Rising and Remembering:
Ktunaxa History and Settler Mythology
in the East Kootenay

by

Sean MacPherson
B.A. University of British Columbia, 2016

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I acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This thesis is a critical history about Cranbrook BC, the town where I grew up. It explores a historical origin story that historians have called the 'Kootenai Uprising,' as well as the annual regional holiday that commemorates that event - Sam Steele Days. By unpacking the symbols utilized in remembering history, applying new historical evidence towards the long accepted narrative and collaborating with Ktunaxa Nation, this thesis attempts to set the historical record straight, include Ktunaxa perspectives in the regional historical narrative and critically examine the practice of mythology in settler society as a way to both remember and forget the past.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to both the people of ʔaq'am and Cranbrook, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and the Kootenays.

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Introduction

A Journey Home

This thesis is a journey home. Or at least it was supposed to be. I am left at the end, or middle, or whatever stage it is that I had to hand this in and defend my research, feeling less like I know what home is than before. Not that this was unexpected. It was never going to be a great plot arch in the western historical tradition, where the 'hero' embarks on a journey, overcoming trials and tribulations, ultimately achieving some goal, discovering some all-truth, setting things right, forever changed from the experience.[1] For upending the history of my hometown made impossible any satisfying narrative outcome. For upending any kind of origin story that we are connected to, sets us adrift in the world, untethered in the void.

I can clearly picture the time I started this research, when the seeds began to plant themselves in my mind during my BA at UBC. As all scholars are taught in our first year of any of the social sciences, the key to any good research is to find some knowledge "deficit", some unanswered question, some under-represented aspect, and to answer it or bring it to light. Cranbrook, the town where I grew up, was full of deficits. Very little historical research had been undertaken in the East Kootenay – leaving me plenty of space to contribute to the region's historical scholarship. Since then, I have been on a journey that has lurched forward, backward and side to side, sometimes running in place, sometimes arriving at a different place than what I had

[1] Works that influenced western historical storytelling like *The Odyssey,* by Homer.

imagined. I have found lots of new sources, new documents that challenged conventional historical narratives, new evidence to revise regional history. Sometimes I felt frustrated, that my efforts led nowhere. Sometimes the research and the connections I made were rich and exhilarating. Wherever I found myself, it was never a linear process. It is only now, when I look back and edit my notes, that a narrative must be formed from the scattered pieces of my research and writings.

It is glaringly disjointed.

I should have expected this. For time, it seems, is like an infinite game of cats cradle, every move a new pattern, over and over again, never moving forward, or backward, just a changing of patterns. For where I am now, I have just as many questions as when I started, just as many things unresolved, and perhaps most importantly, I don't feel like I've come any closer to finding home.

Let me go back to the start, or more fittingly, the place, where this story begins. The town of Cranbrook, British Columbia, a mid-sized interior town of about fifteen thousand people, whose economy was built on mining and forestry, now probably most known for its hockey players and the angry deer that have made themselves at home in town and have become you tube sensations. I spent my formative years here, moving some time at the turn of the 80's to the 90's, when I was about nine years old. Before we had lived in Calgary, and there was that recession going on. I only remember it because my father had to work at Schneiders packing plant, unable to find other work after finishing his B.Ed. I remember the boxes of leftover hotrods he would bring home that we would devour like wild dogs and the thin Santa clause with a loose elastic beard who smelled like cigarettes when he would give us gifts at the company Christmas party. So when my Dad

finally got a teaching job in middle-of-nowhere-Kootenays, it was a big a step up from the factory floor and a chance to put his education to work, to move us out of the university family co-op to a small house with a yard and all the elements of the aspiring middle class. Unbeknownst to us, we repeated the patterns of the past, looking west beyond the mountains. Like all settlers before us, we journeyed towards a new life.

My first memories of Cranbrook were magical. It was strange place, brimming with potential. Deer would come to our yard and eat crabapples, coyotes would howl in the evenings. My Dad built a "sweat lodge" by Moyie lake with long branches and a plastic tarp. We'd go hiking with my Mom and my little brother in the woods, spend days swimming in the river. I brought some urban influence with me from the big city, rocking a stylish Vision Primo with green grip tape and dangling a rebellious skull and cross bone earing from my left ear, so I was pleased to find signs of skateboard culture. Pleasure turned to excitement when I saw the biggest half pipe I had ever seen rising like a temple next to the derelict swimming pool. A beacon of potential. An artifact of opportunity. A shrine of a most promising future.

Ghosts of Place

Cranbrook has haunted me like a hungry ghost ever since I was old enough to escape it, cutting out of its belly from the inside, flying east out on the strip and back towards Alberta. Thundering down the number three in my Dodge Sportsman, exhaust manifold roaring like an airplane, a wide-open future stretched in front of me, a freshly paved highway exploding with life and limitless opportunity. Fixed to the back of my van as I sped towards my destiny was a pair of bumper stickers that

seem more relevant to me today than they ever could at the time. The first read, Boldly Going Nowhere. The second: I Hate This Town.

After spending my early adolescence and teenage years in Cranhole, as we called it back then, I couldn't wait to get out. I gasped in great breaths of highway wind as the air rushed through the open window, filling my lungs as if I could finally breath. As if I had been holding my breath at the bottom of the stagnant swimming pool outside the Nomad motel on the strip, unaware until that moment that my chest was ready to explode. Of the weight that held me down. Of the richness of the open sky.

But as liberating and exhilarating as those first breaths of freedom were, I was never free. For places hold on to us, they haunt us like ghosts. And Cranbrook would continue to gnaw at my soul, the shadowy architect of my memory palace. It held dark secrets down there in the catacombs of memory, urns of both excruciating beauty and pain that would bestow both horrible and precious gifts unto me throughout my life. This ghost was the true master of my destiny, the force that would most influence my path, ushering in the future, the conductor of tectonic shifts of time, while I pretended to leave my past behind (which of course we never do). This place-ghost constantly influenced my life and who I was, relentlessly guiding me to where I was going, persistently informing me of who I was, who I have been, who I am now, who I will always be. I've felt that once I could understand the intentions of that ghost, I would understand everything I would ever need to. Like some dusty map stowed in some cobwebbed box of secrets. All I had to do was to find the key to open it. That key was hidden somewhere, somewhere in this place.

What was that key I was looking for? I knew where to find it, of that I was

sure. But I never knew exactly what it was. A reason for the way that things were? How the place that formed me was itself formed unto the world? Forged in a cauldron of ice and fire, the forces of the time colliding together, a violent birth, a colonial Gunnungagap?[2] Or simply constructed by some human architect, some scheming politician possessed with legacic ambitions, a prison passed down from the place whence they came, ghosts chained tightly to them, just like mine were. A person haunted with a hunger that would create a space to be filled with the voice of a thousand authors that would shape time with the flesh of memory.

How did this place come to be? What was it? If I found the answers to these questions, would I find the reasons I came to be? As if to answer the existential insecurity of my fifteen year-old self, wandering home alone on empty small-town streets, staring past the dim streetlights to the bright moon behind them. This is where you are. This is why the world is. This is what was and what will ever be.

To scrutinize the building blocks of my town, of myself, of the world, could I understand the very elements of the universe? Time was bundled up and locked into the memories of this place, ready to be freed, the great truths of our being in the world spilling forth, cascading across the night sky.

Like shooting stars.

Like falling satellites

[2] I reference here the Norse creation story of the world in Snorri Sturluson *Prose Eddas.*

The Uprising

It all began with an uprising.

At least, according to the town's historians it did. In the tradition of frontier history in the Canadian and American west, history is often crafted in the narrative form of an epic or chronicle, expressed as a right of passage, a linear journey from point a to point b, a heroic path punctuated with epitomizing events along the way.[3] It has a plot. It has coordinates. We can connect the dots on a map as we, the heroes of our time, arrive at our final destination, with little room to reimagine its course.

In the East Kootenay, the Kootenays in general and Cranbrook in particular, the most epitomizing event is what regional historians have long called the "Kootenai Uprising." If there was a single event that might mark the painful birth of this seemingly benign colonial town destined to become the Key City of the Rockies, well, the "uprising" was it. It is not a very well known story, yet its symbolic icons are found throughout the region, largely unnoticed, prevalent nonetheless. As we look closer, those symbolic icons that represent this epitomizing historical event have become the closest thing to an origin story that we have.

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[3]Elizabeth Furniss *Pioneers, Progress and the Myth of the Frontier: The Landscape of Public History in Rural British Columbia,* BC Studies no.115 Winter 1997/98

The general historical narrative goes something like this:

> Sometime after the Wild Horse gold rush, a gold miner was killed near Wild Horse Creek. A Ktunaxa man named Kapla was arrested for the murder and taken to the local prison. The Ktunaxa Chief Isadore was furious and led a group of warriors into town to break Kapla out of jail. Panic ensued, settlers feared for their lives and Sam Steele came to the district leading the mounted "D" Division of the North West Mounted Police. He quelled the "Uprising" before it started and dispensed justice swiftly throughout the region, quickly restoring law and order. In a demonstration of the unbiased legal system he represented, he also dismissed Kapla's murder case in an act of impartial fairness. Steele and Isadore left on the best of terms. As the East Kootenay Chronicle claims, "Isadore was pleased and impressed with the big mounty's fairness."4

The trouble is, this story is not really true.

As we will see later in this thesis, there is much left untold. Ktunaxa voices are absent, larger political contexts are forgotten and transformative forces are left in the periphery. Still – even as a simplified, vague and inaccurate history – powerful elements are embedded in this story, themes that influence the way we think about history and think about ourselves today. It is a story that has a function - binding ideas together in a narrative, in symbols, in place and in time.

Its linearity leaves little room for liminal spaces, its plot arch, conflict and

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[4] A culmination of sources, choosing commonly repeated versions of events, ending with direct quote from East Kootenay Chronicle, p. 74. [4] Regional histories include: Clara Graham *This is the Kootenay (*Evergreen Press 1963)*,* Naomi Miller, *Fort Steele: Gold Rush to Boom Town, (*Surrey: Heritage House Printing Company. 2002), Damian Inwood, *Fort Steele: The Golden Era*, (Langley: Sunfire Publications Ltd. 1986),

resolution leaving little room for critique. Any room it does leave is controlled, for concessions are built into the story, conceding there was trouble at the beginning of the settlement era, but, in the way the story is presented, it suggests those troubles were resolved. It ends well. The two main characters – Sergeant Sam Steele and the Ktunaxa Nasookin Isadore become friends. Indigenous and Settler peoples leave the past together on a path of mutual respect. Everything is set right in the settler world. The rule of law legitimized in righteous action, the destiny of this place set into rightful motion. We can look back with pride at our historical journey and its outcome. For it leads to our society, to *us*, today.

We, the settlers of Cranbrook, just like settlers all across the west, benefit from this narrative. There is certain kind of destiny built into it, a suggestion that things happened the way they were supposed to. It suits the common saying that is part of our ethos, "everything happens for a reason." That larger forces outside *us* are involved in our outcomes, like karma, the universe, fate, God, at the same time it dismisses historical forces we feel powerless to change.

Conflict is also exciting. As regional boosters sought to make history more appealing to wider audiences, uprisings made history interesting. These are dramas meant for the stage, events that excite as we watch from the vantage of the audience, disconnected from the choreography between the curtains as we imagine those events bound in the past. We can watch and enjoy the show, confident in the boundary between performer and audience, just as our world in the present day remains separated from the past. We can do this while, as we will explore later, the symbols of the story obscure historical time and entrench themselves in our present day worldview.

When we create a general history, many voices get left out. For a narrative is never crafted without curation and the larger the scope, the more curation required. Especially true for settler narratives, something always gets omitted, someone is always left out and we continually interact and are influenced by a story that is forever incomplete. In this story, Ktunaxa voices have been largely absent from this history since its inception.

It is an understatement to say that vital information is missing from this account. As we will see in our first chapter, much is left out of the story – even when undertaken by diligent historians. For this particular history is always curated for a specific audience, with subconscious or specific intent. However approached, it is always crafted in a way that allows it to be left behind, a story forever situated in the past, a past now resolved. An origin story we need only reflect on when we must identify symbols to celebrate our origins. Without upending those stories that tell us about the origins of who we are.

Over time, the fragments of those curated histories become a vague and abstract origin story, an unspecifically familiar background narrative whose mythology becomes ingrained in the town's visual landscape. A mythology expressed through symbols – cartoon characters crudely depicted on fading murals, bird-stained statues of forgotten figures, parade floats that pass by small crowds on quiet main streets. A mythology that informs us from the shadows of public spaces, a language that whispers to us in public acts of remembrance.

Sam Steele in Cranbrook

Sam Steele is everywhere when you go to Cranbrook. Well, sort of. There's no

epic statue in the center of town or anything, but once you start to look for him, his name seems to pop up everywhere. Like a lot of settler communities, Cranbrook's boosters grasped at straws as they looked for themes to celebrate heritage, for some elusive essence that gives a town its character. Like all colonial towns, Cranbrook did not have lengthy history to draw from. Its boosters weren't creative enough to build a giant Easter egg, or savvy enough to come up with the brilliant idea to transform the entire town into an homage to star trek.[5] Almost all of our historical icons drew their influence from the early settlement period and the story of the "uprising". Sam Steele, in the town's search to define itself, became a mythological icon. It wasn't a grassroots heritage movement, locals where not clamoring for Steele to be emblematized in Cranbrook. Rather, it was largely the work of a few history buffs and civic boosters in the 1970's, a process that happened unbeknownst to most people that call Cranbrook home today. [6]

Steele may be a subtle icon, but he is pervasive. In mythic proportions. His iconic moustache adorns the advertising campaign for Sam Steele days, a regional holiday of sorts, recently rebranded with the moustachiod slogan, "can you handle it, " rebranded again to the more even keeled "Kootenay's #1 Community festival."[7] The year that he came to town become commemorated as a kind of festival, complete with a parade, beer gardens and softball tournament. It also includes the Kootenays most famous beauty pageant – the annual competition to become the town's Sam Steele Sweetheart.

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[5] Like the Star Trek theme at Vulcan, Alberta.
[6] Alan Gordon *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum* (UBC Press. 2016)
[7] Sam Steele days website: https://www.samsteeledays.org/

They even named a town named after Sam and they called it Fort Steele. The original military fort that Steele built with D Division amalgamated into a town with the previously existing Galbraith's Ferry, a place that had prospered during the Wild Horse Gold rush.[8] Fort Steele, 'destined' to become the center of industry in the Kootenays, was abandoned shortly after once Cranbrook overtook the rail line and became destined to become the center of industry by the 1890's.

By the mid-twentieth century, Fort Steele was all but forgotten, a collection of rural acreages and ranches, until it was reinvented as a 'living history museum' in the 1970's, amidst provincial efforts to capitalize on the burgeoning heritage tourism industry.[9] Today, it features original buildings and is populated by historical interpreters, actors that roam the grounds speaking in old timey accents. It features reconstructions of the original police barracks, lingering shadows of the site's original military purpose, with a look out post facing up the St. Mary's reserve towards ʔaq'am, the site of the present day Ktunaxa reserve. Not surprising, Isadore's presence is nowhere to be found and there is scant mention of Ktunaxa Nation, the very reason it was built there in the first place.

I worked at Fort Steele for a summer. In a recent review for BC Studies, I wrote about remembering the pioneer dresses, the sizzle of red horseshoes in water buckets during the blacksmith demonstrations and the sense of unease from looking into the cold dead eyes of a wax mannequin.[10] It was a place that cast an unsettling feeling on me, and perhaps others that have visited as well. Whether it was the

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[8] For more on Fort Steele's history, see: Naomi Miller, *Fort Steele: Gold Rush to Boom Town, (*Surrey: Heritage House Printing Company. 2002)
[9] Gordon *Time Travel* 208 - 212
[10] Sean MacPherson, *Time Travel Review,* BC Studies, Spring (2018) https://bcstudies.com/book_film_review/time-travel-tourism-and-the-rise-of-the-living-history-museum-in-mid-twentieth-century-canada/

ghosts of the dead, the immense emptiness of the site when the tourists went home or the unspoken conflicts of colonialism; Fort Steele had a dissonance to it, an unspokenness that hung heavy in the artificial streets.

This town, a place I was intimately familiar with and the designated site of regional historical remembrance, was intertwined with those events that occurred when Steele came to occupy the Kootenay. It was here that Steele and Isadore met, representatives of the Ktunaxa Nation and the Colonial State. Here that the terms of the reserves were dictated, that D Division ran long range artillery drills from the bench above the Kootenay River, a barrage heard everyday from the Ktunaxa people living at ʔaq'am. It was here that the colonial government forced its final claim on the land and the Kootenays, opening it up for settlement.

Even though he was only here for a short while, barely a year, and the historical account of his stay is wildly inaccurate, Steele has become the ur totem in Cranbrook's mythology. Throughout the last century, his name and his moustache have become important symbols of remembering, representations of historical time that are everywhere, sometimes brandished with a wicked sense of irony – at parades, beauty pageants, living history museums and cannabis shops. Even the local strip bar is called the Sam Steele, or as locals know it, the "Sammy."

Steele's name and the symbology connected to it are the historic significations that shape the town's sense of history. His signs become the imagination of time that communal memory converges upon, when it is necessary to remember, to celebrate the past of this place. Those icons are transmitted in public spaces throughout town vie mounties on murals, moustaches on websites, even a hilarious nod to history by some young entrepreneurs that opened up the Sam

Steele cannabis shop, a homage most unwelcomed by the RCMP. These symbols, the stories they correspond to and most importantly, the ideas they represent, become our regional background narrative. Sam Steele becomes the foundation of our settler mythology.

Why study the "Uprising"?

The "uprising", with deepest irony, also becomes an epitomizing event in the practice of critical history. For this event can provide us with historical context for all of the political forces at work in the late nineteenth century in what was to become Western Canada. The surveying of reserves throughout British Columbia, the primary role of the North West Mounted police in suppressing Indigenous resistance through the prairies to British Columbia, the tactics employed in clearing the land for settlement and the impossible choices that Indigenous leaders had to make resisting settler colonialism. This was the last great wave of settler colonialism, the tsunami that brought settlers and their economic, political and cultural structures to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, structures that remain today. These were the forces that created my town, the fire and ice that formed a settler community from the molten lava of colonial creationism, the elements which I believe are infused into the very heart of this place.

Exploring the story of the 'uprising' is also an exploration of the critical origins of this place.[11] It is a historical and regional origin story, but it is also a

[11] Uprising is a misleading term, as we shall see, and we might refer to these events as Kootenay crisis Ktunaxa resistance, a forced removal, a Canadian military offensive Here we shall continue to use the word 'uprising', in all its contested meanings, for that is the word that has been used historically to

theoretical one. As critical as we will be of the telling of history as a series of epitomizing events, the events around the uprising do conveniently become a critical convergence point - a place to unpack all of the forces at work during the last wave of settler colonialism and most relevant to this story - the way that we remember them.

This thesis will critically examine the historical events during the "Uprising," but also the elements involved in the creation of Cranbrook, an exploration of its mythology, of the ways historical narratives were formed and those that were left out. In exploring the forgotten origin story of my hometown, I hope to unpack my own origin story, and in a way, the origin story of all settlers that have made their home across the carapace of the continent.

Road map

The central research question to this thesis, is then, *what is* the origin story of my hometown? That includes not only an identification of the story and refashioning of a more nuanced historical narrative, but exploring the function of that narrative, as well as the mediums through which it is transmitted and the ideas it represents. To answer that, I took three different approaches and utilized three distinct methodologies. First, I utilized new historical sources to unpack the conventional historical narrative through a critical lens of post-colonial scholarship to identify new historical evidence and situate the narrative in a larger historical context. Second, I worked in partnership with Ktunaxa Nation to gain Ktunaxa perspectives

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represent that events, and a significant portion of this thesis is about the ways in which settlers remember.

on these historical events, to include Ktunaxa historical narratives in effort to create a history that is more inclusive and truthful. Lastly, I explored the ways that historical narratives are used to reinforce senses of belonging and ways of being, how story is laden with ideas that are represented in mythical significations that are utilized, both subconsciously and consciously, to legitimize a settler myth world.

Chapter one – There shall be a rising

In the first chapter, I take a closer look at the uprising and incorporate new evidence to offer a revised historical narrative. Through a recently un-archived collection of letters I discovered at the Royal BC archives, I was able to piece together a more detailed account of the historical events leading up to and during the crisis. It quickly becomes clear that the accepted historical narrative omitted vital evidence from correspondences between government officials, Indian agents, local settlers, Sam Steele as well as transcriptions of important speeches and declarations made by Chief Isadore.

Through a closer reading of the correspondences, alternate narratives begin to emerge – the influx of settlers and unredressed violence that came with them, the techniques of manipulation the colonial government employed to coerce the Ktunaxa unto reserves and the scheming of local politician Colonel James Baker to acquire the tract of land that belonged to Ktunaxa Chief Isadore, called Akisq'aq'li'it or Joseph's Prairie, the place that would become Cranbrook. It brings to light the true nature of Steele's mission to the Kootenay, intimidation tactics he employed in his interactions with Isadore and the heavy hand of the Canadian paramilitary force that loomed threateningly in the background. Lastly, and most importantly, this

collection contains important transcripts of Isadore's proclamations, public declarations of Ktunaxa law and sovereignty, evidence that the land where this story takes place was never ceded nor relinquished.

In order for Cranbrook to exist, Chief Isadore had to be removed. Colonel Baker and Superintendent Steele, both members of the military and Cranbrook's most visible historical icons, were instrumental in that process. The time of the crisis, from 1885 – 1890, was a crucial period when all Ktunaxa groups throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa were being forced onto reserves across the 'land of the people.' This history is not explicitly presented at Sam Steele days, reenacted by actors at Fort Steele or emblazoned on sashes at the beauty pageant. It is only alluded to in a deeper reading of regional histories, and even then, its full contexts are often distorted. It would seem that the recollection of our history dances around the dispossession of Ktunaxa peoples, and this chapter seeks to correct that.

Chapter 2 – Ktunaxa Perspectives

In order to craft a more accurate and inclusive historical perspective of these events, I engaged the Ktunaxa Nation with an early paper containing the evidence from the letters I had discovered at the British Columbia Provincial Archives. For several years I worked with the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC), the Ktunaxa Research Council (KRC) and the Ktunaxa Elders Group – embarking on journey that would lead me back to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa – to ʔaqʼam and Tobacco Plains, from Yaqan Nukiy to ʔakisqʼnuk, engaging individuals throughout the Nation in a collaborative approach to this research project. In this chapter I will provide notes from my research, interviews and Ktunaxa perspectives on history that were shared

with me. I will also explore methodological approaches and the theoretical challenges of working with a history that still contains incredibly painful memories for Ktunaxa people. For if this history has been mythologized by settlers as a kind of origin story, it marks the beginning of a dark age for many Ktunaxa, a time when settlers would come, taking land and resources and killing Ktunaxa people. It was a time that settler institutions were constructed and Ktunaxa beliefs attacked, as churches and residential schools where established in the region. It was the beginning of an era of segregation, one that would last through the lifetimes of many Elders alive today, a time of addiction and poverty, as settler colonialism eclipsed the land and shrouded ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa in darkness.[12]

Chapter 3 – Settler Mythology

In the final chapter of this thesis, I explore the medium and meanings that settlers employ to remember (and forget) regional histories. Beginning with text and culminating in public displays, such as the parade and beauty pageant, stories and symbols fuse together to create what I call a meta-myth, a pervasive background narrative that influences much more than just our sense of the past. It is an elusive process, one that thrives in its ability to linger unnoticed, taken for granted, not fully known but intimately felt. What gives the meta-myth its power is the composition of symbols that function as coordinates in our worldview. In order to understand this process better, here I suggest moving towards a framework of approaching all regional history, and perhaps larger arenas of historical narratives,

[12] Kootenai Tribe of Idaho *A Century of Struggle: A Brief History of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho* 1990

as *settler mythology* within a settler myth world.

There are several components to this framework, which this chapter will cover. It becomes clear, given new evidence from the archival letters, that regional histories were concerned with, but did not necessarily present historical facts. Regional historians almost dispensed entirely with the practice of rigorous analysis that historians often insist is the cornerstone of their work. But this might not be an isolated incident of historical miscalculation – it may be evidence of a far more wide spread and pervasive phenomenon. For the stories that create what we come to know as history fuse together over time, joined by overlapping symbolic events, until the symbols themselves become more important than the accuracy of the story. The story becomes curated to serve a societal function, to bind cultural significations in a communicable form – a mythological language. That language is complex in how it is transmitted and received, but its message is, I argue, a simple one: to proclaim both the *legitimacy* of settler places and the *inevitability* of settler time. Through an examination of several different regional histories that claim to accurately tell the story of the 'uprising', I try to identify the mythic significations that are created through the fusing of histories. I then try to demonstrate how those mythical significations are proliferated and transmitted, the meanings that they signify and how those meanings both reflect and reinforce the worldviews of settler society, through time and in the present settler myth world.

Theoretical framework

In the three chapters, I will be using a mix of theoretical frameworks, of assemblage theory, spatial theory and semiotics. Some of these theories have been

well established by scholars, some emerged through a process of collaboration, such as my work with Ktunaxa Elders Group, and I have also attempted to take my own steps towards new theoretical scholarship, expanding on myths and assemblages in a historical and regional context, as well as presenting the concepts of *colonial dissonance* and the *settler myth world*.

Assemblages

This thesis is about communities and individuals, about people in a place and their relations to it. It is fruitful to utilize the theories of Giles Deluze and more recent works by Manuel DeLanda and their framework on approaching communities, or any complex organizational structure, as *assemblages*. These "relations of exteriority" have fascinating implications when applied towards understanding communities and communal ideas. Assemblages can be understood as the web of relations of its constituents, through their individual agency but also the ways that agency contributes towards a structure, a whole. Assemblages, " transcend the duality of agency and structure by arguing for their mutual constitution: agency is constituted by its involvement in practice which, in turn, reproduces structure."[13] That structure, or whole, can then be studied as a product of these interrelations - a whole, separate from other wholes. In our case, we can study a community separated from another community cohabitating the same space – a settler and an Indigenous one, with a firm material and imagined boundary between the two. These wholes, "may be usefully treated as assemblages and

[13] Manuel DeLanda *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social complexity* Continuum, NY. 2006

therefore as entities that are products of historical processes."[14]

Assemblage theory can adequately take into account the various perspectives of individuals that live in communities such as Cranbrook or ʔaq'am, while also able to connect how those individual perspectives contribute to and are influenced by their larger community identities. As DeLanda explains, assemblages, "may be analyzable into separate parts and at the same time have irreducible complexities, properties that emerge from the interactions between parts."[15] Assemblages work exceptionally well as models to apply to multi-vocal belief systems that originate from a community and are quite applicable when we begin to discuss ideological assemblages, such as myths and myth worlds, in the last chapter of the paper. Myths themselves, I argue, are assemblages – inter-relations of ideas and ideological structures that shape the interests of individuals in the community, while individuals in the community shape the mythic assemblage. Myths provide us with an interesting example of what DeLanda calls *territorialization* and *de-territorialization*, as individuals in a whole work towards the stabilization of an assemblage or against it. The interesting aspect of this model is that assemblages can still function quite well as both processes occur simultaneously - its components can maintain the duality of being influenced while being influential. In the myth world, which I identify more clearly later, this same process occurs, as individuals can challenge yet continue to remain part of a historical structure. Assemblages provide the flexibility to continue to do so, so long as the structure does not completely dissolve in a paradigm shifting, *de-territorializing* event.

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[14] Manuel DeLanda p3

[15] DeLanda 10

Collaboration and Convergence points

In the chapter on Ktunaxa perspectives, I attempted to engage the Ktunaxa Nation in hopes to build a more inclusive and accurate historical narrative and define research deficits in the general narrative told by regional settler historians. The Ktunaxa Nation have had many encounters with research projects throughout history and the head of Ktunaxa Research Council Dr. Christopher Horsethief claims, "the case can also be made that ongoing research about the Ktunaxa culture, its collected Ktunaxa cultural knowledge, and protocols resulting form its application have existed from time immemorial."[16] It is only in recent Ktunaxa history the Nation has been engaged by western scholars, who often approached the nation with their own terms and brandished their own ethical considerations. Those ethical considerations quickly became problematic as the Ktunaxa where often viewed as un-Christian, sub human and not worthy of the extension of the same ethical treatments reserved for European communities. The Ktunaxa note these early European researchers rarely practiced, "systemic fair treatment, informed consent or confidentiality, or benefits to the participant community."[17]

These practices changed slightly over time, but researchers still upheld diminutive attitudes and, "openly used this perspective to trade Indigenous intellectual property for simple trade items." This system became entrenched in ethnographic practice, as this exchange was understood by Indigenous peoples as a diplomatic pact, "while researchers treated it as 'buying' systems of thought." The

[16] Christopher Horsethief *A Brief Background on Research Ethics* Ktunaxa Nation, (2014)
[17] Horsethief

Ktunaxa view this historical relationship with suspicion, as settler researchers often behaved as if, "Native peoples should receive minimal compensation in exchange for their time and knowledge."[18]

What settler researchers conceived as an exchange of resources was rarely an exchange that offered fair compensation, benefits towards the greater Ktunaxa community nor conducted with a respect towards its cultural value or methodology. That perspective, of Indigenous teachings as resource, continues today and can lead to conflict that further strain the relationship with Ktunaxa Nation and researchers who seek to engagement. One case in particular made the rounds in BC's literary community a few years before I started this project that earned the ire of a prominent Ktunaxa writer and a public reprimand that represented the Nation's disappointment with the researchers conduct.[19]

Due to negative research experiences over the last century and also due to the cultural value Ktunaxa people place on private cultural practices, there is relatively little scholarship written about the Nation. There is a questionable ethnography completed by H.W Turner, some notes from David Thompson, Father Coccola, Ethnographers James Teit and Boas – but many of those sources are not reliable, according to local archeologists, regional historians and many Ktunaxa people today.20 The best work on Ktunaxa culture and practices conducted by settler scholars is the work by Claude E. Scheaffer, but it exists only as an incomplete manuscript that lies in fragments at the Glenbow museum, with all of its culturally

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[18] Ibid

[19] Troy Sebastian, *Misrepresentation and the Truth of Ktunaxa Consent,* Quill and Quire (2018)

[20] Thompson was dismissive to Ktunaxa cultural practices (cit my paper); Coccola often embellished the truth and regional historians question whether he had been present at events he claims to have been; Turner upheld now questionable migration theories and Tiet and Boaz made very brief and superficial accounts, often relying on sources from surrounding Nations.

significant research notes recently made confidential by Ktunaxa Nation. So the best and perhaps only way to learn about Ktunaxa history, is not through settler scholarship, but through the Nation itself.

