

"Decolonizing the Intersectional Blogosphere; A Settler's Perspective"

by

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B.A., Concordia University, 2013

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

There is a tendency within intersectional blogging discourse for settlers to ignore the ongoing colonial process occurring on Turtle Island. This pattern is bound up in a settler common sense that understands settler occupancy as inherent and natural. Such an approach to intersectional-type work ignores the manner in which all oppressive actions on Turtle Island are occurring on Indigenous lands. Regardless of a settler's intersections, their presence on Indigenous lands indicates that they are implicated in an ongoing process of colonization. This thesis identifies and examines how intersectional bloggers are writing about issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples and nations. It is argued that through the exploration of Indigenous feminist writing, intersectional settler blogging has the potential to work towards decolonization and solidarity with Indigenous nations. This thesis draws from the work of Indigenous feminist blogs in order to gain insight on how settlers can begin to decolonize their own work.

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INTRODUCTION: CHAPTER 1

I was first introduced to the term intersectionality when I was in the second year of my undergraduate degree, engaged in support work at an anti-oppressive sexual assault centre in Montreal. It felt as though the term “intersectionality” was used in every anti-oppression workshop that I attended and was treated as the germinal part of anti-oppression activism. Perhaps this is because, as Wendy Hulko notes, intersectionality seeks to recognize that: “we each possess different degrees of oppression and privilege based on our relative positioning along axes of interlocking systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and ageism. Where each of us lies in relation to the center and the margin... —our social location—is determined by our identities, which are necessarily intersectional.”¹ At this time, I was amazed at how, what seemed to be such a simple theory, could explain the foggy questions that had perplexed me for so long. When I was young, I can recall knowing I had economic privilege. I didn’t have the words to describe what I was perceiving, but I was aware of economic injustices. As I matured, my understanding of systemic injustice deepened and I became increasingly passionate about social justice. Intersectionality provided me with a language to express many of the things that I already sensed, helping me understand that “identity, oppression, and privilege are not solely abstract concepts” and that “they have real, complex, and often-disputed meanings in our daily lives.”² For the first time, I was able

Wendy Hulko, "Social science perspectives on dementia research: Intersectionality," *Dementia and social inclusion* (2004): 238.

² Wendy Hulko, "The Time- and Context-Contingent Nature of Intersectionality and Interlocking Oppressions," *Affilia* 24 (2009): 44.

to position myself in relation to others and understand that we did not solely exist on a single-axis with one another, but that our identities were linked to one another in a complex web determined by interlocking systems of power beyond our control.

When I moved back to Victoria after finishing my undergraduate degree, I realized that the manner that I had learnt about privilege and oppression was lacking an essential component: recognition of the colonial reality of the very place we were occupying. An example of this is the organizing that occurred surrounding the Occupy movement³ in Montreal. Though I was not directly involved with the Occupy Movement, many radical⁴ activists were. Activists had set up a tent city in the financial district of downtown Montreal, where they were protesting the economic disparities that existed in Montreal. Despite the fact that the word “occupy” was a central part of their movement, they did not recognize the irony of “occupying” stolen land - and neither did I, at the time.⁵ When I moved to Victoria, the political atmosphere was completely different. Every meeting or gathering would begin with a territorial acknowledgment, which recognized that most people in attendance were not from Lekwungen or WSANEC land and that this needed to be recognized.⁶ Conversations about intersectionality did not

³ The “Occupy” movement is short term for Occupy Wall Street, a protest movement that began in 2011 in Zuccotti Park, in the financial district of New York City. This protest originated as a means of protesting economic disparities in the United States but expanded into a global movement, protesting global financial inequalities.

⁴ The term radical is meant to denote those who embody anti-oppressive politics

⁵ Sirma Bilge. “Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies.” *Du Bois Review* 10 (2013): 406.

⁶ There are problems with this expectation as well, as it can be perfunctory.

ignore colonialism and did not treat Indigenous identity as a category comparable to gender or race. Soon after my move, I realized that the way that activists in Montreal were speaking about intersectionality was unintentionally naturalizing and reproducing settler subjects by masking over indigenous peoples and colonialism.

This realization prompted me to find a more responsible, respectful and accountable way to speak about privilege and oppression. My realization also prompted me to think about how intersectional theory meets practice, and how the gap between the two is represented in social media. It seemed to me that the same patterns of colonial erasure that I had noticed in Montreal, were also present in the online intersectional feminist community. Because of these realizations, I became interested in interrogating the work of intersectional feminist bloggers who are settlers. In my thesis I analyze how issues such as Indigenous identity, settler colonialism and land rights are being addressed within the intersectional blogosphere.⁷ While settler colonialism can be rightfully described as a “structure, a system and a logic,” I am most interested in disrupting the logic of settler “common sense,” where “settler colonial governmentality comes to be lived as the self-evident conditions of possibility for (settler) being.”⁸ In this reality, the presence of settlers on stolen lands “come[s] to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and

⁷ The term blogosphere refers to the notion that social media sites such as blogs provide an interconnected community where the average person can contribute content and participate in a wide range of conversations online.

⁸ Mark Rifkin, "Settler Common Sense," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3(2013): 322.

personhood.”⁹ While some intersectional settler bloggers have begun to disrupt this logic, many write with a presumption of settler common sense, which perpetuates their own naturalization as settler subjects and serves to uphold the settler colonial state.

Throughout my thesis, I refer to what is commonly known as North America as Turtle Island in order to signify the ongoing process of settler colonialism that is occurring on these stolen lands.

The main research question that I address in my thesis is: how can settler feminists committed to intersectionality draw upon and learn from the work of Indigenous feminists in order to decolonize intersectionality? This question is critical because of the transformative role that intersectionality has and should continue to play in challenging hegemonic and oppressive systems of power. In order for intersectional praxes to adequately challenge the oppressive and pervasive system of settler colonialism on Turtle Island, intersectional settler feminists must centre Indigenous feminist decolonization narratives and incorporate Indigenous feminist suggestions into their own intersectional practice. In my thesis, I provide a close reading of individual settler feminist blog posts that operate within an intersectional framework. I analyze and compare settler blogs posts with blog posts written by Indigenous feminists in order to draw out suggestions for how settler feminists can work towards decolonizing intersectionality. My blog analysis is divided into three core chapters. In my second chapter I examine how intersectional settler blogs frequently promote settler common

⁹ Ibid. 322-3.

sense by failing to acknowledge the political status of Indigenous nations; in my third chapter I address the naturalization of settler occupancies and claims to Indigenous lands that can occur within settler blogging; in my fourth chapter I focus on blog posts written by Indigenous feminists and activists, emphasizing the importance of centering Indigenous feminist narratives and thus allowing intersectional feminism to be transformed.¹⁰

Self-Location

When I chose to write about settler colonialism and intersectionality, I was initially nervous that it wasn't my place to write about these topics. As a white settler, I was concerned that it would seem as though I was trying to speak for Indigenous people, which is the last thing that I want to do. I realized that many of the conversations I've had with Indigenous activists have led me to this decision. These activists have expressed their frustrations with being bombarded with questions of how settlers can be better allies. Indigenous activists are continuously tasked with explaining "the basics" of settler colonialism and decolonization to settlers. I came to understand that the onus is not on Indigenous people to decolonize settlers, it is essential that we do this decolonizing work ourselves. Due to these conversations, I recognize the importance of settlers educating other settlers regarding our family histories, occupancies and overall complicity within settler colonialism. The intention of my work is to speak to a subset of the general population that I identify with -intersectional feminists who are settlers- to try to identify

¹⁰ As is recommended in Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy."

ways that we, as a community, can be more accountable to our own positions as settlers on Turtle Island.

I chose to analyze blog posts because social media is an important component of intersectional discourse.¹¹ The primary way that activist networks - that I participate in - share information is through the sharing of blog posts and online articles. These blog posts feed in-person discussions, just as in-person dialogue feeds blogging. When I decided to focus my critique on intersectional blogging, I realized that my position as someone who experiences privilege within feminism would pose some challenges in my writing. For example, the idea of me, as white person, critiquing a blog like *Black Girl Dangerous* seemed to be against the “rules” of the intersectional feminism that I had been “brought up” within.¹² The communities that I was radicalized within hold a deeply held belief that “members of an oppressed group are infallible in what they say about the oppression faced by that group.”¹³ While this idea is rooted in the important belief that lived experiences are valuable and that “marginalized groups must be allowed to speak for themselves,”¹⁴ it poses a significant obstacle for those who wish to challenge hegemony to a larger group than the limited intersection from which they are positioned.

¹¹ Frances Shaw, "Blogging and the Women's Movement," *The Women's Movement in Protest, Institutions and the Internet: Australia in Transnational Perspective 1* (2013): 118.

¹² *Black Girl Dangerous* is blog created by Queer, Black feminist, Mia McKenzie. The blog features the voices of Queer and Trans people of colour.

¹³ Aurora Dagny, June 2, 2015, "Everything Is Problematic." *The McGill Daily*, November 24, 2014, <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2014/11/everything-problematic/>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

After many conversations about my work, I've come to realize that though it might be contentious for me to critique the work of those who experience different forms of oppression than I do, I am doing this work as a part of greater effort to decolonize settler consciousness within intersectionality. In addition, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains, the role of a researcher varies from the role of an activist.¹⁵ Within research, "there are multiple ways of being either an insider or an outsider."¹⁶ While white settlers certainly benefit more from aligning themselves with the colonial state than settlers of colour do, we must all reflect on our position and complicity as settlers within the colonial state. The point of my work is to illustrate that regardless of our various intersections, it is necessary for all settlers striving for just relations between Indigenous peoples and settlers, to take responsibility and acknowledge the ways that we are complicit in the ongoing process of settler colonialism on Turtle Island.

As Andrea Smith explains in her blog *Andrea 366*, the process of listing off one's privileges and oppressions often becomes a ritualized confession, rather than a meaningful conversation about systemic oppression.¹⁷ In this ritual the "most oppressed" participants do not confess.¹⁸ They are "not positioned as those who can engage in self-

¹⁵ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed books (1999): 343.

¹⁶ Ibid, 231.

¹⁷ The implications of using Andrea Smith's work have shifted due to recent controversies that I will further discuss below.

¹⁸Andrea Smith, June 2 2015 "The Problem with 'Privilege,'" Andrea366. Wordpress. December 10, 2013, <http://andrea366.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/the-problem-with-privilege-by-andrea-smith/?blogsub=confirming#subscribe-blog>.

reflection; they can only judge the worth of the confession.”¹⁹ This ritual rarely results in tangible action towards dismantling systemic oppression. Rather, it fixates on interpersonal prejudice, which is only a product of oppressive structures, not the origin. Confessions of privilege often “serve to re-inscribe dominant subject positions,” and tend to create a false sense of safety within the group, often termed “safe space.”²⁰ When settlers confess their positions as settlers, Indigenous participants are positioned as though they can grant confessors with forgiveness. This ritual only reconstitutes settler subjectivities, where the settler can “become the ‘new and improved’ version of the Native, thus legitimizing and naturalizing the settler’s claims to this land.”²¹ Many anti-oppressive spaces, both online and in-person, have centred the confession ritual so that confession itself has become the political project, thus derailing political action.²² Smith challenges her readers to move beyond this ritual, into working towards creating “collective structures that dismantle the systems that enable these privileges.” This means delving into the unknown and “creating the world we want to live in now.”²³

As a response to Andrea Smith’s blog post, I do not provide a laundry list of my privileges and oppressions within this thesis. Instead, I attempt to grapple with how

¹⁹ Andrea Smith, “The Problem with ‘Privilege.’”

²⁰ Beenash Jafri, June 2 2015 “Privilege vs. Complicity: People of Colour and Settler Colonialism,” *Ideas Can* March 21 2012 <http://www.ideas-idees.ca/blog/privilege-vs-complicity-people-colour-and-settler-colonialism>

²¹ Andrea Smith, “The Problem with ‘Privilege.’”

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

various aspects of my identity shape this work and how they have led me to strive towards the world I want to live in. In this thesis, I attempt to view my privileges and my oppressions as responsibilities. While I believe that it is important to be accountable to the privileges I experience, I largely feel as though the “oppressed” aspects of my identity have given me a passion for social justice and a drive to dismantle systemic oppression. My development of critical consciousness began with my own experiences of injustice in the world. I learned how to articulate these experiences when I entered the Queer scene in Montreal. Though this community was not particularly welcoming to femme women at the time, I immediately felt a connection to the broader radical community in Montreal through my Queerness. This is because my Queerness is not a label that denotes individualism, but rather, it is a political identity that sees all systemic oppression as interconnected and interdependent. When I say that I am Queer, I am saying that I believe it is my responsibility to work towards ending all forms of systemic violence.

As a Queer person, it is my responsibility to disrupt homonational rhetoric, which serves to uphold the white-supremacist settler state, and dispossesses those who are marginalized within Queer communities. As a Queer Jew, I have a responsibility to speak out against the pinkwashing that occurs on Turtle Island, as well as in Palestine. As a Queer settler, I have an obligation to learn about the ways in which European contact on Turtle Island destroyed Indigenous ways of viewing gender and sexuality, and disrupt this ongoing destruction today. As a Queer white settler, it is my responsibility to learn about the ways in which heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism are continuing to further

marginalize QT2IPOC²⁴ communities. As a Queer Ashkenazi settler - who has been trained in facilitation, active listening and conflict resolution - I have a responsibility to elucidate how settlers are complicit within these oppressive structures. I view this thesis as one tool for educating settlers about the importance of decolonizing intersectional-type work.

My experiences as a woman have also taught me about my responsibilities in working towards justice. Though I do experience violence and injustice because I am a woman, I recognize that these experiences cannot be compared to the kinds of violence that is experienced by many Indigenous women, women of colour, and migrant women on a daily basis. I believe that as a white settler, I have a responsibility to support Indigenous communities fight against the disturbing pattern of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. As a graduate student, I have a responsibility to highlight the ways that the Canadian government's neglect of this issue is a part of the ongoing colonial violence that the Canadian state perpetuates.

Though I focus my critique non-Indigenous work on intersectionality, I believe that my position as a settler on Indigenous land does pose some limitations in my research. I do my best to listen to Indigenous voices rather than use their work, misinterpret their work or claim to speak for them. Despite my best efforts, I am limited by my positioning. I can use logic and theoretical analysis in order to apply Indigenous feminist thought to the intersectional paradigms, however, I cannot claim to know what it

²⁴ QT2IPOC stands for Queer, Trans, 2Spirit, Indigenous, People of Colour.

is like to be an Indigenous person. It is also important to note that the Indigenous feminist voices that I have chosen to include in this work cannot be universalized and cannot claim to represent all Indigenous opinions. The intention of this work is to challenge settlers living on Turtle Island to consider the ways in which intersectional feminist blogging can serve to naturalize the settler subject and naturalize the settler colonial nation-state. Despite my positionality, I believe that I am capable of putting forth this challenge in a positive manner. My hope is that my critique will serve to push intersectional feminist blogging in a direction that centres decolonization. The decolonization that I refer to is not a metaphorical decolonization. It “centers Indigenous methods, peoples, and lands.”²⁵ Within decolonization “the future is a ‘tangible unknown’, a constant (re)negotiating of power, place, identity and sovereignty.”²⁶ While there are many unknowns regarding the future of decolonization “one thing is sure: the desired outcomes of decolonization are diverse and located at multiple sites in multiple forms, represented by and reflected in Indigenous sovereignty over land and sea, as well as over ideas and epistemologies.”²⁷ Throughout this thesis, I attempt to simultaneously account for the importance of literal decolonization and the acknowledgement that it has multiple and complex meanings. As an attempt towards decolonization, this thesis draws

²⁵ For greater detail please refer to: Chandni Desai, Eric Ritskes and Aman Sium, “Towards the ‘tangible unknown’: Decolonization and the Indigenous future,” “Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society.” 1 (2012): I, accessed June 3 2015, <http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18638/15564>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

on Indigenous feminist blogs in order to centre Indigenous methods, narratives and solutions.

My Position as an Ashkenazi Settler

I have been a settler on WSANEC, Lekwungen and Mohawk lands for most of my life. When I first heard the term settler, I was resistant to the term. The stories of my family's immigration to Canada that I had heard since birth were narratives of courage and desperation. My grandfather, who was a German Jew, was brought to Canada as a prisoner of war during World War II. He was in the United Kingdom when the war began and was mistaken for a Nazi by Canadian troops. He was sent to a POW²⁸ camp in Trois Rivieres, where he lived with Nazis for the duration of the war. The remainder of my family immigrated to Canada in order to escape the pogroms that were occurring in the Ukraine during the early 20th century. The nature of these stories made me want to claim innocence within the ongoing project of settler colonialism on Turtle Island. Though it was difficult at first, I eventually came to understand that though my family came to Turtle Island as a means of survival, and though they faced discrimination when they arrived to these lands because of an ethnic identity that was imposed onto them, they were still complicit in the colonization of Indigenous lands. I now realize that though my family's narrative is different than the traditional white settler narrative, it does not absolve us of our responsibilities as settlers. My family's story of coming to these lands

²⁸ Prisoner of War

as people fleeing death, rape and genocide, makes me feel responsible to call on all settlers - regardless of how we arrived here - to be accountable for our complicity in colonialism on Turtle Island. It is important that we unsettle our desire to claim and control Indigenous lands.²⁹

Methods and Methodology

Interpretive Methods

Throughout my research, I utilized qualitative methods of analysis. I chose this method of conducting research in order to focus on the broader implications of the topics I studied, and to provide an in-depth analysis of the social contexts surrounding them. I chose to engage in anti-foundationalist logics of inquiry throughout this thesis.³⁰ Within anti-foundationalism, there is a recognition that a researcher cannot be an objective observer. In using an interpretive analysis, I recognize that I am influenced by the socially constructed values that have shaped me. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Maori scholar, explains that although most research methodologies assume that the researcher is an outsider, [...] feminist research and other more critical approaches have made the insider methodology much more acceptable in qualitative research.³¹ As an intersectional feminist, I am deeply implicated in this work and recognize the importance of locating myself

²⁹ Scott Morgensen, "Un-settling Settler Desires," *Unsettling America; Decolonization in Theory & Practice*. (2011) accessed January 19, 2015. <https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2011/09/08/un-settling-settler-desires/>.

³⁰ David Marsh and Gerry Stoker, (Eds.). *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (3rd ed.), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillann (2010): 185.

³¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 231.

throughout this thesis. I primarily insert myself in the thesis within the self-location section and continue to do so when it is relevant. Smith explains that a “critical issue with insider research is the constant need for reflexivity.”³² She highlights the importance of thinking critically regarding an insider-researcher’s process, relationships, data and analysis. In order to be accountable to this methodological requirement, within my self-location, as well as within this section, I describe how I came to my topic, how I conducted my research, and the challenges that I faced as an insider-researcher throughout this journey.

Due to the male-dominated nature of research throughout history, I believe that my role as an insider-researcher, and as a woman who experiences systemic oppression, provides important insights for settler colonial studies and political science. The notion that “knowledge, truth and reality” are objective aspects of “common intellectual and cultural heritage” has been constructed by white men throughout history.³³ These ontological constructions pervade much of academic discourse and serve to exclude the voices of those who experience systemic marginalization. This thesis seeks to disrupt the male-dominated canon and to radically transform acceptable notions of “knowledge, truth and reality.”³⁴

Methods

³² Ibid.

³³ Barbre, Joy Webster, *Interpreting Women's Lives Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989, 3.

³⁴ Ibid.

Discourse Analysis

Judith Baxter describes discourses as “forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations, governing mainstream social and cultural practices.” She says, “they are systematic ways of making sense of the world by inscribing and shaping power relations within all texts, including spoken interactions.”³⁵ Throughout this thesis, I conceptualize discursive power in a Foucauldian sense, in that it is systemic, structural and dispersed.³⁶ Within discursive power relations, “it is possible for a speaker to be positioned as relatively powerful within one discourse but as relatively powerless within another.”³⁷ This is the case for intersectional settler bloggers, who experience various forms of systemic oppression, but simultaneously experience power through their settler occupancy. As settlers are largely responsible for producing intersectional discourse, there is a power maintained through settler colonial erasure in their writings. Michelle Lazar argues that critical discourse analysis is a crucial site for contestation and struggle, which is “committed to the achievement of a just social order through a critique of discourse.”³⁸ In this thesis, I disrupt and critique intersectional discourse by challenging the manner in which settler common sense is upheld and

³⁵ Judith Baxter, *Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan (2003), 7.

³⁶ Michel Foucault & Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books (1980).

³⁷ Judith Baxter, *Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology*, 9.

³⁸ Michelle M. Lazar, “Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis.” *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2007, 141-64.

reproduced by settler bloggers. By describing individual intersectional blog posts, locating them within a broader context, and interpreting them by drawing from the work of Indigenous feminists, I am engaging in a critical discourse analysis that seeks to identify and dismantle various forms of systemic oppression.

Thematic Analysis

Throughout my research, I engaged in thematic analysis by conducting a “methodical systematization of textual data.”³⁹ I achieved this by establishing language indicators, choosing blogs, counting language indicators and determining if they fit the criteria I developed. I continued the analysis by organizing the data in charts and outlining the language indicators used in each blog post. I then situated the blogs within a broader context of settler colonialism and intersectional feminism. I concluded this process by interpreting the data by exploring the blogs’ “overt structures and underlying patterns” through thematic categorization.⁴⁰ I organized the intersectional settler blogs into the categories of blood quantum, skin colour, anti-racist activism, cultural appropriation, stereotypes, mascots, and transnational solidarity. I then organized these themes into sections within the second and third chapters. I described and explored these themes, contextualizing them within the broader literature. I then further contextualized them by drawing from blog posts written by Indigenous scholars and activists. I

³⁹ Jennifer Attride-Stirling, “Thematic Networks: An Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Research* 1, no. 3 (2001): 386. Accessed September 12, 2015. <http://qrj.sagepub.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/content/1/3/385.full.pdf.html>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

concluded my thematic analysis by drawing out specific claims and suggestions relating to each theme.

Methodology

I began my research by finding blog posts written by settlers that seemed to be informed by an *intersectional-type* perspective. I only drew from blog posts that addressed or disregarded Indigenous identity in some capacity.⁴¹ I used multiple tactics to find as many posts that fit this criteria as possible. Knowing that many of my Facebook friends read and share intersectional-type blog posts on their Facebook Timelines, my own News Feed was a useful starting point. Once I found blog posts that fit my initial criteria, I furthered my research by clicking on suggested blogs on the sidebar of the blogs I was researching. I also found relevant blog posts by using Google to search “intersectional Indigenous blogs” and other similar word combinations. Once I collected a long list of blog posts, I read through them more carefully to ensure that they truly were informed by *intersectional-type* discourse. I determined this through self-identification and language analysis that I will further discuss below.

Methodological Challenges

One of the challenges of using blogs as data is that it can be very difficult to know the true identities of the authors. The challenge of how the authors represent their identity is largely unavoidable, researchers studying blogs often have no choice but to believe that

⁴¹ This describes my criteria for blogs written by settlers. In my research, I did not have the ability to find all intersectional-type blogs, therefore my findings are only defined by the blog posts I did consider, which are listed in the Appendix.

bloggers are who they say they are.⁴² I primarily use and privilege self-identification as an identity marker.⁴³ The most difficult identity to determine is the category of settler. This is because most settlers do not identify as such. Indigenous bloggers tend to self-identify as Indigenous, often sharing the nation that they belong to in the “about me” section of the blog. When Indigenous bloggers are speaking about Indigenous issues but do not directly self-identify, they tend to refer to Indigenous readers as “us,” rather than “them.” This tendency helped in identifying settlers as well, who tend to speak about Indigenous identity by using “them” rather than “us.” If a blogger explicitly said that they were using intersectionality to inform their writing, I considered this to be a sufficient indicator that they were doing so.⁴⁴ I also used the “about me” section of the blog, as well as other online research in order to determine how the author identifies.⁴⁵

If a blogger did not self-identify as an intersectional feminist, I used language coding and categorization in order to determine if their writing was informed by an

⁴² Julia S Jordan-Zachery, “Blogging at the Intersections: Black Women, Identity, and Lesbianism,” *Politics & Gender*: (2012) 410.

⁴³ The only identity marker that is important to identify is the settler/indigenous differentiation. This is challenging, in that most settlers do not identify this way. However, most Indigenous feminist bloggers do self identify. I rely on Indigenous self identification, subtle language indications, and online research to determine if a blogger is a settler. This method is fallible, but unavoidable. Usually, it is evident that a blogger is a settler by the way they use “they” or “we” to refer to Indigenous peoples.

⁴⁴ I believe that self-identifying is a sufficient indicator because I am not evaluating whether or not they are using intersectional theory properly, only that they are participating in the discourse surrounding intersectionality.

⁴⁵ Blogs that have multiple authors often don’t have an “about me” section about each author, in these cases it is necessary to look beyond the blog in order to find out more information about the author. Bloggers on multiple author sites often have their own blog, website, or youtube channel where this information can be found.

intersectional-type framework.⁴⁶ In this case, I used the language indicators listed below to inform my decision about the selection of blogs. Though it may be contested and inaccessible, intersectional feminists do have a language and a series of buzzwords that we use in order to communicate with one another. I use these words as indicators that the authors I've chosen are informed by intersectional feminism:

Identity indicators - queer, bisexual, trans, gay, lesbian, person of colour (POC), able-bodied, disabled, Two spirit, Indigenous, poor, white, settler, fat, femme, butch, woman, cis, feminist, sex-worker, cis-white-dude, Black, Brown, cishet, LGBT(QIA+), Asian, Native (American), Latina, straight, gender, race, ability, class

Ideological and systemic indicators - Islamophobia, misogyny, racism, ableism, transphobia, classism, sexism, trans-misogyny, homophobia, heterosexism, white-supremacy, imperialism, capitalism, colonialism, body positivity, fat-phobia, sex negativity, sex positivity, patriarchy, masculinity, femininity, fetishization, exoticization, tokenism, hyper sexualization, decolonization, feminism, nation, nationalism, whiteness

Topic-based indicators -street harassment, sexual assault, harm reduction, violence, sex work, migrant justice, body image, rape culture, heritage, incarceration, police brutality, marriage, visibility, gender-inclusive washrooms, poverty, identity, gentrification, color-blindness, reverse-racism, stereotypes, consent, accessibility, blackface, reface, genocide, reproductive justice, cultural appropriation

⁴⁶ Satu Elo and Helvi Kyngäs, "The Qualitative Content Analysis Process." J Adv Nurs Journal of Advanced Nursing 62, no. 1, 107-15.

Buzzwords : privilege, oppression, identity, orientation, binary, trigger warning, problematic, culture, dominant, allies, accessible, hegemonic, institutional, solidarity, constructed, activist, radical, inclusion, (in)visibility, resistance, power, matrix of power, white saviour complex, matrix of domination, systemic, society, marginalization, erasure, prejudice, complicit, binary, social construct

I began this thesis with a smaller list of words than what is listed above, however, due to the rapid transformation of language within blogging communities, it became necessary to add words as I continued. In addition, some of the words I added were very similar to words that were already on the list. For example, my original list included the word ‘racism,’ but as I read more blogs it became evident that it would be necessary to add the word ‘race’ as well. Many of these words could be argued to be known and used by social justice bloggers who are not intersectional feminists, I developed criteria to eliminate these kinds of blogs.

If an author did not self-identify as an intersectional feminist, I only considered their blog posts to be informed by intersectional-type theory if they used at least two words from the list above. If authors used under six words from the list, I only drew on their blog posts if these posts or further online research indicated that they wrote from a multiple-axis feminist perspective. I provide a chart in Appendix A that includes the blog posts that met the criteria that I outline above, demonstrating how they meet this criteria. In Appendix B, I provide a list of links to online research that demonstrates authors’ multiple-axis feminist work. Not all blog posts are informed by intersectionality equally.

This is important to note, as varying dedication levels reflect differently on intersectional discourse as a whole. The in-text blog chart in Appendix A demonstrates the extent to which each blog post is intersectional, ranking each blog as high, medium or low. I determined this ranking by considering the number of language-based indicators used, the strength of the multiple axis-framework and the extent to which the bloggers had written in intersectional-type manner. I further elaborate on these choices in the blog analysis of chapters two and three.

Once I determined the extent to which a blog post qualified as intersectional, I categorized the blog posts based on the extent to which they addressed settler colonialism. The largest category is comprised of the blogs that don't address Indigenous identity or settler-colonialism in any capacity. The majority of blog posts that I read that were informed by an *intersectional-type* framework, were written as though the author was unaware of the ongoing process of settler colonialism on Turtle Island, as well as their own positions as settlers. The second category is comprised of the blog posts that recognized the existence of Indigenous peoples but that framed Indigenous peoples as being members of a minority group, rather than having political and national identities. The third category is comprised of blog posts that acknowledge the difference between race and indigeneity, but that frame Indigenous peoples as communities whose injustice exists only in the past, rather than autonomous nations struggling against colonialism. The fourth category is comprised of bloggers that acknowledge their own complicity within settler colonialism and who are grappling with their own responsibilities as

settlers. While I found many intersectional-type blog posts written by settlers that fit the first and second categories, I did not include all of these posts in my writing, as there is a limited extent that these categories can be written about. I include a chart in Appendix A that lists blog posts that were not included in my writing but fit within the criteria that I outline above.

Data Collection

Throughout my research, I read a multitude of blog posts written by settlers. Using the criteria described above, I narrowed these blog posts down to 28 posts that fit the criteria of an intersectional-type blog that mentions Indigenous identities or issues. Out of these 28 blog posts, I wrote about 16. Although the other 12 posts fit the criteria I was searching for, they didn't provide additional insights not already gleaned from the 16 blogs. This is largely due to settler colonial erasure being a study of absence. Many of the posts merely mention Indigenous identities within a list of other racial groups in order to bolster their own arguments, but say nothing regarding the needs of Indigenous nations. In Appendix A, I include two charts to outline the blog posts that I include in the text, as well as the posts that I exclude. In the first chart, I outline the intersectional-type words used in each blog post, describe additional information that indicates that the blogs are informed by intersectional-type work and include an intersectional-type rating. In the second chart, I outline the intersectional-type words used in each blog post, describe additional information that indicates that the blogs are informed by intersectional-type work and describe the absence that exists within each post.

Although I could have used data analysis software to organize the language indicators within the blog posts, I decided to count them manually. This is due to my desire to engage in a close reading of each blog post, address the absence in the text and to observe the rapidly changing nature of intersectional language. When considering the language coding that I engaged in, it was important that I was able to recognize the context of how the words were being used, which software would not have been able to do. For example, the word body on its own wouldn't necessarily be linked to intersectional feminist discourse, but once the word body is linked with a racial identity by writing "white bodies" or "brown bodies," this word is contextualized and can be recognized as an intersectional-type buzzword. This can also be explained with the words "body image." Neither the word "body," nor the word "image," would be considered an intersectional-type word on its own, however, once the words are seen together, they are further contextualized.

