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The Complications of Colonialism for Gentrification Theory and Marxist Geography

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La gentrification est souvent décrite métaphoriquement comme une forme de « colonisation ». Dans cet article, j'avance que la gentrification n'est que l'une des stratégies de la colonisation historique des peuples autochtones qui se poursuit au Canada, et plus particulièrement dans la ville coloniale de Toronto. Les *relationnalités coloniales* à la fois symboliques et concrètes qui donnent naissance à la ville coloniale, persistent comme moyen de discipliner les corps, les espaces et les terres pauvres et autochtones, à travers le mode de vie capitaliste. Le rôle de la gentrification dans la quête de statut de ville mondiale de Toronto, dans le contexte de l'économie mondiale néo-impérialiste, intensifie encore une fois les relationnalités coloniales. La gentrification est fondée sur des investissement moraux dans l'idéologie capitaliste de la propriété privée et sur des investissements monétaires dans la fluctuation de la valeur de la propriété. L'investissement dans la propriété privée est empreint de manquements éthiques liés au vol des terres, à l'exploitation, à l'accumulation originale continue, et aux déplacements de population qui sont à l'origine du sans-abrisme et de la marginalisation autochtone dans la ville. Par ailleurs, la théorie de la gentrification et la géographie marxiste n'expliquent pas complètement ou uniformément le lien entre l'histoire coloniale et la compréhension actuelle de la gentrification. Par exemple, Neil Smith considère que les épistémologies et l'histoire autochtones ne sont qu'une tentative passée de déstabiliser ou de décoloniser la notion de gentrification, une tentative qui n'a pas fonctionné et qui n'est pas pertinente. D'autres théories marxistes ont tenté de faire des liens entre les questions de gentrification et de colonisation en favorisant une compréhension décolonisée de celles-ci. Il demeure toutefois nécessaire de créer un dialogue avec les universitaires et les communautés autochtones pour poursuivre cette discussion de manière plus libératoire.

Gentrification is often described metaphorically as a form of 'colonization,' however in this paper I argue that gentrification comprises one strategy in the continued historical colonization of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian context, and more specifically in the settler city of Toronto. I propose that the *colonial relationalities*, both symbolic and material that give rise to the settler city, persist as a discipline on poor and Indigenous bodies, spaces and lands, through the capitalist way of life. Colonial relationalities are again heightened through gentrifications role in Toronto's strivings for global city status in a neo-imperialist global economy. Gentrification is based on moral investments in the capitalist ideology of private property and monetary investments in shifting of property values. Investment in private property is fraught with the ethical contractions of land theft, exploitation, ongoing original accumulation, and displacement, which form the

basis of homelessness and Indigenous marginalization in the city. However, gentrification theory and Marxist geography do not fully or consistently account for the implications of colonial history in the current understanding of gentrification. Neil Smith, for instance, relegates Indigenous history and epistemologies to an irrelevant past failing to unsettle or decolonize the notion of gentrification. Other Marxist theorists, who have attempted to connect issues of gentrification and colonization offer a way forward to a decolonized understanding, however, more engaged dialogue with Indigenous scholars and communities are necessary to continue this discussion in a more liberatory direction.

GENTRIFICATION IS OFTEN DESCRIBED METAPHORICALLY as a form of "colonization," where the spatial practices of urban redevelopment by city planners, developers, opportunists, and home-buying classes displace the poor, the working class, and renters from their neighbourhoods. In this paper, however, I argue that in Canada gentrification is more urgently a manifestation of the continued historical colonization of Indigenous peoples. I contend that the colonial relationalities (both symbolic and material) that give rise to the settler city persist through the capitalist mode of production, which is reproduced by bodies who share space across social difference, through a dialectic of gentrification. How gentrification intersects with the historical colonization of Indigenous peoples appears to be under-theorized in the gentrification literature. This paper is an attempt to identify the gaps in gentrification and urban Marxist literature towards a decolonial understanding of gentrification. Building on Nicholas Blomley,[1] this paper considers private property as a key nexus in the complex intersections of colonialism and capitalism as they unfold in settler urban space through gentrification.

The discussion offered here has been inspired by my life, work, and research with the low-income community in the Junction, a neighbourhood in West Toronto, over ten critical years of gentrification. In this work, I consider how my own historical trajectory intersects with the complex spatial dialectic I see unfolding in the Junction. First, I acknowledge the Indigenous lands where this writing takes place: the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Métis, and on lands under a treaty agreement with the Mississauga of the New Credit. With this land acknowledgement, I identify myself as a white settler with Scottish, Irish, and English heritage, a member of a society bound by treaties, and an uninvited guest on Indigenous territory. At the same time, my own history of life-long chronic transience unfolds as a series of low-rent neighbourhoods fallen like dominos to bourgeoisification in my wake. The Junction is the first neighbourhood that I have lived in *during* an actual gentrification process. Witnessing and being, to whatever degree, part of the unfolding processes of gentrification alerted me to my own highly material role in how power hierarchies play out in urban space. My positionality as a settler, an artist, and as an academic brings with it a responsibility to actively resist the gentrification and colonization of which I am an unwilling agent and beneficiary.

In first researching the Junction, I quickly encountered a set of definitional historical narratives that described the economic development of the neighbourhood, but did not acknowledge the colonial nature of that history. I thus begin the first section by proposing that the broad historical frame of settler colonialism is key to any discussion of the production of urban space in Canada (Turtle Island). I then move, more specifically, to the role of the settler city in maintaining the hegemony of colonial relationalities, a starting place that leads us towards

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[1] Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York/London: Routledge, 2004) [Blomley, *Unsettling*].

the understanding of gentrification as ongoing colonization. Taking up Blomley's notion of the unsettled condition of the settler city, I point to a few among the many, many examples of the re-indigenization of urban space. I then offer a discussion of the Junction as an example of how colonization is imbricated with gentrification. In the second section, I give a brief outline of gentrification theory where colonialism is treated as a non-issue in the dominant debates as to whether gentrification represents a move towards a liberatory diversity or greater class conflict.

This is followed by a more critical engagement with Marxist gentrification theory. Along with many Marxist theorists, I see capitalism and colonization as being inextricably intertwined,[2] and thus, I see Marxist geography as offering one set of important theoretical tools not available in non-Marxist gentrification theory. However, Marxist geography must be engaged with critically by Marxist and non-Marxist theorists in order for it to contribute to an understanding of gentrification as ongoing settler colonization. I then look at two theorists of urban development and gentrification, Nicholas Blomley and Matt Hern, who *do* engage with colonization, and particularly private property as a key factor. While gentrification theory often looks at the "who"s and "why"s of gentrification, it does not analyze the involvement of the settler subject. Thus, in the final section I draw on different theoretical tools to look at the subject position of gentrification (what I call the bourgeois settler subject) and the constitution of its Other, those marginalized and subject to coloniality within the gentrification landscape. I have also included throughout a precursory engagement with Indigenous work on space and place, particularly that of Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie.

In the face of hegemonic attitudes that naturalize property ownership and laud neighbourhood upward mobility, only a decolonized approach can provide both an adequate understanding of the profound violence against community that is gentrification, and the everyday reproduction of the colonization of Indigenous peoples at the neighbourhood scale. A decolonized understanding of gentrification contributes to: the intensification of the historical dialectic of colonialism and capitalism within the settler city; a way towards addressing the persistent historical wrongs and ethical failures of settler colonialism; and a basis of engagement with Other and Indigenous productions of space that contest colonial capitalism. Facing ecological, economic, and social devastation wrought by a colonial capitalism dependent on violence, bigotry, and alienation to maintain a brutal hierarchization of bodies, species, and land for the profit of a few, it behoves settler society to examine closely how such systems are reproduced, and as Glen Coulthard suggests, to pay particular attention to critiques of colonialism that arise out of the specific perspectives and knowledge of Indigenous peoples.[3]

I. COLONIZATION AND GENTRIFICATION

A. THE SETTLER CITY CONTEXT

It is necessary to fully acknowledge that in Canada colonization has taken a lasting settler form: there is no clearly demarcated postcolonial moment where the land was returned to the political determination of Indigenous nations. Settler Canadian society perpetuates a myth of "discovery" and makes claims to a permanent new home as it continues to claim legal authority over

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[2] VI Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Sydney: Resistance Books, 2008) at 91; Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1* (London: Penguin Books, 1990) at 873–940 [Marx].

[3] Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) at 36 [Coulthard].

Indigenous nations, enforce a fraught reserve structure, neglect the well-being of Indigenous communities, perpetuate violence, exploit resources on disputed lands, and contest Indigenous land claims and demands for sovereignty.[4] The tensions and divisions created by struggles over history and the ethical implications of genocide and occupation in the settler political and public spheres persist within the reproduction of urban space. This is evidenced by the fact that Indigenous inhabitation of the urban landscape has been among the most denigrated, marginalized, and subject to violence and erasure: Indigenous peoples have historically been seen by settler society to *not* belong in the modern city.[5] High levels of police violence against Indigenous people, high policing and incarceration rates, homelessness, impoverishment, and violence against Indigenous women all speak to the colonial role of the settler city of Toronto.

Historically, settler city spaces such as Toronto have a key role in the identity formation of whiteness—a power structure that regulates racial, class, gender, sexual, and ableist social hierarchies and relations to land—through dispossession, private property and speculation, segregation, and displacement.[6] This production of whiteness pushes against the reality of the frontier space as one of multiple differences, a "transcultural site" marked by continuous migration from more distant global colonial and postcolonial regions layered over the specific condition of colonialism on occupied and contested Indigenous land.[7] Anthony King describes the colonial city as an "instrument of colonization"[8] in its functions of concentrating and acting as a hub for governing and regulating historically-produced difference, and maintaining white supremacist power structures in and through urban space. Toronto is just one such node of colonial domination: the land that comprises the city of Toronto was acquired by the British in a corrupt land deal called the Toronto Purchase (negotiated in 1787 and re-signed in 1805),[9] for which compensation was only settled with the Mississauga of the New Credit in 2010. The Six Nations, or Haudenosaunee (who never signed over rights to their land) and the Huron-Wendat, both continue to inhabit and have significant cultural and historical sites in the city.

Being a settler city means that Toronto has, by definition, a global dimension. As a product of settler colonization and subsequent global migration patterns, Toronto is a city that has developed through the dynamics of imperial power formations, including the patterning of the urban form after cities in the European metropole.[10] Once operating in service to the European metropole, and then as an economic centre in its own right, Toronto currently strives

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[4] *Ibid* at 4; Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010) at 18 [Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*]; Eve Tuck & Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015) at 59 [Tuck & McKenzie].