Today, the Nation encourages research projects led by Ktunaxa communities, sectors and individuals. When outside scholars are invited to work within the Nation's protocols, projects are weighed by the, "collective values of the researchers conducting research and the systems being studied, to the equality of worldviews and cultural perspectives, informed consent and confidentiality of participants, and the benefits to the participant community."[21] In short, the Ktunaxa not only insist that fair and equal treatment, including consent and confidentiality, be upheld, but that those projects benefit Ktunaxa communities.

In order to undertake the collaborative portion of this research project with the Nation, a thorough ethics review was necessary. This process vetted my work and its potential contribution to Ktunaxa interests. It then led to meetings with the Ktunaxa Elders Group and many personal conversations with Ktunaxa individuals. I attempted to work collaboratively as best I could, utilizing a methodology of *convergence points,* intersections in time and place that might be of benefit for Ktunaxa voices to engage the settler narrative. Convergence points are meant to directly address those systemic inequalities in research / community benefits, as their existence is predicated on the Nation's participation in community self interest.

Settler history, or "your history," as many Ktunaxa people have said to me, is considered a separate history, a narrative that exists outside the Ktunaxa view of

[21] Horsethief

historical time. Yet many saw the value of engaging settler history, as historic convergence points might be useful in critiquing unchallenged narratives. As Ktunaxa Elder Herman Alpine once said to me during a meeting with the Elders group, "It is time to set the record straight."[22]

Critical history

In the first chapter on the newly discovered correspondences, I employed a revisionist approach to those sources, identifying historical evidence that was missing from regional narratives while critically examining them through an analytical framework that utilized the work of scholars engaged in post-colonial or critical settler-colonial scholarship.

When engaging with post-modern and post-colonial or de-colonial scholarship, it became clear those theories and methodologies would not completely answer the questions that I had posed at the beginning. In order to do so, I have attempted to be creative and create my own kind of theoretical framework, based on connections to *place* and what I call *colonial dissonance* and *settler mythology* or, the *settler myth world*. The following is an outline of that framework and its components, as well as how they relate to the research and how they will be utilized.

Place

This is unavoidably a story about the origins of a place, but what kind of place am I talking about? There are different forms of place – sizes, shapes, scopes. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan provided us with a kind of road map to navigate how we

[22] Herman Alpine *personal conversation, Sept 2018*

measure the sensory experience and scale of place, based around the central idea that, "place is a center of experienced meaning."[23] It exists in the material world, and we interact with it, as it interacts with us, through both senses, symbols, memory and imagination. We might visualize this scale as having two extremes – macro and micro ends of the scale.

Tuan suggests that the smaller and more intimate the place, the more we rely on *sensory knowledge,* the physical knowledge our senses provide, such as the smells that accompany the kitchen, the feeling of comfort of sitting in our favorite chair or slipping under the covers of our bed after a long day.[24] These small and intimate sites are known through the modes of our physical experience of being-in-the-world and they are captured in memories that are multidimensional, experienced with a broad spectrum of sensory knowledge. Through this way of knowing, place becomes what Edward Casey referred to as, "the environment of my lived body."[25] That environment exists in time through our memories, the history of our senses.

As we draw towards the macro end of the place-spectrum, the forms on the scale increase in size and the modes in which we know them become more abstract. As the place increases in size, from a room to a house, to city, region or nation, more abstract modes of knowledge are used to correlate the idea of a place to a signifier. These modes come in the forms of anthems, texts, maps, flags, songs and stories. As abstract symbols are used to convey our sense of a place that is too large for us to comprehend sensually, the use of our sensory knowledge is utilized less and less.

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[23] Yi Fu Tuan "Place: An Experience in Perspective" *Geographical Review* (1975)
[24] Tuan 157
[25] Edward Casey "Between geography and Philosophy: What does it Mean to Be in the Place-World" *annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 91 No 4. (2010) 683

Symbols and the ideas they represent become the essential means of knowing larger places, and those ideas and their symbology, which we shall identify as signs and significations, become the language we use to understand the greater world we live within, the larger community that inhabits it and the history of a place that represents those people that live there. Symbols are used to understand the assemblage we belong to, and the place that it exists upon. We use narratives to describe these conceptions and in this case, I claim that the main form of knowing connections between larger places and communities of people is through a system that best illustrates our process of contextual symbolic knowledge - the language of mythology.

This is the conventional understanding of macro and micro scales of place and how we know them, but there may be more mixing of sensory and abstract knowledge that should be been given consideration. A smaller place, such as a room, may be experienced through sensory knowledge and those modes we do not usually associate with critical analysis, senses such as touch, smell and taste. But perhaps we can experience them with a different kind of sense - our emotions. Given the sensory experience of our emotions, perhaps an abstract idea of a larger place can also be being experienced emotionally, through signifiers such as a national anthem or symbols in a community celebration. They can be experienced both intimately and abstractly. Abstract concepts about a macro place – a region, or town in this case, can be interspersed with intimate memories of place.

In this case, remembering the history of Cranbrook can utilize a mix of abstract and intimate modes of knowledge - how myself and others who lived there experienced that place and the unfolding of historical time – through the eighties

and nineties for example, through grunge music, the evolution of skate and snowboarding, local slang, style, culture and my emotional connections to experiencing those events through time. In a way, my memory is a tool that can be used to measure how a community remembers. In understanding a macro place through the passage of time of which I am intimately familiar, I can experience a larger conception of place quite intimately. So do others when they remember it. Perhaps then, even a superficial celebration like Sam Steele days, even when no one knows the specifics of that history, can also be experienced intimately, through the symbols that correspond to the remembering of a place that we have interacted with over time. Those symbols, such as a cartoon moustache, *suggest a historical connection to a place that has a direct connection to us.*

This is why the ways we understand places are so important. They can connect us to the material world - through memory, through story, through public displays and abstract symbols, significations that create the frameworks in which we understand the places we live. The power of myth, the medium that binds and transmits all of those signifiers and the ideas they represent, is the ability to connect significations to ourselves and connect ourselves to those significations. They become feedback loops of mutually reinforcing contextual connections. They do not have to be accurate, or true, in order to create those connections.

Colonial Dissonance

Sometimes the stories that connect us to a place, the place we live, where our intimate memories are housed, threaten to violate our sense of right and wrong. They upend our moral framework, and when that moral framework is connected to

both a place and a community of people we belong to – its also creates an existential conflict. In Cranbrook, an inaccurate historical narrative has been repeated for over a century, plenty of time to 'set the record straight', but no one has bothered to substantially revise the town's origin story. Small details are added perhaps, caught up in the minutia of sequential chronologies or the 'human' characteristics of historical actors. What becomes apparent in the incompleteness of regional histories as a whole is that their incompleteness serves an important function, an aspect of the underlying sociological factor that influences the curation and the forgetting of fragmented historical narratives that come to represent the best aspects of settler place. I try to offer here, as one of the underlying reasons and perhaps the most significant influence on settler remembering, what I call *colonial dissonance*.

Colonial Dissonance is an often indirectly experienced phenomenon that is pervasive through settler society, stemming from a systemic inability to reconcile the acts of our ancestors without damaging our present moral compass or worldview. Although often experienced indirectly, it maintains a direct influence on the narratives we choose to represent ourselves. It is the core conflict that urges the utilization of myth as a way to obfuscate the uglier realities of settler colonialism. In a way, myths become tools for settlers to express colonial dissonance, a way of making peace with the legacy they have inherited.

Most importantly, colonial dissonance is the act in which makes it possible to celebrate a controversial history, or critique it, without acknowledging one's own complicitness in its outcomes. It is how we are able to pledge support for Ktunaxa Nation yet attend Sam Steele days, protest a pipeline yet watch the Canada day

fireworks, post memes that critique colonialism without acknowledging our own part as a participating settler in its institutions. It allows us to critique the past and place the perpetrators of historical wrongs on *others* - other settlers, other actors, other empires, other historical forces. It is how we proliferate stories of escaping suffering in our home countries, while ignoring the stories of suffering brought to those in a new one. *It is how we can position ourselves as non-participants. For at its core, Colonial Dissonance requires us to position ourselves outside of the past.*

It can manifest in many forms in historical remembering– the celebration of the mounty, anti-Americanism, celebrating acts of settler benevolence, National myths of cultural mosaics.[26] In this thesis, it manifests in the fabrication of incomplete histories, regional histories that brush over the contexts unsavory to the moral palette in favor of those that reinforce an optimistic view of our settler origins. *The past functions as a receptacle of sorts, a place we can forget the unsettling aspects of history as we remember those things that legitimize our world.*

It is a knot, a contradiction, two things in opposition to each other existing as one, an inability to reconcile a sense of historical wrong with a need to belong to a place. It is a sense of unease, of sense of what Freud called *unhemliech*, a word for the uncanny that literally means "un-homed" or "out of place." It is opposing truths colliding in historical time, and the inability to correctly process them together, or process them at all. Those truths can shift, as myth worlds can de-territorialize and societies collapse and reconfigure.

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[26] Andrew R. Graybill *Rangers, Mounties, And the Subjugation of Indigenous Peoples, 1870 – 1885,* Great Plains Quarterly, (Spring 2004)

I believe that Colonial Dissonance is pervasive, an abstract and subconscious phenomenon, employed by all settlers, everywhere, always. It is a fundamental inability to process information due to many reasons – guilt, shame, hope, loyalty to family and kinship, a need to believe in progress, in a positive direction to the world, a belief in humanity, a need to stay connected to one's dwelling place.[27] To experience colonial dissonance is unsettling on a very fundamental level. It suggests that our very place in our universe is wrong. It is truly, an existential crisis. It is why we must search for relief in myth.

We can remember these histories that we are tied to, but we cannot comprehend them fully. We need to find a language to be able to speak to each other, without completing upending our moral framework. Myth is used as that language. It is the same impulse that compels us to anthropomorphize animal behavior to mirror our own, or technomorphize our own bodies, imagining the brain as computer. We speak to the familiar, we "desire to explain phenomenon we don't understand in terms we do understand."[28] Yet, as much as we desire to understand the world on our terms, we allow those terms to influence us. In the case of colonial dissonance, I argue, is a need to explain ideas we *can't accept* to in terms we can *accept*, or terms we can interpret as understanding. Those terms, are myths.

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[27] For an interesting exploration of white South Africans and their dissonant stories of belonging see: Dominic Griffiths and Maria L.C. Prozesky, "The Politics of Dwelling: Being White / Being south African" *Africa Today* (Vo56, No4, 2010) p 22-41

[28] Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains,* Norton & Co. (2011)

Mythology

The medium we use to remember historical time in Cranbrook and in all regional histories across Canada, should be identified as mythology. Laden with symbolic references to a people and a place through time, settler mythology relies on generalizations, incomplete accounts, archetypes, cultural themes and mythical significations to reproduce historical narratives. Myths come in many forms and are utilized for many different reasons. As fantastical as they are thought to be, they contain a practical component - they are tools we use to form our understanding of the world. I suggest that in order to understand the way we tell regional histories in settler cultures, we must utilize myth as our own analytical tool. In order to understand history – we must first understand myth.

Like place, myth is a complex world of different forms, different shapes to conceptualize and different approaches in utilizing those conceptualizations. There are three properties of the myth that I will explore in this thesis. The first, is myth as a misrepresentation of the truth. Misrepresentation may be the wrong word, though is the one the OED uses. Myth, in my mind, is more of a distortion of the truth – for misrepresentation suggests a devious malevolence – which, in our case here, I do not think is often accurate. What is important about this analogy, is how ideas about historical truth have influenced the way we present historical narratives, and the ways that distorted myths have obscured other historical perspectives.

The second aspect is myth as origin story. It has commonly been accepted amongst anthropologists that myths are histories of a sort, often infused with some kind of a supernatural element, tied to the origins of a people or a place. Often, these events take place in what we might think of as mythical time, or before-time, a time

that is separate from a present sense of historical time. Some Indigenous ways of knowing time reflect this idea. One example among the Stó:lō is the are two distinct arenas of time telling and historical remembering. The first, typically described as the 'myth-age,' is what fluent Halq'eméylem speakers refer to as *sxwõxwiyám*. This is the era when the transformers where changing the landscape, turning beings into stone and teaching moral lessons, a time when the boundary of the spirit world and human was porous and interconnected. The second era is more of what we might think of as modern history, called *sqwélqwel*. Here**,** "the spirit realm has played a slightly less prominent role in the ongoing drama of Stó:lõ human history…in a world already 'made right' by the earlier work of the transformers. "[29]

It is not a shared pan-Indigenous historical perspective, but we may find similarities. In Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis, there is the time when animals and spirits, called Nupika's, could talk to people, a 'mythic age' when the spirit world and the human overlapped. Some of these stories are shared publicly, but when they are, they are curated to fit into an accepted presentational format. The full stories are shared in private ceremony and take many days to tell. There is the arena of modern time – a history of Ktunaxa since the 'black robes,' when the first priests and settlers arrived. This separation in historical arenas can be observed in Ktunaxa historical compilations such as the Kootenai Tribes of Idaho history book. Here there is reference to the myth age, the time of the Great Nupika, the creator of the world and the modern era, a time defined by the coming of the black robes, the hardships

[29] Keith Carlson *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (U of T Press 2010) 65

endured under the American government, leading up the declaration of war against the United States, a declaration that holds today.[30]

Though a separation of histories exists, the most significant separation lies in the wall between Indigenous and Settler historical perspectives. For many Ktunaxa, the settler perspective of history is not widely regarded as legitimate and certainly not representative of Ktunaxa history. Settler history is often referred to as a foreign entity, 'your history', while Ktunaxa history is referred to as traditional knowledge that belongs to the community. One Elder stressed it to me that Ktunaxa history was not only a private one that belonged to Ktunaxa people and separate from settler history, but it was a living one, a history that comes alive in private ceremony today, one in which Nupika's still manifest and both reflect and influence modern historical events.

So, in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, the separation of a mythic age and modern one might not be entirely accurate, as the boundary between the spirit world and the human seems to remain porous, as Nupika's are bound up in recent history as well as 'mythical' history. As Ktunaxa people are often reluctant to share the deeper spiritual connections of their history for settler audiences, it may be difficult to truly identify a Ktunaxa historiography without sharing sensitive and private cultural knowledge. What can be said, based on what has been said to me, is that the Ktunaxa sense of history is viewed as sacred resource that is not freely relinquished, resistant to exploitation. It is a history that incorporates events through time and is shared in private ceremony, through song and story. It is a living history that flows and connects Ktunaxa Nation.

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[30] Kootenai Tribes of Idaho *Century of Struggle: A Brief History of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho* 1990

I argue here that settlers have myths about origins, so it follows that we might attempt a similar framework and identify a myth-age. Interestingly, the concept of before-time seems absent from settler myths. There is no before time, or private sense of time – instead there is a vague and abstract sense of time. There are, of course, references to Christianity, a worldview that contributed its influences. But I argue that we should not spend too much time trying to position Christianity as the before-time era. For the Settler myth world is a different myth world than that of Christendom, with a more secular sense of time, place and being.

Settler myths, I argue, have no before-time. There is only an abstract sense of time. Of nothingness, and then this. Of backwardness, then modernity. The land encountered was thought of as terra-nullius, empty space, and the time that stretched out from that point in history was consumed with *potentiality*. The past was to be left behind, weighted down with imagined superstition and the poor hygiene of the 'dark ages.' The future held sacred settler time and a dream of perpetual improvement, an intoxicating vision of limitless potentiality to be conjured and constructed. The future was employed when looking at the land, a place that was destined for settlement, always a place to-be. The future was the myth era - a mythical after-time, as opposed to a mythical before-time. Perhaps then, if we have no myth-age stories of the past, we are still living in the mythical time. Or, even more profoundly, if the settler myth age hides in the future, it is a myth age that continually and elusively exists, as we continually seek to grasp it, as it remains forever out of our reach.

Even if I cannot define a myth age in the settler past, we can still find evidence of creation myths in today's settler histories. Supernatural properties are

tied to origin stories, and are glaringly present in 'factual' settler histories. In our story, we have Sam Steele, portrayed as the deification of justice. His presence is often god-like and the north-west mounted police also becomes a kind of superhuman entity – a mythical institution of law and justice that exists as an unchallenged instrument of morality independent of the mortal world. There are other forces portrayed in settler myths that have supernatural qualities. Time for instance, understood instinctively as destiny. Settlements themselves are endowed with a kind of supernatural power of inevitability – civilization meant to rise from imagined nothingness, a destiny manifested from an ocean of forgetting. These mythical ideas are embodied in the narratives we tell about the creation of our settlements. In this sense, regional histories about settlements are themselves, mythical *creation stories.*

Last, and the most important aspect of our mythical framework, is the way that myth functions as a language. This language is expressed through symbols, stories, images and iconography. It can be explicit, or it can be extremely subtle. It is a means of communication between people, with the aim of contextualizing our own existential coordinates in the world. Scholars have explored this fascinating component of mythology, but they have been largely ignored in the practice of historiography.

The media theorist Roland Barthes has perhaps contributed the most to this important component of mythology and a fascinating system to apply towards the understanding of history. He developed a framework to understand mythical signs through *semiotics*, or the study of symbolic meaning, and we shall explore this

further in chapter three and apply this framework to unpacking regional narratives and significations as languages in the settler myth world.

It is no simple task to identify how we remember a place, or how we create its origin story. In this thesis, through archival evidence and the theoretical framework I have identified, I hope to be able to answer why we create settler origin histories the way that we do, what they say about who we are, and with the help of Ktunaxa Nation and the theoretical framework I have identified, what is missing from that narrative. Setting the record straight and viewing settler histories as what I argue they are, mythologies, might be a useful step in understanding the settler myth world we live as well as the existential conflicts that remain in settler places and ideologies today.

CHAPTER 1
"THERE WILL SURELY BE A RISING"

One of the exciting prospects of doing my MA at the University of Victoria was a closer proximity to the archives at the Royal BC museum. To my surprise, my supervisor John Lutz forwarded me an email from a retiring archivist, Ann Ten Cate, before I began the program, letting me know that a certain box of documents had been *re-discovered*. This box contained a detailed correspondence of the "Kootenai uprising" and had apparently been languishing, gathering dust in a forgotten corner of the archives for quite some time.[31] The archivist had a feeling that it contained some important materials, and wanted to let someone know about it before she retired. The box contained a series of letters, around three hundred original handwritten copies, documenting an extremely detailed correspondence of the events during the uprising. A jailbreak by the Ktunaxa Chief Isadore and his warriors, the deployment of the north-west mounted police and the settlement of Ktunaxa lands.[32] Here was a chance for me to get the bottom of the uprising, to set the record straight.

This archive was an exciting treasure trove of documents for an aspiring historian such as myself, a genuine "historical goldmine," providing a unique opportunity to uncover the "real" story of the uprising. As I opened that box and smelled that comforting aroma of old paper, I felt the thrill of the journalist on

[32] Popular regional histories include: Naomi Miller, *Fort Steele: Gold Rush to Boom Town, (*Surrey: Heritage House Printing Company. 2002) and Damian Inwood, *Fort Steele: The Golden Era*, (Langley: Sunfire Publications Ltd. 1986)

assignment, the detective ready to crack the case. For a brief week and a half, I felt like Indiana Jones of the archive.

I was aware this was a potentially problematic way to approach this project. Indiana Jones was *the* colonial archetype, travelling to distant lands and discovering Indigenous artifacts, performing his fascist-crushing, jeep-leaping version of American masculinity.[33] Yet, all the while he was fighting Nazis across Egypt, Nepal and the Amazon, he was never really discovering Indigenous treasures in temples laden with booby traps. He was *stealing* them. This blurry distinction has important implications in the practice of ethno-history, implications that I thought about often while I tried to craft a narrative around these letters. While the historian Hayden White suggests that this problem is inherent in historiography, for, "it is here (in constructing narratives) that our desire for the imaginary, the possible, must contest with the imperatives of the real, the actual," there is much more at stake than the tension between objectivity and subjectivity.[34]

Perhaps it is a crude example, but the real stakes are present in that blurry distinction that Indiana Jones embodies. For I am the descendant of colonists, a settler historian, searching for treasures, discoveries, passages of meaning that I may take and utilize to craft my historical narratives. I am searching for a new approach, something meaningful, something "undiscovered." I am continually influenced by my own motives, both consciously and unconsciously. I experience and express *colonial dissonance,* whether I know it or not.

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[33] *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.* DVD. Directed by Stephen Spielberg. Paramount, 1981.
[34] Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity," *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987) 4

For this story has a Ktunaxa narrative. Though we might strive to include Indigenous narratives in settler histories and bring in perspectives previously ignored, there is a fine line of ownership here. In the views of many Indigenous scholars, settlers writing Indigenous stories is akin to stealing an important resource that contains the, "most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of a people."[35] Or, as Indigenous author and activist Howard Adams warns, "Eurocentric historians aggressively seize Native intellectual space and claim it as their own in much the same way imperialists seized and occupied Native land."[36]

Given these inherent problems in any narrative I would chose to write, it seemed unethical for me to try to create an Indigenous narrative; no way could I accurately represent the real experiences of the Ktunaxa people that lived through these events at this time and place. Nor could I ethically represent what this history means to their descendants alive today. I had to be careful as a settler historian to avoid taking histories that don't belong to me, replicating the same colonial practices that I am trying to expose as unjust. By "discovering" these sources and imbuing them with meaning, I am using my own forms of settler methodology, employing my own motives, risking both appropriation and the seizure of cultural knowledge as scholarly capital, a resource for the taking.

Yet, at the same time, this was my story too. It was the story of the events that led to the creation of my hometown. Did I not have a right to tell that story? And if I was to write a story about the origins of my place, were not the Ktunaxa part of that place too? Should not the Ktunaxa be included in that story? If I neglected to mention them at all,

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[35] Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "Stop Stealing Native Stories", *Globe and Mail* (26 Jan 1990)
[36] Howard Adams, *A Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1995) 26

there would be another kind of ethical violation, an act of erasure, a sort that I think would be more unethical. It was obvious that the voices of Ktunaxa nation have been missing from this historical narrative for more than a century and needed to be included. If I wanted to uncover the truth about the origin story of my hometown, surely the path led through ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. In the era of Truth and Conciliation, the most important aspect that the vast majority of Ktunaxa people I worked with proclaimed, is the truth. So I tried to tell the truest version of this history I could, including accounts of Ktunaxa Chief Isadore and the political contexts that have largely been ignored.

I'm not sure if I was able to navigate the intricacies of complex narrativity, but I certainly did my best. I first completed a critical examination of the letters, looking for new evidence that was missing from the fragments of the regional history I was familiar with. Then, I attempted to apply a lens of post-colonial scholarship to situate the events in a larger historical context. The most important aspect by far is the submission to the public record of new historical evidence, new details that flesh out these historical events and the people involved at the time of the crisis.

Upon completion of this first draft on the archival letters, I sent the paper to many members of the Ktunaxa Nation and to the sectors of governance at KNC, in hopes to formally conduct research and collaborate on the work I'd done. The worked was deemed as valuable, the letters were identified as an important source of historical information, and a collaborative effort between the RBC Archives, Ktunaxa Nation and myself was initiated, leading up to the digitization of the letters. The RBC archives quickly capitalized on this as an opportunity to signify their commitments to the 'Truth and Reconciliation' process. The results of my collaborative work with Ktunaxa Nation will be shared in the final chapter.

While I attempted to draw attention to acts of Ktunaxa agency within these letters, instead of treating this as a "discovery" of agency, I also placed emphasis on the limits of agency within an encroaching colonial framework, leaving these acts of resistance open-ended for further analysis by Ktunaxa knowledge keepers.

With all this in mind, I will try to do several things with this chapter, conscious that it will be hard to avoid framing some of these narratives as discoveries, for the letters themselves are newly re-discovered. First and foremost, I will try and unpack these letters utilizing recent scholarship on settler colonialism. I argue that these letters reveal far more than a simple story about a jailbreak and police stand off, that within their pages lurk more pressing implications than the titillations of a historicized "whodunit." I believe these letters clearly illustrate the inner workings of the colonial program that displaced the Ktunaxa from their territory. In response to the "uprising", colonial powers utilized discourses around the danger of lawlessness as means to facilitate the occupation of the Kootenay by a large force of northwest mounted police. Their correspondence demonstrates how this force was utilized to coerce and intimidate the Ktunaxa, while creating reserves and shifting political power.

Another aim of this force was legitimize and uphold the creation of settler space, what historian Paige Raibmon refers to as "settlement lands."[37] These letters further demonstrate how colonial powers ignored Indigenous improvements undertaken through a liberal legal framework, utilizing racialized discourse to facilitate what can only be interpreted as a military acquisition of land and property. Lastly, and what I believe to be most important, these letters clearly demonstrate

[37] Paige Raibmon, "Unmaking Native Space: A Genealogy of Indian Policy, Settler Practice, and the Microtechniques of Dispossession" in Alexandra Harmon, ed. *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008) 57

that the Ktunaxa never formally ceded their traditional land, nor did they agree to the size and location of their present reserves. Rather, the land Cranbrook and other settlements are situated upon today was acquired under coercion and duress. These were the forces of colonialism, the elements that were required to build my hometown.

A Justification for Occupation

> "Arrested Kapla murderer of Stilton, gaol broken open by 25 armed Indians and prisoner released. Galbraith with dispatch arrived today; says lives of settlers in jeopardy; prompt action necessary"[38]

So began the first correspondence of the Ktunaxa "uprising." Panicked colonial officials sent a flurry of responses over the following week, and calls for the Dominion government to send a police force began almost immediately:

> "(Provincial) Government to request the Dominion Government by telegram, to dispatch as soon as practicable to Wild Horse Creek a sufficient force of Mounted Police….it being represented that the settlers are in danger."[39]

Colonial politicians in the district quickly began to capitalize on the situation. Some, such as Colonel James Baker, had multiple land claims in the Kootenay and the suggestion of an uprising provided a useful opportunity to justify a large-scale police presence in the district. Baker held powerful political influence with the dominion government, being the Member of Parliament for the sparsely populated Kootenay and he used that power press both the Provincial and Dominion governments for the deployment of the newly created NWMP to the region. His first letters are laden with

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[38] British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA) GR – 0419, Box 34, Redgrave to Davie: The Gaol Has Been Broken Open, 17 March 1887.
[39] BCA, GR – 0419, A.B. Davie to Vowell: Sending Request to Dominion, 19 March 1887.

urgency and he portrays Chief Isadore as an erratic tyrant, and a threat to the stability of the region. He writes:

> "Isadore the Indian Chief has taken up such a dictatorial position that he is practically master of the situation & he has lately openly defied the law, by rescuing an Indian prisoner, at the head of twenty five armed men. It is evident that such a state of affairs cannot be permitted to exist and that the only way of establishing law and order and personal security for the white settlers is to introduce such a force of Mounted Police as would effectually *overawe* the Indians and thus prevent any chance of a rising"[40]

The request was punctuated with an urgent warning:

> "Unless this is done I am confident that an outbreak will take place and probably a massacre of white settlers."[41]

The urgency in Baker's letters was not to be ignored. Barely a year after the Metis rebellion in present day Saskatchewan and with John A. MacDonald's government consolidating power across the burgeoning country, Baker's fearmongering played at insecurities that lay at the heart of the Canadian project and settler potentiality. He purposefully engaged the federal government with the intention of inciting panic and a swift military response. His suggestion to *overawe* was nothing less than a recommendation to intimidate the Ktunaxa through use of force, making the threat of violence tangible, a tactic that geographer Cole Harris refers to as, "a grand persuasive."[42] Harris notes that the threat of violence was often deployed by colonial powers, claiming that, "such power was more often displayed than used."[43] This show of force and its message (the possibility of imminent deaths to community members and loved ones) was used to deter Indigenous resistance

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[40] BCA, GR – 0419, James Baker: Suggestions for the Deployment of a Mounted Police Force, 22 March 1887.
[41] Ibid
[42] Cole Harris, "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments From An Edge Of Empire" *Annales of Association of American Geographers,* 94, No. 1 (March 2004) 169
[43] Ibid

towards colonial powers across the Canadian west. On the British Columbian coast, it was a common occurrence, "to anchor a warship just off a native village and ostentatiously prepare the guns."[44] Using the mounted police instead of gunships, Baker advocated a similar tactic, encouraging the dominion government to undertake a 'grand persuasive' in the Kootenays.

These displays of power were not limited to BC. The grand persuasion that Baker intended had already been practiced on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. As historian Keith Smith notes, the NWMP, "seized on opportunities to display their weaponry," conducting long-range artillery drills on the prairies in their blood red uniforms, in the midst of treaty negotiations with the Blackfoot confederacy.[45] They maintained a strong police presence across the plains, as means to both survey and intimidate. Baker drew on these precedents and even methodically calculated the precise time and place to deploy this show of force, suggesting that:

> "Easter is the time when all the Indians assemble at the St. Eugene's Mission and it would be a favorable time for introducing the Police Force as they would arrive on the spot without warning to the mass of the Indians."[46]

Col. Baker's idea to "overawe", clearly demonstrated his intention to use Sam Steele and his D Division as a means to threaten and intimidate the local Ktunaxa. Some agreed with his tactics. A Constable Anderson, the man who initially arrested

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[44] Harris, "How did Colonialism Dispossess?" 169

[45] Keith Smith, liberalism, Surveillance and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada 1877 – 1927 (AU press, Athabasca University: Edmonton 2009) 81

[46] BCA, GR – 0419, James Baker: Suggestions for the Deployment of a Mounted Police Force, 22 March 1887.

the prisoner Kapla, was present during the jailbreak and could barely conceal his anger and desire for retaliation, as he suggested that:

> "a force will be necessary to bring the Indians to their senses and make them amenable to the law…having rescued the prisoner will now justify severe measures for the punishment of the Chief and his Subordinents [sic]"[47]

But this did not reflect the views of all settlers in the district. While these calls for violence increased from an disproportionately loud minority and pressure mounted for a police intervention, an "uprising" didn't accurately represent the actual state of affairs. Soon after the jailbreak, Isadore attending a meeting with local settlers in the area, assuring them that no one was in danger.[48] He asserted that his only interest was in freeing the Ktunaxa prisoner, whom he claimed had been arrested despite a lack of evidence and under an authority he did not recognize.[49] The settlers at the meeting clearly did not feel their lives were in jeopardy, signing a petition that claimed there was no threat of an uprising, assuring the Dominion government that all was well. Even colonial authorities agreed. On a visit to the region later that year, Indian Superintendent I.W. Powell conceded that the claims of an uprising were "somewhat exaggerated."[50]

Still, from these initial letters, it is clear that colonial powers accepted the distortion and escalation of events in order to justify the use of force in order to firmly establish power and claim territory in the region. Baker's persistence happened to suit the wishes of both the BC and Dominion government, BC being in the process of implementing a new more restrictive reserve system under the

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[47] BCA, GR – 0419, Const. Anderson: Account of Gaol break and Potential for Violence, *9* March 1887
[48] BCA, GR – 0419, Anon: Meeting Minutes 14 March 1887
[49] Ibid.
[50] BCA, GR – 0419, I.W. Powell: Meetings with Isadore, 13 July 1887

policies of Joseph Trutch, and the Dominion being in the process of quelling any possible Indigenous resistance to the Canadian project reaching westward.[51] The need for violence was veiled under the pretense of law and order, but as subsequent communications will show, police intimidation was used as a means to dispossess the Ktunaxa from their traditional lands.