Throughout this thesis I draw from 28 blog posts written by settlers who are contributing to intersectional feminist discourse. These posts were taken from 14 blog sites: Colorlines, The Toast, The Feminist Griote, Everyday Feminism, Tiger Beatdown, Jezebel, Racialicious, Return the Gayze, White Noise Collective, Briarpatch, Huffington Post, The Body is Not an Apology, Black Girl Dangerous, Bitch Media. 12 out of 14 of these sites have multiple contributors. Throughout this thesis, I draw from 33 blog posts written by Indigenous scholars and activists. The posts were taken from 17 blog sites: Andrea 366, Racialicious, Native Appropriations, Last Real Indians, Non-Status Indians,

National Relief Charities Blog, Rabble, Everyday Feminisms, Indian Country Today Media Network, Urban Native Magazine, Voices Rising, Model View Culture, âpihtawikosisân, Kwe Today, Briarpatch, The Feminist Wire, The Talon. 15 out of 17 of these sites have multiple contributors. Because the majority of the blogs I researched have multiple bloggers associated with their sites, I analyze the posts in this thesis on an individual basis rather than assessing the blog as an entity. Many of the blog sites I analyze do not have one unifying ideology, but rather address a broad scope of issues. Although blog sites such as Jezebel and The Huffington Post promote “light-feminism” at times, they also have bloggers associated with their site whose writing is informed by an intersectional perspective. While it is important to highlight that the standards that Jezebel and The Huffington Post hold may not be as high as blog sites such as Racialicious when it comes to upholding an intersectional-type message, they are still crucial sites for intersectional discourse creation. I use the intersectional-type rating system in Appendix A in order to demonstrate the manner in which each blog post varies in terms of how intersectional it may be.

Indigenous Feminist Approach

Arvin, Tuck and Morrill pose various challenges to Gender and Women’s studies in order to aid these departments in properly addressing settler colonialism. I use these challenges as a guideline for analyzing the settler feminist blogs I examine. The authors use Andrea Smith’s critique of feminist scholarship to explain how it often places the state as a presumed entity, which only serves to further silence and dispossess Indigenous

peoples. They challenge “feminist scholarship and activism [...] to set different liberatory goals, ones that do not assume the innocence or desirability of the continued existence of the nation-state as we currently know it.”⁴⁷ The second challenge that they pose is for feminist studies and activists to go beyond the rhetoric of inclusion. They say that Indigenous women and women of colour should not merely be included in white-dominated feminism, but that they must be given the space to radically transform feminism.⁴⁸ The third challenge asks Women and Gender Studies to centre Indigenous issues within feminism.⁴⁹ Though they are directing this challenge to the academy, it is equally applicable to non-academic feminist circles. The fourth challenge addresses the hierarchy that exists in academia and explains that these hierarchies often dismiss Indigenous ways of knowing. According to the authors, in order to truly decolonize “feminists must recognize Indigenous peoples as the authors of important theories about the world we all live in.”⁵⁰ Though they are addressing hierarchies in academia, many non-academic intersectional feminists have internalized Eurocentric and colonial ideas about knowledge and could benefit from this advice. The last challenge that Arvin, Tuck and Morrill pose asks professors of Gender and Women’s Studies to question the ways in which Indigenous peoples are represented in their courses, if at all. I will be applying this

⁴⁷ Smith in Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” 16.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 19.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 21.

last challenge in a more general manner by asking the question of whether the blog posts I've chosen are representing Indigenous peoples in a manner that re-enforces stereotypes, or in a manner that represents them as complex and dynamic human beings.

While these challenges are not the only steps necessary to decolonize intersectionality, they provide an important framework to begin with. The blog posts that I analyze are written by authors whose knowledge levels vary, regarding issues such as settler colonialism, land sovereignty, indigenous- settler relationships and indigenous legal challenges. Arvin, Tuck and Morrill provide a basis to examine the knowledge level of each blogger regarding settler colonialism. The intention of this work is not to place blame on individual settlers who are unaware of their positions as settler,⁵¹ but rather, to examine the manner that settler common sense is ingrained within intersectional feminist discourse. My work seeks to uncover the way that intersectional discourse within feminist blogging can perpetuate settler colonialism by failing to account for the political nature of Indigenous identities, by naturalizing settler subjectivities and by failing to conceptualize Indigenous liberation as inherently intertwined with intersectional feminism.

Native Feminist Theories

This project is guided by the commitments that underlie a Native feminist theoretical approach, which is described by Arvin, Tuck and Morrill as “theories that make substantial advances in understandings of the connections between settler

⁵¹ This would be incredibly hypocritical considering I was completely unaware of being a settler until I moved to Victoria

colonialism and both heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism” and that focus on “issues of gender, sexuality, race, indigeneity, and nation.”⁵² Native feminist theorists actively disrupts the norms of mainstream feminism, de-centering whiteness, and centering decolonization. Though this field is guided by those who do identify as Indigenous feminist women, Arvin, Tuck and Morrill explain that “Native feminist theories are meant to have a much wider audience and active engagement.”⁵³ My intention of using Native feminist theoretical approach is not to pretend that I am an Indigenous woman, nor is it to try to appropriate Indigenous feminist work, but rather, it is to meaningfully engage this work to ensure that I am writing about settler colonialism and feminism in a responsible manner. As a settler, I will be looking to the work of Indigenous feminists to draw out recommendations to settler feminist bloggers as to how to account for the ongoing settler colonial reality in their writings. Indigenous feminist work can unearth the necessary steps towards decolonizing intersectional feminist discourse.

Andrea Smith

I chose to strongly focus on the work of Andrea Smith within this thesis due to the seminal nature of her work, as well as its accessibility. Smith’s work is written in a manner that is more accessible to the average activist and has been an important link between intersectional feminists and Indigenous scholarly work. Unfortunately, a number of Indigenous scholars have recently drawn attention to the disputable claim Smith has to

⁵²Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25 (2013): 11.

⁵³ Ibid, 12.

a Cherokee identity⁵⁴ Smith's work has had a significant impact within communities that are "committed to antiracist, antisexist, and anticolonial analyses and actions,"⁵⁵ therefore, many of the blogs and scholarly work that I reference were also informed by her work without the knowledge that she was "playing Indian."⁵⁶ Because this information was only publicly revealed after the majority of this thesis was written, it is beyond its scope to address the challenges it presents for the applications and authenticity of Smith's work here.⁵⁷ Despite my inability to fully grapple with the recent controversy surrounding Smith's work, I recognize the importance of acknowledging it. If I continued to represent Smith as Cherokee and disregarded the Cherokee nation's request for Smith to cease representing herself in this way, I would be reinforcing "a history in which settlers have sought to appropriate every aspect of indigenous life and absolve themselves

⁵⁴The implications of this controversy have been articulated by Indigenous scholars with whom I stand in solidarity with. They explain: "Presenting herself as generically indigenous, and allowing others to represent her as Cherokee, Andrea Smith allows herself to stand in as the representative of collectivities to which she has demonstrated no accountability, and undermines the integrity and vibrancy of Cherokee cultural and political survival. Her lack of clarity and consistency in her self-presentation adds to the vulnerability of the communities and constituents she purports to represent, including students and activists she mentors and who cite and engage her work. This concerns us as indigenous women committed to opening spaces for scholars and activists with whom we work and who come after us." For more on this please refer to: Various Authors, "Open Letter From Indigenous Women Scholars Regarding Discussions of Andrea Smith," Indian Country Today Media Network.com. July 7, 2015. Accessed September 14, 2015. <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/07/open-letter-indigenous-women-scholars-regarding-discussions-andrea-smith>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*. Yale University Press, (1998): 3.

⁵⁷ For more on the timeline of the controversy, please refer to: "Andrea Smith Is Not Cherokee." Andrea Smith Is Not Cherokee. Accessed September 25, 2015. <http://andreamithisnotcherokee.tumblr.com/>.

of their own complicity with continued dispossession of both indigenous territory and existence.”⁵⁸

Intersectional-type Approach

Since its inception in black feminist legal theory,⁵⁹ the term intersectionality has become extremely popular and also extremely contested within academia. It is a theory that is continuously evolving and cannot be sufficiently understood with one static definition.⁶⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, one of the first intersectional theorists, defines and breaks down intersectionality into categories of intersecting oppressions, intersectional paradigms and intersecting power structures:

Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation. Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice. In contrast, the matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression.⁶¹

Intersectionality is used by many feminist academics as a research paradigm, a theoretical framework and a methodology. My focus, however, is on intersectionality’s impact as a

⁵⁸ Various Authors, ”Open Letter From Indigenous Women Scholars Regarding Discussions of Andrea Smith,” Indian Country Today Media Network.com. July 7, 2015. Accessed September 14, 2015.

⁵⁹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*. (1989) accessed June 3 2015. <http://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf>

⁶⁰ Devon W. Carbado, "Colorblind Intersectionality,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38 (2013).

⁶¹ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), MyiLibrary.

political project and the way that theory translates to practice, when utilized by everyday feminists writing in non-academic contexts. While some feminists have continued using the term intersectionality, others have rejected this term and have instead used terms such as interlocking oppressions.⁶² It is for this reason that I have chosen to use Rita Dhamoon's term "*intersectional-type*" as a method of highlighting "the contestation within feminist work while also providing a recognizable framework" to speak about related theoretical work.⁶³

Throughout this paper *intersectional-type* will refer to authors who are directly using the term intersectionality, as well as those who are working within similar parameters but are using different terms. When referring to bloggers, I will also use the term *intersectional-type* when a blogger is writing about identity politics in a manner that seems to be informed by *intersectional-type* theory or is writing in a way that contributes to intersectional discourse. This is evidently a difficult obstacle methodologically, 1) as it can be difficult to detect what is and what is not informed by the theory of intersectionality when the practical application of intersectional thought in practice can differ from its theoretical meaning and 2) many bloggers don't specify that they are using an intersectional perspective. In order to mitigate these difficulties, I use a set of criteria throughout my thesis in order to determine if a blogger is operating within an *intersectional-type* framework. With each blog post, I examine whether the blogger is

⁶² Rita Kaur Dhamoon, "Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality," *Political Research Quarterly* 64 (2011): 231.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 232.

using a multiple-axis framework of identity and whether they are considering intersecting systems of power in their analysis. I use language indicators of identities and power systems in order to determine if the blogger is operating within an intersectional-type framework. This does not indicate that each blogger has a grasp of the academic uses of intersectionality, but that they are participating in and contributing to the online discourse surrounding intersectionality. Many of these posts are clearly and intentionally a part of this discourse-creation, evidenced by the manner in which their posts are framed.

Intersectional blog posts will often come in a format that says: *this is what mainstream social media is missing about this thing that happened*. The author will intentionally disrupt the single-axis analysis of social media sites such as *Upworthy*⁶⁴ and explain how their analysis ignores [insert identity/intersection].

While there are many theoretical debates within intersectionality, I am most interested in intersectional praxis, and how it grapples with settler colonialism.

Throughout my research, I have come across many bloggers who use intersectional rhetoric but who fail to connect identity politics with the matrix of domination. Within the matrix of domination, as described by Collins, categories such as nation are important to the analysis of intersections of power. However, intersectional settler bloggers tend to ignore this category completely, as well as their position within it.⁶⁵ Maria Lugones

⁶⁴ *Upworthy* is a website that posts articles and videos that are meant to be moving to a mainstream audience. *Upworthy* posts often operate from a single-axis of analysis and miss intersectional perspectives that are related to the topic being discussed.

⁶⁵ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 203.

argues that “intersectionality reveals what is not seen” and that “once intersectionality shows us what is missing, we have ahead of us the task of reconceptualizing the logic of the intersection so as to avoid separability.”⁶⁶ In a similar vein, researching intersectional blogs is largely a study of absence. As mentioned above, many intersectional blog posts involve the blogger highlighting this absence in mainstream media. My research attempts to find a similar absence, relating specifically to the intersection of nation, in blog posts that are already seeking to re-conceptualize the logic of intersectional absence.

Settler Colonial Studies Approach

Unlike external colonialism, where an imperial power’s primary goal is extraction of raw materials and labour exploitation of indigenous populations, settler colonialism focuses on land theft and permanent settlement.⁶⁷ The literature on settler colonialism seeks to highlight how larger populations emigrate from their home communities to desired colonies and settle these locations permanently. This settlement is achieved through the elimination of the Indigenous populations of the region in order to gain access to land and resources.⁶⁸ While colonialism ends after resource extraction and exploitation has occurred, settler colonial “invasion is a structure not an event.”⁶⁹ That is

⁶⁶ Maria Lugones, "Heterosexualism And The Colonial / Modern Gender System," *Hypatia* 22, 1 (2007): 192-3. Accessed December 13, 2014. DOI:10.1111/j.1527-2001.2007.tb01156.x

⁶⁷ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism And The Elimination Of The Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006), 388. Accessed December 12, 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240> and Lorenzo Veracini. "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies." *Settler Colonial Studies*. 1.1. 1-12

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

to say that settler colonialism is an ongoing process where the settler's ultimate goal is to settle the land and eliminate and replace the Indigenous population. This elimination happens in both a literal and figurative manner. On Turtle Island, figurative elimination occurs through the destruction and dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands, cultures and histories. By referring to settler colonialism as an ongoing process, I seek to disrupt the commonly held settler mentality that colonialism and settlement are events of the past. The phrase "ongoing process of settler colonialism" signals that the systemic strategies of colonization - such as enfranchisement, genocide, allotment legislation, reserve policies, imposition of religious and cultural beliefs, sexual exploitation and child and land theft - have tangible and continuous implications for Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island today.⁷⁰

Settler Common Sense

Throughout this thesis the term "settler common sense" will refer to Mark Rifkin's conception of the term, as explained in his article "Settler Common Sense." Rifkin describes settler common sense to represent the "affective experience" of settlers, where "settlement – the exertion of control by non-Natives over Native peoples and lands – gives rise to modes of feeling, generating kinds of affect through which the terms of law and policy become imbued with a sensation of everyday certainty."⁷¹ This affective outcome of colonial laws and policies allows settlers to live and benefit from Indigenous

⁷⁰ Mark Rifkin, "Settler Common Sense," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3 (2013): 322. Accessed December 9, 2014. 10.1080/2201473X.2013.810702.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 322.

lands as though their presence gives them this right. Settler common sense gives settlers a false belief that they are the arbiters of justice, with the right to judge the validity of Indigenous sovereignties. This thesis seeks to disrupt settler common sense by flipping this narrative and asking settlers to interrogate their own right to be present on Indigenous lands.

Significance

I explore the relationship between *intersectional-type* theory and practice by identifying and assessing if and how intersectional settler feminist bloggers are integrating concerns relating to settler colonialism. I examine how *intersectional-type* theorization emerges within mainstream discourse through feminist blogs, and how this process often leads to the naturalization of the settler subject and settler colonialism. Blogging is an important mechanism “for women and others who have traditionally been marginalized from mainstream politics” to express themselves outside of the rigid constructs of academia.⁷² As Jessica Danforth explains in her book *Feminism for Real: Deconstructing the Academic Industrial Complex of Feminism*, academic feminism can silence and exclude those who are unable to access post-secondary education.⁷³ Blogging offers a voice to individuals “who do not have access to traditional publishing venues nor

⁷² Anna Sampaio and Janni Aragon, "Filtered Feminisms: Cybersex, E-Commerce, and the Construction of Women's Bodies in Cyberspace." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 29 (2001): 126.

⁷³ Jessica Yee, *Feminism for Real: Deconstructing the Academic Industrial Complex of Feminism* Vol. 4th (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2011), 11. Last Accessed June 3 2015, ProQuest ebrary

the resources to travel to share ideas beyond their geographic locales.”⁷⁴ This means that activists are capable of sharing and discussing information with one another without mainstream interventions. Blogging is an important mechanism for intersectional feminists to “engage in claims-making and other discursive practices” and to “influence the trajectory”⁷⁵ of intersectional feminism. Within intersectional feminism, praxis informs theory just as theory informs praxis. Intersectional feminist blogging is a space where women and girls are engaging in a “feminist political activism that reflects their needs as contemporary young feminists within a neoliberal cultural context.”⁷⁶ Blogging provides an environment in which feminists can combat this neoliberal context by creating “new participatory communities” where those who are marginalized can develop “new kinds of public selves.”⁷⁷

Bloggging combats a neoliberal cultural context by providing wider access to information and by opening up a space for conversations that are often not considered acceptable within traditional academia. While blogs also possess certain barriers to access, such as for those who don’t have computers, those without technological literacy, and those with particular disabilities, blogs are becoming more readily accessible. Blogs have become spaces that are much more accessible than academia because of the various

⁷⁴Mariame Kaba and Andrea Smith, January 8, 2015, “Where Twitter and Feminism Meet,” *The Nation*. April 17, 2014.. <http://www.thenation.com/article/178883/where-twitter-and-feminism-meet>.

⁷⁵ Frances Shaw, "Blogging and the Women’s Movement,” 122.

⁷⁶ Jessalynn Marie Keller. "Virtual Feminisms: Girls’ Blogging Communities, Feminist Activism, and Participatory Politics,” *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 3 (2012): 430.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 434.

systemic barriers that often prevent marginalized individuals from attending university.⁷⁸ For example some of the significant barriers that may prevent someone from attending university are the grade requirements, the individualistic competitive atmosphere, and the rigorous academic environment of universities.⁷⁹ University is an environment primarily designed for those who come from a stable financial environment, those who do not have dependents, those with particular learning styles, those without health issues and those who easily navigate complex bureaucratic requirements with strict regulations.⁸⁰ In many ways, blogs de-centre academe by simply existing. This is due to their proliferation and accessibility. Unlike academic journals, blogs do not require payment for access. Therefore, even activist academics who blog are able to share their knowledge more rapidly and easily as well as with a much wider readership that extends beyond their students and colleagues. I chose to analyze blog posts due to their accessibility as well as their educational power and potential. I view intersectional blogging as an important site for learning and teaching. I believe that my research is significant due to the radical nature of blogging, and the importance of settlers teaching settlers. Although feminist bloggers play a significant role in intersectional discourse creation, they are often missing from academic intersectional debates. The claims that intersectional feminist bloggers are

⁷⁸ Aragon and Sampaio, "Filtered Feminisms: Cybersex, E-Commerce, and the Construction of Women's Bodies in Cyberspace," 126.

⁷⁹ Sarah Banet-Weiser and Alexandra Juhasz, "Academic Labor| Feminist Labor in Media Studies/ Communication: Is Self-Branding Feminist Practice?" *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): 1768.

⁸⁰ Tagore in Yee, *Feminism for Real: Deconstructing the Academic Industrial Complex of Feminism*, 37-9.

making are significant and should be taken seriously within academia. My thesis is an attempt to include the voices of bloggers within academia and to harness their potential for radical change.

Chapter Outline

In chapter 2, I examine the ways in which intersectional settler discussions surrounding Indigenous identities often ignore the political nature of Indigenous nations. I begin this chapter with a brief literature review of intersectional-type work as well as a discussion on a “politics of refusal,” outlined by Glen Coulthard and Audra Simpson. The intersectional-type literature review discusses the origins of intersectionality within black feminism, the central debates surrounding intersectionality, and the cooptation of intersectionality by white feminism. The discussion on “a politics of recognition to a politics of refusal” addresses the manner in which liberal multiculturalism attempts to “solve” the “Indian Problem” by offering assimilatory ideologies that seek to stifle Indigenous self-determination and autonomy.⁸¹ This section offers the critiques of Indigenous scholars, who argue the importance of turning away from the state and focussing on the rejuvenation of their own nations. The blog analysis section of this chapter addresses the ways in which settlers can unintentionally naturalize settler colonialism by defining Indigenous identity according to blood quantum and skin colour, without considering the role of land, culture, kinship, spirituality, language and

⁸¹ Glen Sean Coulthard and Taiaiake Alfred, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, (Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

relationships.⁸² This section of blog analysis also addresses the way in which anti-racism and the erasure of people of colour can be conflated with the naturalization of settler colonialism, and therefore can be eclipsed by anti-racist activism.

In this chapter, I review blog posts written by settlers operating from an *intersectional-type* lens - as determined by criteria described in the methodology section - and assess their content based on if and how they address settler colonialism. I analyze individual posts according to their themes, describing the ways in which settler blogging often ignores the political nature of Indigenous identities. I contrast these posts with blog posts written by Indigenous feminists, drawing out further recommendations for decolonizing feminist blogging. My primary goal in this chapter is to provide an understanding of how a variety of settler bloggers are writing about Indigenous identities, as well as drawing out considerations from Indigenous feminist blogs for how to better account for Indigenous self-determinations and political authorities that disrupt settler common sense.

In chapter 3, I address how intersectional blogs written by settlers, in failing to challenge “settler common sense,” end up naturalizing settler subjectivities.

I explore how topics such as cultural appropriation, stereotypes, mascots, and transnational solidarity are discussed in intersectional blogging. I analyze how these blog posts often naturalize the ongoing process of settler colonialism. I also discuss blog posts written by Indigenous feminists and activists in order to draw out recommendations for how to work towards decolonizing intersectional blogging. I begin this chapter by

⁸² Ruth Hopkins, “Native Identity: A Discourse.”

explaining that settler colonialism “destroys to replace” and that when settlers do not challenge this logic of replacement, they perpetuate it.⁸³ Settler colonialism relies on Indigenous disappearance through death and assimilation.⁸⁴ When settlers lack an understanding of their own occupation being predicated on Indigenous disappearance, they are unlikely to recognize the function that their silence plays in the perpetuation of settler colonialism. Chapter 3 highlights the absence that settler silence creates and the way that it aids the colonial process. I chose to dedicate a large section of this chapter to discussions surrounding cultural appropriation. This is largely because of the prevalence of these discussions within intersectional blogging. At this moment, these conversations are crucial in intersectional discourse creation. In this section I discuss how cultural appropriation is a manner of “playing Indian,” where settlers feel a simultaneous desire and repulsion towards what they believe indigeneity represents.⁸⁵ When settlers culturally appropriate, they often frame Indigenous peoples through savage representations in order to serve as oppositional figures against whom they can imagine a civilized national self.⁸⁶

While blogging about cultural appropriation is a relatively new trend, “playing Indian” has a long, colonial history. Playing Indian has always been a ritual of self-criticism and

⁸³ Throughout this thesis I will mostly be using the term Indigenous. When I use the term “Native” it will be in reference to the discussion of this construction in: Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism And The Elimination Of The Native.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Throughout this thesis I will mostly be using the term Indigenous. When I use the term “Indian” it will be in reference to the discussion of this construction by Philip Deloria, Thomas King or Audra Simpson. For further discussion of “playing Indian” refer to: Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing indian*. Yale University Press, (1998): 3.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

conquest, acted out in order to create and affirm national identity.⁸⁷ When intersectional bloggers who are settlers do not acknowledge the uniquely colonial nature of cultural appropriation of Indigenous identities, they affirm the colonial state and naturalize settler subjectivities. Similarly to cultural appropriation, Indigenous mascots have a long history of promoting images of the Indian as savage, vanishing and beast-like as a method of showcasing “oppositional figures” to the white settler, and simultaneously communicating that [settlers] had “symbolically inherited the lands and noble qualities of Natives.”⁸⁸ In the last section of chapter 3, I discuss the way that dis-identification with settlers abroad can naturalize settler colonialism on Turtle Island through transnational solidarity and activism.

I begin chapter 4 by discussing Indigenous feminisms and the relationships that many Indigenous feminists have with white feminism. I discuss the potential for an intersectional feminism that does not ignore settler colonialism, but allows itself to be transformed by the perspectives of Indigenous feminists. Allowing intersectional feminism to be changed by Indigenous feminists means that feminism must prioritize the concerns of Indigenous feminists. One of the most pressing issues that Indigenous communities are faced with is the disturbing trend of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. In this chapter I discuss blog posts written by Indigenous feminists about this topic. Drawing upon the work of Indigenous feminist bloggers, I argue that in order for

⁸⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁸⁸ King and Springwood. “Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy,” 27.

the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples to change, it is necessary that settlers understand how colonial tactics have caused fracturing within Indigenous communities, and how we have often been complicit in this violence. In this chapter, I also discuss how conversations surrounding gender and sexuality within intersectional feminist discourse often fail to accommodate the needs of Indigenous two-spirited people. In this section, I examine blog posts written by Indigenous two-spirited people that explain how their needs vary from the settler LGBTQ community and how these needs can better be accommodated. In the last section of chapter 4, I discuss how within intersectional settler blogging, there is often a failure to communicate how the environmental devastation of Turtle Island is deeply intertwined with the survival of Indigenous nations. The dispossession from and the destruction of Indigenous lands is an ongoing tactic of colonization. Drawing upon Indigenous feminist writings, I argue that by failing to protect the land and waters, we as settlers, are complicit in this dispossession. I argue that in order to be accountable to the Indigenous nations whose lands we live upon, settlers must disrupt industrial capitalism's destruction of the earth and join Indigenous nations in their struggles to preserve their lands.

CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICAL NATURE OF INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which intersectional settler discussions surrounding Indigenous identities often ignore the political nature of Indigenous nations. I begin this chapter with a brief literature review of intersectional-type work as well as a discussion on a “politics of refusal.”⁸⁹ This chapter discusses four blog posts written by settlers that highlight tensions relating to the portrayal of Indigenous identities. While this sample size may seem small, it is a reflection of the study of absence⁹⁰ that I have engaged in. While I found many more blog posts that portrayed Indigenous peoples as minority groups rather than citizens of sovereign nations, the significance of these posts was in their silence. In order to account for this gap, I provide a chart in Appendix A, which lists the blog posts that I did not include in this text and describes how they failed to account for the political nature of Indigenous identities and to acknowledge the ongoing project of settler colonialism on Turtle Island. This chapter also draws from seven blog posts written by Indigenous feminists and activists in order to describe how Indigenous feminists are writing about skin colour, blood quantum and identity politics. I am not including these perspectives as a means of representing all Indigenous perspectives, but rather, as an example of how some Indigenous feminists view the misrepresentations of these issues. Settlers often conceptualize Indigenous identity as

⁸⁹ A “politics of refusal” describes the ways in which scholars such as Audra Simpson and Glen Coulthard have urged Indigenous nations to “turn away” from the state and state definitions of Indigenous identities. This refusal is indicative of a larger movement towards indigenous self-determination.

⁹⁰ Maria Lugones, “Heterosexualism And The Colonial / Modern Gender System.”

something that is purely racial, rather than political, cultural, spiritual and social. As a result, settlers sometimes act as though it is their right to determine who is and is not Indigenous. Due to misconceptions regarding Indigenous identities, intersectional bloggers can misrepresent the oppression that Indigenous peoples face. In some cases, this results in the eclipsing of Indigenous issues. This chapter explores how intersectional settler bloggers are writing about Indigenous identities, as well as how Indigenous feminists are writing about their own identities.

Settlers feel justified in interrogating the legitimacy of Indigenous identities due to the ways that settler common sense frames their occupancy and citizenship as natural. This naturalizing process is further described in Michael Asch's book, "On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal rights in Canada," which addresses a mentality that is held by most settlers on Turtle Island⁹¹ He says, "We take for granted the idea that we are all here to stay because we are all Canadian and Canada has sovereignty and jurisdiction over these lands." This understanding of the state is held by the majority of Americans and Canadians who never ask themselves the questions: "how did [the state] gain the authority to govern lands that were already being governed by others?" and "what [...] is the basis for our right to be here to stay?"⁹² Most settlers have not asked these questions because they have not been required to do so.⁹³ Because of the privilege that allows

⁹¹ Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (2014) 4.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid, 3.

settlers to ignore these questions, and because of the state-sponsored education that blatantly ignores settler colonialism, settlers do not question the legitimacy of American and Canadian state sovereignty. Most settlers have been educated to think of Indigenous peoples as minority groups or “citizens plus” rather than political nations that have a right to self-determination.⁹⁴ From the blog posts I analyzed, we can surmise that despite the transgressive and critical nature of feminist blogging, Intersectional settler bloggers often possess a similar understanding of indigeneity and state sovereignty. In this chapter, I argue that intersectional discourse in settler blogs can perpetuate settler colonialism by failing to account for the political and sovereign nature of Indigenous identities.

Many of the intersectional settler blog posts that I studied did not adequately represent Indigenous issues and identities. Intersectional-type theory and practice centres around subverting systems of power. Intersectional discourse within blogging relies upon writers that question everything, to the point that they are often mocked or criticized for being too critical and thinking that “everything is problematic.” It is alarming then, that such a blatant form of systemic oppression - settler colonialism - goes unnoticed by so many critical writers. Many of the settler bloggers that I take up in this thesis experience various intersections of systemic oppression and write about their individual experiences with oppression, without acknowledging colonialism on Turtle Island or their positions as settlers. Though there is some experiential overlap for all those who experience systemic

⁹⁴ Lomawaima, K. Tsianina, and David E. Wilkins. *Uneven Ground; American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law*. (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press: 2001). and Cairns, Alan. *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

oppression, Indigenous peoples are specifically affected by “the generations of policies specifically formulated with the goal of destroying [Indigenous] communities and fragmenting [their] identities.”⁹⁵ These policies have sought to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands and their cultures. Residential schools often robbed children of their languages and traditional ways of being, forcing them to assimilate. Many Indigenous nations have been pushed off of their traditional lands, which link them to their ceremonial practices. Indigenous peoples have too often been systematically denied their identities through blood quantum requirements and limited tribal resources.⁹⁶ Within intersectional discourse, it is essential that settlers acknowledge the unique nature of settler colonial oppression, in order to be responsible to the fact that all oppressive actions occur within the context of ongoing settler colonialism. In the first section of this chapter I provide a brief review of intersectional-type literature and discuss how it can be linked to settler colonialism. I then review and analyze blog posts written by settlers and discuss the manner in which they address Indigenous identities.

Intersectional-Type Literature Review

In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in her piece “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine.” She further elaborated on the theory of intersectionality in “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women

⁹⁵ Bonita, Lawrence and Enakshi Dua, “Decolonizing antiracism,” *Social Justice* (2005): 121.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

of Color” in 1991. The theory of intersectionality has deepened the field of feminist theory and has been said to be women’s studies’ greatest contribution to the larger academic community.⁹⁷ The theory of intersectionality has allowed for many people of marginalized identities to explain their experiences of difference through discursive and structural analysis. This is especially important due to the ways that people of hyper-marginalized identities have often been excluded from areas of policy making, academic institutions and feminist political gatherings.⁹⁸

Crenshaw explains that her desire to explore intersectionality as a concept was rooted in the tendency for identities to be analyzed along a singular axis. For example, in feminist circles that were combating violence against women, prior to Crenshaw’s article, there was a tendency to universalize the experiences of all women who are subject to violence.⁹⁹ White feminists within these circles were often resistant to the notion that the experiences of lower class, women of colour were different from the experiences of middle and upper class white women. At this time, women of colour were being marginalized within their anti-racist and anti-sexist political struggles. Because of the tendency for white women to discount this hyper-marginalization, there was significant tension within many feminist circles, which clearly highlighted the need for intersectional analysis. The tension within feminist circles, at the time, highlighted the need for

⁹⁷ McCall, Leslie, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30 (2005): 1771-1800.

⁹⁸ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, vi.