[5] Blomley, *Unsettling, supra* note 1 at xiv; Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 174; Penelope Edmonds, "Unpacking Settler Colonialism's Urban Strategies: Indigenous Peoples in Victoria, British Columbia, and the Transition to a Settler-Colonial City" (2010) 38:2 Urban History Review, Special Issue "Encounters, Contests, and Communities: New Histories of Race and Ethnicity in the Canadian City" 4 at 7; Victoria Freeman, "Toronto Has No History! Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism and Historical Memory in Canada's Largest City" (2010) 38:2 Urban History Review 21 at 24; Sherene Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George" (2000) 15:2 CJLS 91 at 102 [Razack]; Julie Tomiak, "Indigeneity and the City: Representations, Resistance, and the Right to the City" in Alan Bourke, Tia Dafnos & Markus Kip, eds, *Lumpencity; Discourses of Marginality, Marginalizing Discourses* (Ottawa: Red Quill Books, 2011) 163 at 164 [Tomiak].

[6] Blomley, *Unsettling, supra* note 1 at 107.

[7] Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers, supra* note 4 at 17.

[8] Anthony D King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World-Economy: Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System* (London: Routledge, 1990) at 15 [King].

[9] Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation, *Toronto Purchase Specific Claim: Arriving at an agreement*, online: <http://newcreditfirstnation.com/uploads/1/8/1/4/18145011/torontopurchasebkltsm.pdf> [perma.cc/GHB6-NTXX].

[10] King, *supra* note 8 at 25–26.

for a dominant position as a global city.[11] Toronto's development as a global city is linked to its status as a centre for the global resource extraction industry,[12] which exploits Indigenous lands within Canada and abroad, especially in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. In the worldwide stratification of cities, neoliberal governance strategies are seen to bring competitive edge. Roger Keil points out that "urban neoliberalism can be read as a specific intersection of global—in the sense of both general and worldwide—shifts in the structure of capitalist economies and states with the everyday life of people in cities."[13] Neil Smith makes a further connection between fiscal crisis and efforts at becoming a global city where gentrification, understood as reinvestment in the built environment, is seen to provide a spatial fix to such crisis.[14] Culturally, Toronto has increasingly become a playground for the industrialists, scientists, and service providers to industry,[15] a global citizenry who drive gentrification from personal, private, and professional directions.

Capitalist ideology and relations have become the dominant logic that either infuses or makes expendable all other bases of sociality in the urban setting.[16] As Blomley writes, in settler cities "the development of the 'global' scale of capitalism confronts ... a very specific local politics deeply marked by the historical legacy of the colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples."[17] Blomley further suggests that cities that strive for global status bring an "intensifying displacement," where "[t]he 'enclosure' of the urban commons has also been a site for conflict."[18] Blomley connects the current reach for global city status with the original moment of colonial dispossession, when lands and resources were seized from Indigenous peoples through war, epidemics, betrayal, and force. Dispossession and displacement are logics that drive both colonialism and gentrification. The present-day Canadian settler city and its gentrification program can be read as the articulation between its colonial past and its present neo-imperialist project, both within its own territory and globally.

At the same time, as Indigenous people are leaving often extremely difficult lives on reserve and entering cities, they contribute to a persistent and critical re-indigenizing production of urban space. Beyond the fact of longstanding Indigenous inhabitation and the organizations and local practices that have arisen to support their communities, urban spaces are also transformed through political struggles to address dynamics of colonization. For instance, the *First Story* project has developed an online resource for gathering and disseminating the Indigenous history of Toronto. *First Story* has also held many events, such as the Great Indian Bus Tour (of significant Indigenous sites) and the Talking Treaties series, which generates

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[11] A global city is a centre of banking, culture, economic boom, a city that espouses the growth model of urban development and that is driven by internationally competitive economic activity.

[12] Niko Block, "On the roots of our skyscrapers: The development of Toronto's extractive industry" (23 July 2013), *Critical Utopias* (blog), online: <https://criticalutopias.net/2013/07/23/on-the-roots-of-our-skyscrapers-the-cynicism-and-depravity-of-torontos-extractive-economy/> [perma.cc/7QDH-W3BL] [Block].

[13] Roger Keil, "'Common-Sense' Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada" (2002) 1:24 Antipode 578 at 579.

[14] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996) at 73, 140 [Smith, *New Urban Frontier*].

[15] Block, *supra* note 12; Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) at 9.

[16] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space,* 3rd ed (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008) at 71 [Smith, *Uneven Development*]; David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (London: Verso Books, 2006) at 438 [Harvey].

[17] Blomley, *Unsettling,* s*upra* note 1 at xviii.

[18] *Ibid* at xviii.

awareness of the treaty relations (and betrayals) that mark the history and lands of Toronto.[19] Another example is the arts based project by Hayden King and Susan Blight called *Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming Renaming*[20] that replaces "alien" anglophile street signs in Toronto with Anishinaabe names. In 2016, King and Blight initiated a billboard project across Anishinaabeg territory to contest the colonial strategy of the erasure of Indigenous landscapes and to revitalize Indigenous politics, language, culture, and knowledge.

King and Blight's project is exemplary of an important dimension of Indigenous struggles, which is that they often extend out, theoretically and practically, from the urban environment to connect with broader Indigenous territories, landscapes, and ecologies, thereby disrupting a false sense of urban/rural divide.[21] This was also demonstrated by the Idle No More round dances, which addressed, among many issues, the proposed limits on environmental protection for waterways through Bill C-45. The sites where round dances took place, such as Nathan Philips Square, were transformed from urban spaces of settler political power and consumerism into spaces of a larger geography of anti-colonial resistance.[22] Such actions upset the enactment of municipal colonialism and the power dynamic of exploitation by the urban of the rural that is embedded in rural-urban divide, while reminding the public of the interconnectedness of landscapes and peoples across space.[23] More specific to the Junction is the successful 2011 community-based struggle, led by the Taiaiako'n Historic Preservation Society under the jurisdiction of the Six Nations, to protect the ancient Iroquoian burial site in High Park, Snake Mound, from destruction by its use as a bmx course.[24] Another very interesting example of the re-indigenization of space from outside Toronto is the recent bequeathing of a multi-million dollar Manhattan family home by Jean-Louis Goldwater Bourgeois to the local Lenape Tribe to be used as a prayer center.[25] This gesture constitutes an important *giving back* of land from settler control and a practical acknowledgement of Indigenous land sovereignty.

B. GENTRIFICATION AND COLONIZATION IN THE JUNCTION

The Junction neighbourhood provides a localized example of how gentrification is imbricated, in both symbolic and material ways, with colonization. The Junction's gentrification story is typical. As a neighbourhood with a once-flourishing industrial base, the Junction experienced economic collapse as a consequence of the 1960s deindustrialization that swept North American cities. The Junction became known as a "sketchy" neighbourhood. The main artery, Dundas Street West, became destitute: businesses closed, buildings fell into disrepair, and the employment base of the neighbourhood was eroded. In between empty storefronts, second-hand stores, porn outlets, and

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[19] First Story, online: <https://firststoryblog.wordpress.com/> [perma.cc/BZ98-4LQL].

[20] Hayden King & Susan Blight, *Ogimaa Mikana*, online: <http://ogimaamikana.tumblr.com/> [perma.cc/QHF7-KL9G].

[21] Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 58.

[22] *Ibid* at 45.

[23] Blomley, *Unsettling, supra* note 1 at 127; Jordan Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928–1950s" (2008) 89:4 The Canadian Historical Review 541 at 544.

[24] LK Jackson, "Snake Mound: Community works against Toronto council to protect burial mounds," *Rabble* (7 November 2011), online: <http://rabble.ca/news/2011/11/snake-mound-community-works-against-toronto-council-protect-burial-mounds> [perma.cc/HHC5-GPGN].

[25] Corey Kilgannon, "Giving Back a 'Stolen' Property to the Original Manhattanites," *New York Times* (10 January 2017) online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/10/nyregion/giving-back-a-stolen-property-to-the-original-manhattanites.html?_r=0>.

donut shops took root. During this period of "decline" in the Junction, there was little middle-class resistance to the establishment of social service institutions, including the Evangeline women's shelter; Mainstay Housing for mental health consumers/survivors; the Keele Street Halfway House; many halfway houses for disabled adults; and the Lucy McCormick High School for disabled youth.[26] The Junction came to be characterized by massage parlours, criminalized sex work, drug culture, and informal, high risk, and appropriation economies.[27] Other modes of informal economic life included hunting, fishing and gathering, bartering, recycling, caring, and sharing. Former and residual industrial activity in the Junction also made it one of Toronto's most toxic neighbourhoods.[28] One business owner commented: "At a certain point in time, people thought the Junction was too shitty to even wreck; it wasn't even worth demolishing."[29] Pre-gentrification neighbourhoods are part of what Neil Smith describes as uneven development:

> [w]hatever the dysfunctional social consequences provoked or exacerbated by disinvestment—deteriorating housing conditions, increased hazards to residents' health, community destruction, the ghettoization of crime, loss of housing stock, increased homelessness—disinvestment is also economically functional within the housing market and can be conceived as an integral dimension of the uneven development of urban place.[30]

Marginalized economic relations, called "dysfunctional social consequences" by Smith, are, however, fully cultural and vital forms of survival for low-income, marginalized, migrant and urban Indigenous communities. And yet, the functionality of these marginalized economic relations for capitalism is dependent on their denigration within the bourgeois paradigm. The perceived decay, dysfunction, and economic failure associated with these communities spawn the perceived necessity for redevelopment. As Smith writes, "the steady devalorization of capital creates the possibility of its opposites, namely longer-term possibilities for a new phase of valorization through investment".[31] Viewing a neighbourhood as a wasteland uninhabited by anything or anyone useful, waiting there for the taking, resonates as a new form of *terra nullius*.[32] Whereas the Junction was once a neighbourhood where Indigenous and low-income people could live, in the period of gentrification they remain as either targets of policing and removal, or as people institutionalized in the remaining social housing, shelters, and halfway houses.

When I moved to the Junction in 2006, some parties' desire for gentrification was at a fever pitch, but little had been realized. After years of work on the part of local boosters (such as the Junction Business Improvement Area, the West Toronto Junction Historical Society, and the

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[26] Brendan Gleeson, *Geographies of Disability* (London: Routledge, 1999) at 140 [Gleeson]; Leslie Kern, "All aboard? Women working the spaces of gentrification in Toronto's Junction" (2013) 20:4 Gender, Place and Culture 510 at 513–514 [Kern].

[27] Kern, *supra* note 26 at 513.

[28] *Ibid* at 514.

[29] Business owner quoted in "Hood: The Junction, Part 2," *Dead Sexy Magazine*, (November 2009) online: <http://deadsexymag.homestead.com/Toronto/2009/November/Hood/The_Junction_Part2.html> [perma.cc/3YYD-W22M].

[30] Smith, *New Urban Frontier*, *supra* note 14 at 189.

[31] *Ibid* at 81.

[32] Tomiak, *supra* note 5 at 165.