Clearing the Kootenays

One of the ideological assumptions that allowed the discourse of settlement to function, was a colonial worldview that attempted to uphold an imagined barrier between self and other, colonizer and colonized, through the abstract idea of, "savage and civilized." This was a kind of instinctual knowledge, resting on an assumptive worldview, which I will later argue as part of the settler myth world. Harris notes that during the early settlement period in British Columbia, "hardly a white person questioned the distinction between civilization and savagery….nor did they question the proposition that civilized people knew how to use land properly and that savages did not."[52] Settlers, if not acutely aware of this discourse, took these assumptions as justification to claim land and resources. Pen and paper were the medium used to legitimize this ideology, while simultaneously used to exclude Indigenous claims. As historian Bev Sellars notes, "the long established territories of the aboriginal people as recorded through oral history was ignored because they were not written on pieces of paper."[53]

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[51] Joseph Trutch, *Report on the Lower Fraser Indian Reserves,* UBC Special Collections (28 Aug 1867)
[52] Harris, "How did Colonialism Dispossess?" 170
[53] Bev Sellars, *Price Paid: The Fight for First Nations Survival* (Vancouver: Talon Books 2016) 35

Colonial powers erased Indigenous territories with the stroke of a pen, often in the form of maps, population surveys, reserve surveys and the documentation of empty or un-improved land.[54] These colonial conceptualizations of Indigenous space functioned like eviction notices for Indigenous peoples, they were the means by which the allotment of reserves in the Kootenay were conceptualized and Ktunaxa claims to ownership were extinguished.

Ideas of the wild and the civilized were enshrined in the British Columbian legal code. Enshrined in the law ordinance of 1861, settlers were allowed to occupy any crown-claimed land that was not a reserve and did not contain "Indian improvements."[55] I might venture that the notion of crown land itself was an abstract idea, a creation that the political theorist Henri Lefebvre might call "abstract space." This space, as opposed to place, was a malleable void draped over local territories, with its legitimacy resting on the military power behind them. Crown land was an inky cloud that veiled the landscape, within which, "lived experience is crushed, vanquished by conceived space." [56] In other words, abstract ideas about space, such as unimproved or crown lands, not only legitimized the practice of pre-emption, but embodied an impulse to destroy local ways of knowing and living within traditional landscapes.

Through this emerging colonial framework in the late nineteenth century, Indigenous territory was seized. In response, many Indigenous peoples sought to preserve their lands through the new legal system that colonists sought to impose. One such example was Akisq'aq'li'it, or Joseph's Prairie - the tract of land that

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[54] Harris 170
[55] Raibmon, "Unmaking Native Space", 63
[56] Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974) 50

Cranbrook sits upon today. It was there that Chief Isadore had built fences, ploughed fields, dug ditches and was at the head of a successful ranching operation – rivaling any in the region. Rather than be let alone to prosper within this new colonial framework, Isadore's success conflicted with settler interests. Joseph's Prairie was the same plot of land that Col. Baker had eyes upon, a flat tract on which he would build a regional rail station and the town of Cranbrook would be spawned unto the world.

Instead of acknowledging Isadore's improvements, commissioners charged with negotiating reserve lands in 1886 and 87 continued to use the discourse of "civilization and savagery," employing their assumptive worldview to de-legitimize Ktunaxa land claims, capital, resources and labor. Their accounts were rife with patronizing critiques such as:

> "why do you not cut the hay? There is plenty of land to raise potatoes, roots and vegetables…why do you not try to use the land you have before asking for more?"[57]

These observations contradicted previous accounts by Indian agents, who praised the success of many Ktunaxa farmers and criticized the proposed reserves as, "rocky wastelands."[58] Instead, the commissioners focused their attention on the large herds of wild horses, long an essential part of Ktunaxa culture and economy, to provide ammunition for further ideological discourse:

> "you have hundreds of horses running wild, and am told they are increasing in number. They only tend to destroy the ranges, and

[57] BCA, GR – 0419, Vowell, Powell and O'Reilly: Proclamation to Chief Isadore and the Kootenay Indians at St. Mary's Reserve, 24 Sept 1887.
[58] BCA, GR – 0419, Michael Phillips: Letter on Isadore's behalf, 16 July1887.

> are of little value to you. You cannot expect the government to give you more land to raise useless horses."[59]

Statements like these not only propagated stereotypes, they ignored the actual evidence in the district. Tending herds of wild horses was a traditional practice and a thorough one in which every horse was accounted for and owned by an individual or family.[60] As far as "civilizing" projects went – the Ktunaxa were as civilized as any of the new settlers in the territory. Fencing, clearing, irrigation, planting, plowing, sowing, ranching - these were all projects undertaken by many Ktunaxa individuals with great success. Michael Phillips, the first Indian agent of the Kootenay, constantly praised the progress of Isadore, claiming he was, "wealthy, industrious and energetic and has as good a farm as most of the settlers."[61] [62] Michael Phillips, the Grandfather of Elder Liz Gravelle (who I interview in the following chapter), advocated for larger reserves and for Isadore to keep his ranch on Joseph's Prairie, claiming that, "By all the laws of right and wrong the place belongs to him."[63]

Despite the recommendation of advocates like Phillips and the clear evidence of his improvements on his ranch, the commissioners, (all who were well acquainted with Baker), dismissed Isadore's land claims. In a proclamation read to Isadore by a third party, they concluded that, "the land on Joseph's Prairie does not belong to you

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[59] BCA, GR – 0419, Vowell, Powell and O'Reilly: Proclamation to Chief Isadore and the Kootenay Indians at St. Mary's Reserve, 24 Sept 1887.
[60] Conversation with Aq'am Nasookin Joe Pierre
[61] Michael Phillips *Letter on Isadore's behalf* July 16 / 1887
[62] add carter
[63] Michael Phillips *Letter on Isadore's behalf* July 16 / 1887

and will have to be vacated immediately. You will be paid a fair value for the fencing you have put there."[64] With the stroke of a pen, Isadore was dispossessed of his land.

These double standards were commonplace during the early years of settlement. Historian Paige Raibmon points out that this contradiction was rampant, "in the crucial decades when authorities worked to impose their notion of a civilized landscape…they repeatedly betrayed the logic of their own self-proclaimed law and order."[65] Settlers didn't follow their own standards and in the case of the decisions reached by the commissioners in the Kootenay, often avoided dealing directly with Indigenous peoples, implementing their policies from afar and without consent.[66] Almost all of the reserve surveys were drawn up the previous year, in 1886, when Ktunaxa tribes were away. If Ktunaxa people were present when the commissioners arrived and if they did not agree to the proposals, the commissioners would simply leave, sometimes in the middle of the night, then ratify the proposals arbitrarily from the safety of a Victoria office.

The theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty notes that this was a common occurrence across colonial empires, that, "the European colonizer of the nineteenth century both preached this enlightenment humanism at the colonized and at the same time denied it in practice."[67] Across the Canadian West, historian Sara Carter provides us with further evidence of colonial obstruction towards Indigenous success in adopting colonial practices. Predicated on liberal ideology, colonial initiatives such

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[64] Vowell, Powell and O'Reilly *To Chief Isadore and the Kootenay Indians at St. Mary's Reserve* 24 Sept 1884

[65] Raibmon, "Unmaking Native Space," 63

[66] for more on a liberal framework see: Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," Canadian Historical Review 81 (4), Dec. 2000: 616-78.

67 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Idea of Provincializing Europe," *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Colonial Difference* (Princeton, 2000): 3-26

as the peasant farming policies that emerged in the late nineteenth century in Alberta forced successful large-scale Indigenous farmers to use rudimentary equipment and restricted the size of their operations, making it impossible to earn capital or continue farming as a viable livelihood.[68] Cole Harris also notes that in British Columbia, "the rights of property and the free play of the market became, in British Columbia, not an argument between different economies and classes…but the more polarized, and characteristically racialized juxtaposition of civilization and savagery."[69] The land question, at least as viewed by colonial officials in the Canadian west, was not settled based on the very laws enshrined by the crown, nor their own stipulations for the acquisition of land. Rather, it was based upon ideas of race.

Resistance and the Limits of Agency

Through the letters and the records of Isadore's speeches recorded by the colonial powers involved, it is possible to identify instances of Ktunaxa agency. Isadore's words reveal resistance and resilience in between the lines of these letters, clear displays of Ktunaxa sovereignty that can be read through Baker's correspondence. As evidence of Chief Isadore's suggested volatility, he includes a speech that was delivered to the first commissioners visiting the Kootenay in 1884 to negotiate the allotment of reserves. Baker's account of Isadore's statements is as follows:

> "Isadore spoke in reply and became exceedingly insolent, he dashed his staff on the ground, took out a pistol and placed it by

[68] Sara Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-97," *Canadian Historical Review,* no. 1 (1989) 28 - 30
[69] Harris, "How did colonialism dispossess?" 172

> his side, and said that it was for him to say what lands he would grant the Queen and not that she should dictate to him. He then demanded as a reserve what was fractionally the greater part of the land in the whole valley."[70]

Baker's account was meant to delegitimize Isadore's actions within the discourse between colonial agents. What they perceived as an uncooperative Chief was an impediment to the settlement of the Kootenay and a threat considered by most colonial officials to be intolerable. Yet, there is an even more significant narrative that can be interpreted from this reading. Isadore's speech was a declaration of sovereignty, spoken aloud in public, to a Ktunaxa audience and witnesses that represented the Queen. Isadore rejected the very idea of reserves to be set aside for the Ktunaxa, informing the colonial government that this was Ktunaxa land, not crown land, that Ktunaxa laws still governed the territory and would not be relinquished, not to the Queen nor her representatives.[71]

Baker also included what could be viewed as a concession from the commissioners. They did not respond to Isadore's proclamation, Baker explained, because it, "was hopeless for Powell to do anything without force…he therefore evaded the questions."[72] Colonial representatives conceded to Isadore's wishes at that important moment and place, not the other way around. The terms he declared, if not protested in person nor in writing, could be been seen as having been accepted.

Still other examples of Ktunaxa agency abound through the letters. The liberation of the prisoner Kapla is evidence of the ways that Ktunaxa enacted their

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[70] BCA, GR – 0419, Baker's Second Letter, 27 April 1887
[71] A demonstration of Ktunaxa law…
[72] BCA, GR – 0419, Baker's Second Letter, 27 April 1887

own sense of justice. As Isadore explained his actions, he claimed that he needed to appease kinship demands, but also to bring attention to the unequal and racialized system of justice deployed in the region and the unanswered violence towards Ktunaxa peoples. Some of Isadore's settler supporters in the district corroborated this account. Father Foquette, of the St. Eugene mission, wrote this account of settler violence in the district as the underlying reasons behind the jailbreak:

> "they say, that as the white men…who killed or shot at Indians are not punished nor even tried in some cases, the murder of the whites who are passed ought to be looked upon as a set off against the murder of Indians, and for the future take a new start, and punish equally white men and Indians where guilty"[73]

I.W. Powell presented Isadore's full statement concerning the jailbreak and the distribution of justice:

> "Look over the land, how many white men have the Kootenay killed (?)….Look at this place, there is the blood of a Kootenay, it is the white man who spilled it. We have seen this with our own eyes…"[74]

Isadore continued:

> "White man sent below for trial, we thought he would be killed, the Chiefs said so, not long after, he returned….three white men have killed four Indians, all this I told the constable. There are many other cases of Indians being killed I do not speak of…The Indians have not forgotten it."[75]

Still further resistance to settlement can be gleaned from these letters, as the, "Indians refused to allow white men to cut trails, and do work on their preemptions."[76] The Ktunaxa resisted in the limited ways that they could, freeing

[73] BCA, GR – 0419, Father Foquette: Concerning the killing of Indians in the district, 6 May 1887
[74] BCA, GR – 0419, I.W. Powell: Isadore's own words 13 July 1887
[75] BCA, GR – 0419, I.W. Powell: Isadore's own words 13 July 1887
[76] BCA, GR – 0419, Baker's Second Letter, 27 April 1887

prisoners charged without evidence, disputing pre-emption claims, prohibiting settlers from building trails and fighting for larger reserves. Most importantly, it is clear that the Ktunaxa never formally ceded their territory within a colonial framework. Rather, they repeatedly asserted their sovereignty and never formally relinquished control of their territory.

Yet, utilizing a narrative of agency can conceal the truth, distorting the panorama. In this case, it might obscure the leviathanic tentacles of colonial power. Johnson has even claimed the practice of ascribing agency has become, "the master trope of New Social history."[77] For, as the Ktunaxa resisted settlement in any way they could, many more examples abound of colonial power imposed on Ktunaxa lives, exposing the *limits of agency*. While Ktunaxa acts of resistance and resilience can be read from the accounts in these colonial documents, it is all the more evident that agency was also being stripped away. It was limited by military force, coercion and intimidation, behind which surged a great wave of settlers, hungry for land and resources.

Steele in the Kootenays

The "trouble" in the Kootenays was to be "settled" upon the arrival of the northwest mounted police.[78] They built a small garrison at a site that would thereafter be known as Fort Steele, housing their seventy-five armed troops and artillery. Major Sam Steele quickly dismissed the case against the prisoner Kapla, citing a lack of evidence – a gesture of impartial justice but also a possible

[77] Walter Johnson, "On Agency," 114
[78] According to many regional histories, such as East Kootenay Chronicle.

diplomatic maneuver that became a useful diversionary tactic, a gesture of impartialness that masked what Steele's presence meant, a gesture that occupied the focus of historians, distorting the significance of these events within the plot of a murder trial.

What is missing from the regional history narrative, is that Steele quickly turned his attention to what was the actual intent of the police deployment - the dispossession of Ktunaxa lands. While Isadore was temporarily away from the district, the commissioners drafted a letter, given to Steele for the purposes of presenting to Isadore in an official capacity. This letter functioned both as a final decree and reprimand, upholding the smaller reserves the commissioners had previously chosen, ignoring the protests of Ktunaxa Nation and their allies, as well as rejecting Isadore's claim to Joseph Prairie.[79] The last exchange of Sam Steele and Chief Isadore is an important one, and a poignant way to conclude the narrative of these letters. It spans two meetings and several weeks, as follows:

Isadore stated that, "commissioner O'Reilly was mistaken in supposing that when the reserves were laid out before, that he was satisfied", and that the, "Chief was very much against giving up the land at Colonel Baker's saying that he was justly entitled to it."[80] Isadore wished to meet the involved parties face to face to resolve the matter, but Steele denied him this, stating that, "the matter had to be decided at once, there being no appeal from the decision of the commissioners, and that he must leave as soon as Col Baker should pay whatever price is offered for the

[79] BCA, GR – 0419, Vowell, Powell and O'Reilly: Proclaimation to Chief Isadore and the Kootenay Indians at St. Mary's Reserve, 24 Sept 1887
[80] BCA, GR – 0419 Sam Steele: Presents Colonial Decree to Isadore, 12 Nov 1887

improvements."[81] Isadore again refused the terms, to which Steele instructed him to leave and to return after he had thought about the possible consequences of "obstruction."

Steele's second letter on the matter included a conversation with Isadore that showed how coercion and intimidation was utilized by colonial authorities. After Isadore arrived, he:

> "launched into a long account of the wrongs of the Indians, that the reserves were not of sufficient size, that the commissioners should have met him face to face, and finally, that he had repented his bargain and did not wish to give up the prairie."[82]

Steele responded that the decision had already been made, and that Isadore, "must appoint an arbitrator…if he refused, I [Steele] would appoint one." Steele then began to threaten Isadore, claiming that, "he had acted in such an unreasonable manner by refusing to give up the land."

Isadore then,

> "began a long complaint, saying that the commissioners (for the settlements) had not treated him properly, that he and the Indians should have been met by the commissioners and had the whole thing explained to them, as it was said that not an Indian was satisfied with the treatment they received."[83]

In response to Isadore's statement, Steele conjured the power of the colonial state he represented and threatened Isadore that:[84]

> "owing to his obstructiveness, there was an absolute certainty of his being deposed from his position, and upon his reply that the custom of the Indians was that a Chief remained a chief as long as he lived. I told him that if he broke the laws, and proved obstructive, as he was doing now, that he would be deposed, and

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[81] BCA, GR – 0419 Sam Steele: Presents Colonial Decree to Isadore, 12 Nov 1887

[82] BCA, GR – 0419, Sam Steele: Issuing a Final Ultimatum to Isadore 9 Dec 1887

[83] BCA, GR – 0419, Sam Steele: Issuing a Final Ultimatum to Isadore 9 Dec 1887

[84] PC – Indian act?

> another of a more law abiding and reasonable nature appointed."[85]

Isadore was forced to settle. Steele triumphantly declared that, "with the final settlement of this claim I believe the most troublesome part of the arrangements with the Indians, and that most likely to cause trouble has been dealt with. "

In these letters are the details left out by regional historians, the events blurred by mythology. These letters echo the voices of colonial powers and Ktunaxa leaders. They clearly illustrate the inner workings of the colonial program that displaced the Ktunaxa from their territory, a necessary precursor for the acquisition of land that Cranbrook would be built upon. They show how Colonial powers utilized discourses around the danger of lawlessness as means to deploy the NWMP and they demonstrate how this force was utilized to coerce and intimidate the Ktunaxa, while creating reserves, shifting political power and making space for settlement. Lastly, these letters clearly demonstrate that the Ktunaxa never formally ceded their traditional land, nor did they agree to the size and location of their present reserves. Rather, the land Cranbrook and other settlements are situated upon today was not acquired in some kind of cooperation with Ktunaxa Nation as many regional histories suggest, but by military force.

Further exploration and analysis of these letters is certainly needed. I was only able to include a small selection of the most relevant and important ones. This paper was intended as the beginning of a mutual dialogue with Ktunaxa Nation, and in the following years since I wrote this, it has served as such. I have presented it to Chief Nasookin Joe Pierre of ʔaq'am, ex-Chief Sophie Pierre, Dr. Christopher

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[85] BCA, GR – 0419, Sam Steele: Issuing a Final Ultimatum to Isadore 9 Dec 1887

Horsethief, Ktunaxa Research Council, the Ktunaxa Nation Council and the Ktunaxa Elders Group. The letters themselves were digitized thanks to the initiative of Ktunaxa writer and historian Troy Sebastian with the cooperation of Royal BC Archives. These letters are now easily accessible to anyone in the Nation and the general public. However flawed, I also hope that my narrative of dispossession and the mechanisms of colonial power in the settlement of the Kootenay might prove useful, and many Ktunaxa peoples have told me that it has. The letters themselves will be useful tools for the Ktunaxa Nation in ongoing land disputes and litigation. I worked with Ktunaxa Nation for several years after finding this archive, and the results of that collaboration shall be the focus of the following chapter, as well as any pertinent Ktunaxa perspectives on these historical events, in a process we called "setting the record straight."

CHAPTER TWO
KTUNAXA PERSPECTIVES
"SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT"

A Train on Fire

I first met with Chief Joe Pierre of Ktunaxa Nation in the fall of 2015. I had driven across the pass from Calgary, eager to meet up after an introduction through my old friend Star. I was still doing my undergrad at UBC and Joe was working for School District 5, painstakingly and persistently trying to get Ktunaxa language and culture courses engrained into the local school system, in hopes that everybody in Cranbrook could learn about Ktunaxa culture from a very young age. A far cry from when I grew up there, when we learned absolutely nothing.

I was excited to meet him, eager to learn about the place I grew up from a Ktunaxa perspective. I drove west from Calgary, heart swelling as the foothills rolled up into the Rocky Mountains like waves of earth from some ancient ocean, forever frozen in time. As my truck cowered on the small ribbon of highway through a valley of giants, I played Wovenhand and Burmis Tree, ruminating on my own relationship with this landscape. Could I have a spiritual connection with this place? I knew I had an intimate one. But as a settler, could I ever have the same kind of relationship with the place I grew up as Ktunaxa people do, whose ancestors lived and died here for thousands of years? Did we forfeit our ghosts, and our ties to the landscape, in the old country?

My familiarity with this place runs deep. I spent the first half of my life between Cranbrook and Calgary, driving between the two, constantly creating giant geospatial rings through the ether of the Rocky Mountains and the seasons. We

seemed to be in state of constant commuting from southern Alberta to the Kootenays, up the 95 to the 1, or down the 22 to the 3, through the green and golden groves of tamarack and white birch in the fall, the treacherous snow storms of winter, the rolling rain clouds of spring and the bright yellow fields of summer. Endless configurations and variations of those routes, drawing giant invisible circles on the earth, through landscapes and through time, leaving vivid transect lines of memory that stretched over the land and linked together in the core of my being.

Those different routes were not unlike the different configurations of myself as teenage vans sped across the pass, seasonal work began and ended, parents divorced, siblings were separated and brought together again. Back and forth across the mountains, back and forth in my memory.

This route embodies time. Not just the passing of time, or the memory that sits in places, but the kind of time that creates a familiarity, a knowledge of having *been there*. A knowledge of having some part of you that will always be *there* and some part of *there* that will always be in *you*.

In the midst of the passage through the Bow Valley, there is an overpass by Castle Mountain, a place I had gotten stuck hitchhiking many times. From here you enter the sublime vista of the upper Kootenay River valley, whose slate grey waters run through bright green pines, itsfreezing eddies cold enough to take your breath away, even in the middle of summer. Every time I drove by, I would immerse myself in these heart-stopping waters, a baptism of sorts, a cleansing of the years between and a reinforcement of my connection to this landscape.

If you keep going south-west through the upper Kootenay, at some point you pass from Alberta into BC, through the immense rock gates that guard the town of

Radium, past the wood plaque proclaiming, “the mountains shall bring peace to the people.” Here is the first sweeping panorama of the Columbia valley, the heartland of Ktunaxa people. The Columbia valley divides the Rockies from the Purcells and is so wide it births two rivers; the Columbia River flowing to the north and the Kootenay to the south. The Purcells are an ancient range worn into the earth over millennia, a range that turns green and gold and orange in the fall as the tamaracks change their needles. In the midst of this cinematic countryside sits Cranbrook, on a flat plateau just on the other side of the Columbia valley. Buried in bull pine accentuated by a high surrounding bank, framed by the peaks of the Steeples to the east, and a slow, rolling mountain to the south. This was Akisq'aq'li'it. Joseph’s Prairie. Cranbrook, The site in which the events in my research took place. The place that Steele forced Isadore to relinquish. The place that Baker was obsessed with transforming, possessed with its potentiality. The place I grew up.

I was meeting Joe Pierre in Cranbrook at Amy Woodland Elementary. In one of the many strange coincidences this project unveiled, Amy Woodland happened to be the place I went to school, when I first moved to Cranbrook at around nine years old. My childhood home was only a few blocks away, and the neighborhood was weighted with memory. It was an unnerving museum of sorts, as every corner, every driveway, every tree or even every missing one, held some kind of story, some gang of ghosts making sacred pacts in the alley, trading clandestine artifacts of memory like stolen cigarettes.

This was the place I got in my first fight. When a kid named Buddy from the trailer park up the hill, with his mouse brown mullet and his rebook pumps, picked me as an easy target the very first day of school. Fresh from the city with my left ear

pierced and baggy vision street wear pants, I was forced to defend myself after the bell rang and his gang followed me home, cornering me in one of those alleys by the school. We punched and kicked and rolled around in the dusty gravel as the other kids shouted and jeered. When we were finally out of breath and took a moment to wipe our bleeding noses, I reflexively recited a passage from an X-Force comic book I had been reading. It was cheesy and dramatic, something like, "I only fight for honor." I'm pretty sure everyone laughed at me, but Buddy never tried to fight me again. This was my first day of school, my first introduction to people in Cranbrook. It was also my first experience with violence, an adrenaline-fueled mix of shock, fear, elation and performative righteousness that was all a strange way of contextualizing myself in that moment in time. For even then, I was looking for meaning in the brutality of this place.

I could see the alley from where I parked as I pulled up at the school. This place marked a vivid memory, but it is not the only one. For these pothole-pocked streets were the sites that my young self ollied up street curbs and stuck two feet to grip tape, the sublime vibration of urethane and wood moving through my body in the-sorcerous mastery of motion and momentum. Close by was the place I smoked my first cigarette, in the alleys we would run through at night as teenagers, sneaking out to share a bottle of stolen wine. These were the places I first heard Nirvana, where we held a vigil in the far end of the soccer field the day Kurt died, where I was consumed with the need not only to play guitar but to channel those same

destructive forces of creation in my parent's garage, that slowly began its transformation into THE SHED, a prolific jam space and teen angst incubator. [86]

As memory would have it, or as I would have memory, this was also the first place where I first learned anything about Ktunaxa Nation. For Amy Woodland was the place I met my first Ktunaxa friend, my childhood buddy Tyler Josef. He was a rebellious figure, with braided cornrows hanging down over a bandana, sauntering through the hallways with a sneering disdain for all his surroundings. We had to be friends. He introduced me to Snoop Dogg and taught me the importance of rebellion, as we skipped school to hang out at the Tamarack Mall until my Dad came busting in, storming straight through a group of older kids who scrambled out of his way as he cut a path like an angry lawnmower, a dark and furious Moses parting the sea, dragging me out to the parking lot and a long ride home in smoldering silence.

I'm sure my parents thought Tyler was a bad influence. I remember my mom, a second wave feminist, freaking out when I brought home "Doggystyle." I experienced a kind of childish glee as she ranted around the house about misogyny, confiscating my new rap tapes. The truth was, Tyler wasn't a bad influence. I was mischievous, had a penchant for trouble and a persistent need to push boundaries, break rules and see what I could get away with. Looking back, whether we were skipping school or stealing Christmas lights to smash gleefully on the road, I'm not sure who was a worse influence, or if either of us were. Worst is the wrong word, I think our influences at that time were complimentary. One thing is for sure, that for

[86] Memory is an important contact point. For if the Ktunaxa utilize a different historiography than we do in the settler myth world, memory can be a medium to interpret convergence points…

a year in grade seven, we made a good team of young rebels at the elementary school.

There was something else that stuck with me from our brief friendship. It was the first memory I have of Sam Steele days. We had all been assigned some heritage-inspired art project, a seemingly benign exercise to waste a few hours in the afternoon. Tyler drew a train on fire, pelted with arrows. I can't quite remember what it looked like and I didn't really understand the historical significance at the time, but I know I thought it was cool.

The teacher did not share that opinion. I'm sure the teacher did not have a clue what to do with this piece of pre-pubescence political resistance. What had begun as an afternoon art project had turned into something entirely different when Tyler drew that burning train, violating some unspoken secret and the boundaries of what settler educators in my hometown considered acceptable ways of expressing history. The teacher processed this act as if he was misbehaving, and employed a contextually confirmed behavior mitigation strategy, sending Tyler home for the day and calling his parents. Still, in a very profound way, Tyler had illustrated the fractures in our society that remained unresolved, unspoken. It was a symbol of the unanswered land question, of unredressed wrongs that lingered in our shared history, forces I was completely unaware of. Through his drawing he destabilized the legitimacy of Sam Steele days, of the classroom, of the authority of the teacher and the institution she represented. That picture destabilized our entire settler myth world.

That drawing cemented his iconic status in my young mind as the ultimate rebel. In my view at the time, he was fighting against an oppressive system ruled by

adults who wanted you to be at school during school hours and come home for supper. But even at that age I sensed there was something more to it, some hint of another kind of rebellion that was unfamiliar to me. I was beginning to experience an awareness that Tyler was from a world far different than mine, fighting a very different battle. This awareness disturbed me, for it was a conflict that I was involved in. The heavy truth of history lay waiting to break my heart, illuminating the conflict that divided us. Unlike my X-Force comic books, I was not on the side of the underdog, the heroes I looked up to that fought against overwhelming odds for righteous ideas and all the good in the world. I was on the side of the oppressor.

Creation Stories

I was awash with memories of Tyler and the burning train as I stooped through the doors of the school into the hallway at Amy Woodland. It felt uncomfortably small, as though the ceiling had been lowered, or the whole place had been shrunk down for some strange experiment in perspective. In this miniaturized version of the school that loomed so large in my memory stood Joe Pierre, a towering man with a reddish beard and a warm smile. He led me to his office, a place I remembered the computer room used to be, filled with bins full of perforated printer paper we'd relish ripping the edges off, pulsing with the nuclear hum of ancient black screens, dull green glyphs and stacks of floppy disks you had to hold with two hands. Now the walls were covered in posters and maps of Ktunaxa Nation.

As thoughts of Tyler's drawing and other memories filled my head, Joe showed me a map of what I knew as the Kootenays, and a concept that would

forever change the way I look at the region where I grew up. He told me of the creation story, how it functioned like a map, illustrating the connection of Ktunaxa people to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The condensed version is public and quite succinct, easily accessible from the Ktunaxa Nation homepage. It is not the full creation story, for to hear that story would require a very special invitation and five uninterrupted days of attentive listening. But this version fulfills an important public function. It goes something like this:

In the time before people there was some disturbance caused by a huge sea monster known as Yawuʔnikʼ, who killed many of the animals. A council was called by the Chief animal, Naɬmuq¢in, who was so tall that he had to crawl on his hands and knees, for if he stood up his head would hit the ceiling of the sky. It was decided that Yawuʔnikʼ had to be destroyed. A war party was formed.

Yawuʔnikʼ was sighted and the chase was on. At that time, the Kootenay River and the Columbia Lake were joined. As the chase proceeded, Naɬmuq¢in gave names to many locations along the Kootenay River, Kootenay Lake, Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River.

The chase would go on and on. Every time the war party thought they had Yawuʔnikʼ cornered, Yawuʔnikʼ would escape again. One day sitting on the river bank observing the chase was a wise old one named Kikʲum. Kikʲum told Naɬmuq¢in, You are wasting your time and energy chasing the monster. Why not use your size and strength and with one sweep of your arm, block the river from flowing into the lake and the next time the monster enters the lake you will have him trapped. Naɬmuq¢in took the advice of Kikʲum and did as he was told. The next time Yawunikʼ entered the lake, he was trapped.

When Yawuʔnikʼ was killed, he was taken ashore and butchered and distributed among the animals. There remained only the innards and bones. The ribs were scattered throughout the region and now form the Hoo Doos seen throughout the area. Naɬlmuq¢in then took the white balloon-like organ, known as the swim bladder, and crumbled it into small pieces and scattered it in all directions saying, these will be the white race of people'. He then took the black ingredient from the inner side of the backbone, the kidney, and broke it into small pieces and scattered them in all directions declaring, These will be the black race'. He then took the orange roe and threw the pieces in all directions saying, These will be the yellow race of people'.

Naɬmuq¢in looked at his bloody hands and reached down for some grass to wipe his hands. He then let the blood fall to the ground saying, This will be the red people, they will remain here forever'.