⁹⁹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color," *Stanford law review* (1991): 1242.

intersectional analysis. The assumption that anti-racist struggles and anti-sexist struggles did not overlap came with the underlying implication that the struggles of women of colour and white women were the same, and that struggles of men of colour and women of colour are the same. The term intersectionality sees oppressions as coming from numerous places and meeting at various crossroads. Intersectional theory allows people who experience multiple oppressions to “delineate difference” in a manner that is empowering and resists silencing.¹⁰⁰

It has now been more than twenty years since Crenshaw’s original use of the term intersectionality. In this time, the term intersectionality has moved beyond Crenshaw’s original definition. There is now an entire body of thought that is addressed in academic contexts around the world that take up, rework, critique, and expand Crenshaw’s formulation. State-led institutions such as the United Nations as well as many NGOs have also used intersectionality in order to address global human rights issues.¹⁰¹ While the term intersectionality had the original purpose of addressing the position of women of colour within the context of the larger dominant society, intersectionality has now come to encompass a potentially limitless number of identity formations¹⁰² and has been argued to transcend the concerns of women of colour.¹⁰³ While this has been positive in some

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (2006): 204.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ange-Marie Hancock, "Intersectionality As A Normative And Empirical Paradigm," *Politics & Gender* 2 (2007): 249.

cases, it has also served to undermine the very people who it was originally intended for. An example of this occurred in 2001 at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa where Charlotte Bunch, a radical feminist, named “16 vectors of difference” that fall under the intersectional framework. In this speech she explained that if any of these groups’ human rights were violated, then the human rights of all of humanity would be at risk. This speech attempted to operate under an intersectional framework but was incredibly problematic in its execution. This is because it ignored the “differential positionings of power in which different identity groups can be located in specific historical contexts.”¹⁰⁴ The speech framed all difference as being equally threatened by oppressive frameworks, and failed to acknowledge the importance of time and context when speaking about oppression. The notion that we all suffer when a certain group’s human rights are being violated, without an acknowledgment of different positionings, ignores the very power imbalances that intersectionality is meant to highlight.

Although one of the initial purposes of intersectional theory was to account for the delineation of difference as an empowering act, examples such as Bunch’s speech demonstrate how intersectionality can be used as a mechanism to universalize identities and erase difference. Nira Yuval-Davis¹⁰⁵ demonstrates the importance of understanding the specificities of historical context when we speak about difference. By providing an endless set of possible identities that an individual can be oppressed by, there comes a

¹⁰⁴ Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," 204.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

danger of diluting experiences of oppression and forgetting the importance of history. The identity of settler is a category that is forgotten in intersectional analysis. As a result, Indigenous peoples are often placed under pre-existing categories of oppression such as race, class, gender, sexuality and ability. The political aspect of their identities is simply forgotten, and they are placed in the all too familiar position of being framed as “merely another ‘minority.’”¹⁰⁶ The political nature of their identities, as nations struggling for self-determination within the colonial state is erased. In these cases, intersectionality further serves as a colonial tool, reinforcing the legitimacy of the state and denying Indigenous tribal sovereignty.¹⁰⁷ This is not to say that intersectional analysis cannot adequately discuss settler colonialism, but rather, that it is not reaching its full radical potential when it does not do so.

Similarly to Davis, Sirma Bilge argues that intersectionality has been co-opted by mainstream feminism. Bilge says that white feminism had sought to depoliticize and neutralize intersectionality and has thus hindered its potential for radical social change. She then explains how intersectionality can be reclaimed, and can harness its radical potential.¹⁰⁸ Bilge draws on activist movements such as Occupy and Slutwalk to explain how intersectionality is often misinterpreted and co-opted by whitestream feminists.

¹⁰⁶ Lomawaima, K. Tsianina, and David E. Wilkins. *Uneven Ground; American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law*, 250.

¹⁰⁷ Sirma Bilge, "Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectional Studies," 405-6.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Indigenous feminists such as Jessica Yee have critiqued the Occupy movement for perpetuating colonial violence, naturalizing settler status and eroding Indigenous rights.¹⁰⁹ By using the term “Occupy,” the movement completely ignores the current occupation of Turtle Island.¹¹⁰ Bilge explains the ways in which Slutwalk, a feminist march aimed towards reclaiming the word “slut” serves to perpetuate the same violences that Kimberlé Crenshaw originally sought to dismantle. By attempting to reclaim the word slut in the name of feminism, Slutwalk ignores the systemic and violent sexualization that Indigenous women and women of colour are consistently subjected to.¹¹¹ In the case of Slutwalk, white women are ignoring their own privilege as well as the ways in which Indigenous women and women of colour experience the world. Bilge explains that when movements that claim to understand and practice intersectional anti-oppression do not, it causes identities that should be allying with one another to fragment and compete with one another. This in turn, prevents transformative and counter-hegemonic change and continues to perpetuate colonial and neoliberal mentalities.¹¹² In my analysis of intersectional settler blog posts, I highlight the ways in which this kind of co-optation naturalizes settler status and stunts the radical potential of intersectional

¹⁰⁹ Yee, Jessica. June 5, 2015, “Occupy Wall Street: The Game of Colonialism and Further Nationalism to be Decolonized from the ‘Left,’” Racialicious September 30, 2011, <http://www.racialicious.com/2011/09/30/occupy-wall-street-the-game-of-colonialism-and-further-nationalism-to-be-decolonized-from-the-left/>

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Sirma Bilge, "Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectional Studies," 406.

¹¹² Ibid, 407.

praxis.

Although intersectionality can be co-opted by white feminism, many feminists of colour believe it to be a revolutionary tool that has radically transformed feminism. Ange-Marie Hancock argues that intersectionality is “the most cutting-edge approach to the politics of gender, race, sexual orientation, and class,”¹¹³ explaining that intersectionality is an important tool in beginning conversations about issues of identity in a manner that promotes dialogue rather than competition. Intersectionality can be used as a strategic theoretical device in order to educate people about their own positionality. In some circumstances, intersectionality can help in preventing a trend that Hancock calls “willful blindness,” where oppressed groups see themselves as pure victims rather than individuals who exist in a complex web of oppression and privilege.¹¹⁴ For example, intersectionality may be helpful in helping heterosexual black women understand that they have heterosexual privilege in comparison to queer black women.¹¹⁵ In practice, conversations about intersectionality have a tendency to ignore the colonial framework that they are operating within and thus, end up obscuring the positions of those who are pushed to the margins.¹¹⁶ While intersectional-type theory has the potential to account for the diverse intersections of Indigenous identities, in practice, conversations about

¹¹³ Ange-Marie Hancock, "Intersectionality As A Normative And Empirical Paradigm," 3.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 11.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Giorgia Aiello, Sandeep Bakshi, Sirma Bilge, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, Lynda Johnston, Kimberlee Pérez, and Karma Chávez, "Here, and Not Yet here: A Dialogue at the Intersection of Queer, Trans, and Culture," *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 6 (2013): 99.

intersectionality and oppression tend to “neglect the normalizing logics of settler colonialism” and thus naturalize the colonial state.¹¹⁷ Although intersectionality certainly helps some settlers understand the more privileged aspects of their identities, it can also perpetuate a framework where some settlers attempt to claim innocence within the colonial framework by seeking recognition as most marginalized.¹¹⁸ My thesis aims to expose how the normalization of settler status and innocence is prevalent within the intersectional feminist blogosphere and attempts to find solutions to this damaging trend.

A common critique of intersectionality is that the notion of intersecting roads seems to imply that multiple forms of oppressions are separable. Although Crenshaw has clarified that the idea of separability was never her intention, some scholars have begun using the term “interlocking oppressions,” which sees oppressions as intrinsically linked.¹¹⁹ For many feminist scholars, “interlocking systems of patriarchy, white supremacy and capitalism are upheld through relations of penalty and privilege that cannot be extracted from one another.”¹²⁰ Sherene Razack explains that oppressed people do not live in a vacuum but that they sometimes see themselves as “innocent subjects, standing outside hierarchical social relations.”¹²¹ Within the context of intersectional

¹¹⁷ Smith, Andrea, “Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (2010): 42.

¹¹⁸ Sherene Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 10.

¹¹⁹ Rita Kaur Dhamoon, “Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality,” 232.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Sherene Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*, 10.

praxis, this can result in communities that “are not accountable for the past” and do not view themselves “implicated in the present.”¹²² The notion of interlocking oppressions then, attempts to hold all people accountable for the systems of domination that they gain privilege from by showing that these systems are interrelated. If we take the notion of interlocking oppressions as signifying co-constituted aspects of political power, and locate colonialism as also inseparable from other systems of oppression, then intersectional-type frameworks can be capable of addressing settler-colonialism in a responsible manner. Although the intersectional settler blogosphere as a whole has not yet succeeded in doing this, my experiences within feminist communities at UVIC have shown me that placing Indigenous voices at the centre of intersectional politics and seeing settler colonialism as intrinsically linked to all other forms of oppression is a necessary step for intersectional feminist practice.

In order for intersectional-type work to become decolonized, intersectional feminists must understand the nature of systemic oppression, as well as the manner in which it operates. Patricia Hill Collins elaborates on the notion of interlocking oppressions and explains that intersectional-type frameworks highlight how “oppressions work together in producing injustice.”¹²³ She also uses the term “matrix of domination,” which “refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized.”¹²⁴ The

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 18.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

matrix of domination explains how the various hierarchies of privileges and oppressions that exist are not always the same, but that they are organized differently according to the particular society.¹²⁵ Patricia Hill Collins notes the complexity of the matrix of domination and asserts that in order to resist it, we must dedicate ourselves to understanding how the matrix operates and resist it with its same complexity.¹²⁶ For Collins, this means that we must not only dedicate ourselves to understanding the institutional mechanisms that oppress, but that we must also come to understand how oppressive hierarchies manifest on an interpersonal level. This means that in addition to understanding the broader affects of systemic violence, we need to see how the matrix of domination results in stereotypes, lateral violence and micro-aggressions.¹²⁷

Politics of Recognition to Politics of Refusal

Advocates of a more “progressive” Canada argue that Indigenous peoples should be engaged in a politics of recognition and reconciliation.¹²⁸ Charles Taylor, for example, has argued that Canadian recognition of Indigenous peoples is essential to their self-authentication and self-worth.¹²⁹ Another proponent for liberal multiculturalism, Will

¹²⁵ Ibid, 228.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 203.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 203.

¹²⁸ For a critique of this approach see: Glen Sean Coulthard and Taiaiake Alfred, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, (Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

¹²⁹ Charles Taylor, "The politics of recognition," *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition* 25 (1994): 25.

Kymlicka, holds Canada up as an example for other self-proclaimed democracies as proof that minorities can be successfully absorbed into the modern state in a manner that preserves and respects their difference. For Kymlicka, Taylor, and others like them, “liberal multiculturalism offers itself as a postcolonial "solution" to the colonial "problem" of Canadian/Aboriginal relations.”¹³⁰ Kymlicka and Taylor are not arguing for multiculturalism because of their altruistic values, but rather, because they believe it is a pragmatic and necessary step in preserving the integrity of Canadian liberal democracy.¹³¹ Within this politics of recognition, “some modes of Aboriginal self-determination are not only permitted but celebrated, [while] [...] others are so threatening to the "new" concept of citizenship that they cannot even be acknowledged as possibilities.”¹³² The possibilities that are offered then, always imply that the process of colonization is over, and are therefore limited by this belief.

Glen Coulthard addresses the limits of state-sanctioned Indigenous self-determination in his book *Red Skin, White Masks*. He argues, “since 1969 we have witnessed the modus operandi of colonial power relations in Canada shift from a more or less unconcealed structure of domination to a form of colonial governance that works through the medium of state recognition and accommodation.”¹³³ He says that despite

¹³⁰ Richard F. Day and Tonio Sadik, "The BC land question, liberal multiculturalism, and the spectre of Aboriginal nationhood," *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* 134 (2002).

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 25.

this shift, the settler state has maintained the same goals throughout history; to take power from Indigenous peoples by dispossessing them of their lands and by destroying their autonomy.¹³⁴ For Coulthard, and Indigenous scholars like him, the politics of recognition are futile, and only serve to distract Indigenous nations from their actual goals. Instead of continuing to engage in this futility, Glen Coulthard, Taiaiake Alfred, Audra Simpson, Jeff Corntassel, and Leanne Simpson have all argued that Indigenous peoples should turn away from the state and focus on their own self-recognition and revitalization. In their article *Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism*, Corntassel and Alfred trace the colonial history of the Canadian state and differentiate between historical and contemporary forms of colonization. Like Coulthard, they argue that while historical forms of colonialism were overtly trying to make the bodies of indigenous peoples disappear, modern colonial structures attempt to “eradicate their existence as peoples through the erasure of the histories and geographies that provide the foundation for Indigenous cultural identities and sense of self.”¹³⁵ Due to this culture of erasure, Alfred and Corntassel insist that indigenous peoples must turn inwards and focus on revitalizing their communities by becoming self-sufficient and rejecting modern projections of state-defined “Aboriginal” identity.¹³⁶ To them, this means beginning with one’s own self, family, clan and community and attempting to move

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences against contemporary colonialism," *Government and Opposition* 40 (2005): 598.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 599.

beyond colonialism together. While Corntassel and Alfred acknowledge that there is not one right way to make this change, they suggest various steps that Indigenous peoples can take to reclaim their lives. These steps include: reconnecting to the land, recovering Indigenous languages, transcending colonial methods of domination, becoming self-sustaining producers of food, clothing and medicine, and building meaningful relationships with one another.¹³⁷ These authors emphasize the importance of Indigenous autonomy and self-governance, a belief that resonates within Indigenous feminisms as well.

The politics of recognition are utilized as a response to Indigenous moves towards self-determination. They are a strategic attempt to continue the colonial process and to suppress Indigenous sovereignty. As Thomas King says in his book *The Inconvenient Indian*, Indigenous peoples who are still alive are an inconvenience to the settler state.¹³⁸ People who were here first; who refuse to entertain colonial understandings of “Aboriginal” identity; who belong to sovereign nations are inconvenient because they disrupt the colonial imagination. “Live Indians” are inconvenient because they “simply refuse to stop being themselves.”¹³⁹ Because Indigenous peoples in North America are not all dead or assimilated, as the colonial project wishes them to be, the state must

¹³⁷ Ibid, 613.

¹³⁸ Thomas King, *The inconvenient Indian: A curious account of Native people in North America*, Doubleday (Canada: 2012).

¹³⁹ Simpson, Audra. *Mohawk Interruptus: Political life Across the Borders of Settler States*, Duke University Press (2014), 2.

attempt to “manage” and monitor Indigenous peoples.¹⁴⁰ According to Audra Simpson, colonial tools such as apology, reconciliation and multiculturalism are the state’s more modernized methods of managing the “Indian Problem.”¹⁴¹ Through this clever manipulation, sovereign nations are discursively transformed into racialized minority groups. Within this colonial understanding, Indigenous self-determination is framed with the language of “cultural difference” in a manner that “occludes Indigenous sovereignty.”¹⁴²

“Live Indians” are inconvenient because they have not done what they were supposed to. Indigenous peoples who were not eliminated were supposed to absorb into the “white, property-owning body politic.”¹⁴³ They represent the failings of the settler colonial state. Multiculturalism and the politics of recognition are the state’s attempt to remedy these failings. For Alfred and Corntassel, the label of “Aboriginal” and the embracing of this label, embodies these attempts. They believe that “aboriginalism” is a “state construction that is instrumental to the state’s attempt to gradually subsume Indigenous existences into its own constitutional system and body politic.”¹⁴⁴ Within the context of colonial dispossession - where many Indigenous people are suffering from

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 20.

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ Alfred and Corntassel, “Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism,” 598.

poverty - the state has effectively coerced many Indigenous peoples to embrace “aboriginalism” and the post-colonial logic that accompanies it.¹⁴⁵ The majority of settlers on Turtle Island also embrace this state-imposed understanding of Indigenous identity. For us though, there are no obvious consequences to embracing the notion that Indigenous peoples are simply minority populations seeking recognition from the state. We are simply doing what our “imperial forefather’s” intended¹⁴⁶ Though the consequences of embracing “aboriginalism” are not obvious, they are incredibly significant. Like Alfred and Cornassel, I see this logic as detrimental to our relationship with the Indigenous peoples whose land we occupy. I believe that it is crucial for settlers to understand how our presence on these lands has directly contributed to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands. Because of this, we must fulfill our responsibilities to the nations whose land we are occupying by refusing to be silent. My following analysis of blogs written by settlers who fail to account for the political nature of Indigenous identities is one part of a larger attempt to break the silence amongst settlers.

Settler Blog Analysis

I examine trends in intersectional feminist blogs written by settlers, as a means of exploring the ways in these writings are addressing settler colonialism on Turtle Island.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

My intention is to work in solidarity¹⁴⁷ with Indigenous nations by highlighting how various intersectional blog posts ignore the ongoing reality of settler colonialism. I also demonstrate how some intersectional bloggers are actively engaging in decolonization in an accountable manner. My point in this thesis is not to place blame onto individual bloggers, but rather, to highlight a trend amongst the blog posts that I read, of ignoring settler complicity that enables the perpetuation of settler common sense. My intention is to move intersectional feminist discourse in a direction that is accountable to the Indigenous nations of Turtle Island by encouraging settlers to educate other settlers of their own complicity within colonialism. A central component of settler common sense is the way in which “non-Native access to Indigenous territories come[s] to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood.”¹⁴⁸ My intention in critiquing settler feminist blog posts is to disrupt the naturalization of settler occupancy that Rifkin describes in “Settler Common Sense.”¹⁴⁹ In this next section, I describe how ignoring the political nature of Indigenous identities within feminist blogging perpetuates and allows this naturalization to occur.

¹⁴⁷ I recognize that solidarity is a contentious word, that is constantly misused and taken advantage of by settlers attempting to benefit from “helping” Indigenous peoples. I recognize that “without centering Indigenous peoples’ articulations, without deploying a relational approach to settler colonial power, and without paying attention to the conditions and contingency of settler colonialism, studies of settler colonialism and practices of solidarity run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonial as well as other modes of domination” (Snelgrove et al. 2014, 1).

¹⁴⁸ Rifkin, “Settler Common Sense,” 322-3.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Identity Politics

In both the United States and Canada, “the primary objective of early Indian policy was to ensure the eventual disappearance of Indians – a goal which has not changed in hundreds of years.”¹⁵⁰ This goal has been reflected in policies in the U.S. and Canada that specifically legislate and control Indigenous identities. Although “tribes had existed for millennia as national groups with bounded lands, defined populations, and adaptive governing institutions”¹⁵¹ before European contact, the judicial and legislative bodies in the U.S. and Canada have both been inconsistent in their stance on Indigenous sovereignty. Judicial bodies in both countries have had the tendency to affirm tribal sovereignty in certain cases and deny it in others, claiming the former instances to be acts of benevolence.¹⁵² This is representative of the state’s belief in European conquest and racial superiority, where “Indigenous nations are imagined to be like children or wards, incompetent to manage their own territorial affairs.”¹⁵³ This framing of Indigenous nations as incapable has served to justify policies that legislate Indigenous identity with blood quantum requirements meant to “liquidate tribal lands and to eliminate government

¹⁵⁰ Pamela Palmater, "Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada," *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 3, (2014): 27.

¹⁵¹ David E. Wilkins, “The Manipulation of Indigenous Status: The Federal Government as Shape-Shifter,” *Stanford Law & Policy Review* (2001): 223.

¹⁵² Christopher D. Jenkins, “John Marshall’s Aboriginal Rights Theory and its Treatment in Canadian Jurisprudence,” *UBC Law Review* (2001): 20.

¹⁵³ Lomawaima, K. Tsianina, and David E. Wilkins. *Uneven Ground; American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law*, 24.

trust responsibility to tribes.”¹⁵⁴ This understanding is embodied within settler common sense, wherein settler citizens view themselves as the arbiters of Indigenous rights and identities. This section examines the ways in which bloggers who are settlers are portraying Indigenous identity, and how Indigenous bloggers and activists are speaking about their own definitions of identity.

The first blog post I analyze demonstrates the ways in which settlers can unintentionally naturalize settler colonialism by defining Indigenous identity based on blood quantum and phenotype. Colorlines, a blog dedicated to racial justice, posted a slam poem entitled *Two Young Black Poets on Hipster Racism*. The poem is incredibly poignant in speaking about the ways in which gentrification and hipster culture serve to appropriate and dispossess racialized communities.¹⁵⁵ In the poem Kai Davis and Safiya Washington highlight how hipsters often justify their racism. One of the examples that they use is how hipsters will often justify their use of the “n-word” by saying that they have black friends, claiming that these friendships prove that they aren’t racist and that this proof should allow them to use the slur “ironically.” While most of the points that Washington and Davis make throughout the poem are reflective of anti-oppressive ideas, at one point in the poem, the poets say “you don’t get cool points because you’re 13%

¹⁵⁴ Eva Marie Garroutte, “The Racial Formation of American Indians: Negotiating Legitimate Identities Within Tribal and Federal Law,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (2001): 225.

¹⁵⁵ See poem in Appendix

‘Native American.’”¹⁵⁶ When the words ‘Native American’ are said, Davis and Washington say them in unison and accompany the words with air quotes and eye rolls. Davis and Washington are expressing a legitimate anger at hipsters who try to use their Indigenous ancestry as a way to legitimize their appropriation of other cultures and their participation in gentrification. However, the poets are simultaneously perpetuating colonial ideals of Indigenous identity. Washington and Davis are treating Indigenous identity as something that is theirs to define. However, Indigenous nations are sovereign bodies who have the right to determine their own membership. This is an essential component of respecting Indigenous nations’ rights to self-govern.¹⁵⁷

Kai Davis and Safiya Washington use blood quantum as a means of evaluating Indigenous identity. Blood quantum requirements are used by some nations but are considered by many Indigenous people to be a colonial tool to eliminate Indigenous nations, rather than a true measure of identity.¹⁵⁸ Despite these state-dictated legal restrictions on Indian status,¹⁵⁹ Indigenous nations and bands have their own

¹⁵⁶ Kai Davis and Safiya Washington, Accessed June 6, 2015, Jorge Rivas, “Two Young Black Poets From Philly on Hipster Racism [Video]” *Colorlines* August 17, 2012.

¹⁵⁷ David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, “American Indian Politics and the American Political System,” Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, (2010): 13.

¹⁵⁸ Adrienne Keene, Accessed January 19, 2015. “Love in the Time of Blood Quantum,” *Native Appropriations*. April 4, 2011.

¹⁵⁹ Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Canada can receive status cards from the federal government if they qualify according to state blood quantum requirements.

requirements for membership, which often vary from the state's requirements.¹⁶⁰ While some nations use similar blood quantum requirements as the state to determine membership, many are now opting to forego blood quantum restrictions and determine membership according to lineal descent.¹⁶¹ Regardless of what each nation's specific requirements are, when settlers use arbitrary blood percentages to determine whether or not a person is Indigenous, they are denying the political and sovereign nature of Indigenous nations. This poem is an example of how the oppression of one community can serve to eclipse the struggles of another community or nation.¹⁶² The poem demonstrates the ways that intersectional rhetoric often fails to address the political nature of Indigenous identities and therefore silences issues that are important to many Indigenous nations.¹⁶³

The poem was posted by Jorge Rivas, an editor and blogger at Colorlines, with little writing to accompany the video. Colorlines is a blog that normally uses a critical lens and presents an intersectional approach to the topic of race. While Rivas could have used this video to speak about the complexity of the relationship between racialized and

¹⁶⁰ There are many federal definitions of what defines Indigenous identity in the U.S. They are often inconsistent with one another, as well as with tribal definitions. Because of this, there are many individuals who are considered to be citizens by their nation, but aren't considered to be "Indian" by the government's standards. This is the case in Canada as well, where status is determined by definitions set out in the Indian act.

¹⁶¹ Eva Marie Garroutte, "The Racial Formation of American Indians: Negotiating Legitimate Identities Within Tribal and Federal Law."

¹⁶² Bonita Laurence and Enakshi Dua, "Decolonizing Antiracism," 135.

¹⁶³ Adrienne Keene, "Love in the Time of Blood Quantum."

indigenous communities, he chose to ignore the tension in this video or simply did not notice it. Because white supremacy impacts communities of colour differently, it is common for struggles against racism and colonialism to be framed in opposition to one another.¹⁶⁴

While this poem should not be blamed for the erasure of settler colonialism within anti-oppressive discourse, it seems to represent an ongoing trend within dominant settler narratives, where settlers attempt to define who is “authentically Indian.”¹⁶⁵ In the same way that the state has standards of Indigenous authenticity that are irrelevant to Indigenous self-conception, settler discourse relies on Western understandings of skin colour and blood quantum to determine who is Indigenous, and who is authentically “oppressed.”¹⁶⁶ This rhetoric ignores the aspects of Indigenous identity that are not related to blood, but are uniquely political and are connected to land, kinship and culture.¹⁶⁷

It would be easy to dismiss Washington and Davis for their comments about Indigenous peoples, but this would not address the true culprit - white supremacy. This relationship can be explained through Andrea Smith’s essay “Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy; Rethinking Women of Color Organizing.” Smith

¹⁶⁴ Andrea Smith, “Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy,” *Incite* (2006): 67.

¹⁶⁵ Andrea Smith, *Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism*, 42.

¹⁶⁶ Adrienne Keene, “Love in the Time of Blood Quantum.”

¹⁶⁷ Ruth Hopkins, June 5, 2015, “Native Identity: A Discourse,” *Last Real Indians*, 2012.

complicates common categories of identity by explaining that broad categories such as “women of colour,” do not always account for the complexities and differences that exist within those categories. She explains that women of colour organizing often leads to tensions amongst group members because of a denial of the validity of identities or a refusal to recognize intragroup differences. These arguments are often centred around who “counts” as truly oppressed, whether being able to “pass” as white means that a person can still count as a person of colour, and whether legal categorizations of whiteness are capable of determining who is white.¹⁶⁸ A common ideology that is often the backbone of women of colour organizing is the notion that the group should unite against white supremacy. Smith highlights an important flaw within this logic; it assumes that all communities of colour “have been impacted by white supremacy in the same way.”¹⁶⁹ This strategy fails to recognize the ways in which various narratives of colour can serve to eclipse one another. Oftentimes communities of colour are pitted against one another by white supremacist discourse and thus their strategies for liberation often conflict with one another. According to Smith, this is because “white supremacy is constituted by separate and distinct, but still interrelated, logics.”¹⁷⁰

For Washington and Davis, black women speaking about the “gentrification of [their] hood,” their oppression may seem more severe than Indigenous oppression,

¹⁶⁸ Andrea Smith, “Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy,” 66.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 67.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

because of the ways that Indigenous realities are presented to black communities in the United States.¹⁷¹ The white supremacist discourse that pits oppressed groups against one another exists within the feminist blogosphere and often disrupts the true potential of intersectional blogging. When bloggers do not understand how white supremacy operates, it becomes possible to ignore the political nature of Indigenous identities and to compare Indigenous realities to the realities of other communities of colour, on the basis of race alone. It is important for bloggers to disrupt the belief that Indigenous identity is a race-based identity because this notion is rooted in colonial tactics meant to eliminate Indigenous existence.¹⁷²

In an ideological framework that can be understood through the notion of interlocking oppressions, Andrea Smith explains that white supremacy is upheld by the three pillars of white supremacy: Slavery/Capitalism, Genocide/Colonialism and Orientalism/War. These pillars, which are conceptualized as inherently tied, can help us to envision a common struggle that successfully incorporates the realities of settler colonialism into the framework of interlocking oppressions. The pillar of Slavery/Capitalism explains how the Prison Industrial Complex has allowed for the continued enslavement of black bodies for the profit of white bodies.¹⁷³ According to this pillar, the enslavement of black bodies is only produced through the continued desire of white

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 66.

¹⁷² Adrienne Keene, Accessed June 6, 2015, “‘She’s so pale’: The good and bad of national exposure,” July 29, 2014 <http://nativeappropriations.com/2014/07/shes-so-pale-the-good-and-bad-of-national-exposure.html>

¹⁷³ Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy," 67.

bodies to profit from the labor of black bodies, where one cannot exist without the other. The pillar of Genocide/Colonialism explains how the very legitimacy of the state relies upon the genocide and continued disappearance of indigenous bodies. According to this pillar, the continued efforts to remove indigenous peoples from their lands is only produced through the continued desire of settler societies to feel as though they are the “the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous.”¹⁷⁴ The pillar of Orientalism/War explains how Orientalist values have continued to justify the constant state of war that *is* the United States. According to this pillar, the racialized Other is only produced by Orientalist logic, which assumes that Western nations are perpetually superior to, but threatened by Other civilizations. Within Orientalist logic, those who immigrate to the United States are forever marked as threats to the stability of the nation, regardless of how long they have lived there.¹⁷⁵ When the complexities of these systems are not understood, communities of color can experience internal tensions that centre interpersonal experiences of oppression.

Based on the dynamics that I observed in the world of identity politics and intersectional blogging, it seems as though people are often divided into two categories: white and person of colour. On blogging platforms such as Tumblr, “white-passing” people of colour are considered to be a separate category. Discussions of privilege and oppression often occur with only these categories in mind when it comes to race. “White

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 68.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

passing” people are seen to have more privilege than people of colour who are visibly of colour. This understanding does not consider that many Indigenous peoples may appear to be white, but do not experience the same privileges as other white passing people of colour because of ongoing colonization.¹⁷⁶ In a video produced by “Savage Media” a black woman and white-passing Indigenous woman are sitting next to one another while they are studying. The black woman asks the Indigenous woman what her plans are for the weekend. The Indigenous woman replies that she's “probably just hanging out at the Native American house.”¹⁷⁷ The black woman responds and says “how much Indian blood do you even have,” asking if her “great great great grandmother [was] Indian.”¹⁷⁸ This video was a part of a larger project to reveal the kinds of questions Indigenous Students at Dartmouth are asked on a regular basis. This video demonstrates the limited understanding that most settlers have when it comes to Indigenous identities, and the tendency to rely on blood quantum and skin colour to determine Indigenous authenticity.¹⁷⁹ The video also depicts the tensions that tend to arise between Indigenous communities and communities of color, which further illustrates the settler common sense embedded within Davis and Washington’s poem discussed above.

¹⁷⁶ Adrienne Keene, “‘She’s so pale’: The good and bad of national exposure.”

¹⁷⁷ Savage Media, Accessed June 6 2015 “Blood” *YouTube* Sept 30, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIZ7SuaiH0I>

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Adrienne Keene, “‘She’s so pale’: The good and bad of national exposure.”

Pamela Palmater, a Mi'kmaq legal scholar, discusses the history and current implications of blood quantum requirements in Canada on her blog "Non-Status Indians." Palmater discusses the Canadian government's use of blood quantum as a colonial tactic meant to distance Indigenous peoples from their identities. Palmater argues that the "Eurocentric ideologies around blood purity and race" set out in the Indian Act are methods used to force Indigenous people into assimilating into Canada.¹⁸⁰ In her scholarship, she explains that blood quantum regulations in the Indian Act were designed in order to terminate the state's responsibility to Indigenous nations by creating policies aimed to "ensure their legislative extinction over time."¹⁸¹ This tactic has been partially successful in Canada, as the number of "Status Indians" is continuously decreasing, while the number of "Non-Status Indians" is increasing.¹⁸² This has been accomplished with varying methods "over time, with rules which exclude Indian women, illegitimate children, and adoptees" and that dictate who is able to live on reservations, how communities are to be governed and how nations' lands and assets are to be used and occupied.¹⁸³

Due to the nature of the settler colonial state, Indigenous identities are strictly regulated in both the United States and Canada. Ruth Hopkins (Sisseton-Wahpeton/

¹⁸⁰ Pamela Palmater, accessed June 6, 2015, "Canada's Blood Quantum Formula for Assimilation," Non-Status Indians, August 20, 2010 <http://nonstatusindian.blogspot.ca/2010/08/canadas-blood-quantum-formula-for.html>

¹⁸¹ Pamela Palmater, "Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada," 29.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 35.