Junction Arts Festival organizers) to promote the neighbourhood, gentrification has finally entered the condominium development phase, and even the parts of the neighbourhood least likely to gentrify (areas without historic architecture) are now being redeveloped. The successful gentrification in the Junction provides a platform from which gentrifiers are now crossing the tracks and spreading north into new working-class and low-income areas. This narrative of gentrification, while typical, neglects to consider Indigenous histories of inhabitation, reiterating the conception that conquest is complete and in the past.

Fetishistic constructions of history play an important role in gentrification.[33] The Junction is known for its historic housing, and commercial and industrial architecture dating back to when the neighbourhood was an independent town competing with the newly developing city of Toronto. The romantic appeal of nineteenth-century architecture generates historical narratives that normalize colonialism as part of the branding in local neighbourhood boosters' place-making strategy. With civic monetary aid, historic buildings in the Junction have been sandblasted, and old-timey light fixtures and benches[34] installed. The Junction is promoted as a former frontier town with stories of white men wheeling and dealing to build industry, infrastructure, a political establishment, and a booming land market.[35] Missing from the popular narrative is the fact that the Junction is also situated in the middle of known Indigenous historical sites including: a set of criss-crossing ancient trails; a Seneca-Mohawk village site named Taiaiako'n; a large Black Oak Savannah which is the result of Indigenous horticultural practices; and ancient Iroquoian burial mounds.[36] Also erased from the popular historical narrative and the dominant culture of everyday neighbourhood life are Indigenous social and philosophical epistemologies and the historical knowledge of colonization, which are embedded in the land and built environment, and are active in the contemporary urban Indigenous community of Toronto, including in the Junction.

Indigenous peoples have continuously inhabited the Junction area. Prior to gentrification, the Indigenous population in Junction was above the city average. Since gentrification, Indigenous inhabitation of the Junction has declined.[37] Instead of grappling with what Nicholas Blomley understands as an issue of further displacement (on top of dispossession) caused by gentrification,[38] this Indigenous history is fetishized by local organizations and real estate

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[33] Loretta Lees, Tom Slater & Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2008) at 27, 95 [Lee, Slater & Wyly].

[34] Toronto Real Estate Board**,** "Old meets new as historic Junction comes of age" (14 June 2001), online: <http://www.trebcommercial.com/news/archived/apr_june/historic.htm#top> [perma.cc/AKY5-E62B].

[35] Diana Fancher, ed, *The Leader and Recorder's History of the Junction*, 4th ed (Toronto: West Toronto Junction Historical Society, 2004); Diana Fancher & Joan Miles, eds, *West Toronto Junction Revisited* (Toronto: West Toronto Junction Historical Society, 1999).

[36] Rodney A Bobiwash, "The History of Native People in the Toronto Area: An Overview" in Frances Sanderson & Heather Howard-Bobiwash, eds, *The Meeting Place: Aboriginal Life in Toronto* (Toronto: Native Canadian Centre, 1997) 5–24; Jon Johnson, "The Indigenous Environmental History of Toronto, 'The Meeting Place'" in L Anders Sandberg, Stephen Bocking & Ken Cruikshank, eds, *Urban Explorations: Environmental Histories of the Toronto Region* (Hamilton, ON: Wilson Institute for Canadian History, 2013) 59–71; Julie Nagam, "Digging Up Indigenous History in Toronto's Cityscape" (2009) 43:1 Canadian Dimension 54.

[37] A study of City of Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles from 2001 to 2006 demonstrates this decline. The 2011 census did not include statistics on Aboriginal inhabitation of the city, and this when the City of Toronto recognizes that Aboriginal relocation to the city is increasing, online: toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Neighbourhood %20Profiles/pdf/2001/pdf2/cpa90.pdf [perma.cc/4EYN-HHYP] and web.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/aboriginal-affairs/torontos-aboriginal-peoples/ [perma.cc/JK6J-2R26].

[38] Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 149.

companies, who reference the foundation of the Junction as being where "two Indian trails crossed."[39] Many local street names such as Indian Grove, Indian Crescent, Indian Valley Crescent, and Indian Trail refer to the historic Indigenous geography of the area, and point to the common colonial practice of appropriating Indigenous landscapes[40] by laying railway lines and streets over Indigenous trails. Today, the railway, which gives the Junction its name, has become the symbol of its brand mobilized throughout the neighbourhood in business and organizational names and logos, local murals, plaques, and in the historical narrative that extols the glory days of the Junction and its industry-driven economic development. The troubling symbolism of the train, however, is ignored: the war against Indigenous peoples, the opening of lands to privatization, commodification and market speculation, and brutal indentured migrant labour.[41] More recently the railway in the Junction has been targeted by neighbourhood members for the transport of highly explosive crude oil, radioactive materials, and other toxic substances,[42] largely linked to the industrialization and polluting of Indigenous lands and communities across the North American continent.

The relationship between colonization and gentrification in the Junction unfolds as a tension between the erasure of Indigenous history and life in the historical discourse through which the neighbourhood identifies, and the daily reproduction of the capitalist mode of production (continually re-valorized through these historical narratives) against the marginalized and diverse economic lives of low-income and Indigenous peoples who are negatively impacted by gentrification.

II. UNSETTLING GENTRIFICATION THEORY

As has been stated, there is a large gap in gentrification theory when it comes to addressing how ongoing colonization persists in the gentrification landscapes of the settler city. In this section I work through specific theorists in an attempt to get closer to a decolonized understanding of gentrification theory. I start with a review the broad strokes of accepted gentrification theory and then move towards the Marxist theory, which I feel has the most potential for developing in decolonizing directions. In order to engage with Marxist geography, the issue of stagism and other theoretical weaknesses, which have plagued gentrification discourse where Indigenous peoples are concerned, must be addressed. In this discussion of stagism, I address the limits in the works of Neil Smith specifically because of his significant stature in the field of Marxist geography and beyond, as well as the work of those theorists who have worked through Lefebvre and Fanon. I then discuss those recent theorists, Blomley and Hern, who directly address colonization, and more specifically relations to property, as central to their theorization. The work of Blomley and Hern form an important basis for opening the discussion of decolonizing space in the settler city and the relationship between gentrification and colonization.

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[39] See the Junction Business Improvement Area website, online: <http://thejunctionbia.ca/about/area-history/> [perma.cc/H5HW-QFWD].

[40] Liza Kim Jackson, *The Reproduction of Capitalism and Cultural Production in the Junction* (MA Thesis, York University Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, 2011) at 21, online: academia.edu/5912415/The_Reproduction_of_Capitalism_and_Cultural_Production_in_the_Junction [perma.cc/AW6J-DUHN]; Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 110; Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, *supra* note 4 at 96.

[41] Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers, supra* note 4 at 186–187.

[42] Given the transport of toxic and explosive tar sands bitumen on tracks running through the Junction, a clean train movement has arisen in the neighbourhood, but this does little to de-fetishize or decolonize the image of the train.

A. SOCIAL MIXING OR CLASS CONFLICT

Mainstream gentrification theory proposes a reading of gentrification as an emancipatory movement of people who reject a cookie cutter, mass-produced suburban existence in favour of a reclaimed boutique life of creativity, tolerance, and social mixing in funky, lived-in urban centres.[43] The social diversity that gentrification is seen to provide is viewed as a social good, as a positive urban development based on the idea of the city as a space that integrates flourishing difference. Much of the gentrification debate prioritizes analyzing the forces (government, real estate, developers, and other social sectors) at play. Richard Florida for instance credits the creative class, which he understands as educated people who are involved in work that "creates new meaningful forms" (scientists, engineers, university professors, artists of all disciplines the intelligentsia, media, etc.), as being the drivers of urban development and financial growth.[44] Quite rightly, gentrification theory also takes up the concern as to whether and how revitalization comes at the expense of incumbent working and lower-class inhabitants, and if social mixing actually occurs in gentrified neighbourhoods.

Theorists understanding gentrification as spatialized class conflict[45] have analyzed the roles of identity groups including people of colour, women, gay folks, and artists. For instance, analyses of anti-Black racism have deepened our understanding of the ways that spatial development is specifically and historically a tool of corrupt white privilege, including the oppressive practices of segregation, redlining, predatory lending, slum clearance, blockbusting, urban renewal, environmental racism, labour exploitation in urban construction, housing discrimination, policing of space, white violence, stigmatization, disinvestment, and exclusionary gentrification.[46] While gentrification is often seen as engendering spaces of difference, it ultimately depends on bourgeois whiteness as a normative base for property valuation.[47]

Feminist geographers have looked at how the city centre can provide a space safe from the nuclear-family oppressions of suburban life. In the city, women can find resources and access community outside the family, and thus have the possibility of liberation from heteropatriarchal life.[48] Others have discussed how women's experience of gentrification is contradictory: women can be situated as indirect promoters of gentrification through their immaterial community-building labour, while at the same time creating the conditions for their own displacement as an economically vulnerable group.[49]

Urban centres are also seen as relative sanctuaries from homophobic culture for gay folks, as queer geographies allow for self-expression, safety from violence, mutual support, and a concentration of resources for community endurance and struggle. At the same time, Queer urban theorists have also looked at how homonormativity works in line with Richard Florida's creative city agenda, and its reach for global city status, to appropriate and commodify gay

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[43] Lees, Slater & Wyly, *supra* note 33 at 305.

[44] Richard Florida, "Cities and the Creative Class" (2003) 2:1 City and Community 3 at 8 [Florida].

[45] Blomley, *Unsettling, supra* note 1 at 148; Lees, Slater & Wyly, *supra* note 33 at 8–9; Tom Slater, "Municipally managed gentrification in South Parkdale, Toronto" (2004) 48:3 The Canadian Geographer 303 at 314; Smith, *New Urban Frontier, supra* note 14 at 6–7.

[46] George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011) at 119 [Lipsitz].

[47] *Ibid* at 33.

[48] Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder and Women* (London: Virago Press, 1991) at 157.