There is a lot of profound information in this condensed version of a condensed creation story and important reasons that this particular version of the story is shared. The first item of importance is its reference to the landscape. This story includes most of the Ktunaxa place names, through the upper Columbia and Kootenay watersheds, from Golden to Cranbrook to Libby, from Bonners ferry through Nelson up to Revelstoke. All of those names are included in a story that is a definitive statement about Ktunaxa territory, the historical creation of this landscape, its connection to Ktunaxa culture and the inheritance of that land from beings who have become the modern day Nupika's or spirit helpers. It is a spiritual and cultural history, but it also gives context for modern Ktunaxa culture. And just like Isadore's speech to the representatives of the Queen during that Easter of 1887, it is also a declaration of territorial sovereignty. Through the idea of blood that drips from Naɬlmuqȼin's hands onto the long grass that grows everywhere in the Kootenay, a corporeal connection to time and place is made, dissolving the boundaries between flesh and the landscape. In this way, the Ktunaxa are woven into the land at its emergence, here since human-time began.

The creation story is also an incredible source of perspective shifting geographical information. For after talking about the complexity of the creation story with Joe, he traced the route that Naɬlmuqȼin took on the map. It was kind of like staring at one of those magic eye posters, when you look long enough, relax your eyes, an image emerges. That image was ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa - "the land of the

people" or "people's land."[87] The two rivers, the Kootenay and Columbia, circle around each other like a snake trying to eat its tail, creating a kind of inland-island, separated only by a small strip of land at Canal Flats. I had never thought about it before, but sure enough, the region where I grew up, when you look at it, it resembles an anatomical heart. A heartland.

Knowing Indigenous Places

When I started coming back to Cranbrook with the intention of learning all the intricate layers of its history, I was filled with wild, optimistic, even mystical ideals. I was in the last year of my undergraduate degree at UBC and I had just finished a fascinating course on the history of places that had changed my perspectives on the world in a profound way. I was in my mid thirties and had gone back to school as a mature student. I was really enjoying my daily routine of reading and writing, a welcome break from drywall dust in my eyes. I was feeling pretty optimistic about life in general.

One of the transformative books I had read was *Wisdom Sits in Places,* the popular Ethnohistory of Apache understandings of place.[88] In this work, Keith Basso attempted to bridge a gap between Settler and Indigenous understandings of place, or at least explore the potency of time and story held by Indigenous landscapes. It was fascinating. I drank it like a Gabor Mate apostle chugging ayahuasca, altering my

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[87] Elder Liz Gravelle, *personal conversation,* Tobacco Plains 2019

[88] Keith H. Basso *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 2006

senses, my perception of the world, the way I see time, the way I understand place. It was intellectually euphoric.

I've since heard enough self-righteous settlers quote that book, or probably more accurately, reference that book without a specific quote, that it has kind of lost its appeal to me. Basso did incredibly innovative work that few scholars could dream of doing, exploring the connections between land and memory via his use of Bahktin's chronotopes, where time becomes space and flesh becomes charged, where, "geographical features have served the people for centuries as indispensible mnemonic pegs on which to hang the moral teachings of their history."[89] Yet, while this work could have fascinating implications for a study in Ktunaxa place-knowledge, it might also be true that books like this inadvertently do all the wrong things. They may perpetuate a long tradition of scholarly fetishism, providing yet another way for settlers to become 'experts' on Indigenous ways of knowing, to share with a predominately settler audience. As Adams said in the 1970's, it has long been a trend for "European scholars" to seize "Native intellectual space." Or, as Ktunaxa scholar Christopher Horsethief has written, researchers came and took resources without consent or benefit to the host community. Settlers could claim expertise in Indigenous ways of knowing places and profit from that resource without proper compensation, just as they staked out a gold claim in the 1800's.

It's a conflicting conundrum, considering how many scholars today are doing work that celebrate Indigenous knowledge. These scholars do important work, but what we must ask ourselves, who is this work important for? There can be no argument that Indigenous systems of knowledge stand on their own and have for

[89] Basso 62

millennia, with or without settler validation. To suggest that Indigenous knowledge is still 'discoverable' and 'acquirable' for settler academics, is an argument only possible from within the settler myth world. In a way, it upholds the imagined hierarchy of knowledge created by settler colonialism in the first place.

Perhaps, by attempting to spread the wisdom of those messages, we only cast out our own myths. By looking at the magic of place, scholars take Indigenous experience and create a space through institutional discourse to capture the perceived mysteries of Indigenous knowledge, as well as the ways of knowing time and place connected to them, asserting a kind of illusionary ownership, while also changing that knowledge. By unlocking these ideas it created its own self-referential authority, a scholarly theory of place and Indigeneity that becomes a feedback loop of ingoing and outgoing influences, divorced from the lived experience of modern and historical Indigenous people, bolstered by post modernist theory. It becomes a form of benevolent colonialism, its own distinct force in the settler myth world, and it also changes that knowledge in translation from one myth world to another.

I am no exception to this process and I am undoubtedly writing this entire thesis from within the settler myth world. This is why it is important for the identification of this practice, my own practice included, as folds in the knot of colonial dissonance reaching towards Indigenous myth worlds from within the settler myth world. There is an inherent conflict in this idea, such as there is an inherent conflict in settler colonialism. It is again, *colonial dissonance* at work – the yearning to learn, include and celebrate another group's knowledge, while potentially exploiting and benefiting from those resources that make that group what it is. Perhaps the only way that Indigenous knowledge can be shared in a de-

colonial framework, the only way it can be pulled outside the settler myth world, if our current scholarly process can accomplish that at all, is when Indigenous people are not just participants, creators and collaborators, but also the audience and the beneficiaries of this work. Yet this may not be entirely possible either, for once that knowledge is circulated through colonial institutions, it influences, but is also influenced by that institution and its language, methodologies, discourses, etc.

Settlers have been appropriating Indigenous traditions for a long time. My family was no different. I remember dream catchers hanging up in the house, next to crystals that spun tiny rainbows around the kitchen at morning. I remember learning simplified versions of the medicine wheel and reading Carlos Castaneda books on trans dimensional spirit warriors. A hodge-podge blend of unspecific appropriated Indigenous spirituality to fill a void inside left from the covenant we made when we severed ourselves from our ancestral homes. And perhaps this fascination with Indigenous place was simply more of the same.[90] For if we can imagine a place, we can make it ours. We can divorce it from the people who live there with theories, then we can own those spaces, intellectually.

If I had gone back to Cranbrook with any ideas floating around in my head to try and write my own paltry version of "Wisdom sits in Places 2.0 Ktunaxa edition", which I would never be nearly a good enough scholar to do anyways, Joe Pierre set me straight pretty quickly. When we were looking at that map of Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis, I had asked what the name for what I knew as Mt. Baker, whose much older name is ʔakinmi, meant. He said that it doesn't matter what it means. It means ʔakinmi. That's its name. That's what its called. Yes, it has a story, one I've been invited to

hear. But it is not to be shared with scholars nor to be published by an outside scholar.[91]

At the time, I admit to being disappointed with Joe's brief explanation about place names. I was expecting something that would blow me away. A discovery. A guided tour through chronotopian landscapes and the Ktunaxa convergence of time and place. All it did was get me thinking about my own expectations. Why did it need to mean something profound to me? Why did I need something exotic to shift my perceptions of the land, of history, of time? What was I hungry for? Here was a chance to understand my own inner colonial impulse coming through, my inner Indiana Jones wanting to find treasure and dodge poison darts, as the dissonance guided me forward.

All of this is important, but it also misses the point. For Joe's point of sharing the creation story or looking at the map, I believe, wasn't about an opportunity to expand on de-colonial or place-based theory. It was to situate this story in the heartland. To situate the story within a Ktunaxa world. From there, the story doesn't begin when Sam Steele gets to the Kootenay. It doesn't begin when I first moved to Cranbrook. It doesn't begin with theories of Indigenous landscapes and worldviews and the binds of kinship and story creating a corporeal sense of place charged through time. It simply begins, in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Infallibility of Ktunaxa places and names

Joe didn't need to tell me the story of that particular place, nor any story behind any of the names on the map he showed me. The actual stories behind those names are a sacred part of Ktunaxa culture and told through a system of ceremonies that outsiders do not have privy too, except by special invitation. I think the main reason is that an explanation is insufficient, is that the act of requesting an explanation underscored a mythological function. For Joe, it was enough that this was a Ktunaxa place. That it had a Ktunaxa name. It did not need to be explained, to *be.* It did not need to be legitimized by scholars in order for it to be legitimate.[92] Because it simply is. It exists with or without settlers to see it. It doesn't need to be heard by me, in order for it to have a story. It already has one. Settler history can move through the region in the way that we imagine it, but it does not replace Ktunaxa history. Our names can dot the map, but the Ktunaxa never forgot their traditional geography. Nothing, not maps, nor books, nor treaties, nor our imagining of time itself, can ever change that.

I learned a lot in the course of that first conversation with Joe, as we talked through the afternoon and he told me about the name of his son. It had an English translation, but he made a point to forbid his son to translate it for anyone. That he

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[92] In notes of a first draft of this chapter, my supervisor remarked that I make a contradictory stance here, one that I claim Ktunaxa names, places and culture exist of their own, outside the settler myth world and without settler affirmation, while in doing so, I affirm it. I realize now that this is a fundamental problem of perspective. For if the audience is a settler institution, then I am indeed performing a contradictory act. Although, I claim that the Ktunaxa places/names exists without us affirming them, so anything taken as affirmation is also, irrelevant. For the audience is the affirmation that matters to the performer, and the Ktunaxa do not perform their culture for a settler audience. I may observe and affirm from my own myth world, in a scholarly institution as such, but it still cannot change the infallibility of Ktunaxa knowledge, a world that exists on its own terms. My presence and observation have little to do with the Ktunaxa performance or the Ktunaxa audience that proliferate their own Ktunaxa myth world.

never need explain what it means. For the translation didn't matter. For the translation of a Ktunaxa name, the translation of the meaning of the name, did not need to occur for it to hold meaning. His name was what it was and he should never explain it.

Explanations can be a powerful way of telling stories, of getting to the truth. Explaining the world through rigorous observation and analysis is indeed a corner stone of science and western philosophy. But explanations can also be an act of diminishment, an act that asks for validation of one's existence in another's world. Who has the right to validate another's knowledge? Why should Ktunaxa people ever have to explain what their names mean, even to the naively curious? The explanation perpetuates the very system that makes it possible to ask for an explanation in the first place.

There are hierarchies of power that exist within a question. This is an idea that I think has important implications for ethnographic scholarship, especially, when the scholar is situated inside the settler myth world and working with Indigenous knowledge, looking to glean something from an Indigenous myth world. Any time a question emerges with the impulse to discover, to explain, to validate, include or even create a safe space, we should be suspicious of the mythic influences underlying those questions.

A few years later, during the Ktunaxa annual General Assembly in Akiskunuk, I was having a conversation with Joe about names, and how they related to his ideas on reconciliation. For him, he was hopeful to see a time when settlers could simply call places in the Kootenays by their Ktunaxa names. No need for explanations, just a normalized use of Ktunaxa names to identify familiar places. For to say the names,

those names become familiarized in one's geography of the world, a certain kind of acknowledgement of where one is. It does not to be valorized, fetishized or critically understood. They just need to be said. Say the names.

Lessons from Isadore

> *Isadore the Chief spoke in reply*
> *and became exceedingly insolent,*
> *he dashed his staff on the ground,*
> *took a pistol and placed it by his side*
> *and said that it was for him to say*
> *what lands he would grant the Queen,*
> *and not that she should dictate to him.*

Isadore's defiant speech on that Easter weekend in 1887 rings out through the century, weighted thick with meaning. I thought about it a lot over the course of this project and it occurred to me that not only was it a declaration of territorial sovereignty that remains un-extinguished, it was a useful roadmap for anyone seeking to engage in research with Ktunaxa Nation. For within these words is a statement about power.

Consent continues to be a minimum standard for Ktunaxa Nation Council to endorse a research project today. I started this project soon after an author had earned the ire of KNC, after publishing a fictionalized novel that included the use of cultural knowledge they gleaned from a Ktunaxa Elder. This opened up a lot of controversy, but at its heart was a question about how settlers should approach working with First Nations. For KNC, it was simple as a matter of consent, working through the ethics process to achieve that. As Ktunaxa historian and writer Troy

Sebastian reiterates, "that is how we will get to consent: by telling Ktunaxa stories in our way with partners who respect and affirm our ability to say yes."[93]

Isadore's proclamation, if we listen, may shift our perspective even further, beyond the protocols of obtaining consent. It can shift our settler worldview, our perspective of power, our imagined hierarchy of worlds. In the last chapter we will talk more about positionality and Steele being in the center of this story. In Isadore's speech here, he situates himself in the center. He speaks from a Ktunaxa historical perspective, from the center of the story. That center could be argued to lie outside the settler myth world. A center situated in the heart of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Isadore demonstrated a precedent so many years ago – that when outsiders come to seek a resource, be it land or stories, it is ultimately up to Ktunaxa people to say which stories they would grant us, not for us to dictate to them. *This is a profound shift in perspective, that research is not done through the terms of the researcher, or the institution, nor any well meaning de-colonial indigenous methodological framework or discourse – it is only for the Ktunaxa to decide what, why and how they share, never the other way around.* It reverses a power dynamic, perhaps one that we are not even aware of as well meaning allies. When approaching Ktunaxa history, power should never be perceived to be in settler hands, it should be seen in Ktunaxa ones.

[93] Troy Sebastian https://quillandquire.com/omni/misrepresentation-and-the-truth-of-ktunaxa-consent-a-response-from-ktunaxa-nation-council/

Sharing and the Ethics Process

Even though Ktunaxa people are protective of their history and culture, there are many examples of times when they choose to share to a larger public. One example is when certain individuals are called from the spirit world to do so. A recent example includes the case of the Jumbo Ski resort and the dream of Chris Luke. For Luke, what compelled him to share intimate cultural knowledge came from a dream on his deathbed, and the visitation of seven Grizzly bears. According to Luke, "I know from the visitation I got from the grizzly bears that I have an obligation – a purpose and the plan is to reject any kind of development that's going to happen in the Jumbo Valley."[94] These points in time are another example of *convergence points*, and how they can be multi-directional, intersections where Ktunaxa send their narratives into the settler world, where they make contact, overlap or collide. Places where Ktunaxa perspectives need be shared to expose omissions, to hear the truth, to seek justice, to fulfill spiritual obligations, to answer dreams. To set the record straight.

The participation of Ktunaxa Nation in these convergence points are determined by Ktunaxa people. In research projects, they take time and trust-building between researcher, Ktunaxa individuals and the larger Ktunaxa Nation. When they do happen, there is a certain amount of vulnerability involved and a lot at stake. For Ktunaxa individuals, it is not simply a personal decision. They must be wary of what they share, so as to respect their families and relations when they do so, as well as interests of the larger Nation. It is a big responsibility. This is why the

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[94] Ian Cobb *e-know Nov.* 2011 *https://www.e-know.ca/news/ktunaxa-celebrate-qat%E2%80%99muk-declaration-with-akisqnuk-gathering/*

notion of "walk softly," an important cornerstone of Ktunaxa philosophy, sets the pace for the ethics process. The concept of walking softly reminds one to be mindful of ones words and actions, and how those actions affect the world around them. That mindfulness is not beholden to a researcher or writers deadlines, a meeting with the council, or a claim of due diligence by notifying the Nation about a prospective project. It is built through relationships, with many different people involved in the Nation, throughout its sectors of governance and cultural infrastructure.

This is why Ktunaxa ethics process is a lengthy one. It first requires contact, then identification of a project's potential benefits by the Ktunaxa Research Council. If the project is approved, it is invited to be heard by the Ktunaxa Elders Group. From then, it befalls to Ktunaxa individuals to decide if the project is a worthy use of their time, whether they have an interest in contributing to a particular project and whether that project is beneficial. For the work should be a benefit to the Nation as whole and also to its individuals. These steps are the best way that the Ktunaxa Nation can protect and share their important economy of cultural knowledge, one whose exploitation by outsiders in the past, have made it necessary for the Nation to install these vetting and protective measures. As I have heard the Ktunaxa scholar Dr. Christopher Horsethief say time and time again, "our cultural knowledge is our most important resource and it belongs to us."[95]

Getting to ethics approval took me a very long time, at least two years, and certainly stretched out the time frame for my MA thesis considerably. Some scholars before me were outright rejected. UBC anthropologist Leslie Robertson, who

[95] Christopher Horsethief *personal conversation* 2018

undertook an thorough ethnography of the Fernie curse, recorded the conversion with the Elders group when they turned her research down, claiming that, "another person came here to write a book, and we never heard from them again, never got any money."[96] Robertson, to her credit, took this to heart and found other ways to include sources from local people in her work. If and when a Ktunaxa person contributed information, it was not misrepresented to be an endorsement by the larger Nation, unlike some of the claims that recent researchers and authors have made in their works that have sparked controversy.

Toys in the Sandbox

After over a hundred years of the St. Eugene's reserve and the residential school system, cultural genocide, systemic racism and the fallout from alcohol and drug related addictions to cope with the effects of these devastating events, intergenerational trauma is a part of the Ktunaxa Nation's struggle. I had seen manifestations of it first hand when I was young and went out to the reserve, at a time when the old mission school sat looming over ʔaq'am, dark and menacing. I saw it in violence that got way out of hand, in the everyday racism of my hometown, in the struggle for sobriety of many of my friends. I saw it in suicides, in accidents, in death, in recovery. I've had friends tell me many survival stories during this research process, harrowing and horrible, private and confidential stories of addiction and abuse. Even though the Ktunaxa nation is recovering from this dark era, it still lingers in the background.

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[96] Leslie Robertson, *Imagining Difference: Legend, Curse and Spectacle in a Canadian Mining Town,* UBC Press (2005)

One of my old Ktunaxa friends, Norman Allard, now works at Yaqan Nukiy or Lower Kootenay band outside Creston. We used to go to school together at pathfinders, above the legion. I saw him recently, grabbing lunch in Creston, where we caught up on life after alternate school and paid our respects to a friend who had passed on. I told him a bit about the research I was doing and he shared something that stuck with me, a kind of parable as to how I might navigate that sense of collective trauma, or how to be more mindful of it when I'm talking to people about my research. He told it to me like this:

> "Its like if you took a child, playing with his favorite toy, his only toy, in the playground. One day a bigger kid comes along. He takes the toy, he breaks this favorite toy. Then he abuses this kid, beats him up, takes everything else he has, leaves him there. All that kid is left with is that broken toy. He's traumatized by what happened, and the toy is all he has left, but it's broken. So he tries to put it back together himself. Maybe he's not even doing it right. But it's all he's got. Then some other big kid comes along and asks if he can see the toy, if he can help fix it. So the kid holds on tighter to the toy. What would you do? Would you want to give it up? No, you'd tighten your grip on it."[97]

There may be some components of this analogy that not everyone in Ktunaxa Nation would agree with, but there is something powerful in his words. If that toy is culture, and settlers had already tried to break it, what is our expectation if we wish to be allies, now? If our ancestors were the cause of that dark era, how can we ever separate ourselves from that darkness?

What makes approaching the Nation so complicated, is that no matter how we debate the ethics of what we are trying to do - we, as settlers, remain those big kids in Norman's parable. We are and always have been, an existential threat to

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[97] Norman Allard Jr. *personal conversation* 2019

Ktunaxa Nation. A threat to Ktunaxa *being.*[98] We've grown up within the settler myth world, its ideas engrained within us. Colonialism required our ancestors to build its empire. It requires us today to be here, to keep it going. It is a dissoluble equation – one that will never go away. We will continue to be bound within this world – an inseparable part of the settler assemblage. We can never explain ourselves out of our position, no matter how good our intentions.

At the general assembly in ʔakisq'nuk, I was given a button with a picture of Isadore and his kin. I placed it up on my visor, and as I drove through Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis over the next several years meeting with members of the Nation, he was there, watching me. I think he was there for a reason. To remind me of that speech I found in the letters. To remind me that it was up to Ktunaxa people to decide what to share, not the other way around. To follow the lead of the Nation in question, as best I could. To try and establish those convergent points – but know that it will always be up to Ktunaxa Nation to decide if they will benefit from that convergence. To refrain from viewing the ethics process as steps to go through on the way to achieve something, but as a journey that holds its own teachings. A journey perhaps without end, rich with stories that defy explanation or expectation, owned by the resilient people in the beautiful country of Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis.

Setting the Record Straight

Ktunaxa Elders Group

It was a crisp fall morning, my favorite time of year in the Kootenays, as the tamaracks begin to change, lining the mountains in green and gold. I was excited as I drove from the cabin I was living in Creston, on my way to Cranbrook to talk with the Elders group. Dr. Christopher Horsethief had been in the process of setting up these research groups for a while now, consulting and collaborating with Ktunaxa Elders on research initiatives. I was thankful to have been given some time to talk to them.

I pulled into the driveway of Ktunaxa Nation governance building, situated inside the old Tembec building, once the mainstay of the local timber economy. The group was busy, and obviously had many other projects on the go. I waited my turn, nervous as I always get before public presentations. There were added stakes here and I kept going over the best way to give a pitch of my research, knowing that it triggered a painful history, in the most concise way possible without hurting or offending anyone. I got up and stammered it all out, stumbling over some of my words, I think, but getting the content of the letters out for the group to hear.

I was offered a seat, while the Elders silently digested my chaotic blitz of a presentation. Slowly, some of the Elders began to speak. Alfred Joseph began, remembering how bad racism used to be when he was young, growing up in Cranbrook. He remembered how he was forced to sit in the back of the restaurant

when he would go out to eat, how "Indians" were forced to sit in specific seats at the old Armonde movie theatre, separated from the white audience.

More Elders began to share. Connections to Cranbrook's once bustling Chinatown were made apparent several times, evidence that the Chinese and Ktunaxa shared some kind of connection, if not through families at least at a socio-economic level. Herman Alpine shared a story of some of the old swindlers and bootleggers, a Hogarth and an Eckels, who would sell booze out of Chinatown. Then he spoke of the racism he experienced in Cranbrook. He remembered how he was confronted with it everyday. How he learned to live with it, how he learned to get used to it. How he *survived* it.

Sophie Pierre then spoke up and shared a similar story of discrimination. Her family also would go to Chinatown to eat and shop, the only place her family was allowed in the segregated town. Even in that place, they were forced to sit behind a curtain in the back of the restaurant.

One by one the Elders spoke. All recounted the racism they endured. Talking about the uprising caused these traumatic memories to come to the surface. I'm not sure what I expected, but sharing this history triggered the painful experiences of racism for all of the Elders of the Ktunaxa Elders Group. Though I've read a hundred books on the kind of systemic racism so intrinsic to colonialism, this hit me hard in the gut. It hits home when you hear these first hand stories of the place I grew up, the place I was intimately familiar, yet never truly experienced the darkness that lurked here, barely beneath the surface.

These were the stories that my research on Sam Steele invoked in the Elders – the bitter sting of racism, of persecution, of injustice. Of being forced to sit in the

back of a Chinese restaurant, the only restaurant they were allowed inside. Of being told the reason you were doing so was because you were special, as your parents tried to protect you from the horrible truth of the world. Here were the wounds first opened by Sam Steele's excursion into the Kootenay, the scars of a long dark century. A symbol of the profound and courageous spirit to endure, to heal in a history of pain. The will to survive under an immense weight of a dark and menacing world that covered up the sky. A world my ancestors constructed. That I was a part of.

Digging up this history brought up very painful memories, the most uncomfortable of truths. It was an intense truth to bear witness to, one that I didn't know what to do with, probably still don't, and would not write any of it down if I didn't believe that all of this was shared with me for some purpose, that this convergence point was somehow an answer to those letters, a response to the settler narrative of the birth of this place. It was a truth that burned hot and angry. It was a truth that not only needed to be heard, it needed to be felt. I left that day feeling an immense ache in my chest, the colonial abyss seeming to deep and profound to ever hope to cross.

But I was invited back.

On my second visit, the Elders group decided to share a little more with me. Not much, mind you, but just enough to encourage me to continue. We began the session talking about oral histories, and Dr. Horsethief gave an introduction that talked about the accuracy of Ktunaxa Oral histories and how these settler sources might serve to corroborate them. A convergence point.

I proceeded to that letter that included Chief Isadore's speech, I heard rumbles when I got to the part when Isadore, "said that it was for him to say what lands he would grant the Queen, and not that she should dictate to him."

After I finished reading the letter, the Elders sat thoughtfully in silence. Soon they began to speak. Emilia Danyluck spoke first, and suggested I look further into O'Reilly's journals, as well as the pre-emption surveys that went along with it. She claimed that every community O'Reilly went through, echoed the same sentiments as Isadore. That every Chief claimed the territory in a public setting, re-iterating Ktunaxa ownership of traditional territory from mountain to mountain, valley to valley. This would mean of course, that the whole of the Columbia Valley were claimed, from the Rockies to the Purcell's, and that the whole of the Kootenay Lake valley was claimed as well, from the Purcell's to the Selkirk's. One of the Elders claimed that the Ktunaxa territory stretched as far west as Rock Creek.

Emilia, who was from ʔakisq'nuk, claimed that Chief Michel, the ʔakisq'nuk Chief who held a leadership position at around the same time as Isadore in the 1880's, had made a similar speech. Chief David also made a powerful speech in Tobacco Plains at the same time, one that had trans-national implications, as he claimed his house would be cut in half, as that territory was divided by the border. His speech has been documented and there is a transcript available, something I would learn much more about later on the project, through my conversation with Liz Gravelle in Tobacco Plains. Chief Isadore, Chief David and Chief Mathias all seemed to echo the same sentiment in unison – this land belongs to us, and no one, not the Queen nor her representatives, will change that.

Another Elder suggested it might be fruitful to think about Ktunaxa territory in terms of trap lines. The swaths of territory that linked the land and families through hunting rights, kinship ties and game migrations, stewarded by specific Ktunaxa families. All of the Elders suggested it might be best to speak with Elders individually, and the group proceeded to come up with names of people I should talk to. Liz Gravelle of Tobacco Plains, would know, they said. Mary Basil. Herman Alpine. Robert Williams. Anne Jimmie. Sophie Pierre.

Several of the Elders began to drift over to the coffee table, as I could feel the session winding down. I sat beside Herman. As we sipped coffee, he leaned over casually and said, "this is interesting research." He paused, then added thoughtfully, "it might be time to set the record straight."

He then told me of a dream he had, a dream where Chief Isadore was there, talking to Herman in Ktunaxa:

> *It was back around that time, in the 1880's, when Steele was entering the territory. Faced with a grave decision on how to respond to this threat, Isadore had to decide whether to lead his people to war, to attack Steele's militia or try to negotiate and avoid bloodshed. The Ktunaxa had the numbers, they knew the country and had many allies with the Flathead to the south - they could have easily wiped them out quickly. Isadore then spoke to the Great Nupika. The Nupika told Isadore that he could kill all of Sam Steele's men, and all of the settlers if he wished, ridding the country of all of these people. Yet, if he did so, there would be a terrible price. Great sorrow and death would follow. Caring for the lives and the future of the people he was in charge of,*

Isadore decided to negotiate, instead of going to war. This dream was spoken all in Ktunaxa.[99]

While I was thinking about what he told me, Herman chuckled and remarked that Isadore was kind of like John Wayne to him – a hero. That Isadore watches over him, one of Herman's Nupika's, a guardian spirit. He said that when he looks into Isadore's eyes in a picture, that he sees just that. He sees a hero, a saint, a guardian angel.

Isadore is everywhere in Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis, in the Ktunaxa past and present. Through stories, relations, song and ceremony. His image adorns buttons given out at the AGA. His image is present at the St. Eugene resort and casino and many families can trace their lineage to Isadore. Isadore's presence is felt everywhere throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa today.

Re - Conciliation

After the second session, I said my goodbyes, gathered some contact information and made my way to the front door of old Tembec building. Tembec was once a logging superpower, a company that supplied the bulk of the jobs in Cranbrook throughout the last century, until NAFTA and the softwood lumber crisis brought the industry to a crippling standstill, rendering more than a handful of my friend's fathers into unemployed alcoholics. Like many buildings in Cranbrook, it was an empty building, or it had seemed empty the whole time I lived there, but those empty buildings still held memories for me. For here were these perfect cement benches that rose from the uncut grass, benches I always wanted to grind

[99] Herman Alpine *personal conversation* 2018

but never could, as the approach was always un-skatable. These days, the approach seemed to be paved.

As I made my way out of this familiar building, skateboard geography spilling out of my memory palace into the familiar parking lot, Dr. Horsethief's father, Pete Sanchez, followed me out.

"It seems to be going well," he said, "Looks like it's all coming together."[100]

'Thanks,' I said, "I hope it all came across okay." I had really tried not to come across as an arrogant "expert" on Ktunaxa history, while providing enough information that people had a good grasp of what I was doing and why it was relevant…and hopefully, exciting. I tried to refrain from asking questions, as I had been skeptical about even using questions in my methodology at all, but I got a bit nervous and I wasn't really sure how well it all came out in the end.

"It did," he said. He paused, then added, "I just have a little advice for you. Maybe next time you might skip the whole reconciliation business. It's a sore spot for some of us."[101]

I hadn't realized I had even said that word, but it was likely I did. Its kind of one of those catch phrases, a safe one for settlers to use, a sign of being an 'ally', a de-colonial speech act. It is a mythic sign in many ways. The more I think about it, the more it represents a *benevolent colonialism* of its own, a term that suggests some kind of amiable friendship we all shared in the past, and as the research in this project progressed, the more it seemed a questionable suggestion at best. For reconciliation suggests a time of mutual cooperation, a time that is our moral and

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[101] Pete Sanchez, *Personal Conversation* Ktunaxa Elders Group, 2018

ethical duty to return to. But what does it mean if that time doesn't exist? If reconciliation is a myth?

Ktunaxa people remember what happened when the first settlers came and what came after. They remember a people hungry for gold and land who fought, stole, burned homes and in some cases, murdered Ktunaxa people. Behind them was the power of the colonial state, the system whose institutions we live within today. This isn't news for Ktunaxa people.

"You see," he went on, "for us, in order for there to be re-conciliation, there had to be *conciliation*." He smiled, taking some enjoyment in his turn of phrase.

I get it. Or at least I think I do. I can see that here, with the way that history unfolded, it was clear that there was no time mythical era of conciliation for the Ktunaxa. Colonialism swept over the landscape like a violent tsunami, and leaders like Chief Isadore, Chief David, Chief Michel, did what they could to preserve what they could, their best to protect those they were bound to protect. They held on while the waves crashed and ushered in the long, dark century. That isn't conciliation. That is damage control.

Sophie Pierre

I had been looking forward to speaking with Sophie Pierre for a long time. She was the Chief of the Ktunaxa for many years, a formidable force in the resurgence movement of Ktunaxa culture at ʔaq'am. She is also the mother of Joe Pierre, the present day Nasookin of Ktunaxa Nation.