Mdewakanton/Hunkpapa), a founding writer for the blog “Last Real Indians,” discusses the complexities surrounding the regulation of Indigenous identities. According to Hopkins, the Bureau of Indian Affairs forces sovereign nations “to define themselves by blood with little regard for land holdings, culture, language, kinship, and those often imperceptible spiritual bonds that all contribute to one’s true Native identity.”¹⁸⁴ Historically, tribal membership was determined through a variety of factors, such as “social, cultural, linguistic, territorial, sociopsychological and ceremonial.”¹⁸⁵ Each nation decided upon different criteria in order to determine membership. The increase in the federal government’s power in the late nineteenth century, along with the decrease in tribal governments’ power, resulted in “indigenous cultural-social-territorial-based definitions of tribal identity [being] ignored and [being] replaced by purely legal and frequently race based definitions.”¹⁸⁶ These definitions are often expressed arbitrarily through congressional legislation and court cases, which often conflict with the decision of the tribe.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, blood quantum requirements were conceived due to racist Euro-American beliefs that “understood blood as quite literally the vehicle for the transmission of cultural characteristics: ‘Half-breeds’ by this logic could be expected to behave in ‘half-civilized’ i.e., partially assimilated, ways while retaining one half of their

¹⁸⁴ Ruth Hopkins, “Native Identity: A Discourse.”

¹⁸⁵ David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiiik Stark, “American Indian Politics and the American Political System,”

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 13.

traditional culture.”¹⁸⁸ Vince Two Eagles discusses tangible impacts of blood quantum laws, which he deems to be racist. He explains that in the United States, those who have below one-quarter blood quantum are not recognized as “Indian” by the federal government. This means that they do not receive vocational training, health benefits, as well as other necessary services.¹⁸⁹ Like Palmater and Hopkins, Vince Two Eagles believes that blood quantum laws have been dictated by state authorities who wish to stunt the growth of Indigenous nations and perpetuate a “statistical extermination” of Indigenous peoples.¹⁹⁰

Adrienne Keene, a Cherokee scholar and the creator of the blog *Native Appropriations*, shares her experiences of being criticized for being “too pale” and therefore not “authentically Indigenous” in a blog post entitled “She’s so pale”: The good and bad of national exposure.” As someone who has a prominent social media presence and is well known for her work on *Native Appropriations*, Keene is often critiqued within the public sphere. She contests the notion that she is not Indigenous enough and explains how she is actually “the colonizer’s worst nightmare.”¹⁹¹ She says: “Because history has tried to eradicate my people by violence and force, enacted every assimilating and acculturating policy against my ancestors, let me grow up in white suburbia, and erased

¹⁸⁸ Eva Marie Garroutte, “The Racial Formation of American Indians: Negotiating Legitimate Identities Within Tribal and Federal Law,” 225.

¹⁸⁹ Vince Two Eagles, accessed June 6, 2015, “What is an Indian? Blood Quantum,” *National Relief Charities Blog*, December 13 2011, <http://blog.nrcprograms.org/what-is-an-indian-blood-quantum/>

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Adrienne Keene, ““She’s so pale’: The good and bad of national exposure.”

all the visual vestiges of heritage from my face—but still tsi tsalagi (I am Cherokee).”¹⁹² In this post, Keene is affirming the validity of her identity and the importance of being recognized as Cherokee. Keene points out that while blood can be “bred out” as colonizers intended, citizenship cannot be.¹⁹³ This is an important reminder that colonial mentalities about Indigenous identities are rooted in the state’s desire to steal Indigenous lands:

Of course the only way in which Indigenous peoples can be permanently severed from their land base is when they no longer exist as peoples. The ongoing regulation of Indigenous peoples’ identities is therefore no relic of a more openly colonial era—it is part of the way in which Canada and the United States continue to actively maintain physical control of the land base they claim, a claim which is still contested by the rightful owners of the land.¹⁹⁴

When intersectional feminists resort to guessing a person’s identity based on the colour of their skin, they are being tacitly complicit in a colonial system that naturalizes settlement and ignores the legitimacy of Indigenous sovereignty. This practice is a perpetration of colonial logic that seeks to “take the Indian out of the child”¹⁹⁵ as residential schools and similar assimilatory tactics intended.

Keene critiques the identity politics litmus tests that exist within many Indigenous communities and attempts to subvert these tendencies within her work. She argues that

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Bonita Lawrence, *“Real” Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood*. University of Nebraska Press, (2004), 38.

¹⁹⁵ Ann Chinnery, ““What Good Does All This Remembering Do, Anyway?” On Historical Consciousness and the Responsibility of Memory,” *Philosophy of Education Archive* (2010): 400.

this same colonial logic has been adopted by various Indigenous nations, causing many Indigenous people to determine their partners based on blood, rather than love. She says: “Colonialism leaves a helluva legacy, doesn’t it? [...] Notions of “blood fractions” are a complete colonial construction, designed to “breed out” Indians, and now they’ve been internalized and are being used by our own communities to further restrict not only the futures of our tribes, but our right to love.”¹⁹⁶ Despite Keene’s understanding of blood quantum as a colonial construction, she still worries how continual intermarriage will affect tribal sovereignty. Denny Gayton (Lakota), Sara Jumping Eagle (Oglala Lakota) and Chase Iron Eyes (Standing Rock Sioux) acknowledge the complications surrounding blood quantum in their podcast on *Last Real Indians*. On the podcast, they discuss the option of choosing to protect blood quantum within their tribes. They recognize that this is not ideal, but that not doing so will eventually lead to “statistical elimination,” effectively relieving the federal government of its treaty responsibilities, “because there will be no more Indians.”¹⁹⁷ While a wide range of opinions were expressed on the podcast regarding whether blood quantum should determine tribal membership, everyone agreed that the sovereign nation should decide.¹⁹⁸ Intersectional feminists who are settlers can draw an important lesson from these debates; determining

¹⁹⁶ Adrienne Keene, accessed June 6, 2015, “Revisiting Love in the Time of Blood Quantum,” *Native Appropriations*, September 5 2013. <http://nativeappropriations.com/2013/09/revisiting-love-in-the-time-of-blood-quantum.html>

¹⁹⁷ Denny Gayton, Sara Jumping Eagle and Chase Iron Eyes, accessed June 6, 2015, “Blood Quantum Talk,” *Last Real Indians*, *Soundcloud*, <https://soundcloud.com/lastrealindians>

¹⁹⁸ Despite legal definitions of “Indian,” Indigenous nations have the right to choose membership.

who “counts” as Indigenous is none of our business, it is up to Indigenous nations and communities to decide this. This means that we certainly cannot tell if someone is Indigenous based on their appearance. Treating Indigenous peoples as though they are “one race of people with certain pre-determined physical characteristics” and ignoring “the fact that Indigeneity is social, cultural, political, legal, territorial, and nation-based” is racist and is a part of a larger trend of settlers ignoring the political nature of Indigenous identities.¹⁹⁹

Most people do not understand the difference between race, ethnicity, and sovereignty and how they pertain to Indigenous peoples. For instance, settler Canadians often attempt to compare the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada to the experiences of Black people in the United States. The nuances of these identities are not understood, which complicates the ways that these identities are written about. A trend that I often came across in my research was the tendency for bloggers to talk about Indigenous peoples as members of a race rather than as members of distinct sovereign nations. When Indigenous peoples are merely mentioned as a racial and cultural minority, rather than being acknowledged as political nations, the colonial project of destroying Indigenous nations is perpetuated. In this colonial myth, Indigenous peoples are framed as historic figures, rather than human beings who are struggling for national survival.²⁰⁰

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, co-founder of the *Wičazo Ša Review* and member of the Sioux

¹⁹⁹ Pamela Palmater, accessed June 6, 2015, “RCMP report on murdered and missing Aboriginal women is statistically skewed,” *Rabble*, April 13 2015.

²⁰⁰ Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua, “Decolonizing antiracism,” 123.

nation explains: "Native populations in America are not "ethnic" populations; they are not "minority" populations, neither immigrant nor tourist, nor 'people of color.' They are the indigenous peoples of this continent. They are landlords, with very special political and cultural status in the realm of American identity and citizenship."²⁰¹ Unlike other racial groups, Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island belong to "sovereign nations, not minority groups. A sovereign nation is a distinct political entity that exercises a measure of jurisdictional power over a specific territory."²⁰² Settlers must begin to see the Indigenous peoples whose lands they reside upon in the way that Cook-Lynn describes, as landlords, not tenants. We are the visitors, and we must begin acting accordingly.

In a blog post written for Colorlines, Dominique Alan Fenton, "a certified legal advocate in Oglala Sioux Tribal Court," argues that "racism [is] at [the] core of Native teen suicides in Pine Ridge."²⁰³ He tells stories of racism experienced by youth in Pine Ridge that all share an overwhelming message that says "Your lives are not valued. You do not have a place in the world beyond the reservation."²⁰⁴ While similar ideas are hammered into the minds of many racialized children, racism that targets Indigenous peoples is rooted in a specific colonial history that is important to acknowledge, and that we must be accountable to. Fenton explains that many Indigenous children feel as though

²⁰¹ Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, "Scandal," *Wicazo Sa Review* 22 (2007): 86.

²⁰² David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiiik Stark, "American Indian Politics and the American Political System," 38.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

they are trapped on their reservation. This is a constant reminder that they are “Live Indians,” who survived targeted elimination:

Live Indians didn't die out. They were supposed to, but they didn't. Since North America already had the Dead Indian, Live Indians were neither needed nor wanted. They were irrelevant, and as the nineteenth century rolled into the twentieth century, Live Indians were forgotten, safely stored away on reservations and reserves scattered in the rural backwaters and cityscapes of Canada and the United States. Out of sight out of mind. Out of mind, out of sight.²⁰⁵

When Indigenous peoples experience racism within the public realm, it is the responsibility of intersectional feminists to demonstrate how this racism has a distinct history of colonial dehumanization and erasure. Despite this responsibility, many intersectional feminist blog posts that I read failed to articulate the specificity of colonial racism, and referred to Indigenous identity as a purely racial identity. In a blog post entitled “Emma Stone Plays A Part-Asian Character In 'Aloha,' And That's Not Okay,” Claire Fallon argues that Cameron Crowe's movie *Aloha*, was problematic in its casting choices. Specifically, in the casting of Emma Stone, a white actress who plays a character that is a quarter Chinese and a quarter Hawaiian. Fallon refers to Hawaiian identity as an ethnicity and implies that Hawaiians are Asian in the title of her piece, which names the character as “part-Asian.”²⁰⁶ Julie Feng, wrote a blog post for *The Body is Not an Apology*, in response to Fallon's post (as well as other blog posts with similar messages),

²⁰⁵ Thomas King, “The Inconvenient Indian,” 61.

²⁰⁶ Claire Fallon, accessed July 23, 2015, “Emma Stone Plays A Part-Asian Character In 'Aloha,' And That's Not Okay,” Huffington Post May 29, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/29/emma-stone-aloha_n_7465730.html

explaining that the centering of Asian erasure comes at the expense of Indigenous Hawaiians, whose protests against the erasure of ongoing colonialism are being silenced. She argues that naming Indigenous Hawaiians as Asian represents an alarming ignorance that exists amongst most settlers, who do not understand their role in the colonial project. Feng says, “non-indigenous Asian Americans have to recognize complicity in our roles as settlers.”²⁰⁷ In her post, Feng took responsibility as a settler by initiating a difficult conversation with her community, demonstrating that anti-racist activism should not eclipse anti-colonial activism. Her blog post is an example of what I believe intersectional blogging should be: a space that is uncomfortable in its challenging of all settlers “to do better” in facing our complicity.

In her blog post *Ally-Phobia: On the Trayvon Martin Ruling, White Feminism, and the Worst of Best Intentions*, Jessie Lane-Metz, a self-identified Black intersectional feminist, demonstrates how anti-racist activists can stand in solidarity with Indigenous nations by acknowledging settler colonialism and by differentiating anti-Indigenous racism from other forms of racism. Her post addresses the ways that white allyship can be more damaging than helpful when seemingly subtle forms of white privilege go unchecked. Though she only mentions Indigenous identity once in the post, explaining that Indigenous peoples and people of colour have a wealth of experience with well-intentioned allies, she ends her blog post with a note that acknowledges colonialism on

²⁰⁷ Julie Feng, accessed July 23, 2015, “The Problem with Aloha is Not the Lack of “Asian” Faces: On Asian American Complicity in the Erasure of Indigeneity,” *The Body is not an Apology* June 13, 2015, <http://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/the-problem-with-aloha-is-not-the-lack-of-asian-faces-on-asian-american-complicity-in-the-erasure-of-indigeneity/>

Turtle Island. She says: “I also do not wish to minimize the oppression of marginalized people from all racialized groups, including Indigenous peoples, upon whose colonized territory these events have occurred.”²⁰⁸ Metz’ statement seems to represent what is largely missing from intersectional settler discourse - the recognition that all oppressive actions and trends that intersectional blogging addresses are happening within the context of the colonial state. Though Metz’ post is mostly addressing anti-black racism within the context of state-sanctioned violence against black bodies, she highlights that this violence is happening within a colonial framework. By recognizing the settler colonial framework, Metz is not allowing Indigenous bodies to disappear from her analysis of oppression, as white supremacy and colonialism wish it to. Though she does not acknowledge her own position as a settler, her acknowledgment of the political nature of Indigenous identity and of ongoing colonialism seems to be a large step in the right direction.

When we, as settlers who are feminists, discuss intersectionality and attempt to subvert systems of power, it is necessary that we understand how these intricate systems operate. As Patricia Hill Collins explains, in order to effectively resist systemic oppression we must understand the matrix of domination, which teaches us how power functions.²⁰⁹ Collins explains that “structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression.”²¹⁰ Systemic

²⁰⁸ Jessie Lane-Metz, accessed May 29, 2015, “Ally-Phobia: On the Trayvon Martin Ruling, White Feminism, and the Worst of Best Intentions,” *The Toast* July 24, 2013 <http://the-toast.net/2013/07/24/ally-phobia-the-worst-of-best-intentions/>

²⁰⁹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 228.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 18.

injustice operates in subtle ways that go unnoticed by society, thus making it difficult to dismantle. This chapter has addressed one of the primary ways that colonial power operates: settler colonialism is most successful when Indigenous nationhood is forgotten or ignored. This chapter has shown how settler common sense allows colonialism to go unnoticed. When intersectional settler bloggers fail to represent the political nature of Indigenous identities, and in turn, ignore the fact that all oppressive actions are happening within the context of the colonial state, they confirm the successes of colonial indoctrination.²¹¹ When settler bloggers allow blood quantum to be used as a legitimate measure of Indigenous identity by other settlers, they are validating the state's definition of Indigenous identity. When they frame Indigenous identities as purely racial, they are allowing sovereign nations to be ignored. In these contexts, settler bloggers are not fully interrogating how systemic power operates on Turtle Island. In order to be accountable to the nations whose lands we reside upon, intersectional feminists must begin to decolonize intersectionality. This "decolonization involves actively challenging or disrupting systems of knowledge that do not fully account for the lives of Indigenous people."²¹² By recognizing Indigenous knowledges and perspectives as integral to building a world we want to live in, intersectional settler feminists can challenge the colonial erasure that we've perpetrated.

²¹¹ Rifkin, "Settler Common Sense," 322.

²¹² Sarah Hunt and Cindy Holmes, "Everyday Decolonization: Living a Decolonizing Queer Politics," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* (2015): 159.

CHAPTER 3: NATURALIZING SETTLER SUBJECTIVITIES

Lorenzo Veracini argues that settler colonialism can be differentiated from colonialism in its desire to erase “the distinction between colony and metropole” rather than emphasize it.²¹³ The purpose of this erasure is to establish a colony that does not appear to the common eye as a colony, but appears to be organic in nature.²¹⁴ Settler colonies are successful when they are able to hide the colonial process. “Once colonized people outlive their utility,” there is a distinct project of eliminating the Indigenous population that occurs in settler colonial societies.²¹⁵ Unlike colonialism, settler colonialism is foremost a competition for land, because “land is life.”²¹⁶ Within capitalist settler colonies, land is used as commodity, where settlers exploit land for profit. While this elimination on Turtle Island has at times been a literal, genocidal elimination, it has also involved other elimination strategies that continue to persist today. The strategies for elimination that occur today are necessary because original attempts at elimination were not entirely successful. They are enacted “by trying to eradicate [Indigenous] existence as peoples through the erasure of the histories and geographies that provide the foundation for Indigenous cultural identities and sense of self.”²¹⁷ These strategies include “taming”

²¹³ Lorenzo Veracini, “Introducing: Settler Colonial Studies,” 1 (2011): 3. Accessed May 2, 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648799>.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism And The Elimination Of The Native,” 404.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 387.

²¹⁷ Alfred and Corntassel, “Being Indigenous: Resurgences against contemporary colonialism,” 398.

the Indigenous populations into “civilized” and assimilated populations, repressing unrest amongst Indigenous populations, stealing aspects of Indigenous cultures and religions traditions “and extinguish[ing] Indigenous alterities.”²¹⁸ As Patrick Wolfe explains, “settler colonialism destroys to replace.”²¹⁹ This logic of replacement has become so ingrained within the U.S. and Canada that “non-Native occupancy” does not understand itself to “predicated on colonial occupation or on a history of settler-Indigenous relations.”²²⁰ When settlers enact settler common sense, they naturalize and confirm settler subjectivities, and therefore allow settler colonialism to go unnoticed.

By examining various blog posts written by intersectional feminists who are settlers, this chapter addresses how intersectional discourse can fail to challenge “settler common sense” and can end up naturalizing settler subjectivities. Intersectional discourse within blogging varies in regards to what extent settler bloggers are critical of the colonial state as an entity. I argue that most settlers go through their lives without asking the question: *What gives me the right to live on lands “that belong to others without their permission?”*²²¹ This is because most Americans and Canadians have been taught that their citizenship is what grants them the right to “be here to stay.”²²² Most settlers do not think about this, but by failing to question the legitimacy of their occupancy, they are

²¹⁸ Veracini, “Introducing: Settler Colonial Studies,” 3.

²¹⁹ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism And The Elimination Of The Native,” 388.

²²⁰ Rifkin, “Settler Common Sense,” 324.

²²¹ Asch, “On Being Here to Stay,” 4.

²²² Ibid.

tacitly accepting the notion of conquest as a legitimate means of acquiring land.²²³ While an in-depth analysis of the matrix of domination explains how the state has produced and continues to reproduce oppression, not all intersectional-type bloggers have been exposed to this analysis.²²⁴ For example, an intersectional settler blogger might understand that street harassment has very different implications for white women than it does for women of colour and Indigenous women. This blogger might not understand however, how the colonial state has produced this difference and the structures it uses to maintain it.²²⁵ This blogger might understand that we live in a white supremacist society, but might not understand the intricate and dynamic ways that white supremacy is conditioned by colonialism, slavery, genocide, and orientalism in obtaining and maintaining power. In this chapter, I explore the discourses espoused by intersectional settler bloggers and examine how a lack of knowledge surrounding settler colonialism can result in the perpetuation of settler common sense, and the naturalization of settler subjectivities. I explore how topics such as cultural appropriation, stereotypes, mascots, and transnational solidarity are written about in intersectional blogging, and how the blog posts I examined often naturalized the ongoing process of settler colonialism. I also discuss blog posts written by Indigenous feminists and activists in order to draw out recommendations on how to work towards decolonizing intersectional blogging. In this chapter, I engage with

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 228.

²²⁵ Sarah Hunt in Emily Van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love. *Selling sex: Experience, advocacy, and research on sex work in Canada*. UBC Press, 2013.

twelve blog posts written by intersectional-type settler bloggers and ten blog posts written by Indigenous feminists and activists.

Cultural Appropriation

Since European contact, settlers have had a fascination with the image of “the Indian.” Settlers “wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to destroy the original inhabitants.”²²⁶ This duality means that settlers have continuously been faced with the question of whether they should attempt to eliminate Indigenous peoples or assimilate them. Due to settlers’ “simultaneous desire and repulsion”²²⁷ towards the images that Indigenous peoples have represented, they have never successfully implemented assimilation nor elimination. This can be explained through the term “noble savage.” While the image of the savage Indian justifies elimination, the noble Indian is a wise critic who highlights the ills of Western society. Settlers’ desire to own the land has also resulted in a desire to simulate Indianness. The image of the “savage Indians served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national self. Coded as freedom, however, wild Indianness proved equally attractive.”²²⁸ The dialectic between repulsion and desire towards Indianness has continued throughout history. This duality is manifested in settlers’

²²⁶ Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing indian*. Yale University Press, (1998): 5.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 3.

²²⁸ *Ibid*.

complicity in ongoing colonization and their simultaneous desire to “play Indian.” This section will examine how intersectional bloggers who are settlers are writing about cultural appropriation, a current manifestation of “playing Indian.”

Due to systemic racism, ignorance and colonial legacy, “Playing Indian” has become particularly popular on Halloween, when settlers dress up as racist caricatures of Indigenous peoples. In their²²⁹ blog post on Tiger Beatdown entitled “There’s still time to not be racist for Halloween!,” s.e. smith discusses the damaging effects of cultural appropriation on Halloween, specifically in relation to Indigenous peoples. They explain that these costumes often imply that there are no Indigenous people alive today. Smith frames dressing up as an “Indian” as a racist action, and simultaneously acknowledges the uniquely colonial nature of the racism that Indigenous peoples experience.²³⁰ Racism against Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island is similar to many other forms of racism, in the way it dehumanizes, degrades and disempowers. It is further exacerbated by colonial tactics of dispossession from lands, assimilation and violence. When settlers dress up as “Indians” on Halloween, they are confirming Thomas King’s insistence that they are comfortable with images of the “Dead Indian,”²³¹ but have little desire to “[make] space for contemporary Native voices.”²³² s.e smith also highlights the damaging impacts of

²²⁹ The gender of s.e. smith is unknown to the reader, I’ve chosen to use they as a neutral gender pronoun.

²³⁰ s.e. smith “Tiger Beatdown.” > There’s Still Time to Not Be Racist for Halloween! October 29, 2012. Accessed September 15, 2015. <http://tigerbeatdown.com/2012/10/29/theres-still-time-to-not-be-racist-for-halloween/>.

²³¹ Thomas King, “The Inconvenient Indian.”

²³² Dominique Alan Fenton, “Racism at Core of Native Teen Suicides in Pine Ridge.”

grouping all Indigenous peoples together, without acknowledging the existence of individual nations. They invite readers to further their education on colonial racism and cultural appropriation by linking to Adrienne Keene's blog, *Native Appropriations*, which discusses these topics in great detail. smith's post demonstrates that being accountable to Indigenous nations on Turtle Island does not require academic jargon or complex theoretical knowledge, but does require an awareness that Indigenous bloggers are writing about their own narratives. It is our responsibility, as feminists who are settlers, to promote these writings.

The cultural appropriation of headdresses has become a popular trend amongst settlers aspiring to achieve a "hipster" aesthetic. This trend is problematic due to the manner in which it misuses images of traditional regalia, encourages the myth that Indigenous peoples are a part of a monolithic race and perpetuates stereotypes about Indigenous peoples. Headdresses and warbonnets hold a spiritual significance within nations who use these items. For example, one reason eagle feathers are given is to recognize significant events or actions that deserve respect, and are not worn for the purposes of fashion. Warbonnets are only worn by Plains men and are "reserved for respected figures of power."²³³ The appropriation of headdresses by settlers is representative of a reoccurring theme within ongoing settler colonialism on Turtle Island: It demonstrates how settlers are consistently willing to trivialize Indigenous life, while

²³³Adrienne Keene, accessed August 26, 2015, "But Why Can't I Wear a Hipster Headdress?" *Native Appropriations*, April 27, 2010, <http://nativeappropriations.com/2010/04/but-why-cant-i-wear-a-hipster-headdress.html>

simultaneously stealing it. The glorification of attractive women in headdresses in pop culture is a significant symbol of this theft. When half-naked women wear headdresses and utilize Indigenous cultural items as a means of being seen as “sexy,” they perpetuate the hyper-sexualization of Indigenous women and trivialize the sexual violence that is perpetrated against them.²³⁴

In 2014, Christina Fallin, the Governor of Oklahoma’s daughter, posed in a headdress on Instagram and later, issued an apology, naming her action as an “innocent” appreciation of “beautiful [Native American] things.”²³⁵ Adrienne Keene, a blogger from the Cherokee Nation, wrote a letter to Christina Fallin and posted it on her blog *Native Appropriations*. The way that Keene addresses cultural appropriation can serve to inform how intersectional settler bloggers can better address the topic. In her letter, Adrienne Keene explains the irony of Christina Fallin’s use of the word innocent, considering the fact that Indigenous “peoples in Oklahoma, are there by force and by trauma”²³⁶ because of the Indian Removal Act.²³⁷ Keene says:

²³⁴ Sarah Hunt in Emily Van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love. *Selling sex: Experience, advocacy, and research on sex work in Canada*. UBC Press, 2013.

²³⁵ Adrienne Keene, accessed June 7, 2015, “Dear Christina Fallin,” *Native Appropriations*, March 7, 2014, <http://nativeappropriations.com/2014/03/dear-christina-fallin.html>

²³⁶ Keene, “Dear Christina Fallin.”

²³⁷ “In 1830, [Andrew Jackson] signed the Indian Removal Act, which gave the federal government the power to exchange Native-held land in the cotton kingdom east of the Mississippi for land to the west, in the “Indian colonization zone” that the United States had acquired as part of the Louisiana Purchase. (This “Indian territory” was located in present-day Oklahoma.) [...] The law required the government to negotiate removal treaties fairly, voluntarily and peacefully: It did not permit the president or anyone else to coerce Native nations into giving up their land. However, President Jackson and his government frequently ignored the letter of the law and forced Native Americans to vacate lands they had lived on for generations.” “Trail of Tears,” *History*, accessed August 26, 2015, <http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/trail-of-tears>

After the removal off of our homelands, after the loss of our land in Indian Territory, then came the laws to remove our culture. Boarding schools, acts and laws to prohibit us from practicing our traditional spirituality, and more. Little Native children were forcibly removed from their homes, separated from their families, and forcibly assimilated. Our cultural markers, like your beloved headdress, were stripped from us, prohibited by law.²³⁸

Keene pokes holes in terms such as “cultural appreciation” and “cultural exchange,” which are often used to excuse the theft of Indigenous art, culture and spirituality. These terms are often attempts to mask the self-indulgent reasons for culturally appropriation. She explains that to truly engage in appreciating another group’s culture, it is essential to respect that group and the way that they engage with the aspect of their culture that you are trying to participate in. She says: “If you would have listened to our voices as Native community members, you would have seen that the way to show respect to your Native friends and neighbors was not to put on a headdress and defend your choice, but to take it off and apologize.”²³⁹ Keene’s focus on historical facts, which links Indigenous histories to the present, emphasizes the importance of understanding how colonialism functions on Turtle Island. Keene’s analysis can serve as an example as to how intersectional settler bloggers should write about cultural appropriation. It is not enough to write about cultural appropriation being wrong, it is important to name the systems of power and histories that make it wrong.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

Drawing from the blog posts that I analyzed, I found that settler bloggers writing about cultural appropriation often failed to link modern-day appropriation to colonial histories of cultural dispossession, which have continued to be detrimental to Indigenous ways of life. For example, in a blog post about Urban Outfitters' appropriation of the Navajo nation's name and art, entitled "Urban Outfitter's 'Navajo' Problem Becomes a Legal Issue,"²⁴⁰ Jenna Sauers fails to discuss how Urban Outfitters' appropriation is a continuation of colonization. In 2012, the Navajo Nation sued Urban Outfitters for its theft of the Navajo name, arguing that it was a misrepresentation of the Navajo nation and a violation of the Federal Indian Arts and Crafts Act.²⁴¹ This act prohibits companies from falsely advertising or suggesting their products as being "authentically Indian made," when they are not produced or sold by Indigenous peoples.²⁴² The Navajo nation was particularly offended by Urban Outfitters' promotion of "Navajo" print flasks and underwear, which they argued promoted a negative image for the Navajo nation.

Jenna Sauers quotes a section of Sasha Houston Brown's²⁴³ letter to Urban Outfitters, demonstrating her awareness of the importance of centering Indigenous women's voices within mainstream feminism, as Arvin, Tuck and Morrill suggest.

²⁴⁰ Jenna Sauers, accessed June 7, 2015, "Urban Outfitter's 'Navajo' Problem Becomes a Legal Issue," Jezebel, October 11, 2011, <http://jezebel.com/5848715/urban-outfitters-navajo-problem-becomes-a-legal-issue>

²⁴¹ Felicia Fonesca, "Navajo Nation Sues Urban Outfitters over Goods," Retail. February 29, 2012. Accessed September 18, 2015. <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/46574519/ns/business-retail/t/navajo-nation-sues-urban-outfitters-over-goods/>.

²⁴² Jeremy Savian, "The Arbitrary Indian: The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990," *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 2 (1998): 573-573.

²⁴³ Sasha Houston Brown is Dakota, of the Santee Sioux Nation.

However, Sauers includes a section of the letter that confronts the blatant racism and cultural insensitivity of Urban Outfitters' choice, but fails to include the section of the letter that addresses how the theft of the Navajo Nation's name is inherently tied to the theft of Indigenous lands.²⁴⁴ Sauers also informs her readers that "'Navajo' isn't an aesthetic movement — it's a legal entity, a tribe of people, and an actual nation."²⁴⁵ While these acknowledgements disrupt stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, they fail to recognize the ongoing colonial project and fail to position Sauers as a settler, thus naturalizing settler occupancy. It is crucial for settler bloggers to explain how "violence, colonialism, and genocidal policies" are the factors that make cultural appropriation unacceptable.²⁴⁶ Intersectional bloggers should work to demonstrate how Indigenous jurisdiction over Indigenous culture and art "is critical to Native sovereignty."²⁴⁷ In addition, without the explicit naming of ongoing settler colonialism, settler common sense remains unchallenged, leaving space for continued disrespect and dispossession.

Settler intersectional bloggers can aid in decolonizing intersectionality by offering readers tangible alternatives to cultural appropriation. Many Indigenous feminists argue that in order to appreciate and support Indigenous culture, it is important to ensure that

²⁴⁴ Sasha Houston Brown, accessed June 7, 2015, "An Open Letter to Urban Outfitters on Columbus Day," *Racialicious*, October 10 2011, <http://www.racialicious.com/2011/10/10/an-open-letter-to-urban-outfitters-on-columbus-day/>

²⁴⁵ Sauers, "Urban Outfitter's 'Navajo' Problem Becomes a Legal Issue."