[49] Kern, *supra* note 26 at 522.

spaces.[50] Homonormative culture, exemplified by Gay Pride, tourism, and bounded gay village spaces, replicates white supremacist spatial production and drives working-class and racialized gay sexual/gender non-conforming subcultures underground.[51] Homonormativity also works through gentrification: affluent gay people, as carriers of cultural capital,[52] become "pioneers" who arrive in depressed neighbourhoods to transform and cleanse them in a manner that accommodates middle-class straight people's tastes and desires, including shuttering marginal sex work and cultures.[53]

Artists are also integral actors according to the "bohemian index" in Florida's creative city paradigm.[54] Artists seek out marginal neighbourhoods because of affordability, for the inspiration found in a gritty environment, and for room to establish their artistic identities.[55] As a result, individual artists play a well-known important and conflicting role as the shock troops of gentrification.[56] On another scale, arts institutions and large-scale arts festivals, such as Nuit Blanche and Luminato, while exploiting free and cheap artist labour, are seen by civic politicians to contribute to Toronto's image as a world-class arts destination[57] and a competitive global city. Branding the city as an arts centre supports tourism and attracts the international bourgeois class to take up residence and invest in business and property.[58] At the same time, artists are the poorest of all professional classes[59] and are extremely vulnerable to displacement due to the gentrification that their presence and self-interest promotes. Minority identity groups and artists might add flavour, desired diversity, and a liberatory air to the gentrifying neighbourhood, but as gentrification progresses to condominium development, their economic vulnerability may ultimately contribute to their displacement.[60]

All of these theories problematize the intersectional, privileging or de/privileging dimensions and complexities of a classist production of space that seeks an idealized diverse city where difference is domesticated and made safe for middle-class consumption and profit.[61] As Blomley notes, viewing gentrification as a social problem that exists *within* an accepted private property paradigm suggests that it is merely a planning problem that can be solved by mixed-income developments and affordable housing.[62] Such approaches to gentrification do not resolve the more profound ethical and practical issues of classism and colonialism maintained over time through the institution of private property. With few exceptions, current gentrification theory addresses neither the factual historical basis of the colonial city nor the urban Indigenous experience. The lack of inclusion of Indigenous perspectives on urban issues in gentrification

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[50] Florida, *supra* note 44 at 12.

[51] David Bell & Jon Binnie, "Authenticating queer space: citizenship, urbanism and governance" (2004) Urban Studies 41:9 1807 at 1811 [Bell & Binner].

[52] *Ibid* at 1817.

[53] *Ibid* at 1815; Lees, Slater & Wyly, *supra* note 33 at 103–106.

[54] Florida, *supra* note 44 at 13.

[55] Alison Bain, "Constructing contemporary artistic identities in Toronto neighbourhoods" (2003) 47:3 The Canadian Geographer 303 at 310 [Bain].

[56] Bain, *supra* note 55 at 310; Florida, *supra* note 44 at 9; David Ley, "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification" (2003) 40:12 Urban Studies 2527 at 2540 [Ley]; Heather McLean, "Competitive Creativity? Arts and Culture in Torontos Mayoral Debates", *The Bullet - Socialist Project* (17 October 2010), online: <http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/420.php> [perma.cc/UJ5H-ESR3] [McLean].

[57] McLean, *supra* note 56.

[58] Florida, *supra* note 44 at 7.

[59] Ley, *supra* note 56 at 2538; McLean, *supra* note 56.

[60] McLean, *supra* note 56.

[61] Bell & Binnie, *supra* note 51 at 1816.

[62] Blomley, *supra* note 1 at 81, 96-7, 155.

theory not only curtails its liberatory potential, but also makes gentrification theory complicit in re-enacting the colonial production of space. Adding a settler colonial frame to the discussion on gentrification will deepen the critique, and at the same time open up the possibility for more radical, relevant, and ethical forms of production of urban space which are resistant in the present and liberatory in the future.

B. ONGOING PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

Contrary to the above gentrification theories, Marxist thought provides a useful starting point for understanding the role of the privatization of property in connecting colonization and gentrification. To begin, Marx's theory of primitive accumulation, or what many have come to call *original accumulation*, refers to the enclosure of the commons, the conquest of land, the and extraction of resources at "at the fringe of capitalism's reach," and describes how peoples become dispossessed of their lands.[63] Marx describes how "conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short force, played the greatest part"[64] in transforming land into private property. Forced off the land and separated from access to resources, people are continually pushed into the labour market to survive. Thus the transformation of land into private property and the creation of a landless class *is ultimately the cause of poverty, scarcity, homelessness, and immiseration*, which become endemic to the economic condition under capitalism and throughout imperial and neo-imperial geographies. For David Harvey, original accumulation on the global scale,

> constitutes a moving testimony to the depredations wrought in the name of human progress by a rapacious capitalism. It also captures the immense complexity and richness of human interaction as diverse peoples of the world with equally diverse histories, cultures and modes of production are forged into an awkward and oppressive unity under the banner of the capitalist law of value.[65]

Indeed, the process of enclosure is how the capitalist/colonial city comes to be, with the urban form itself being a hallmark of the capitalist system.[66] Anthony King notes that "[t]he new cities, and the new 'norms and forms' introduced from the metropole to the colony did not simply provide 'models on which the colonies were built … they were also the 'norms and forms' of one mode of production (industrial capitalism) being transplanted into the territory of another mode of production." [67] In the Canadian context, diverse forms of Indigenous inhabitation and relations to land, described by Coulthard as being based in a relational ethics of obligatory reciprocity among species and places which all hold agency and spirit, [68] are reterritorialized to conform to the demands of capitalist alienation, privatization, and commodification of property.

Theorist of the commons Massimo De Angelis proposes that original accumulation is not a discrete historical moment, but a continual process of enclosure of various forms of commons by

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[63] Marx, *supra* note 3 at 876.

[64] Marx, *supra* note 3 at 874.

[65] Harvey, *supra* note 16 at 439.

[66] Stuart Hodkinson, "The new urban enclosures" (2012) 16:5 City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action 500 at 500.

[67] King, *supra* note 8 at 9.

[68] Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 60–61.

the marketization of relations and space, which is constitutive of a capitalist logic.[69] Ongoing original accumulation takes place across global and local scales, from the uneven landscape of a globalized capitalist world system (as with corporate extraction of resources on Indigenous lands) to the privatization of urban space and daily class and colonial struggles in the gentrifying settler city context. DeAngelis explains that this is the process by which "human activity is channelled into forms that are compatible with the priority of capital's accumulation."[70] It is through the legal, cultural, and institutional mechanics of capitalist property relations and exchange that enclosure by marketization of relationalities unfolds.

As Neil Smith notes, the competitive dynamics of capitalism produces uneven development in urban land markets and the rent gap where neighbourhoods that are in decline, and therefore offer cheap real estate, are measured by speculators against the potential profits that could be made once developed. The rent gap spurs reinvestment and thereby drives gentrification.[71] Gentrification is a process that takes advantage of inherently unstable and constantly fluctuating land markets across urban spaces where the neighbourhood as a whole is seen as a basis of economic competition within the context of the city. Additionally, the local unfolding of gentrification has taken on an international dimension with the increasing significance of tourism and investment in property, business, and infrastructure by the transnational capitalist and creative classes.[72] This competitive activity continually dominates the space and socio-economic relationalities that exist and unfold in the geography of the neighbourhood.

While De Angelis does not refer to gentrification, his theory of ongoing primitive accumulation perfectly describes the logic of gentrification, where enclosure of urban spaces and practices includes: the conversion of churches (as community spaces) into condominiums; urban design strategies to discourage loitering or street sleeping, such as homeless-proof benches and other physical barriers to street living; shaming and excluding poor people and their cultures; and legal strategies to criminalize public homeless/low-income culture and economics, such as panhandling, smoking and squeegee work.[73] One can understand enclosure as an act of separation of peoples from their survival networks enforced through the use of extra-economic force (surveillance, policing, and military), economic coercion (austerity), legal regulation of public space through civic by-laws, and inaccessibility of housing and the necessities for life. De Angelis points out that "what capital … does is that it attempts to create life-worlds in its own image or to colonize existing ones, to put them to work for its priorities and drives. And it has done this since the beginning of its history to different degrees, and, at any given historical moment, different life-worlds are subject to different degrees of colonisation."[74] However, the privatization of space and relationalities cannot fully dominate; rather, it is a process of struggle as illustrated by the Indigenization of space projects mentioned above alongside the many anti-

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[69] Massimo De Angelis, "Separating the Doing and the Deed: Capital and the Continuous Character of Enclosures" (2004) 12:2 Historical Materialism 57 at 60–61 [De Angelis]. See also Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 151–152.

[70] De Angelis, *supra* note 69 at 64.

[71] Smith, *New Urban Frontier, supra* note 14 at 72.

[72] Stefan Kipfer & Roger Keil, "Toronto Inc? Planning the Competitive City in the New Toronto" (2002) 34:2 Antipode 227 at 236.

[73] Such as with Ontario's *Safe Streets Act*. See: Matthew R McLennan, "Our Streets! Practice and Theory of the Ottawa Panhandlers Union," in Alan Bourke, Tia Dafnos & Markus Kip, eds, *Lumpencity* (Ottawa: Red Quill Books, 2011) 389 at 397.

[74] De Angelis, *supra* note 69 at 67.

gentrification struggles taking place. Thus, De Angelis characterizes capitalism not as a "totalised system, but as a force with totalising drives."[75]

De Angelis does not address issues of historical colonization, however, there are many forms of ongoing enclosure in the urban setting by settler society which are of particular relevance to Indigenous peoples. Aside from the main issue of the stolen land itself and acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignty, these include: the refusal to acknowledge the full and unlimited importance of Indigenous history, knowledge, culture and politics; the refusal to recognize historical and sacred Indigenous sites; the decimation of Indigenous ecologies; the regulation of urban hunting, fishing, and other food production practices by settler laws; the criminalization of Indigenous inhabitation of public spaces; civilian and police violence and incarceration of Indigenous bodies.[76] Therefore, there are significant gaps in the Marxist narrative that can only be resolved by adopting a decolonial frame.

C. THE PROBLEM OF STAGISM

Another significant barrier to the contribution of Marxist thought to discussions on gentrification and colonization, is its lack of engagement with Indigenous thought. The origin of Marxist thought in the classical political economy that celebrated capitalism means it is tightly imbricated with modernist positions that become problematic when considering issues of liberation within colonial contexts.[77] It has been all too common in political-economic discussion to dismiss and foreclose on those who raise Indigenous knowledge as unwisely harkening back to a romantic or imagined past where it is supposed that identity and place were one, and Indigenous societies were spiritual, just, and ecological.[78]

One of the theoretical barriers to decolonizing Marxist and gentrification theory is stagism, the theory of human evolution through stages of development towards greater civilization and enlightenment. Within the dominant strain of European thought, Indigenous cultures are wrongly believed to have failed to progress, and thus represent undeveloped societies frozen in the past. In line with such thinking, Marx proposed a temporal sketch of humanity, which thought of non-industrialized, communal cultures as belonging to a "primitive" stage prior to the industrial capitalist mode of production, which in contrast was viewed as advanced, modern, and technological.[79] While stagism in Marxist thought has been much critiqued,[80] it persists through the common and uncritical use of terms such as "primitive," "pre-modern," and "pre-capitalist" to describe Indigenous cultural-economic life. To refer to "pre-capitalist" forms is problematic because Indigenous culture persists within, around, and against

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[75] *Ibid* at 60.

[76] Coulthard has written extensively on rejecting the politics of recognition as a reinstatement of settler power to recognize. He argues for the self-determined assertion of sovereignty through other means of Indigenous resistance and resurgence. See Coulthard, *supra*, note 3 at 154–159.