Sophie is also a prominent figure in Cranbrook and has been involved in efforts to create bridges between the Nation and the town itself for decades. She was

on the board of the local college, a Chief commissioner for the BC treaty process and is an officer of the Order of Canada. She even was one of the very first Sam Steele sweethearts.

Not that city council has ever given her much credit. As you drive into Cranbrook, on what we locals call the strip, you might notice banners adorning the street lights that line the highway. On those banners are names of Cranbrook's most important people. The usual hockey hall of famers of course – Yzerman, Neidermeyer and a slew of others you might not recognize unless you grew up in town.

Somewhere, hidden away behind the only clump of trees on the strip, is Sophie's name. Tucked away as and out of sight, it's a hard banner to find. Joe makes fun out of the situation, betting visitors they can't find it. He's usually right. The family struggled hard to even get it up in the first place, as the town tried to argue that Sophie's achievements were not applicable to Cranbrook's strip of fame, something along the lines that they did not represent the town or Canada on the world stage. Joe and family had to make the argument over and over again that it was. Eventually the town council acquiesced, screen printed Sophie's name on a banner, then placed it behind the only tree on the barren strip. Joe's humorous, if not cynical, challenge for visitors to find the banner on the road is a metaphorical tour through the elements that Sophie has spent a lifetime fighting against. To be seen against a system that wanted her to remain invisible.

I drove to meet Sophie out at ʔaq'am. It looked a lot different than I remembered. The last time I was out here was at my Dad's wedding twenty years ago, after the residential school had just been renovated. I have earlier memories of

that place. I remember when I was a teenager and the school was abandoned, a dark and hulking building that loomed menacingly over the reserve. We broke into it with some Ktunaxa friends when we when we were kids, climbing around inside, drinking beer, telling ghost stories and reciting bloody Mary. We didn't know any better, but felt a sense of evil thick in the musty air. It was especially pronounced on the top floor and the basement, a place even us rebellious punks were too afraid to explore. Those memories still send a shiver up my spine, a physical sensation of brushing up with evil lurking in a dark and terrible place.

The transformation was incredible. The school was now a hotel, framed in brightly stained pine and accented with colorful river stones. The golf course rolled out behind it, soft green fields that stretched alongside the St. Mary's River. Signs of prosperity were abundant, a new gas station, a big and bright LED community event board, a recently renovated band office. Things had really changed.

I met Sophie in the restaurant, catching her for lunch. We talked about the history of the area and the early days when the settlers first came. All of her knowledge had been passed down from her Mother's mother. The following is a record of our conversation according to my field notes.

A Wild and Lawless Country

Jesuit priests had arrived very early on and had influenced the Ktunaxa to start homesteading, which they were very successful at.[102] But trouble would start with the gold rush. As miners entered the area they began to interfere with the

[102] The Ktunaxa were very capable ranchers and homesteaders. This is co-oraborated in the evidence of Isadore's success as a rancher, whom in the settler record had been referred to as a great rancher by other ranchers and settlers, having at least 500 head of cattle, an incredibly large amount at that time, perhaps on his way to rival the Alberta "Big 4."

Ktunaxa in the midst of a very successful agricultural transition, "when the miners came they created havoc, they were after the minerals." Just like the Fraser Gold rush during the 'canyon war', the miners coming up from America had created a local militia, and that militia kept burning the Ktunaxa out of their homesteads. Sophie's ancestors were burned out of their homesteads during and after the wild horse gold rush and she claims that the first priests also brought fire. According to Sophie, "All of our stories that our history tells us is our people were getting burnt out left and right."[103]

The Ktunaxa had little recourse against these attacks. There was no legal arena to seek justice for the Ktunaxa during this influx, no way to address any of these wrongs to a representative of the encroaching settler state. According to Ktunaxa oral histories, "the government supported anyone that wasn't Indigenous….there were no record of those miners who committed crimes, they just let it slide."[104]

Burning is a symbolic act. An effort of extinguishment. It reinforced a pretext of emptiness, just as it set aflame the efforts of the Ktunaxa to adapt to the encroaching settler world. Burning was a metaphor for the ways land title was extinguished in the eyes of the settlers state, how cultural practices were extinguished in the eyes of the first priests, how Ktunaxa place names were erased by the miners and homesteaders that came after, how Ktunaxa law was ignored by the colonial government. It is a practice that continues to this day. As Sophie points

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[103] Sophie Pierre *Personal Conversation* 2019

[104] The correspondence letters here show Isadore presenting this to Steele and other authorities. Isadore, in his public statement, had brought up the fact that Ktunaxa people had been murdered by miners, and those crimes remained unpunished. This was part of the reason he gave for breaking his people out of jail.

out, settler governments continuously claim that, "that nobody was there," and that, "today the government still supports that notion, we still have to prove we existed." Still forced to rise from the ashes in the settler imagination.

The first wave of settlers brought a chaotic battle to continue existing for the Ktunaxa Nation. It was not a conciliatory period of mutual understanding and friendship. Pierre adds, "there was this romantic idea, of settlers coming here, but really what you had, was people who were lawless and would get away with anything." This was the beginning relations the two communities, a divisive cleft initiated by the first settlers that continues in many ways today. In understanding that aggressive division and desire to extinguish, we might better understand how Ktunaxa people are suspicious of settlers and the institutions they brought with them. Over time, that division also became a way for the Ktunaxa to protect themselves against settler colonialism, to survive and finally, persevere.

Special People

Those early divisions between the two communities stood like a wall between settler society and Ktunaxa peoples throughout the twentieth century. Those divisions were institutionalized, and while settler children could enjoy the increasing commodities of modern society – going to restaurants, movies and participate in civil life, the Ktunaxa were kept on the margins, hemmed in on the reserve, stuck in residential school, unwelcome in town.

Sophie remembers that painful part of her childhood, growing up in Cranbrook during the post-war era. Brushed under the rug by many Canadian historians, it was a time of what can only be called segregation. As Pierre notes, "In

the 50's there was still very overt racism, places you couldn't go into, places that wouldn't allow Indians."[105] Ktunaxa families were forced to shop in the few places that allowed them to, ostracized and exiled from the mainstream Cranbrook community.

In this environment, Ktunaxa families were forced to the margins. Some businesses dealt with the Ktunaxa, as Sophie notes, "Swanson's menswear were always good guys." Her Mother would make moccasins and tan hides and Swanson would buy them from her, one of the few white businesses that dealt with the Ktunaxa people during this time.

But Swanson's was an exception to the pervasive and racist rule of segregation. Sophie recalls that, "we had to shop in Cranbrook's Chinatown," one of the few parts of town whose people allowed Ktunaxa to enter their establishments. One such place was a restaurant owned by man named *Qwikle*. Sophie remembers her family would go there for dinner, but they "had to go in through the backdoor…there was a screen separating the back from the front, where the white people would sit." When young Sophie would ask her step-father why they were forced to sit there, hidden away, he would tell her that, "the reason we sit here is because we are special."

Sophie drew some comfort from that belief, that the reason she was sitting in the back of a restaurant behind a curtain because they were special, as her parents tried to shield her from the grotesque truth of colonialism and the racial segregation that was a part of daily life in Cranbrook, and all across Canada, in the mid-twentieth

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[105] Sophie Pierre *Personal Conversation*

century. Settlers had come to take the land to build a city on the hill, and the Ktunaxa were not welcome there.

Sam Steele Sweethearts and Being Seen

Despite the hardships and discrimination Sophie and her family endured growing up in Cranbrook, she still sought to create bridges between the two communities and maintain a visible presence for Ktunaxa Nation in Cranbrook. Perhaps her first act of doing so was during her tenure as one of Cranbrook's first Sam Steele sweethearts.

Sophie was working at drugstore in Cranbrook at the time, sometime in the late 1960's, when the chamber of commerce approached her, encouraging her to run in the newly created regional beauty pageant. In a moment of great historical irony, Sophie became part of the competition and became one of the first Sam Steele sweethearts.

It might seem ironic that a Ktunaxa woman was involved in a beauty pageant named after the man who was an instrument in the dispossession of Ktunaxa peoples so many years ago. But for her, the pageant served an important function. "The whole Sam Steele thing was interesting" Pierre remembers as she, "went from being invisible to becoming very visible."[106] In a great ironic convergence, she was inverting a settler myth during an event that was created in part to further settler mythology, bringing Ktunaxa representation from the margins to the center of the parade. It was an act of resistance, an unwillingness to be extinguished. For Sophie, at that point in history, it was important to be there representing the Ktunaxa, their

[106] Sophie Pierre *Personal Conversation* 2019

continued existence here and their un-extinguished title to the land, in the midst of settler festivities and search for regional symbolism.[107] It's a practice that continues today, as the Ktunaxa still participate in the Sam Steele parade, piloting several floats through the festivities, singing their songs, dancing their dances, insisting on being seen - accompanying Steele in the center of the ring.

Still, none of this is *Ktunaxa* history. These are Ktunaxa perspectives on settler history, those convergent points, areas where Ktunaxa interests coincide with a need to assert presence in the settler historical record. For perhaps Ktunaxa participation in projects like these, reflect the same impulse that guide Ktunaxa people to have a float at the parade or compete in the beauty pageant. It is not their festival, but it is important they remain a part of it.

The Ktunaxa maintain an awareness of the settler history, of being outside of it, while being skeptical of its legitimacy. During the project, settler history was continually been referred to as 'your history,' as though it were something completely separate. A saying I heard often was, 'you have your history, we have ours.' As Sophie explained it to me like this: "we realize its there (settler history), but it doesn't really mean anything to us, because we know our real history."[108] It shows a Ktunaxa awareness of the two myths worlds that exist in a place, and the Ktunaxa don't acknowledge the legitimacy of the other.

Still, these convergent points, these points of interpenetration through the myth worlds, can have potential benefits for both communities. As Sophie notes, "it doesn't do much for future generations to live with half-truths…it makes it worse

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[108] Sophie Pierre *Personal Conversation* 2019

when it comes out later that it was not so wonderful." In this way, it is important for us to confront the myths of Sam Steele and the early settlement of Cranbrook, "rather than continue myths that offer a distorted reality as Canadians, to continue misinformation." If there is any hope of real conciliation between the two communities, Sophie believes, "it is most important to face the truth. "[109] Sharing perspectives on history might continue Pierre's efforts to build bridges, to become those convergent points that help to build a better foundation between the two communities in ʔaq'am and in Cranbrook. A foundation of truth.

Isadore's Power

Ktunaxa history survives in Ktunaxa people. As Sophie emphatically points out, Ktunaxa history "is a living culture, not just something that happened 100 years ago…it continues to live, continues to be passed on." That is where the history of Isadore and the events that took place here continue to exist, through songs and dances, through Ktunaxa ceremony. It's difficult to share, because this part of the culture is currently not for outsiders to know. Sophie clarifies the position, that, "there are songs for Isadore…he had a power to break out those prisoners and there are songs and ceremonies about that….but we don't share those right now."

It seems that even recent history becomes enmeshed in Ktunaxa cultural practices and ceremonies. As Herman Alpine previously shared in the Elders Group that Isadore was like a Nupika to him, Sophie corroborates by talking about the songs that celebrate the supernatural powers of Isadore. She explains, "our ceremonies are thousands and thousands of years old, we incorporate history as we

[109] Sophie Pierre, *personal conversation* 2019

know it." The stories of Chief Isadore and the events that took place when Sam Steele came to the region become a part of that tradition, incorporated into the living Ktunaxa culture today. Ktunaxa history then, is known through Ktunaxa songs and ceremonies. For the Ktunaxa, history is an intimate thing. To know it, is to be Ktunaxa.

Liz Gravelle

Liz is a powerful woman. At 97, she is the eldest elder of Ktunaxa Nation. Her power is tangible. It can be felt talking with other Ktunaxa people when her name is spoken. Their tone of voice changes, gets softer. Eyes float downwards, thoughtful, humbled, reverent. Liz's name draws out something out of Ktunaxa people, a force felt throughout Ktunaxa Nation.

Liz is a keeper of history. She lives in Tobacco Plains, one of the six Ktunaxa communities and a nexus of important historical events. In her small frame she embodies an important nexus of two streams of time, at the center of important settler events in the region and the keeper of little known stories of Ktunaxa history. Like the Elk and Kootenay that intersect just a mile away, she embodies two worlds that join like two rivers, a confluence of time.

She is the great granddaughter of the great Chief David, who once laughed at a government official for being elected to his position, while he had earned his by facing a barrage of gunfire in war, unmoving, while "the bullets singed his hair." His son was another great Chief, Paul David, who led the plains Ktunaxa into the twentieth century. Chief Paul David's Granddaughter is Roweena, a Ktunaxa woman who married the regions first Indian agent and who would inadvertently became

the central figure in the legend of the Fernie 'Ghost rider', one of the regions most widely known settler myths. Rowena then bore a daughter, who bore a daughter. That granddaughter was Liz.

Liz is one of the last traditional Ktunaxa speakers. The Ktunaxa language is an isolate language family that bears no resemblance to the surrounding Salish languages of BC or the Algic language family of the Plains. Down to only a handful of speakers by the eighties, the language was on the verge of extinguishment. Liz worked with a linguist from Berkeley to create a Ktunaxa language dictionary, preserving the language, shaping the text and typeface used today. That dictionary is the base for all of the modern Ktunaxa language written and spoken through the Nation today.

Liz embodies two streams of belief as well. A powerful advocate for Ktunaxa land rights and preserver of language and culture, she is also a devoted Christian. She embodies Ktunaxa strength and her own fierce independence with such veracity that I sometimes wonder how that power can be held together, without blowing the roof off her home.

Liz was one of Canada's first female Chiefs, in the mid-1960's, a tradition that has recently been inherited by her Granddaughter, Heidi Gravelle, who became Chief in 2019. She jokes about the power that she holds, claiming she's like "Trump. Around these parts," with a devilish smirk. She has a mischievous grin, her eyes intelligent and bright, always analyzing, assessing. Nothing seems to get past her, and she'll continually remember small details from my previous visits and turn them into subtle jokes, details I thought had surely gone unnoticed.

Unjust Geography

The Ktunaxa name for Tobacco Plains is ʔakink' um ɬasnuqɬiʔit. The translation is quite a literal one. As Liz told me once after I asked her what it meant, she replied with a smirk, "Indians used to grow tobacco here." The Tobacco valley, known as South Country by settlers, is a flat plain that stretches along the southwestern edge of the Canadian Rockies, across the confluence of the Elk and Kootenay rivers straight through to Montana. It is hemmed in by the Rocky Mountains to the east, and the Kootenay river to the west. A lot of people are familiar with this area, but they don't know what it is. This area is more commonly known as Lake Koocanusa today, a not-so-witty combination of Kootenay, Canada and USA. The 'Kook,' is it's known in local vernacular, is a body of water created by the Libby dam that blocked the Kootenay. A casualty of the Columbia River Treaty projects underway in the 1970's & 80's, it has become a kind of party beach, a popular local tourist destination. Every year, Albertans and BC'ers alike, pull their fifth wheelers in to drive their side-by-sides and zip around on jet skis on the artificial lake. In the height of summer, thousands drive by the reserve, unaware of it being there. Tobacco Plains, ironically, has become one of the most ignored, yet heavily trafficked, communities in the area. Every year, thousands of tourists drive through, most not even knowing the name of the landscape that sped past their windows on their way to the fake lake.

Tobacco Plains Indian Band #2 is a 10 000 acre reserve. A perfect rectangle, it is drawn from the Montana border up alongside, but not quite connected to, the east shore of Koocanusa. Long time locals lamented the transformation of that part

of the river, where, "the rustling waters, where they reach the Libby dam impoundment called lake Koocanusa, are stilled forever."[110] The reserve is blocked from all of the major natural landmarks and resources in the valley, pushed up against the border without any direct access to the lake, nor the Kootenay or Elk rivers, nor the Rocky Mountains or the Elk Valley to the north east.

The very geography of the reserve is cheap.[111] Pinched. As if whoever had drawn up those old surveys hadn't even bothered to look at the surrounding area, or had cared so little as to make such an obvious gesture of contempt for the people that would try to build a future here. Looking at a map is infuriating - how could the reserve have no water access, when there is so much water around? Why does it not have mountain access, whose peaks and valleys are home to moose, bears, bighorn sheep, mountain goats and some of the largest herds of Elk in the west? How is it that the reserve misses the confluence of the two major rivers of the East Kootenays, were some of the best fly-fishing in the world takes place? Even visually experiencing its geography gives a sense of confinement, of enclosure, of being imprisoned, the key jangling just outside the bars.

Splitting my House in Two

The reserve, geographically, does not make much sense. Liz states that it should not be where it is located now. The original grounds of the local Ktunaxa during the early settlement period was at the "Big Village", the place where Libby, Montana sits today. From there they were moved further north, just south of the

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[110] Ernest Fee Helman *Kootenay Country: One Man's Life in the Canadian Rockies* Alaska Northwest Books 1990

Canadian Border, to what was known as Tobacco Plains # 1. Later, they were moved across the border to Tobacco Plains #2, the present site of the reserve.

It is obvious how the border disrupted this community. School children still have to be bused daily across the border to Eureka Montana, every day. Liz's mother and sister are buried on the American side, and she feels the personal sting of those imaginary border lines cut through her own family. This was a sentiment that echoed the protests of the original reserve allotments. As Liz remembers:

> Well, that's when Chief David said, right, 'What is the border? You're cutting my house in half.' Which is right, I got my mothers people from there, my fathers people are from this side…so I got more relatives down there than I have here.[112]

At the time of settlement in the 1880's, when O'Reilly and his survey team had travelled through the Kootenays in 1886 (Cite), they avoided meetings with several prominent Ktunaxa Chiefs, including Isadore. However, in Tobacco Plains, Chief David was here. Just like Isadore would do a few years later, Chief David made a public proclamation, one survived in a transcription at the Tobacco Plains band office. He protested the survey and the coming border, claiming that they would be drawing a line through his house. Liz's great-great grandfather proclaimed to O'Reilly and to various witnesses:

> What is the meaning of this boundary line? It runs through the middle of my house. My home is on both sides. Why should you, without asking me or considering me, divide my property in two and also divide my children? [113]

Chief David would go even further, rejecting all of O'Reilly and his representational authority:

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[112] Liz Gravelle *personal conversation* 2018

[113] Transcript of Chief David's speech *Tobacco Plains Indian Band archives* (date unknown)

> I will tell you what land I want for the Indians. I want all the country from the coast in the far South to the Arctic on the North, and from the Atlantic on the East to the Pacific on the West.[114]

Here was a clear statement that rejected all European claims of ownership, not only in the Kootenays, but the whole of the continent. O'Reilly begged him to negotiate, to which Chief David responded:

> You are sent by the Queen to hear what land I wanted. Well, I will tell you. I want the country from here to Quesnel (Canal) Flats [Twenty-five miles south of Windermere] then across to the west, following the mountains on the other side [of the Kootenai River?] through Yahk, Kondo, and upon the mountains [Pinkham Mountains?] and thence to [what is now] Stryker, in Montana, thence east to the Rockies, and thence north along British Columbia [Alberta] line to northern starting point. All the land inside these boundary lines.[115]

O'Reilly claimed he wanted too large a piece of land, to which David responded:

> If I came to your country and asked you to pick out land for a reserve, you would not like it. You would refuse because you would know you were to pick out land of what was already yours. You would say, 'All this is my own land'. You would not want to divide it up, if I were to tell you we Indians were to settle on your land, and you were to choose only a part of it for yourself.[116]

After making this point, Chief David began to negotiate. He began by asking for land from St. Clair's creek in Montana to Yahk, over to Bull River and back down, a sizeable chunk of territory that would stretch from about just south of were Cranbrook sits today to Libby Montana.

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[114] Transcript of Chief David's speech *Tobacco Plains Indian Band archives* (date unknown)
[115] Ibid
[116] Ibid

> I told you I would pick out land, and that I stand on the Boundary line. I will take from the mouth of Pimper Creek by St. Clair's Creek, Montana, straight to Yahk, and thence through Bull River, and down Bull River to the British Columbia line in the Rockies, and thence around to the starting point.[117]

O'Reilly responded that, "we must only talk of the Canadian side." So Chief David continued to negotiate once more, asking for the portion of the southern Columbia Valley on the Canadian side.

> I will choose my land from the American Boundary Line from where it crosses the top of the mountains west of me, thence north to the mouth of the Elk River, thence up the river to the top of the mountains of the South Fork of that River, thence along the Eastern mountains as far as I can see, and south to the American Line again. This I want and that is my last word. I will take the Queen's word that we will have reserved for us what we ask.[118]

In response, O'Reilly pulled out his watch and said, "It is near noon; we will close this meeting. Tomorrow at noon we will convene again." But, "O'Reilly packed up and left without speaking to the Indians any more."

Liz remembers a story that Rowena told of that day, that she saw the delegation leaving covertly before the negotiations could be finalized. As Liz recalls a story that Rowena told her:

> What were they doing there, at the border? Doing the reservation I think. So they brought the surveyor or whatever and they were camped there…and they met with the Chiefs. They stopped in the middle of the day…they said they would finish the meeting the next day, nothing was settled. So the people, the Chiefs and everything, were waiting for them the next day, but they snuck away in the night,[119]

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[117] Transcript of Chief David's speech *Tobacco Plains Indian Band archives* (date unknown)
[118] Ibid
[119] Liz Gravelle *Personal Conversation* 2019

The people of Tobacco Plains would wait for a long time, as the negotiations were never concluded. O'Reilly and his people left without notice and never came to a mutual agreement. When a survey team came through the valley, Chief David and his people were away hunting farther south and were not present when a surveyor drew up the reserves on the Province's terms. When Chief David returned, he was shocked to discover this. He exclaimed:

> I did not expect this. It is the same as if a thief had stolen from inside my house. The reserve here has been made so small for me I can only live on it in starvation and destitution.[120]

Chief David was right. The reserve would be insufficient to support the people that lived there. Drawn by the same O'Reilly that oversaw the survey at ʔaq'am, the same boundaries that caused the conflict with Chief Isadore, would cause conflicts throughout Ktunaxa territory. These were the same land allocations that Steele came to enforce, the same shrinking reserves that Ktunaxa Chiefs objected to across the region. This legacy remains today, and as Liz notes, the boundaries of the reserve became a noose of poverty around the neck of the people of Tobacco Plains.

Bugs in a jar

The reserve was drawn out of reach of the more fertile land in the valley and without access to water. The Kootenay and Elk rivers join just a few miles up the road from the reserve, but the boundaries were cut away from this valuable confluence, rich in fish and large game. It could have been the lifeblood of the

[120] Transcript of Chief David's speech *Tobacco Plains Indian Band archives* (date unknown)

community. The constrictive borders of the reserve were a daily experience for the people of Tobacco Plains, a lasting bitterness that Liz often bound together with humor. She had an analogy for the way in which the reserves had been drawn up. She likened the experience of growing up in Tobacco Plains as the life of a bug in a jar. They can climb to the top, but can't get out. They fall to the bottom, without food, water or oxygen. In the jar, they starve.

In Liz's own words:

> I says, you put the Indian reserve here…no mountain, no river, no water running through…where they gonna get food? Ten thousand acres. Indians, then, lived on meat and fish you know? And berries. So you put them on ten thousand acres of dry land! I said, if you put a fly in a jar, it starts crawling out and it gets so far and it falls back down and it starves, it dies. That's what the government was trying to do with our people. Do you believe that?[121]

This is a sentiment that rings true throughout the people of Tobacco Plains., the band council issued a statement concerning O'Reilly's failure to negotiate the land question, the drawing up of reserves and the total disregard for Chief David's claims. The Band council official statement is:

> We think the Queen did not know how our lands had been stolen; we were asked to point out what we wanted and our Chief did this but we never *got it.* Here we are with a small piece of poor land and no country for hunting. Our present Reserve here is bare flats, all dry and burnt up. There is no way for us to progress or make a profit or good living off this land. The whites have become possessors of our lands, and have waxed prosperous on them. [122]

The obvious exclusion from any of the good land or waters surrounding them in all directions, is a tragic geographic irony one need only look on a map to

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[121] Liz Gravelle *Personal Conversation* 2019
[122] Transcript of Chief David's speech *Tobacco Plains Indian Band archives*

immediately understand. Yet it seems as if the province have long ignored it, and continue to ignore it today. Just as Chief David waited for O'Reilly, Liz and her family wait today.

"When do we get compensation for this? When will a treaty be signed?" Liz chuckles softly, with a tinge of bitterness. "Probably not in my life time," she sighs. "I've been waiting for a hundred years."

Her Granddaughter Sarah jokes, "maybe by the time I am your age."

CHAPTER THREE
Settler Mythology

How do we remember together?

Memory is a formless thing. It fills the great space of our being, a viscous substance concealed until it is conjured, called upon. Sometimes, it catches us by surprise as it conjures itself, called forth by an image, a sound, a smell, a place. Its dimensions are inexact and unquantifiable, yet just like water, it comprises the volumetric expanse of the self. Memory is everything that makes up who we are, and how we perceive ourselves. It is the context for our understanding of the world. As one author humorously muses, "We are what we were."[123]

I might pose the same be true for the memories of a community. Abstract and elusive, communal memories are also viscous and permeable, filling the form of what a place is imagined to be. They come in the shape of stories, histories and myths about people in places through time. These organs of remembering influence how we perceive a place, how we represent it and how we share our perceptions of it. Communal memories are inherently multi-vocal, yet often meta-narratives assemble themselves from multiplicity, forming a seemingly cohesive mosaic of memory.[124] Yet, these memory mosaics are highly abstract and malleable, relying on signs, symbols and broadly generalized themes to tell stories about a community's

[123] James McConkey *Court of Memory*, Dutton 1983 pg xiv
[124] The assemblage is solidified from the top down over time, but it also gathers grass roots support. It is most effective as a background narrative, relegated to the shadows, impervious to the light of the truthful day.

past, present and even the future. These memories, histories, or more accurately myths, can be used to reinforce a sense of place and a connection to it through time.

It is often the case that history-as-remembering employs a curatorial approach to the telling of the past. This inevitably leads to celebrations of incomplete accounts, incorporating monumental half-truths into the memory mosaic. These half truths, repeatedly consumed, become generally accepted historical 'facts', manifesting in signs and symbols used to create connections to a shared sense of historical identity. They become myths.

These myths are subtle, inconspicuous. They survive by slithering in the back currents of our cultural subconscious, sliding beneath the surface. There they languish, lazy, indifferent, unchallenged. Pretending not to care whether we scoop them from the murky waters of time, grasping with clumsy hands in the muddy slough, feeling for flesh, the slippery skin of the eel, the sting of the water snake. Settlers do not often come to the murky river of history, for we are a people built to forget. Yet try as we might, we can never shed our need to belong to something. To somewhere. So we come down to the river, water slipping through our fingers as we reach for substance in the void, searching for meaning.

The absence of history

I don't remember ever learning the history of Cranbrook growing up. Pieces maybe, like the elephants that escaped the circus to wander the forest, immortalized in rusty bronze on a dry patch of grass near the highway. Or the giant mural of Colonel James Baker, with Winchester '94 slung over his shoulder, adorning the wall of "Mountain Man Sports". Surrounding him, trains and logging trucks crisscrossed

the cigarette-yellow wall, amidst a patchwork of blank spaces and pieces of stucco that were slowly cracking off and falling to the sidewalk.

Those missing pieces, the incompleteness of the image as a whole, might represent how we remember this place. For what is missing can tell us just as much about ourselves as the iconic depictions of colonial progress surrounding the man in the foreground, forever walking in the future. Like our own conception of the history of this place and our connection to it, the mural is an ambiguous narrative comprised of fractured images, incomplete iconographies, half-truths clumsily assembled together, loosely bound, hard to put your finger on.

My own memory, the context for my understanding of that place, is also fractured. Interspersed between the recollection of blurry sensory experiences, fiery flashes of chaotic bush parties and the waxed concrete ledges at the post office where we'd skate, lies an ambiguous narrative of place, colorful and out of focus. Just like the symbols and blank spaces on that mural, the story of the place I spent my formative years is a fractured collage. It feels full, bursting with sensory life and symbolic meaning, but the narrative is not a cohesive one.

Perhaps one of the reasons this historical void exists within me was because I got kicked out of school so many times I ended up at 'pathfinders', the local alternate school that occupied the vacant space above the legion on the strip. Here I spent afternoons typing self-guided math tests on a bulky computer the size of an old tube television while the smell of gasoline from the highway and cigarettes from the legion below would waft upstairs.

There were no history or geography courses available on those self-guided floppy disks, no opportunities to build upon my understanding of place, to put the

pieces together. If there ever was, it was a small section on 'Canadian history,' stories of a place far away and alien to me. As historian Richard Mackie recently noted, Canadian history was often, "spatially biased, conceptually antiquated and regionally insufficient."[125] It did not reflect the place I lived and did not hold relevance to me.

The school existed as more of a shelter, staffed by friendly youth workers, attended by a mix of misfits like me – drop-outs, punks, teen moms and kids from the reserve. A place we minded our business, made grilled cheese sandwiches and killed time smoking cigarettes or kicking a hacky sack in the dusty parking lot. We weren't thinking about regional history. We weren't thinking about going to university. We were just getting through.

But I think the real reason my sense of history and the place I lived was lacking was because *we lived in an immense forgetting machine*.

A machine that compelled us to constantly look forward, never look back. Atop the asphalt of the strip, a symbol of our path of persistent progress towards an ever elusive destination of perpetual potentiality. The toll an unspoken covenant to somehow leave our history behind us. To keep the past in the past.

When history had to be remembered, municipal culture-makers cobbled together an ambiguous and incomplete mythology of place. Peripheral images, like the mural of Baker, were our reference to historical time. Other symbols adorned our town, also out of context. Mounties on faded pieces of plywood. Moustaches on

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[125] Richard Mackie, *Beyond the Great Western Peninsula* Ormsby review. 2020

fire trucks at the Sam Steele parade. Images, that represented the ideas lurking in our collective subconscious. Ideas, that in some subtle way, represented the origin story of Cranbrook. .

These images were commissioned by people who wanted to propagate specific ideas about the history of a community. They survived and reproduced themselves, because people inherently believed in their message, but also because most people didn't even know what they were. We couldn't care enough to bother with a thorough analysis or a critique of a regional narrative or bother to unpack the signs that represented the place we lived. It was historical apathy that hung like a great cloud over Cranbrook, one that discolored the waters of time with a disdain that permeated every aspect of contextual life.

There was some evidence of "history" in town. The usual aesthetic offerings for the heritage gaze, of course, such as the clock tower and a few old brick buildings that dotted the main street. But these were only a few artifacts, meaningless separated from their aesthetic value, drifting like islands between the box stores, industrial spaces and empty lots that dotted the town like missing teeth. The mural was our most obvious historical marker, but most people rarely gave it a second glance. The closest reference for that image was its likeness to a large goatee wearing concert promoter at the time, a man who booked our teenage punk / metal / hardcore bands at the old Anglican Church hall.