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Rebecca A. Tsosie "Reclaiming Native Stories: an Essay on Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Rights," *Arizona State Law Journal* 34 (2002): 303.

the profits are going to Indigenous artists. Taté Walker, a Mniconjou Lakota writer and regular contributor for the blog *Everyday Feminism*, wrote a post entitled “Free the Fringe: 6 Ways to De-Stereotype Native American Heritage Month.”²⁴⁸ She suggests that readers resist cultural appropriation by purchasing items that are sold by Indigenous-owned companies, rather than settler owned companies that use false advertising, which the Indian Arts and Crafts Act prohibits. This ensures that readers are not contributing to the profits of companies that appropriate “tribal” designs and that they are instead, contributing to self-determination for Indigenous artists. This is particularly significant as it combats the tendency for settlers to attempt to own and define Indigenous culture. This attempt is a continuation of the theft of Indigenous lands and resources through dispossessing Indigenous nations of control over their own cultural images, and only serves to deteriorate Indigenous rights.²⁴⁹ When Indigenous art is appropriated, it is represented as a part of America or Canada’s national identity, and is usurped from Indigenous peoples, thus naturalizing settler colonial theft. Buying from Indigenous owned companies can ensure readers that they are not purchasing items that have cultural significance and would be disrespectful to own, such as headdresses.²⁵⁰ Walker’s blog post links to Beyond Buckskin’s²⁵¹ list of Indigenous owned companies that sell

²⁴⁸ Taté Walker, accessed June 7, 2015, “Free the Fringe: 6 Ways to De-Stereotype Native American Heritage Month,” *Everyday Feminism*, November 13, 2014, <http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/11/free-the-fringe-6-ways-to-de-stereotype-native-american-heritage-month/>

²⁴⁹ Ward Churchill, "Indians are us? Culture and genocide in Native North America," (1994): 216.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Beyond Buckskin is an Indigenous Blog that promotes Indigenous artists and designers.

Indigenous-made art. As Walker demonstrates, providing readers with alternatives to cultural appropriation is an effective tool in decolonizing the actions of intersectional feminists.

Lindy West elaborates on the trend of cultural appropriation in a blog post entitled “A Complete Guide to Hipster Racism.” West²⁵² explains how “hipster racism,” a pervasive trend commonly known as “post-racial humour” or “ironic racism,” is a falsity, and is as harmful as more blatant forms of racism.²⁵³ As a response to hipsters wearing “Navajo” panties because they “have a genuine interest in another culture,”²⁵⁴ West explains that simply because a person *can* wear whatever they want, does not mean that they should. West says, “Like, you know we had an actual genocide here, right? A deliberate extermination of human beings? Right where your house is? So maybe just err on the side of sensitivity.”²⁵⁵ While West’s confrontation of hipster racism is necessary, her writing inadvertently suggests that the Navajo nation, along with all other Indigenous nations, have been exterminated. West’s acknowledgement of Indigenous genocide is important, but also unintentionally perpetuates the myth of Indigenous extinction. This erasure is detrimental because of the colonial state’s reliance on the continued denial of

²⁵² Lindy West is a self-identified white, middle-class feminist.

²⁵³ Calling someone a racist slur on the street is a more blatant form of racism that mainstream society would deem to be racist, whereas, cultural appropriation and racist jokes are considered by some within mainstream society to be acceptable.

²⁵⁴ Lindy West, accessed June 7, 2015, “A Complete Guide to Hipster Racism,” Jezebel, April 26, 2012, <http://jezebel.com/5905291/a-complete-guide-to-hipster-racism>

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

Indigenous life.²⁵⁶ West's failure to acknowledge Navajo life ironically perpetuates the same kind of violence that Urban Outfitters' theft of Navajo art does (although, to a much lesser extent). It is the denial of Indigenous life that allows settlers to steal Indigenous art, as well as Indigenous lands. In this post, West naturalizes settler subjectivities by failing to recognize Indigenous life, the ongoing process of settler colonialism that is allowing for the theft of Navajo art, as well as her own position as a settler on Turtle Island.

It is important for intersectional feminists to understand how cultural appropriation fits into the ongoing colonial project of taking. As Margo Thunderbird, an Indigenous activist of the Shinnecock Nation explains:

They came for our land, for what grew or could be grown on it, for the resources in it, and for our clean air and pure water. They stole these things from us, and in the taking they also stole our free ways and the best of our leaders, killed in battle or assassinated. And now, after all that, they've come for the very last of our possessions; now they want our pride, our history, our spiritual traditions. They want to rewrite and remake these things, to claim them for themselves. The lies and thefts just never end.²⁵⁷

Indigenous cultural items are often used as a means of appropriation, but are blanketed as so-called appreciation. In a blog post entitled "Designer's 'Stop Racism' Headdress Calls Out Industry Appropriation," Callie Beusman critiques a designer who attempted to confront this trend, but instead, perpetuated it. Beusman writes about Walter Van Beirendonck's fashion show that "sent two models down the runway in large headdresses

²⁵⁶ Ward Churchill, "Indians are us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America," (1994).

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

that read ‘STOP RACISM’.”²⁵⁸ Beusman delves into some of the major problems with cultural appropriation, explaining that cultural appropriation “occurs across a matrix of power that reflects and reinforces centuries of ignorance and oppression.”²⁵⁹ In this phrase, Beusman seems to imply that she understands that Indigenous peoples have experienced systemic oppression and that this oppression is linked to colonialism. However, by failing to name the specifically colonial nature of this history and the modern implications of settlers wearing headdresses, Beusman is naturalizing settler colonialism in a similar manner to Beirendonck. Beusman discusses the irony of Beirendonck’s confrontation of the fashion community’s “problem” with cultural appropriation. She argues that while it is important to confront the fashion community, it is “patently hypocritical to send a couple of white dudes down the runway wearing “STOP RACISM” on their heads in a show that had only 6 out of 41 looks modeled by men of color.”²⁶⁰

Beusman’s post misses the point. Beirendonck’s “STOP RACISM” headdresses would have been just as offensive if there were more men of colour in the show. It also would not have been acceptable if the models wearing the headdresses had been non-indigenous people of colour. The point is that non-Indigenous people are constantly wearing cheaply-made items that are made to look like culturally sacred objects, that do

²⁵⁸ Callie Beusman, accessed June 7, 2015, “Designer’s ‘Stop Racism’ Headdress Calls Out Industry Appropriation,” *Jezebel*, January 16, 2014, <http://jezebel.com/designers-stop-racism-headdress-calls-out-industry-a-1502629370>

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

not belong to them, and that they have not earned the right to wear. The point is that non-Indigenous people are consistently profiting from these offensive images, which paint all Indigenous peoples as members of a monolithic and unchanging race.²⁶¹ Despite his seemingly good intentions, Walter Van Beirendonck put another non-Indigenous person in a cheaply made headdress; an action that garnered media attention for his show and drew attention to his career. As Arabelle Sicardi explains in the fashion blog *The Style Con*,²⁶² “In the end, it’s still perpetuating the insulting use of histories and bodies that aren’t the designers to claim. It’s still tokenism; it’s not funny, it’s not changing anything, it’s not giving the power back to the people it was taken from.”²⁶³ When we listen to Indigenous activists who protest the fashion industry’s appropriation of the headdress, it becomes evident that headdresses have “deep, traditional meanings” and should not be worn by anyone who has not earned this right, even if they are claiming to protest its appropriation.²⁶⁴

Callie Beusman wrote another blog post entitled “Heidi Klum Made Germany’s Top Model Contestants Pose in Redface,” where she addresses the issue of cultural

²⁶¹ Ruth Hopkins, accessed June 7, 2015, “WTF Coachella?! You’re a One Stop Cultural Appropriation Festival!” *Last Real Indians*, <http://lastrealindians.com/wtf-coachella-youre-a-one-stop-cultural-appropriation-festival-by-ruth-hopkins/>

²⁶² While I do not elaborate on Sicardi’s blog post in the text, it is an intersectional-type blog post (as demonstrated in the chart in Appendix A). I did not include this blog in the text because the author makes very similar points to Beusman. However, Sicardi ranks as “high” on the intersectional-type scale, while Beusman ranks as “medium”. Sicardi displays a stronger multiple-axis analysis.

²⁶³ Arabelle Sicardi, accessed June 7, 2015, “Why Walter Van Beirendonck is just Perpetuating the Appropriation Shitstorm,” *The Style Con*, 2014, <http://www.thestylecon.com/2014/01/16/walter-van-beirendonck-just-perpetuating-appropriation-shitstorm/>

²⁶⁴ Taté Walker, “Free the Fringe: 6 Ways to De-Stereotype Native American Heritage Month.”

appropriation in a manner that seems to better address the ongoing process of settler colonialism on Turtle Island. Beusman quotes Ruth Hopkins, a Lakota and Dakota woman, who writes for the blog *Last Real Indians*. Hopkins' quote highlights that Klum is not only mocking the history of Indigenous peoples, but that she is ignoring the existence of the 567 Tribal Nations that live in the United States today.²⁶⁵ Beusman explains that Klum's photo shoot "depicts Native Americans as a primitive and mythologized people of the past" rather than human beings. Beusman is critical of Klum's hypersexualization of Indigenous women and explains that the shoot was particularly insensitive because of the high rates of sexualized violence experienced by Indigenous women in the United States. Beusman also links to a blog post that she wrote about Matika Wilbur's Project 562, a project dedicated to disrupting stereotypes about Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. By quoting Hopkins and linking to an article about Project 562, Beusman seems to be placing Indigenous women's voices at the centre of her analysis in this post.²⁶⁶ By demonstrating that she is not an expert on Indigenous identity, and respecting the knowledge of Indigenous women who are personally affected by cultural appropriation, Beusman is disrupting the status quo and allowing white feminist discourse to be changed by Indigenous women.²⁶⁷ This post is a shift from her

²⁶⁵ Callie Beusman, accessed June 7, 2015, "Heidi Klum Made Germany's Top Model Contestants Pose in Redface" *Jezebel*, April 9, 2014, <http://jezebel.com/heidi-klum-made-germanys-top-model-contestants-pose-in-1561505793>

²⁶⁶ As Arvin, Tuck and Morrill recommend in their challenges in Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," 17.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

previous blog post, “Designer’s’ Stop Racism’ Headdress Calls Out Industry Appropriation,” written only a few months earlier.

Whereas the immediate motivation behind cultural appropriation in fashion can be more easily explained by a profit-driven fashion industry and selfish consumers, the Western obsession with Indigenous spirituality is not as obvious. In her paper, “Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality,” Lisa Aldred explains that New Age appropriation of Indigenous spirituality is rooted in individualist alienation, late consumer capitalism and the West’s romanticization of Indigeneity. She argues that the white and affluent sector of the baby-boomer generation “complain of feeling uprooted from cultural traditions, community belonging, and spiritual meaning.”²⁶⁸ As a result of these feelings, as well as a romanticized understanding of what it means to be Indigenous, many New Agers have looked towards Indigenous spirituality for guidance. New Age appropriation of Indigenous ceremonies are used to feel closer to nature, the Earth and inner spirituality. Because most of this sector of the baby boomer generation has not had many interactions with real “Live Indians,” they are able to project their “imperialist nostalgia” onto this imagined Indian; in this fantasy they find a place for their colonial guilt, as well as all of their “anxieties and desires.”²⁶⁹ Channelling the “Dead Indian,” they “simulate the

²⁶⁸ Lisa Aldred, “Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 24 (2000): 329.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 345.

original "authentic Native American spirituality" and consume it.²⁷⁰ Meanwhile, their simulations allow them to ignore real Indigenous peoples and the historical and socio-economic relations that tie them together."²⁷¹ Though "playing Indian"²⁷² is often framed by New Agers as flattering imitation, it is simply another way that settlers have stolen from Indigenous peoples, and claimed themselves to be the legitimate owners of that which is Indigenous.²⁷³

New Age appropriation of Indigenous spirituality is distinct in the way that those who practice it seek to consume, own, and profit from it.²⁷⁴ The documentary *White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men* confronts the specifically consumerist nature of New Age spirituality and speaks about the unique harm that it perpetrates. The documentary demonstrates how this theft is disrespectful towards Indigenous nations that deem these ceremonies to be sacred and something that cannot be bought or sold. Thomas Bearhead Swaney says that despite the New Age belief that these practices are spiritual, without the teachings, they are meaningless.²⁷⁵ Aldred explains, "As products of the very consumer culture they seek to escape, these New Agers pursue spiritual meaning and cultural

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 343.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian*. Yale University Press, (1998).

²⁷³ An example of this would be white shamans who claim to have been Indigenous in another life.

²⁷⁴ Aldred, "Plastic shamans and Astroturf sun dances: new age commercialization of Native American spirituality," 330.

²⁷⁵ Terry Macy and Daniel Hart, "White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men." Native Voices at the University of Washington, YouTube, 2000, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19JAMhAzXms>

identification through acts of purchase,” ultimately leaving participants feeling empty, as the meaning and community they seek is only imagined.²⁷⁶ The documentary makes a distinction between those who seek to sell what they claim to be Indigenous spirituality, and those who seek to buy it. In the film, Charlie Hill, an Oneida-Mohawk-Cree comedian, places blame on those who claim to be spiritual practitioners and attempt to profit from cultural appropriation. He argues that plastic shamans like Lynn Andrews and Carlos Castaneda are abusive of their white privilege and are taking advantage of an ignorant public who are misguided but legitimately interested in learning.²⁷⁷

“Plastic shamans” can be characterized by their claims to have been trained by “authentic” Indigenous healers, their claims of having been Indigenous in another life, their fake “Indian names” and most significantly, their profit-driven spirituality.²⁷⁸ In actuality, they are participating in cultural and spiritual theft. Robert Animikii Horton, an Anishinaabe member of Rainy River First Nations of Manitou Rapids and from the Marten Clan, argues that New Age “entrepreneurs” are mimicking the same colonial forces that dictated what spiritual practices Indigenous nations could practice, the missionaries that robbed nations of their cultures and languages and the settlers who

²⁷⁶Aldred, “Plastic shamans and Astroturf sun dances: new age commercialization of Native American spirituality,” 329.

²⁷⁷Macy and Hart, “White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men.”

²⁷⁸Aldred, “Plastic shamans and Astroturf sun dances: new age commercialization of Native American spirituality,” 331.

wish/ed to plunder the earth's resources ²⁷⁹ He describes these appropriators as types: "the self-absorbed tie-dyed hipster invading ceremony to hijack, the New Age appropriating 'shamanic healer,' the swank 'visionary' who fraudulently self-promotes as an elder and a majestic, the rootless fraud who claims self-styled wings as he who is called 'Dreams of Eagles', and the profiteering non-indigenous self-nominated 'vision quest guide'."²⁸⁰ For Dennis Jennings, those who profit from appropriation are disrupting the potential for respectful relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers on Turtle Island.²⁸¹ Horton agrees: "cultural (mis)appropriation and New Age frauds impact the present and the future, and in turn even affects the past by opening up the scars of yesterday -- and fanning mistrust."²⁸² He argues that the individuals who seek to profit from Indigenous (mis)appropriation are ruining the alliances that have been built between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

New Age appropriation has tendency to be taken up by white feminists as a means of achieving self-actualization. Non-Indigenous women have "increasingly employ[ed] Indian traditions to escape the patriarchal biases of monotheistic religions and to become

²⁷⁹ Robert Animikii Horton, accessed June 7, 2015, "On the theft and appropriation of Indigenous cultures," *rabble*, January 13, 2011, <http://rabble.ca/news/2011/01/theft-and-appropriation-indigenous-cultures>

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Macy and Hart, "White Shamans, Plastic Medicine Men."

²⁸² Horton, "On the theft and appropriation of Indigenous cultures."

empowered, as well as individuated.”²⁸³ In many cases, these women become the “plastic shamans” that the documentary warns of. Women like Lynn Andrews encourage other women to connect back to their lost inner selves, which she describes to be warrior-like and wild.²⁸⁴ New Age appropriation is particularly significant to my analysis due to the manner in which it manifests in intersectional-type blogging. This harmful tendency can be exemplified through an examination of a series of blog posts written by Adrienne Keene on the cultural appropriation of sweat lodges, where Keene addresses a Jezebel blog post entitled “Sweat Lodges: The Therapy Of Choice For Bros.” In the post, Anna North humorously mocks a plastic shaman named Durek Verett but unfortunately, ends with this statement: “And before I rag on the middle-aged white dudes in Schaefer's article for appropriating Native American traditions to solve their decidedly white-dude problems, I should confess that I too once signed up for a sweat. But I couldn't go. Because I was menstruating. True story.”²⁸⁵ Keene responds to North’s sarcasm by explaining how disappointing it is when feminists choose not to deepen their analysis of colonial feminism and instead critique Indigenous nations for being “anti-feminist.” Keene says: “[Anna North]” had an opportunity to address the inherent issues with the idea of white bros and white “shamans” appropriating spiritual practices, but instead, the

²⁸³Laura E. Donaldson, “On medicine women and white shame-ans: New Age Native Americanism and commodity fetishism as pop culture feminism,” *Signs* (1999): 678.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 679.

²⁸⁵ Anna North, accessed June 7, 2015, “Sweat Lodges: The Therapy Of Choice For Bros,” *Jezebel*, April 14, 2010, <http://jezebel.com/5517139/sweat-lodges-the-therapy-of-choice-for-bros>

comments turned to swapping stories of sweat lodge experiences and disdain over the fact that menstruating women weren't allowed into Anna's sweat."²⁸⁶ Due to North's closing line, the comment section of her post involves women either sharing "empowering" stories of settler-led feminist sweats or insulting Indigenous communities that did not allow commenters to join sweats when they were menstruating. One woman, who had a negative experience in a sweat lodge led by her ex-boyfriend's nation, ended her comment by saying that she was "jaded on sweat lodges and their lodgers." The commenter was jaded due to being asked whether she was menstruating in front of strangers. Rather than asking about the origins and reasons behind this protocol, the commenter imposed colonial meanings onto her experience. Due to Anna North's failure to locate cultural appropriation within a settler colonial context, she provided space for colonial rhetoric to remain unchallenged.²⁸⁷

On *Native Appropriations*, Keene debunks myths surrounding supposedly sexist protocols surrounding sweats and drumming, and encourages settler feminists to educate themselves on the reasons for these protocols, as well as the real impact that cultural appropriation has on Indigenous nations.²⁸⁸ Intersectional-type bloggers have a responsibility to educate themselves about the stereotypes that circulate about Indigenous

²⁸⁶ Adrienne Keene, accessed June 7, 2015, "Sweat Lodges: "Bro" Therapy? (Part I, the summary)," *Native Appropriations*, April 15, 2010, <http://nativeappropriations.com/2010/04/sweat-lodges-bro-therapy-part-i-the-summary.html>

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Adrienne Keene, accessed June 7, 2015, "Sweat Lodges Part II: No, you can't. Here's why," *Native Appropriations*, April 15, 2010, <http://nativeappropriations.com/2010/04/sweat-lodges-part-ii-no-you-cant-heres-why.html>

peoples, and to actively combat them. For North, this would mean questioning her own negative assumptions about Indigenous cultural and spiritual practices and working to understand their origins. The notion that Indigenous peoples are “anti-feminist” is intertwined with ideas of the “backwards savage,” a deeply racist and colonial ideology. It also feeds into the brand of white feminism that encourages white women to act as saviours to Indigenous women and women of colour. It is irresponsible for bloggers such as North to claim feminism when it fits their writing objectives, but disrespect Indigenous ceremonies - and therefore, Indigenous women - when it does not.

Stereotypes and Mascots

It is common for the use of Indian mascots in schools and professional sports teams to be justified through the rhetoric of tradition. In actuality, this “tradition” was invented in the modern era as a means of building camaraderie and cohesion amongst the American population, serving to establish and maintain social order.²⁸⁹ Images of the Indian as savage, vanishing and beast-like was a method of showcasing “oppositional figures”²⁹⁰ to the white settler, and simultaneously communicating that they had “symbolically inherited the lands and noble qualities of Natives.”²⁹¹ Mascots are consistently used by the settler state and settler institutions as tools to promote and maintain colonial order. Stereotypes about Indigenous peoples are used to justify social

²⁸⁹ Richard C. King and Charles Fruehling Springwood, eds. *Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy*. U of Nebraska Press, (2001): 25.

²⁹⁰ Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing indian*. Yale University Press, (1998): 3.

²⁹¹ King and Springwood. “Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy,” 27.

hierarchy and colonial dominance.²⁹² When intersectional bloggers fail to recognize the uniquely colonial nature of Indian mascots and stereotypes, they can naturalize the settler colonial state and settler theft of Indigenous lands.

When organizing around Indigenous issues, intersectional bloggers sometimes fail to see how the loudness of their activism can drown out the concerns of Indigenous activists. This was demonstrated when Indigenous activists were protesting Dan Snyder's "Washington Redskins Original Americans Foundation." Their concerns were overshadowed by the anti-racist activists protesting a sketch performed by Stephen on the topic. When the owner of the Washington Redskins announced his decision to create the "Washington Redskins Original Americans Foundation," in an alleged attempt to mend his relationship with Indigenous nations, Stephen Colbert performed a comedic sketch that satirized Snyder's ignorance. He pretended that he, Stephen Colbert, was the creator of an organization entitled "Ching Chong Ding Dong Foundation for Sensitivity to Orientals or Whatever."²⁹³ This part of the sketch was tweeted out of context by the Twitter account "TheColbertReport," a Twitter account that is not actually controlled by Colbert or his writing staff. This "ignited a Twitter shitstorm that called for Colbert's cancellation"²⁹⁴ under the hashtag #cancelcolbert, which was initiated by twitter activist, Suey Park. In a blog post written by Erin Gloria Ryan entitled "What We Can Learn From

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Erin Gloria Ryan, accessed June 6 2015, "What We Can Learn From the Embarrassing #CancelColbert Shitstorm," *Jezebel*, March 28, 2014, <http://jezebel.com/what-we-can-learn-from-the-embarrassing-cancelcolbert-1553680450>

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

the Embarrassing #CancelColbert Shitstorm,” Ryan addresses the #cancelcolbert controversy by arguing that the tweet was taken out of context and that the activists were distracting from Dan Snyder’s real and intended racism. Ryan had the opportunity to speak about the distinct nature of anti-Indigenous racism, and the importance of supporting anti-colonial activism. Instead, she failed to differentiate between anti-Indigenous racism and other forms of racisms and only named Indigenous peoples as a race. By failing to acknowledge the political nature of Indigenous nations and their activism, Ryan’s post further perpetuated an aspect of settler common sense, which views Indigenous peoples as minorities. This notion affirms the legitimacy of the colonial nation state and tacitly accepts its futurity.²⁹⁵

Arturo R. Garcia, a blogger at Racialicious, addressed the nuances of this controversy more clearly in a blog post entitled “On #cancelcolbert and the Limits of ‘Liberal Pass’ Humor.” He acknowledges that the #cancelcolbert hashtag did “drown out” the #Not4Sale hashtag that was started by Indigenous activists who were protesting Dan Snyder’s racism. Garcia argues that while the #cancelcolbert tweets were distracting from Dan Snyder’s racism, Colbert did in fact participate in perpetuating racism against Asian-Americans, which did need to be addressed. Garcia also argues that Colbert should have apologized and confronted his angry fans (who were threatening Park on twitter with death threats, rape threats and racist remarks), but took a cowardly approach instead,

²⁹⁵Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” 16.

and failed to confront his fans in a meaningful way.²⁹⁶ Though Garcia's blog post was tagged under the category of "colonialism/colonization," he did not actually mention colonialism in the article. This absence is a missed opportunity to educate settlers about the ways in which racism against Indigenous peoples must be contextualized within the settler state. Garcia is expressing himself within a public forum that claims to support anti-colonialism, and therefore, he has a responsibility to adequately represent the realities of colonial oppression and how it differs from race-based oppression. Those who claim to be anti-colonial in their intersectionality have a responsibility to explicitly challenge the desirability of the nation-state and educate other settlers to critically examine their own occupancy on Turtle Island.²⁹⁷

While Garcia does reference an *Indian Country Today* article about the #cancelcolbert hashtag, he does not mention the title of the article, which highlights its central point. The article is entitled "Snyder Wins: How 'CancelColbert' Drowned Out the Native Voice."²⁹⁸ Garcia fails to mention that the "bottom line for the Native activists on Twitter who saw a real opportunity to open some eyes when Snyder announced his bizarrely named charity: The momentum building for their campaign -- #Not4Sale -- was

²⁹⁶ Arturo R. Garcia, accessed June 7 2015, "On #cancelcolbert and the Limits of 'Liberal Pass' Humor," *Racialicious*, April 2 2014, <http://www.racialicious.com/2014/04/02/on-cancelcolbert-and-the-limits-of-liberal-pass-humor/>

²⁹⁷ Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy."

²⁹⁸ ICTMN Staff, accessed June 7 2015, "Snyder Wins: How 'CancelColbert' Drowned Out the Native Voice," *Indian Country Today Media Network*, April 1, 2014, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/04/01/snyder-wins-how-cancelcolbert-drowned-out-native-voice-154270>

stymied by #CancelColbert.”²⁹⁹ The Indian Country Today staff argue that if Suey Park, the creator of the #cancelcolbert hashtag, did not want The Colbert Report to be cancelled, as she admitted in an interview with The New Yorker, she should not have started a hashtag that makes no mention of “a campaign against a racist team name that has been with us for decades.”³⁰⁰ The #cancelcolbert hashtag seems to represent a larger trend within identity politics where settlers promote their messages without considering the repercussions these actions will have on Indigenous nations and activists. There are times when anti-oppressive politics can become so dogmatic, that it fails to see the larger picture. In this case, Suey Park and other anti-racist activists failed to see the greater importance of acting in solidarity with Indigenous activists who were protesting a uniquely colonial history of representing Indigenous peoples as mascots, rather than people. As Arvin, Tuck and Morrill explain, in order to go beyond the rhetoric of inclusion and allow feminism to be decolonized, it is necessary to centre issues that affect Indigenous nations and to demonstrate that they are a priority within feminism.³⁰¹

When arguing against Indigenous stereotypes and mascots, it is possible to accidentally reinforce the racist and colonial tendencies of the people you are arguing

²⁹⁹Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy.”

against, if you do not have strong arguments.³⁰² Taté Walker wrote a blog post entitled “How to Argue Against Racist Mascots” that gives readers a list of arguments that proponents of mascots tend to use, as well as the appropriate rebuttal strategies. In her post, Walker describes the frustration she felt as a high school student trying to convince her teachers and peers that racist mascots are truly a problem. She didn’t have the language to be convincing, which resulted in further fuelling and affirming their colonial ideologies.³⁰³ It is not enough for intersectional settler bloggers to highlight the instances where stereotypes and mascots are used, they must also explain why this theft is problematic on several levels. The first argument Walker provides explains that these mascots do not honour Indigenous nations, but rather, they dehumanize Indigenous peoples and reduce them to caricatures.³⁰⁴ Walker argues against the notion that mascot names are tradition; this so called tradition is rooted in colonial ideals that “memorialized and mythologized [Indigenous peoples], even as [they] struggled to survive under the new conditions of reservation life.”³⁰⁵ Team names and mascots that are “traditional,” were named with colonial nostalgia as an attempt to pay tribute to a “vanishing race” by the very people who caused Indigenous death.³⁰⁶ Mascots serve as a colonial tactic to

³⁰² Taté Walker, accessed June 1, 2015, How to Argue Against Racist Mascots, *Everyday Feminism*, January 31, 2015, http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/argue-against-racist-mascots/?utm_content=buffer9cc19&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

naturalize settler occupancy, to build camaraderie amongst settlers and to legitimize the theft of Indigenous lands and resources.³⁰⁷ In a similar manner to cultural appropriation, through representation, mascots allow settlers to speak for Indigenous peoples by destroying to replace. As Pam Colorado, an Oneida scholar explains:

The process is ultimately intended to supplant Indians, even in areas of their own culture and spirituality. In the end, non-Indians will have complete power to define what is and what is not Indian, even for Indians. We are talking here about a complete ideological/conceptual subordination of Indian people in addition to the total physical subordination they already experience. When this happens, the last vestiges of real Indian society and Indian rights will disappear. Non-Indians will then claim to “own” our heritage and ideas as thoroughly as they now claim to own our land and resources.³⁰⁸

Walker continues her blog post by disputing the “slippery slope” argument that sports fans often use when defending mascots, which argues that if one team is forced to change their name, many others will be obliged to do so as well. She explains that no other group that has been an inspiration for a team name has “experienced oppression or genocidal policies at the hands of the US government.”³⁰⁹ Walker also disputes the commonly spouted argument that claims that because *Sports Illustrated* found Indigenous people to support colonial stereotypes means that they are acceptable. This does not change the fact that these images increase levels of anxiety, depression and apathy

³⁰⁷ King and Springwood. “Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy.”

³⁰⁸ Ward Churchill, “Indians are us? Culture and genocide in Native North America,” (1994).

³⁰⁹ Taté Walker, How to Argue Against Racist Mascots.

amongst Indigenous youth.³¹⁰ These images do not exist in vacuum; “seeing their people reduced to mascots is toxic to Indian children.”³¹¹ Walker also responds to the question “don’t Native Americans have more important things to worry about?” with this response:

I know you’ve been primed to see Natives as simple and one-dimensional, but we’re human beings capable of taking an active interest in many subjects [...] Mascots push us to the margins, where those in power are fine with us being. And yet we still find time to rally against youth suicide, oil pipelines, and police brutality. We advocate for our missing and murdered indigenous women, language revitalization, and the environment. We worry about our kids getting good educations, good healthcare, and being treated fairly by the justice system. Because we’re human beings.

Walker’s quote actively combats the dehumanization and one-dimensional understandings of Indigenous peoples that many settlers maintain. She demonstrates that Indigenous peoples, like all other people, are passionate about many topics. They are invested in issues that affect the well-being of their friends, families and nations. Walker’s post demonstrates the extent to which the colonial project has consistently served to misrepresent Indigenous nations and to stifle their prosperity.

Similarly to Walker, Lisa Charleyboy, a Tsilhqot’in blogger, combats stereotypical understandings of Indigenous peoples in her blog post entitled “I am not your Pocahontas.” She describes the stereotypes that she encounters when she dates Caucasian

³¹⁰ Friedman, M. (n.d.). The Harmful Psychological Effects of the Washington Football Mascot. Oneida Indian Nation. Retrieved from <http://www.changethemascot.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/DrFriedmanReport.pdf>

³¹¹ Taté Walker, “How to Argue Against Racist Mascots.”

men. She explains that bad dates often stereotype Indigenous people and ask questions about taxes, reserves, “Indian princesses,” and “special rights.”³¹² She cites a *Globe and Mail* article, which breaks down settlers into three categories: inattentive skeptics, cultural romantics, and connected advocates. Inattentive skeptics “are uninformed about Natives,” cultural romantics “appreciate native art and culture, but are unlikely to know any actual aboriginals” and connected advocates “are most likely to support the achievements of Aboriginals, and to understand the role discrimination plays.”³¹³ In her recent dating experiences, Charleyboy came across inattentive skeptics and cultural romantics. She explains that though it might seem counterintuitive, cultural romantics were much worse to date. Charleyboy found cultural romantics worse due to their tendency to stereotype and exoticize Indigenous women. Cultural romantics imagine Indigenous women as unrecognizable fantasies rather than real people.³¹⁴ In order to express the destructive affects of exotification, Charleyboy ends her post with a poem performed by Suheir Hammad, a Palestinian-American poet, author, and activist. Hammad’s poem describes how romanticization of Otherness is a romanticization of a death, explaining that these men are uninterested in dating live women, only the fantasy surrounding their identities. Walker and Charleyboy’s posts about stereotypes can serve as an example to intersectional settler bloggers, demonstrating how to write about the

³¹² Lisa Charleyboy, accessed June 8, 2015, “I am not your Pocahontas,” *Urban Native Magazine*, February 26, 2011, <http://urbannativemag.com/i-am-not-your-pocahontas/#!prettyPhoto>

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

impacts of stereotypes, as well as how to combat them. They demonstrate the importance of linking the appropriation and misrepresentation of Indigenous bodies to the manner in which colonial histories have been established and have continued through manipulation and transformation.³¹⁵ They show how Indigenous nations and individuals “can and do suffer the socioculturally debilitating effects of [...] trivialization and appropriation”³¹⁶ and the importance of combating these stereotypes. It is the responsibility of intersectional feminists who are settlers to educate other settlers on the detrimental impacts of cultural appropriation, mascots and stereotypes, and to show the ways that they are linked to the ongoing project of settler colonialism on Turtle Island.

