Inevitable Extraction, Colonial Security, and the Making Recoverable of Unconventional Oil

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Abstract

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Anna Pringle

In 2002, the Athabasca tar sands in Alberta were re-classified as recoverable. This recovery required, and requires, a vision of the region that is long in the making; a vision that emerges within a history of colonialism. I begin by tracing out how post-Cold War imaginaries of the tar sands presented the resource as crucial to the future viability of North American 'democratic' states. These envisionings of energy security, I argue, build, and tap into, prior colonial imaginaries of the region as wild and empty. In my first chapter, I look at how the Boreal forests of Athabasca had to be emptied out of certain dissenting interrelations and populations in order for oil to appear, although, this emptying out was never completely successful. Subsequently, in my second chapter, I build on this argument by contemplating how shifting discourses of wildness, legality, order, safety, and violence, allowed land to become frontier while granting legitimacy to colonial regimes of violence. I conclude by examining how prior visions of abundance acted as the extractive scaffolding for the 2002 recovery. What I hope to emphasize is that the visions of abundance in 2002 are interwoven with long-held colonial anxieties surrounding security. Further, the recovering of resources in Alberta was never inevitable, rather, it occurred through a multiplicity of encounters, between both human and nonhuman communities, all brimming with contingency. I close by posing the question, how can we radically re-imagine the land, each other, and deeply ingrained notions of security, violence, and belonging?

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Preface

Why Oil?

I begin with oil because we, citizens of the West,[1] are utterly entangled with it. In many ways, we are oil. Or, as Reza Negarestani puts it, we are "complicit" with oil.[2] To be complicit. A verb that entangles us in the violences of colonial and capitalist systems: land grabs, militarized interventions, occupations, climate changes, mass displacements and extinctions. Think about the oil consumed by hot showers and heated (or air conditioned) homes, our modes of transportation, communication, and entertainment, what we eat, pharmaceuticals, cleaning products, plastics and textiles, as well as, the oil consumed by armies fighting to ensure our possession of the resource in the first place. Violence is interwoven with these daily comforts, these energy-intensive privileges of empire. [3] Oil is a crucial aspect of how life is lived and organized in the West, and subsequently, our "structures of feeling" are intricately entangled with the material violence of oil economies.[4] If, following Negarestani, we think of "war as a machine," we are left with the understanding that oil is what allows these machines to run.[5] But,

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[1] Following Harsha Walia, "I use the term West not only to denote the geographic site of the global North (that is, Europe, Australia, and North America) but also to reference the dominance of Western political, economic, and social formations and ideologies that have led to the foundation of other settler-colonial states such as Israel, and that are increasingly adopted by neoliberal states in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Though political and economic governance are not uniform across these states, as Japanese scholar Naoko Sakai comments about the West as an ideology, 'Unlike all the other names associated with geographic particularities, it also implies the refusal of its self-delimitation or particularistic determination… In short, the West must represent the moment of the universal, which subsumes the particular.'" Harsha Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2013), 39.
[2] Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: re.press, 2008), 7.
[3] M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 17.
[4] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132.
[5] Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*.

how is oil assembled for these machines? How is it found, seen, perceived, or made extractable? In what follows, I turn to oil, and the question of how oil is assembled for war machines, out of the belief that oil is vital to the continued operations of Western colonialism and empire. In particular, I look at the Athabasca oil sands of the area known to some as Alberta, in an effort to show how this resource is procured for North American based war machines.

My mode of inquiry is inspired by Anna Tsing's consideration of resource extraction in the Kalimantan forests of Indonesia. In her work, *Friction,* Tsing describes meeting with her Meratus Dayak mentor Uma Adang. Tsing presents Uma Adang a gift, only to be told, "Better you had brought me a bomb, so I could blow this place up."[6] After witnessing the forests transform from a landscape buzzing with life to a dire political realm where a bomb seems to be the only solution, Tsing asks: "How does nature at the frontier become a set of resources? How are landscapes made empty and wild so that anyone can come to use and claim them?"[7] Tsing devotes her work to articulating how resources are assembled. She finds a partial answer to her inquiry with what she terms the "magical vision of frontier regionality"---an act of conjuring, which "asks participants to see a landscape that doesn't exist, at least not yet". A vision that "must continually erase old residents' rights to create its wild and empty spaces where discovering resources, not stealing them, is possible." It is this magical frontier vision that concerns me as I endeavor to write about the Athabascan frontier. My approach to this writing project is also informed by Tsing's description that she is moved to write about the environment and resource extraction both practically and poetically for with luck, sensory absorption can

[6] Here, I quote Tsing's footnote about Uma Adang's statement: "Security officers, please note: I am referring to customary expressions of everyday frustration and not plans for violence. There has never been any agitation for violence in the Meratus Mountains." Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton and Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2005), 25, 277n1.
[7] Ibid., 30, 68.

"sweep away the 'common sense' of resource exploitation and leave us with the moving force of anger". A part of the challenge in this type of writing then is to find ways to make the landscape a "lively actor," rather than "inert" and ready for export.[8] Another challenge is to tell and listen to the stories told by those who remember history (and the future) differently.

By mobilizing a variety of disciplines, ranging from the life sciences to critical race theory, from the environmental humanities to Indigenous oral histories, from radical field work to anti-colonial theory and activism, I hope to respond to Tsing's argument that continued life on earth requires "paying more rather than less attention to the multiplicity of knowledge claims."[9] This thesis blossoms from a sincere belief that the work of the media critic entails not only a consideration of the mass communication technologies that make up our newsfeeds but an impassioned interest in the vast world providing the conditions for life: the "media of sea, fire, star, cloud, book, and Internet all anchor our being profoundly, even if we can't say what they mean."[10] Yet, this work also stems from a fierce belief that any ecological turn must be accompanied by a critique of global colonialisms as they operate through intersecting processes of sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, classism, and anthropocentrism. A dangerous tendency in certain environmentalisms is to understand the material or the ecological as somehow free from discursive regimes or systems of power. Thus, along these lines, this thesis attempts a material-discursive analysis, believing that bodies, the material, and the environment, cannot be separated from structures of power.[11] Discussions about petrol politics

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[8] Ibid., 29.
[9] Ibid., 81.
[10] John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Towards a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 14.
[11] As Donna Haraway remarks in *When Species Meet* about the posthuman turn which references the "ever-deferred demise of Man": "I never wanted to be posthuman, or posthumanist, any more than I wanted to be postfeminist. For one thing, urgent work still remains to be done in reference to those who must inhabit the troubled categories of woman and human, properly pluralized, reformulated, and brought into constitutive intersection with other

must be rooted in calls for Indigenous sovereignty, an end to colonial borders, and the abolishment of capitalist war.

Yet, in my articulation of how global systems of resource extraction operate, I do not want to fall into a sensation of hopelessness in the face of global capitalism. Thus, echoing Tsing, I turn to the specificity of the local with the intention of showing that the recovery of resources in Alberta was never inevitable, rather, it occurred through a multiplicity of encounters, between both human and nonhuman communities, all brimming with contingency. I introduce this thesis by thinking through how the oil industry cultivates imaginaries of future abundance. I look at the 2002 re-classification of the Athabasca tar sands as recoverable, tracing out how this "making recoverable" relied on the oil industry's contradictory imaginations of oil as "infinite" and oil as "peaking" or "insecure". During my introduction, I also speak to the theories guiding my consideration of Northern Albertan oil as well as the methods I use throughout this thesis to think and feel oil. Subsequently, carrying Tsing's questions with me, I structure my thesis around three historical visions of the Athabasca oil sands. The first, the region as empty. The second, the region as wild. And the third, the region as abundant. In my first chapter, I look at early imaginaries of the Athabasca frontier to consider the imaginations and violences necessary to transform this land into an empty site of future profit. Subsequently, in my second chapter, I consider how shifting discourses of wildness and order, criminality and legality, safety, and violence, allowed land to become frontier and a source of colonial energy security. My third chapter examines how visions of abundance are accompanied by

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asymmetrical differences." She cites the following feminists of color as foundational theorists of intersectionality: Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, Chéla Sandoval, and Gloria Anzaldùa. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," in *Feminist Legal Theory: Foundations*, ed. D. Kelly Weisberg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 383–95; Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981); Chéla Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressesd* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera.* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987); Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 17, 308n20.

displacements and genocide. By looking at these visions, I hope to make visible the instruments, the material, historical, and political conditions, the violences, and the speculations, that produce the recovery of oil in the early 2000s as "Truth".

A large portion of this thesis is dedicated to an examination of early colonial presence in the Athabasca region during the 19th century. I turn to these historical visions of the region in order to illustrate the significant role oil had in seducing colonial interest to the area. Further, in the present political context where promises of renewed relations with the First Peoples of so-called Canada are prolific,[12] settlers need to begin seriously considering Glen Coulthard's contention that access to land "in *both* urban and land-based settings" is a critical part of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.[13] As Coulthard emphasizes,

> in the Canadian context, colonial domination continues to be structurally committed to maintain---through force, fraud, and more recently, so-called 'negotations'---ongoing access to the land and resources that contradictorily provide the material and spiritual sustenance of Indigenous societies on the one hand, and the foundation of colonial state-formation, settlement, and capitalist development on the other.[14]

By examining how the accumulation of Indigenous lands and resources is central to Canadian nationhood, we can begin understanding the immense structural changes needed in order to truly

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12 Claire Wählen, "Trudeau meets with AFN to renew Canada's relations with First Nations," *iPolitics*, December 8, 2015, http://ipolitics.ca/2015/12/08/trudeau-meets-with-afn-to-renew-canadas-relations-with-first-nations/; Government of Alberta, "Alberta seeks renewed relationship with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Alberta," June 22, 2015, http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=382201F08E932-0934-F591-9820A6FA93C90156.
[13] Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 176.
[14] Ibid., 7.

transform settler and Indigenous relations. Further, the question of (in)access to land compels us to begin thinking through how the violences of Canadian resource extraction extend beyond the local to impact communities on a global scale. Canada's history of colonialism has allowed it to become a judicial and regulatory haven for extractive industries worldwide.[15] With this in mind, I conclude my thesis by looking at the contemporary oil economy and posing the question, how can we move beyond oil to radically re-imagine the land, each other, and deeply ingrained notions of security, violence, and belonging?

[15] Alain Deneault and William Sacher, *Imperial Canada Inc.* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2012).

I. Introduction: Genocidal Visions, Colonial Security, and the Making Recoverable of Unconventional Oil

M. King Hubbert, a geologist and expert of extractive estimates, gained a certain fame for his studies on the size of oil fields and natural reserves.[16] As an employee of Shell Oil, Hubbert was not supposed to theorize the end of the very industry that paid him to know the earth. However, theorizing oil finiteness is precisely what he did. In 1956, at a meeting of the American Petroleum Institute in San Antonio, Texas, Hubbert offered up the idea that in any geographical area, from an individual oil patch to the globe as a whole, the rate of petroleum production would peak and then decline over time.[17] Hubbert's bell curve eventually became known as "peak oil": a concept that clutched the imaginaries of both oil investors and degrowth environmentalists. Colon Campbell, a geologist, describes peak oil as a simple theory that any drinker can understand: "The glass starts full and ends empty, and the faster you drink it, the quicker it's gone."[18] As the graph below shows (Figure 1), Hubbert estimated that worldwide oil production would begin declining in the early 2000s. Yet, long before 1956, the worrisome thought that we could run out of black gold was present. The peak of oil has been a persistent feature of the North's extractive landscape. In 1880, when oil production was concentrated in Pennsylvania, it was popularly believed there was no oil West of Mississippi.[19] Eventually, oil was discovered in Texas and Oklahoma. How exactly do we look at the earth and know how much oil is left to guzzle?

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[16] His idea of peak oil has endured to this day as a way of thinking about the finite nature of the earth's resources. He became widely known for his "pessimistic" geology during a time of perceived oil abundance. M. King Hubbert and Ronald Edmund Doel, *Oral History Interview with Marion King Hubbert* (Bethesda, Maryland, 1989).
[17] M. King Hubbert, "Nuclear Energy and the Fossil Fuels" (Paper presented to the American Petroleum Institute at the Plaza Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, Houston, 1956).

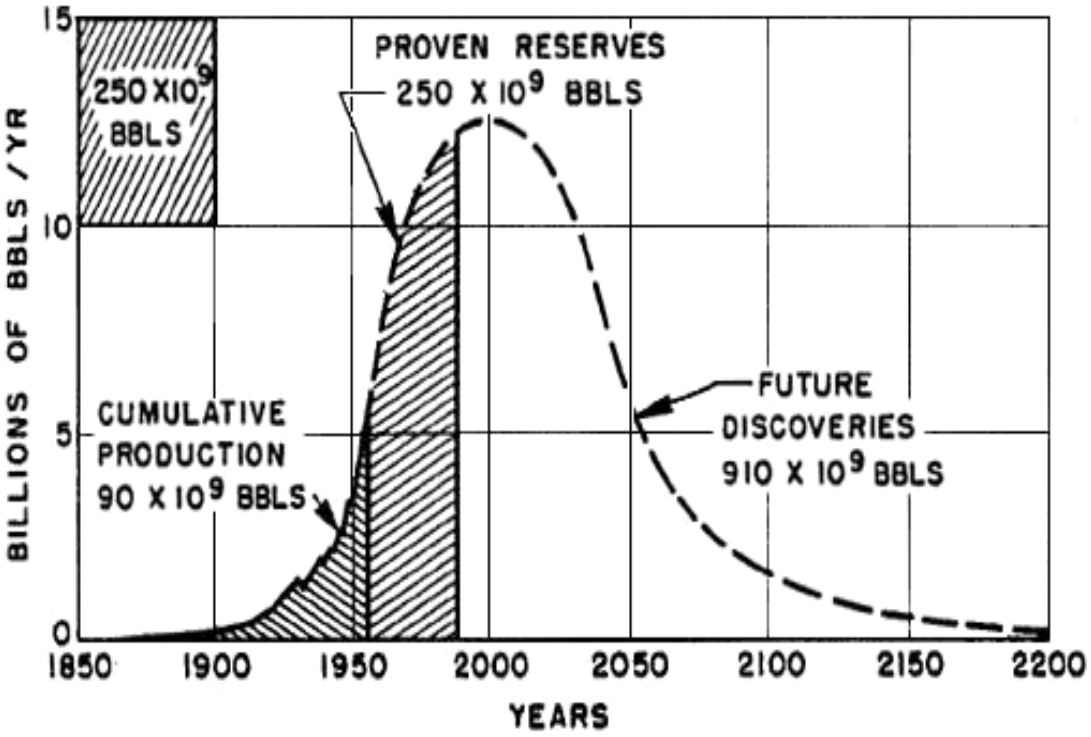

Figure 1. Hubbert's bell curve graph depicting Peak Oil. (Reprinted from: M. King Hubbert, "Nuclear Energy and the Fossil Fuels," paper presented before the American Petroleum Institute in San Antonio, Texas, 1956.)

The tricky thing about oil is that it does not flow, move, or appear, as Colin Campbell conjectures with his image of a glass "that starts full and ends empty". Yet, why question the knowledge of Colin Campbell? He is a *geologist*. He knows the History of the earth, the "indisputable Certainty"[20] of rocks, and of layers of soil, the science of how the earth was made. What Campbell fails to touch on, with his image of the world's oil supply as a full glass that

[18] Daniel Yergin, "There Will Be Oil," *Wall Street Journal*, September 17, 2011, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111904060604576572552998674340.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Latour's use of "indisputable Certainty" refers to earlier arguments he has made concerning how the scientific institution bases itself on a belief that they possess an objective Truth. Latour traces this to long-held beliefs that Western civilization is more evolved and rational than those who are "pre-modern." Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*, trans. Catherine Porter (London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2–5.

gradually diminishes over time, is how the appearance of oil has consistently been twisted into moments of scarcity and abundance as to suit the demands of Northern petrol states. Campbell's description of peak oil doesn't quite tell that story of oil. At least, it is not the story I would like to tell. I am more interested in a story that asks how oil is made for war machines. In this introduction, I will commence with a discussion of how the "end of oil" has been imagined by both industry and the public. By doing so, I hope to show what is at stake in contemporary imaginaries of abundance, while, prodding at the environmental movement's uptake of "peak oil" as a tool of resistance. I will also use this introduction to outline the streams of thought (theories), as well as the tools (methods), vital to this thesis.

Abundance, Inevitable Extraction, and the Making Recoverable

Beyond Hubbert's prediction of peak oil, the oil industry has long been invested in seeing the future. Shell, as one example, currently employs a somewhat legendary team of individuals to prophetically imagine what the world will look like in the years to come. The methods they use were picked up by other transnational corporations like Walt Disney and continue to inform Shell's investments, as illustrated by the company's recent acquisition of oil leases in the melting arctic.[21] Shell's scenarios initiative began in 1967 when James Davidson, the head of economics and planning for Shell's exploration and production division, asked senior-staff planner, Ted

[21] A cynical reading of the future that takes the sea ice melting as a definite. Yet, as of this moment, Arctic explorations have been put on hold after Shell announced disappointing results from initial explorations. See Mckenzie Funk, "Shell Oil's Cold Calculations for a Warming World," *The New York Times*, May 18, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/18/magazine/shell-oils-cold-calculations-for-a-warming-world.html; Dan Joling, "U.S. Cancels Arctic Offshore Lease Sales after Shell Drops Interest," *The Globe and Mail*, October 16, 2015, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/us-cancels-arctic-offshore-lease-sales-after-shell-drops-interest/article26855166/.

Newland, to start an activity called Long-Term Studies. Eventually, Davidson also brought in Pierre Wack, the head of planning for Shell Française. Wack would one day be known as the "Father of Shell Scenarios."[22]

Wack was a student of Armenian born Sufi mystic G.I. Gurdjieff, and had a deep interest in a variety of Eastern[23] religions such as Sufisim (the mystical branch of Islam), Zen Buddhism, and Hinduism.[24] He often disappeared to India for weeks to meditate on what the future held. Wack once explained his job by telling a story about an encounter he had with a Japanese gardener.[25] The gardener had pointed to a thick bamboo stem and explained that if a pebble was thrown at it and it hit the stem slightly off-center, it would bounce off without hardly a sound. The gardener subsequently related that if a pebble was thrown and it hit the stem dead center, one would hear a distinctive "clonk". To be sure to hit the stem in this way, the gardener explained, it was necessary to hear the distinctive sound in your own mind in advance of throwing the pebble—and then to concentrate intensely on that sound. Seeing the future for Wack was "about being in the right state of focus to put your finger unerringly on the key facts or insights that unlock or open understanding."[26] Wack understood the future as "the rapids": "traversable terrain that required intense concentration on the task in hand."[27] In utter contrast to deeply entrenched perceptions of capitalist modernity as the epitome of progress, secularity, and

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[22] Shell Global, "40 Years of Shell Scenarios," accessed September 8, 2015, http://s05.static-shell.com/content/dam/shell-new/local/corporate/corporate/downloads/pdf/shell-scenarios-40yearsbook080213.pdf.
[23] My use of the word "Eastern" comes with an awareness of its embedment in orientalist visions. I invoke the word East to gesture towards how Wack's turn to Eastern religions was packed with reductive assumptions of the East as romantic, mysterious, and exotic. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
[24] Joseph Jaworski, *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011), 219.
[25] "Pierre Wack," *The Economist*, August 2008, http://www.economist.com/node/12000502.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

rationality,[28] Wack approached scenario planning, and thinking the future of oil, as a spiritual quest.