Perhaps what is most memorable of growing up in Cranbrook, was the vast expanse of emptiness, a corporeal and cosmological sense of absence. Absence of heritage, absence of culture, absence of belonging. As if the empty Super-Value, hulking and dark and empty in the center of town for as long as I can remember, was

some kind of sacred artifact. A sigil of history. A museum of obliteration. A church of nothing. Where the non-place could be exalted. A loud and empty abyss.

There were no regional history courses, no offering of a critical review of our accepted historical narrative, no mention of the Ktunaxa Nation, on whose land Cranbrook was built upon. There were no knowledge keepers in the town square, in our schools or the guidance councilor's office, to whom we might pose our existential questions. No one to guide us to find substance in the void.

That meta-myth, the story that connected us to a place and gives that relationship meaning, is elusive everywhere in settler-colonial society. For it is a myth that hides itself in plain sight, as we live within its form. We are born, we live and we die in a myth world. The way we understand the past is a myth. The structures of our beliefs are myths. We do not have any tools in which to analyze them that exist outside the myth world. We are unable to see the forest through the trees, because the myth is the forest and the trees. It is the sky and the universe. The great settler myth is everything that we know.

Regionality and myth

We all spoke of our dirty old town in lovingly defamatory terms. Cranhole. Dinktown. We imagined it as its architect encouraged us to - a place to go through. A place to leave. Manufactured regional identities transmitted through the symbols on hockey jerseys. Cranbrook Colts, Fernie Ghostriders, Trail Smoke-eaters. Subversive counterculture transmitted through band names or skate gangs. Grendel. Mung. Team Rory Tate. East Kootenay's Finest. Our sense of historical context was short term - the newest skate tricks, the most recent Stanley cup champions.

The closest thing we had to stories of deep time were conspiracy theories and stories of the supernatural. My Dad would tell ghost stories as my brother and I would shiver in fright in the orange a-frame pup tent, listening for the hooves of the 'Goatman' outside, a terrifying figure who haunted the Kootenay mountain ranges. Old hippies in the park would tell us of ancient and angry spirits that dwelt in the forest, the invisible energy meridians that crossed the sky that, in great leaps of mythical logic, were somehow connected to the Dalai Lama. A history of curses lingered in the neighboring landscapes and though our sources were ambiguous, we all were aware that a long time ago a local Elder had warned our neighbors in the pass never to build in the valley of the "mountain that moved." When the prophecy was fulfilled and the mountain collapsed and buried the town of Frank in a horrible landslide, killing everyone except a baby that miraculously survived unharmed on a rock, the people of Frank paid a terrible price for ignoring Indigenous wisdom.

These stories spoke to a darkness that lingered in the landscape, the arrogance of the white man, the retributions for our hubris and the mysterious connection to a mythical landscape. We didn't know the exact details, but for us, that was not important. Listening to those stories served to reinforce our own claims to place, convincing us of the power of the landscape we lived on, its mystery and its supernatural importance. In repeating these stories, we tried to connect to that importance, however fleeting that connection was.

For these were not oral histories in the Indigenous tradition, these were disjointed stories that locals pieced together in a messy mosaic, a discourse that formed our local conceptions about a place we were not secure about having a connection with. Nameless gold miners in the hills, angry spirits in the mountain,

the sound of hooves and the gleam of yellow eyes in the dark woods at night. Stories, in passing, of a place we were destined to pass by. A place we feared we did not belong.

Historians and civic boosters employed a more top down approach to placial connectivity, choosing mounties and pioneers as symbols to represent the long inevitable train of Canadian progress. But those historical narratives were also fleeting, dismissed before we even took the time to scrutinize and unpack them. Our historical narratives remained elusive, relegated to the background, forever unchallenged. These were the stories that languished in the brackish water of memory like water snakes. Stories whose symbols were everywhere, but whose meanings remained elusive. Stories we didn't criticize because they were dismissed and forgotten before we even knew what they were.

But never underestimate the power of background narratives. Even if elusive and hard to put your finger on, they are powerful. They can suggest to us. They can encourage suggestion. They haunt the places we live, ready to become what we need them to be. Even if they are not pronounced or visibly tangible, they become the narratives that shape communal memories, municipal histories and regional identities. They become the myths that explain how we are and how we came to be. They are the stories that inform our world through symbols in our subconscious. They shape who we are, as they shape who we were.[126]

A path through the myth-world

So, how do these disjointed and forgotten stories become part of communal memory? They are certainly not experienced the same way by every community member. They are often experienced and reacted to in multiple ways – embraced, rejected, forgotten, dismissed. How do they become the meta-narratives of a place?

Myths are crafted through signs. The signs imbedded in ideas. Images. Text. Stories. For if that imagined community is informed by the same images and texts, that community inevitably consumes the same ideas. In the place-world, if that community is bound together by the experience of the same place, individual memories and reactions to signs may vary, but they will be informed by the same signs as one another.[127] These signs influence and are influenced by those same community members and their multitudes of experiences, creating complexity but also an observable whole, as members orbit and interact with those central signs.

These signs are the language of mythology. They are abundant in our environment, everywhere in the world around us. By unpacking them, we can begin to see the myth-world, and the framework of the myths that pose as official narratives, historical facts, ghost stories and legends, as regional identities, as the way we remember together. The myths that shape who we are.

In the following chapter we will explore what a myth is, suggesting that it is much more than a story about the supernatural origins of people and places. Rather, it is a communication system, an exchange of signs that hold subconscious values. It is a moral framework, a kind of map, in which we utilize to contextualize ourselves not only in society, but in the universe. Myths are ecological systems whose different

[127] Perhaps communal memories may even be quantifiable, to some extent.

members within it, acting in both their own self-interest but also in the imagined continuance or transformation of the community, reaffirm and reinforce the world that we live within.

There are many different kinds of myths. Some are deliberately created, some form organically. Some we might call *chrono-myths,* similar to what Lutz calls mytho-histories, histories presented as general narrative about a people, in a place, connected through time. These are often represented as thematic origin stories, particularly common in Frontier histories and are often a combination of multiple narratives that explain a kind of *coming to be*, such as the stories of the first pioneers in an area that built a present day settlement, or the first mounties that laid the foundation for the modern Canadian state. Whatever themes they use, or events they focus on, they suggest a connection to a kind of *lastingness* - from a beginning somewhere into the past, unto now, and continuing into the future.

I also argue that these *myths* have an important function. As well as representing a community or institution's lastingness, or mythic chronology through time, they correlate to a larger, more existential myth. The *myth-world.* This mythic framework is an ontological one, the structure of what we can know. Comprised of many myths, it is more pervasive and defines more than one community or a Nation. It defines an era. It is the framework and the contextual locator, the map that allows us to find our coordinates, in time and space and a moral universe. It is the space in which we use myths, either *chrono-myths* or otherwise, as a kind of echo-location system, orienting ourselves in a moral and historical framework in the world. In the case of settler societies, through the link that chrono-myths provide to a place and time, they serve to legitimize present day

colonial society, and our individual place within those colonial societies. As either strong, heroic, hardworking, resourceful and future driven pioneers; or freedom fighting, benevolent allies, or any other thematic configuration, these myths legitimize our claim to place through narratives that reaffirm our rightful place in the universe. Most importantly, they offer signs that correspond to a *legitimacy* of place and a *destiny* of time. These two pillars, which I call *Legitimacy* and *Inevitability*, hold up the entire *myth-world* of settler colonialism.

In the following chapters we will explore how the *chrono-myths* of Cranbrook emerged from regional history texts. Historians curated events and themes that bound themselves together over time, creating a *meta-myth* or background narrative, that informed us of what Cranbrook was/is and who we were/are. These myths obfuscated the dispossession of the Ktunaxa people whose lands Cranbrook would emerge upon, allowing us to remember history without de-legitimatizing our present day society.

In the following section, I shall explain what a myth is, through common definitions, structural theory and semiotics. Then I shall explore how different historical narratives carried mythical signs that bound together in Cranbrook's mythology. Lastly, we shall explore how these signs are reproduced in the public sphere, through events such as the Sam Steele Days parade, and explore the relationship of the *myth-world,* the *spectacle* and settler colonialism.

Defining Mythology

So what are myths? What is history? The differences at first might seem obvious, so much so the question might seem absurd. But on closer examination, the two are more entangled than we might initially assume. The more we probe their properties, the more blurred their boundaries become. Stare long enough and at a certain point, their differences seem to evaporate, and we are presented with a profound idea, one that could change the way that we view the past, the present, and perhaps our entire relationship with the telling of time and the ways we speak of any sort of lastingness. That history itself might be nothing more than a myth in disguise. A specific kind of myth-telling, to be sure, but nothing more than a genre within a much larger myth world. History may be a myth that concerns itself with time. A *chrono-myth.*

The dictionary definition of history is, "the study of past events, particularly in human affairs', or, "the whole series of past events connected with a particular person or thing." The definition of myth is a "traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events".[128] They are not so dissimilar, even when positioned as opposites, minus the supernatural beings of course. Yet, even dismissing the supernatural may be nothing more than the mythological properties of history at work. For whatever our understanding of myth is, there is a clearly assumed belief that it is fantastical, untrue, backward.

This leads to the second OED definition of myth, being a, "widely held but false belief or idea." Myth is imagined in opposition to what we believe to be real, the adversary of science, to objective chronological time, to historical facts. Yet,

[128] Oxford English Dictionary

those distinctions may have more to do with the fluidity of myth itself rather than the existence of these ontological boundaries. In order to get a grasp on what a myth is, and what function it plays in understanding history, we shall explore and create a framework for our mythological methodology. In the following section, we shall define what a myth is, and the terms we will use in which to understand the myth world.

HISTORY, SCIENCE and MYTH

The notion that myth is a "widely held but false belief or idea", or "A misrepresentation of the truth," tells us a lot about how our culture positions itself. To the settler world view, myths are imagined as untruthful, offending our belief in factual knowledge. They exist on the bottom of an imagined hierarchy of knowledge, false, misleading or humorous and not to be taken seriously, easily dismissed. They violate an imagined sense of the logical, the rational, ideas of truth and knowledge as being predictive and certain.

The settler world is heavily influenced by the enlightenment ideas that coincided with the colonial era, when the specialization of the sciences and the belief in the possibility of determining facts served to dismiss myth as some inferior form, some backward and superstitious belief we left in the past or in the old country, as myth was divorced from materiality and the new disciplines of the social sciences believed to be impermeable to the imagined inferiority of storytelling. It created a hierarchy of knowing. The stories of Empire became more "true" than the stories of Indigenous peoples, a contextual framework that became a kind of colonial assumption, draped in its own mythic tropes

Western history was imagined as located in the dominant ideological hierarchy, considered more than a story – an unequivocal collection of facts, an unbiased chronology of events. One historical theorist identified the essential conflict of history as the a battle between, "imaginary (the possible) and the real, (the actual)."[129] Our imaginations then, can be reined in if we include a source that remains true, an ontological truth that can be expressed through diligent research and a careful balance of facts and narrativity. It is an almost Cartesian way of looking at stories, the soul (or passion of the storyteller) balanced by the mind (the facts).

Our settler society presents itself as valuing disciplines that gather knowledge of the world in a way viewed as "predictive and certain, " while other methodologies outside that world are viewed as "subjective."[130] Yet, when we deny the possibility of other ontological ways of knowing the world at work, it is likely the case we are unable to comprehend those systems because of our immersion in our own myth world.[131] As Abrams points out the limitations of the scientific method as a way of obtaining knowledge, suggesting that, "science experiences a world without which symbols of science would be meaningless."[132] In other words, since science is situated within the world it aims to study, it is a *second order expression*. It utilizes symbols that correspond to meanings that we read into a world that already precedes scientific knowledge. Science is a language, inseparable from the world through which it is a part. The same problem may exist in the practice of what we

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[129] Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity," *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987) 4
[130] David Abrams *Spell of the Sensuous* 32
[131] Denial of the myth world allows it to flourish.
[132] Abrams 35

understand as historiography. History may be simply a different set of symbols that we read into the world, a manifestation of a distinct set of limitations in understanding the world through the stories we tell about it.

Historical facts are read into a world that already exists, into past events that already occurred and the people who experienced them. The historian makes sense of them through their own perceptions, biases and instincts, the discipline of their practice. This practice involves the search for evidence, the curation of that evidence into a narrative, the overall meaning or 'argument' the historian forms from those narrative elements. That historian identifies what is a fact or not, just as I did in my reading of the letters in the first chapter, through the tools of their craft and the language and symbols of a second order expression. [133]

When we look through an ethnographic lens at the practice of science or history, we might be less interested in it as a system that explains the truth of our world and its events within it, but in its properties as a language - the aspects of this particular epistemological assemblage of symbols and symbolic meanings that are utilized to impart an understanding of the world. Within that context, the social sciences, including history, become identifiable languages rife with symbols and ideas that correspond to specific meanings and ideas about the truth of the world we live within. One such example is the idea of evolution. For most, it is an irrefutable, factual theory of how we came to be. To the philosopher Mary Midgley, however, our fascination with evolution as the foundation of truth in the order of the universe is its own kind of mythic language:

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[133] history only exists when others have interacted with it – when it becomes an ecosystem of interaction – an assemblage that operates on its own terms outside of my intentions (though hopefully in line with some of them).

> "Evolution, then, is the creation myth of our age. By telling us our origins it shapes our views of what we are. It influences not just our thoughts, but our feelings and actions too, in a way which goes far beyond its official function as a biological theory. To call it a myth does not of course mean that it is a false story. It means that it has great symbolic power, which is independent of its truth."[134]

It does not mean those symbols are true or not, they are merely representational of the truth to a community and that that representation – that shared contextual understanding itself, the mythic language, holds power and *meaning*. It also does not mean that the practice of traditional history is false – as Lutz notes, "Myth and History, Science and Fiction are not exclusive but complementary and inseparable ways of knowing."[135] It suggests that historical "facts" are more subjective than we assume and depend upon confirmation from the community they are intended for, through a mutually comprehensible dialect.

It is useful to think of historical facts as symbols in a historical language. Those symbols and their corresponding meanings are things we believe to be true, their connections created a web and formed both our ontological and epistemological framework. They are what we know of the world, achieved through the means we accept are appropriate to acquire that knowledge. What is most important to this thesis is not only the meaning these symbols carry for the settlers in the region I grew up in, but how those symbols bind collectives together, creating assemblages of imaginative memory that form mythic ecosystems. Central to those assemblages are key ideas that we continually, and often subconsciously, interact with.

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[134] Mary Midgley *Evolution as Religion* p. 33
[135] Lutz 14

Claude Levi Strauss, one of the early contributors to structuralism, had a lot to say about the relationship between myth and history. He suggests that myths, and histories too, are first and foremost a collection of stories; patch works and pieces from multiple accounts and sources.[136] Disconnected stories become arranged together over time, forming a kind of collection, a mythical assemblage. This process does not necessarily arrange itself in chronological order, but it does eventually form some kind of structure – bound in a meta-narrative, a sacred anthological text, or a larger abstract belief system.[137] Examples like this can be found all over the world, In Africa and South America, from the Stó:lō to the Ktunaxa, within the pages of the Torah and the Bible. Throughout all of these mythic accounts, and from whatever circumstances influenced a collection of stories to assemble themselves together, the same events and themes tend to be repeated within them (such as the lessons of the Trickster, or the miracles of Jesus or the memes of MAGA). These events and themes may not be chronological, but they correspond and create a connection from a community to historical time.

Strauss does not have all the answers as to how mythic-historical relationships ultimately connect with each other. His most important contribution is his skepticism of their imagined division, illustrating the permeability of the historical/mythic barrier. He offers a profoundly important critique of that imagined division in this existential historical question:

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[136] *Myth and meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture,* Claude Levi Strauss, University of Toronto Press, 1978.
[137] Strauss 35

> "When we try to do Scientific history, do we really do something scientific, or do we remain astride our own mythology in what we are trying to make as pure history?"[138]

Strauss is suggesting that the myth world is potentially so vast and influential, that not only does it render the task of creating a "scientific" history impossible, that perhaps we can never perceive anything outside of our own myth world. Perhaps all histories are actually myths.

Strauss acknowledges this inescapability of the myth world suggesting that, "in our own societies, history has replaced mythology and fulfills the same function."[139] The lines we are trained to see as ethnographers or historians, the specializations that present themselves as barriers that separate social science and mythical story, legendary or linear time, fact and fiction – are more elusive than we might ever imagine, if they ever existed at all.

Indigenous and Settler myths

It seems, for the time being anyhow, that we should view Indigenous and settler myths separately. Though they have similarities, such as both myth worlds are a means of ascribing meaning to the world, they are very different frameworks, and function in very different ways. To conflate the two into one giant myth world

[138] Strauss 41
[139] Strauss 43

might be possible, but for the time being, when our understanding of settler mythology itself so poor, it distracts from this thesis from an epistemological perspective.[140] Two, there are very serious political contexts and consequences for failing to make a distinction. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Indigenous mythology is not viewed as mythology by Indigenous peoples, it is often thought of as inseparable from history, culture, family and territory. Conflating settler mythology to similar status would not only be incorrect, but might uphold power imbalances that serve to dismiss Indigenous belief systems.[141] So there are political consequences for acknowledging Indigenous and settler mythologies in the myth-world as the same thing. No doubt the process of creating myths might utilize similar functions– a similarity akin to all humans having language or that all trees photosynthesize, but the myth worlds themselves are entirely different and guided by senses of time and place that are totally paradigmatic.

Separate as they may be, they cannot be considered isolated and unconnected, for myth worlds are ecosystems, and when two ecosystems live next to one another, they may overlap, like the hint of a few cedars in the pines on the way from alpine to rainforest. The ecosystems function in the same way, they require sun and water while germinating, photosynthesizing, pollenating, etc. But the characteristics are fundamentally different, full of flora and fauna that have adapted to utilize and perpetuate the specific conditions and inter connections of each eco-system.

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[140] Myth itself is both ontological and epistemological – being that it explains reality, but that the expression of that knowledge is also part of its meaning.

[141] For example, sentiments could occur that if settlers have our own myths too, then they are just as valid as Indigenous myths (oral histories) and could be applied towards land stewardship and further legitimize settler society, which settler myths do anyways without being accepted as myths.

For now, the most important functional difference, to this thesis anyhow, between Indigenous and Settler mythologies (besides the denial of settlers that we even have a mythological world), is that Indigenous mythologies create a cohesive bind of kinship connected through both place and time, passed down generationally through stories that are tied to families , communities and specific places. The ability of these stories to travel thousands of years through time in a localized boundary speaks to a kind of cyclical sustainability, could be called *place time*.

Yet, it is not fair to say that there is one Indigenous myth world. Many different systems of myth and history exist within their own separate and distinct Indigenous myth-worlds. Those myth worlds treat myth and history in unique ways. For the Stó:lō on the lower mainland, there are two distinct approaches to the telling of time. One is *sxwōxwiyám*, stories that take place in the ancient past, where interpenetration of the spirit world was so frequent that human and spirit was indistinguishable. The second form, or *sqwélqwel,* take place in the more recent past, "in a world already 'made right' by the earlier work of the transformers."[142] The Stó:lō myth world today, is both influenced by the ancient world before-time, a modern historical record and modern relations with the settler colonial world.

The Ktunaxa have their own distinct myth world, but it is more difficult to access for an outsider for theirs is a very private history. As I have discussed previously, it should be thought of as a living, performative and private history shared through contemporary ceremony, intended for Ktunaxa people. It is one that maintains an active, if private, link with the spirit world, with an active presence of

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[142] Keith Carlson *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* University of Toronto Press 2010 p65

Nupika and Nupika's. Creation stories that are shared to a general public hold historical reference points, especially in regard to communicating the boundaries of traditional territory with outsiders.

These ideas are condensed and simplified. What I mean to do is illustrate that there may be limitless amount of myth-worlds. They are complex and fluid, but can be identified as wholes, as in assemblage theory, having irreducible complexities that are the product of historical forces. Throughout the Indigenous world, myth worlds anchored in place allowed for more intricate myth worlds to flourish within their boundaries – like highly specialized ecosystems. These differences existed in European Indigenous cultures too, why the myth world of the Celts were so vastly different from the myth world of the Norse.[143]

While Indigenous myth worlds might be diverse and numerous, I argue that the settler myth world is not so. In its abstractness it has spread across the globe – but carrying very limited range of ideas within it.[144] It has shrunk while casting a wider not, become less specific as it universalized. Settler myths might also aim to create some kind of communal bind through time, and to relay a moral message, but the binding is fundamentally different. It occurs through superficial symbols that are cast out upon abstract space. We still may reproduce stories passed down through our own ancestors, but they are fragmented, representing ideas and places like disjointed points on a map. Our connection to each other is also more abstract, strangers within an imagined nation, represented by flags and anthems, entities that require symbolic, not familial, reference points. The moral message is fundamentally

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[143] Compare the *Prose Eddas* to *Irish Myths and Sagas*, for instance.

different, and it is not passed down through a genealogical kinship system. Rather, they are imagined 'universal' ideas about morality, attached to those foundational theories of western modernity we've discussed - science, reason, evolution, progress.

The Language of Myth

Perhaps the most important aspect of mythology for us to understand, is the way that myth functions as language. The way it becomes that substance in the void, the rope in the darkness, the mode for communicating meaning. It is the way a community remembers together, the way it represents time itself.

To unpack mythical language, it is crucial to draw on the work by philosopher Roland Barthes and his ideas on mythology. To Barthes, myths are more than a misrepresentation of truth or a supernatural story. Myth was the arena in which "signs finally correspond to causes without obstacle, without evasion and without contradiction."[145] Symbols, when seen on a mural for instance, can suggest an idea without hindrance, even if that process works subconsciously and subjectively – our interaction with it forms a direct link to the well of meaning. Myths serve an important epistemological function, as they become the means by which knowledge of our world, in this case our world in the past, is gathered and shared. To Barthes, "myth is a type of speech…a system of communication." Myth, "is a message." [146]

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[145] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* © 1957, published Hill and Wang, New York, NY. 2012 p.14
[146] Barthes 217

Myth is a message. Through its narrative properties, it uses symbols to correspond to those messages, those meanings it conspires to transmit. It becomes a language of deep existential meaning. In the practice of semiotics, or the study of symbolic meaning, language can be understood in a three-fold process that allows the ability for symbols to correspond to meanings in our linguistic processing, influencing our imaginations and our perceptions of the world.

The first component of the mythic language system, is the *signified*. This is the thing that is being described, the object, so to speak, that is to be communicated. In this case, lets say that thing to be communicated is Sam Steele's cartoon moustache, on display during Sam Steele days. It can exist on its own, but it requires a symbolic reference point for us to be able to talk about it, to get the idea across that it is a moustache we are talking about. This requires the second part of the process. The *signifier.* This is the mode of description, the tangible symbols (drawings, text, etc) that make contextual references to a "moustache". The *signifier* is the transmitter, the mechanism that allows us to visualize and imagine the thing, such as a moustache, that is being referred to. These two things working together become the third and final part of the process. This is the *sign*. The sum of the process, the whole framework that makes it possible for someone to write m-o-u-s-t-a-c-h-e, or say "moustache", or draw a symmetrical squiggle, and for the receiving audience to immediately understand what it is. It is the total sum of associated meanings. Any language, or speech, involves a similar process and use of *signs* to convey meanings – to understand what we are talking about.[147]

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[147] Barthes *mythology today*

Barthes suggests that myths use a second tier of signs. The first tier is the linguistic one, that we just described as the three-part process of that creates the *sign.* That final linguistic version, the *sign*, becomes the very thing the myth references. It takes the *sign,* and places it at the beginning of a new process. It becomes the first part of the process again, the *signified,* on the second, mythical tier. Since we already have the sign and its corresponding associations, the myth takes this final concept and utilizes an additional signifier, creating another associative meaning. The final manifestation of the two-tiered semiotic myth equation – is what Barthes calls the *signification.* The *signification* is the mythical version of the *sign*. The signification has additional importance in that it does more that describe something, as a language sign does, making a corresponding association. It does more than simply *describe* the *description.* It suggests. It imposes. It influences.[148]

Here is an example of that system at work. I embarked on a research trip to Cranbrook last spring, to experience the mythology of history first hand in my hometown. Sam Steele days is our regional municipal festival, a semi-holiday which semi-celebrates the coming of Sam Steele to the region, at some point in the past. It suggests all this rather vaguely, and all through the use of symbols. If one attended the festival, one would glean very little information about Steele's year in the Kootenays, including the 'uprising' connected to his arrival, much less the role he plays in enforcing the reserve system. It would be hard to even get a sense of how long he was here and what "D" Division was up to. Underlying historic information is suggested through *significations* - the name of the festival, a parade with a few

[148] I also argue, one of the key factors of myth is that it is also *influenced upon.* It relies on our interaction with it to exist, so it is on one hand very fluid, but on the other, never loses its original idea or suggested meaning.

actors in historical costume and a highly stylized cartoon moustache that is emblematized through its promotional materials.[149]

But what information is actually transmitted through a name and a moustache? What does it mean to witness or partake in festivities that bear the name of someone we are somewhat familiar with, involved in events we know little about? What is the meaning of the moustache that is associated with that person and thus, those events? The real meaning, the real idea being communicated, has very little to do with history, and nothing at all to do with historical facts. That meaning is locked up in layers beneath the sign, and though not obvious or visible, it can be clearly understood. It contains an unmistakable message of belonging. It tells us of our *Legitimacy* and *Inevitability,* themes that tie the settler in place, our context in the universe.

Our regional meta-myth requires the use of the sign in the first, linguistic, tier of Barthes semiotic system, in the way that language binds its symbolic associations together. We know what the moustache means, or assume that we know what it means, albeit in a very limited and ambiguous way. We know that the *signifier*, the moustache, corresponds to the *signified*, Sam Steele, because of their associations – his portrait or photograph showing him with a moustache, or the general idea that mounties had moustaches or even their contextual reference in symbolic proximity. We can assume, or at least we do not have to question, that he had a moustache. So the *sign* is comprised of the *signified* (Sam Steele the historical mounty) and the *signifier* (the illustration of that moustache). Using the moustache as the logo for the

[149] Add image of moustache here….

Sam Steele parade counts on that inherent, or reflexive knowledge, to tell us that this festival celebrates Sam Steele, a historical figure from a familiar past.

So, we got it. The curvy brown squiggle on all the posters are meant to be Sam Steele's mustache, who carries some kind of historical significance. But the myth creates a second tier, and imbues its own meaning on the sign. Partly because no one knows the details of Sam Steele's actions in the area, the myth can easily influence us to believe that Sam Steele, the mounty, came to Fort Steele, and did something important that somehow corresponds to Cranbrook itself. The most important component of this equation is that the moustache, and by extension Sam Steele, has something very important to do with *us, here* and *then.* By the contextual reference of us being at the parade and witnessing the sign, it also becomes *us, here* and *now.*

The mythic system makes that contextual correspondence and creates a deeper, more instinctual, meaning. Sam Steele days are about celebrating heritage, since they have a historical component, embodied in the symbolic references to Sam Steele – a mounty from the nineteenth century. We know his *sign* (the moustache and historical mounty figure bound together) has to do with heritage. Even though we don't know the exact story, we know it has to do with us. Contextual history is implied though representation. It is told to us through the *signification* – the combination of the *sign* (Sam Steele, the historical mounty, represented by moustache), with the mythical *signifier* (the context of the moustache at the festival that is celebrating a community's heritage, a contextual arena that announces the sign has something, or everything, to do with the past of the place the festival celebrates) and the ultimate *signification* – Sam Steele, the mounty, represented by

the moustache, implicitly connected with the past of this place – and therefore – with the time, history, or *lastingness,* of this place and more importantly, *us*.

This idea is lucid and it can cover many of those themes and institutions that Sam Steele, a mounty could theoretically represent; ie, the NWMP, the Canadian State, colonialism, resources, Settlement, Economy and the forces that influenced and allowed the creation of Cranbrook itself. But the particular *signification* (the moustache), in its contextual arena (Sam Steele days) becomes the ultimate symbol of place, time and settler *being*. The moustache, in effect, becomes an embodiment of time. A time that specifically *belongs to us*. [150]

In the context of settler colonialism, that sense of belonging corresponds to the *legitimacy* of place and the *inevitability* of time.

If Barthes is right, all myths need to proliferate subconscious ideas are the means to *transmit* – through speech, stories, photos, murals, parades or cartoon moustaches that brand regional festivals. Myths become a language that speaks to the subconscious. They correspond directly to meanings, without the need to be clearly understood. They are accepted, as Barthes notes, without hindrance, without critical scrutiny. In the same way a red hat with "Make America Great Again", a totally abstracted claim about history, implies meanings that those to whom that idea resonates with, can fully understand. For myths do not require analysis. They need only to communicate and contextualize symbolic references that resonate within us. They are the medium in which ideas about history and culture can be

[150] Mythic significations can also be fluid in their perceived meanings. Sam Steele's moustache might be a symbol of heritage to one, a symbol of colonial violence to another. But its core meaning does not shift. By engaging it, we legitimize it as a symbol of historicity. We can reject it or embrace it, but interacting with it ensures that we are bound to it. The myth is interacted with by the witness.

communicated through seemingly benign symbols in our environment, the dialect that declares a handle bar moustache an immortal instrument of time. Myths can make moustache time.

Understanding myth becomes a useful framework to explore the ways multiple regional histories fused into that meta-myth of place & belonging. Through myth, we can understand how an ambiguous narrative and its symbology can become a *signification,* a mythic message that corresponds abstractly to a people, to a place. In the context of the meta-myth of Cranbrook and other colonial creation stories, that message behind the gun, or the train, or the moustache, is often two things – *legitimacy* and *inevitability*. Those two pillars in the settler myth world are foundational messages that are repeated over and over again, devoured through the consumption of histo-mythical *significations*, ritualized into collective memory.

Now that we have explored what a myth is and how it works, it is time to how settler myths are created and how settler historians created a historical mythology, through the binding of a collection of *myth-histories* created by historians, that gradually became a regional meta-myth or meta-narrative over time, arranged and assembled within the giant firmament of our collective subconscious– the myth world.

Though its sources were a messy mosaic of curated evidence, their meanings were clear, if remaining elusive and unspoken, reproducing the mythic qualities through signs that Barthes claims can transmit an idea, "without hindrance or obstacle." That idea, that unhindered historical message, is not one based on historical facts. Rather, these existential ideas were understood through our own

cultural contexts – as settlers in a settler world. Historical facts were irrelevant, what matters was our ability to use them, to have access to a codex, a language, that as settlers, we could mutually understand. Those ideas were refined through the process of curation, and not in an organized and homogenous fashion. It was undertaken by separate parties, each submitting fractures of the story creating an assemblage that *influenced* our view of the past, just as we *influenced it.* In order for a message to be curated, for a mythic narrative assemblage to take place, important information was omitted along the way.