[77] For instance, Coulthard critiques the use of the concept of "the commons" as a settler claim to lands without accounting for the fact of Indigenous land, *supra* note 3 at 12.

[78] Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 51.

[79] Marx, *supra* note 2 at 285–286.

[80] David Bedford, "Marxism and the Aboriginal Question: The Tragedy of Progress" (1994) 14:1 Canadian Journal of Native Studies 101 at 102–117; Tom Keefer, "Marxism, Indigenous Struggles, and the Tragedy of 'Stagism'" (2010) 10 Upping the Anti: A Journal of Theory and Action 99 at 100–114; Frank Black Elk, "Observations on Marxism and Lakota Tradition" in Ward Churchill, ed, *Marxism and Native Americans* (Boston: South End Press, 1983) 137 at 140.

capitalism and are, therefore, coeval with modernity. Indeed, modernity itself does not exist without colonialism and its Other. [81] Making Indigenous modernity theoretically invisible reproduces colonialism. Many Marxists face a difficulty in approaching Indigenous knowledge, which developed independently from the Western philosophical paradigm. The hoped-for transformation of capitalism into socialism indicates a cultural worldview based in a Eurocentric modernity that differs from, and is not necessarily inclusive of, non-European Indigenous worldviews. [82]

Doreen Massey is one Marxist geographer who rejects stagism with her theory of space produced through the simultaneous, coeval trajectories of stories (human and non-human) that take place in historically specific geographies of power. [83] The implication of these intersecting trajectories is that space provides the opportunity for a radical heterogeneity, a confrontation with the Other, a co-mingling of stories out of which space is produced and which opens up new political possibilities (as opposed to the superficial diversity of mainstream gentrification theory). Massey's call for a decentering of Europe touches on a demand from Indigenous scholars, and her discussion of space provides many openings. However, like many Marxist geographers, Massey remains highly suspicious of "local," "parochial," and "nationalist" defenses of place, [84] and her theoretical work in many ways reinforces European cultural hegemony. For instance, I question how Massey's defense of space as perpetual flow, and her rejection of any idea of a timeless connection to place, reflect on Indigenous creation stories[85] or the longstanding rejection by many Indigenous scholars and peoples of the Bering Strait land bridge migration theory. Western theories of nationalism or sovereignty, territory, land, property, and space cannot be automatically applied to Indigenous realities or politics. Furthermore, if the production of space can be described with the dialogical metaphor of intersecting trajectories of stories, then shouldn't theoretical space also be enacted dialogically? According to Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, the land-based self-understanding of Indigenous peoples in relationship to space challenges Marxist, new materialist, and geographic thinking. [86] The *critical place inquiry* proposed by Tuck and McKenzie asserts that a decolonizing spatial theory cannot be developed outside of a discussion with Indigenous scholars, leaders and peoples at its centre. [87]

The stakes, if such a discussion does not take place, are high. In Marxist theory, economic forms that have persisted alongside capitalism are generally not articulated as cultural or historical specificities, but as abstract empty spaces, or spaces of the past, while capitalist space is well defined and articulated. An undefined space cannot be conceived as a resistant

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[81] Walter D Mignolo, "Coloniality: the Darker Side of Modernity" in Sabine Breitwieser, ed, *Modernologies; Contemporary Artists Researching Modernity and Modernism* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2009) 39 at 43 [Mignolo].

[82] Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 60; Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 11.

[83] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005) at 64.

[84] *Ibid* at 6. Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 30.

[85] Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 56.

[86] Tuck & McKenzie, in describing Indigenous understandings of place, move beyond the limited concern for the social, the human, to include "land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place." This understanding of place is one of non-privileged, non-hierarchical "familiar" relationalities among species and material elements that occur across dimensions of being from emotional, personal, and spiritual to that of knowledge production, and which are also described as sacred (*ibid* at 51). In making a few points about Indigenous conceptions of land, it still seems necessary to point out that these do not comprise a reductive, static cultural state, but exist within dynamic epistemological practices which are transforming and exchanging over time, *ibid* at 48.

[87] *Ibid* at 49.

space, so not engaging across knowledge paradigms undermines the relevancy of Marxist thought to decolonization. Many critiques of bourgeois modernism by Marxist urbanists, however, are *not* necessarily meant to abolish the bourgeois cultural system that gave birth to capitalism and colonialism, but are meant to "heal the wounds of modernity through a fuller and deeper modernity."[88] I interpret this to mean a project of working towards socialist control over productivity and nature[89] without consideration of capitalism's colonial history or engagement with Indigenous theorists, leaders and peoples as a vital beginning place, rather than an afterthought. This neglect of the importance of colonial history and Indigenous thought is exemplified by one of the most important Marxist theorists of gentrification, Neil Smith.

D. URBAN MARXISM AND COLONIALISM

Despite writing from the old colonial metropole and researching in settler colonial urban sites, Smith's work does not account for the violent history of colonialism. Smith's primary concern with colonization is its role in the purported universalization of the wage labour relation and the commodification of space. Glen Coulthard, on the other hand, points out that Indigenous peoples are not primarily integrated into the capitalist mode of production as labourers, but are seen instead as obstructing the acquisition of land and resources.[90] Outside of the wage labour relation, Smith views the persistence of non-capitalist economic forms as "fossilizations of pre-capitalist relations of production."[91] In his discussion of imperialism and uneven development, Smith emphasizes the issue of "pre-capitalist" cultures by recalling Rosa Luxemburg's casting of Indigenous economies as "a legacy from the past which is inexorably destroyed with the forward march of capital," in other words, "a temporary matter of the articulation of modes of production."[92]

In *Uneven Development*, Smith relies on stagist theory to describe historical transformations of the conceptualization of space. In considering the relation between space and nature, Smith uses the term "primitive" liberally to refer to the Indigenous experience of "place," set in opposition to abstracted Western conceptions of "space." As evidence of primitive, un-developed notions of space, Smith (quoting Robert Sack) describes Indigenous peoples as having a unified or undifferentiated relation to nature, and, lacking private commodified property, owning territory as a social group rather than as individuals.[93] As further proof that Indigenous societies experience place and not space, Smith quotes Ernst Cassirer's example of "natives" who can easily find their way through a landscape, but are unable to draw a map of it. With this wholly inadequate summation of Indigenous relationships to space, Smith states that the Western conception of space coincides with a "milestone in human history—the origins of philosophy, of conceptual thought which is no longer the direct efflux of practical human activity."[94] Blomley, taking a more critical bent, notes that the development of cadastral mapping as a technique of bourgeois hegemonic, disembodied, scientific conceptualization of space is key to the ideology

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[88] Andy Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (New York: Routledge, 2002) at 162.

[89] Smith, *Uneven Development*, *supra* note 16 at 89.

[90] Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 10–11.

[91] Smith, *Uneven Development, supra* note 16 at 115. Smith espouses the idea that the working-class have the most revolutionary potential, and therefore the universalization of the wage labour system creates the conditions for the desired socialist revolution (at 228).

[92] *Ibid* at 129.

[93] *Ibid* at 96.

[94] *Ibid* at 97.

and technology by which colonial land theft and private property is materialized.[95] Indeed, the violence against Indigenous peoples that has resulted from the bourgeois relation to space seems to be a non-issue for Smith. The stagist narrative is a given; Smith moves us theoretically from a pre-capitalist state of the unity of nature and human society, to the bourgeois misconception of a dualistic separation of nature and society, through to his idea of the production of nature where humans, while seen to be a part of nature from the start, have developed the powers to produce their own means of subsistence, and thus have now become the centre of nature.[96] The development of advanced Western dualistic thinking that serves capitalism and the human ascendancy within nature it produces, is also seen as the ground for capitalism's own overcoming, an achievement which ultimately brings about a social control of history. While this is clearly anthropocentric, Smith pre-empts such a critique as "nostalgic."[97]

Smith does *not* discuss the violent dispossession through military, cultural, trade, and biological war, or the decimation of Indigenous ecologies that was required to achieve and reproduce capitalism in the settler context. The ethical underdevelopment of the European philosophical tradition is written over with a modernist (in its limited European sense) celebration of philosophical advancement. Smith's analysis of space leaves out any cross-cultural, and therefore possibly decolonizing, discussion.

By relegating Indigenous history and epistemologies to a so-called pre-capitalist past, Smith fails to radically unsettle the notion of private property, a foundational bourgeois production of space, making his analysis of gentrification incomplete. For instance, Smith examines economic processes of gentrification such as the rent gap from *within* a capitalist paradigm of private property, a move that solidifies the private property system rather than unsettles it.[98] Smith's theoretical situatedness within the private property paradigm is reflected in his discussion of gentrification as a frontier where,

> a highly resonant imagery [is] bound up with economic progress and historical destiny, rugged individualism and the romance of danger, national optimism, race and class superiority. But it also comes from the geographical specificity of the frontier. The frontier of the American West was a real place; you could go there and virtually see the line, as Frederick Jackson Turner put it, between "savagery and civilization." The geography of the frontier was cast and created as a container of all these accumulated meanings; the sharpness of the geographical frontier was an excellent conveyance for the social differences between "us" and "them," the historical difference between past and future, the economic difference between existing market and profitable opportunity.[99]

Missing from this description is any understanding of the specific situation of Indigenous peoples, who seem again to be located vaguely in the past (relative to the future of civilizing opportunity). For Smith, the line between "us" and "them" is not determined by conflicting cultural systems or historically-specific modes of production, it is between an existing marginal

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[95] Nicholas Blomley, "Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid" (2003) 93:1 Annals of the Association of American Geographers 121 at 127 [Blomley, Law, Property and the Geography of Violence].

[96] Smith, *Uneven Development, supra* note 16 at 48.

[97] *Ibid* at 82, 91.

[98] Smith, *New Urban Frontier, supra* note 14 at 62–63.