Together, Wack and Newland began writing scenarios: their first scenarios in 1971 and 1972 foresaw the 1973 oil embargo. Since then, the scenarios team has envisioned futures ranging from the rise of the anti-globalization movement, to recent uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. With the scenarios in hand, the company hedges its bets and makes provisions. From scenario planning for a post-apartheid South Africa in the 1990s with politicians, business leaders, trade unionists, academics and community activists who were both with and against the apartheid state, to helping the UN create a report entitled *Aids in Africa: Three Scenarios to 2025,* the team's projects have exceeded what could traditionally be conceived as normal business practice for oil and gas companies. But, as two former team members explain, "Shell-style scenario planning has never really been about predicting the future."[29] Rather, the value of scenario planning lies in breaking the habit, "ingrained in most corporate planning, of assuming that the future will look much like the present." "As unthreatening stories," the scenarios allow Shell executives to "open their minds to previously inconceivable or imperceptible developments."[30] Scenario planning was about preparing the oil industry for the ineffable, the unknowable, and the unexpected.

Recently, allowing Shell executives to "open their minds to previously inconceivable or imperceptible developments" has meant helping the oil company navigate through a post-global warming world. In a paper entitled "Shell Energy Scenarios to 2050," published in 2008, the

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[28] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[29] Angela Wilkinson and Roland Kupers, "Living in the Futures," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2013, https://hbr.org/2013/05/living-in-the-futures.
[30] Ibid.

futurists present two scenarios of what a climate-changed world may look like in fifty years entitled "Blueprints" and "Scramble."[31] "Blueprints," predicts a world where the global economy shifts towards a less energy-intensive path: cities invest in green energy, international treaties are signed, and a carbon emissions trading scheme is introduced. In this gradual shift towards a more sustainable global system, the Shell futurists argue, the world is able to avoid the very worst of climate change. Yet, in the "Blueprints" scenario, stabilizing CO2 emissions and other greenhouse gases to 450 parts per million (ppm) remains a challenge.

450 ppm is a number that scientists have linked to a 2°C temperature rise and dramatic transformations in the global climate system: "Earth's history shows that 2°C global warming is likely to result in eventual sea level rise of the order of six meters (20 feet)" while inducing "slow amplifying feedbacks" wherein global warming causes more global warming.[32] As an example of these feedback loops, we can think about the melting of sheet ice. With the loss of the reflective agencies of sheet ice, the earth will absorb more heat. With a 2°C warming, regions with higher air pressure will spark more wildfires, droughts, and heatwaves. This warming will prompt the atmosphere to hold more water vapor, "which is the fuel that drives thunderstorms, tornadoes and tropical storms," and so, with a 2°C change, we will also see more frequent storms as well as heavier rainfalls and floods. Subsequently, even in the more optimistic scenario, "Blueprints," a 2°C change is understood as inevitable. By understanding this amount of warming as a constant future variable, the futurists also view both mass extinctions and

[31] Shell Global, "Shell Energy Scenarios to 2050," accessed September 8, 2015, http://s00.static-shell.com/content/dam/shell/static/future-energy/downloads/shell-scenarios/shell-energy-scenarios2050.pdf.
[32] James Hansen et al., "Assessing 'Dangerous Climate Change': Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature," *PLoS ONE* 8, no. 12 (December 3, 2013), doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0081648.

displacements as unavoidable. So even as scenario planning is about preparing for the unthinkable, future oil consumption is taken as an inevitable part of future life on earth.

On the other hand, the Shell team's more pessimistic scenario "Scramble" envisions a world where states and industries chaotically clamber to secure an energy supply, making those who control resources "the rule makers rather than the rule takers." In the world of "Scramble," the futurists warn that although "news media regularly start to report energy-related crises in one part of the world or another," "action to address climate change and encourage energy efficiency is pushed into the future, leading to largely sequential attention to supply, demand and climate stresses."[33] The scenario team describes that, "environmental policy is not seriously addressed until major climate events stimulate political responses." In the "Scramble" scenario, the question of transforming energy intensive lifestyles and political structures is deferred until the global North hits some point of rupture. How this manifests in the scenario is the development of unconventional oil in the 2010s. Conventional oil supplies are typically defined as crude oil extracted from oil wells.[34] While the industry constructed categories of "conventional" and "unconventional" oil shift "over time, as economic and technological conditions evolve,"[35] "unconventional" oil typically refers to a heavy type of oil that is deep in the earth, tightly sandwiched between or bound to sand, tar, and rock. Examples include mineral formations such as oil shale and the resource known as the 'oil sands'. Surreally, the scenarios are very much

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[33] Shell Global, "Shell Energy Scenarios to 2050," 15, 13.

[34] Often oil and natural gas are grouped together under the categories of conventional or unconventional. See U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Glossary," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.eia.gov/tools/glossary/index.cfm?id=C#conv_oil_nat_gas_prod. As such, some definitions of unconventional oil also reference unconventional natural gas. Examples of unnatural gas include tight gas, shale gas, coal-bed methane, and methane hydrates. See Deborah Gordon, "Understanding Unconventional Oil," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 5, 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/05/03/understanding-unconventional-oil. Further, the extraction of unconventional oil requires unconventional gas, for instance, heating the Alberta oil sands up to the point that they are viscous enough to transport requires liquified natural gas that is extracted from B.C.'s shale deposits using methods like fracking.

[35] International Energy Agency, "Oil," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.iea.org/aboutus/faqs/oil/.

rooted in the present: we are living in the 2010s, and in recent years, there has been a significant turn towards the development of unconventional oil.

In December of 2002, the *Oil & Gas Journal*, an industry publication, published an article announcing the re-evaluation of Alberta's oil sands as *recoverable* reserves: reserves that are technologically and economically feasible to extract. The piece contains only a page of written text, and is followed by approximately thirty pages detailing country-by-country statistics of oil production worldwide. The change in global oil reserve statistics is explained in the course of two rather brief paragraphs:

> The reserve figures published here are based on survey responses and updates released by individual countries, which in many cases are not released every year--if ever. OGJ changes a particular reserve only when it receives evidence that a change is necessary but also, a reliable, new estimate.
>
> The jump in reserves for Canada reflects the inclusion of Alberta's oil sands. Conventional crude oil and condensate reserves, as reported by Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) stands at 5.2 billion bbl. An additional 174.8 billion bbl is contained in the oil sands, reports Alberta's Energy and Utilities Board. CAPP considers this estimate to accurately represent the volume of crude bitumen that is recoverable using current technology.[36]

[36] Marilyn Radler, "Worldwide Reserves Increase as Production Holds Steady," *The Oil and Gas Journal.* 100, no. 52 (2002): 113.

The spectacular announcement of massive reserves in Alberta functioned as an act of "conjuring" that lured investment to the region.[37] These two paragraphs effectively unleashed a mass of "newly" found resources into the global market, signaling a transformation in standards of what was and is considered extractable. The new estimate of recoverable reserves was produced by drawing on the reserve date of the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), the Alberta government, and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP).[38] While the ERCB calculated reserve data by accounting for unconventional reserves and crude oil reserves separately, the Alberta government, and the CAPP merged unconventional reserve estimates with crude oil estimates. As a result of the provincial government and the CAPP's statistical slippage, over time, industry publications and major energy agencies began refiguring global oil reserve estimates. The slippage did not go unnoticed: both the *New York Times* and *Toronto Star* published articles about the questionable methods the *Oil & Gas Journal* used to calculate oil reserves.[39] However, as time passed, this new estimate of world reserves, and what counted as a recoverable resource, was accepted.

Significantly, framing the change in reserves as a recovery gave a sense that nothing new or drastic was occurring in the global oil industry with the turn to the Athabasca tar sands. However, as Timothy Mitchell concludes in *Carbon Democracy,* as global supplies of "conventional oil" begin to decline and we draw closer to "peak oil," we will see a shift to other

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[37] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 57.
[38] See Emma Hemmingsen's discussion of the new estimates in which she languages the recoverability as a shift in proven estimates. Emma Hemmingsen, "Producing Barrels From Bitumen: A Political Ecology of Price in Explaining the Classification of the Alberta Oil Sands as a Proven Oil Reserve" (Master's thesis in Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Toronto, 2009), 2, http://hdl.handle.net/1807/18995.
[39] David Olive, "Fun With Fossil Fuel Figures," *Toronto Star*, June 29, 2003; J. Gerth, "Canada Builds a Large Oil Estimate on Sand," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2003.

kinds of things as oil - so-called "unconventional oil."[40] This is what the 2002 recovery signals: a larger global shift towards unconventional oil resources.[41] Oil couldn't possibly peak or decline because that would mean the ruin of an industry that runs on myths of infinitude, as well as the end of a way of life made possible by oil. Instead, we witness the transformation of earth that was once not oil into oil. A moment when the Geologist's glass seems a bit more like a glass without a bottom or "just a sleight of hand."[42]

Since 2009, the United States has seen the most rapid increase in new energy supplies in the country's history due to the extraction of gas and oil from shale formations. Timothy Mitchell describes this rapid increase as the "New Carbon Boom," and notes that for politicians and the mainstream media, this sudden reversal of a thirty-five yearlong U.S. decline in reserves indicated the country's emergence out of the 2008 recession: a moment where the "fragile paper economy of financial speculation and consumer credit would give way to a 'potential re-industrialization of the US,' built on the solid foundation of expanding material resources."[43] Previously, unconventional oil projects were unattractive for investors as they required significant financial investment. Together, Mitchell argues, the collapse of the speculative home mortgage market and a fourfold rise in oil prices between 2005 and 2008, a symptom of peak oil, created an economic setting in which unconventional oil in the United States could boom.[44] Shale gas and tight oil "offered Wall Street a new field in which to speculate and earn fees."

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[40] Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2011), 249–250.
[41] U.S. Energy Information Adminstration, "Argentina and China Lead Shale Development Outside North America in First-Half 2015 - Today in Energy - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)," June 26, 2015, https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=21832.
[42] The "sleight of hand" thought as well as my decision to spend more time with the Geologist's vision of the earth as a glass came after conversations with my supervisor Peter van Wyck.
[43] Timothy Mitchell, "Peak Oil and the New Carbon Boom," *Dissent Magazine*, June 25, 2013, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/peak-oil-and-the-new-carbon-boom.
[44] Ibid.

Defying the idea of peak oil, a massive amount of resources were suddenly "found". Yet, simultaneously, this turn to "unconventional oil" betrays the industry's internal logic of oil inevitability and plenitude by demonstrating that we are indeed running out of certain kinds of oil.

The shift to the "unconventional," has resulted in the recovery of resources that were long thought of as technologically and economically impossible. The Bakken formation (a deposit that underlies Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota, and Montana) is just one example of this. It is the largest group of tight oil fields[45] in the United States but has a decline rate of sixty-nine percent in the first year, and ninety-four percent over the first five years. Since the oil found in shale, sandstone, and carbonate formations, does not migrate towards the well, production from each well declines very rapidly. Due to their rapid decline rates, fields like the Bakken formation require that producers drill "an estimated 6000 new wells each year merely to maintain production, at a cost of almost $6 million per well."[46] In comparison, conventional oil fields have a decline rate of approximately four percent per year.[47] Prior to the decline of "conventional"

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[45] As Investopedia explains, "The oil and natural gas industry often refers to 'tight oil' rather than shale oil when estimating production and resource estimates … because shale oil may be extracted from rock formations that include sandstone and carbonates in addition to shale formations. Tight oil estimates will be greater than shale oil estimates." Shale oil, and/or tight oil, both fall under the category of unconventional oil, although, again this depends on who is describing the resource. Investopedia, "Shale Oil Definition," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/shaleoil.asp. The *Oil and Gas Journal* uses the Bakken deposit to exemplify unconventional oil. Oil and Gas Financial Journal, "Bakken Shale," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.ogfj.com/unconventional/bakken-shale.html. The Alberta Energy Regulator refers to tight oil as unconventional but the oil sands as conventional. Alberta Energy Regulator, "What Is Unconventional Oil and Gas?," accessed January 17, 2016, https://www.aer.ca/about-aer/spotlight-on/unconventional-regulatory-framework/what-is-unconventional-oil-and-gas.

[46] Mitchell, "Peak Oil and the New Carbon Boom."

[47] While this difference in decline rates makes common sense considering that conventional oil and unconventional oil have different geologic properties, calculating oil decline is just as tricky as articulating a peak. The International Energy Agency's calculation of decline, as an example, looks at yearly production rates as a measure. This method of calculating how oil "naturally" declines does not consider how oil companies might stall production given certain geopolitical and economic circumstances. It is immensely difficult to have any idea of how much oil is *actually* left. The decline of a specific oil field is dependent on a multiplicity of factors, as well as the composition of that particular deposit, making any estimations of decline subject to reductive generalizations. I have chosen to use these decline rates because I believe they give some understanding of the technical and economic obstacles presented by

oil, the Bakken formation did not make technological or economic sense to exploit. However, in the context of decline, "unconventional" extraction becomes not only possible but profitable.

Still, this situation leads us to ask, how do we keep "discovering" more of what some call a finite resource? How are we, yet again, led down the path of fossil fuel dependency?[48] The scientific knowledge that we have already reached a perilous 400 ppm of C02[49] does not temper the expansions of industry. Nor does the knowledge that the expansion of tar sands means "game over" for the climate. Companies ranging from Shell, as mentioned earlier, to ExxonMobil have accepted unconventional oil as a present and future industry reality.[50] In ExxonMobil's glimpse into future supplies, *The Outlook for Energy: A View to 2040,* they concede that conventional oil has peaked and will gradually decline.[51] The oil industry is acutely aware that we are running out of oil but they have developed an armory of strategies to manage this problem, and all of these strategies lead us towards continued extraction.

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unconventional oil extraction. International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2008* (Paris: International Energy Agency, 2008), 233–242.

[48] Rodrigo Romo, "There Are 45 Fracked Wells within 2 Miles of My Daughter's School," *The Guardian*, August 20, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/20/45-fracked-wells-2-miles-daughters-school-discrimination; Damian Carrington, "Fracking Boom Will Not Tackle Global Warming, Analysis Warns," *The Guardian*, October 15, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/oct/15/gas-boom-from-unrestrained-fracking-linked-to-emissions-rise; M. Purde and M. Rahu, "Cancer Patterns in the Oil Shale Area of the Estonian S.S.R," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 30 (June 1979): 209–10; Damian Carrington, "Tar Sands Exploitation Would Mean Game over for Climate, Warns Leading Scientist," *The Guardian*, May 19, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/may/19/tar-sands-exploitation-climate-scientist.

[49] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Greenhouse Gas Benchmark Reached," *Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research*, May 6, 2015, http://research.noaa.gov/News/NewsArchive/LatestNews/TabId/684/ArtMID/1768/ArticleID/11153/Greenhouse-gas-benchmark-reached-.aspx.

[50] As it turns out, ExxonMobil also knew about global warming a lot longer than we did. Neela Banerjee, Lisa Song, and David Hasemyer, "Exxon: The Road Not Taken," *Inside Climate News*, September 16, 2015, http://insideclimatenews.org/content/Exxon-The-Road-Not-Taken.

[51] See "Liquids Supply by Type," in ExxonMobil, "The Outlook for Energy: A View to 2040," accessed September 8, 2015, http://www.exxonmobil.com/energyoutlook. As Timothy Mitchell direly reminds us, "ExxonMobil is the world's largest company by net income, about 50 percent larger than Apple, Inc., which in 2012 overtook it as the largest by share value." Mitchell, "Peak Oil and the New Carbon Boom."

One way the oil industry obstructs public awareness of the peak is by deploying "fiduciary tricks."[52] Here, I invoke the word fiduciary to bring attention to how the public places a certain trust in oil companies to both manage *and* measure the resources we have left. Perhaps, it *could* be popularly perceived that we are running out of oil if not for companies that want us to keep seeing futures of energy-intensive life. The fiduciary tricks of oil companies lead us to a state of oiled inevitability where *more* oil keeps being found. This *more* could be the Peat deposit in Ontario,[53] or the possibility of new oil reserves in space.[54] These tricks of the oil industry are breathtakingly at work in the present moment as exemplified by the turn to "unconventional" oil. Instead of reaching the "peak," additional oil reserves have once again been found. The danger of these tricks is that they are employed by an oil industry which is able to pour an immense amount of financial resources into developing technology.

Technological development is another tool in the oil industry's pocket. Paired with speculative imaginations of extraction, extractive innovation allows the oil industry to transform the unprofitable stuff of nature into resource. The new carbon boom in the states drew upon technological systems and expertise created while mining the sands found in Northern Alberta. The "unconventional" oil of the United States was unlocked because of the successful production of the tar sands, another "unconventional" oil project. One of the most common methods for extracting oil from shale formations in the United States, the Alberta Taciuk process, was invented and perfected by mining the tar sands.[55] The American government described that the

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[52] Again, an acute turn of phrase uttered by my supervisor, Peter van Wyck.
[53] International Peatland Society, "Peat as an Energy Resource," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.peatsociety.org/peatlands-and-peat/peat-energy-resource.
[54] Carolina Martinez, "NASA - Titan's Surface Organics Surpass Oil Reserves on Earth," 2008, http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/cassini/media/cassini-20080213.html.
[55] Martin Lukacs, "Canada Becoming Launch-Pad of a Global Tar Sands and Oil Shale Frenzy," *The Guardian*, April 16, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/16/canada-becoming-launch-pad-of-a-global-tar-sands-and-oil-shale-frenzy.

Athabasca sands would function as their template for oil shale and tar sands extraction in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.[56] Northern Alberta acted as model for the oil industry to learn from, and then take this knowledge and apply it to similar, but different, zones of extraction.

This brings us back to the main question of my thesis: how were the lands known to some as Northern Alberta shaped into extractive territory? To begin answering this question, I return to the scenario builders. Speculative imaginations played an important role in the transformation of the Athabasca Region into a realm of profit and extraction. As much as the scenario building of the Shell Team was informed by Pierre Wack's mysticism, it was propelled by the American state's war strategizing. Shortly after World War II, the US military began developing scenarios in order to strategize within a new war environment altered by technological advancements such as computers and nuclear weapons. The RAND Corporation (an acronym for Research and Development), a think tank which was engaged almost exclusively in Defense management studies for the US Air Force up until the 1960s, were the forerunners of scenario planning in the United States during the postwar period.[57] In particular, Herman Kahn, the ranking authority on Civil Defense and Strategic Planning at the Rand Corporation in the 1950s, and oft named the "father" of modern-day scenario planning, deeply impacted the Pentagon's thinking in the 1950s and 1960s. Credited as authoring the phrase "thinking about the unthinkable," and as the inspiration for Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*, Kahn believed that military planning tended to be based on wishful thinking rather than "reasonable expectations."[58] The standard speculative practice of the military was disastrous in Kahn's eyes, and he responded to this by creating

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[56] Ibid.
[57] See R. Bradfield et al. for a discussion of the French and American resurgences of scenario planning post World War II and Herman Kahn's role. Ron Bradfield et al., "The Origins and Evolution of Scenario Techniques in Long Range Business Planning," *Futures* 37, no. 8 (October 2005): 795–812, doi:10.1016/j.futures.2005.01.003.
[58] Ibid.

atypical scenarios: "serious alternatives to annihilation and surrender."[59]

In 1961, Kahn left the Rand Corporation and established the Hudson Institute where he began to apply his scenario methodology to social forecasting, government policy, and advising industry. His work greatly influenced the formation of the Shell scenarios team discussed earlier.[60] As the author of books like *The Year 2000, Thinking about the Unthinkable,* and *Things to Come*, Kahn was committed to thinking through how the United States and transnational corporations "would survive in an increasingly hostile world environment."[61] Facing the threat of nuclear apocalypse, Kahn began imagining futures that were drastically different than the present. As van Wyck suggests, the threat of nuclear annihilation forces a confrontation with death, and the cultural otherness of the future.[62] Further, Kahn's envisionings of the futures were also permeated by energy insecurity anxieties triggered by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OAPEC) decision to place an embargo on oil exports to the United States in 1973.[63] Amidst oil embargo and nuclear/Cold War insecurity, Kahn started to think about massive destabilizations of American civil order. This in turn prompted him to begin thinking about ways to secure future American energy supplies.