The omission of historical truths was a multi-generational process, as various writers and historians expanded or took their own approach over the last century to create their own versions of the story. It was not a top-secret plot to twist historical evidence into mythical superstition. The myth process was often executed by well-meaning individuals who were sympathetic to Indigenous peoples, genuine in their aim to document historical truth, in their own capacity, in their own contexts. They to celebrate the story of a region with the means they had.

The story they told is not untrue. It was not fabricated out of thin air. It was influenced by documented evidence, anecdotes, hearsay, interviews, archives and oral histories. The only pieces missing are those original correspondences I covered in chapter one. Perhaps they were available at some point, yet none of the regional history books I've come across seem to cite them. Whatever source influenced the stories that voiced these events, over the years, history transformed into myth. That myth became the accepted, if unsubstantiated, background narrative of place. The meta-myth of Cranbrook.

Creating Mythology

So what is the *meta-myth* these significations represent? How did it come to be? For myths do not create themselves. They are, after all, created by people. Sometimes they begin as an intentional creation from a singular entity, such as a historian, a heritage society, the provincial ministry of education or a municipal chamber of commerce.[151] In this way, the beginnings of many settlers myth began as what can be considered propaganda. Edward Bernays, the theorist who created the modern framework we utilize today, claimed that, "the new propaganda, having regard to the constitution of society as a whole, not infrequently serves to focus and realize the desires of the masses."[152] Historians and heritage groups were cognizant in the desires of their audience, as they aimed to create a history that *celebrated* a place. Part of that process was promotional, creating interest and intrigue for settler audiences that came uprooted from their own homes, infused, like all human beings, with a need for belonging.

But myths, even when created by an intentional entity, do not become myths on their own. They can only become myth when they are circulated through a community. For myth is a language of verbs. It requires action. Myth depends on the assemblage, it requires the exchange of ideas, acceptance and rejection, belief and scrutiny, acknowledgment and ignorance, remembering and forgetting.[153] This way it grows into a robust ecosystem over time, as both intentional and unintentional

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[151] Furniss, looks at BC school text books, for instance.
[152] Edward Bernays, *Propaganda,* IG publishing NY, NY © 1928
[153] Manual dellanda – assemblages make room for dissent.

multi vocal adaptations grow together like branches on a familiar tree, nourished by the same nutrients. Myth grows as different perspectives interact with it, influencing, adapting, and changing its shape. Yet, myth is not entirely fluid - it remains bounded. It retains a form. All those different voices that make up the branches on the same tree, grow from the same seeds –the same fundamental ideas that have allowed the settler myth world to flourish, as we flourish within it. In this way, myths can grow and twist and become unique, but they cannot survive outside the limitations of their ecosystem.

The settler myth world is a young forest, full of young trees. In the Kootenays our tree is barely over a hundred years old, or four generations. Since their life span has been so short, it is often possible to source the elements of these young myths, to scrutinize their creation. In the case of Cranbrook, there is an abundance of sources to unpack, ample evidence and important artifacts for the would-be settler ethno botanist.[154] There are regional history texts, heritage society websites, municipal celebrations, public art, public histories, parades, statues, murals, parks, monuments and Fort Steele. Our settler world abounds in those mythic signs when we begin to look critically at our surroundings.[155]

But a tree cannot exist without shedding its leaves, a forest cannot exist with the death of many trees. Just like the mural on Baker Street with its abundance of blank space, it is as important to look at the parts that appear missing, allowing the meta-myth space to grow and adapt. We are better equipped to piece together the

[154] In my case, an auto-ethnographer?
[155] Chrono-myths – stories about time.

parts that were missing in light of the documents explored in the previous chapter, as well as the Ktunaxa perspectives.

For this chapter, the bulk of the sources I shall explore come directly from the canon of East Kootenay historiography. Memoirs, official chronologies and regional histories all provided narratives accounts of the events in question. These narratives emerged in different variations throughout the twentieth century, reflecting the different cultural contexts the authors were influenced by at their time. These histories were written for many different purposes, meant for different historical consumers, for different ends.[156] They demonstrate the agency of the individual authors, and those authors intentions. But individual agency inevitably creates its own structure. Over time, they become entangled to form a mythic assemblage.[157] That assemblage, can be defined by its parts, as well as its whole. That whole, comprised of parts that are not necessarily working toward the same outcome, is not unknowable or entirely subjective. As DeLanda explains, "a whole may be both analyzable in separate parts and at the same time have irreducible properties, properties that emerge from the interactions between parts."[158]

Myths about settler historical time, then, informed our historical awareness not through clearly articulated messages that were crafted as a total whole, but through more elusive means, emerging from a set of central ideas, then the interacting with its creators, consumers and sometimes lack of consummation – a

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[158] Manuel Delanda *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* Continuum, London UK, 2006

system of interconnection interaction which contributed their own actions of affirmation, acknowledgement and apathy that created a whole.

The whole is brought into emergence from the many. It is a malleable whole –it is influential, yet it is ready to welcome the influencer, ready to show subordination if new themes can carry the message clearly enough to interact with the audience and the myth can find resonance.

By sifting through the arms of the assemblage, we can begin to untangle the myth's tentacles, better able to understand its properties, its intentions, its stories, its meanings. We can critically unpack its *signs*. Its most prominent themes and *significations* can tell us a lot about the people who created them, the people who consumed them and the cultural contexts that allowed this exchange to repeatedly occur over time, continuing to influence us in the present day. The sending and receiving of mythic *significations* can tell us a lot about who a people were, as well as perhaps, the people we are. Exploration settler myths moves us towards an ethno-history of a settler world, through the symbols of a story that everyone, and yet no one, truly knows.

Yet, we must also be cautious as we seek to see its form, for we are also a part of the myth. As Levi Strauss suggested, we cannot write from outside our own ontology. For the mythic whole is brought into emergence from the many, a whole of which we are a part. The settler myth world is particularly sly – for it is one that welcomes the ally, the revolutionary, the critique, the scholar – the performance of challengers that we imagine challenge the myth world but in actuality never do. For they are just as much the myths signs and archetypes as the mounty or the pioneer. Yet, though the myth retains its form through its malleability and its ability to exist

through territorialization and de-territorialization as it influences, yet is ready to welcome the influencer, this does not mean that we can't know it. We can, even if we may remain trapped inside of it. We can also be critical of it, while engaging with its inter-subjective properties of which we are tied within. The first step in knowing it and that requires us to identify its signs, and what they mean.

The Frontier Myth

If myth is a language, it makes sense that it has certain dialects. And if we live within a larger settler myth world, those dialects would represent the settler groups at different times and places within – such as the couer du bois and their flying canoes, the puritans of England, the Boers of Africa,, etc. Here in western Canada, like the western United States, our mythic dialectic is filled with themes from the frontier – the age when settler time began here – our regional symbolic historical dialect.

There are several obvious motifs that are immediately visible in any Western Canadian regional history – significations, that are used to reproduce mythologies. Archetypes we are familiar with. The explorer gazing out across the wilderness into the potentiality of the future, the industrious pioneer breaking the soil, the cowboy tending his cattle ranch on the foothills. The logger clearing the reluctant land, as miner burrows in the earth, the steam belching from trains taking those resources to industrious centers utilizing natural resources in the ways modernity intended as civilization is conjured forth from an otherwise empty landscape.

Historian Elizabeth Furniss has done excellent work exploring the way that frontier themes in Canada, and British Columbia in particular, have proliferated and how the use of "frontier myths" are woven through the tapestry of settler Canadian history.[159] She identifies many useful themes that are common signifiers in the settler myth world. One important theme is the way that history is portrayed as a struggle between good and evil, in which settler society, the good, emerges as an inevitable victor.[160] Another theme, is the way in which the complexity of human motivations and actions are condensed into simple narratives. Third, history is displayed as a series of epitomizing events, such as decisive battles, the signing of treaties, the signatures of confederation.[161] These decisive events make the curation of meta-narratives very efficient, as those events can be arranged in semi-chronological order, displaying a simple, yet, effective narrative structure. Of course, this simple structure is never simple, for the mythic signs it contains are complex. Nevertheless, its deceptive simplicity becomes an effective medium for reproducing ideas of the myth world, a format in which there is little obstruction for mythic ideas to be understood as historical truth.

I believe the most important aspect she explores, is how historical knowledge is transmitted as signs through different sectors of settler society, such as the

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[159] Elizabeth Furniss, *Pioneers, Progress and the Myth of the Frontier: The Landscape of Public History in Rural British Columbia,* BC Studies no.115 Aut/Winter 1997/98

[160] (essential to explain colonialism's L & I)

[161] This is perhaps an even more vulgar concept of time (history) than Hediger's concept of vulgar time – a series of infinite *nows*, kept track by the clock. Like an infinite clicking shutter of a film camera. By choosing only epitomizing events, this way of looking at time curates the frame it wishes to present, so that frames (events) are out of context with the previous and forthcoming frames, foregoing all of the movement in an unbiased presentation of linear time, if one intended to present an unbiased narrative of linear time. Nevertheless this curated presentation of time masquerades as the linear progression of time – a cornerstone of settler mythology.

education system in the form of textbooks. Frontier themes abound in the settler myth-world and are expressed in visual and textual aesthetics, the lumberjacks, goldpanners, mounties, trains, horses, guns, all become effective mythical symbols, tools to propagate the myth world. We share these symbols with Americans in the western United States and Furniss draws on the work of Richard Slotkin, who had previously pointed out that, "mythic icons," abound in western history. Those icons are, “powerful condensed symbols that are capable of evoking a complex system of historical associations by a single image or phrase."[162] This is, of course, exactly what Barthes is talking about. This is the *signification.*

The themes themselves are somewhat irrelevant. Whether they be pioneers or explorers, trains or pick axes, what is most important is the message. Whatever form they take, these “mythic icons” function like the first tier in the mythological semiotic system; namely, the frontier and its thematic ideas correspond to generalized notions of settler time and settler place.[163] The deeper ideological underpinnings, which are suggested by those mythological symbols in the second tier of Barthes’ semiotics, correspond to more existential ideas, existential understandings of society and the self that transcend historical consciousness. These ideas not only situate the settler within the context of historical time and place, they offer an affirming message that corresponds to the self within those contextual coordinates.

The myth of the frontier, and all of its symbols, its thematic icons of good vs. evil, its epitomizing events, simplification of narrative and the use of signs, can be

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[162] Furniss

[163] Can settler time and place together be called *being*? Or lastingness?

studied as a particular dialect of the mythological language, the specific arrangements of symbols that we in particular, as western Canadian settlers, for instance, can comprehend. Ultimately, all of these signs are almost always influenced by two central themes, the two pillars of settler ideology that hold up the entirety of the settler myth world - ***Legitimacy*** and ***Inevitability*****.**

Settler myths are at their core about clinging to a legitimate claim to our place-world and our history within it. That claim is both an existential and a moral one. The consequences of failing to uphold the existential morality of a people in a place through time, are more severe than a failure to celebrate "heritage", or relay an inaccurate account of history. What informs these ideas at their core are not simply colonial aesthetics that might represent ideas that we now reject and could blame for colonialism in the past tense; ideas of the patriarchy, or capitalism, or even the ambiguous form of colonialism itself, for instance, or some such revisionist argument. These ideas, whether dismissed, scrutinized or taken seriously, are stories about the right of settlers to be where they are and the legitimacy of settler existence across the carapace of the continent. That claim can also transcend place – the existential right of the settler in the universe – in time and in space.

A structure, such as settler society, cannot function if it believes its existence is illegitimate. Nor can an assemblage hold its whole if those interrelation that make it such are unbound. The existence of any group, must always bestow upon itself a right *to be.* This is why the settler myth world is always infused with the interrelated elements of *legitimacy* and *inevitability.* It requires the reinforcement of these beliefs in order for a settler society to function. With a society as ours, with such a morally dubious creation story marking its genesis that continually pose an

existential threat to destabilize it – navigating those themes become a crucial component of remembering our past while remaining morally intact. It takes a certain choreography, a routine of historical gymnastics, a curatorial narrative, to keep a sense of existential morality intact, a process that the myth world allows us.

This process requires a certain amount of forgetting. It needs all this to create a myth that can remain nebulous, yet whole. A myth we can challenge, yet at the same time, passively accept. We can disagree on its components, in fact, the settler myth world encourages us to do so, but it also asks us to collectively accept its signifiers.[164] As we relate and interpret, engage and dismiss, accept and reject – the process of all of our interactions become connections that reinforce the mythic ecosystem, feeding it, making it more robust, allow it to flourish. These are the essential ideological materials for colonial society and its conception of time and place, being and belonging, to function.

This is how the symbols of the frontier become tools in shaping the settler our understanding of historical time and upholding the myth world. They are surprisingly sly to escape - even when we identify them and critique them; we remain inside the ecosystem they comprise (don't change metaphors!). Wiezenbaum claimed this happened in our perceptions about the world when manipulated by any medium. In his case, "'an intellectual technology, becomes an indispensable component of any structure once it is so thoroughly integrated in the structure, so enmeshed in various vital substructures, that it can no longer be

[164] For we, as settlers, even as critical scholars, cannot write outside of colonialism.

factored out without fatally impairing the whole.' "[165] In our case here, in the ways that we view the world, settler colonialism is so integrated in our ideological assemblage ecosystem that we can never take it out without a collapse of the structure, or a dismemberment of the assemblage, an event that might plunge settler society into chaos. As long as our society continues to exist, we cannot think outside of it. We cannot write outside colonialism.

Can Myth Worlds Collapse?

Some of the best examples of how Colonial Dissonance is laid bare, when the myth world collapses and the precarity of settler colonialism emerges is in South Africa. There is a substantial body of work that ethnographers have undertaken on white populations who created similar myths as Canadian settlers, complete with themes of destiny, empty space, legitimacy and all the themes we have been unpacking here in the Kootenays. The white South African myth world was built in fear or to control their own specific sense of Colonial Dissonance. When those myths were unsettled, when white South Africans faced the existential conflict that Colonial Dissonance present as apartheid collapsed, that dissonance merged into disorientation. At least a quarter of all white South Africans emigrated away, leaving a large diaspora of unsettled settler across the globe. A member of the Beoremag, a

[165] Carr 207

militant faction of white South Africans, voiced this sense of extreme dissonance to disorientation, on trial during the first Truth and Reconciliation hearing:[166]

> "That moment (after apartheid collapsed) my whole life became shit. I became a killer. Yesterday I was a blessed soldier, fighting a righteous cause; shooting each bullet with the blessing of our political leaders and God. Today I was just a common killer. A shit."[167]

Statements like this articulate the internal battleground of Colonial Dissonance, the disorientation experienced by many individuals who subscribed to racist ideologies, only to experience deep distress as those same ideologies become formally discredited. This may be an extreme example, but perhaps it is not. However appropriate this example may be viewed, it certainly illustrates that Colonial Dissonance is a precarious condition.

ASSEMBLING THE MYTH

Historians were instrumental in contributing to a regional mythology. They were the ones who identified, created and decimated the *significations* of the past. It was through historians that settler origin stories were formed, a medium that would influence a community through time, an integral element in forging the meta-myth

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[166] Walter R. Johnston "Are 'whites' in South Africa really ready for democracy?" *Social Identities (*Fall*:* 2008) p.621-632
[167] Johnston 627

of Cranbrook today. Myth building began in biographies, memoirs and regional history texts.[168] These sources become the foundational work that led up to the corporeal embodiments of history that are the more common contact points of the myth today – such as the Sam Steele parade or Fort Steele heritage town.

Historians conspired to celebrate the story of a place they wanted to create a connection to. While doing so, they had to find a way to navigate the existential land question, which always posed a threat to destabilize that connection, to uproot the dwelling place of the assemblage. In our story, almost every regional historian had to concede that something happened during these events that negatively impacted the Ktunaxa people and that that negative impact somehow benefited the future settler community. No one who spent any amount of time looking at the region's past could outright deny that a process of dispossession and occupation occurred. Yet all utilize some kind of moral mechanism to soften the message.

From displaying sympathy towards the Ktunaxa (passive ally-ship or benevolent colonialism), to depictions of Isadore as a bloodthirsty tyrant, a whole range of narrative technique can be witnessed at work as settler historians danced around the ethics of dispossession while simultaneously creating a connection to place. This was a dance the audience was already familiar with, steps in a routine it instinctively knew, a performance it already participated in. Here is where I argue the influence of colonial dissonance comes into play in our myth world, as the inability to reconcile ourselves with systematic injustices our ancestors participated in, influenced the way we could understand and talk about our past. As the colonial

[168] The first documented descriptions of the events took place in the correspondences, but those were quickly forgotten and/or classified.

project continues, we continue that same process today. We must continue to craft and critique our stories just so - in a way that does not render our world, including our very existence within it, illegitimate.

Mythic Officiality

In the "official" history of the RCMP/NWMP, published by the Canadian Minister of National defense, the uprising was framed in a particularly diplomatic light. The NWMP historian only dedicated a short paragraph to the years-long crisis, portrayed in this text as a side note amidst the operations of the police/military at that time. Their version of the story goes like this:

> Chief Isadore was *informed* that the final decision was that they had all the land they required, and that the tract occupied by Col Baker would have to be forfeited on receipt of the value of any improvements previously done upon it. The Chief acquiesced and requested in return an irrigation ditch on his own land, The result of the interview was reported to the BC commissionaires and in due course, the arrangements were carried out to the satisfaction of all.[169]

Here the NWMP historian constructs a signification that creates a kind of map, one that places Steele in the historical position of *"informing"* Isadore that the Ktunaxa had 'all the land they required.' This position influences the context of how the information being relayed is received - it suggests the NWMP could and should dictate the terms of how the event would be resolved and that they were in a rightful position to do so. In this way, the word *informing* transforms itself into a

[169] John Peter Turner. *The North-West Mounted Police 1873 – 1893, vol 1*. Edmond Cloutier – King's Printer / Minister of National Defense (1950)

signification, suggesting a contextual hierarchy of power, a legitimacy of Steele's authority and the settler state.

The signification functions as a kind of mythic verb, as the language of *informing* the terms of an outcome suggests a process that it is connected to. It is an action, a motion, and an indistinguishable component of the imagined movement through time that the creation of the Canadian state required. With these mythic signifiers situated in the background of the text, a subconscious message is relayed: that the Canadian state existed here already or was *to be* in existence, and that these events occurred within what our myth world allows us to imagine as the history of that emergence. That this *inevitable* process was its *destiny.*

Canadian institutions, even though they were mostly imagined at the time these events took place, existing in maps and surveys and had no material claims to that time and space, projected imagined authority over the land and over Ktunaxa lives. That imagination was actualized through physical power. Through the acceptance of these kinds of *chrono-myths,* we legitimize that imagination. This very idea transmits a sense of imagined inevitability to the actions of the NWMP and the legitimacy that the historian attributes to Steele's authority.

The text becomes a language of time as it masters the powers of creation. Through mythic language, ritualized and repeated, inevitability becomes naturalized, a subconscious process that becomes as familiar as breath. Imagining Steele conducting the terms of how the state, and settler time, would carry forward, allows the historian to curate the past. Dictate the terms of dispossessing. Move into an inevitable future. These become the background ideas of this mythic language, the ambiguous ideas that slither beneath the water in the settler myth world.

Steele comes to be understood by historians and historical consumers that he was and perhaps always will be, in a position to *inform* Isadore what the Canadian state imagined Ktunaxa lands should be. For in the settler myth world, this was never Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis. This was going *to be* British Columbia. It was *to be* Canada. It was an imagined inevitable progression, in its inception, by an imagined legitimate authority. The myth neutralizes the debate of whether Steele, or the Canadian State, really had any authority in Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis. So too does it neutralize the question of how they acquired that authority, through what means power was unfurled. Our present institutions are safeguarded by the myth world, as the question of whether they had any legitimate authority in the past, and thus, whether they do today, disappear before having the chance to form. And so our mythic sleep is constructed, as signified layers descend down into the deep.

Steele in the ring

Texts communicate more than their signs seem to suggest. For their significations interact with the historical consumers/audience pre-existing worldviews, reinforcing the position of the reader and the sign within a culturally contextual arena. It thus becomes a contextual language – a language of positionality – that allows particular signs to correspond to "objective" truths in a projected universe.

Barthes' most popular metaphor for how myths interact with an audience in his example of wrestling. Here, the audience doesn't care whether a fight is real or not, - "the wrestlers function is not to win but perform the gestures expected of

him."[170] Once wrestlers are in the ring, "the public is entrusted with the obviousness of the roles." In what we understand as regional history, it is the same. Once in the spotlight, characters as signs firmly manifest as textual *significations*, informing an abstract awareness of subconsciously perceived universal truths, carrying with them the full weight, power and assumed legitimacy of the legal institutions which our settler civilization employs. It is a contradictory performance; one whose language is truth, but executed in a routine that requires untruths to be performed. As the wrestler stamps his foot on the mat, delivering a chest slap to the opponent, we know those blows are not connecting. We even have an idea the match is choreographed. In fact, what matters to us is not just a convincing execution of historic (mythic) choreography, but the ring in which it transpires (the medium – a book), the audience cheering or booing (our community engagement with the signs), all of which we take in from our own individual seat within the arena.

When Steele informs Isadore he will have to vacate his land, we do not need to be told on what grounds he can do so. We don't need to know, explicitly, because what we understand is the position of the iconography. Steele is in the center of the ring, his red uniform shining in the spotlight. We know that some of his actions could be wrong, but he cannot be wrong in his place in the ring. We can rely on his positional authority, reinforced by the peripherality of Isadore, who otherwise disappears in the shadows of the story, the outside of the ring, to the periphery of the settler narrative.

Sometimes we cheer for Isadore to get back in the ring, for we need him to be there, to give Steele a fight, to perform the honorable struggle. For legitimacy and

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[170] Barthes 4

Inevitability cannot persevere without the illusion of something achieved. Most deceptively, we are even permitted to waver on who we cheer for, confident in their position in the ring. None of the outcomes matter, even if Isadore wins the match that day. Because we know their place in the ring. Their place in time and space. Steele is in the spotlight and will continue *to be*. Steele is in the center of the ring, in the center of the myth world and will continue *to be*. It is from here, under these layers of mythic signs, that Steele *informs*.

Many of us sympathize when Isadore is thrown outside the ring. We might even cheer for him to sneak up and catch Steele, to land some blow that will mess the mounties hair, to challenge him, to break his composure, to pull his moustache. It serves both a glorious and grotesque function - it makes the victory feel earned. It completes our mythology of legitimacy and the inevitability of history like the choreography of a wrestling match, where Steele always wins in the long run, or the context of the world we live be inverted and the foundations of settler society, subverted. Steele must always win, otherwise there would be no wrestling match, no arena to go to, perhaps no wrestling as we understand wrestling at all. In this way, we readily accept a narrative of half-truths, as the truth, at a very fundamental level. Surrounded by shadows of what we don't know, we stay transfixed on Steele and the spotlight, our interactions conducted through his signification. The shadows of worlds on the periphery of our world remain dark, while our sign is illuminated. In this way, a mythology of legitimacy and inevitability informs our positional context in the universe.

What matters most as settlers, is that we believe the ring is real. That this historical choreography took place within its perimeters, and not an arena

constructed by someone else. It is our ring. The arena of British Columbia, of Canada, whatever you want to call it. It is our arena in which the myth-world is enacted, a temple in which the terms of justice are informed, in which the stories of history, of time itself, are told. This is the place our ideological universe is constructed, from which we, settlers, are shot forth like sparks in the night, like confetti in the crowds. We cheer for different icons. We cheer for different heroes. But we walk to the ring together, standing under the bright lights of the settler myth-world, blinded and becoming, knowing sure our place in the universe.

Punishment orgies and moral equations

The historians Edna Hanic and David Scott's version of the Kootenai uprising begins on a cold winter day, transporting the reader into the midst of an "Indian Trial."[171] A vulnerable group of accused Ktunaxa huddle helplessly together, awaiting the verdict of the ruthless Chief Isadore who looms like a tyrant in the background. The Chief's inner circle, who the authors call "Sheriffs", encircle the accused like junk yard savages from a mad-maxian ~~apocalyptic~~ world. It is a scene of ruthlessness, led by a brutal, authoritarian leader. Governing by the fist, ever ready to speak the violent language of the whip. As Chief Isadore raises his hand, commanding a youth to 60 lashes, the authors build up to the grand finale, a disturbing account of the torture of a young woman. Accused of rolling over her sleeping infant in the middle of the night, Isadore shows no mercy. The innocent

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[171] Edna Hanic and David Scott *East Kootenay Chronicle: A Story of Settlement, Lawlessness, Mining Disasters and Fires Stretching Across Southern British Columbia from the Alberta Border to Creston on Kootenay Lake*. MR Paperback, Langley BC. 1979

woman was whipped until, "the blood ran down her breasts." According to the authors, after this heinous incident, "the woman looked about vacantly, limping away from a pool of blood…arms cradled, as if she nursed a baby at one of her blood smeared breasts." [172]

These images are intense. They elicit an almost physical response. They are powerful, corporeal signifiers. Through the eyes of the omniscient settler narrator, we are transported back in time and invited to witness the unspeakable. To share a secret together, an intimate glimpse of a most unacceptable state. This was a grotesque invitation to a barbarous spectacle, voyeurs to the physical embodiment of the imagined enemy of western civilization – tyrannical savagery.

Whatever the subsequent narrative of Isadore and Steele's encounter would be, the reader cannot forget the first encounter of those moral significations - the youth crying out for mercy, the pitiful attempts to nurse a ghostly child on a bloodstained breast, the inability of Chief Isadore to show mercy to the innocent and vulnerable. In this way, it embeds into the settler myth a kind of ethical anxiousness – it positions us, as settler readers, to wait in anticipation for Steele to bring order to a society the authors imagine is out of control. That order must undoubtedly occur in the later part of the story, confirming our sense of historical time. We need the moral relief that Steele's *signification* brings, the strong, yet fair, hand of liberal law and order – the antidote to the chaos of this wild country.

Read this way, as it is mythically intended, colonialism cannot come soon enough. It *must* come. The alternative, the continuance of Ktunaxa civilization is positioned as too horrible, too despicable, too evil, now that we have been

[172] Hanic and Scott 68

influenced to imagine these "punishment orgies." It provokes our sense of morality and forces us to interact with those feelings. On some level, it strongly encourages us to make a spiritual investment in colonialism. If we do not agree that colonialism had to come here, to end this barbaric state of society, then our own sense of ethics are in question – for then, if we wished that the Ktunaxa had been left alone - are we complicit in the maltreatment of the innocent? The vulnerable? Does it mean that we support the whipping of innocent women? It creates a moral equation in which there is no room for critique. We are compelled to feel relief that the red blood of tyranny is vanquished by the red of the mounty uniform, of the law and the settler state to come.

The trick about myths though, is that the problems of history and the moral equation we preoccupy ourselves with, may be an equation that never existed in the first place. This portrayal is obviously rife with bloodcurdling embellishment, and while we subconsciously breath relief that colonialism brought order to these lands and saved vulnerable people, those events may never have occurred. It is an imagined scene, embedded with abstract significations the authors inherited from their our world views – the influence of the settler myth world they live within. It is a moral equation that we engage with when thinking about regional history, but one that sits upon a fictitious scenario. For I cannot find a single source, in any documentation, nor in any oral histories of which there are violent encounters, of the whipping of a woman for rolling over on her son or Isadore's 'punishment orgies.' There is ample evidence to the contrary, evidence to suggest that Isadore did not rule with an iron fist. In many of the documents that we have previously looked at, we see quite a different picture, a man who avoided bloodshed and strove for

diplomacy, a man who was beholden to the wills of the families he represented, a man whom met with the settler community and strove for diplomacy, a man who is still well respected amongst his descendants today.

It's a tricky to parse through and the subject can quickly get caught up in distracting details because the scene is based in amorphous half-truths – it is not true, yet nor is it completely false. For whippings may have occurred, not that it matters. They certainly occurred in settler institutions. It has been claimed by historians that the early Catholics to the region brought the practice of whipping. Even Scott and Hanic concede this. But it seems unlikely they could ever have been carried out is such a despotic way, with so many interconnected relations and individual political power held by Ktunaxa individuals within the Nation. It seems contrary to the evidence of the correspondences during the crisis, as Isadore claims that he was forced to act in the jailbreak, not because it was his wishes, because he had to satisfy his obligations to his familial relations.

Yet, even these details, in this context, are unimportant. What matters most in the settler myth, is the relational context of the signification that encourages the embellishment of violent imagery to become moral signs that correspond to the understanding of historical time. These signs carry moral equations and when reproduced and presented as history, then consumed by collective settler society, becomes historical truths that shape our understanding of the past. By doing so, they solidify an ethical claim on history of a place, a *then,* which was in a state of savagery, and a *now,* in civilization. A backward time and a better time. Thus time can be imagined to move in a positive progression towards the future, as it improves itself. It reinforces a sense of linearity, a wave that we are continually on the crest ,

always moving towards something better. Thus the myth functions as reaffirmations of *significations* that represent legitimacy and inevitability – the righteousness of settler *time* and ultimately, settler *being*.

For almost fifty years, anyone that sought to understand something of East Kootenay history would most likely encounter this book. It is certainly the most popular regional history, the most likely you'd run into at a library or find in a cursory google search. For the last half a century, the blood-drenched "orgy of violence" was probably the most common introduction for settlers to the Ktunaxa Nation. It doesn't take much to imagine how this narrative reinforced an idea of settler supremacy, framing the presence of settlers and settler institutions as natural and necessary, enveloping the settler reader comfortably within a framework of chronological confirmation. Colonial authorities and settler institutions become representatives of progress. Ktunaxa society is portrayed in a state of siege, ruled under the iron fist of Isadore, awaiting rescue from a civilization to come. In this ultimate settler narrative, the most powerful signification is that Canada and all its institutions needed to emerge. They could not come soon enough.

Benevolent Colonialism

Perhaps what we might consider as the historical text most sympathetic to Ktunaxa peoples, is *This Was the Kootenay,* written by Clara Graham, published in the early sixties. It is actually quite a hard book to find and generally not available in public libraries. A copy goes for about $100 used on amazon. Nevertheless it remains an influential book, and partly so because it includes an interview with a

Ktunaxa Elder that was present during the crisis, one of the men accused of killing the gold miners, a man they called Little Isadore.[173]

I found a copy at the wonderful Kingfisher bookstore, a place where I make myself at home when I am in Creston, enjoying a fine selection of local authors and oso negro coffee. As I sat down to read Graham's work, I checked my email quickly, and I received a message from Vi Birdstone, an Elder at Ktunaxa Nation, suggesting I should read "This is the Kootenay," one of the many coincidences that emerged during the project. The book is well researched, with clear citations and the oral history sources, which make it more significant. It presents itself as objective piece of diligent historiography, which it is, and written with sympathy towards the Ktunaxa. Anyone interested in critical history in the region knows about this book and would say that it is essential regional reading. Subsequent historians cite it often and so am I.