[99] *Ibid* at 186.

market and future profitable opportunity of more organized capital within a landscape already dominated by Europe. Smith evokes the frontier to draw parallels with gentrification as a place that "transmits the distilled optimism of a new city … where the future will be made"[100] by those who invest in and transform so-called savage spaces. Smith writes that the disinvested neighbourhood is,

> made available as a frontier by the existence of a very sharp economic line in the landscape. Behind the line, civilization and profit making are taking their toll; in front of the line, savagery, promise and opportunity still stalk the landscape. This "frontier of profitability," invested with such a wealth of cultural expectation, is a viscerally real place inscribed in the urban landscape of gentrified neighbourhoods.[101]

Smith points out that low-income, working-class, and homeless peoples are targeted by gentrifiers, media, and politicians as "savages," and their spaces called "Indian country."[102] He then analyzes the frontier as a myth that denotes a style as much as a real place.[103] Nowhere in Smith's description of the historical *or* the modern-day frontier of the gentrifying neighbourhood is the Indigenous body found as a factual entity or a critical source. Smith deploys the "frontier" image to understand the shifting property values that occur block by block, as a line in space between areas of disinvestment marginalizing working-class and poor folks (hyperbolized as savages) and areas of reinvestment benefitting the incoming middle- and upper-class folks who are buying up properties. This frontier is deployed as an illustration of his rent gap theory, which becomes comprehensible as lines on a map—a map of space totally configured as commodified property. When Smith suggests that the economic profits of gentrifiers are maximized within the borders of disinvested neighbourhoods with "little risk of … being scalped,"[104] it becomes clear that Indigenous bodies are entirely outside this narrative, only appearing spectrally to signify the sensationalistic Other as a metaphor for economic danger. Without getting too deep into a complex history, Indigenous scholar Bonita Lawrence reminds us that bounty scalping of Indigenous people was introduced by British colonizers as part of a genocidal removal campaign.[105] This colonial scenario cannot be transposed adequately, either as metaphor or material equivalent, onto the class struggle of modern day gentrification in the manner that Smith attempts. Rather, Smith adheres to the rhetoric and mechanisms of private property, without stepping outside to see private property from a wholly different vantage point, and understanding it as arising out of a radical transformation in modes of production: this is the significant meaning of the frontier in any discussion of gentrification. Therefore, to see a differential between two forms of private property, one highly valorized (invested) and one with a depressed valorization (divested or not yet priced),[106] is a limited understanding of the historical reference of the frontier, and thus of gentrification itself. Indeed, one might surmise that Smith's project of

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[100] *Ibid* at 186.

[101] *Ibid* at 186.

[102] *Ibid* at 7.

[103] *Ibid* at 14.

[104] *Ibid* at 205.

[105] Bonita Lawrence, "Rewriting Histories of the Land: Colonization and Indigenous Resistance in Eastern Canada" in Sherene Razack, ed, *Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002) 21 at 34 [Lawrence].

[106] Smith, *New Urban Frontier, supra* note 14 at 187.

a revolutionary leap from private property to socialist control of land would be interrupted by Indigenous sovereignty. Rather, for Tuck and McKenzie the potential radical moment would come from reconnecting the debate on space to the history and philosophy of Indigenous relations to land that were suppressed through colonization and privatization of property.[107]

While attempting to materialize the notion of the frontier, Smith maintains the use of the term colonization as a metaphor in regards to actual Indigenous history. Smith unfolds his arguments about gentrification at length, including discussion of the role of migrant populations, never mentioning the Indigenous presence in the cityscape. Surprisingly, Smith, writing about "retaking the urban frontier," ends his seminal book *The New Urban Frontier* with a first mention of Indigenous history, drawing a parallel between the "symbolic extermination and erasure" of homeless people in the revanchist city and Custer's declaration that the genocide of the Sioux was a necessary step in settler land acquisition as evidence of the true nature of the frontier.[108] Rather than pausing to reflect of the ongoing significance of this historical moment, he passes up the opportunity to analyze the links between gentrification and colonization, claiming that the settlers were squatters who fought for welfare and democratic land rights— forerunners to those being pushed out of cities by today's revanchist politics. Indigenous dispossession is ignored, while white working-class or homeless settler dispossession is condemned. Those settlers who participated in the theft of Indigenous lands are retroactively deemed victims, their victimization continuing with gentrification.[109]

E. URBAN MARXISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM

Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer have worked more explicitly to integrate a materially-based colonial critique into Marxist urban theory, drawing on a reading of Henri Lefebvre, but expanding his limited understanding of colonialism. However, it is difficult to grasp the issue of settler colonization in Canada through their theorization.

Goonewardena and Kipfer contend that in earlier writings, Lefebvre failed to move his conception of the colonial beyond the metaphorical, "with only the barest of nods to the specificity of colonial social relations."[110] Rather, Lefebvre introduces an understanding of colonization that moves past historical specificity in the "era of European territorial expansion"[111] to recognize "colonization as a 'new' form of alienation"[112] that captures "the domination of everyday life by capital and state in the imperial metropole."[113] Goonewardena and Kipfer point out that Lefebvre later develops the material dimension of his conceptualization, recognizing that colonization forms a logic of the capitalist production of space.[114] The authors write that "Lefebvre establishes a connection between various socio-spatial 'peripheries'—underdeveloped countries, displaced peasants, slum dwellers, immigrant workers, inhabitants of suburbs, women, youth, homosexuals, drug addicts—that nourish revolt."[115]

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[107] Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 108.

[108] Smith, *New Urban Frontier, supra* note 14 at 225.

[109] *Ibid* at 226.

[110] Kanishka Goonewardena & Stefan Kipfer, "Urban Marxism and the post-colonial question: Henri Lefebvre and 'colonization'" (2013) 21:2 Historical Materialism 76 at 87 [Goonewardena & Kipfer].

[111] *Ibid* at 95.

[112] *Ibid* at 87.

[113] *Ibid* at 87.

[114] *Ibid* at 94.

[115] *Ibid* at 97.

Importantly, the authors note that Lefebvre's understanding addresses the situation of internal colonies,[116] where the centre-periphery relation can be telescoped from relations between nations across extensive territory and history to segregated areas within imperial cities. Lefebvre's later articulation provides an important material basis to the use of the term colonization in gentrification theory where gentrification is understood as the neo-colonial dominance over, and white production of space against, those globally marginalized and often forced into displacement and transience within capitalism.

To deepen the relevance of Lefebvre's articulation of colonialism, Kipfer and Jason Petrunia bring Frantz Fanon into the discussion. For the authors, a reading of Fanon means that "racism be understood as the 'most visible,' 'most everyday' modality of the systematized hierarchisation" that is colonization. [117] Fanon's theory is applied by these Marxist urban geographers to the conditions of migrant communities as victims of gentrification in the metropole, which they understand to be "neo-colonial aspects of post-colonial situations."[118]

These theorizations of the relationship between capitalism and colonization are important for developing a nuanced understanding of the production of urban space and of gentrification. However, in the Canadian context, the intricacies of post/neo-colonial theory obscure ongoing colonization. While European metropoles are transformed by and enact colonial relationalities with diaspora communities from former colonies, Canada has never decolonized, and therefore the colonial relations of occupation are a direct continuum with and form the basis for extenuating settler colonial relationalities. Migrants (dispossessed from their own lands) arriving, either by will or by force, in Canada are situated within this ongoing colonization differently than European settlers, but are nonetheless positioned within hegemonic settlerism by many Indigenous and allied scholars.[119]

F. REAPPROACHES TO THE DECOLONIZATION OF GENTRIFICATION THEORY

Nicholas Blomley and Matt Hern have recently made contributions to discussions that foreground private property as a major problematic that links gentrification and colonization. As a legal scholar, Blomley writes extensively about the conflicts that arise through colonial property relations in the settler city context and lays the basis for an understanding of the relationship between ongoing colonization and gentrification. Blomley comments that "[e]ven though native people are undeniably caught up in gentrification, this has all too often been ignored."[120] Blomley begins by observing that land is a substrate over which European regimes of property are laid.[121] Blomley draws on the early theorist of private property, John Locke, who despite encountering a North American landscape that in all parts was characterized by non-acquisitive Indigenous economic life in the form of hunting and gathering, mobile agriculture,

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[116] *Ibid* at 97.

[117] Stefan Kipfer & Jason Petrunia, "'Recolonization' and Public Housing: A Toronto Case Study" (2009) 83 Studies in Political Economy 111 at 112–113.

[118] Goonewardena & Kipfer, *supra* note 110 at 89.

[119] Bonita Lawrence & Enakshi Dua, "Decolonizing Antiracism" (2005) 32:4 Social Justice 120 at 132; Shannon Clarke, "Q&A with Sherene Razack: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody," *Global Migration Research Institute* (4 April 2016), online: <http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies/2016/04/qa-with-sherene-razack/> [perma.cc/LU35-53G8].

[120] Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 149.

[121] *Ibid* at xv.

decentralized authority structures,[122] and land-based spiritual practices, was oblivious to the intricate interspecies and chemical-relational web that makes up the ecology and economy of Indigenous life. Instead, Locke put forward a notion of the land as a *terra nullius*, as empty, valueless in itself, and belonging to no one. He theorized that it wasn't until a person mixed their labour with the land, thereby making that land productive, that the individual could take possession of it.[123] Locke deemed Indigenous people to be in a "state of nature," meaning that their economic system did not "improve" or maximize the economic potential for extraction, production, and subsequent exchange of commodities. Therefore, their mixing of labour with the land did not result in property ownership. To not follow the European industrial form of working the land was, according to Locke, to leave the land to waste, and as long as land could be considered wasted, vacant, and undeveloped, there would be no dispute over Europeans taking possession of it.[124] Locke's labour theory of private property forced the European paradigm of capitalist property relations onto Indigenous economic life and land. Blomley understands Locke's theoretically convenient move as a primary violence and ethical contradiction that drives urban contestation over space.[125]

Blomley makes the connection between Locke's narrative of property and gentrification in the contemporary settler city, writing that "[i]f gentrification entails progress, it follows that urban space that has not been 'improved' is somehow non-progressive."[126] Neighbourhoods are treated as a new *terra nullius*—wasted lands ripe for the taking. Furthermore, Blomley notes that Locke's theory of *terra nullius* and waste distils down to the level of embodiment:

> the poor are themselves imagined as causal agents of decline—a decayed built landscape and damaged bodies are locked together. The visual decay of the landscape—the boarded-up buildings, the disorder of the street, the pervasiveness of 'lowest and worst use'—are both cause and effect of the feral population of the 'dazed, drugged, and drunk.' Ipso facto, the removal of this population is a pre-condition for neighborhood improvement.[127]

The entitled figure of property possession is what John Locke called the "rational and industrious" body ordained by God, those who have the "art, science, skill" and "faculty"[128] to turn waste into productivity, into surplus, which can then be brought to market where profit can be derived.[129]

While Locke argues for the privatization and improvement of property by the individual, he also specifies that there should be enough land left over for common usage (perhaps not realizing that settler society would eventually develop a desire for all of the seemingly vast lands of North America). For Blomley, the legal idea of common possession is an antidote to the Lockean notion of *terra nullius* that underpins liberal bourgeois individualist claims to land.[130]

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[122] James Tully, "Rediscovering America: the Two Treatises and aboriginal rights" in *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 137 at 156 [Tully].

[123] John Locke, *Two treatises of government* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980) at 19.

[124] *Ibid* at 23–28; Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 86.

[125] Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at xvi.

[126] *Ibid* at 86.

[127] *Ibid* at 90.

[128] Cushman quoted in Tully, *supra* note 122 at 125.

[129] *Ibid* at 163.

[130] Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 116.