Unsettled by an atmosphere of nuclear threat and oil embargo, Kahn began speculating about the Athabasca oil sands. Significantly, his speculations about Athabasca as the solution to a threatened American energy supply emerged in a context where the material basis of the

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Rafael Ramîrez, John W. Selsky, and Kees Van der Heijden, *Business Planning for Turbulent Times: New Methods for Applying Scenarios* (Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2008), xvi-xvii.
[61] Larry Pratt, *The Tar Sands: Syncrude and the Politics of Oil* (Edmonton: Hurtig Press, 1976).
[62] Peter van Wyck, *Signs of Danger: Waste, Trauma, and Nuclear Threat* (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005), 120.1.
[63] This sense of threat came both from Cold War nuclear paranoia and the OAPEC oil embargo. That said, Timothy Mitchell points out that the OAPEC oil embargo was the oil embargo that "never happened." Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, 173–175; Morris A. Adelman, "The Real Oil Problem" (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, May 11, 2004), 16–21, http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=545042.

American nation-state was under threat. In December of 1973, a *Financial Times* reporter revealed that Herman Kahn and Marie Josée Drouin, a Montreal associate of Kahn, had met with Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Energy Minister Donald Macdonald, and senior members of Macdonald's staff in late November.[64] During this meeting, Kahn offered the politicians his dream of what the Athabasca oil sands could offer Western countries like the U.S., Europe, and Japan. He proposed "an internationally financed effort on a giant scale to build twenty Syncrude-sized plants by the end of the 1970s" --- a solution to the energy crisis. Kahn believed that in contrast to the pleasing, mountainous shales of Colorado wherein development would bring about environmental resistance, the oil sands of Northern Alberta were the perfect solution to America's energy insecurity for they were remote and could be developed without significant opposition. At the time, this proposition was shocking to the Canadian government. The infrastructure to support such a massive project was simply not there. Yet, Kahn proposed that an international consortium would invest twenty billion dollars and Korea would provide thirty thousand to forty thousand temporary workers. He even assured that in order to keep local unions happy, the Korean temporary workers would "pay normal dues" and "never collect any benefits."

Despite Kahn's dramatic plan, the tar sands would not see intensive development until decades later. Worried about what a project of that scale would do to the Canadian economy (the possibility of steel shortages, a disturbed labour market, and a dramatic increase in the value of the Canadian dollar), and concerned about Canada's future energy security, the Canadian state declined Kahn's proposal.[65] In addition, the state was well aware that the Northern Alberta

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[64] See Pratt, *The Tar Sands: Syncrude and the Politics of Oil*, 74.
[65] Andrew Nikiforuk, *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2008), 21.

wasn't empty of resisting populations as Kahn believed.[66] Regardless of the Canadian state's choice to delay development, there were those who had already committed to Kahn's dream and staked out tar sands territory: the American investor and multimillionaire, Howard Pew, built the first oil sands mine in 1967, and poured money into the sands, without profit for thirty or so years, out of the belief that "No nation can long be secure in this atomic age unless it be amply supplied with petroleum."[67] Several years after Herman Kahn's speculative saunter into Canada, he began lobbying the US government to invest in the extractive futures of American oil shales. Eventually, Kahn and Pew would both be rewarded for their speculations of what the North American energy future would be. Somehow thinking about the unthinkable brought about the development of the unconventional.

Theories: Frontiers, Dangerous Peripheries, and Energy Security

Facing the threat of nuclear extinction and shortage, the oil sands became the promise of a viable future for speculative investors like Pew and Kahn. In imagining a future wherein American nationalism and capitalism was under threat, the sought out alternative future was one which required the intensive development of previously unextractable Indigenous lands. This alternative future was an envisioning of frontier. Anna Tsing describes that frontier landscapes are "natural and social," as "they shift and turn in the interplay of human and nonhuman

[66] Melina Laboucan-Massimo, "Awaiting Justice: Indigenous Resistance in the Tar Sands of Canada | openDemocracy," *Open Democracy*, April 22, 2015, https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/melina-loubicanmassimo/awaiting-justice-%E2%80%93-indigenous-resistance-to-tar-sand-development-in-cana.
[67] Alastair Sweeny, *Black Bonanza, Alberta's Oil Sands and the Race to Secure North America's Energy Future* (Mississauga: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 2010), 101.

practices."[68] Their wildness "reaches backward as well as forward in time, bringing old forms of savagery to life in the contemporary landscape."[69] In his seminal work, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, Frederick Jackson Turner describes the frontier as the "meeting point between savagery and civilization."[70] A meeting point that Turner suggests is ultimately a site of freedom, enterprise, and opportunity. The wild, imagined-as-empty, lands of the West were "free from the British cultural and institutional dogmas that influenced the Eastern United States, and therefore provided a sense of independence," that would form the foundation, in Turner's view, of American democracy.[71] If the tar sands have represented the dream of North American energy independence, security, and thus freedom, then, we cannot think about this frontier region without understanding that it too has been considered crucial to the "democratic" futures of the United States and Canada.

Edward Said's argument that struggles over territory occur through militant land defense, *and* through symbols and stories,[72] allows for an understanding that northern Alberta, as a frontier landscape, is molded by extractive imaginations. In particular, the building of an energy secure, petro-democratic future is, and has been, made possible through discourses of insecurity.[73] Notions of insecurity emerge within a context of colonial settlement in which Indigenous lands have long been imagined as wild, dangerous, and disordered, in order to justify colonial occupation. Concerns about safety and insecurity, whether related to energy, economic, or physical insecurity, are tied to a colonial system of land dispossession that demands the

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[68] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 29.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 3.
[71] Neeraj Bhatia, "Floating Frontiers," in *The Petropolis of Tomorrow*, ed. Neeraj Bhatia and Neeraj Bhatia (New York: Actar D, 2013), 14–15.
[72] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992).
[73] For a consideration of how oil development in Athabasca was motivated by Canadian and North American concerns about energy security, see Pratt, *The Tar Sands: Syncrude and the Politics of Oil*.

actual/attempted genocide of the land's first inhabitants. A system of land dispossession, which Glen Coulthard points out in *Red Skin, White Masks*, is an ongoing feature of colonial-capitalist accumulation industry Canada.[74] North American energy security is thus dependent on certain registers of what counts as violence, security, and property.

Considering the co-constitutive relationship between safety and violence, freedom and imprisonment, Jackie Wang writes,

> We need to consider the extent to which racial violence is the unspoken and necessary underside of security, particularly white security. … White civil society has a psychic investment in the erasure and abjection of bodies that they project hostile feelings onto, which allows them peace of mind amidst the state of perpetual violence.[75]

What Wang's words move us towards is an understanding that white energy security demands the elimination of certain bodies. However, for some, security is precisely what the tar sands offer. In the early 2000s, the American Petroleum Industry, a powerful lobby group, ran a campaign around the slogan, "Energy Security? The answer might be closer than you think," suggesting the Alberta tar sands as the solution to North American energy security.[76] If sites like the tar sands represent an energy secure future for North America, this security is based on immense violence. This violence stretches beyond North American borders to impact those living in the global South who will bear the brunt of global climate change. The peace of mind

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[74] Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*.
[75] Jackie Wang, "Against Innocence: Race, Gender, and The Politics of Safety," *Lies: A Journal of Materialist Feminism* 1 (2012).
[76] Philippe Le Billon and Angela Carter, "Securing Alberta's Tar Sands," in *Natural Resource and Social Conflict: Towards Critical Environmental Security*, ed. Matthew Schnurr and Larry Swatuk (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2012), 174.

afforded by energy security is made through violence.

These ideas of North American energy security emerge within the divided geography of settler states. Frantz Fanon describes that in a landscape carved into zones by colonialism, the settler's town "is a strongly built town," "a brightly lit town," "a well-fed town … its belly is always full of good things. … a town of white people, of foreigners." In contrast, Fanon explains, the town on the outside belongs "to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. ... The town of the colonized is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light." Building on Fanon, Sunera Thobani relates that with colonization, a divided world emerged: "on the one side, a world of law, privilege, access to wealth, status, and power for the settler; on the other, a world defined *in law* as being 'lawless,' a world of poverty, squalor, and death for the native."[77] Thobani contends that believing and inventing the Indian as savage, and their lands as wild frontiers, enabled the construction of the Canadian state.[78] She explains that during settlement, violence "was more than the individual caprice of unscrupulous settlers, it was the necessary condition of colonial order." Violence is the sustaining force of the colonial resource state. It enables the settler state to keep the town of the colonized in a zone of "non-being."[79]

"As long as there is oil, they will not stop because to them it's black gold," Alice Rigney, a Dene woman living in the Northern Albertan community of Fort Chipewyan, explained to me

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[77] Sunera Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 38.
[78] Ibid., 56–58.
[79] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 8.

as she reflected on the industry's expansion.[80] Frontiers, like cancer and nuclear weapons, have a mode of expansion that is "always already out of control."[81] We might think of the frontier's cancerous growth and deadliness as the "integral accident" of a carbon-based North American democracy.[82] For whether it is the cancer clusters in communities downstream from the tar sands or the disappearance of islands due to global warming, the tar sands are imbued with future death and yet, a staple of North American life as we know it. These violences and risks are built into the new technologies that make possible unconventional extraction but are masked by narratives of progress, order, efficiency, and development. The "brightly lit" settler town requires a periphery "starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light." The war machine needs oil, and this oil entails violence.

[80] Alice was one of many who spoke with me when I travelled from Edmonton to Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan, a community 200 km north of Fort Mac located downstream on the southwestern tip of Lake Athabasca, in the summer of 2015. I've used her name as she agreed to speak me for an independent article about how her home as transformed under colonial regimes of extraction, see the full interview in Anna Pringle, "Oil's Violent Disturbances," *Briarpatch Magazine*, January 4, 2016, https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/oils-violent-disturbances. For others, I met on my travels between a settler town, an extractive town, and "the town on the outside," I've chosen not to use their names as my experiences and encounters with them were moments of life, rather, than formal anthropological interviews. Through emails with Concordia Ethic's team, I was given permission to write about these experiences as long as they did not form the foundation of my conclusions**.**

[81] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 27.

[82] Here, borrowing the concept of "integral accident" from Paul Virilio, see Wilfrid Greaves, "Risking Rupture: Integral Accidents and In/Security in Canada's Bitumen Sands," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'Études Canadiennes*, Literature Online, 47, no. 3 (2013): 169–99.

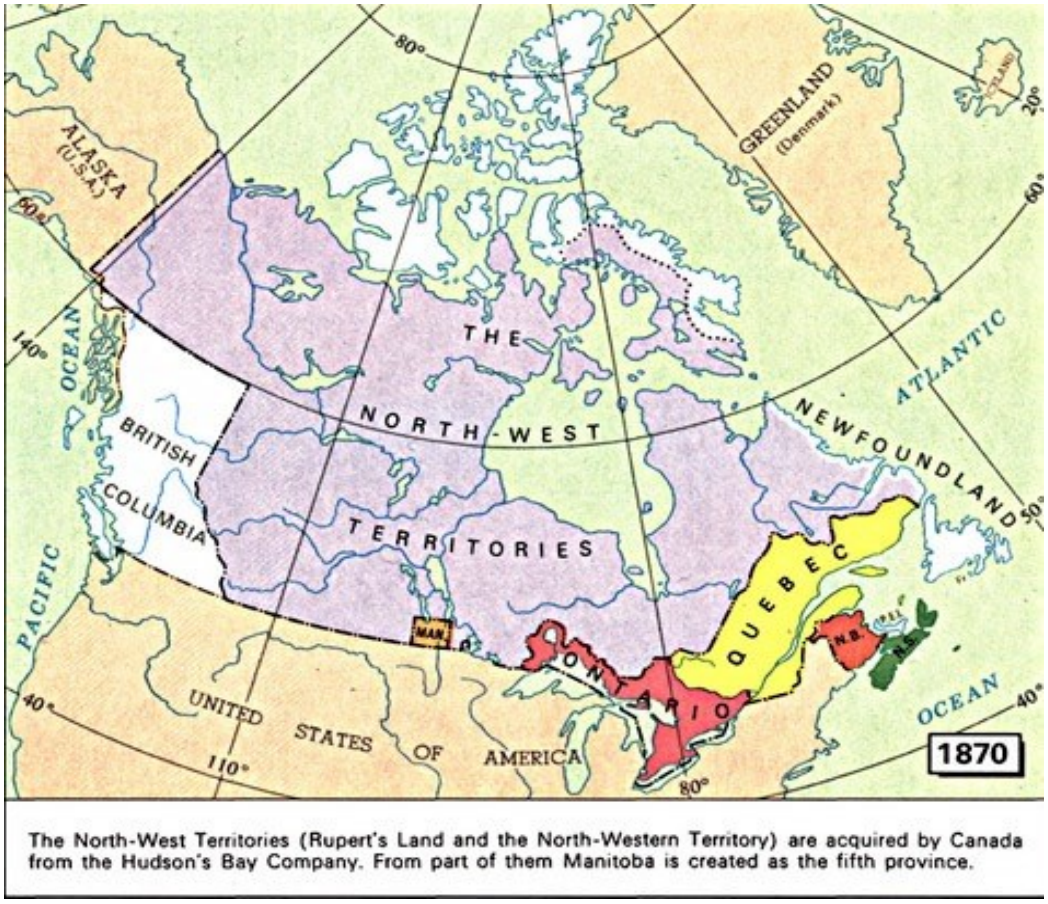

Figure 2. 1870 map of North-West Territories. (National Atlas Maps. © Natural Resources Canada. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. Source website: (http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/index.html). License: http://open.canada.ca/en/open-government-licence-canada.)

In the Canadian context, the oil may have been "discovered" in what Harold Innis described as a hinterland: a landscape on the margins that provides the staples of contemporary settler life.[83] A region that Innis and many others fill with the same figures and wildness due to what Peter van Wyck calls "colonial metonymy".[84] This tendency for colonial metonymy led many who encountered the landscapes of the so-called New World to substitute the local specificity of Indigenous presence with Eurocentric visions of an empty wild. Encounters with the Northwest were charged with colonial imaginaries of the wild. The colonizers viewed Indigenous communities as having the same wildness as nature; "indigenous peoples were not fully human; they were not Christian; they were not civilized; they had not evolved; they were doomed to extinction by history and progress; they had no recognizable legal systems or concepts of property rights and were thus lawless".[85] Indigenous land was perceived as "an insecure and uncomfortable environment against which civilization has waged an unceasing struggle."[86] The hinterland or peripheral economic zone becomes imbued with the Natures of other frontiers for, as Anna Tsing writes, the frontier is a "traveling theory". That said, even

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[83] See the consideration of Harold Innis's work, *Empire and Communications,* in Peter van Wyck, *The Highway of the Atom* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill University Press, 2010), 192–197.
[84] Ibid., 193.
[85] Sunera Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada,* 41.
[86] Jonathan Bordo makes a convincing case for the Canadian colonial landscape to be read as a wilderness, emptied out of human and animal presence, in his consideration of Group of Seven Canadian landscape art in his Jack Pine essay. He argues for a distinctly Canadian experience of landscape that differed from European Romantic traditions as well as the American frontier. While certainly, Group of Seven art makes use of a colonial vision of an empty landscape, and a strange cherishing of the Pine Tree, I am more interested in how colonial visions of resource have shaped landscape. In particular, how visions of land as resource have been present since contact. I depart from Bordo by arguing that beyond colonial visions of the landscape as wilderness, settlers, explorers, missionaries, and fur traders also saw the Canadian landscape as a frontier, full of Indigenous threat, and frothing with the possibility of resource plentitude. Bordo claims the paradigmatically Northern Jack Pine tree as the iconic image of settler vision, whereas, I turn to oil. Not that these two visions are necessarily mutually exclusive. As I will show later, desires for protected havens of wilderness, national parks, co-existed, with the making of extractive terrain. Jonathan Bordo, "Jack Pine-Wilderness Sublime or the Erasure of the Aboriginal Presence from the Landscape," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, no. 4 (January 1, 1992): 98–128; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 8.

though the frontier arrives carrying many layers of previous associations, it requires local translation.[87]

As settlers came to Canada, European concepts of wilderness were specified as they met a particular topography and the contingencies of particular inhabitants. Whereas Euro-Christian visions of the wild bestowed the earthly realm with the powers of evil, in Canada, Indigenous peoples were either enveloped into the wild through lingering visions of the wild as empty of human existence, or their bodies were perceived as a tarring presence. These Euro-Christian visions of Indigenous lands constructed programs of development and civilization, and their related tactics of genocide and assimilation, as the necessary course of history.[88] The frontier in Canada shifted as European settlers gradually moved further into the interior after their initial arrival in the sixteenth century. These Eurocentric visions of land live on in a contemporary moment of hyper-extraction as the frontier's "wildness reaches backward as well as forward in time, bringing old forms of savagery to life in the contemporary landscape."[89] And so, in Northern Alberta, present resource crazes wander amidst dreams of other frontiers and memories of past insecurities. The region carries the promise Turner found in the American frontier: freedom, opportunity, democracy, independence. It remembers the euphoria of northern gold: The *Financial Times* spoke to this in their early 2000's description of the tar sands as "one of North America's most frenzied resource booms since the Klondike gold rush of 1897."[90] But it is also a unique landscape that emerges shaped by its own inhabitants, memories, tendencies, and possibilities.

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[87] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 31.
[88] Patricia McCormack, "Native Homelands as Cultural Landscapes: Decentering the Wilderness Paradigm," ed. Jill Oakes, Rick Riewe, and Kathi Kinew (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, University of Alberta, 1998), 26–27.
[89] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 29.
[90] Bernard Simon, "Canada's Oilsands Rush Hits the Buffers," *Financial Times*, July 9, 2006, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7ac57e58-0f6b-11db-ad3d-0000779e2340.html.

The extraction of oil can only occur through certain imaginations of violence and their related disavowals. North American desires for energy security focus in on a threatened white capitalist future while placing the bodily harm felt by Indigenous, Southern, and nonhuman communities into the background. Extractive imaginaries convince us that the exploitation of resources is an inevitable path. The frontier functions as "a space of desire: it calls; it appears to create its own demands; once glimpsed, one cannot but explore and exploit it."[91] These imaginations can only succeed by excluding and suppressing alternative experiences, histories, and imaginings of the land. This tendency to exclude and disappear takes place within an ongoing colonial project built on actual and attempted genocide. As Thomas King points out, Eurocanadians, equipped with a belief in self-superiority, have long presumed that the Indian is "on the brink of extinction."[92]

Yet, the genocidal colonial belief in the inevitability of Indigenous absence is perpetually "haunted" by a "relentless remembering and reminding" that not everything is settled despite "settler society's assurances of innocence and reconciliation."[93] Rather, as Eve Tuck and C. Ree describe, settler security is "permanently haunted by the slavery, genocide, and violence entwined in its first, present and future days."[94]

> Haunting doesn't hope to change people's perceptions, nor does it hope for reconciliation. Haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop. Alien (to settlers) and generative for (ghosts), this refusal to stop is its own form of resolving. For

[91] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 32.
[92] Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2003), 32.
[93] Eve Tuck and C. Ree, "A Glossary of Haunting," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacey Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek: Coast Press, 2013), 642.
[94] Ibid.