Still, the best intentions do not escape the myth world. Many pieces are missing in regards to the Kootenay crisis, and Graham inevitably reinforces significant mythical elements to the regional meta-myth. The author unknowingly contributes her own hand to mythology building, placing a more nuanced and complicated cornerstone into the town's meta-myth – that of *benevolence.*

This concept is contradictory and complex. For Graham praises Isadore as a man who "inspired his people and defied the white man's law."[174] She laments how, "The white man's folly cut deeply into the lives of these people…a sad reflection of our civilization." She acknowledges and laments the events of the past, bearing her

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[173] Clara Graham,*This is the Kootenay* Evergreen Press 1963

[174] Graham 56

sympathy for the Ktunaxa people into her pages. Yet, she simultaneously praises Sam Steele as, "the man for the job." That he, "combined innate kindness, wisdom, tact and a knowledge of Indian character in his difficult task of bringing understanding and protection for both red and white alike."[175] She projects empathy towards Isadore, but also towards Steele, unable to relinquish the boundaries of his mythic form, unable to let his embodiment of justice dissolve. This empathetic duality is a contradictory performance occupying a liminal space, an intersection of *colonial dissonance* we have touched upon earlier.

For Graham occupies a dissonant position, even if we did not have access to the letters in the previous chapters - Steele's presence has always corresponded directly to the removal of Ktunaxa people from Ktunaxa lands. Graham knows this well, for she writes about the events at Joseph's Prairie, noting that the Ktunaxa had claimed it "for generations" and that the events resulted in "the final removal of these people from this location."[176] Still Graham focuses, like many other historians, on Steele's imagined characteristics, unable to comfortably acknowledge his role in the forced removal.[177]

This is how myths work so effectively. They appeal to our inner sense of morality, while simultaneously praising the righteousness of larger events we are connected to that can be understood as immoral. They allow us to challenge our myth world, while remaining safely inside its borders. Steele's mythic embodiment of justice remains intact. Even more, it is encouraged to spread out through every facet of the meta-myth, for whatever injustice might occur throughout the narrative,

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[175] Graham 60
[176] Graham 119
[177] Graham 60

even injustices caused by Steele, we can contradictorily rely on Steele as the anchor of justice. These ideas work so effectively that I myself have heard several Ktunaxa people I have talked to claim that Steele was actually a good guy. Maybe he was, but is hardly relevant. His role as an instrument of dispossession becomes blurred through myth, when in actuality his time here was to achieve one end – the forced removal of Ktunaxa people off their lands on to the reserve.[178]

Graham's narrative is sympathetic to the Ktunaxa and she strives to present a story with nuance, employing innovative techniques that would be considered contemporary methodology today, using oral histories and place names, naming the site of Joseph Prairie by its Ktunaxa name, Akisq'aq'li'it. It worth including here her beautiful description of the place, a flat and grassy plain, "with a plentiful water supply and a prevailing breeze which kept the mosquitoes away."[179] An ideal spot, close to a steep hill she refers to as Isadore's peak, which I imagine are the hills the College of the Rockies sits upon today. In fact, that place seems an ideal one, and Chief Joe Pierre has also mentioned of its benefits, it being told to him as having the best weather in the region, a wind that kept the insects away. Col. Baker saw it as a flat stretch, ideal for a rail station.

Graham's record of the Kootenay crisis is as follows:

> "No unfriendliness appears to have developed to mar the happiness of all until after ten or twelve years had elapsed when Col Baker bought and fenced his farm and many more acres of land which the Kootenays had claimed as theirs for

[178] The continual suggestion that Isadore or any Ktunaxa at that time viewed Steele with respect, is suspect. In the chapter of Ktunaxa perspectives, it is clear that through Herman's dream, Isadore saw Steele as an existential threat, an embodiment of colonial violence.[178] Herman Alpine – *personal conversation*

[179] Graham p. 118

> generations. This, of course, led to hard feelings, much trouble and the final removal of these people from this location. They were paid for their improvements and were ceded certain lands in the vicinity of Mayook, and so the last vestige of the Indian village disappeared and Col Baker renamed the location."[180]

The mythic sense of settler destiny is interconnected with the idea of the vanishing Indian, as they become parts of the same mythic mechanism, a confirmation about the inevitability of settler time. The last vestige of the Ktunaxa in Cranbrook exits the stage, on to the reserve, outside of the settler myth world. Baker simply renames the place and settler time continues to move forward.

Graham attempts to tell this story with a balance between sympathy, lamentation and facts. All of this supports the element of benevolence in the settler myth world. Just as Steele's symbolic displays of justice suggest a fundamental legitimacy, so benevolence suggests the same. For, who is more legitimate than the fair? The merciful?

But does a history told with empathy make a difference to those people who those events favored poorly? Probably not – but it changes our perspectives about them. More insidiously, it helps to navigate around our own culpability in the colonial state. Empathy can alleviate guilt. As historians imagine themselves writing outside of colonialism, looking back at those inevitable events that they had no part in, we can imagine those boundaries in the same way. We become free of the past, unbound as settlers, free to look at this event with a moral compass. We can feel sorry for the dispossession, absolved of our inheritance.

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[180] Ibid 119

But you cannot write outside of colonialism.

You cannot create myths outside the myth world.

But you can critique settler colonialism within the settler myth world. In fact, myth encourages this. This elasticity is an inherent part of the myths resilient nature. As assemblage theory suggests, that while people, (in this case stories), come together to form assemblages (here in the form of myths), there are simultaneously forces that threaten to destabilize those assemblages. Territorialization and de-territorialization are bound in the same system. They push against the central narrative, but they are created from within it, and remain within it. Much in the same way an ecosystem works - weeds will grow unchecked until trees take their place in the sun. Deer would eat all the vegetation, if not for the wolves. The system is mostly a fixed one, and within it there is an interconnected system of coexistence this simultaneously in conflict and harmony.

The myth world functions in the same way. Graham's sympathetic voice can shake a scolding finger at the unrelenting hand of colonial place makers like Col. Baker, lament for the vanishing "Indian village," yet still contribute to the meta-myth, by framing it as an inevitable and legitimate sequence of events. She can shake her head, (and us with her) at the "white man's folly", while upholding it - allowing Steele to remain as a symbol of justice. In this way,-her own individual morality can remain intact through the creation of myths about the place she is tied to (as can ours as settler readers), the events that she has benefited from and that she remains a part of. It may not be a conscious creation, but it is a creation nonetheless. She

creates an illusion of being outside of those events, such as the removal of Isadore's people from Akisq'aq'li'it, while never going anywhere. Meanwhile, the significations of our colonial institutions remain a beacon in time, signified as systems we can trust in even as we critique them, reassuring ourselves that events unfolded the way they were meant to be. That this epitomizing historical event was terrible, but necessary – or *inevitable*, if our settler world, the world we are writing from, was ever to emerge.

Bodies in the void

In the settler myth world, we are encouraged to use this positioning to our advantage. All over the settler myth world, the sign of the benevolent ally has existed since our inception. It takes many forms, the good Indian Agent, the Grey Owl, the John Smith, the Kevin Costner. It is in existence today, infused in the ideologies of modern day activists, the internet ally and the righteous advocate.

Yet, creating an illusion of benevolence never changed the encroachment of the European empires into Indigenous lands, nor does it in this case change the outcome for Ktunaxa peoples. In fact, the sympathetic voice may function as an integral part of upholding the settler myth world, an ideological *sleight of hand that becomes* a subconscious mental process in our worldview that function as a distraction that serves as the transistor of historical injustice. The reassurance of empathic voices guarding our history provides a sense of historical morality that becomes entangled within the events of dispossession and allows settlers to position ourselves outside those events.

It is a manifestation of colonial dissonance. Graham situates herself, like so many academics do, outside of settler colonialism. From that vantage point she performs a positionality, an ability to look objectively at the facts from the outside and therefore able to construct a historical narrative representative of an unbiased truth. Yet in doing so, she perpetuates the illusion of the ability to free oneself from being an inheritor of colonialism, from the settler myth world. Looking down on history with sympathy and separated from those events, she positions herself far away from being morally culpable in the dispossession. She, as a historian working within the settler myth world, finds the ability to create the space to reprimands those who acted in the dispossession of Ktunaxa peoples - shaking her finger, scolding the conqueror, lamenting the disappearing Indian - while she remains an active participant in the colonial project, and a contemporary contributor to the settler myth world.

Here is where it gets tricky. I am doing the exact same thing. Though I may be exploring a more critical history, with more sources and Ktunaxa perspectives – I still weave a narrative from my own contexts. I am suggesting a new way to look at these things, but I remain inside the myth world. I am a settler, a beneficiary of colonialism, and the words I write, no matter how I position myself, will do nothing to change the outcomes for Ktunaxa people in the past. I can never change that I am a colonial settler, and will always be one, no matter how many intersections I draw around my positionality. I cannot remove myself from this place. I cannot go home. I am critically aware of the myth world, yet forever trapped within it.

Because you cannot write outside of colonialism.

In order for colonialism to function it required bodies, settlers to fill the spaces of newly imagined maps. Settlers were the medium in which the colonial imagination could realize its empirical visions, and gave the project a sense of legitimacy. Those settler bodies have not gone away. We are descendants of those settlers, the inheritors still participating in that project. Anyone who was born or chooses to moves into the space in which that project is still underway, also agrees to participate in the colonial state, as a settler, as a colonist. No one can never talk about these issues from the outside, looking in. One can never absolve their guilt in participating in the unresolved land question. To imagine otherwise is to practice *colonial dissonance.*

Sympathetic histories such as this are crucial aspects of the myth world, pathways that function to channel that colonial dissonance that haunts our history. Benevolent settler narratives make our background myths even more righteous and more elusive, harder to grasp and pull out into the light of day.

Murders and Magicians

I was having coffee last fall at the house of ʔaq'am Nasookin Joe Pierre and we were talking about the letters. I had been calling their distractive function, "red herrings", sub plots in the historical narrative that create a kind of detour and a way

to keep the historical reader both engaged and distracted. As I told him about, he sipped his coffee and mused, "it's like a sleight of hand." It's a good analogy, for rather than a series of wild goose chases I was imagining, which is also a useful metaphor, it is useful to think of historical information relayed through illusions, elements that appear to be one thing but are something else entirely.

I argue that these mythical sleights of hand, occur throughout the canon of East Kootenay histories, perhaps through all settler mythologies. They are plot devices that are utilized to give history a more engaging narrative, make the story more compelling, encourage the participation of the reader, while allowing other aspects to go ignored. They are significations in their own right and crucial components in the mechanisms of colonial dissonance

The signification of local archetypes, such as Steele, function more than a contextual exchange network of mythical signs, they operate as a *mythical sleight of hand*, preoccupying the reader with trivialities while avoiding larger destabilizing questions. In this way, we are distracted from the broader panorama of the events and their political ramifications. Overwhelmed with the details of many sub-plots, we lose the main plot.

In the regional histories in question here, both in Graham's work and the work of Hanic & Scott, a preoccupation with Steele and the murder trial consistently obscures the fact that the NWMP were charged with overseeing the subjugation, dispossession and removal of Indigenous people. When we are caught up in the events of Steel's accomplishments, the marching of D, such as his role as arbitrator in the murder trial - we lose sight that Steele and D Division were initially created to quell resistance against treaties and reserves, while supporting the expansion of the

Canadian state and settlement. They were sent to quell the Metis rebellion only two years before the events in the Kootenays. When we distract ourselves with plot twists we forget, as an Indigenous colleague once joked to me, that Steele was Canada's "ultimate Indian fighter."[181]

After Hanic and Scott's punishment orgy sets the prelude for Steele's arrival, the subsequent bulk of their story centers on the murder of the two American gold miners and subsequent arrests and trial of two accused Ktunaxa . After two bodies are found at Wild Horse creek in 1884, rumors float around that Ktunaxa men named Kapla and Little Isadore were responsible. The evidence included witnesses who claim to have seen the two spending gold dust somewhere across the line, riding atop saddles that may have belonged to the deceased miners. An arrest was made by Constable Anderson, and they were imprisoned at a make shift jail at Galbraith's Ferry.[182]

Within hours after the arrest, Isadore and his men were upon the jail. It was here, the authors claim, "the band danced around, letting out blood curdling whoops accompanied by angry gestures."[183] The "White population was terrified", with the memory of the Riel rebellion fresh in recent memory. It seems as if an uprising is underway…

As war whoops and angry "Indians" busted out their imprisoned relations and prepared to terrorize the white population, Sam Steele makes his way into the central arena of the narrative. Of course, he must battle the wilderness and persevere against many obstacles to get there, in order for our hero narrative to be

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[181] John Bird personal conversation
[182] Galbraith's ferry is the settlement later to be known as Fort Steele
[183] Hanic and Scott 70

imbued with prescriptive power. In a brief prelude for D Division, the authors offer a heroic backstory as the men wage an epic battle against mountain fever, savage pathogens and the wilderness on their way to ʔaq'am. On the journey, Steele solidifies his mythic iconography. Before the story of Steele's role in the region is even underway, *we* are told that Steele "tackled the problem of the white settlers and Kootenay Indians with directness and competence."[184] Before the trial, before he encounters Isadore, he has already assumed his supernatural status and his mythical place in the order of settler myth world. His name, his very presence, if and when only alluded too, takes on contextually superhuman characteristics – as if he were mainlining justice straight from the heart of the universe to be consumed like mythical heroin.

Upon arrival, true to the authors predictions, Steele took, "very little time to decide that the evidence against Kapla and Little Isadore was skimpy and inconclusive."[185] The authors note he was disappointed in the way the local authorities had carried out the investigation and shook his head disapprovingly at the neglect of the settler bodies left unexamined, lonely and rotting in the hills.

Settler historians orbit around the trial as the central question to this story - did Steele let a guilty man go? Graham adds her own sleuthery, equally as obsessed with the murder trial as she cracks the case - providing oral testimony from Little Isadore himself, who, in his sunset years, admits to her of killing one of the

[184] Hanic & Scott 74
[185] Ibid 74

miners.[186] Meanwhile, as we are presented with the intricacies of a murder case, the reserves are drawn, and Isadore is forced to accept terms of surrender.

Furniss and Slotkin both identified within the frontier myth, a macabre fascination with criminality. We share a similar mythological interest as our neighbors to the south, but our Canadian version of regeneration through violence differs in that it finds itself preoccupied not with sheriffs and bandits, but with the orderly and disciplined symbols of the British legal system. Its mythic icon is the Mountie, of course, whose red uniform is always pristine, untouched and somehow freshly starched through the wilderness, a purposeful contrast to the wild and untamed land that surrounds him. The uniform is a bounded structure of sorts, enclosing within it the values of the liberal legal system, the comforting institutions of Empire. His archenemy, deceptively, is not the indigenous peoples. No, here they are presented as friends. His real enemy, we are encouraged to imagine, is the frontier criminal – the murderer, the whiskey runner, or some devious and corrupting ill-mannered American scoundrel.

The focus on criminality functions as a red herring in the colonial dissonant narrative – by repeating stories in the framework of the law vs. criminality, the process of dispossession can be overlooked. This outcome is easily the most significant consequence of these events, for they are both the origins of the present day reserve and the town of Cranbrook. Yet these significant events are lost in the small details that regional historians debate, such as whether Kapla had a new saddle that may have belonged to one of the murdered miners, or whether they bought items with stolen gold dust. These debates around the "evidence" that Kapla

[186] Graham

or Little Isadore actually killed the miners allow an obfuscated narrative to assemble, a criminal procedural where the authors become detectives, searching for the truth in the "sketchy accounts" of history.[187]

For a settler audience it is easier, and perhaps more exciting, to digest a historical narrative that is presented as a three act true-crime. Not only does it situate the reader within a familiar structure, it provides a kind of moral release valve, an outlet to focus and engage with the mechanics of plot, to participate in history without being culpable in it, the Ktunaxa dispossession narrative obscured in the evidence of the traditional whodunit. It is a language that we revel in, a system we can actively participate it, as we correct the grammar and debate the details. It gives regional historians a purpose and role for their craft – that of the *time journalist* or *chrono-investigator* – who's duty it is to gather evidence, search for clues and providing the most superficial details of people and events that provoke reactions and encourage participation, ignoring the most significant aspects the events that occurred at this time and place that relate to our current political contexts in the myth world.

This is colonial dissonance at work in historiography. The ability to deal in half truths, while side stepping the larger questions of dispossession and settlement, as the collision between the Settler state and Indigenous Nation occurs off-stage, away from place and out of time. In this way, the crime not only serves as the ultimate distraction, it becomes the main event.

As we get lost in the components of a mystery, we become immersed in its language. Speaking that language becomes an end in itself, the goal of that

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[187] Hanic & Scott 70

language's creation. The signal and receiver and signal again. This is mythology at work. By following the choreography of cracking a murder case, we get lost in the language that incorporates familiar myths, the interplay of civilized vs. savage, lawmen vs. criminal, good vs. evil. It no longer matters the enormity of the information that is obscured, nor whether the murder is ever resolved, even if one tries to engage in the act of piecing those clues together, as Graham did. For it doesn't matter if we find the truth. What matters is that we locate our mythic icons, our symbolic references. Our participation in this process acts as a medium to bind those symbolic relationships to one another, to study the map of myth world, to reaffirm our place in the myth world. Those symbolic relationships confirm our cosmic hierarchy, firmly re-establishing our own familiar place in the framework of settler colonialism, while legitimizing our existence in time and place.

Spectacle Colonialism

A central mechanism in the production of myths is in its reproduction cycle. Once a regional meta-myth is established, drawing elements from the larger myth world it is situated within, it must be reproduced and consumed in the exchange of influences in order to continue its existence as a whole. One of the ways the meta-myth proliferates, is its ability to hide itself in plain sight as establishes itself as a background narrative, an ignored yet influential set of suggestive ideas. One way that it reproduces itself, is through ritualistic consumption and reproduction of its significations. This is done through the organs of culture – texts, murals, museums, parades, living history parks. The key is that this information is experienced on a cyclical basis - it becomes ritualized in annual events and everyday life. Municipal

festivals like Sam Steele days occur once a year and Fort Steele heritage town has its tourist season. Murals are inherently cyclical, as we experience them through the rhythms and routines of our own lives – we experience them peripherally in our own daily migration patterns.

That ritualized exchange of images becomes an end in itself, an act of speaking and also an embodiment of that speech. It becomes a corporeal exchange, covering myth in flesh, giving it life, naturalizing it as we consume it. It facilitates the chronotopes that form our lived environment. This abstract and representational exchange is described in the theories of Guy Debord. Here, the present state of settler society merges with capitalism, colonialism and materialism, fusing together within a commodity-based, visually informed myth-world, what Debord calls the spectacle.[188] It is within the mechanisms of the spectacle that poorly painted murals, beauty pageants and moustache iconography can be ritualized as unquestioned historical time. Understanding our conception of settler history as an exchange of representational and related images through the spectacle, divorced from their historic context (or loosely based on them), is a useful framework to approach the proliferation of myth in the context of settler colonialism and an important key to understand the mechanism of the settler myth world.

To mythologize historical images as icons of truth, contextual locators and existential *legitimifiers* is a manifestation of colonial dissonance in the legitimization of settler place, time and being transported through the medium of the spectacle. Since the advent of modernism and industrial society, western civilization evolved

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[188] Guy Debord. *The Society of the* Spectacle (NY: Zone Books, 1994) original publishing Buchet-Chastel 1967

into what Debord argued all encompassing economic and cultural ideology, a worldview in which consumption of commodities and the reproduction of that system become an end in itself. Significantly, he claims it merely representational of reality, divorced from the living world, that, "all that once was lived has become mere representation."[189] Our abstract system of time, space and story inform our visual and underlying ideological landscape, our perception of the world. Further, the spectacle is not simply a collection of those representations or images, "it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."[190] It utilizes the language of mythology to create relationships and territorialize assemblages as it informs our economic systems, political institutions, personal identities and our cultural worldview. The spectacle, is a myth world extraordinaire.

In the practice of history, the spectacle should be given more serious consideration as a theoretical lens. As a social relationship mediated by images, those images of the past become powerful influencers in how we understand history, as well as understating how we build the scaffolding of our ideological universe from which we look back towards history. I suggest that in the case of colonial cultures, especially those that were established in the 19th century, such as the American and Canadian west, historical mythologies have been distributed throughout the spectacle since their inception, the spectacle driving the essential messages of its assemblage, as the settler myth world influenced the organs of the spectacle.

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[189] Guy Debord *The Society of the Spectacle* 12
[190] Ibid

I also argue that the spectacle can be understood as a direct product of settler societies. I believe it was able to transform into its most purest form, following the migration of settlers. That migration was a physical embodiment of imagined linear time – a crucial and corporeal divorce with the past, when old country connections to both place-time and cyclical time became severed and final. Settlers inherited the ability to live in an abstract world, forgetting the past, while forever situating themselves in the future. Within that future was the infinite potentiality of all things: resources, relationships, careers, wealth, political structures, economic systems. Settlers living in the settler myth world enthusiastically embraced this divorce from familial time and place - forever lost in this future, sleeping in the midst of the world, awake in a dream.

That dream is the spectacle. Its limits are infinite to the imagination, or are thought to be, its options limitless. Its requisite was simple, it required the commodification of life itself. All of the resources in nature, all of the people who specialized in extracting those resources, in the mythology of that relationship of work, wealth and land as a some definitive equation of being, it was influenced by settler ideas of freedom, advancement, improvement and progress. One only need to compete and work hard enough to thrive in a world of these ideals – another central myth.

In the case of regional histories created and consumed within the spectacle, the myth of place and the settler engaging in *commodities-towards-freedom,* become iconic symbols of legitimacy and inevitability. This theme is the fulcrum between terra nullius and settler potentiality – of the wild and empty landscape and the purposeful use of resources and "improvement" of land, of the legitimacy of settler

spaces *to be* and the inevitability of events that led them *to be*. This equation lingers in all the regional histories and settler myths we have been discussing. It is there surrounding Col. Baker on the mural downtown or Sam Steele's moustache on a parade cement truck. The spectacle encourages settler myths as the continual commodification of our being-in-the-world, which is, in a very profound way, is the essential state of settler *being* – a commodification of existence.

SAM STEELE DAYS
conclusion

Spectators at the spectacle

The Sam Steele parade was incredible.

I had finally made it. Back to Cranbrook, sweet home of my youth, ready experience the entirety of Sam Steele days. I don't think I ever sat through the entire parade when I was kid. I would come down to look for Mr. Death, a subversive act of performance by local artist ManWoman, who would dress up in a giant skull, complete with top hat, monocle and cane, calling merrily out to the spectators, "catch you later!" Mr. Death was always the highlight of the parade for me, a wild and mischievous icon. If we ended up at the parade at all, we'd go to watch for him. As soon as he passed we would we'd ride away on our skateboards, paying little attention to the other elements of the parade. We dismissed it and laughed about it. For many years, apart from the deliciously dark irony of Mr. Death, I didn't think I would remember a thing about what Sam Steele Days. I was ready to forget having been there, even when I was there.

But now, here I was. At the long side of thirty, in the third year of my gratuitously long MA project, back in a town I swore to leave and never come back a hundred times, come to see the entire parade I was surprised I hadn't forgotten about as part of a project I had been working on for almost half a decade.

I was strangely excited. I was hoping it would reaffirm all of my suspicions on the use of symbolic mythology in real time. I might have been enjoying the build up more than I should, sleep deprived after a restless night in the back of my truck, obsessed with the theoretical frameworks I had been immersing myself in, calling friends up to join me for the big day.

I had my film camera with a long lens strapped over my shoulders, performing the role of ethnographer, of journalist, of modern day mythologist, or whatever the hell I was doing, enacting my own inner Indiana Jones. But, unlike Indy, I was not an adventurous outsider looking in. I was a part of this. I knew these people. In the floats, on the street, here were people I went to go to school with or got drunk at bush parties, the same people now taking in the festivities with their kids and in a few cases, grandkids. I could not separate myself of my connection to these people or this place, not with theories or with my camera lens. In a way, my process was employing all the elements of myth I had been thinking about.

My old friend Leif decided to get out of bed early on a Saturday to join me. A friend since the shed days and Nirvana summers, he's a brilliant musician, a professional mover, a recovering alcoholic and the best local philosopher you could have at your side to analyze Sam Steele days. We'd been talking a lot the last year, holding impromptu seminars outside the Tim Hortons in the Tamarack mall parking lot, as locals screeched their truck tires, "dropping coal" out along the strip. Our themes varied but generally focused around the persistent, yet malleable, qualities of memory and how the only way to experience the awesomeness of creation was to be humbled by it. If anyone could temporarily untether themselves from their own

positionality in the myth world and enjoy the spectacle for the cosmic irony that it was, he was the guy to do it with.

The Parade

The parade started with cops. I mean, *of course* it did. Here was the biggest police van in Cranbrook and the drinking and driving counter attack mobile response unit, flanked by quads and motorbikes, kitted out like Team America: World Police. In the most fitting universal irony, to myself at any right, the RCMP, the symbol of officiality we've been talking about and the authority of utmost imagined legitimacy of this place, was the vanguard of the parade. Just as our origin story starts with a police occupation, the parade began with a police contingent.

This theme would not let up. The RCMP would be the most commonly represented theme throughout the parade, appearing in many forms as including historical reenactments of D-Division, with live actors portraying the significations of historical time, as if the parade itself was also a kind of textual symbol of the history of the RCMP and their connection to this place. They showed off their lever actions atop their quarter horses, tasseled jackets jangling at a canter and reins gathered in buckskin gloves. Behind them a giant wheeled cannon was drawn through. This was a military parade.

Within the first five minutes of this, Leif and I were laughing hysterically. We were overwhelmed with the sheer irony of the symbolic references we were seeing. And now, immediately following the RCMP vanguard, was the signs of our time, the titans of industry, the totems of capital economy. Hamburgler, Grimace and the great clown himself. I could not think of a more fitting emblem to support the RCMP

in a parade about place. For McDonalds represents that vast myth world colonialism built, the globalized economy, the extraction of resources, global trade and the manipulation of labor and material costs. It signified the need of resources to be utilized and distributed around the world, not only for profitability, but in some bizarre way, to uphold its destiny in the sanitizing powers of homogenization. McDonalds confirmed the inevitable future, a safe, affordable and convenient one, all with a mythic pantheon, complete with its own gods.

The gods of McDonalds were mythic in scope – the villainous Hamburgler, always trying to take away the good things made the world happy, but an integral part of the group nonetheless. Grimace, who encouraged and emblematized the gluttonous over-consumption in the world we created. While the King God, a clown, permanent smile painted on his face, a thin disguise that showed the happiness of the world colonialism created, yet hiding his true form beneath it. If there is any god more qualified to guard a mythic sleep than Ronald McDonald?

Ronald, and the gods of McDonalds, here in this context at this parade, lent their support and blessing to our own local pantheon, legitimatizing our local gods – the mounty, the explorer, the moustache - the symbols we use to safeguard the myth world we have created here. They legitimized them in the larger context, welcoming them as legitimate signs in a global economy, the web of colonialism, capitalism and technology, our modern anthropocenic myth world.

Fascinatingly, two myth worlds collided at one parade. For the Ktunaxa came close behind, with a full float and delegation from ʔaq'am, dressed in full regalia, singing and drumming loudly. There also were representatives of Yaqan Nukiy, ʔakisq'nuk and Tobacco Plains. There was even a delegation from the Confederated

Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, coming up all the way from Elmo. Here was another kind of chronotope – an embodiment of the words that Ktunaxa people had told me, the need to remain visible. A reminder of the painful history they had survived. To remind, every year, that not only are the Ktunaxa a part of this story, but have their own story.

Soon came the star of the show - Steele himself. Well, sort of. The Salvadore ready-mix cement truck had a giant ten-foot wide plywood handle bar moustache bolted to the grill, the iconic signification of the festival. It probably wasn't the star of the show to anyone else, as monster trucks, Clydesdales and the Ktunaxa dancers were more exciting to watch. But to me, here was the signification at the center of it all. Carried with it was the representation of all that Sam Steele brought with him – the Canadian state, the allocation of reserves, the removal of Ktunaxa people from this place and the creation of Cranbrook itself. Here was that origin story I was looking for - a plywood cutout adorning a cement truck, materialized in moustache time. All those forces of colonialism that cleared the land, disposed the Ktunaxa, set up a resource focused transportation center, housed the political and legal institutions of the state to come. The forces that made the town of Cranbrook possible, the forces that would shape the place I would grow up and probably, the forces that shaped me. All of those forces, bound in a symbol on an old cement truck, ignored and forgotten. This was the very elements of how our myth world functions and will continue to function. Everything bound up in that signification, then forgotten. This was our time and this was our place.

Connections

The parade ended anti-climatically as the sun reached its peak above Baker street and people were anxious to get into the shade. They had watched the parade with mild interest, but most had just been milling about, watching their kids, who were waiting for the floats that threw candy or the giant pink monster truck that could be heard from blocks away. The parade itself didn't seem to mean all that much to people on the surface. There were those who admired the replica's of the 87' Winchesters, the Clydesdale horses, the classic cars with the sweethearts waving from the back seats. But the meaning of all the pageantry was unclear, not something one could identify, nor passionately endorse. No one was chanting, "Sam Steele," nor even acknowledging who that was. It was just the name of the festival, just some Mountie with a Moustache.

Whatever its meaning was, the ideas carried by the significations we had all witnessed – the militaristic RCMP, the gods of McDonalds, the giant moustache on the Salvadore ready mix truck – those meanings are powerful. They aren't immediately accessible, but they aren't inaccessible either - they float freely through the spectacle, inviting us to project onto them the beliefs that reflect the myth world we share. Whether we realize it or not, we experience those significations together – they become living chronotopes as we experience them, corporeal ideas of time and place that we are a part of. We become a part of their creation and continuation as we ritualize and consume them in ceremony.

And true to the elements of our myth world, we quickly forget them. For the Sam Steele soft ball tournament is underway and there is live music by the arena to watch, beer to drink at the beer gardens. I had looked for Joe, but the Ktunaxa didn't

stick around either, it was enough to perform their annual ritual of resistance and recognition, most were now headed home or to the dugout. All that remained of the parade were the candy wrappers and paper cups that blew across the emptying street, lonely in the afternoon sun.

Leif and I walked to the park, happy with our own epic inside joke, as if we had stepped outside the boundaries of the parade, of this place, of our childhood, of the myth world itself. As if we could look back at it all and laugh, diminishing the power of the ghosts Cranbrook held. Yet, we too, were joining in the language of myth. Creating our own connection to this place, deterritorializing yet holding on, a part of the whole in this mythical assemblage, performing a separateness that was fundamentally a part of it. Our actions, thoughts and ideas connected us to this place and all the systems that make it possible. By examining our mythology in a critical way, or even by laughing at it, we reaffirmed our part in it, drawing our coordinates in the map of the myth world together.

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