Transnational Solidarity and Colonialism Abroad

When I was working at the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society in Montreal, I was required to undergo forty hours of training each year, half of which was anti-oppression training. In my first year of training I attended an anti-racism workshop that transformed my worldview. At this workshop, a woman who was a role model to many of the workshop participants, stood up and spent the entire workshop explaining Andrea Smith's pillars of white supremacy.³¹⁷ I was in awe of her confidence as well as the information she was relaying to us. Looking back on the workshop, it seems as though there was a central component missing from the experience. In Smith's

³¹⁵ Coulthard and Alfred, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*.

³¹⁶ Ward Churchill, "Indians are us? Culture and genocide in Native North America," (1994).

³¹⁷ Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy."

chapter, it is evident that she is largely referencing colonialism on Turtle Island. In the workshop, we were mostly discussing the way that genocide and colonialism operate abroad. In my experiences, this pattern was common in Montreal.

Many of the activists I was friends with at the time possessed a similar anti-racist and anti-colonial analysis. They were very aware of colonialism as a concept, and were quick to support efforts such as the BDS³¹⁸ movement, but had little understanding of their own complicity within settler colonialism on Mohawk lands. In Montreal, this kind of activism was linked to a kind of anti-intellectual intersectional anarchism that tended to maintain and reproduce settler common sense. This anti-intellectual attitude towards concepts rooted in academia resulted in an understanding of oppression that relied too heavily on personal anecdotal experiences of oppression. There was an understanding amongst people who practiced anti-oppressive politics that “ethical questions pertaining to oppression” were only accessible “through personal experience.”³¹⁹ Because this community was almost entirely made up of settlers who were attending or had attended McGill, there was no one to emphasize the persistence of settler colonialism at home.³²⁰ This meant that settler colonialism on Turtle Island was largely absent from our activist analysis.

³¹⁸ The Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions movement asks “people of conscience all over the world to launch broad boycotts, implement divestment initiatives, and to demand sanctions against Israel, until Palestinian rights are recognized in full compliance with international law” (BDS).

³¹⁹ Dagny, “Everything is Problematic.”

³²⁰ This is not to say that there weren’t Indigenous people attending McGill, or that they weren’t activists. It is only emphasizing how radical politics at the time was a settler-dominated space that was difficult to penetrate or influence.

Settler radicals at McGill and Concordia were interested in having conversations about privilege and oppression that challenged their positionality in terms of class, race, sexuality, ability and gender. However, they were simultaneously engaging in activities that confirmed their investment in the “conquest and settlement” of Turtle Island.³²¹ Many activists were willing to admit to having privilege, but failed to challenge their deep desire “to be emplaced on Indigenous land” and to be owners of it.³²² Specifically, their methods of trying “to be intimate with Indigenous land” through “communalism and counterculturism” demonstrated their unwillingness to actively interrogate the ways that their desires were interwoven with colonial desires.³²³ Scott Morgensen explains that “a desire to live on Indigenous land and to feel connected to it—bodily, emotionally, spiritually—has been the normative formation of settlers.”³²⁴ While a spiritual connection to the land was not something that was actively sought out by members of the communities that I was a part of, and while there did not seem to be a direct appropriation of Indigenous culture, the way that anarchism was practiced enacted a colonial desire to connect to the land, without being accountable to the Indigenous nations’ whose lands these activists occupied. This attachment to Indigenous land as settler land became

³²¹Scott Morgensen, accessed January 19, 2015, “Un-settling Settler Desires.” *Unsettling America; Decolonization in Theory & Practice*, 2011. <https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2011/09/08/un-settling-settler-desires/>.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

tangible with practices such as “squatting,” “hoboing,” and permaculture.³²⁵ In addition, the anti-state attitudes that came with these practices were absent of decolonial analysis. The people who were engaging with these practices, were also leaders in the Occupy movement, which, as I mentioned earlier, was embedded with colonial meaning, language and culture.

The anti-pinkwashing movement in Montreal followed a similar trajectory to the actions mentioned above. On their³²⁶ blog “Return the Gayze,” Alok Vaid-Menon discusses the white supremacist nature of the Queer, Palestinian solidarity movement in North America, and the manner that the anti-pinkwashing movement can be hypocritical.³²⁷ To give some background, in 2005, the Israeli government collaborated with the government of the United States in launching a campaign intended to boost Israel’s global image. The campaign used gay rights and “gay-friendliness” in an attempt to modernize Israel’s image, selling Israel as the ultimate gay travel spot.³²⁸ Israel attempted to hide its human rights violations by co-opting gay rights and utilizing this liberal image as a mechanism of self-aggrandizement and self-promotion. These attempts to “pinkwash” Israel have worked on many gay individuals who choose Israel as their

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Alok Vaid-Menon uses the gender pronoun “They.”

³²⁷ Alok Vaid-Menon, accessed June 8, 2015, “White Supremacy in (Queer) Palestine Solidarity Work,” Return the Gayze, 2014, <http://darkmatterrage.com/part-1-white-supremacy-in-queer-palestine-solidarity-work-3/>

³²⁸ Sarah Schulman, accessed June 8, 2015, “Israel and ‘Pinkwashing,’” The New York Times, November 22, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/opinion/pinkwashing-and-israels-use-of-gays-as-a-messaging-tool.html>

gay travel destination. As a response to this trend, some queer organizations have proposed queer participation in BDS, promoting the boycott of Israeli made products, as well as the boycotting of Israel as a tourist destination. In their³²⁹ blog post, Vaid-Menon argues that queer solidarity with Palestine “is bankrupt without both an analysis of the histories of settler-colonialism and indigenous genocide in North America, and of criminalization and exploitation of black people and people of color through institutions like the prison.”³³⁰

By framing far away places as sites of colonial and racial injustice without recognizing the injustices occurring on Turtle Island today, a false dichotomy between “real democracies” and “fake democracies” is established.³³¹ In this false dichotomy, the United States and Canada are tacitly accepted as sites of innocence, and far away places are framed in opposition to this innocence. The tendency for queer feminists to protest the pinkwashing of Israel acknowledges the colonial project abroad but simultaneously facilitates the pinkwashing of North America. For example, the ongoing “critique of the illegal settlements in Palestine is rendered through a disidentification with those settlers, rather than recognition of a common historical, political, and ongoing practice of settling the United States.”³³² If “homonationalism is fundamentally a deep critique of lesbian

³²⁹ Vaid-Menon uses they as their pronoun

³³⁰ Vaid-Menon, “White Supremacy in (Queer) Palestine Solidarity Work.”

³³¹ This dichotomy fails to recognize the fallacy of any democracy built on colonialism and genocide.

³³² Jasbir Puar and Maya Mikdashi, accessed May 12, 2015, “Pinkwatching and Pinkwashing: Interpenetration and its Discontents,” *Jadaliyya*, August 9, 2012, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/6774/pinkwatching-and-pinkwashing_interpenetration-and-

and gay liberal rights discourses,” then it must be further interrogated by North American settlers and cannot stop at transnational solidarity.³³³ Jasbir Puar describes homonationalism as “a facet of modernity and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states, a constitutive and fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the state, capitalism, and sexuality.”³³⁴ It is common for queer feminists who are settlers to interrogate homonationalism in North America in a manner that critiques racism, classism, cissexism, and ableism but does not question the colonial tactics of the U.S. and Canada at home.

Alok Vaid-Menon’s blog post addresses the emptiness of critiquing Israeli colonialism without interrogating settler-colonialism on Turtle Island and the bodies that it does not deem worthy of protection.³³⁵ Vaid-Menon explains that while it was easy for them to agree with Palestinians’ demand for actual un/settlement, it was harder to imagine what this would mean for their life on Turtle Island. Vaid-Menon explains that though it is easier to say that white settlers are the only people who are complicit in settler colonialism on Turtle Island, it is important to recognize the way that they, as an Asian American, “also participate in settler colonialism.”³³⁶ Vaid-Menon’s blog post is an example of how intersectional-type blogging has the potential to be radically transformed

³³³ Jasbir Puar, "Rethinking homonationalism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 337.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Vaid-Menon, “White Supremacy in (Queer) Palestine Solidarity Work.”

³³⁶ Ibid.

into a nuanced analysis of power in the current settler colonial context that we are living in. They end their blog post with a demand for accountability, which demonstrates their commitment to decolonizing anti-oppression politics and can serve as an example to other intersectional bloggers. They argue: “We must not only see ourselves as ‘oppressed,’ but also perpetrators of settler colonial and anti black violence. This means that we must come at our queer of color domestic activism from a position of allyship in similar ways to the transnational work that we participate in.”³³⁷ Their critique of the complicity that exists within anti-pinkwashing discourse demonstrates how complex the matrix of domination truly is, and how easy it can be to stop at the oppressions that we understand more intimately. Their critique demonstrates the importance of always asking the question - *how am I tacitly accepting oppressive systems? What am I missing?*

Scott Morgensen addresses the complicity within pinkwashing activism from a more theoretical perspective. He argues that “homonationalism arises whenever settler colonialism is naturalized in U.S. queer projects.”³³⁸ When queer theory, such as Foucauldian theory, interrogates the history of sexuality without addressing how this history is intertwined with colonialism, this theorization is perpetuating the naturalization of settler colonialism.³³⁹ It is important to be accountable to the ways that this naturalization happens in theory and in practice, and for intersectional bloggers to be

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸Scott Lauria Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16 (2010): 107.

³³⁹ Ibid, 109.

aware of this colonial history. Queer settler activism should not seek to include Indigenous peoples, it should radically change its perspective as one that sees current and past forms of colonialism as inherently intertwined with Queer liberation.³⁴⁰ Queer activists and bloggers must develop a more in-depth analysis of queerness that understands colonialism on Turtle Island to be the origin of heteropatriarchal violence here. It is colonialism that instilled gender and sexual hierarchies into Indigenous communities in order to naturalize the hierarchies of colonialism itself. Settlers used sexual violence as a means of destroying Indigenous communities, making colonization easier.³⁴¹ It is important for Queer people living on Turtle Island to know that Indigenous peoples were marked for “death, and settlers as subjects of life.”³⁴² Though we as Queer settlers did not choose this hierarchy, we have benefitted from it. Because of this, we need to be accountable to Indigenous communities, specifically Indigenous individuals who have been further marginalized by gendered and sexual methods of colonization. It is essential for queer organizing to value the narratives of Indigenous peoples and to see the priorities of the nations whose lands they occupy as central to their own activism.

This analysis of Queer settler positionality can be extended to settlers of all locations: Our liberation is tied to the liberation of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. We will not be free of oppression until all systems of domination, including colonialism,

³⁴⁰ Hunt and Holmes, "Everyday Decolonization: Living a Decolonizing Queer Politics," 160.

³⁴¹ Andrea Smith and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "Native feminisms engage American studies," *American Quarterly* 60 (2008): 241.

³⁴² Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities," 111.

are dismantled. In order to achieve this destruction, we must actively disrupt the ways in which settler common sense has infiltrated our collective consciousness and the way that it becomes naturalized. This means interrogating how we, as settlers, are implicated in the “dispossession, effacement and management of indigeneity.”³⁴³ This means flipping the script surrounding sovereignty. Instead of “analysing and evaluating Indigenous sovereignty claims..., we have a political and intellectual responsibility to analyse and evaluate the innumerable ways in which White sovereignty circumscribes and mitigates the exercise of Indigenous sovereignty.”³⁴⁴ Regardless of our intersections, we must reject colonial projects of inclusion and challenge the ways that our interests have been aligned with the interests of the colonial state. We need to reframe these interests so that they are instead aligned with the interests of decolonization.³⁴⁵

Decolonization is often used as a metaphor or is used to describe colonialism in distant places, rather than on Turtle Island. For example, when I was engaging in research, I noticed that it is common for feminist social media and scholarship to use phrases like “decolonizing our movements,” without an acknowledgment of the actual and ongoing process of colonization in North America. The use of these phrases without an investment in actual decolonization here, contributes to “resettlement, reoccupation,

³⁴³ Rifkin, “Settler Common Sense,” 323.

³⁴⁴ Nicoll in Rifkin, “Settler Common Sense,” 323.

³⁴⁵ Dean Itsuji Saranillio, “Why Asian settler colonialism matters: a thought piece on critiques, debates, and Indigenous difference,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 3 (2013): 280.

and reinhabitation that actually further[s] settler colonialism.”³⁴⁶ This metaphorization is a process by which settler academics and settler feminists use the decolonizing metaphor as a means towards their own liberation but make “no mention of Indigenous peoples,” or their “struggles for the recognition of [...] their sovereignty.”³⁴⁷ This metaphorization demonstrates that these intersectional feminists are not taking the concerns of Indigenous feminists seriously. This message is detrimental to creating alliances between settlers and the Indigenous nations of Turtle Island. When intersectional feminists who are settlers speak about decolonization, it cannot be metaphorical. It must refer to a genuine dedication to Indigenous self-determination and self-governance.

Anni Liu, a blogger at Everyday Feminism, gives readers advice on how to have healthy, anti-oppressive relationships in her blog post “Say Yes to Decolonial Love: 5 Ways to Resist Oppression in Your Relationships.” She opens her post by asking and answering the question of whether colonialism is over. She explains to the reader: “While the time of more developed (read: militaristic) countries invading the “blank” places on the map has come and gone, its cultural and economic equivalent is still very much alive in the form of neo-colonialism [...]. And though you have not personally colonized countries or groups of people, by living [in the] US, you inherit a colonial history and

³⁴⁶ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, 1 (2012), 1.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

mindset.³⁴⁸ This all too common analysis of colonialism ignores the current process of colonialism that is occurring on Turtle Island. While neocolonialism and post-colonialism are both important structures to acknowledge, they should not be conflated with settler colonialism, an ongoing form of colonialism that is often overlooked and seen as something that can end through “successful conquest.” As Patrick Wolfe explains, “settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event.”³⁴⁹ Liu is correct in saying that many of her readers have inherited a colonial legacy, but this acknowledgment is not enough. By failing to name present-day colonialism, Liu risks perpetuating the belief that Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island have all died or have been conquered. This serves to both silence Indigenous nations who are fighting for self-determination, and as well as operates to naturalize settlers as inheritors of Indigenous lands.³⁵⁰ Liu’s understanding of colonialism is representative of a lack of self-awareness amongst settlers on Turtle Island. When I was doing my undergraduate degree at Concordia, my most progressive teachers shared Liu’s anti-colonial analysis. In their own efforts towards radical praxis, they taught my classmates and I about global manifestations of post-colonialism and neocolonialism. They explained how the colonial histories of “developing” countries are responsible for these countries’ international debt and socio-economic inequities. This analysis deepened

³⁴⁸ Anni Liu, accessed Jun 5 2015, “Say Yes to Decolonial Love: 5 Ways to Resist Oppression in Your Relationships,” *Everyday Feminism*, December 9, 2014, <http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/12/decolonial-love/>

³⁴⁹ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism And The Elimination Of The Native,” 388.

³⁵⁰ Mark Rifkin, “Settler Common Sense,” 323.

our understanding of global politics but did not prepare us to understand and accept that we were settlers on lands that many of us considered to be home.

Some intersectional bloggers attempt to decolonize intersectionality in their writing, but unintentionally perpetuate colonial ideologies instead. In her blog post for Everyday Feminism entitled “3 Myths about Native Hawaiians You Ought to Know Before Visiting Paradise,” Amy Sun critiques the tourism industry in Hawaii and debunks the myths that are often associated with it. Sun emphasizes the importance of differentiating between Indigenous Hawaiians and residents of Hawaii. She refers to herself as a resident, but not as a settler. She explains that Hawaii was stolen from its Indigenous population and that Kanaka Maoli must be acknowledged by tourists as the original inhabitants, who deserve access to their land. While Sun does not use language that acknowledges an ongoing colonial process, she recognizes how colonialism is linked to injustice in Hawaii today. She does so by explaining how settlers brought disease, committed genocide and eventually overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy. Sun highlights the roles that “businessmen, missionaries, and the US military” have played in the removal of Indigenous Hawaiians from their homes.³⁵¹

Sun’s third point debunks the myth of Hawaii as paradise, where everyone lives with an *Aloha* spirit. Sun explains how the term *Aloha* was appropriated by colonizers and is misused today by a mostly settler-owner tourist industry. Sun uses Haunani Trask’s

³⁵¹Amy Sun, accessed May 31, 2015, “3 Myths about Native Hawaiians You Ought to Know Before Visiting Paradise,” Everyday Feminism, January 9, 2015 <http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/myths-about-native-hawaiians/>

metaphor of Hawaii as a “prostitute” to convey the exploitative nature of the tourism industry. While this metaphor is important, Sun does not adequately translate Trask’s message. Sun communicates a story that Trask, an Indigenous Hawaiian nationalist, would disagree with. While Sun debunks myths about Hawaiian tourism in her blog post, she also promotes tourism to Hawaii, which contradicts one of Haunani Trask’s central messages. Trask argues that while tourism in Hawaii is promoted under the guise of economically aiding Indigenous Hawaiians, in reality, it is “planned and executed” by multinational corporations, governments and landowners for the sole purposes of internal profit.³⁵² Though Sun does not glorify Hawaiian tourism, she encourages her readers to visit Hawaii.

After highlighting the problematic aspects of the tourist industry Sun says: “So what should you do? Avoid Hawaii? I don’t think you should. Hawaii is amazing. But please be aware of your role as a tourist.”³⁵³ This is not what Trask, the Hawaiian activist she referenced earlier, has advocated for. In her book “From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii,” Trask says: “If you are thinking of visiting my homeland, please don’t. We don’t want or need any more tourists, and we certainly don’t like them. If you want to help our cause, pass this message on to your friends.”³⁵⁴ Sun continues her post with this advice: “Visit the “rougner” parts of Hawaii — the side of

³⁵² Haunani Trask, “From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii” in Chen, Edith Wen. *Teaching about Asian Pacific Americans: Effective Activities, Strategies, and Assignments for Classrooms and Communities*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006).

³⁵³ Sun, “3 Myths about Native Hawaiians You Ought to Know Before Visiting Paradise.”

³⁵⁴ Trask, “From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii,” 123.

Hawaii that tourists don't see when all they do is snorkel and tan."³⁵⁵ By encouraging readers to see the "real" Hawaii, Sun is ignoring Trask's request. Sun fails to consider the voyeuristic nature of her suggestion and the colonial relations of power that this voyeurism unravels. Trask argues that tourism in Hawaii epitomizes colonial relations in America, where colonizers are ignorant of Indigenous life and simultaneously have power over it.³⁵⁶ Trask's request is clear: do not come here. In her request, she challenges the settler belief that we have an inherent right to travel and occupy Indigenous lands. By failing to "pass this message on to [her] friends," Sun is neglecting to communicate the most destructive aspect of the Hawaiian tourism industry - tourism itself. Sun is giving her readers a false belief that they can travel to Hawaii ethically, which, according to Trask, is not the case. Sun's misrepresentation of Trask's message can teach us an important lesson about solidarity. While it may be tempting, we cannot butcher Indigenous feminists' messages in order to serve our own agenda. Indigenous feminists have their own agendas, and if we want to support Indigenous struggles for self-determination, we must fully commit to that struggle, even if it means writing something that challenges the status quo and that makes people uncomfortable. When using Trask's work, it is necessary to unearth and challenge the deeply held belief that people from the West have an inherent right to travel. By misrepresenting Trask, Sun is failing to fulfill

³⁵⁵ Sun, "3 Myths about Native Hawaiians You Ought to Know Before Visiting Paradise."

³⁵⁶ Trask, "From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii," 136.

Arvin, Tuck and Morrill's challenge, which asks feminists to centre Indigenous issues and to respect Indigenous individuals' ways of conceptualizing the world.

In this chapter, I have explored how topics such as cultural appropriation, stereotypes, mascots, and transnational solidarity can get taken up within intersectional blogging. I argue that various blog posts that I analyzed naturalized the ongoing process of settler colonialism on Turtle Island by perpetuating settler common sense, which sees settler occupancy as given. I argue that when cultural appropriation is written about without integrating the history of how "playing Indian" is intertwined with a national hatred and fascination with the mythologized figure of the Indian, bloggers can perpetuate colonial erasure. When stereotypes and mascots are discussed without the understanding that this is another method of erasing Indigenous life, settlers unintentionally perpetuate the justification of Indigenous elimination. This is due to the way that stereotypes about Indigenous peoples have been used in order to account for genocidal policies in the U.S. and Canada. When intersectional settler bloggers frame settler colonialism on Turtle Island as an event rather than an ongoing structure, they discourage their readers from interrogating their positions as settlers on Indigenous lands. This chapter has demonstrated the necessity of disrupting discourses that, through subtle absence, naturalize settler colonialism and settler occupancy.

CHAPTER 4: INDIGENOUS FEMINISMS

In many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, feminism is considered to be a controversial term. It is seen as “an imperial project that assumes a [...] colonial stranglehold on indigenous nations.”³⁵⁷ These critiques are rooted in a problematic white-dominated feminist history that failed to prioritize the concerns of Indigenous nations. Many strands of feminism, such as Liberal feminism, are deeply invested in the colonial state, and fight for specified projects of justice that do not challenge the colonial framework, but rather, uphold and enforce it. However, many Indigenous feminists believe that “true feminism” is something that inherently critiques the colonial “project of sovereignty and nation-building.”³⁵⁸ For Indigenous feminists like Jessica Danforth, a Mohawk scholar and activist, intersectionality moves feminism away from a one-dimensional and oppressive analysis and is capable of accounting for all of the complexities of Indigenous identities.³⁵⁹ For Danforth, the term feminist is not only essential to Indigenous women’s liberation, but is also rooted within Indigenous communities themselves. Danforth explains that although it wasn’t named feminism at the time, Indigenous nations invented feminism. Danforth argues that before European

³⁵⁷ Smith and Kauanui, "Native feminisms engage American studies," 242.

³⁵⁸ Jessica Yee, accessed June 8, 2015, "I'm an Indigenous Feminist - and I'm Angry." *Our Times* 30 (Feb, 2011): 22-23. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/862749619?accountid=14846> and Smith and Kauanui, "Native feminisms engage American studies," 242.

³⁵⁹ Jessica Yee, accessed May 29, 2015, “Indigenous activist Jessica Yee talks theory, practice and making progress,” *Daily Xtra*, November 23, 2009, <http://www.dailyxtra.com/ottawa/news-and-ideas/news/indigenous-activist-jessica-yee-talks-theory-practice-and-making-progress-6895>

contact, Indigenous nations on Turtle Island were matriarchal societies where women were given responsibility over resources, “had respected positions of political significance,” had reproductive rights, and were respected by all members of the community.³⁶⁰ According to Danforth, unlike European women at the time, Indigenous women had power in both the private and public realms. For example, prior to the implementation of the Indian Act in Canada, many women were high chiefs within their nations.³⁶¹ That is, patriarchy was a settler viewpoint and practice, which was imposed onto Indigenous nations.

In Jessica Danforth’s book *Feminism for Real: Deconstructing the Academic Industrial Complex of Feminism*, she explains that mainstream feminism is a space that has been incredibly damaging to Indigenous women and women of colour. She sees terms such as intersectionality as a way for feminists to “talk the talk” but fail to “walk the walk.” Without the action of “actually being anti-racist” or supporting indigenous peoples’ “right to self-determination,” Danforth sees intersectionality as meaningless.³⁶² Despite her frustrations and discomforts with mainstream feminism, Danforth feels motivated to transform feminism to be a better space for women of colour and indigenous peoples.³⁶³ She believes that though it can be used coercively, intersectionality is an

³⁶⁰Yee, "I'm an Indigenous Feminist - and I'm Angry."

³⁶¹ Verna Kirkness, "Emerging Native Woman," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 2 (1987): 410.

³⁶²Jessica Yee, "Feminism for Real: Deconstructing the Academic Industrial Complex of Feminism," 12.

³⁶³ Ibid, 13.

important tool that is rooted in Indigenous ancestry.³⁶⁴ Danforth demonstrates the potential of intersectional-type writing, showing that it can be meaningful if authors are making genuine efforts to decolonize their writing. She argues that if settlers want to build alliances with Indigenous feminists, we must begin to “walk the walk.” Sarah Hunt, a Kwakwaka'wakw feminist scholar and activist, emphasizes the importance of intersectionality within her work. Specifically, within her discussion on improving the safety for sex workers in Canada, she discusses the importance that intersectionality plays in conceptualizing the lives of Indigenous women.³⁶⁵ While many Indigenous feminists view the term intersectionality as helpful, some Indigenous feminists and activists believe that intersectional conceptualizations of interconnectedness are already embedded within Indigenous epistemologies. They view intersectionality as a new word that expresses something they have always done. Some Indigenous scholars argue that while intersectionality may be a useful concept for explaining systemic power, “it is not needed to validate the inherent complexities of Indigenous knowledge.”³⁶⁶ While Indigenous

³⁶⁴Jessica Yee, "I'm an Indigenous Feminist - and I'm Angry."

³⁶⁵ Sarah Hunt in Emily Van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love. *Selling sex: Experience, advocacy, and research on sex work in Canada*. UBC Press, 2013.

³⁶⁶ In April 2014, I attended a conference at SFU entitled “Intersectionality Research, Policy & Practice: Influences, Interrogations and Innovations.” At this conference, Indigenous scholars Dory Nason, Natalie Clark, Leanne Simpson and Jessica Danforth all expressed this viewpoint in some manner (Nason, Clark and Simpson within a breakout group, Danforth in her keynote speech). For more on this please see: Sarah Hunt, "Dialogue On Intersectionality and Indigeneity: Summary of Themes," *Dialogue On Intersectionality and Indigeneity: Summary of Themes*. 2013. Accessed September 18, 2015. https://www.academia.edu/4677649/Dialogue_On_Intersectionality_and_Indigeneity_Summary_of_Themes

feminist perspectives can aid in decolonizing intersectional discourse, it should not be assumed that intersectionality is inherently valuable to Indigenous feminists.³⁶⁷

In order for intersectional feminism to be transformed by Indigenous feminisms, settlers must make strides towards understanding the effects of sexualized and gendered colonization. When Europeans began to colonize Indigenous territories they failed to understand Indigenous religiousness and spiritualities. They interpreted Indigenous rituals to be “savage” activity and began forcefully converting Indigenous peoples to Christianity. Whereas Indigenous religions taught the belief that men and women were equal, Christianity taught that men should rule over their wives.³⁶⁸ The Christian values that were forced onto Indigenous communities by missionaries through residential schools have had lasting effects on Indigenous nations. Due to colonial methods of conversion, many Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Canada still practice Christianity today.³⁶⁹ This aspect of colonization evidently complicates the reality of Indigenous communities and feminism today. Similarly to mainstream society, many Indigenous communities have internalized sexist and heteropatriarchal Christian values. For scholars like Andrea Smith and J. Khaulani Kauanui, the aim of instilling of Christian values was about more than just religion, it was about successful colonization and the elimination of

³⁶⁷ Some Indigenous scholars and activists view intersectionality as an academic imposition of Western worldview and standards, which do not account for the violence of colonial culture. For more on this please refer to: Sarah Hunt, "Dialogue On Intersectionality and Indigeneity: Summary of Themes," Dialogue On Intersectionality and Indigeneity: Summary of Themes.

³⁶⁸ Kirkness, "Emerging Native Woman,"410.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

the Native. According to Smith and Kauanui, the European colonizers observed the non-hierarchical dynamics of Indigenous communities and knew that they would be unable to successfully colonize people who did not understand hierarchy. As a result, they imposed systems of domination in order to instil hierarchy amongst the nations they wished to conquer.³⁷⁰

One of the ideological systems that was imposed onto Indigenous nations was the system of heteropatriarchy, which heavily relies upon notions of male superiority, a strict gender binary and heterosexism.³⁷¹ Enforcing these ideals within Indigenous nations was essential to the project of colonization because these ideals serve to “naturalize social hierarchy”.³⁷² The instilling of heteropatriarchal logic makes the project of colonization logically sound: “Just as the patriarchs rule the family, the elites of the nation-state rule their citizens.”³⁷³ Ideological indoctrination was not the only gendered method of colonization that European settlers used. The use of gender violence was a primary tactic in the genocide of Indigenous peoples. Sexual violence was used during colonization to humiliate, dehumanize and break down Indigenous peoples. Through sexual mutilation and rape, colonizers were better able to colonize Indigenous lands. In the same way that instilling hierarchy amongst Indigenous peoples naturalizes the understanding that the

³⁷⁰ Smith and Kauanui, "Native feminisms engage American studies."

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid, 241.

³⁷³ Andrea Smith, "American studies without America: Native feminisms and the nation-state," *American Quarterly* 60 (2008): 312.

colonizers should rule over the colonized, instilling the notion that a people are “inherently rapable” reaffirms the notion that their lands “are inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable.”³⁷⁴ Although feminism has been interpreted as a colonizing force that seeks to “destroy tribal ways of life,” Indigenous feminists affirm feminism as necessary in preserving Indigenous land and life.³⁷⁵ It is not enough for settlers to include Indigenous women in a feminism that upholds the colonial state, it is necessary to see our liberation as inseparable from Indigenous feminist self-determination and justice.

This chapter examines how Indigenous feminists are writing about their own liberation, and draws upon this writing to extrapolate how we as settler feminists can decolonize our own writing. Within this chapter, I examine two blog posts written by intersectional feminists and twelve blog posts written by Indigenous feminists and activists. I chose to focus on the writings of Indigenous feminists and activists in this chapter, highlighting the issues that these authors find to be important. I do this in order to follow the guidance of Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, and to centre the narratives and desires of Indigenous feminists. Research for this chapter was process for decolonizing my own work and my own feminism. I begin this chapter by discussing Indigenous feminisms and the relationships that some Indigenous feminists have with white feminism. I continue

³⁷⁴ Ibid, 312.