> ghosts, the haunting is the resolving, it is not what needs to be resolved. Haunting aims to wrong the wrongs, a confrontation that settler horror hopes to evade.[95]

Or, as Anna Tsing writes, "Order and progress banish imagined wildness; wildness emerges in a parody and recuperation of the worst dreams of order and progress."[96] With banishments or displacements come hauntings.

Communities, on the underside of neocolonialist structures, have persistently made visible the violences that colonizers forget while positing different futurities based on environmentalisms not extraction. These environmentalisms, Taiaiake Alfred argues, begin with the understanding that the land is not property but a sacred homeland.[97] From the Unis'tot'en action camp against illegal pipelines[98] to the toxic tours hosted by Aamjiwnaang sisters, Vanessa and Lindsay Gray, in Ontario's Chemical Valley,[99] as sites of extraction expand, resistance proliferates. Resistances that stretch beyond humans to entangle nonhuman creatures in zones of contestation. Bears, as but one example of this, have had their homes made uninhabitable by the colonial petrol economy. Yet, they too affect *and* are affected by colonial land grabs.[100] Contemporary scholarship about the encroachments of oil, gas, and mineral companies follows

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 31.
[97] Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, "What Is Radical Imagination? Indigenous Struggles in Canada," *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action* 4, no. 2 (November 23, 2010): 5, http://journals.sfu.ca/affinities/index.php/affinities/article/view/59.
[98] Unist'ot'en Camp, "Who We Are," accessed January 17, 2016, http://unistotencamp.com/
[99] Rick Garrick, "Sisters Host 'Toxic Tours' of Their Home in Canada's Chemical Valley," *Anishinabek News*, January 7, 2015, http://anishinabeknews.ca/2015/01/07/sisters-host-toxic-tours-of-their-home-in-canadas-chemical-valley/.
[100] Ed Mazza, "This Is What It's Like To Be Chased By A Bear," *The Huffington Post*, June 16, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/16/bear-chases-runners_n_5498272.html; Jordan Thompson, "Bear Shot in Abasand," *Fort McMurray Today*, April 21, 2013, http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2013/04/21/bear-shot-in-abasand.

these vibrant histories of frontline resistance.[101]

Communities ranging from those living in proximity to wells, drill sites, and pipelines, to those whose lands are affected by the tar sands in a disjunctive way (those whose homes are lost to the sea, whose lands no longer have water) have engaged a variety of tactics to force a remembering. Located in both the global South and the occupied lands of Turtle Island, decolonial resistance movements have haunted colonial energy security through an outraged and exhausted language of leaks, spills, cancers, tumours, death, displacement, and destroyed homes. With this outraged and exhausted language also comes moments of healing, survival, resilience and resurgence. These communities, whose lively presence disrupts the inevitability of oil, are not alone in their resistance but "accompanied" by communities across the earth who have militantly defended their homelands from the encroachments of a global economic system based on resource extraction. I use accompanied to signal the type of alliances that occur between accomplices, not allies, who together challenge the legitimacy and legality of colonial states and industries.[102] Communities ranging from Palestine, to Nigeria, have expressed their support for Indigenous led anti-pipeline and anti-tar sands movement based in Canada.[103] While these movements are explicitly rooted in calls for Indigenous self-determination, others global environmental movements have been organized and articulated by large Western-based NGOs. As Kat Yang-Stevens argues, environmental NGOs like 350.org, and Greenpeace have a

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[101] See Rob Nixon's exploration of slow, long-lasting, and incremental environmental violence, and Winona LaDukes's documentation of the colonial degradation of Indigenous lands. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2011); Winona LaDuke, *All Our Relations* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1999).

[102] "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Industrial Ally Complex," May 4, 2014, http://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/.

[103] Gale Courey Toensing, "Palestinians Endorse Idle No More," *Indian Country Today Media Network*, December 29, 2012, http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/12/29/palestinians-endorse-idle-no-more-146631; Indigenous Environmental Network, "Indigenous Activists Around the Globe Target Shell for Violating Agreements with Frontline Communities," November 30, 2011, http://www.mediacoop.ca/newsrelease/9206.

tendency to reproduce colonizing and imperializing politics in their articulation of a "Global" environmentalism.[104] By demanding an end to Western imperial borders, occupation, and war, radical grassroots communities of resistance call into account the complicities of the more mainstream Left, and in doing so, rebel against the structures that define global life.

And still, there are moments of silence when grief is overwhelming. In writing this, I at times wonder what words can possibly be uttered that do justice to the horrors felt by those most affected by petrol regimes of disposability,[105] and who find their homes in zones of abandonment.[106] But, somehow we must learn to speak or dance or sign or chirp the unutterable if only to counter the deadliness of silence (even though, as Gayatri Spivak reminds us, there will always be stories that evade telling).[107] I trail Rob Nixon in understanding the theoretical dwelling of this piece as what field biologists call an "ecotone": a habitat that emerges in the borderzones between adjacent communities of vegetation.[108] By drawing on the edges of several communities of vegetation, "ecotones may thereby open up new configurations of possibility (and for some species, introduce new threats)". This thesis is composed of and vitalized by several fields of thought out of an understanding that interdisciplinarity is needed to think through transnational questions of oil, settler colonialism, the environment, extraction, and speculative futures.

The first consists of scholarship from the interdisciplinary field of the environmental

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[104] Kat Yang-Stevens, "Quelling Dissent: How the Big Greens Contain & Dissolve Resistance," *Groundwork for Praxis*, August 29, 2014, http://groundworkforpraxis.com/2014/08/29/quelling_dissent/; Kat Yang-Stevens and Jonathan Sidney, "Against the Inclusion of Zionist Organizations In The People's Climate March," *Groundwork for Praxis*, September 19, 2014, http://groundworkforpraxis.com/2014/09/19/againstzionism_pcm/.
[105] Abe Louis Young, "BP Hires Prison Labor to Clean Up Spill While Coastal Residents Struggle," *The Nation*, July 21, 2010, http://www.thenation.com/article/bp-hires-prison-labor-clean-spill-while-coastal-residents-struggle/.
[106] João Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
[107] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in *Marxism and the Intrepretation of Culture*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg and Nelson Cary (Urbana: University of Illinois press, 1988), 217–313.
[108] Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 30.

humanities: scholars who have attempted to portray worlds of "petrocultures,"[109] and "biocultural diversity,"[110] while seeking out ways to decenter the 'human.'[111] The environmental humanities is a burgeoning field that attempts to bridge the natural sciences and the humanities, while also speaking truth to neocolonial systems of power. Using a variety of approaches from various disciplinary backgrounds (Indigenous Studies, Anthropology, Media Studies, Postcolonial theory), Vanessa Watts, Anna Tsing, Peter van Wyck, and Rob Nixon have all been influential to this work through their efforts to move away from the anthropocentrisms of a globalized capitalist system.[112] In this move away from human atomism and exceptionalism, they are joined by theorists like Donna Haraway, Kim TallBear, and Sandra Harding, from the field of science and technology studies, who have critiqued Western science and culture for its colonial and patriarchical disavowals of those considered less than human. [113]

Believing that environmentalisms need to be rooted in an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial politics, this piece of writing is additionally beholden to Postcolonial writers and revolutionaries who have told stories of war, devastated landscapes, homes made strange, and strange homes. Writers such as Jacqui Alexander, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Harsha Walia, who have

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[109] See Petrocultures, a University of Alberta research group, "Petrocultures | About," accessed January 17, 2016, http://petrocultures.com/about/.

[110] Anna Tsing, "Contaminated Diversity in 'Slow Disturbance': Potential Collaborators for a Liveable Earth," in *Why Do We Value Diversity? Biocultural Diversity in a Global Context*, ed. Gary Martin, Diana Mincyte, and Ursula Münster (Munich: RCC Perspectives, 2012), 95–97.

[111] Read white, cis, able, property owning, citizen of the Global North and Western Empire.

[112] Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Amongst Humans and Non Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go On a European World Tour!)," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (May 4, 2013), http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/download/19145; Tsing, "Contaminated Diversity in 'Slow Disturbance': Potential Collaborators for a Liveable Earth"; Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*; van Wyck, *The Highway of the Atom*.

[113] Haraway, *When Species Meet*; Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," in *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara Kennedy (London: Routledge, 2000), 291–324; Sandra G. Harding, *Sciences from below : Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Kim Tallbear, *Native American DNA* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

written poignantly about how the global economy shapes lands and constricts the possibilities of daily life for those living in the Global South through gendered violence.[114] Their writing traces the movements of those forcibly displaced as well as of those who chose to move, who then upon arriving, found themselves living and working in Northern countries as indentured labour, as nonhumans; feeling the legacies of a history in which Brown and Black bodies were brought over by boats as enslaved peoples. And yet, still, who with hope remind us that even in the most disturbed landscapes, life prevails.[115]

Since this piece of writing specifically discusses resource extraction in the territory known to some as Canada, and to others as Turtle Island, this work follows Native Studies scholars and activists, such as Leanne Simpson, Glen Coulthard, the Kino-nda-niimi Collective, Audra Simpson, and Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, who have made visible the violent depths of the Canadian state's extractive politic while fighting for a land-based Indigenous resurgence movement.[116] Their work contributes to a larger tradition of Indigenous communities fighting the violences of a settler-colonial state founded and propelled by the attempted and actual

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[114] Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism*; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Ramachandra. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods : Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*; Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera.*; Chandra Telpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003); Chéla Sandoval et al., "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed," in *Cyborg Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 407–21; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

[115] Tsing, "Contaminated Diversity in 'Slow Disturbance': Potential Collaborators for a Liveable Earth."

[116] Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2010); Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*; Kino-nda-niimi Collective, *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2014); Audra Simpson, "Reconciliation and Its Discontents" (Lecture, World of Matter: Extractive Ecologies and Unceded Terrains symposium at Concordia University, Montreal, QC, February 21, 2015); Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014); Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

elimination of Indigenous peoples.[117] Following Corntassel, Snelgrove, and Dhamoon, I am committed to a groundedness that takes seriously how we are all *differentially* implicated in the occupation and dispossession of Indigenous lands.[118] This groundedness speaks to my location in a place. I have access to the "privileges of empire" as a white settler on lands many know as Turtle Island. There are certain truths I cannot speak or know.

There are powerful differences between European Canadian settlers whose ancestors participated in the occupation and settlement of Turtle Island, and those forcibly displaced by climate change, capitalist economic expansion, and war: populations Jody Byrd differentiates from Euro-settlers with the name "arrivants."[119] There are differences between those bodies who pass under colonial and patriarchical schemes of recognition and those who fail: the differently-abled, queer, and trans women of color, as well as the Indigenous women and the two-spirited people, whose lives are made disposable by white supremacy.[120] There are also differences between the poor white workers that end up constructing lives around twelve hour shifts in the mines and others who are able to critique from afar.[121] And differences between the life of someone flying by plane twice a year and forest dwelling birds, who in not being able to read the

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[117] Corey Snelgrove, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, "Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (July 2014): 2.
[118] Ibid., 1-32.
[119] Jody Byrd borrows this term from Kamau Braithwaite, see Jody Byrd, *Transits of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xix-xxx.
[120] Chelsea Vowel, "Indigenous and Two-Spirited People: Our Work Is Decolonization!," *GUTS Canadian Feminist Magazine*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://gutsmagazine.ca/issue-two/indigenous-women-two-spirited-people-work-decolonization; The Audre Lorde Project, "'We Were Never Meant to Survive': A Statement on Police Violence, Hate Violence, and Anti-Black Racism," accessed December 4, 2015, http://alp.org/%E2%80%98we-were-never-meant-survive%E2%80%99-statement-police-violence-hate-violence-and-anti-black-racism.
[121] See Eli Claire's work *Exile and Pride* for a consideration of how social justice movements can be inaccessible to many. A friend from Fort McMurray spoke about the importance of this work in making them understand the oppressive tension between poor white workers in Fort Mac and urban based, more class privileged environmentalists. Eli Claire, *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation* (Boston: South End Press, 1999).

human-made signs of warning, sound cannons and scarecrows, land in toxic tailing ponds only to find death.[122] This isn't to say that we are not all connected but that our connections occur through difference. I commence this writing from my lived experience, speaking for myself, even as this self is interwoven with a greater world. Despite my entanglement with structures of power, I am interested in a groundedness that may resist a tendency to view "settler colonialism as complete or transhistorical, as inevitable,"[123] and instead, attend to its conditions, contingencies, and contradictions, as an on-going project, believing that '"We' are in *this* together but we are not all the same.[124]

Methods: "What lies under the bridge is of little consequence to those above."

"Experts," Anna Tsing writes, "are those who have trained themselves to see with a singular vision". She continues, "In contrast, the public is troubled by haunting. Only by excluding the public can knowledge be kept pure."[125] What haunts the expert knowledge of the Athabasca landscape as the extractable and the recoverable? How can we attune ourselves to the gaps, breaks, border spaces, elements of difference that violate laws of repetition, reproduction, and re-presentation?[126] What kind of methodology can be engaged that allows one to be opened up by these hauntings rather than seduced by charismatic expertise? I turn to Christine Stewart's strategy of reading the underbridge as a means of listening to, and centering voices, experiences,

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[122] CBC News, "'Something Is Seriously Wrong,' Says Alberta First Nation after Bird Deaths, Pipeline Spill," August 9, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/syncrude-bird-deaths-nexen-pipeline-spill-show-oilsands-degradation-of-ecosystem-first-nation-1.3184789.
[123] Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel, "Unsettling Settler Colonialism," 17.
[124] Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 131.
[125] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 81.
[126] Della Pollock, *Telling Bodies Performing Birth: Everyday Narratives of Childbirth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 27. See also Anna Tsing's thinking of gaps, friction, and global connection in *Friction*.

and histories that exist in spaces of non-visibility. This strategy is a method of material-discursive analysis, that by stretching beyond Man made languages, attempts what Rita Wong describes as "recognizing interrelations": "hearing how water speaks, in an unfamiliar syntax, along with moss and smog, mountains and mycorrizhal mat, musqueam and ktunaxa [k-too-nah-ha], lubicon, tahltan."[127]

As one walks or drives across a bridge, one cannot see what lies underneath. I think of walking across the High Level Bridge in my hometown Edmonton, and how I've been both comforted and scared by the presence of the North Saskatchewan River below. On top of the bridge, I do not know the lives lost after jumping to join the waters below nor do I know the lives who call the riverbed their watery homes. Those lives and the water are nonlives for me as I cross the bridge. Christine Stewart speaks of another bridge in Edmonton: the Mill Creek Bridge, a bridge that once served to connect communities of white settlers. She writes, the Mill Creek Bridge "promises that we are moving in the right direction, that we will arrive, that the automobile is subject and citizen, that oil is capital."[128] Stewart follows two ravens as they fly towards the trees below. She crouches, bends her knees, and tilts her head, attempting to see the underbridge where the "world shifts." The underbridge is land the Papachase community called and call home, which gathers "complex ecologies of subjects and nonsubjects: of sleepers, coyotes, painters, waxwing, creek."

> … a place where consciousness shifts and processes information differently, where new data are taken into account, where new sense is made. … It rests

[127] Rita Wong, "Poetic Statements" (Reading during the KSW Positions Colloquium, Vancouver, 2008).
[128] Christine Stewart, "Propositions from Under Mill Creek Bridge: A Practice of Reading," in *Sustaining the West: Cultural Responses to Canadian Environments*, ed. Liza Piper and Lisa Szabo-Jones (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 241–257.

> between the sleeping and the woken, between the sleeper and the jogger, between having and not having, life and its absence. It is a place: a nonplace. It is a dynamic and it is a border that borders nothing: that is central to everything. … It covers the landscape with new definitions and dissolutions. … a zone that marks the dream of the State and its ruin.[129]

In the summer of 2015, I drove across a bridge that was once called the "Bridge to Nowhere." A bridge built by Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed in 1982 "as a show of good faith to an oil exploration company".[130] The bridge stretches across the Athabasca River, connecting workers, and machinery to the lands of oil, north of Fort Mckay. A bridge that as industry expanded northwards became a Bridge to Somewhere. After crossing the bridge, I drove farther north, passing mining site after mining site. Extractive projects scattered the landscape, peaking through the thick trees that surround the forest. I stopped and pulled over as the paved road turned into dirt. Buses of workers and trucks continued to pass by me. I thought about how this dirt would one day be paved road. I also tried to think about the possibility that this dirt would remain dirt.

To open up to the underbridge requires a type of fieldwork, or material-discursive analysis, that broadens what is comprehended as intelligent life, understanding meaningful and meaning-making subjects to stretch beyond man-made scripts, histories, and news reports, for not only Man can communicate.[131] As suggested in my preface, the media critic who attempts

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Truck News, "Oilpatch Infrastructure," *Truck News*, December 2, 2007, http://www.trucknews.com/features/oilpatch-infrastructure/.
[131] See Mel Chen's work for a consideration of how bodies considered nonhuman or inanimate can be agential in Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

this type of work studies the "media of sea, fire, star, cloud, book, and Internet" for they "all anchor our being profoundly, even if we can't say what they mean."[132] This mode of listening and perceiving is what van Wyck describes as "a kind of field practice that is decidedly subjective"[133]: a field practice that is *grounded* instead of distanced under the guise of scientific objectivity.[134] It is a field work that opens up to, and is opened up by, diverse ecologies of subjects and nonsubjects, whose agencies, voices, and movements, are ignored under neocolonial economies.

Perceiving the underbridge, as method and a practice, is both a way of life and a trip made during a hard summer. I visited Northern Alberta for the first time several weeks after my father died of cancer. Somehow the trip was part of my mourning. The death pushed me towards a frontier site intimately interwoven with my subjectivity for the "activity of the frontier is to make human subjects as well as natural objects."[135] I grew up in Edmonton, and my ancestors settled the land. Oil has allowed for my life. When I visited, I was surprised by the beauty of Nistawaya (Cree for where three rivers merge, otherwise known as Fort McMurray). The town is surrounded by dense, deep green forests. Growing up in Edmonton, I had imagined Fort McMurray as many things, but never thought of the forests. On my first night, I walked down to the river and watched its curve; a curve I know from the photos of those who came before me, and I thought about how in all my imaginations of the place, I forgot that there were trees.

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[132] Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Towards a Philosophy of Elemental Media*, 14.
[133] van Wyck, *The Highway of the Atom*, 23.
[134] Patricia Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/in the Postmodern* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Donna. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99.
[135] "The activity of the frontier is to make human subjects as well as natural objects." Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 30.

As the sun sets, the densely polluted air turns the sky vibrant colours, and I am so surprised by how beautiful it is here. Mourning asks us "not to like or love through one's own tear but only through the other, and every tear is from the other, the friend, the living, as long as we ourselves are living, reminding us, in holding like, to hold on to it."[136] While I am here because of death, that death asks me to remember the vibrancy of life. Night falls and all I can think about is the trees and how I never thought the beating heart of the Canadian economy would be surrounded by so many trees. What do those trees tell us? Did they hear the earth scream?[137] They were here before us along with a variety of others. Before bridges and machines, it wasn't just an empty nature waiting for white men and women to find it. Those longtime residents are all still here despite the carving up of deep swathes of land. By reading the underbridge, I hope to attune myself to that which is unfamiliar and haunts settler systems of power.