Blomley states that the idea of common land (distinct from state-owned land) recognized in Anglo-American law provides an opening to envision a counter-narrative towards both more just property relations and the starting point for property-based political struggles.[131] Speaking of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Blomley comments that the,

> neighborhood itself is imagined as in some ways 'owned' by area residents. In part, this relates to the argument that the neighborhood has been intensely used and physically produced through local struggle and collective agency, thus vesting a claim to this space in its low-income residents. Moreover, the physical landscape—the community centers, hotels, service agencies, co-ops, and streets—itself speaks of successful working-class resistance to attempts at community erasure through displacement.[132]

Here, Blomley offers an important argument contra to Locke's labour theory of property, in which the entitled productive body of land improvement and ownership is based in capitalist production, in favour of alternative property claims based in socially-reproductive labour that is not profit-producing, but community-sustaining. With the intensity of the private property market , however, such a claim to common lands is not easy to achieve recognition for.

In effect, Blomley understands the struggle against gentrification as a struggle between various property claims: Indigenous, community, versus colonial-capitalist. These claims can also be understood as a dialectic between enclosure and commons, or public-use property versus private property. Blomley attempts to integrate Indigenous relations to land within this Eurocentric dialectic of property even though he acknowledges that there are significant ontological differences between Native and non-Native forms of property.[133] Blomley agrees that Indigenous societies universally did not have anything resembling the commodification of, or alienation from, land access that characterizes the European system of private property relations.[134] Nevertheless, Blomley points to the Squamish people's social practice, as reflected in the klanak or potlatch, as a form of property relation.[135] Blomley looks at pre-contact Indigenous property practices as being in dialectical relation with European forms of property claims as a way to reframe, redress, to unsettle private property. According to Blomley's understanding, while dispossession of Indigenous people has taken place in the past, there remain ongoing contested claims within the private property model that are marked by continued displacement within the settler city, and this forms a basis for struggle.[136] Ultimately, his view is that "collective claims can be enacted using ideological vocabularies similar to those that sustain private property."[137] Blomley calls property "both the problem and the solution,"[138] and thus the question remains as to how one might disagree with the historical theft of Indigenous lands, but then seek redress *within* the ideological and legal systems by which that theft was made possible.

Like Blomley, Hern's work also centers on colonial property relations as key to a theory of urban liberation. Hern's concern is to move beyond property to open up the possibility of a

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[131] *Ibid* at 64.
[132] *Ibid* at 96.
[133] *Ibid* at 111.
[134] *Ibid* at 10.
[135] *Ibid* at 111.
[136] *Ibid* at 122.
[137] *Ibid* at 154.
[138] *Ibid* at 155.

totally new conception of relations to land. Hern, thus, also expresses discomfort with a gentrification theory "untroubled" by colonial history.[139] Hern considers both the ethical and ongoing material problem of colonialism by focussing on questions of land, property, and sovereignties.[140] Like Blomley, Hern understands private property as a form of violence imposed on relationships to land, in that the "domination of land is integral to the domination of people, and vice versa."[141] Land, for Hern, is the basis of freedom[142] and thus must be reimagined "outside the predatory market" and "Westphalian" forms of state sovereignty.[143] Like many Marxist urban geographers, Hern believes that despite the connection of the city form to capitalist development, the city has liberatory potential—here, he envisions an ecological "city of generosity."[144] Hern is "convinced that materially destabilizing ownerships is the predicate to the unsettling of land, to righting past wrongs, and is the route to producing a city air that makes us free."[145] Without giving much detail, Hern assumes the resolution of complex questions of Indigenous sovereignty alongside the abandonment of the European sovereign nation structure, before discussing at length exemplars of alternative, non-private property arrangements, including "Georgist taxes, nonmarket housing, squatting, or co-ops."[146] The core, "critical, even essential" move for Hern is to "abolish profiteering from land."[147] Here he takes up the notion of diverse forms of commons, which must necessarily be unsettled through their placement in a settler/post-slavery historical context that demands a resolution to land injustices as a way forward.[148] At the same time, Hern does not underestimate the complexities of sorting land relations, historical injustices, and questions of sovereignty among multiple and fluid forms of difference.[149] However, for Hern, unlike Blomley, "taking Indigenous presences, African American reparations, and decolonizing land struggles seriously rips an unfixable tear in the fabric of the ownership model,"[150] where possession is not the correct answer to dispossession.[151] Hern proposes the "generous city" as the ethical guide for everyday projects of instituting land access, (re)distribution[152] and shared use across difference, writing that "'sharing' has to be generously complex, and complexly generous, and speak to land justice."[153] In the final analysis, Hern questions the usefulness of gentrification as a point of resistance, arguing that the theory does not go outside of the private property paradigm that he critiques so thoroughly. Rather, he sets his sights on a complex set of larger social problems, from questions of democratic decision-making, alternative modeling, and historical justice, to alternative sovereignties.

I agree with Blomley and Hern's critiques of private property and the linkages each makes between colonialism and gentrification, but I also offer several points of discussion. Both Blomley and Hern take an important and strong ethical position on the necessity of accounting

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[139] Matt Hern, *What a City Is For: Remaking the Politics of Displacement* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016) at 19.
[140] *Ibid* at 15.
[141] *Ibid* at 244.
[142] *Ibid* at 43.
[143] *Ibid* at 165; 201–209.
[144] *Ibid* at 165.
[145] *Ibid* at 166.
[146] *Ibid* at 229.
[147] *Ibid* at 169.
[148] *Ibid* at 175.
[149] *Ibid* at 183.
[150] *Ibid* at 184.
[151] *Ibid* at 243.
[152] *Ibid* at 170.
[153] *Ibid* at 215.

for colonial history in gentrification theory. However, addressing Hern's dismissal of gentrification politics, I contend that gentrification represents a heightened dialectic and material reality in the current moment of urban development—a key strategy/tactic/ideological tool of politicians, developers, corporations, and the bourgeois subject in their class-colonial war. In this context, I don't find it useful to abandon gentrification as a frame altogether. I prefer to challenge gentrification theory in order to push its radical potential within specific resistances.

Whether Indigenous relations to land can be usefully understood as property relations, as does Blomley, or whether the idea of possession should be done away with all together, as for Hern, there are pitfalls either way. The danger in Blomley's position is that the term property will not be flexible enough to allow for the expansive, diverse, and historically-specific possibilities of decolonial Indigenous relations to land. On the other hand, Hern's suggestion of doing away with the idea of possession (and legal sovereignty) altogether might undercut the historical and legally-binding assertion of Indigenous land rights. In either case, notions of property, possession and sovereignty, or their denial, reflect a binary and universalized Eurocentric worldview. Furthermore, Hern's prescription for a generous city seems to me to be a premature leap forward over the significant problems that arise from an understanding of colonized lands as occupied, and of the roles of settlers in decolonization. Tuck and McKenzie point out that arguing for new relations to land without acknowledging the pre-existing and "intact" Indigenous relations to that same land is problematic.[154] Tuck and Yang clearly state that their purpose is not to solve the problems of non-Native productions of space, writing that "[d]ecolonizing the Americas means all land is repatriated and all settlers become landless."[155] Recently, calls for a return of Crown Lands to Indigenous control have gotten louder. For Tuck and Yang, the repatriation of land also means the abolition of property and the rebalancing of relationalities,[156] according to Indigenous paradigms and processes, not those of settler theorists such as Hern and Blomley, or myself for that matter. Tuck and McKenzie state: "decolonization is always historically specific, context specific, and place specific."[157] I interpret this to mean that it is up to settlers to engage with the specific self-understandings of Indigenous peoples in their relationships to their land *through* local struggles against colonization in all its forms. For me, in my context, that includes gentrification. The intention here is to point to a gap, as I see it, between the understanding proposed by Marxist geographers and that of Indigenous theorists and communities, as to what decolonization means and what it demands. This is a hugely complex process underway, which, I feel, demands more on the ground engagement and praxis in order for the theory to develop in fruitful directions.

III. THE BOURGEOIS SETTLER SUBJECT AND ITS OTHER

The idea of giving up control of land to Indigenous nations strikes a blow to the heart of bourgeois/settler identity (as is evidenced by the total evasion of the issue by Smith and other Marxist geographer's of gentrification). While discussions of the "who's" and "why's" permeate gentrification theory, there is seldom an articulation of the structural subject position of gentrification. I refer to this position as the *bourgeois/settler subject* using a slash to indicate

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[154] Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at xvi.
[155] Eve Tuck & K Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor" (2012) 1:1 Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society 1 at 27.
[156] *Ibid* at 30.
[157] Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 11.

their inherent connectivity. I use the term "bourgeois" to represent the foundational, historically ascendant system of capitalism: capitalism as a system of bourgeois power to which we all must conform. This power encompasses the bourgeois-labour relation and also reflects more clearly a colonial subject that encloses and possesses land and thus is implicated in coloniality. Property possession is in fact the condition of possibility out of which bourgeois/settler subject arises.[158] I think about the bourgeois/settler subject as a naturalized and hegemonic mode of being, where the values of colonial capitalist society are adopted and performed despite an individual or group's actual position within social hierarchies.[159] The bourgeois/settler subject produces space in the contemporary urban context through gentrification.

While the bourgeois/settler subject of gentrification (particularly in the form of the middle-class) is accorded the moral high ground, is representative of the status to be achieved in society, is who government caters to, and is lauded for its ability to "improve" neighbourhoods, its positioning is actually ethically tenuous. Marx understood the bourgeois subject as arising from the theft of Indigenous land, and as one who seeks to conceal their dependence on the exploitation of the working class (especially globally) behind their own moral and meritorious ascendancy.[160] CB MacPherson sees the bourgeois subject as constructed through European liberal philosophy to be excessively individualized and possessive, writing that "the individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society."[161] Thorstein Veblen understands the bourgeois subject as aesthetically bound up with its own consumer power and presentation as a way to secure honour and superiority, and to protect itself from "inferiority and demerit."[162]

On the other hand, those who are oppressed within the bourgeois order see right through the bourgeois/settler subject of gentrification. George Lipsitz describes white supremacist production of space as a form of corruption and crime.[163] Indigenous narratives of contact have in some cases described Europeans as "sub-human and monstrous" in their violent and deceptive behaviour,[164] a perception that persists as settler society continues to manoeuvre corrupt and racist power against Indigenous communities. Fanon sharply critiqued the self-serving and contradictory racism of the bourgeoisie, commenting that "the bourgeois ideology that proclaims all men [sic] to be essentially equal, manages to remain consistent with itself by urging the subhuman to rise to the level of Western humanity that it embodies."[165] For Walter D Mignolo,

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[158] Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 3; Tuck & McKenzie, *supra* note 4 at 64.

[159] For instance, an individual or group may not necessarily be the owners of the means of production, as in the classical Marxist understanding of bourgeois, but they may be caught up in the reproduction of the colonial bourgeois system from their position within it. While this is complex issue of power, class-consciousness, and resistance is outside the scope of this paper, I do recognize that for those on the lower end of the social hierarchy, sometimes conformity is survival. But this is also not always the case. For how this works in white working class communities see: Thorstein Veblen, *Conspicuous Consumption* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006) at 50–51 [Veblen]. For how this works in Indigenous communities see: Ward Churchill, "Marxism and the Native American" in Churchill, ed, *Marxism and Native Americans* (Boston: South End Press, 1983) 183 at 195 [Churchhill]. For an example of how this works within Black migrant and African American communities see: Lipsitz, *supra* note 46 at 184, 186; and see: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967) at 44.