³⁷⁵Mishuana R.Goeman and Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Native feminisms: Legacies, interventions, and Indigenous sovereignties," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, (2009): 10.

this chapter by discussing the disturbing trend of missing and murdered Indigenous women on Turtle Island, and the manner in which this is deeply rooted in a colonial history and present. I then discuss the obstacles facing two-spirited people and the solutions that various Indigenous feminists suggest in combatting these difficulties. I conclude this chapter by discussing the role that colonialism and capitalism have played in the destruction of and displacement from Indigenous lands.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

An essential component to decolonizing intersectional blogging is centering the concerns of Indigenous nations. One of the most pressing issues that Indigenous communities are faced with is the disturbing trend of missing and murdered Indigenous women. It is our responsibility, as intersectional feminists, to view this pattern as a primary concern for all feminists. In her article “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide,” Andrea Smith explains how the colonial state has always viewed Indigenous bodies as dirty and sinful. This colonial history is demonstrated through the following Procter & Gamble advertisement for Ivory Soap, which was released in 1855:

We were once factious, fierce and wild,
 In peaceful arts unreconciled
 Our blankets smeared with grease and stains
 From buffalo meat and settlers' veins.
 Through summer's dust and heat content
 From moon to moon unwashed we went,
 But IVORY SOAP came like a ray
 Of light across our darkened way
 And now we're civil, kind and good
 And keep the laws as people should,

We wear our linen, lawn and lace
 As well as folks with paler face
 And now I take, where'er we go
 This cake of IVORY SOAP to show
 What civilized my squaw and me
 And made us clean and fair to see.

This advertisement reveals the ways in which darkness is seen as dirty and uncivilized and whiteness is seen as pure and innocent. The advertisement also serves as a warning. It explains how Ivory soap could transform Indigenous peoples into “good” law abiding citizens. What is implied then, is that if those who are Indigenous forget to bring their whitening soap “where’er [they] go,” and become dark again, they will no longer be considered humans, but “wild” animals.³⁷⁶

This warning still exists today, where Indigenous peoples are expected to abide by the rules of a white supremacist society, if they wish to be considered human. If they “break” these rules, and engage in any “unsavoury” activities, such as sex work or the use of drugs or alcohol (activities that many non-Indigenous people engage in), they lose their right to be human.³⁷⁷ When we look at the trend of missing and murdered Indigenous women, we are always met with the same stereotypes in the media. Stereotypes of Indigenous women as “squaw, Indian princess and sexually available brown woman” are used to justify violence against Indigenous women.³⁷⁸ The attitude is

³⁷⁶ Andrea Smith, “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide,” *Peacework* 32 (2005): 7.

³⁷⁷ Sarah Hunt in Emily Van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love. *Selling sex: Experience, advocacy, and research on sex work in Canada*. UBC Press, 2013, 88.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 87.

that these women lead “unorthodox” lifestyles and are “always on the move and hence culpable in their murders or disappearances.”³⁷⁹ By dehumanizing Indigenous women and painting these disappearances as inevitable due to their alleged “lifestyle choices,” the media gives white society the ability to wash their hands of this disturbing pattern, thus continuing colonial genocide.

When intersectional bloggers fail to see how the disappearance of Indigenous women is a part of the larger colonial project of legitimizing the state - in a manner that goes beyond the categories of race, class, sexuality and gender etc. - their writing serves to further dispossess Indigenous peoples from their right to be free from colonial violence.³⁸⁰ Within intersectional discourse, it is important to recognize the ways in which violence against Indigenous women is directly linked to the fear of Indigenous women’s bodies and the colonial desire to preserve the white supremacist, colonial state. The fear of Indigenous women’s sexuality is rooted in a history of conquest, dominance and disposal. Sarah Hunt explains:

In the early days of Canadian colonialism and settlement, Indigenous women were partners of white men, fulfilling a reproductive and familial role until the arrival of European women. However, the sexual availability of Indigenous women became seen as a threat when greater numbers of European women immigrated to Canada.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹Yasmin Jiwani and Mary Lynn Young, "Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31 (2006): 897.

³⁸⁰Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy."

³⁸¹ Sarah Hunt in Emily Van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love. *Selling sex: Experience, advocacy, and research on sex work in Canada*. UBC Press, 2013, 86.

This colonial thread persists today, where Indigenous women are viewed as a threat to a “wholesome” Canadian society. In this portrayal, white men are framed as innocent victims, while Indigenous women are made “hypervisible as deviant bodies.”³⁸² This framing warps truth and erases the violence that is done to Indigenous women by white men.³⁸³

Leanne Simpson addresses the ways that gender based violence against Indigenous peoples is a direct result of colonial tactics to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands and cultures. Sexual violence was a colonial tool used in residential schools that continues to be used today. In her blog post “Stolen Sisters, Sex Workers, and Conservative Saviours,” Pansee Atta shares Leanne Simpson’s sentiment that “the perpetrators of colonial gender violence cannot be in charge of coming up with a strategy to end it because they are the beneficiaries of it.”³⁸⁴ Atta does not, however, explain the way that heteropatriarchy was forced onto Indigenous nations by colonizers as a method of “destroy[ing] the fabric of Indigenous nationhoods.”³⁸⁵ In order for the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples to change, it is necessary that we understand how colonial tactics have caused fracturing within Indigenous communities, and how we have often been complicit in this violence. In her post “Not Murdered and Not Missing,”

³⁸² Ibid, 88.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Leanne Simpson, accessed May 26, 2015, “Not Missing and Not Murdered” Voices Rising, <http://nationsrising.org/not-murdered-and-not-missing/>

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

Simpson says that she has largely been silent on her feelings about gendered violence because of her worries that “white Canadians [will] automatically blame Indigenous men for gender violence” as opposed to understanding the ways that they, as settlers, have benefited from this state sanctioned violence.³⁸⁶ Simpson also emphasizes the investment that white settlers have in stereotypes of Indigenous men, “as unfeeling, uncaring, violent savages.”³⁸⁷ This investment frames settlers as innocent and erases the colonial violence that is perpetuated by white men.

Settler colonialism is an ongoing structure that encompasses violence that takes many forms. Tara Williamson, an Anishinaabekwe/Nehayowak musician, writer, and college professor explains: “The violence that is perpetrated against Indigenous women is the same violence that is perpetrated against the land in the tar sands is the same violence that sexually assaulted our parents and grandparents in residential school and is the same violence that displaced and tortured our nations during the first invasions. It’s all colonization. It’s all about power.”³⁸⁸ Williamson says that she was tricked into believing that Indigenous women who are like Loretta Saunders - educated, urban, and light-skinned - will be safe from colonial violence.³⁸⁹ While violence against Indigenous women is often explained away by class, race or lifestyle, Williamson reminds her

³⁸⁶Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Tara Williamson, accessed June 8, 2015, “Don’t Be Tricked,” Voices Rising, February 28, 2014, <http://nationsrising.org/dont-be-tricked/>

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

readers that this violence has a much deeper legacy. For intersectional bloggers, Williamson and Simpson demonstrate the importance of knowing this difference. Loretta Saunders knew that Canadian society is intent on “destroying and eliminating indigenous peoples.”³⁹⁰ As settlers, it is important that we produce work that understands this deeply ingrained characteristic of the Canadian state. The lives of Indigenous women are endangered regardless of their “lifestyle choices,” due to the ways in which the colonial state has framed Indigenous women less-than human. As was discussed in previous chapters, cultural appropriation, stereotyping and dispossession from land have all contributed to this violence, which plays out in the lives and bodies of Indigenous women. It is essential for intersectional settlers, specifically white settlers, to understand that the violence we experience cannot be conflated with the violence experienced by Indigenous women.

In a blog post entitled “There is No “We”: V-Day, Indigenous Women and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression,” Lauren Chief Elk highlights how white feminism has co-opted Indigenous struggles against sexual violence to the point that it has become detrimental to Indigenous women and their communities. In her post, she critiques Eve Ensler’s *One Billion Rising* event, an event that attempts to universalize experiences of gender-based violence and transforms specific place-based experiences into a global movement. On February 14th 2013, *One Billion Rising* focussed its event on Indigenous

³⁹⁰ Darryl Leroux, accessed June 8, 2015, “In Honour of Loretta,” Halifax Media Co-Op, February 27, 2014, <http://halifax.mediacoop.ca/story/honour-loretta/21987>

women, but failed to acknowledge or consult with the already existent Stolen Sisters March, a grassroots march organized by Indigenous women on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside that began in 1991.³⁹¹ By failing to consult with the communities most affected by sexual violence on Turtle Island, Ensler's movement contributed to a colonial pattern of speaking for Indigenous nations and treating them as "wards of the state"³⁹² This treatment reinforces the colonial notion that Indigenous leaders are savages, incapable of self-government.

One of the primary aims of the *One Billion Rising* movement is to encourage survivors of sexual assault to report their assaults to the police. Not only does this fail to acknowledge the systemic violence that women of colour and Indigenous women face at the hands of police officers - and that law enforcement is therefore not safe for them - but it also fails to understand how the incarceration of Indigenous people and people of colour is detrimental to women of colour and Indigenous women who experience assault.³⁹³ By insisting on harsher law enforcement, *One Billion Rising* is ignoring the systems of power that created this violence in the first place. As long as representatives of the state continue to perpetuate sexual violence against Indigenous women (or allow their

³⁹¹ Lauren Chief Elk, accessed June 6, 2015, "There is No "We": V-Day, Indigenous Women and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression," *Model View Culture* February 3, 2014, <https://modelviewculture.com/pieces/there-is-no-we-v-day-indigenous-women-and-the-myth-of-shared-gender-oppression>

³⁹²Ward of the State refers to "a paternalistic legal relationship that illustrates the historical imperial notion that Aboriginal peoples are "children" requiring control and direction to bring them into more "civilized" colonial ways of life" (<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act/indian-status.html>)

³⁹³ Lauren Chief Elk, "There is No "We": V-Day, Indigenous Women and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression."

coworkers to do so without speaking out), the police will not be a safe option for Indigenous women.³⁹⁴ Lauren Chief Elk explains that a carceral approach exists at the expense of Indigenous women and Women of Colour, where they “become collateral damage in the continued quest to uphold and protect white womanhood.”³⁹⁵ As I mentioned earlier, sexual violence against Indigenous women is a tool used by colonizers to extract resources, steal land and to force assimilation.³⁹⁶ It is necessary for intersectional bloggers who are settlers to recognize the specificity of Indigenous women’s experiences of sexual violence on Turtle Island. White intersectional feminists must confront the notion that “Indigenous women need to be rescued by the benevolence of white women from scary, savage brown men on reservations.”³⁹⁷ They must actively challenge the idea that “giving power back to tribal governments” is ineffective when it comes to managing violence against Indigenous women.³⁹⁸ White women have been beneficiaries of patriarchal colonization, and by failing to recognize this, white feminism is further perpetuating this violence. Intersectional settler bloggers must refuse to be passive in patriarchal colonization by promoting Indigenous self-determination in relation to managing colonial violence.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Andrea Smith, “Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism,” 59.

³⁹⁷ Lauren Chief Elk, “There is No “We”: V-Day, Indigenous Women and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression.”

³⁹⁸ Lauren Chief Elk, “There is No “We”: V-Day, Indigenous Women and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression.”

As a part of the Voices Rising series, Jana-Rae Yerxa wrote a blog post entitled “Refuse to Live Quietly!” In her post, she critiques the expectation that Indigenous people will educate settlers in a manner that caters to their needs, and ignores the needs of Indigenous nations. She no longer wants to act strategically by educating settlers about “Indigenous issues.” Instead, she says that it is time to start framing conversations in relation to “settler colonialism, white supremacy, and settler colonial violence.”³⁹⁹ As settlers, we can learn from this. When we speak with other settlers, it is important that we frame Indigenous issues within the larger context of settler colonialism. This means answering questions that other settlers have about settler colonialism or Indigeneity that might seem ignorant to us. This means having difficult conversations with our friends and loved ones about their own complicity within these oppressive systems. As Pansee Atta demonstrates in her blog post, when intersectional bloggers are writing about missing and murdered Indigenous women, it is necessary to explain the colonial nature of this violence.⁴⁰⁰ We must explain “Indigenous issues” to our friends and families as a colonial sickness, not an Indigenous one.

Siku Allooloo, an Inuk/Taino from Denendeh, wrote a blog post entitled “From Outrage to Radical Love.” She begins her post by describing her outrage at the high rates of violence against Indigenous women in Canada. Allooloo’s post is a visceral one,

³⁹⁹ Jana-Rae Yerxa, accessed May 27, 2015, “Refuse to Live Quietly!” Voices Rising, March 12, 2014, <http://nationsrising.org/refuse-to-live-quietly/>

⁴⁰⁰ Pansee Atta, accessed May 26 2015, “Stolen Sisters, Sex Workers, and Conservative Saviours,” Briarpatch Magazine, September 24 2014, <http://briarpatchmagazine.com/blog/view/stolen-sisters-sex-workers-and-conservative-saviours>

speaking about love and rage. As settler feminists, we can learn from this. All too often, when we write about systemic oppression and identity politics, we are unable to communicate the deep emotional pain that this oppression causes. It is hard to write theoretically about something so real and, as Allooloo puts it, so disgusting. Allooloo says that Indigenous women “deserve to be treated with the utmost honour and respect.”⁴⁰¹ It is not enough for us as settlers to know this. Settlers need to feel this and act out of outrage and love, not guilt. This take away is evidently less tangible, but it is incredibly important. Within many activist communities, there exists a strong “call-out culture,” where “calling [people] out⁴⁰² is seen as an end in itself.”⁴⁰³ While it is important to bring attention to oppressive behaviour, “call-out culture” tends to be performative, often serving to boost the social capital of the person who names the oppressive action. This culture is particularly prevalent in online spaces such as Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook, where there is little accountability. In these online spaces, people who name oppressive actions are able to hide behind their screen, and are not obliged to face the person they are criticizing. In online spaces, “calling someone out isn’t just a private interaction between two individuals: it’s a public performance where people can demonstrate their

⁴⁰¹ Siku Allooloo, accessed May 27, 2015, “From Outrage to Radical Love,” *Voices Rising*, March 7, 2014, <http://nationsrising.org/from-outrage-to-radical-love/>

⁴⁰² Call-out culture refers to the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organizers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language use by others.

⁴⁰³ Asam Ahmad, accessed May 27, 2015, “A Note on Call-Out Culture,” *Briarpatch Magazine*, March 2, 2015, <http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/a-note-on-call-out-culture>

wit or how pure their politics are.”⁴⁰⁴ These interactions can feel as though the “performance itself is more significant than the content of the call-out.”⁴⁰⁵ Siku Allooloo’s post can remind those of us who blog, and those of us who are a part of intersectional online discourse more generally, to approach each conversation with both love and rage, rather than a political competition. Call-out culture and the resulting competition for social capital only distances us from the causes we should be working towards and makes it harder for us to build alliances with one another. If we are honest about the love and rage that we feel within our activism, we will be better able to build trusting relationships.

In her Voices Rising post “Making It Home Alive,” Jarita Greyeyes tells a story that describes the inequality that exists in Canada between Indigenous peoples and white settlers. She describes an event “that focused on the regeneration of Indigenous sexual and gender identities.”⁴⁰⁶ At the event, white women were taking up too much space dancing on stage. They were asked to get off the stage and were outraged at the request. Greyeyes comments on the stark contrast between the experiences of white women and Indigenous women on Turtle Island: “Isn’t it strange to think we live in a country in which one woman’s greatest injustice may be being asked to leave a stage, while some of

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶Jarita Greyeyes, accessed May 27, 2015, “Making it Home Alive” Voices Rising, April 1st, 2014, <http://nationsrising.org/making-it-home-alive/>

us just want to make it home alive?”⁴⁰⁷ White settlers who wish to act in solidarity with Indigenous nations must be aware of the immense privilege that we have in this work and attempt to be respectful of this difference. It is essential for settlers who want to be allies to Indigenous nations and communities to be aware of the roles they take on and how their privilege affects this. For intersectional bloggers and writers who are settlers, this can relate to how and why we are writing about Indigeneity. We must ask ourselves: *Why am I writing about this? Is it for my own ego or personal gain? Has this been asked of me? Who is benefiting from this writing? Am I acting in solidarity with Indigenous resurgence movements? Am I listening to Indigenous voices?*

In her blog post “Stolen Sisters, Sex Workers, and Conservative Saviours,” Pansee Atta addresses the Canadian government’s refusal to listen to the voices of Indigenous sex workers. In her post, she frames Indigenous women as people who are facing the ongoing effects of settler colonialism. She highlights how patronizing the Canadian government is in their framing of Indigenous women as those “who await rescue by the colonial state and its police.”⁴⁰⁸ She says: “The truth is that policy that acknowledges and addresses the effects of ongoing colonization and patriarchal violence is at odds with the Canadian state and its current representatives. To take leadership from those defined as victims would redistribute the balance of power in favour of those whose continued dispossession and exploitation is required by the economic system which the

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Pansee Atta, “Stolen Sisters, Sex Workers, and Conservative Saviours.”

state serves.”⁴⁰⁹ In this statement, Atta is meeting Arvin, Tuck and Morrill’s first challenge that asks feminists not to assume the futurity of the colonial state. Atta argues that the colonial state’s goals are antithetical to achieving decolonial justice. She highlights the structural and ideological flaws of assuming the compatibility of the state with liberatory goals for Indigenous women.⁴¹⁰

At a roundtable on colonial gendered violence, on February 13 2015, Bridget Tolley, Zhaawanongnoodin (Colleen Cardinal), Carol Martin and Audrey Huntley - “Indigenous family and community members who are leading the calls for justice for Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, and trans people” - speak about the role that the state plays in gendered violence.⁴¹¹ Tolley puts it simply: “you cannot leave those who created the problem in charge of the solution.”⁴¹² The women all agree that asking the state to investigate itself is futile and continue to discuss the difficulties that this causes for Indigenous women and their nations. Huntley speaks about how these difficulties are most emphasized when families who have lost loved ones are faced with hostility from state institutions and their representatives. When families are made to be dependent on the police when loved ones are missing, and are met with indifference and disrespect,

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Harsha Walia, accessed May 29, 2015, “A roundtable on gendered colonial violence: Part two,” rabble, February 13, 2015, <http://rabble.ca/columnists/2015/02/roundtable-on-gendered-colonial-violence-part-two>

⁴¹² Ibid.

their pain is only heightened. When asked about alternatives to state-based inquiries,

Zhaawanongnoodin responds with recommendations for allies:

I have found great empowerment from building community with Indigenous people and non-Indigenous settlers who are committed to understanding, listening and supporting. Not only is it important for settlers to understand how they are implicated in colonization on Indigenous land, but to also challenge mainstream media to do better when reporting about Indigenous women's deaths or disappearances, and to really understand that the women who have been murdered or gone missing meant the world to their loved ones and communities.⁴¹³

Zhaawanongnoodin's words are an important reminder that Indigenous women are already speaking and writing about the issues that affect their communities. It is our responsibility as intersectional settler feminists to pass their messages along to other settlers, and ensure that mainstream media accurately depicts colonial violence. As people with settler privilege, we must translate our love and rage into action. We must demand that the stories of these women are told, depicting them as humans, rather than statistics facing inevitable death.

Gender and Sexuality

While “Indigenous languages contain within them place-specific terminology that reflects the spiritual, social, and political position of variously gendered people within individual nations,” many trans and queer Indigenous people use the term two-spirit as an identifier.⁴¹⁴ The term two-spirit is an intentionally broad, pan-Indigenous term used to describe those who fit somewhere along gender and sexuality spectrums. The term was

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Hunt and Holmes, "Everyday Decolonization: Living a Decolonizing Queer Politics," 160.

coined in 1990 at “an inter-tribal Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg” in order to replace terms such as “berdache,” which were thought to have negative connotations.⁴¹⁵ When speaking about the term two-spirit, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of English as a colonial language, and to know that this language is incapable of describing how pre-contact nations understood gender and sexuality. We need to understand that our beliefs as settlers are clouded by colonial understandings of gender and sexuality and that we shouldn’t try to impose “equivalents” onto Indigenous non-binary people.⁴¹⁶ Colonial laws surrounding gender were imposed onto Indigenous children within residential schools. These laws regulated the language of Indigenous children, requiring them to speak in a manner that reinforced the gender binary. School regulations required Indigenous children to dress and style their hair in a Western manner, which served to mark them “boy” or “girl.” Two-spirited people were erased through this colonial indoctrination process. Their needs and ways of seeing themselves were manipulated through colonization, so that many Indigenous nations lost the manner in which they had viewed two-spirited people prior to contact.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ âpihtawikosisân, accessed May 27, 2015, “Language, culture, and Two-Spirit identity,” March 29, 2012, <http://apihtawikosisan.com/2012/03/language-culture-and-two-spirit-identity/>

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Sarah Hunt, “Embodying Self-Determination: Beyond the Gender Binary,” In *Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health in Canada: Beyond the Social*, edited by Margo Greenwood, Sarah De Leeuw, Charlotte Reading, and Nicole Marie Lindsay. Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars Press, 2015.

Indigenous two-spirited people are often forced into existing within a “colonial landscape that does not meaningfully reflect who [they] are or how [they] want to be.”⁴¹⁸ This is often reflected in the manner in which the gender binary is reflected in colonial culture. Many two-spirited people do not come from nations that believed in enforcing gender roles. In a guest blog post on Kwe Today, a blog about Fierce Indigenous Feminism, Sâkihitowin Awâsis writes about the intersectional needs of Indigenous two-spirits. They⁴¹⁹ say that while mainstream feminism says that it is inclusive, it rarely follows through in practice. Awâsis does not feel represented by mainstream feminism because it does not consider the unique needs of their position as an Indigenous two-spirited person. For example, the barriers that non-Indigenous non-binary people face when seeing health professionals are heightened for Indigenous two-spirited people because of the cuts in funding for Indigenous health services and the lack of cultural awareness amongst health professionals. Awâsis highlights the importance of having “culturally sensitive and relevant health professionals” available to Indigenous two-spirit people.⁴²⁰

In a blog post entitled “Hearing Two-Spirits,” Cortney Dakin, Two-Spirited Didikai Métis, describes the colonial laws that dispossessed Indigenous two-spirits from

⁴¹⁸Sâkihitowin Awâsis, accessed June 8, 2015, “Why We Need Indigenous Feminism,” Kwe Today, October 23, 2012, <http://kwetoday.com/2012/10/23/guest-post-why-we-need-indigenous-feminism/>

⁴¹⁹Sâkihitowin Awâsis uses “They” as a gender pronoun.

⁴²⁰ Sâkihitowin Awâsis, accessed June 8, 2015, “Why We Need Indigenous Feminism,” Kwe Today, October 23, 2012, <http://kwetoday.com/2012/10/23/guest-post-why-we-need-indigenous-feminism/>

their cultures. According to Dakin, “colonizers used gender identity to determine policy, refusing to acknowledge chiefs who were women or Two-Spirits, and excluding them from colonial state structures, private ownership, and the wage labour force.”⁴²¹ This colonial ideology took hold in many Indigenous nations so that two-spirited people today often face the choice of denying their gender identity or being rejected from their communities.⁴²² At the same time, LGBTQ spaces, as well as other progressive spaces tend to perpetuate the stigmatization and alienation of Indigenous “cultures, languages, and traditions.”⁴²³ When intersectional settler bloggers write about gender and sexuality and the barriers that queer and trans people face, it is important that they consult Indigenous two-spirited people and non-binary people as to what their needs are, rather than simply claiming to be inclusionary.⁴²⁴

A number of allies⁴²⁵ wrote a letter on the White Noise Collective’s blogging forum entitled “A Letter to White People Using the Term ‘Two Spirit,’” saying that they had been called upon by Indigenous members of their communities to speak to non-Indigenous people who were appropriating this term. The authors gently engage with their readers, beginning with words of compassion, expressing that they understand why

⁴²¹ Cortney Dakin, accessed May 27, 2015, “Hearing Two-Spirits,” *Briarpatch Magazine*, September 1, 2012, <http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/hearing-two-spirits>

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ This is a term that the authors used to described themselves.

white gender non-conforming people might have a desire to use words that seem to best express their identities. They explain that the term two-spirit may seem most fitting because of a void that exists within mainstream Christian-dominated culture, where non-binary histories have been erased and shamed. The authors provide a list of examples of non-binary identities throughout history that might be more connected to the readers' own histories and that they might relate to. They ask the readers to "give something up willingly that was never [theirs]."⁴²⁶ The authors explain that the term two-spirit is sacred and "comes with its own deep history of gender violence, patriarchy, resistance and reclamation" that is not their history.⁴²⁷ This letter is an important example of how settlers can stand in solidarity with Indigenous people within their communities by educating other settlers. In this instance, the authors were reacting to call from Indigenous members of their communities to end a problematic trend, by taking over the unpleasant labour of engaging in difficult conversations. Because of the complexity of telling people that they cannot self-identify in a particular way, given that so much of identity politics is allowing people to self-identify, the authors are taking a social risk by writing this letter. Taking social risks is a crucial aspect of solidarity. It is often easy to call out the "cis-white-man" in the decolonization 101 workshop,⁴²⁸ because we know

⁴²⁶ Beja, accessed June 8, 2015, "A Letter to White People Using the Term 'Two Spirit,'"

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ This is a typical occurrence of anti-oppressive politics. It is common for anti-oppressive activists to rant about the "cis-white-man" in their workshop/class/job. The cis, white heterosexual male is often used as an example of those who are oppressive because they're not seen to have experienced systemic oppression. This ranting is often done without actually knowing whether this person identifies as cis, white or male, and without knowing whether they have experienced other forms of systemic oppression.

that we can come back to our activist communities and receive support and praise. In ways, it is much harder to call trans people out who are appropriating the term two-spirit, who might be more respected within activist communities.

In an article that she wrote for UBC's "The Talon" entitled "violence on the land, violence on our (student) bodies," Danette Jubinville, a Cree-Saulteaux student, connects violence to the land to gender based violence. She writes about how sad it makes her that there is a tree at UBC called "the punching tree," where UBC students take out their aggression by punchin the tree. She says:

as a nehiyaw-nahkawekwe, my elders teach me that the land is my first mother. they teach me that the land provides us with everything we need for survival, and therefore we treat it with the utmost love and respect. they teach me that the plants, the animals, the water, and the air feed me, and therefore i am of the earth. the elders teach me that to hurt the land is to hurt myself.⁴²⁹

She sees a connection between the violence that is experienced by those who "defy gender binaries" and the violence experienced by the tree, who also defies these boundaries.⁴³⁰

In the comments section of Jubinville's article, Jonah Slinn, a commenter from the UK references the author's connections between plants and humans and calls it "ludicrous," because trees "can't feel pain."⁴³¹ While most feminists know to never read the comments section of any article, this comment struck me because it was the most

⁴²⁹ danette jubinville, accessed June 8, 2015, "violence on the land, violence on our (student) bodies," *The Talon*, <http://thetalon.ca/violence-on-the-land-violence-on-our-student-bodies/>

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

popular comment on the post. Because of the way that voting for comments functions on the Talon's site, and considering that the Talon is an anti-oppressive publication that is dedicated to decolonization, it is almost certain that Slinn's post originally received well over 62 positive votes.⁴³² While Slinn is only one commenter, his comment demonstrates the immense disrespect that many settlers feel towards Indigenous ways of knowing. Because the anonymity of the internet allows commenters to be as cruel and as ignorant as they'd like, it is especially important for intersectional feminists to engage in dialogue with those who perpetuate colonial mentalities about Indigenous ways of knowing. Slinn's comments may appear to some as someone who is valiantly defending science, but in reality, he is perpetuating the ideology of the backwards and savage Indian, where "human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property."⁴³³

Respect for Indigenous Land

In their article "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," Arvin, Tuck and Morrill's fourth challenge to feminists is to "recognize indigenous ways of knowing."⁴³⁴ They explain that "within

⁴³² The Talon uses Disqus to facilitate commenting on their website. Disqus functions in a manner where readers and commenters can upvote (positive vote) and down vote (negative vote) each comment to demonstrate how popular it is. Disqus subtracts the negative votes from the positive votes and displays the total number of votes. The fact that Jonah Slinn had 62 total upvotes indicates that he likely had many more upvotes originally, but ended up with 62 because of down voting from anti-oppressive supporters of The Talon.

⁴³³ Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," 5.

⁴³⁴ Ibid, 21.

Indigenous contexts land is not property, as in settler colonialism, but rather land is knowing and knowledge.”⁴³⁵ Danette Jubinville was ridiculed in the comments section of her article for her epistemology as a Cree-Saulteaux woman. Jubinville was treated as a “crazy” outlier by Jonah Slinn, but the understanding that land is mother is older than European contact, and is certainly older than Jonah Slinn. It is a belief system that is not only held by Jubinville’s Cree and Saulteaux ancestors, but one that is also held by many Indigenous nations today. As Manulani Aluli Meyer says: “Land is our mother. This is not a metaphor. For the Native Hawaiians speaking of knowledge, land was the central theme that drew forth all others. You came from a place. You grew in a place and you had a relationship with a place. This is an epistemological idea... One does not simply learn about land, we learn best from land.”⁴³⁶ It is not enough for intersectional settler feminists to respect Indigenous ways of knowing, and it is not enough to call out those who appropriate and idealize Indigenous cultural practices. We must also recognize that Western epistemologies and theories of liberation have failed many Indigenous nations, and respect that they do not speak to many nations’ belief systems.⁴³⁷

In her article “The paradox of Indigenous resurgence at the end of empire,” Waziyatawin, a Dakota professor, author, and activist, asks her readers to “challenge the fallacy of the superiority of Western society” and depicts how Western epistemologies

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 22.

⁴³⁷ Leanne Simpson, “Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence,” (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Pub, 2011), 31.

have failed all of creation.⁴³⁸ Waziyatawin argues that through “climate chaos, fossil-fuel resource depletion, overpopulation, and the ongoing destruction of ecosystems,” industrial capitalism has “threaten[ed] the very foundation of colonial empire, both creating emancipatory potential for Indigenous societies struggling against colonial subjugation and wreaking devastating havoc on the lands, waters, and ecosystems upon which [Indigenous] people must survive.”⁴³⁹ Within a Western epistemological framework, we recognize the social system as that which feeds, clothes and shelters us. If we shift our understanding to see that it is actually the land and the water that we rely upon for these things, we will defend them as though we were defending the social system.⁴⁴⁰ In the current context, where the “elite [are] attempt[ing] to protect the existing system [...] at the expense of the rest of creation [...] “the paradigm we need is the Indigenous paradigm based on sustainability.”⁴⁴¹ This is “the kind of sustainability that allows a human population to live on the same landbase for thousands of years without destroying it.”⁴⁴²

Within intersectional settler blogging, there is sometimes a failure to communicate how the environmental devastation of Turtle Island is deeply intertwined

⁴³⁸Waziyatawin, "The Paradox of Indigenous Resurgence at the End of Empire," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1 (2012): 77.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, 68.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, 71.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, 77.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

with the survival of Indigenous nations. The dispossession from and the destruction of Indigenous lands is an ongoing tactic of colonization. By failing to protect the land and waters, we as settlers, are complicit in this dispossession. In order to be accountable to the Indigenous nations whose lands we live upon, settlers must disrupt industrial capitalism's destruction of the earth. In order to do this, we must shift away from Western epistemologies, which tell us that "the restoration of fossil-fuel free lifestyle [is] a step backwards" and must instead, listen to "Indigenous teachings [that] would more accurately characterize this as a restoration of balance."⁴⁴³ As intersectional settler feminists, it is important to listen to this guidance without fetishizing and appropriating it.