[136] Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 110.
[137] Robin Mackay, "Brief History of Geotrauma," in *Leper Creativity: Cyclonopedia Symposium*, ed. Ed Keller, Nicola Masciandaro, and Eugene Thacker (Brooklyn: Punctum Press, 2012), 21.

II. Emptiness and Discovery

History: "It will be like a log that has started from the middle of the lake"

"It will be like a log that has started from the middle of the lake. With a breeze behind it, the log will eventually make its way to the shore. This is how I can foresee the laws of the white man in the future. I will not see them myself, but the people who will be alive in the future will see this taking place."

- Justin Martin, a Mikisew Cree speaking to the Treaty 8 commission[138]

"The forests I know are full of ka nikamot piwayisis (songbirds) singing and dancing, and niskak (geese), sisip (ducks), mawkkwa (loons), apisimosis (deer), moswa (moose), mahkesiw (fox), mescakan (coyotes), wapus (rabbits), wachask (muskrats), amisk (beavers), muskwa (bears), kamamak (butterflies), kwaskohtsis (grasshoppers), ayikis (frogs), kwekwekocis (fireflies), kinosew (fish), mikisew (eagles), and so much more. This is our family too."

- Jesse Cardinal, resident of the Kikino Métis Settlement[139]

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how colonial imaginations of emptiness, as well as regimes of violence, worked and work, to ready Indigenous homelands for extraction. This chapter is divided into four parts. I begin by discussing alternative histories of the region

[138] Richard Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Treaties* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999), 156.
[139] Jesse Cardinal, "The Tar Sands Healing Walk," in *A Line in the Tar Sands: Struggles for Environmental Justice*, ed. Toban Black et al. (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2014), 127–33.

before moving into colonial myths of discovery. Subsequently, I discuss tactics of violence used by the colonial explorer Peter Pond and the role of these tactics in the forging of extractive territory. Finally, I attempt to show how the Boreal forests of Athabasca had to be emptied out of certain dissenting interrelations and populations in order for oil to appear, although, this emptying out was never completely successful.

Perhaps as one beginning of this story, we can think about a time when the world was but an ocean. Dene oral history remembers this time, describing an ocean world that was "'inhabited by no living creature, except a mighty bird, whose eyes were fire, whose glances were lightning, and the clapping of whose wings were thunder.'"[140] "'On his descent to the ocean, and touching it, the earth instantly arose, and remained on the surface of the waters.'" The bird's lightning made the world come alive; Chipewyan elder Jean Janvier relates, "'when he winks, lightning strikes, and deposits black eggs". The black eggs bore life. Janvier explains that to this day, the "'reason why there is lightning or thunder is because there are animals in the Earth; lightning keeps them there.'" The great thunderbird brought life and land.[141]

Another story, about how this land was made, is told by geologists.[142] The geologists also tell us of an ocean that spread across the land. They describe how in this ocean, amidst the waters

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[140] In their book *Inkonze*, Hoffman-Mercredi and Coutu draw upon early explorer documentation of Dene oral history as well as the oral history of elders. They alternate between geologic histories and Dene oral history, as to demonstrate that Dene oral history, which has long been discounted by Western science, contains immense knowledge concerning the world as it is and the future. The Chipewyan term Inkonze can be translated as "to know something a little." Hoffman-Mercredi and Coutu explain that Inkonze, as a gift of the Dene, is a powerful way of knowing, perceiving. Inkonze relies on one's ability to have "relevant dreams". Phillip R. Coutu and Lorraine D. Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge* (Edmonton: Thunderwoman Ethnographics, 1999), 32–40.

[141] In my recounting of this story, I join with Vanessa Watts in asking that we resist the impulse to attack Indigenous histories of the land for a part of how colonialism works is through the delegitimization of Indigenous knowledge. Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Amongst Humans and Non Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go On a European World Tour!)," 23.

[142] I speak of this story, as well as Indigenous oral history, out of the belief, articulated by Tsing that continued life on earth "depends on getting our knowledge into as good as shape as possible" which in turn requires "paying more rather than less attention to the multiplicity of knowledge claims." See Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global*

that covered what is now known as Alberta, a substance formed: one that compressed great quantities of space and time into a concentrate form. A substance that perhaps shouldn't even be called oil, although, that is how it is sold. The boundless ocean contained an expansive coral reef: a structure that acted as a sponge, absorbing and trapping decaying plant and animal remains. A death bed. A moment when lives transformed into something else only to transform into another mode of life.

Eventually, the sponge and decomposing bodies were covered with sediment, which worked to further transform the dying matter into the substance known today as petroleum. Oil began forming millions of years ago. The sediment was then swirled around by the ebbs and flows of oceanic floods, the waters carried the petroleum with them. Mountains rose to the west, making the land the state would later call Alberta sink. Northern flowing rivers brought and deposited the sediment in the depressed area made by the mountains rising: this area would one day be known as the Athabasca oil sands. With the gradual processes of sedimentation, the fossil fuels became trapped in huge amounts of quartz sand. Any crude, "conventional," or lighter hydrocarbons were either consumed by bacteria or evaporated. Only a thick, heavy, viscous bitumen was left, entrapped in the sands. As glaciers travelled over the sands, they left debris behind in their wake. Over time, the sands became further obscured by layers or rock, clay, and muskeg, "leaving only the outcroppings along the Athabasca and Peace rivers to reveal the riches hidden below."[143]

Connection, 81. By speaking of history in this way, I hope to bring an awareness to a Western scientific apparatus that has long ignored and discounted Indigenous ecological knowledge. I am also interested in considering how our imaginaries of present landscapes are shaped by multiple imaginaries of past landscape.

[143] "Geologic History," *Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.ramp-alberta.org/river/geography/geological+prehistory/paleozoic.aspx.

Climate change led to periods of glaciation followed by flooding. Another Dene story tells of a giant collapsing whose fallen form left an imprint on the landscape.[144] The giant was a glacier. As the head of the giant melted, a flood transformed the landscape, leading to a loss of life. As waters flooded and re-flooded lands, the Dogrib, Slavey, and Chipewyan peoples migrated to high mountain regions. Eventually, the mountainous regions, which they then knew as home, erupted, and the Dene (loosely translated as The People) fled, scattered into different communities, migrating across the land. After the flood, according to oral histories, the earth endured to regenerate in a new form.[145] So along with the bitumen came other abundances; the abundances of thriving life (caribou, white buffalo, and wide variety of plants) in a water-rich, lush, region.[146]

The Boreal Forests became home to Athapaskan Dene (Chipewyan or Beaver) communities, although, their inhabitation of this territory would be changed by contact. [147] In the early nineteenth century, the original Beaver residents of so-called Northern Alberta were driven westward as the fur trade triggered Algonquin (Cree) communities to settle in the area.[148] While Cree communities have a long history of residency in north-central Saskatchewan, and parts of

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[144] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, 17.
[145] Ibid., 83.
[146] The existence of water in this region was as vital as the existence of oil. Both water and oil had to exist in the region for extraction to be possible. Although we have a tendency to think water separately from oil (water and oil don't mix), the two are intimately related. Oil extraction is only possible through the utilization of massive stores of fresh and saltwater. Furthermore, fossil fuel extraction results in the transformation of global waters through global warming. The impact that the resources of water and oil have had on the shaping of history could be known as "hydropolitics," or alternatively, "petropolitics." See John Waterbury, *Hydropolitics of the Nile Valley* (Syracruse: Syracruse University Press, 1979); Timothy Mitchell, *Rules of Experts, Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002); Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*; Ursula Biemann, *Deep Weather*, Video Essay, (2013), http://www.geobodies.org/art-and-videos/deep-weather.
[147] Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, *Nistawaya: "Where the Rivers Meet" - First Nation Traditional Land Use Study* (Calgary: Nicomasian Publishing, 2006).
[148] Patricia McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 20. McCormack's history of Fort Chipewyan and Northern colonization has been immensely helpful in the writing of this thesis.

northeastern Alberta (areas such as Lac La Biche and Clear Water), historical and anthropological accounts clash concerning whether or not a Cree community called the region below Lake Athabasca home before contact. A history written by the Fort McMurray First Nation suggests that "if this group existed in Aboriginal times, it was wiped out by the smallpox epidemic of the 1780s."[149] If stories make up our present and our relationships to the land we live on, then part of the problem rests in the gaps found in certain visions of history. The uncertainty about whether or not this Cree community did call the land home unfolds in a colonial present filled with genocidal impulses seeking to empty 'Canadian' land of its first inhabitants. This uncertainty reveals how those positioned on the bridge do not always have access to what exists underneath. As Spivak emphasizes, the stories of those most oppressed by colonial systems cannot be known by those who live in comparatively more privileged positions.[150] Still, that the Fort McMurray First Nation is unsure about the history of their ancestors speaks to the hegemonic power of colonial history, knowledge, and violence.

That said, those who have survived the violences of colonial settlement speak of the vibrancy of worlds before colonial contact, while also reminding us of the rich histories of resistance that have existed throughout the history of colonialism. The Northwestern frontier was able to flourish, in part, precisely through stories of "progress" that erased Indigenous histories and cultures. Only the colonizer, armoured with superior tools of 'civilization', could make meaning and make history. This is a logic that holds up modernity: the pretense that we "moderns" have progressed from a "primitive" past.[151] This myth of a progress-filled modernity needs undoing in two ways. First, the dismantling of the idea that in the present, we are more

[149] Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, *Nistawaya: "Where the Rivers Meet" - First Nation Traditional Land Use Study*, 6.
[150] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak."
[151] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

rational, secular, and developed, than our "primitive" ancestors. The West's entry into the "modern" age has not meant that powerful societal institutions, such as the institutions of science and law, are suddenly free of religious and political convictions. Second, the deconstruction of the idea that those colonialism labeled "primitive" were uncultured, and uncivilized animalistic beings. The land and its inhabitants before contact were in no way "uncivilized," or "empty," rather, vibrant communities and cultures co-existed with worlds intricately entangled with a lively landscape. Each community lived attuned to their own histories, ways of life, and relationships to territory. These cultural particularities existed both within and between communities. The landscape too held its own memories and ways of being.[152]

Before colonial settlement in the Canadian northwest, complex knowledge about the land allowed Indigenous communities to navigate and live with the landscape in a way that nurtured a variety of lives, both human and not.[153] Lives were interwoven with the vitality of the flora and fauna of the boreal forest and transitional treeline biomes.[154] A variety of creatures knew the landscape as home ranging from Caribou to Raspberries, Muskrat to Whooping Crane, Wekis (rat root) to Wekusk (sweet grass).[155] Chipewyan, Cree, and Dene communities used various technologies for snaring, entrapment, and transforming raw materials into what was

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[152] What can be called "nature-cultures," See Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s"; Haraway, *When Species Meet*.
[153] Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, *Nistawaya: "Where the Rivers Meet" - First Nation Traditional Land Use Study*; Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*.
[154] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 27.
[155] The extraction of territory has necessitated the extraction of traditional knowledge. Oil industries and the state have garnered knowledge from elders and communities about what the land once was in order to ensure proper reclamation or that certain lives will not be disrupted. That this knowledge has meant anything to the industry, beyond the appearance of care for what this land once was, is doubtful. That said, traditional knowledge is archived by industry-oriented organizations such as the state's reclamation working group. With this traditional knowledge, they can offer the illusion that everything will go back to what it was like before. See The Terrestrial Subgroup of the Reclamation Working Group of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association, *Guidelines for Reclamation to Forest Vegetation in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region* (Fort McMurray: Alberta Environment, 2009), 97. Cree translations of rat root and sweet grass found in

needed; spiritual beliefs and knowledge of landscape allowed for the successful use of these tools.[156] The first inhabitants also used fire to create and manage landscapes: another technology that required expansive and intricate knowledge of the land and ecological interrelationships.[157] Vibrant networks of trade coexisted with hostilities between tribes.[158] At that time, the sands were something else; a substance used by Indigenous communities to seal canoes, and perhaps better known by ᑳᖾᑭᐤ ᐱᑯ or kaskitew piko, one of the many Cree words to describe tar.[159]

These vibrant worlds are concealed by the idea that Canada "developed as a country and achieved its destiny to greatness through the agency of explorers, government agents, and homesteaders – all Europeans – who steadily pushed backward the frontiers of civilized lands into the western and northern wilderness occupied by primitive people – 'Indians' and, in the far northern reaches, 'Eskimos' – who must either disappear or themselves become civilized, at which point they would no longer be Indians (or Eskimos)."[160] This imagination of Europeans as the agents of civilization led to the imposition of sexual, class, racial, bodily, religious, technological, and environmental orderings as to assimilate Indigenous peoples and lands into the fabric of the Canadian nation-state. The Métis who began to call this region home after contact were also affected by these stories and regimes of power. These histories of grief live on, and within this, the stories we tell about violence, terror, and the land, matter for they lead us towards different worlds. Further, the stories we tell about present ecological interrelations that disrupt are just as vital, for they too allow us to construct the materials for different futures. For

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[156] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History,* 27.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 4.
[159] Alberta Elders Cree Dictionary English-Cree, s.v. "tar."
[160] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 3.

despite and in spite of colonial power, the first inhabitants of the Athabasca region have persisted to hold space for the blossoming of alternative worlds and futures.

As Thomas King relates, the "truth about stories is that that's all we are."[161] European settlers became aware of the Athabascan oil sands as early as 1715. Yet, it was only in the early 2000s that the oil sands and the Northern Albertan town of Fort McMurray experienced the euphoric and dystopic rush of a resource boom. By the spring of 2003, the U.S. government announced that Canada's oil sands were now the second-largest reserve in the world, placing Canada ahead of Iraq. Canada is currently the largest single exporter of oil to the United States.[162] Speaking about decolonization, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith reminds us, "To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges."[163] Thus, I examine the early moments of oil "discovery," territorial exploration, and colonial violence in order to emphasize that, as Patrick Wolfe claims, "Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element."[164] By re-considering the role oil had in the early stages of colonial contact, we can trace out the emergence of what Coulthard describes as a structure of dispossession.[165] This activity of tracing will allow me to demonstrate that Canada's contemporary economy continues to be upon the occupation and accumulation of Indigenous resources.

Yet, the story is much more complicated than a white man goes into the wild and discovers "oil". The abundant did not suddenly appear because of white colonial technical ingenuity, rather, it emerged because of "a series of claims, affinities, and interactions, all of

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[161] King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, 2.
[162] U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Company Level Imports," December 31, 2015, http://www.eia.gov/petroleum/imports/companylevel/.
[163] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1999), 34.
[164] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler-Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no.4 (December 1, 2006): 388, doi:10.1080/14623520601056240.
[165] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 7.

which exceed the grasp or intention of the human agents involved."[166] What I will try to do in the remaining parts of this chapter is foreground the bedlam inducing residents of the Boreal forests in an effort to rebel against determining colonial vision of the Boreal forests as empty. What happens when we refuse the myth of inevitable extraction and progress? By foregrounding the bedlam inducing residents of the Athabascan region, I intend to show how history unfolds through entangled, ambiguous, and terribly messy relations. Anna Tsing would describe this history as a history of "Friction," of moments that show us it "didn't have to happen that way"; moments which are not equated with resistance but rather speak to how "encounters across difference can be compromising or empowering."[167] In considering these encounters, I will speak of colonial violence and attempt to articulate the environmental traumas of what Mike Mercredi, a Fort Chipewyan community, names a "slow industrial genocide."[168] As Tsing writes, "Others have, and will tell of the pleasures of resource booms. The need to understand capitalist expansion, however, inspires me in another direction: I will not erase the conditions of terror in which agency is sometimes formed."[169]

Myths of Discovery

Typically, the discovery story of the tar sands takes place in the early 1700s when the colonial fur trade began expanding into the interior. In 1715, James Knight, based in York Factory (one of the Hudson Bay Company's first trading posts), described hearing about the

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[166] Mitchell, *Rules of Experts, Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, 34.
[167] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 14, 6.
[168] Mike Mercredi, *Slow Industrial Genocide*, The Dominon, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.dominionpaper.ca/audio/mike_mercredi.
[169] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 26.

substance from a Chipewyan woman named Ttha'naltther,[170] and several years later, in 1719, Henry Kelsey, also based in York Factory, referred to "Swan the Peacemaker" bringing "a sample of that Gum or pitch that flows out of the Banks of that River."[171] But, the historical record contradicts itself: many contemporary rememberings cite Henry Kelsey's encounter with Swan or Wâpisiw (the Cree translation of Swan) as the first moment of colonial speculation on what the Athabasca region contains, effacing Ttha'naltther's presence from the historical memory of how the frontier was opened up.[172] Wâpisiw's transportation of the sample is glorified over Ttha'naltther's exchange of ecological knowledge. Yet, with both Wâpisiw and Ttha'naltther, oil only becomes visible after it is encountered by the colonial explorer, prospector, or scientist.

The Canadian oil company Suncor named their first reclaimed tailings pond after Wâpisiw and a work camp for Imperial Oil's Kearl project is named the Wapasu Creek Lodge.[173] Wâpisiw is monumentalized in tar sands infrastructure, although, this does not necessarily mean he is remembered. I spoke with a customer service agent from the Wapasu Cree Lodge who had no idea where the name "Wapasu" originated. This absence in contemporary memory shows how

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[170] Here, I employ the spelling of Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi in *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*. In most historical references, she is known as Thanadelthur, pronounced Than-a-DEL-thur. Source for pronunciation: Rick Book, *Teachers Guide: Blackships/Thanadelthur* (Winnipeg: Heartland Associates Inc., 2004), https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/files/K-12/Curriculum/social-studies/Gr4/4.Fur-Trade-Edukit/Thanadelthur-Teacher's-Guide.pdf.

[171] Henry Kelsey, "Journal Entries: 1719" (York Factory Post Journals, 1719), Hudson Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba.

[172] The Alberta government's energy website, the Oil Sands Discovery Center (a museum dedicated to the tar sands), and Suncor all describe Swan and Kelsey's moment as the initial colonial "discovery" of the resource. Whereas the Alberta government's culture and tourism cite references Thanadelthur as the first. See Government of Alberta, "Alberta Energy History Prior to 1950," *Alberta Energy*, April 9, 2015, http://www.energy.alberta.ca/About_Us/3997.asp; Oil Sands Discovery Center, "Facts about Alberta's Oil Sands and Its Industry," accessed October 7, 2015, http://history.alberta.ca/oilsands/resources/docs/facts_sheets09.pdf; Suncor, "Wapisiw Lookout," accessed October 7, 2015, http://www.suncor.com/pdf/IYC_OS_wntr010.pdf; Government of Alberta, "The Fur Trade and Alberta's Oil Sands - Alberta Energy Heritage," *Alberta Culture and Tourism*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://history.alberta.ca/energyheritage/sands/origins/the-fur-trade-and-albertas-oil-sands/default.aspx.

[173] The camp houses 5000 workers and has a Tim Horton's on site. CIVEO, "Wapasu Creek Lodge," *Civeo*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://civeo.com/lodges-villages/canada/wapasu-creek-lodge/.

easily Wâpisiw's role in history is forgotten. The company running the work camp probably chose the name because of the camp's proximity to Wapasu Creek, unaware of what stories the flowing waters told or who the water knew before its life was embroiled in the production of oil.[174] The typical myth of oil sands discovery does not reference Ttha'naltther nor her people nor the trees her people lived with nor the sand the oil slept with. Instead, we hear of Wâpisiw and Henry Kelsey, or perhaps Peter Pond. While Wâpisiw came out of the woods, holding the substance known as oil, Ttha'naltther went into the woods, with the mission of creating peace between her people and the Cree. Somehow, what happened between Ttha'naltther, the woods, and her people, does not fit with the heroic memory of the oil frontier.