[160] Marx, *supra* note 2 at 280.

[161] CB MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1962) at 265.

[162] Veblen, *supra* note 159 at 48.

[163] Lipsitz, *supra* note 46 at 15.

[164] David L Blaney & Naeem Inayatullah, *Savage Economics: Wealth, Poverty, and the Temporal Walls of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2009) at 189 [Blaney & Inayatullah].

[165] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004) at 110.

the settler subject comes into being through the civilizing mission, which has historically deployed various means of achieving civilization from murder, war and discipline to forced cultural assimilation.[166] Linking to De Angelis' proposal of the ongoing condition of original accumulation, Mignolo considers the ongoing colonial project, which he calls a condition of "coloniality," as being a "celebratory rhetoric of modernity, a rhetoric of salvation and newness, based on European achievements"[167] that links "a new type of economy (capitalism) and the scientific revolution." Coloniality is both a material system of capitalist exchange and a hegemonic knowledge practice. It is a fundamental Eurocentric drive that operates through a "matrix [or order] of power."[168] For Mignolo, what is European tradition, what is modern is constructed *through* coloniality—there is no modernity without coloniality.[169]

I contend that coloniality is the fuel of gentrification. Settler/bourgeois subjectivity is expressed through those gentrifiers whose project is to rehabilitate, cleanse, and restore the underdeveloped and degraded urban landscape, and the bodies within, in their own image, to their own taste, and in support of their own economic advancement. As Anthony King notes:

> In the formal institutionalization of "town planning", the notion of "modernity" and "the modern" was informed by two sets of circumstances: the first, constructed diachronically, was in relation to the premodern, preindustrial, or early industrial capitalist cities of Britain, to replace the "disorder" and "squalor" of the old industrial towns; the second, constructed synchronically, in relation to the "traditional," "unmodern" societies confronted in the colonial encounter.[170]

Here, King is cognizant of the double articulation of coloniality that in one instance operates against Indigenous bodies and in the next against working-class and other subaltern sectors. The logic of both the colonial and capitalist productions of space is based on cordoning off transgressive (or savage) bodies from the morally-sanctified bourgeois/colonial body[171] into segregated urban spaces, reservations, residential schools, prisons, asylums, and hospitals.[172] Gentrifying neighbourhoods might be valorized for their multicultural character, but in the end class mixing does not occur to any significant extent, and the reality is that a cleansing of the Other does. [173] The competitive sociality of gentrification that arises out of the legal rights accorded to owners of capitalist private property is "predicated on physical, material practices; notably the state-enforced right to expel"[174] those bodies (deemed dependant on the state, non-productive, abject, traumatized, colonized, etc.) which seemingly do not contribute to the capitalist growth of the neighbourhood. The right to expel is an important settler bourgeois claim that originates in historical colonialism, continues through ongoing original accumulation, and is re-enacted through displacement caused by gentrification.

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[166] Lawrence, *supra* note 105 at 27–32.

[167] Mignolo, *supra* note 81 at 41. See also Churchill, *supra* note 159 at 187.

[168] Mignolo, *supra* note 81 at 42.

[169] *Ibid* at 39.

[170] King, *supra* note 8 at 9.

[171] Razack, *supra* note 5 at 97; Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) at 30 [Bauman].

[172] Gleeson, *supra* note 26 at 108.

[173] Damaris Rose, "Discourses and Experiences of Social Mix in Gentrifying Neighbourhoods: A Montreal Case Study" (2004) 13:2 Canadian Journal of Urban Research 278 at 294–299; Slater, *supra* note 45 at 320.

[174] Blomley, *Unsettling, supra* note 1 at xvii.

Mignolo refers to the drives to cleanse bodies deemed primitive, pre-capitalist, or "barbarian" as the "darker side of modernity,"[175] a modernity that, in effect, accepts violence against Europe's Other for the sake of progress.[176] For David Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah, the European philosophical justifications of genocide for the greater good of achieving freedom, through the linear progression of history to a state of hegemonic Western civilization, are a "necro-ontology" or "necrophilosophy".[177] The necessity of exterminating and containing Indigenous bodies, culture, knowledge, economies, and relations to land in order for capitalism to persist is what they call the "wound of wealth."[178] The settler bourgeois identity reproduced through gentrification) is therefore bound up with a denigration and ultimate death of resistant bodies: non-European, Indigenous, non-capitalist bodies. This is the violence of colonization reproduced through gentrification.

In my view, gentrification is the expression of an empowered, and highly normativized, bourgeois/settler subject. While the bourgeois/settler subject projects itself as autonomous, meritorious, and morally superior, at the same time, the fictitious nature of land markets, in which the bourgeois subject finds its realization, brings about a docility and organic conservatism. As property debt lays a claim on the future labour of owners through mortgages, investment risks, and consumer debt,[179] a docile population is created. Bourgeois gentrifiers become prone to reactionary attitudes towards the economically different, the urban poor, and Indigenous people,[180] who are viewed as not labouring and, on top of that, lowering the property values of hardworking bourgeois subjects through their cultural and informal economic expression. Disadvantage, and ultimately exclusion, is produced through bourgeois place-making strategies, economic practices, cultural values, and ideology. Liberal gentrifiers bring their sense of moral superiority into cross-class and cross-cultural social relations, manifesting as micro-aggressions (*e.g.*, charity, condescension, and pity), symbolic violence (a depoliticized discourse that blames marginalized peoples for the conditions they experience) and as hate speech against poor and Indigenous people.[181] Such attitudes espoused by gentrifiers are fuelled by intense and irrational fears of those who are cast out.[182]

In line with their colonial worldview, bourgeois gentrifiers tend to have an individualized sense of spatial and moral entitlement that extends beyond the property they own privately to public streets, parks, urban spaces, and other rental properties. This entitlement is expressed through the desire to protect the morally superior sensibilities, property claims, and values of the deserving, wealthy incoming class through securitization, including neighbourhood watch-style sociality, the denigration of and infringement on low-income public and private spaces, and demands for surveillance and heavy policing that contribute to the vulnerability and further marginalization of poor, racialized, Indigenous, and disabled inhabitants of the city.[183]

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[175] Mignolo, *supra* note 81 at 46.

[176] Blaney & Inayatullah, *supra* note 164 at 193.

[177] *Ibid* at 126.

[178] *Ibid* at 7.

[179] Harvey, *supra* note 16 at 367; Gary Bridge, "The Space for Class? On Class Analysis in the Study of Gentrification" (1995) 20:2 Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 236 at 241.

[180] Blomley, *Unsettling*, *supra* note 1 at 31.

[181] Bauman, *supra* note 171 at 207; Slater, *supra* note 45 at 321.

[182] Lipstiz, *supra* note 46 at 36; Bauman, *supra* note 171 at 54.

[183] Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 16–17; Smith, *New Urban Frontier, supra* note 14 at 26–27; Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009) at 1.

Police violence, coupled with neglect for the safety of poor people, inadequate diet, pesticide toxification, institutional violence, infestation, stigmatization, trauma, stress, poor medical care, addiction, vulnerability to violence, despair, depression, and alienation, have all taken their toll on poor people. From the perspective of the bourgeois settler subject, they have been targeted as un-aesthetic, non-productive bodies to be removed from sight—in the case of Toronto, to be segregated or dispersed into the inner suburbs and other dangerous urban spaces that are more dangerous due to being out-of site and far away from supports and resources.[184]

As a socio-spatial process in a landscape of uneven development, gentrification is constituted by a set of normativizing relational forces that relegate and reorder our bodies in space according to their ability to be integrated into capitalist economics. Necro-political spaces within the settler city exist within a continuity of the genocidal colonial practices of the imperial, and then Canadian state. Gentrification can be seen to have a homological relationship to colonialism in that while they may be viewed as different moments in the reproduction of capitalist relationalities, their logic has the same origin: the hegemony of the European bourgeois value system and its spatial logic of dispossession, displacement, segregation, privatization and seizure of wealth, and mobilization of the bourgeois settler subject against its necessary Other.

IV. CONCLUSION

Because the neighbourhood is where diverse bodies share space—and struggle to make place—it is where difference is confronted. The ideologies and material relations which underpin gentrification play out between people in daily life, but not as the purported liberatory idyll of diversity. I have proposed that gentrification is involved with a bourgeois production of space that reiterates colonial and capitalist ideologies and relationalities of dispossession, displacement, exploitation, and marginalization. The continual imposition of colonial-capitalist relations on Indigenous and diverse Other economic forms constitutes a gross ethical failure which demands redress before any liberatory project can proceed. While the Marxist geographers discussed above have contributed important analyses to gentrification theory, very significant limits exist. This paper asks for a more historically pertinent political ground in gentrification debates. To follow Coulthard in his call for a conversation between Marxist and Indigenous thought[185] is not to nostalgically harken back to pre-modern times, as many would suggest, but to recognize capitalism is not totalized or inevitable and that Indigenous societies have endured within and alongside capitalism, and have continued to fight for their sovereignty all along.[186]

Indigenous theoretical, philosophical, and historical knowledge are also critical perspectives for not only a practice of liberation, but also for ecological and ethical approaches to future life.[187] It is imperative to take seriously the coevalness and interaction of different knowledges within and around the hegemonic capitalist system rather than enclosing and foreclosing on those vital epistemologies that contest or conflict with Eurocentric bourgeois theory.[188] Without subjecting Marxist geography to a decolonizing interrogation, the full ethical problematics of gentrification within the settler city cannot be revealed. A failure to account for

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[184] David Hulchanski, *The Three Cities Within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970–2000* (Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto, 2007) at 19–20.
[185] Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 8.
[186] Blaney & Inayatullah, *supra* note 164 at 193.
[187] Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 65.
[188] Blaney & Inayatullah, *supra* note 164 at 194; Coulthard, *supra* note 3 at 8.

the continuity of the twin modes of original and ongoing accumulation from the moment of historical colonization through to the present and to radically unsettle the role of private property in the oppression of un-propertied and Indigenous peoples, as well as an evasion of issues of Indigenous sovereignty, will prevent gentrification theory from contributing to radical reformulations of urban politics in resistance to capitalism. It is important to inquire into the possibilities of solidarities among those impacted by capitalist hegemony through ongoing colonization in its form as gentrification. Furthermore, gentrifying neighbourhoods such as the Junction offer a field of struggle waged in actual space and time, between those bodies enacting bourgeois culture, economics, and ideology, and the Indigenous/Others of capitalist colonialism who inhabit and haunt the space.