In a blog post entitled "Eco-Feminist Appropriations of Indigenous Feminisms and Environmental Violence," Lindsay Nixon, an anishinaabekwe, nêhiyaw-iskwêw from the Tootinaowaziibeeng Nation, argues that evoking Indigenous environmental knowledge without acknowledging settler colonialism "separat[es] Indigenous knowledges from their political contexts," [which] "reinforces the denial of Indigenous genocide within these territories on which the settler state legitimates itself."⁴⁴⁴

Ecofeminism for example, often ignores how "neocolonial state violence, compounded by exposure to environmental contaminants, is embodied in very specific ways for Indigenous women and Two-Spirit peoples."⁴⁴⁵ This is evidenced through the harmful

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Lindsay Nixon, accessed May 31, 2015, "Eco-Feminist Appropriations of Indigenous Feminisms and Environmental Violence," *The Feminist Wire*, April 30, 2015 <http://thefeministwire.com/2015/04/eco-feminist-appropriations-of-indigenous-feminisms-and-environmental-violence/>

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

effects that environmental contaminants have on Indigenous mothers' bodies. The Akwesasne Mothers' Milk Project's research showed that women who ate fish from the St. Lawrence River "had 200 percent greater concentration of PCBs in their breast milk."⁴⁴⁶ This contamination of breast milk contaminants is an example of how environmental injustice on Indigenous lands is a violent mechanism, which furthers colonialism by negatively impacting Indigenous reproductive health. Intersectional settler feminists must simultaneously care deeply about this injustice and know how to "sit down, be quiet, and listen" to Indigenous nations' solutions.⁴⁴⁷

Intersectional feminism can centre the voices of settlers at the expense of Indigenous feminists. In order for intersectionality to move towards decolonization, intersectional feminists must centre the voices of Indigenous feminists, and the issues that are central to their nations. Intersectional settler feminists must understand the ways in which their liberation is intertwined with the liberation of all Indigenous peoples. This does not mean that settler feminists experience the same oppression as Indigenous feminists, but rather, that settlers have a responsibility to work towards decolonization if they wish to remain on stolen lands. This responsibility is linked to the search for social justice that is inherent within all intersectional-type work. Like all anti-oppression work, decolonizing intersectionality involves facing the privileges that come with being a settler, as well as facing the ways that settler occupancy is complicity. Regardless of how

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

settlers came to these lands, they benefit from colonization. This chapter has sought to draw out the ways that intersectional feminists who are settlers can take responsibility for being beneficiaries of settler colonialism on Turtle Island.

CONCLUSION

Lilla Watson, a Murri elder, activist and educator from Queensland, Australia challenged settlers who consistently asked her how they could help the Indigenous peoples of Australia by saying: “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”⁴⁴⁸ This challenge speaks to how I begun my journey in this program and where I ended up. When I completed my bachelor’s degree I decided that if I was going to continue to live in Canada, I needed to face and attempt to reconcile what it meant to be a settler on Turtle Island. I decided that completing a master’s program in Political Science *about* Indigenous peoples in Canada would help me to face my settler occupancy on these lands. Through conversations with my supervisors, along with other community members, I realized that writing *about* colonialism without discussing the ways that I am implicated within it, would not allow me to be accountable in the way that I aspired to. After many more conversations, I came to understand the importance of writing a thesis that spoke *to* settlers about their own occupancy, rather than writing *about* Indigenous peoples.

In order for intersectional settler feminists to truly stand in solidarity with Indigenous feminists, we must see our liberation as intertwined with the liberation of Indigenous peoples. In order to do this, we must sacrifice the benefits that come with

⁴⁴⁸ "About." Lilla International Womens Network. October 14, 2008. Accessed September 14, 2015. <https://lillanetwork.wordpress.com/about/>.

aligning ourselves with the colonial state. Evidently, white middle-class feminists such as myself, who have deeply benefitted from the ongoing colonization of Turtle Island, will have a lot to sacrifice. Andrea Smith explains that Indigenous feminism challenges “not only patriarchy within Native communities, but also white supremacy and colonialism within mainstream white feminism.”⁴⁴⁹ For white intersectional feminists, this means de-centering white feminist narratives from the mainstream periodization of feminism. Smith demonstrates how this periodization - as exemplified by the “waves” of feminism - idealizes white action and frames women of colour and Indigenous women as an attachment to feminism. In order for feminism to truly be intersectional, settlers must “see that there are multiple feminist histories”⁴⁵⁰ that begin at various points in time. White Western feminism begins with what is known as the first wave of feminism, which “is characterized by the suffragette movement.”⁴⁵¹ By placing the suffragette movement at the beginning of feminism, we are glorifying racism and colonialism, and are erasing Indigenous feminism, which “might begin with 1492, when Native women collectively resisted colonization.”⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Andrea Smith, accessed June 8, 2015, “Indigenous Feminism Without Apology,” *Unsettling America: Decolonization in Theory & Practice*, September 8, 2011, <https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2011/09/08/indigenous-feminism-without-apology/>

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

Intersectional settler feminists must challenge our understandings of feminist history and recognize that feminism and intersectional-type conceptualizations of interconnectedness are rooted within Indigenous epistemologies. As Arvin, Tuck and Morrill remind us, it is crucial for intersectional feminists to view Indigenous epistemologies as legitimate contributions to how we conceptualize the world we live in. As Leanne Simpson and Waziyatwin remind us, Western epistemologies have failed Indigenous peoples and settlers, and are to blame for the destruction of the land and waters. As intersectional feminists, it is necessary to recognize the role that industrial capitalism and colonialism have played in this destruction and to understand that challenging the colonial state is necessary in the pursuit of holistic social justice.

In order to act in solidarity with Indigenous feminists, we must challenge the nation-state model in its entirety and highlight the political nature of Indigenous identities - as nations. Additionally, we must acknowledge that Western notions of nationalism do not align with how Indigenous nations might envision a decolonized future. Indigenous scholars “are developing other models of nationhood” that “counter the frequent accusations that nation- building projects necessarily lead to a narrow identity politics based on ethnic cleansing and intolerance.”⁴⁵³ According to Glen Coulthard, an intersectional Dene scholar, settlers must “recognize the revolutionary potential and subjectivity of indigenous peoples” in order for settler-Indigenous alliances to be

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

realized.⁴⁵⁴ A support for this decolonial vision should include a recognition of how the colonial state and capitalism are intertwined. This means challenging “a reliance on an extractive capitalist economy that is ‘entirely at odds with the deep reciprocity that forms the cultural core of many Indigenous peoples' relationships with land.’”⁴⁵⁵ Though an end to the nation-state might seem scary to settlers, Coulthard believes that Indigenous “claims to land and conceptions of nationhood are not based on an understanding of land that is something to be exploited or hoarded to the exclusion of others. Land is a relationship based on the obligations we have to other people and the other-than-human relations that constitute the land itself.”⁴⁵⁶

Intersectional settler bloggers who address Indigenous issues have a responsibility to challenge the colonial ideas ingrained in their writings. This has a wide range of implications depending on the topics being addressed. When intersectional bloggers who are settlers discuss identity politics, specifically relating to Indigenous identities, it is crucial that they consider the political nature of Indigenous identities. Settlers should interrogate settler common sense by emphasizing the sovereign nature of Indigenous nations. This means allowing Indigenous peoples to determine the qualifications for their own identities and respecting these decisions. When intersectional bloggers discuss topics

⁴⁵⁴ Andrew Bard Epstein, accessed June 1, 2015, “The Colonialism of the Present,” *Jacobin*, January 15, 2015, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/01/indigenous-left-glen-coulthard-interview/>

⁴⁵⁵ Glen Coulthard in Harsha Walia, accessed June 8, 2015, “‘Land is a Relationship’: In conversation with Glen Coulthard on Indigenous nationhood,” *rabble*, June 21, 2015, <http://rabble.ca/columnists/2015/01/land-relationship-conversation-glen-coulthard-on-indigenous-nationhood>

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

such as cultural appropriation and stereotypes, it is not enough for them to name these actions as problematic. It is essential for intersectional bloggers to depict the deeper implications of these actions, and the manner in which they serve to justify ongoing colonization. In order to act in solidarity with Indigenous nations, intersectional settler bloggers must strive to create alliances with Indigenous feminists. This can be done by “[siting] down, [being] quiet, and [listening],” as Lindsay Nixon suggests. As is demonstrated in chapter four, Indigenous feminists have tangible solutions to issues that affect their nations. It is our responsibility to educate ourselves and other settlers about these issues.

Building trust and allyship is not a simple task, however, many Indigenous feminists share tangible examples of how settlers can work towards change. In a blog post entitled “‘How can I help’ answered concretely,” âpihtawikosisân answers the question of how settlers can help support Indigenous efforts against colonization. While many of the solutions that I have compiled in my thesis rely on theoretical knowledge, âpihtawikosisân’s post gives concrete examples of how settlers can stand in solidarity with Indigenous nations regardless of their background. She understands that while many aspects of solidarity do involve a complex process of learning and listening, there are two tangible principles that are the cornerstones of building strong alliances. The first is that settlers must “believe that Indigenous peoples have the power to find solutions for [themselves]” and the second is that settlers must “support [Indigenous] efforts in ways

that ensure the solutions [they] enact continue to happen.”⁴⁵⁷ While settlers may search for glamorous roles within decolonization movements, it is necessary to listen to Indigenous feminists and do the work that is being asked of us. There are so many projects that are being led by Indigenous peoples for their own nations. These projects often need money, materials and logistical support. Tasks such as driving vehicles, doing dishes or making phone calls can ensure that Indigenous leaders are able to take on the roles that are suited for their projects.⁴⁵⁸

Acting in solidarity with Indigenous nations within intersectional blogging could have similar requirements and implications to the suggestions listed above. It could be beneficial for intersectional bloggers who are settlers to begin their writing process by asking themselves these questions:

Why am I writing about this? Is it for my own ego or personal gain? Am I writing this improve my social status? Has this been asked of me? Who is benefiting from this writing? Am I acting in solidarity with Indigenous resurgence movements? Am I listening to Indigenous voices? Am I fully facing my own complicity within settler colonialism? Am I acting from a place of love and rage? Am I acting from a place of guilt?

The blogger could then use Arvin, Tuck and Morrill’s challenges to ask themselves about their content:

Am I assuming the desirability of the nation-state? Am I going beyond the rhetoric of inclusion? Am I working to decolonize my own feminism? Am I leaving space for intersectional feminism to be transformed? Am I centering and prioritizing Indigenous issues within my writing? Am I using Indigenous issues to bolster my own opinions and motives? Am I submitting to a Western hierarchy of knowledge? Am I presenting

⁴⁵⁷ âpihtawikosisân, accessed June 1, 2015, “‘How can I help’ answered concretely”, September 18, 2014, <http://apihtawikosisan.com/2014/09/how-can-i-help-answered-concretely/>

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

Indigenous feminists as important contributors of knowledge? Am I reinforcing stereotypes about Indigenous peoples? Am I representing Indigenous peoples as complex and dynamic human beings?

Once the blogger completed their post, they could ask themselves these questions:

Am I representing Indigenous peoples as minority groups? Am I highlighting the political nature of Indigenous nations? Am I acknowledging ongoing settler colonialism? Am I disrupting settler common sense? Am I framing colonial injustice as an event of the past? Am I recognizing the uniquely colonial nature of Indigenous oppressions? Am I accurately representing the Indigenous people I'm referencing?

These questions could help settler intersectional bloggers act in solidarity with Indigenous nations by ensuring that they are writing about Indigenous issues in a responsible manner. With these questions, I believe that intersectional blogging that discusses Indigenous issues could be a radical tool for settlers to educate other settlers.

For intersectional settler bloggers, acting in solidarity means producing writing that challenges readers in a deeply uncomfortable manner. Intersectionality is not about maintaining the status quo and allowing people to remain where they are. Intersectional-type work is about highlighting and dismantling systems of domination. On Turtle Island, the system that dominates is a colonial one. Even the most radical settlers have been indoctrinated by colonial logic, which teaches us that it does not exist. Settlers have been told that it is our right to be here. We have been told that we are here to stay. That we have no responsibilities to our landlords, the Indigenous peoples of this land.⁴⁵⁹ This of course, is not true. For those of us who already know this, it is our responsibility to teach. This task is not a pleasant one. It requires us to challenge our mentors, our friends, and

⁴⁵⁹ Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, "Scandal," *Wicazo Sa Review* 22 (2007): 86.

our families. It demands that we unsettle their colonial desires and uproot them from their conceptions of home. These conversations may be difficult, but they are necessary sacrifices. Decolonizing intersectional discourse requires us to see our fates as intertwined with the fates of Indigenous nations, and to sacrifice as a reflection of this entanglement.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

In-Text Blog Chart

	Identity Indicator	Ideological or Systemic Indicator	Topic-based Indicator	Buzzwords	Additional Indicators of Intersectional-type blogs	Intersection-type rating (low, medium, high)
Two Young Black Poets From Philly on Hipster Racism [Video] - Jorge Rivas	1(Black)	1(Racism)			Further online research indicates that Rivas writes from an intersectional perspective. See Appendix B for details. See transcribed poem in appendix. Intersectional indicators are in bold throughout poem.	MEDIUM - Though the intersectional word count is low, this is offset by Rivas' previous writings, Colorlines' tendency to post intersectional blog posts, and the intersectional nature of the poem.
Ally-Phobia: On the Trayvon Martin Ruling, White Feminism, and the Worst of Best Intentions- Jessie Lane-Metz					Uses term "intersectional" in blog post	HIGH- If a blog post uses the term "intersectional" it is automatically considered high.

Say Yes to Decolonial Love: 5 Ways to Resist Oppression in Your Relationships - Anni Liu	6 (POC, queer, Asian, women, Indigenous, white)	8 (colonialism, white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, ableism, fetishization, decolonization)	5 (stereotype, rape culture, violence, consent)	9 (privilege, radical, activist, oppression, culture, systems, power, culture, identity)		HIGH - This blog post has 28 intersectional-type language indicators.
The Humanity & Reality behind #Struggleplates - Lutze B.					The Feminist Griote is a blog dedicated to intersectional feminism, as stated in the "about" section of the blog.	HIGH - Blog is dedicated to intersectional feminism.
There's still time to not be racist for Halloween! - s.e. smith	2 (Native, White)	2 (racist, white supremacy)	2 (appropriation, stereotype)	3 (culture, appropriation, marginalized)	s.e. smith uses a multiple-axis analysis, speaking about racism, classism and sexism.	MEDIUM - 9 language indicators and multiple axis
What We Can Learn From the Embarrassing #CancelColbert Shitstorm - Erin Gloria Ryan	3 (Native American, Asian, Disability)	4 (sexism, racism, imperialism, homophobia)		1 (society)		LOW - 7 language indicators. Post style demonstrates wavering commitment to intersectionality (further explained in text)

On #cancelcolbert and the Limits of 'Liberal Pass' Humor - Arturo R. Garcia	7 (White, Asian, Black, Native American, communities of color, cis-het males)	5 (racism, misogyny, trans-misogyny, transphobia, Orientalism)		3 (allies, privilege, activists).	Garcia uses a multiple-axis analysis, critiquing racism, sexism, and transphobia. racialicious requires bloggers to critique with an intersectional lens.	HIGH - 15 language indicators, multiple axis blogger and blogging forum.
Urban Outfitter's 'Navajo' Problem Becomes a Legal Issue - Jenna Suaers	1 (Native American)	2 (hypersexualized, racism)	1 (cultural appropriation)	2 (identity, culture)	Suaers uses a multiple-axis analysis, addressing racism and sexism.	LOW - 6 language indicators, multiple axis is weak.
A Complete Guide to 'Hipster Racism' - Lindy West	2 (blackness, white)	2 (racism, class)		6 (invisibility, culture, prejudice, privileged, power, oppressed)	West uses a multiple-axis analysis, addressing racism and sexism.	HIGH - 10 language indicators, multiple axis is strong.
Designer's 'Stytop Racism' Headdress Calls Out Industry Appropriation - Callie Beusman	3 (American Indian, white, POC)	3 (racism, feminists, whiteness)	1 (cultural appropriation)	5 (activists, culture, matrix of power, oppression, visibility)		MEDIUM - 12 language indicators
Heidi Klum Made Germany's Top Model Contestants Pose in Redface - Callie Beusman	3 (Native American, Indigenous, women)	3 (race, hypersexualization)	4 (appropriation, heritage, sexual assault, redface)	1 (culture)	Beusman uses a multiple-axis analysis, addressing racism and sexism.	HIGH - 11 language indicators, multiple axis is strong.

Sweat Lodges: The Therapy Of Choice For Bros - Anna North	2 (white dude, Native American)		1 (appropriation)		Further online research indicates that North writes from an intersectional perspective.	LOW - 3 language indicators, North seems to use intersectional analysis when it is convenient, but abandons analysis for humour.
When White Supremacy Isn't About White People - Alok Vaid-Menon	9 (Asian, white, queer, POC, brown bodies, gay, indigeneity, LGBT, trans)	8 (white-supremacy, patriarchal, class, racism, whiteness, imperialist, gentrified, decolonization)	4 (colonial, sexualities, sexual violence, gentrify)	9 (activist, privilege, radical, erasure, solidarity, systematic, complicit, visibility, oppressed)		HIGH - 30 language indicators, strong multiple axis
A Letter to White People Using the Term 'Two Spirit' - White Noise Collective	4 (Native, white, two-spirit, trans)	8 (poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, colonialism, racism, patriarchal)	5 (police violence, heritage, gender violence, cultural appropriation)	5 (privilege, oppression, power, culture, identity)		HIGH - 22 language indicators, strong multiple axis
3 Myths about Native Hawaiians You Ought to Know Before Visiting Paradise - Amy Sun	4 (Native, Asian, non-white, Indigenous)	2 (fetishize, colonialism)	1 (stereotypes)	5 (problematic, culture, erase, identity, invisible)		MEDIUM - 12 language indicators
Stolen Sisters, Sex Workers, and Conservative Saviours - Pansee Atta	3 (Indigenous, women, Native)	3 (colonization, feminist, patriarchal)	2 (sex-work, violence)	2 (activists, power)		MEDIUM - 10 language indicators

Emma Stone Plays A Part-Asian Character In 'Aloha,' And That's Not Okay - Claire Fallon	4 (Asian, white, [people] of color, race)			4 (activists, invisible, erasure, culture)	Further online research indicates that Fallon writes from a feminist perspective	MEDIUM - 8 language indicators, Fallon writes from feminist perspective
The Problem with Aloha is Not the Lack of "Asian" Faces: On Asian American Complicity in the Erasure of Indigeneity - Julie Feng	7 (Asian, Native, white, indigeneity, race, Indigenous, people of color)	1 (colonization)	3 (cultural appropriation, culture, heritage)	7 (erasure, complicity, oppression, culture, power, activists, inclusion)		HIGH - 18 language indicators, author has in depth understanding of intersectionality and settler colonialism
Why Walter Van Beirendock is just Perpetuating the Appropriation Shitstorm - Arabelle Sicardi	3 (white, Native American, class)	2 (racism, capitalism)	2 (appropriation, tokenism)	3 (power, culture, activist)	Author is using a multiple-axis lens	HIGH - 10 language indicators, author uses multiple-axis framework of analysis

Additional Blog Chart (blogs not included in text)

	Identity Indicator	Ideological or Systemic Indicator	Topic-Based Indicator	Buzzwords	Additional Indicators of Intersectional-type blogs	absence
Kimye Held a Goddamn Music Festival For North's First Birthday - Isha Aran	1 (Native American)			1 (culture)	Further online research indicates that Aran writes from an intersectional perspective. See Appendix B for link.	mention of cultural appropriation and disrespect but does not go further.
Surf Magazine Sued Over Racist Article, Author Responds With Threatening Letter - Carla Herreria	3 (Indigenous, man of colour, black)	1 (racist)	2 (stereotypical, abused)		Further online research indicates that Herreria writes from a feminist perspective. See Appendix B for link.	mentions racism and discrimination but does not go further.
Tanning Salon Is Super Thankful Native Americans 'Brought Sexy Color' - Erin Gloria Ryan	2 (Native American, woman)	1 (racist)	2 (genocide, cultural appropriation)	1 (culture)		mentions cultural appropriation, disrespect and genocide but does not go further.
My thoughts on Jada & her colorblind society - The Feminist Griote	7 (women, white, women of color, Black, Asian, Indigenous, Latina)	7 (race, class, fetishized, patriarchal, hetero, white supremacy, racist)	4 (colorblind, stereotypes, blackface, redface)	3 (society, culture, privilege)	The Feminist Griote uses a multiple-axis analysis, addressing racism and sexism.	lists Indigenous identity amongst other races but does not elaborate.

4 Ways to Push Back Against Your Privilege - Mia McKenzie	11 (white, male, cisgendered, able-bodied, women of color, POC, trans, women, straight, black, queer)	ideological - 2 (class, supremacy)	1 (accessible)	4 (privilege, power, oppression, identity)		excludes white-passing people from category of POC, ignoring complexity of Indigenous identities.
Native American Actors Leave Set of Adam Sandler's 'Satire' - Qimmah Saafir	1 (Native American)	1 (Nation)	1 (stereotyping)	1 (culture)	Further online research indicates that Saafir writes from an intersectional perspective. See Appendix B for link.	Mentions stereotyping of Native Americans, but does not elaborate.
The Beautiful Way Hawaiian Culture Embraces A Particular Kind Of Transgender Identity - Huffpost Gay Voices	6 (transgender, male, female, gender, Native, race)			5 (culture, identity, binary, construct, society)		Discusses Native Hawaiian culture but does not elaborate.
Emma Stone Playing a Half-Asian Character in Aloha: Literally Why - Jia Tolentino	4 (Asian, white, Native, race)			3 (white saviour, oppressive, erasure)		Conflates Asian with Indigenous, fixates on Asian erasure, while ignoring Indigenous erasure.

Buffy Sainte-Marie's Ingenious Plan To Help Our First Nations Housing Crisis - Joshua Ostroff	2 (Indigenous, woman)	1 (colonization)		3 (activism, cultural, system)	Further online research indicates that Ostroff writes from a feminist perspective. See Appendix B for link.	Frames colonization as an event of the past.
Unhappy Gilmore: Native American Actors and Activists Protest New Adam Sandler Project - Arturo R. Garcia	5 (Native American, female, woman, Indigenous, race)	2 (nation, exoticization)	1 (stereotypes)	1 (activists)		Does not mention colonialism.
Native American Women Are Still Blocked from Getting Plan B - Sarah Mirk	2 (Native American, women)		3 (reproductive health, sexual assault, rape)	2 (access, cultural)		Does not mention colonialism.
Feathers And Fashion: Native American Is In Style - Anna Holmes	2 (Native American, white)	1 (romanticize)	1 (appropriations)	2 (oppressing, culture)		Does not mention ongoing settler colonialism.

Indigenous blogs

Title	Blog	Author
The Problem with 'Privilege'	Andrea 366	Andrea Smith
Occupy Wall Street: The Game of Colonialism and Further Nationalism to be Decolonized from the 'Left'	Racialicious	Jessica Yee
Love in the Time of Blood Quantum	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
Native Identity: A Discourse	Last Real Indians	Ruth Hopkins
She's So Pale': The Good and Bad of National Exposure	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
Canada's Blood Quantum Formula for Assimilation	Non-Status Indians	Pamela Palmater
What is an Indian? Blood Quantum	National Relief Charities Blog	Vince Two Eagles
Revisiting Love in the Time of Blood Quantum	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
RCMP Report on Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women is Statistically Skewed	Rabble	Pamela Palmater
But Why Can't I Wear a Hipster Headdress	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
Dear Christina Fallin	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
An Open Letter to Urban Outfitters on Columbus Day	Racialicious	Sasha Houston Brown
Free the Fringe: 6 Ways to De-Stereotype Native American Heritage Month	Everyday Feminism	Taté Walker
WTF Coachella?! You're a One Stop Cultural Appropriation Festival!	Last Real Indians	Ruth Hopkins
On the Theft and Appropriation of Indigenous Cultures	Rabble	Robert Animikii Horton
Sweat Lodges: "Bro" Therapy?	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
Sweat Lodges Part II: No, you can't. Here's why	Native Appropriations	Adrienne Keene
Snyder Wins: How 'CancelColbert' Drowned Out the Native Voice	Indian Country Today Media Network	ICTMN Staff

How to Argue Against Racist Mascots	Everyday Feminism	Taté Walker
I am not your Pocahontas	Urban Native Magazine	Lisa Charleyboy
Not Missing and Not Murdered	Voices Rising	Leanne Simpson
Don't Be Tricked	Voices Rising	Tara Williamson
There is No "We": V-Day, Indigenous Women and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression	Model View Culture	Lauren Chief Elk
Refuse to Live Quietly	Voices Rising	Jana-Rae Yerxa
From Outrage to Radical Love	Voices Rising	Siku Allooloo
Making it Home Alive	Voices Rising	Jarita Greyeyes
Language, Culture, and Two-Spirit Identity	âpihtawikosisân	âpihtawikosisân
Why We Need Indigenous Feminism	Kwe Today	Sâkihitowin Awâsis
Hearing Two-Spirits	Briarpatch	Cortney Dakin
violence on the land, violence on our (student) bodies	The Talon	danette jubinville
Eco-Feminist Appropriations of Indigenous Feminisms and Environmental Violence	The Feminist Wire	Lindsay Nixon
How Can I help' Answered Concretely	âpihtawikosisân	âpihtawikosisân

Intersectional-type word chart

<h2>Identity Based Indicators</h2>	<p>queer, bisexual, trans, gay, lesbian, person of colour (POC), able-bodied, disabled, Two spirit, Indigenous, poor, White, settler, fat, femme, butch, woman, cis, feminist, sex-worker, heterosexual, Black, Brown, LGBT(QIA+), Asian, Native (American), Latina, straight, race, gender, ability, class.</p>
<h2>Ideological and Systemic Indicators</h2>	<p>Islamophobia, misogyny, racism, ableism, transphobia, classism, sexism, trans-misogyny, homophobia, heterosexism, white-supremacy, imperialism, capitalism, colonialism, body positivity, fat-phobia, sex negativity, sex positivity, patriarchy, masculinity, femininity, fetishization, exoticization, hyper sexualization, decolonization, feminism, nation, nationalism, whiteness, romanticize.</p>
<h2>Topic-Based Indicators</h2>	<p>street harassment, sexual assault, harm reduction, violence, sex work, migrant justice, body image, rape culture, heritage, incarceration, police brutality, marriage, visibility, gender-inclusive washrooms, poverty, identity, gentrification, color-blindness, reverse-racism, stereotypes, consent, accessibility, blackface, redface, genocide, reproductive justice and cultural appropriation, tokenism.</p>
<h2>Buzzwords</h2>	<p>privilege, oppression, identity, orientation, binary, trigger warning, problematic, culture, dominant, allies, accessible, hegemonic, institutional, solidarity, constructed, activist, radical, inclusion, (in)visibility, resistance, power, matrix of power, white saviour complex, matrix of domination, systemic, society, marginalization, erasure, prejudice, complicit, binary, social construct.</p>

Appendix B

Online Research on Authors

Jorge Rivas

<http://fusion.net/story/54456/what-being-transgender-after-50-looks-like/>

<https://twitter.com/thisisjorge/status/573873222615064577>

<https://twitter.com/thisisjorge/status/530379451830255616>

<http://fusion.net/story/109882/these-people-have-phds-in-selena/>

Anna North

<http://jezebel.com/5467949/should-we-teach-feminism-in-school>

Isha Aran

<http://jezebel.com/the-womansplainer-will-google-feminism-for-clueless-du-1643037938>

Carla Herreria

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/11/women-surfers-sex-symbols-trailblazers_n_6681594.html

Qimmah Saafir

<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/azealia-banks-pride-and-prejudice>

<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/shonda-rhimes-says-writing-saved-her-life>

Joshua Ostroff

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/19/ontario-sex-ed-consent_n_7277456.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/11/polly-quinn-gsa-catholic-elementary-school_n_7226896.html

Claire Fallon

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/31/witches-literature_n_6057684.html

Appendix C

Kai Davis and Safiya Washington at Brave New Voices 2012:

Your horn-rimmed glasses,
Sweater hoodies,
Vintage leather oxfords,
Authentic woven Guatemalan bookbags,
And your crafty, handmade, wooden iPhone cases,
Tell me you are none other than a self-affirming,
Self-satisfying,
Self-righteous,
DOUCHE.

Dear dirty hipsters,
It's bad enough, I see you every day on the same corner of the park,
Smelling of week old piss,
Jammin' with some dope Rastafarian drummers,
Dancing-off-beat,
Bein' all integrated and shit,
Hugging trees and smoking them in the same breath,
... hair dreadfully resembling locks
Acting like you're down because you say "fuck the **system!**" but in the same
breath, are quick to **gentrify** the hell outta my hood!

When you call them on it,
they say things like "I don't see **color**,"
"Oh my god, I didn't even know you were **black** until just now."
What you meant to say was, "oh, I'm choosing to deny your personal **identity** and
heritage in order to make me feel more comfortable."
"I'm comfortable enough to say 'nigga' with my black friends, and by the way, I have
black friends."
They're quick to suck a **culture-appreciated, appropriated-**
Act like it's an act of love and **solidarity**, when really you just turn it into organic,
alternative, indie, vomit.

"Yeah, I listen to rap music-I love A Tribe Called Quest."
And this is the part where me and my homies give you the side eye.
Why do you think that's okay?
You don't get cool points because you're 13% "Native American."

You don't get points for slumming it in the hood when you still clutch your purse every time you walk past a **black** man, when your **privilege** is still the most prominent thing about you.

And butchering African songs, buy yourself Indian garb, "is that **racist**?"

Yes, it is.

And we don't mean to offend you by calling you racist,

We know that according to you, we're all a part of the "human **race**."

But you have the tendency to treat animals better than humans.

We know you hipsters like cats with ironic pet names, like Ernest Hemingway, or Zooney Deschanel. I just hope to God you don't feed it meatless, gluten-free, toxin free... kibbles and bits,

When you know DAMN WELL YOUR CAT DON'T LIKE THAT SHIT!

You're as intolerable as an Odd Future lullaby.

We don't need to hear your feelings about OUR ISSUES!

"To be fair, as a **white** person--"

Nuh nuh nuh, SHUT THE FUCK UP!

You're constantly biting at our ears with unwanted opinions, you're blogging Tumblr posts concerning your liberal perspective.

Not to mention your ability to multiply, gathering followers in every second hand bookstore, leafing through anarchist literature, claiming you're an **activist**—KONY 2012!

Walking past the **poverty** in your own city towards a donation box for mythical African children, because all that continent needs is another **ivory savior** who's convinced Africa is a country.

...

I'd rather eat my own face, chew raw venison,

Than listen to you tell the same story about how you don't listen to CD's because you're strictly vinyl.

I'm sure these points will fly above your ninety dollar haircut,

Designed specifically to make you look like a vagabond.

And I'll walk down the street and see another one of you.

Crank up your dubstep mixtape,

Sip on your raspberry seltzer water.

I'll call you a douche,

You'll call me "**reverse-racist**,"

Then hopefully you'll cry hipster tears of sorrow,
Sauntering towards the next removable trend, so when the suburbs call, you can answer
properly,
Just as long as it still affirms your individuality—
Because being cool, while not being cool, is almost as cool as being yourself.