According to Edward Curtis's account of Chipewyan oral histories living in Cold Lake, Alberta, Ttha'naltther was bought by James Knight from the Crees who had taken her hostage during her youth.[175] Alternatively, the oral histories of Athabascan elders, compiled by Lorraine Hoffman-Mercredi and Phillip Coutu, as well as, the information found on the Hudson's Bay Company (the HBC), both suggest that she escaped from her Cree captors to find refuge with Knight at York Factory.[176] In Knight's records, she was known as the "Slave Woman," but, Chipewyan oral histories know her as Ttha'naltther. The information James Knight recorded from his encounter with Ttha'naltther about oil was that "a Certain Gum or pitch … runs down

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[174] Heritage Community Foundation and Friends of Geographical Names of Alberta, "Alberta Place Names - Cree Place Names," 2008, http://wayback.archive-it.org/2217/20101208162117/http://www.albertasource.ca/placenames/programs/cree/names.html.

[175] Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian, Being a Series of Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska*, vol. 20 (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1928), 8–11. I tentatively cite this source, knowing that massive romanticizations are at work in Curtis's portrayals of Indigenous cultures. Whether or not Ttha'naltther was sold to Knight is unclear: Indigenous scholars Hoffman-Mercredi and Coutu cite oral histories that recall her escape, whereas the Chipewyan oral histories Curtis draws upon, note that she was purchased.

[176] HBC Heritage, "Our History: People: Women: Thanadelthur," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/history/people/women/thanadelthur; Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, 117–124.

the river in Such abundance that they cannot land but at certain places." [177] Often, Ttha'naltther is praised for creating peace between the Crees and Chipewyans, and therein paving the way for HBC entry into the Northwest.[178] Impressed by the goods and trade networks of her Cree captors, the story goes, she sought to bring the prosperity of white man's world to her people. While the peace Ttha'naltther brokered was limited to an alliance between some Chipewyans and one group of Crees, the HBC provided the Chipewyans with guns in order to ensure their security against the Crees (who had already received guns from the Europeans). The European supply of weapons to the Chipewyans made it possible for them to join the fur trade.[179]

Ttha'naltther's sharing of knowledge about her homelands occurred within a context where colonialism relied heavily upon Indigenous knowledge about the land and its peoples.[180] Her knowledge of a territory was met by Knight's dreams of the potential for property and profit. His violence towards her was physical as much as it was archival: he "scoff'd her ears" and then wrote that the Crees were her masters. In his *York Factory Journal* entry, he noted she was immensely apologetic for upsetting him and that she subsequently called him a father to her people.[181] This vision of history transforms her into "the ideal Native informant in the colonial encounter, smoothing the way for the expansion of British imperialism."[182] There is no discussion of the physical violence needed to garner her knowledge of the land nor discussion of

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[177] James Knight, "Journal Entries: 1715" (York Factory Post Journals, n.d.), Hudson Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba.
[178] Province of Manitoba, "Thanadelthur," *Government of Manitoba: Rearview*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.gov.mb.ca/rearview/thanadelthur/index.html?print.
[179] John Douglas Belshaw, *Canadian History: Pre-Confederation* (British Columbia: Open Textbook Project), accessed October 7, 2015, http://solr.bccampus.ca:8001/bcc/file/6c4a9484-8d43-4a44-a565-09cc773aa53f/1/Canadian-History-Pre-Confederation-1428947118.html; Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*.
[180] This colonial history of stealing Indigenous intellectual property continues on into this day. Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.
[181] Julia V. Emberley, "'A Gift for Languages': Native Women and the Textual Economy of the Colonial Archive," *Cultural Critique*, no. 17 (1990): 21–50, doi:10.2307/1354138.
[182] Ibid., 39–40.

how this physical violence was linked to her 'dutifulness.' Nor is there memory of Kelsey's desire for fifty Ttha'naltthers, for if there were fifty of her, that would be enough to "drive all the Northern Indians in America out of their country." Somehow in the imagining of Ttha'naltther as a "person of national significance,"[183] we forget that Knight beat her after she told him her Indians should kill him.[184]

Yet, to believe she was simply exploited would be to fall into the same traps of those who efface her presence from the moment of discovery. As Coutu and Mercredi point out, her efforts to help her homeland make her a heroine in Dene memory. She tried to ensure the survival of her people who at the time were greatly harmed by the Cree. The Crees were armed due to their earlier contact with Europeans, and had used these arms to enact war against the Dene. The devastations of Cree violence against the Dene people is memorialized by "Cree Burn Lake." Dene oral history tells us that the lake received its name after the Cree community began committing suicide by jumping into the fire "because they felt ashamed of what they had done in the region."[185] A part of Ttha'naltther's motivation for engaging with the Hudson's Bay Company was the possibility of bringing peace to her people. The war machine at its most successful is able to divide kindred groups. The introduction of the fur trade brought about the possibility of the Cree peoples completing the violent work of European imperialism. The land must be made empty of certain dissenting interrelations in order for it to become extractable. This violence targeted Indigenous communities as well as the animals who formed the material

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[183] Dianne Dodd, "Canadian Historic Sites and Plaques: Heroines, Trailblazers, The Famous Five," *National Park Service* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2009), http://www.nps.gov/history/crmjournal/Summer2009/article.html.
[184] James Knight, "Journal Entry: February 5, 1717" (York Factory Post Journals, n.d.), Hudson Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba.
[185] *Alberta Online Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Elders Voices - Cree Burn Lake," Heritage Community Foundation and University of Alberta web archive, accessed January 17, 2016, http://wayback.archive-it.org/2217/20101208163253/http://www.abheritage.ca/eldersvoices/history/beginnings_cree_burn.html.

basis of the fur trade. An emptying out that continues to this day as Indigenous women, two spirited peoples, and other long time inhabitants are disappeared under an economy of extraction.[186]

"A white man goes off to the frontier…"

While Ttha'naltther withdraws from sight in oil discovery narratives and Wâpisiw becomes a marginal, largely unknown, character in the setting up of the frontier, Peter Pond is credited as the pioneer who "opened up the Athabasca region to European awareness, exploration and, ultimately, economic development."[187] Pond would also be memorialized in the oil town Fort McMurray with the construction of a local school. The school was eventually demolished to build the Peter Pond mall. I'm sure that if I spoke to anyone working in the mall, they would probably know nothing about Peter Pond. A stone monument in tribute to Pond also exists, though it has been recently moved in order to build a parking lot on the previous location. In a 2007 Peter Pond society newsletter, one of the two Fort McMurray residents who are members of the society, Art Avery, responded to the relocation by bemoaning the apathy of the new population of Fort McMurray: "Unfortunately the population that we have now only cares about the eternal dollar."[188] The aim of this subsection is to attempt a remembering of Pond in order to show how violence "was the necessary condition of colonial order." [189]

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[186] Native Youth Sexual Health Network, "Statement in Support of 4th Annual Tar Sands Healing Walk," accessed October 7, 2015, http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/tarsandshealingwalk.pdf; Vowel, "Indigenous Women and Two-Spirited People: Our Work Is Decolonization!"
[187] Government of Alberta, "The Fur Trade and Alberta's Oil Sands - Alberta Energy Heritage."
[188] Peter Pond Society, "Peter Pond Newsletter :: June 2007 #31," June 2007, http://www.peterpondsociety.com/newsletters/news31.html.
[189] Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, 56–58.

In 1778, Peter Pond, a fur trader, and one of the founding members of the Northwest Trading Company (later amalgamated with the Hudson's Bay Company), became the first European to enter the Athabasca region.[190] Often, there is an acknowledgement that Pond was the first "non-Native" to enter the territory, making it fathomable that others called the territory home first, it was Pond alone, not Pond with the aid of a variety of inhabitants (both human and not), who "discovered … Canada's most notable oil resource".[191] A part of the power of such a myth is that it replaces encounter with discovery. We do not learn of the ecological relations holding him up nor of the Indigenous peoples who made his safe passage possible. Instead, our ears are filled by another story, a story you "likely already know":

> A white man goes off to the frontier located somewhere in the imagined wild west. … the frontier posits a dangerous but bountiful garden … Our hero is tested here on the frontier, as heroes necessarily must be, and he (again, not she) prevails violently in the encounter.[192]

In his triumph over violence, the frontiersman finds what Turner's frontier thesis has called "perennial re-birth": he is "stripped of his eastern cultural baggage" and transformed into a democratic, strong, freedom loving individualist.[193] You've seen this man and heard this story before, think John Wayne, Jimmy Stewart, Tom Cruise, Harrison Ford, and Richard Harris.[194]

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[190] H.A. Innis, *Peter Pond: Fur Trader and Adventurer* (Toronto: Irwin & Gordon, Ltd., 1930).
[191] Gwyn Morgan, "Investment in Resources Being Stymied by Vocal Minority," *The Globe and Mail*, January 5, 2014, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/investment-in-resources-being-stymied-by-vocal-minority/article16200085/.
[192] Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 85.
[193] Ibid., 85–86.
[194] As Anderson and Robertson detail, the frontier as a genre is expansive. Think John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart for their Westerns, Tom Cruise for *Far and Away*, Harrison Ford in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (a "film that affords the Indian treatment to Arabs and South American Natives), and Richard Harris in *A Man Named Horse* or a *Man in the Wilderness*. See Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers,* 301n14-18.

Or, even better, Gary Cooper in the film *North West Mounted Police*. A film that tells the tale of how Dusty Rivers, a Texas Ranger, is sent to Canada to pursue outlaw Jacques Corbeau during the 1880s. He arrives in the midst of the Riel Rebellion, faces danger, and then rides off into the sunset after giving his mistress his blessing to stay with her beloved, a Mountie. Some encounters are remembered but only ones in which white settlers were victims. In biographies of Pond, we are reminded that he killed two white fur-trading rivals during his travels as an explorer.[195] These murders are a palatable type of violence in the Canadian national memory, whereas Pond's role in the emptying out of northern territory goes unmentioned.

Figure 3. Film poster for Cecil DeMille's North West Mounted Police. (1940, Promotional Poster. Available from: http://imagestack.co/169911015-fotografia-victor-milner-w-howard-greene.html.)

[195] Peter Pond Society, "Peter Pond Biography," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.peterpondsociety.com/pondbio.html.

Earlier in life, Pond was a fighter in General Amherst's army; Amherst who once asked, "Could it not be contrived to send the Small Pox among those disaffected tribes of Indians? We must on this occasion use every stratagem in our power to reduce them."[196] As Pond moved from the Mississippi valley, through Saskatchewan, towards the Athabasca region, outbreaks of smallpox followed him. Phillip Coutu and Lorraine Hoffman-Mercredi, trace out the connections between Pond's movements and the diffusion patterns of smallpox in the late eighteenth century, to ask whether or not Pond deliberately introduced smallpox in order to gain access to the region's rich fur resources.[197] In 1778, Pond, after arriving in Saskatchewan, "made some of the Indians drunk, he was so annoyed by them that, to rid himself of their importunity, he gave one of them so large a dose of laudanum that he was plunged into an eternal sleep."[198]

This death, Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi note, triggered open warfare against the fur traders from an alliance comprised of Cree, Assiniboine, and Bas de la Riviere Nations.[199] Alexander Mackenzie described this conflict in his history of the fur trade: "In short; it appeared, that the natives had formed a resolution to extirpate the traders; ...and nothing but the greatest calamity that could have befallen the natives, saved the traders from destruction. This was the smallpox which spread to destructive and desolating power, as the fire consumes the dry grass of the field."[200] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi argue that Mackenzie's reference to fire alludes to an Indigenous tactic of land defense: the burning of areas around forts as to push traders out of Indigenous territories.[201] In response to the ecological weapon of fire, the fur traders and

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[196] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, 167.
[197] Ibid., 182–184.
[198] J.W. Bond, *Minnesota and Its Resources* (New York: Redfield, 1853), 337.
[199] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, 181–182.
[200] Alexander Mackenzie and W. Lamb, *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1970), 74.
[201] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*.

explorers brought smallpox: a biological weapon which resulted in the death of large numbers of Northern Athabasca Indigenous peoples from 1780-1782. Though numbers are impossible to know, estimates range from fifty to ninety percent of the population dying.[202] While some fur traders lamented the ramifications this death would have upon trade, others took the furs that cloaked the dead as a way to ensure the payment of debt.[203]

Here, I must be an undutiful[204] daughter to a father of communications: Harold Innis. Following Thobani, forgiving Innis for his colonial acts under a belief "that they should not be judged from the vantage point or the ethos of the present," would only nourish the belief that the present form of Canadian nationhood is more ethical or lawful.[205] A radical critique of Canadian nationhood requires the undoing of the belief in a glory-filled national founding, and a making visible of how violence holds up Canadian senses of morality and lawfulness. This means indicting both present nationals who have faith in fair trial as well as the nationals of Canada's past who excuse Canada's genocidal and assimilatory foundings. In his biography of Pond, Innis bemoans that Pond is not recognized as a founding father of Canadian Confederation.[206] Innis argues that because of his illiteracy, Pond's achievements were never fully recognized, emphasizing that Pond, unlike Sir Alexander Mackenzie, died impoverished. In Innis's vision, Pond's achievements included the first map of the Northwest and solving the problem of trade over long distances. While Pond's work required the aid of the Athabascan inhabitants, his travel routes facilitated the Northwest to become a part of Canada. In particular, his "discovery" of the

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[202] James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 38.
[203] Ibid., 38–39.
[204] Henriette. Gunkel, Chrysanthi. Nigianni, and Fanny Söderbäck, *Undutiful Daughters : New Directions in Feminist Thought and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[205] Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, 34–35.
[206] Innis, *Peter Pond: Fur Trader and Adventurer*.

Methye Portage, a trade route used by Indigenous nations for generations, allowed for the opening up of the Northwest and thus, the accumulation of Indigenous lands.

European entry into the interior was accomplished through small pox, one tactic of colonial violence. This violence made possible a Canadian confederation that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But, Innis fails to recognize this violence. He overlooks the laudanum murder that triggered the uprising of the Cree, Assiniboine, and Bas de la Riviere Nations, and only briefly discusses small pox by citing a journal entry of Ponds. In the entry, Pond describes that he convinced a group of Indigenous traders to work with him, instead of the Hudson's Bay Company, on the basis that "they might not take the contagion which had depopulated the country to the eastward of them,"[207] After their meeting with Pond, the traders caught small pox: "most unfortunately they caught it here and carried it with them, to the destruction of themselves and the neighbouring tribes." By making visible the violence needed for the installation of colonial order, we become aware of an alternate history, and in this, an alternate present.

On Locality: "do not you white men know every thing in the world?"

What I have attempted to show thus far is that the oil sands were not simply discovered, rather, history unraveled through "a series of claims, affinities, and interactions, all of which exceed the grasp or intention of the human agents involved."[208] Ideas about the superiority of European civilization crumble when it is recognized that the success (and survival) of early explorers and fur traders was contingent on the help and knowledge of those who knew the region intimately. The second point I have aimed to elucidate is that violence was a necessary

[207] Ibid., 98.
[208] Mitchell, *Rules of Experts, Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, 34.

component of the frontier's opening. Yet, this violence co-existed with a deep dependency on the region's first inhabitants. Local knowledge gave Dene and Cree communities' incredible resiliency against colonial entry into the area.

In the late eighteenth century, the colonial explorer Sir Alexander Mackenzie came west, seeking to follow Pond's premonitions that a travel route to the Pacific existed. Pond laid out a path for Mackenzie to follow. As he travelled through the Athabasca region in 1793, Mackenzie noted the "bituminous fountains, into which a pole twenty feet long may be inserted without the least resistance."[209] Mackenzie, whose expeditions to the West relied on Indigenous communities for their knowledge of the land and its resources, is celebrated as another great frontiersman of Canadian history.[210] Again, this myth of greatness depends upon the covering up of the variety of relations that his success depended on as well as what his actions amounted to: the theft of Indigenous lands and knowledge. Yet, those he encountered were in no way naïve of his intentions. On his second attempt to reach the Pacific ocean, after Mackenzie posed question after question to his Indigenous guides, one of them asked, "What … can be the reason that you are so particular and anxious in your inquiries of us respecting a knowledge of this country: do not you white men know every thing in the world?"[211] In response, Mackenzie went out of his way to assure the guide of white superiority while admitting that, yes, there were certain obstacles that only those with a local knowledge of the land could know.

Throughout his travels West, Mackenzie articulated that whites were inherently superior to Indigenous peoples, going so far as to claim supernatural control over nature. When he travelled through the interior of British Columbia, on route to Fort Chipewyan in Northern

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[209] Mackenzie and Lamb, *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*, 129.
[210] *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Sir Alexander Mackenzie (Explorer)," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sir-alexander-mackenzie-explorer/.
[211] Mackenzie and Lamb, *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*, 323.

Alberta, Mackenzie had a few articles stolen by the First Nations workers accompanying him. As a means to compel the restoration of the stolen goods and white norms of property, he told them of the white man's supernatural ability:

> they had no idea of the mischief that would result to them from taking our property. I gravely added that the salmon, which was not only their favourite food, but absolutely necessary to their existence, came from the sea which belonged to us white men; and that as, at the entrance of the river, we could prevent those fish from coming up it, we possessed the power to starve them and their children. To avoid our anger, therefore, they must return all the articles that had been stolen from us.[212]

Mackenzie's prophetic vision genocidally imagined white control over nature; a dramatic alteration of already-in-place natural orderings. A nature emptied out of fish and Indigenous co-becoming.

His imagination of the future occurred while the landscape and the populations who called it home gradually transformed. During the late eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, with the establishment of several forts in Northern Alberta, a variety of outsiders poured into the region. Men ranging from the Highland Scots of Montreal, Loyalists from the United States, to Orcadians, and Métis.[213] As the fur trade entrenched itself in the landscape, the environment began to change. The fur trade economy made some animals desirable as resources and others not. For instance, with the arrival of white traders, bison entered high demand, they

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[212] Ibid., 397.
[213] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 21.

were "hunted so intensively to provision the posts that by the 1840s they were in serious decline."[214] The diminishment of these fur trade animals was another necessary precursor to the appearance of oil.

Despite colonial contact, communities continued to use traditional knowledge of local ecosystems, animal behaviour, and controlled burning. Furthermore, the mixed economy of Northern communities like those living around Fort Chipewyan (hunting, fishing, berrypicking, and trading) allowed them considerable resilience as colonial forces moved into the Northwest. That said, the fur trade could not exist without the in depth knowledge of Cree, and Chipewyan communities. As Anna Tsing points out in her discussion of Meratus collectors, "any reader who has ever tried to locate a wildflower or even an animal site probably knows that it really helps to know the *particular* places, and not just the ecologically appropriate kinds of places, that plant or animal has been seen before; that's the place to find it again."[215] One example of this in the Athabascan region was the use of controlled burning by Indigenous communities to create and maintain landscapes that fur trade species relied upon for nourishment. Controlled burning was an art perfected over time. However, as the bison population was diminished due to the out-of-control demands of capitalist accumulation, the Cree and Chipewyan began to rely on other animals such as the moose and caribou.[216] The depletion of these nonhuman communities altered life for Indigenous communities who had long histories of co-existence with animals like the bison. That said, as I will show in the next chapter, it was the introduction of colonial laws and

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[214] Ibid., 39.; Theresa Ferguson, "Wood Bison and the Early Fur Trade," in *The Uncovered Past: Roots of Northern Alberta Societies*, ed. Patricia McCormack and R. Geoffrey Ironside (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, 1993), 63–79.
[215] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 186.
[216] Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, *Nistawaya: "Where the Rivers Meet" - First Nation Traditional Land Use Study*, 17.

landscape management that made settlement in the region possible by outlawing Indigenous environmentalisms and interrelations.

