalgia that represented a white settler version of honour. In moving forward, I bear in mind that with the knowledge acquired, future efforts need to work in constellation and solidarity to collapse settler colonial intentions - not solely environmental. Nevertheless, at a time when of global concern around the ecological health of our planet and our role, I believe the real work ahead lies in Wildcat's (2009: 5-6) call to action:

> In order to deal with the array of social and ecological issues we will face across nearly every dimension of the complex life system of Mother Earth, we must begin to understand our lives as essentially not only about us, but about our human selves in what environmental scientists and ecologists, without the least hint of romanticism, call the web of life. The web of life, if taken seriously, implies that our human intelligence must be framed in the context of learning how to live well and sustainably as one small but powerful part of nature, as opposed to strategizing how to manage nature.

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