III. Order and the Wild

Violence and Colonial Security

By the 1880s, a federal report on the "inexhaustible" tar sands exalted that they were "the most extensive petroleum field in America, if not the world" and predicted that they would soon rank "among the chief assets comprised in the Crown Domain of the Dominion."[217] Selling the dream of abundance demanded certain mappings and envisionings of land as to summon outside investment in the terrain. Starting with the arrival of the arrival of Professor John Macoun in 1875, a botanist, a steady stream of geologists and surveyors visited Northern Alberta.[218] During the nineteenth century, the Canadian state sent a variety of agents to map the region; geologists working for the Geological Survey of Canada and surveyors working for the Geological Survey of Canada. Their work built on earlier fur trade maps. Surveyors delineated baselines and meridians, and geologists mapped rock formations with the intention of making "Canada's resources known abroad to powerful capitalists and men in public life, as well as to humble families looking for new homes across the sea."[219] Mapping the north was foundational in the expansion of the Canadian nation-state, and made possible the infrastructure necessary for an oil economy.[220] Patricia McCormack writes, "While these geologists, surveyors, and other explorers who travelled in the North after 1870 benefited from the extensive knowledge and experience of Aboriginal residents and guides, Aboriginal knowledge was typically uncredited and reframed to

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[217] Jeffrey Murray, "Hard Bargains: The Making of Treaty 8," *The Archivist*, n.d., http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/publications/002/015002-2060-e.html.
[218] Ferguson, "Wood Bison and the Early Fur Trade," 85.
[219] Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1890-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 81.
[220] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 85.

accord with Euro-Canadian configurations of science and narrative traditions."[221] What I will try to emphasize in this chapter is that the colonial desire to secure resources required both colonial violence and certain understandings of what counts as violence. By imagining a wild and lawless landscape, colonizers saw a region desperately in need of the trappings of Euro-Christian civilization. This meant the application of colonial laws to both the region's inhabitants as well as its landscape.

In the eyes of the state, Indigenous bush-based economies "were considered evolutionary backwaters in the Canadian narrative of progress," making Indigenous communities "in need of the protection afforded by the law," and as "fit subjects for the paternal care of the government."[222] Canadians have oft relied on an imaginary that this paternalism differentiates them from the brutal tactics of the United States, believing that by "making 'civilization' available, they 'resolved the moral difficulty inherent in the removal of the native'".[223] As Sarah Carter points out, even historians have been hesitant to "consider that what took place here was part of a global pattern of intensified conflict over land and resources."[224] Instead, the Canadian imaginary clings to a national identity of peace-making and paternalism. From Pierre Trudeau's proposed 1969 white paper which outlined an expansive project of assimilation to the disproportionate amount of Indigenous children taken by child welfare services, Canada's self-imaginary of innocence and morality holds power to this day.[225]

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[221] Ibid., 89.
[222] Ibid., 145.
[223] Ibid., 60.
[224] Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 101–130.
[225] Another instance this is the utter invisibility of Canada's massive role in a system of global resource extraction, and thus, its implications in economies which thrive through rape, murder, and toxic ecologies.

In Northern Alberta, Canada's project of 'civilization' came in the form of a militarized settler presence: the North West Mounted Police, and the administration of colonial law. The North West Mounted Police arrived in the northwest in 1874, before the 1899 Treaty, which resulted in significant refusals[226] from communities who did not recognize the Canadian's state's authority to apply law in the region. In order to turn the land into property, and ensure Canadian possession, the insecure needed to be forcefully policed. In 1878, Swift Runner, a Cree trapper, was the first person hung by the North West Mounted Police.[227] He was hung for a series of wîhtikôw killings. History tells us he murdered and consumed his wife and five children near the Athabasca Landing trading post in north-central Alberta. Wîhtikôw, a psychic and bodily state, is typically described as a type of northern psychosis or as a spirit possession associated with an immense craving for human flesh. However, Nathan Carlson observes that Western medicine and anthropologists rendering of wîhtikôw as psychotic deprives individuals and northern communities of their rationality, and their rootedness in the 'real' world and in particular environmental conditions.[228] Following Nathan Carlson, I am not interested in discussing wîhtikôw as psychosis.

Instead, what I seek to consider is how the policing of wîhtikôw is implicated in the transformation of territory into resource. What I argue in this chapter is that Indigenous natures had to be defined as unlawful through visions of wild natures, criminality, and heathenism for the setting up of an extractive terrian. The making unlawful of Indigenous natures was accomplished through the installation of a police force and legal system, the spread of Divine

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[226] Refusals of colonial law which continue to this day, see Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*.
[227] N. D. Carlson, "Reviving Witiko (Windigo): An Ethnohistory of 'Cannibal Monsters' in the Athabasca District of Northern Alberta, 1878-1910," *Ethnohistory* 56, no. 3 (July 1, 2009): 376, doi:10.1215/00141801-2009-001.
[228] Carlson, "Reviving Witiko (Windigo)."

(Christian) law by missionaries, as well as the enforcement of "natural" orderings by wild life rangers. However, as colonial forces entered the Northwest aiming to secure territory, Indigenous communities relentlessly trespassed, broke, refused, and haunted, colonial orderings.[229]

Carlson became interested in experiences of wîhtikôw after listening to stories told by his Métis grandmother, Marie Anne Marguerite Carlson's (née Beauchamp). She spoke to him about growing up near Grouard, a native community on the northwest shore of Lesser Slave Lake in northern Alberta, told him stories of the wîhtikôw. The wîhtikôw, according to the legendary cycle of tales (atâyohkewina) told by the Northern Alberta Cree and Métis, is "an owl-eyed monster with large clawed hands, matted hair, a naked emaciated body, and a heart made of solid ice" with a hunger instinct "so insatiable that it has consumed its own lips."[230] While tales about wîhtikôw can be traced back to at least the seventeenth century, post-contact starvation led to an intensification in how many cases of famine cannibalism were reported. As the local ecology changed, and communities began to experience famine due to the depletion of wildlife, reports of wîhtikôw became more present. Wîhtikôw can be understood as geotraumatic: a traumatic experience interwoven with the traumas experienced by the land.[231] Indigenous communities understood that becoming wîhtikôw was linked to environmental conditions of famine. The intensification of wîhtikôw post-contact signaled a destabilization of traditional ecologically-based Indigenous ways of life. With the entry of the NWMP into Northern Albertan territories, wîhtikôw as well as community responses to wîhtikôw became criminalized, for the

[229] During the writing of this thesis, I had a nightmare of Swift Runner. In the nightmare, he came for me and I couldn't scream as to alert anyone of what was occurring. Time moved slowly as the sound would not come from my lips. Finally, I woke up with a small utterance into the night.
[230] Carlson, "Reviving Witiko (Windigo)," 359.
[231] LaDuke, *All Our Relations*; Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, "Colonialism and State Dependency," *International Journal of Indigenous Health* 5, no. 2 (2009): 42–60.

dispossession of Indigenous lands required both violence and the suppression of how Indigenous communities imagined, understood and dealt with violence.

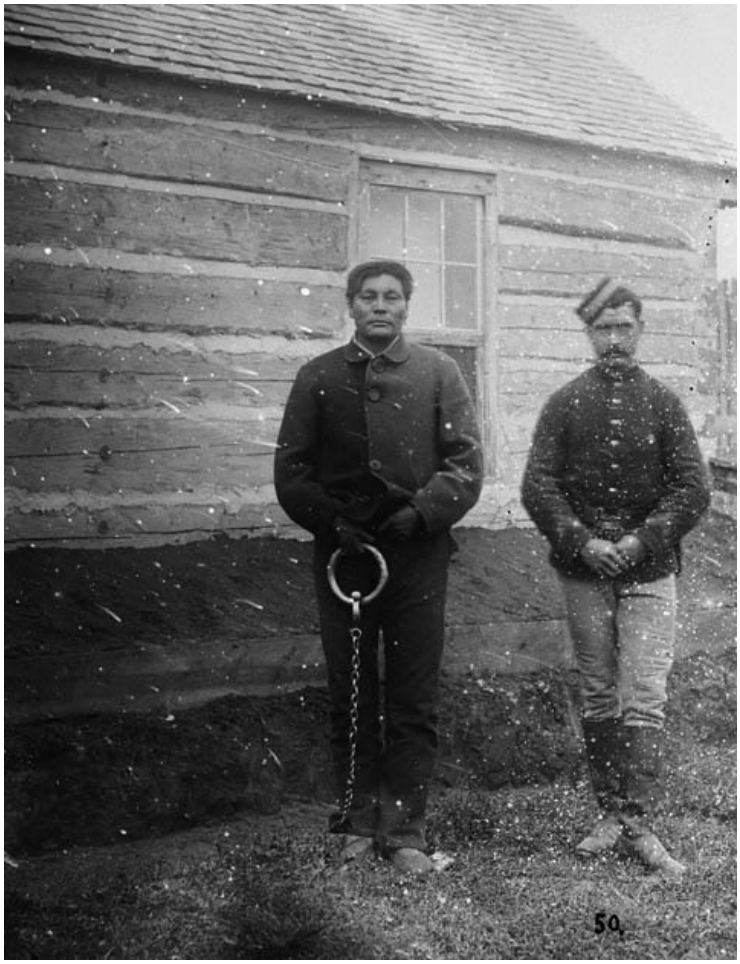

Figure 4. Swift Runner, or Kak-say-kwyo-chin. (Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, 1879. Photograph by George Mercer Dawson, Geological Survey of Canada. Glenbow archives.)

The 1887 assignment of NWMP officers to a wîhtikôw killing at Lesser Slave Lake met powerful refusals from the communities who called the Northwest their home. The officers arrested Michel Courtereille and his son, who were accused of killing Michel's wife, Marie. After the arrest, an *Edmonton Bulletin* report related that,

> This form of insanity is not uncommon among the Indians and the law among them is that the person so afflicted shall be killed, their nearest relatives at hand being expected to perform the deed. In this case, the woman is said to have demanded that she be killed to prevent her from doing injury to her friends … The prisoners do not conceal their connection with the affair and justify themselves on the grounds that they acted according to Indian law and that they knew no other.[232]

The use of law in this passage speaks to the significant resistance in the north against the implementation and applicability of colonial law.[233] After the Courtereilles were arrested, 53 Aboriginal families from Lesser Slave Lake sent a letter to the *Edmonton Bulletin* stating that "they did not acknowledge the control of the government over them, and did not wish to make any treaty with the Canadian government."[234] As Indigenous communities continued to respond to wîhtikôw in ways that conformed to their cultural philosophies, they refused colonial orderings.

The two men were eventually found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to six years' hard labour. The sentencing of these two men signaled the state's legal response to Indigenous refusals. Confronted with Indigenous refusal, colonial powers were further incited to dismantle Indigenous structures of life. This manifested through the installation of a colonial legal system as well as Divine (Christian) law. Both police and priests presented Indigenous cultural orderings as ineffectual or illegal in their attempts to contain Indian bodies and practices.

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[232] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 91.
[233] Ibid., 91-92.
[234] Ibid.

Missionaries arrived before state representatives with the goal of forcing and encouraging locals to convert to Christianity. In the eyes of these Godly colonizers, Indigenous peoples lived "outside the purview of both human and divine (Christian) law as savages and heathens."[235] Through language learning, benevolence, residential schools, and hospitals, missionaries greatly contributed to "processes of national formation in which the Christian European as civilized subject was exalted over the heathen Aboriginal".[236] Further, as colonialism triggered the onslaught of new illnesses, missionaries presented themselves as the remedy. The majority of missions were stocked with European medicines which some locals believed might cure the new infectious diseases.[237] Writing about the Northern community of Fort Chipewyan during the early twentieth century, Agnes Deans Cameron, the first white woman to reach the article, described, "In among the half-breed populace stalk policeman and priest, red jacket keeping the dark-skinned people straight in this world and black robe laying out conditions for the world come. So is Chipewyan fate chequered with the *rouge et noir* of compulsion and expediency."[238] Militarized compulsion was interwoven with Christian promises of salvation in the making of an ordered landscape.

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[235] Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, 39-40.
[236] Ibid., 13–14.
[237] Referencing Mike Davis's study the El Nino famine in China that took place between 1875 and 1880, Peter van Wyck describes how British evangelical missions "saw in this 'wonderful opening of famine' an opportunity even better than war." They called the converted "Rice Christians." van Wyck then traces this colonial tactic to early 1930s and the Canadian government's attempt to integrate the Dene of Great Bear Lake into the extractive economy. He writes, "when Canada's first radium boom took place, the Canadian federal government of Indian Affairs recognized the mining activity on Great Bear Lake as an ideal opportunity to involve the Dene in wage labour as the carries of cargo. The Dene – 'coolies' – were promised money, schools, and religion. … Uranium Christians." This conversion meant bodily contamination. In 1933, W.B. Timm from the department of mines described, "'[t]he hazards involved in the handling of high-grade radioactive materials make necessary the adoption of certain precautions. By a careful check on the workers and the adoption of all necessary precautions, it is possible to reduce the hazards to a minimum. The fact, however, that radium or radioactive substances once deposited in the bone structure of the body are impossible to eliminate make the taking of every precaution a most necessary factor in the treatment of pitchblende for the recovery of radium." See van Wyck, *The Highway of the Atom*, 50.
[238] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 100.

Before colonial intervention, Northern Algonquin (the language group of Crees, and some Métis) peoples responded to incidents of wîhtikôw with traditional cures such as making the afflicted individual consume boiling or warm animal fat as to make the victim "cough up or otherwise discharge ice from the mouth as a signifier that the condition, manifested in the core of ice, was overcome."[239] If this cure, and other cures, such as rest by a fire and the consumption of alcohol, were unsuccessful, communities would ostracize or put the afflicted individual to death. Missionaries and the colonial legal system subverted Indigenous understandings of order, health, and justice. That said, individuals and families explicitly linked colonial settlement to an evil presence. In November of 1895, the residents of Athabasca panicked after a Salteaux Indian elder, a medicine man and an operator of the shaking tent at Moose Lake, prophesized, according to Bishop Young's journal, "that a Wetegoo would arise who would destroy every one who did not join his religion & come & place themselves under his protection." [240] Carson writes, "the warning of the medicine man seems to have been reactionary to the advance of Christianity and pointed at those whom he might have perceived as a threat to the practice of indigenous religious traditions."[241] Affected by the medicine man's warnings and the presence of missionaries, communities were struck by a fear of wîhtikôw that was severe enough to prevent residents from hunting and trapping; intensifying the circumstances of starvation. The criminalization of wîhtikôw amounted to the criminalization of an Indigenous response to environmental disruptions unleashed by colonialism.[242] For, as I will expand on in the next section, the introduction of colonial law was immensely concerned with the ecological.

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[239] Carlson, "Reviving Witiko (Windigo)," 361.
[240] Ibid., 367.
[241] Ibid.
[242] An environmental politics made unlawful.

The Orderings of an Extractive Nature

The making unlawful of Indigenous cultures, shored up by perceptions of Indigenous peoples as "savage," "wild," and "violent," came with the forceful implementation of a colonial understanding of Nature. While fur-bearing populations like muskrats and hares have cyclical populations, the occurrence and recurrence of famine in the winters of 1886-1887, 1887-1888, and then in the early 1900s, indicated a massive transformation of life in the north due to the depletion of creatures who had long called the territory home.[243] By the 1890s, there were approximately only three hundred to six hundred bison left in Alberta. In 1894, again before Treaty 8 was signed in 1899, the federal government enacted the Unorganized Territories Game Preservation Act that gave the North West Mounted Police the task of protecting wildlife resources in the unceded Northwest. The Act prohibited any hunting of the endangered northern or wood bison, forbid the use of poison by white trappers to kill animals, regulated fire use, and established closed seasons for hunting several other species.

While these new wildlife laws were passed out of a colonial nostalgia for a nature undisturbed by the capitalist economy,[244] the 'protection' offered by the Game Preservation Act looked like the active management and repression of Indigenous ways of knowing and co-creating landscapes. The Act infringed on the relationships that existed between various communities. It defined what was a permissible economic relationship between Indigenous communities and settlers by forbidding the employment of "any Indian or other person," "to

[243] McCormack's documentation of wildlife control in Northern Alberta in *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 83-93.
[244] Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, 39–40, 60.

hunt, kill or take, contrary to the provisions of this Act".[245] Moreover, the Act attempted to alter relationships between Indigenous communities and nonhuman communities as well as the relationships that existed between various nonhuman communities. This is illustrated in the Act's prohibition that dogs be "used, at any time of year, for hunting, taking, running, killing, injuring or in any way molesting musk oxen, buffalo and bison, or, during the close season, any of the other beasts or any of the birds mentioned in this Act." The Act presented a moral code for what ecological interrelations should look like.

The settlement of Northern Alberta required the surveillance and policing of not only Indigenous peoples, but a variety of ecological others. Bison, for instance, became the duty and property of the state. An animal which also knew and created the landscape, prior to its life as a necessary energy for the expansion of European imperialism. The NWMP were also called upon to police miners moving through the territory on their way to the Klondike,[246] however, their primary mission was to pacify what Prime Minister Macdonald called "'that fretful realm'" and make the West a safe place for white settlement.[247] This required installing a colonial vision and ordering wherein the wild animals, Indigenous peoples, and land were under control.

Canadian occupation was formally made lawful through Treaty. The question of gaming regulations and the North West Mounted Police's enforcement of a colonial landscape were major concerns during the treaty process.[248] While the discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1896 drew an influx of unregulated settlement and resource extraction in the north, it was descriptions

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[245] The Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, *The Unorganized Territories Game Preservation Act* (Ottawa: Printer to the Queen, 1894).
[246] The poison was feared because it was distributed throughout the landscape, making locals fearful to even pick berries. McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 96.
[247] Walter Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford : Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West* (Regina, Sask.: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1994).
[248] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 197.

of the tar sands that prompted the Canadian state to extinguish Aboriginal title in Northern Alberta.[249] The drawing of the Treaty 8 boundaries was shaped by colonial extractive speculations: the northeastern part of British Columbia was included as a route towards the Klondike as well as parts of Great Slave Lake when the state heard whispers of gold.[250] For the colonizers, the Treaty represented an agreement that Indigenous peoples would "conduct and behave themselves as good and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen" and "obey and abide by the law."[251] In the vision of the colonizers, entering into treaty meant Indigenous communities relinquished their claims, and attachments to the land they lived on. Treaty 8 was signed in 1899 between the Cree and Athapaskans alongside the use of scrip by the Crown to acquire Métis land. Yet, not all Northern communities entered treaty. When the treaty was signed in 1899, the state did not travel inland and thus, left the Lubicon Cree and several other isolated communities out of negotiations.[252] The Chipewyans and Crees of Fort Chipewyan and other Treaty No.8 communities maintain that they were never asked to sell or cede the land.[253] Six years later, in 1905, the Canadian government created the province of Alberta.[254]

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[249] Jen Preston, "Neoliberal Settler Colonialism, Canada and the Tar Sands," *Race & Class* 55, no. 2 (October 1, 2013): 47, doi:10.1177/0306396813497877; Jennifer Huseman and Damien Short, "'A Slow Industrial Genocide': Tar Sands and the Indigenous Peoples of Northern Alberta," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 16, no. 1 (January 2012): 217-218, doi:10.1080/13642987.2011.649593; Christine Smillie, "The People Left Out of Treaty 8" (Master's thesis in History, University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 6, http://hdl.handle.net/10388/etd-07102007-091310.

[250] Smillie, "The People Left Out of Treaty 8," 8.

[251] *Treaty 8 Text*, Reprinted version found on the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1899), http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028813/1100100028853.

[252] Smillie, "The People Left Out of Treaty 8," 6.

[253] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 203; Felix Gibot and Richard Lightning, *Felix Gibot Interview* (Fort Chipewyan, AB: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1974), http://ourspace.uregina.ca:8080/xmlui/handle/10294/1367; Justice W.G. Morrow, *Reasons for Judgement in the Matter of an Application by Chief Francois Paulette et Al. to Lodge a Certain Caveat with the Registrar of Titles of the Lands Titles Office for the Northwest Territories* (Yellowknife: Supreme Court of the North West Territories, 1973).

[254] Saskatchewan became a province at this time as well.

Figure 5. "Map of Numbered Treaties of Canada. Borders are approximated." (2011, Themightyquill, Wikimedia Commons. Source website: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Numbered-Treaties-Map.svg)

With the deployment of a security force, and the conclusion of the treaty process, the prairies were opened up to mass settlement and the embedding of a colonial economy. Settlers poured into the region: Alberta's population rose from 73,022 in 1901 to 373,943 in 1911.[255] To facilitate the settling, the federal government offered settlers a free section of land provided they lived on it for three years and fulfilled homestead duties such as clearing land, cultivating land,

[255] Paul Chastko, *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 3.

erecting dwellings and farm buildings.[256] While encouraging outside settlement, Indian commissioners like Hayter Reed devised policies during the late 1800's to early 1900's that divided white and Indigenous farmers in Southern Alberta, and ultimately allowed white farmers to prosper. Propagating the belief that Indigenous farmers were "savages," who "had a 'naturally brutal disposition' toward their domestic animals," and "had to be taught to be merciful to their beasts," Hayter Reed forced Indigenous farmers to only keep one cow instead of a larger herd like white farmers.[257] Reed also argued that the uncivilized "savages" were not prepared to use the labour-saving machinery employed by whites, and subsequently required that they farm in a simple manner, only using hand implements.[258] The sentiment that the lands were lying idle and wasted by Indigenous communities received widespread support from farmers, townspeople, merchants, railroad executives, newspapermen, veterans, and speculators. As Sarah Carter writes, "All those with a stake in the expansion of agriculture were interested in reducing the size of Indian landholdings."[259]

In the north, similar ideas informed the creation and policing of wildlife and fire regulations. These systems of colonial land-management meant the erasure of Indigenous ways of knowing and interacting with land. The Canadian government eventually transferred the task of policing wildlife regulations from the North West Mounted Police to the Forestry Branch in 1913, and then to the Parks Branch in 1917. Patricia McCormack describes how attempts to create an animal sanctuary, or even a national park led to an increase in bison protection in the form of wildlife officers. [260] In the process, two local Indigenous trappers, Mustus (Cree Métis)

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[256] Ibid.
[257] Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvest: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 213.
[258] Ibid., 218–219.
[259] Ibid., 244–245.
[260] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 237–245.

and Whiteknife (Cree), in charge of bison patrol in the north were dismissed, as to employ outsiders who might better communicate the status of the bison population due to their "education" and "surveying experience." Imaginations of the park proposed that "Indians (or at least half-breeds) should be relocated elsewhere," and that only "noxious animals" could keep being hunted and trapped. Wolves were targeted because of colonial perceptions that they were the cause of bison depletion.[261] With the belief that Indigenous peoples were somehow savagely brutal to, and ignorant about, the lands and animals with whom they co-became, the state began to employ wildlife rangers to protect northern landscapes; "They were the solution to the problem posed by NWMP Inspector Jarvis in 1907, when he asked how Indians could possibly be policed when they lived in an area 'where Police or white man never go.'" Wildlife management was connected to the securing and settlement of northern lands.

In addition to federal laws, the province also began regulating the landscape in 1907 with its own Game Act; an act that prohibited the killing of beaver. In 1909, famine struck the north again, the state chose to inform Indigenous communities that they were allowed to hunt beaver, aware of the severe risk of starvation. Many did not hear and there were over a hundred deaths between Fort McMurray and Fort Resolution.[262] The intensification of wildlife management took place in the context of a greater Conservation movement in North America during the early 1900s which resulted in the foundation of national parks. What Tsing describes as an emptying out of Indigenous territories to make room for "the exclusive handiwork of God, laid out for the

[261] Wolves are currently targeted as well, tar sands expansion has given wolves pathways to hunt through the construction of pipelines, roads, and lines of downed trees. This has allowed wolves to become a greater threat to the caribou population. The Albertan government has intensified the wolf cull allowing wolves to be the scapegoat for man made ecological disruptions. Bloomberg News, "Wolf Cull Widens as Oilsands Development Cuts into Caribou Habitat," *Calgary Herald*, April 24, 2015, http://calgaryherald.com/business/energy/bc-caribou-wolf-cull.
[262] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 252.

gaze of settlers."[263] Indigenous subsistence in Northern Alberta was sacrificed to broader wildlife conservation imperatives.[264] As Thobani describes, "The fantasy of unsullied origins allowed the innocence of the land to be claimed by the national subject as its own, and the brutality and savagery of colonial violence to instead be projected onto the land itself, and onto the savage who was part of this landscape."[265] Indigenous peoples of the north did not tranquilly accept these transformations of landscapes and life, nor did they welcome Canadian laws that threatened their well-being or targeted their land-use practices. Locals employed various tactics to evade and challenge undesirable regimes of colonial control.[266] For instance, with both treaty discussions and starvation fresh in their memories, Treaty 8 communities continued to hunt and repeatedly confronted state authorities regarding new provincial hunting prohibitions. [267] Throughout this transformation of land, locals continued to have different imaginations of the land, of each other, and of what would come.

Chief Justin Martin and his wife were two of the deaths during the 1909 famine. During the signing of Treaty 8, Martin delivered the following words concerning the passage of time,

> It will be like a log that has started from the middle of the lake. With a breeze behind it, the log will eventually make its way to the shore. This is how I can foresee the laws of the white man in the future. I will not see them myself, but the people who will be alive in the future will see this taking place. [268]

[263] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 283.
[264] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 247.
[265] Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, 60.
[266] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 211.
[267] Ibid., 253.
[268] Richard Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Treaties* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999), 156.

These words conveyed Martin's belief that he could not know the future. He was not sure the state would take care of his people. The future was something that only the future generations could know. The Treaty commissioner responded to Martin's concerns about his people and the land, with the infamous words, "As long as the sun shines and the river flows, your requests for anything will never be turned down." Martin's image of the log making its way to shore speaks to the strange way history unfolds, how time makes a mess of all future imaginings and hopes, and the impossibility of knowing what the future will be. This tentative and open vision of how time would unravel co-existed with other visions of the future. Other visions such as those of the settlers seeking to transform Indigenous lands into "civilization." Martin refuses to envision, and in this refusal, differs immensely from the philosophies and strategies of extractive scenario builders. With power and violence, the colonial state was and is able to carve the land into an extractive territory. The log made its way to the shore and perhaps, Martin understood what his starvation meant for the future. And still, perhaps, he hoped time would unravel differently. But, he refused to know and claim the future as his own.

Hauntings

Throughout the late nineteenth century, vivid descriptions continued to paint a landscape frothing with oil where one could scrape the bank of the river only to have a mix of tar and sand linger mesmerizingly in one's hands. In 1897, the Geological Survey of Canada confirmed the discovery of immense quantities of petroleum in the area. A perception and calculation that seduced more outside interest. This abundance came in tandem with the NWMP building a

substantial northern presence; by 1898, they had outposts at Lesser Slave Lake, Peace River Landing, Athabasca Landing, Grand Rapids, and Fort Chipewyan all in effort to bring "a little law and order into the north land."[269] A year later, in 1899, the "Half-Breed Scrip and Treaty 8 commission" entered the unsettled region, known as the "Unorganized District of Athabasca," with the aim to secure land for the Queen. Treaty 8 was signed only fourteen years after the Northwest Rebellion, in a landscape that Charles Mair, a member of the treaty commission, described as rude, dangerous and full of barbarous Indians. And yet, the "Half-Breed Scrip and Treaty 8" commissioners would report at the end of their trip to the "Unorganized Region of Athabasca" that "no trouble or friction whatever need be apprehended in bringing the country under government control."[270]

This belief that the signing of the Treaty occurred with "no trouble or friction" erases massive amounts of anti-colonial resistance: resistance found both in the everyday breaking of colonial laws and instances of collective uprisings. The trouble I will focus on for the remainder of this chapter is the Northwest rebellion, and specifically, the historical event remembered as the Frog Lake Massacre. While some have argued that the rebellion wasn't fought for Indigenous communities,[271] it had lasting consequences for both Métis and Indigenous populations. Following the decisive battle of Batoche where Métis resistance fighters were defeated by the Canadian forces, the Canadian government charged or considered charging 200 individuals for

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[269] Quote from Fort Saskatchewan NWMP weekly report May 31, 1897, cited in McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 97.
[270] Jeffrey Murray, "Settling For Scrip," *Legion Magazine*, May 1, 1999, https://legionmagazine.com/en/1999/05/settling-for-scrip/.
[271] A. Blair Stonechild claims that Indigenous populations deeply wished to honor their treaties with white men which were inherently pacifistic. Further, he describes that the Métis forced members of the Whitecap Reserve and One Arrow's reserve to participate in the Battle of Batoche. See A. Blair Stonechild, "The Indian View of the 1885 Uprising," in *Sweet Promises*, ed. J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). See also Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Until Death, Indians in the Northwest Rebellion* (Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1997).

treason against the empire.[272] Of the 129 eventually jailed, 46 were Métis, 81 were Indigenous, and 2 were white. Of the 46 Métis, 19 were convicted, one hanged, and seven conditionally discharged. Of the 81 Indigenous "criminals" charged, 44 were convicted and 8 hung for murder. The white men were both acquitted on the grounds of insanity. Six of the Indigenous men were hung due their involvement in the Frog Lake Massacre. I will begin by discussing what was at stake during the Northwest Rebellion, and subsequently, describe how the Frog Lake Massacre indicates colonial imaginations of violence which were the crucial underpinning of the frontier. As I have attempted to show thus far in this thesis, colonial imaginations and acts of violence were integral to the appearance of oil. I will conclude by telling a story my grandma told me as a child, which speaks to hauntings of vision and on-going disruptions of settler property regimes.

The first Métis resistance, in 1869-1870, was triggered by the Hudson Bay Company's choice to sell the Northwest to Canada. A major difference between the first resistance movement and the Northwest Rebellion was that by 1885, white settlers vastly outnumbered the Métis population.[273] In 1882, the onslaught of settlement had led to the state's creation of four administrative districts in the Northwest: the districts of Alberta, Athabasca, Assiniboia, and Saskatchewan. These districts were created in order to facilitate the management of the Northwest. The aim to extend colonial control into the Northwest was also aided by the NWMP's recent installation in the northwestern Plains. The Canadian state was well aware of unsettlement in the Northwest: "in 1884, Ottawa banned the sale or gift of 'fixed ammunition' or 'ball cartridges'" to Indigenous communities living in Manitoba and the Northwest.[274]

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[272] Patricia Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations* (Canada: Oxford University Press, 2006), 203.
[273] Ibid., 199.
[274] Ibid.

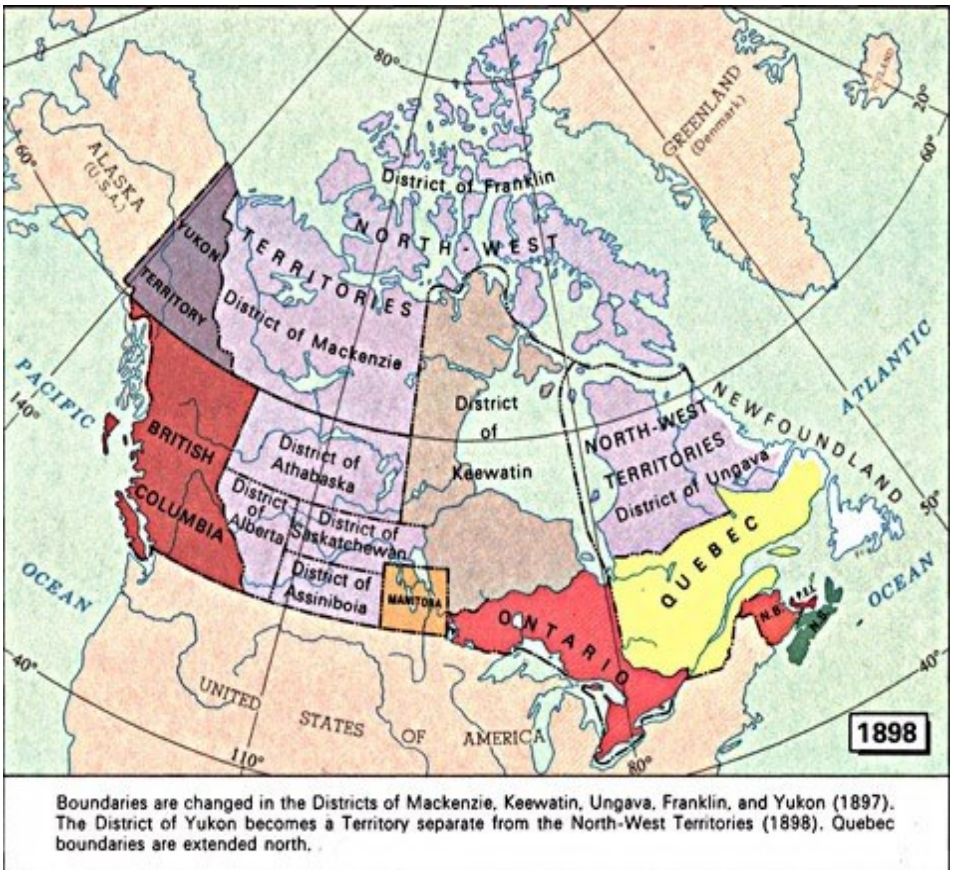

Figure 6. 1898 map of North-West Territories. (National Atlas Maps. © Natural Resources Canada. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. Source website: http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/index.html. License: http://open.canada.ca/en/open-government-licence-canada.)

State efforts to contain would be undone by diffuse, yet assembled, resistance movements in the Northwest frontier landscape. In 1884, a delegation of Métis asked Louis Riel,[275] who was living in Montana and teaching at a Jesuit mission at the time, to return to the Northwest and

[275] Unlike her brother, Sarah Riel "distanced herself increasingly from the Red River Métis and dedicated herself to 'Christianizing' and 'civilizing' the Métis, Cree, and Dene of the North." Lesley Erickson argues that gender shaped the siblings' differential relations to Colonialism and Christianity. That said, certain Métisse women did participate in the insurrection, although their role is presented as negligible due to the gendered violences of the historical archive and memory. Erickson's piece also notes that Métis missionaries complicate our notions of "missionaries as conquerors." See Lesley Erickson, "'Bury Our Sorrows in the Sacred Heart,' Gender and Métis Response to Colonialism – The Case of Sara and Louis Riel, 1848-83," in *Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West through Women's History*, ed. Sarah Carter et al. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 17–46.

present the Canadian government with their grievances. Upon his return, Riel presented the government with a list of demands dealing with such varied issues as Indigenous hunger, Métis land claims, tariff reductions for long-time settlers, as well as the right to control natural resources. By March, Riel decided to begin setting up a provisional government. As bison populations declined leading to a pervasive sense of famine, and settlement in the West increased due to the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, an asymmetrical coalition of whites, Métis, and Indigenous communities, led by Louis Riel, rose up against the colonial state. While certain populations opposed Riel's turn to violence, his actions, entangled with a colonial ecology of famine, set in motion a series of militant anti-colonial resistances.

The coalition was asymmetrical because of the particular positions of all involved. In the valorization of certain forms of militant action, other forms fall by the way side or are ignored. For instance, as history recalls male fighters for their military victories during the Northwest Rebellion, the militancy of Indigenous and Métisse women and two spirited peoples is forgotten. We forget the Métisse woman who spoke against Riel's new religion at Batoche and was banished by him.[276] We forget the Indigenous women at Cut Knife Hill who melted led and fashioned bullets.[277] We forget the militancy of those who were not male for they were invisible to the white victors.[278] Further, this militancy remains out of sight because we cannot understand militancy as both armed action and collective care. The militancy of Indigenous and Métisse women participating in the war was fighting, as well as, stealing food from HBC stores, and

[276] I am unable to write her name because of my inability to access the primary source that tells of her speaking out against Riel. "St. Laurent Annals, May 4, 1885," ed. Shirley Majeau, *Journeying Through a Century: Sister Pioneers*, *1883:1983* (Edmonton: Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus): 183. I know of this source from Erin Millions' research: "Ties Undone: A Gendered and Racial Analysis of the Impact of the 1885 Northwest Rebellion in the Saskatchewan District" (Master's thesis in History, University of Saskatchewan, 2004), 88n68, http://hdl.handle.net/10388/etd-10182007-090232.
[277] Ibid., 88.
[278] Ibid.

taking care of children, prisoners, wounded fighters, and each other.[279] Throughout the insurrection, this care for future life, as shown by the concern for children and surviving famine, was a huge example of anti-colonial militancy. That said, this care for the future generations was countered by a colonial state with genocidal visions. These genocidal visions were present in the propertied transformation of a landscape that Indigenous life was interwoven with, as well as the implementation of certain policies regulating the food supply. As a consideration of the Frog Lake Massacre's aftermath shows, the state reacted to Indigenous anti-colonial uprising with extreme methods of repression as to illustrate to future generations the consequences of disobedience.

Between 1881 and 1888, Edgar Dewdney, the lieutenant-governor of the Northwest Territories, had encouraged the withholding of food rations in an effort to keep Indigenous communities quiet, and suppress a burgeoning pan-Indian movement.[280] Chief Mistahi-maskwa (Big Bear) was a leader of the pan-Indian movement. Out of a belief that Mistahi-maska was a threat to the settlement of the West, Dewdney directed his policies of food rationing at Mistahi-maskah's band. For some within Mistahi-maskwa's band, the colonial state's stategy of starvation sparked a need for new tactics. Both Kâ-papâmahcahkwêw (Wandering Spirit) and Mistahi-maskwa's son, Âyimisîs (Little Bear), "advocated violence as the only way of regaining independence."[281] In March of 1885, after receiving news about the successful uprising of the Métis at Duck Lake and Cree advances on Battleford, a group of Plains Cree, propelled by hunger, and following their War Chief Kâ-papâmahcahkwêw (Wandering Spirit), entered the settlement of Frog Lake. Mistahi-maskwa, their Chief, had warned against violence but was

[279] Ibid., 70–91.
[280] Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 197–199.
[281] Ibid., 199. See also John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879–1885," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 4 (December 1983): 539, doi:10.3138/CHR-064-04-04.

away hunting at the time of the Frog Lake events. The group, which included Âyimisîs, went into a Hudson's Bay Company store looking for food and took hostages including the abusive Indian Agent Quinn. Quinn was Métis: part Sioux, part Irish, part French.[282] He spoke Cree and had a Cree wife: Owl Sitting. Yet, he was known for his horrific treatment of the community. Louis Goulet, a Métis person who passed through Frog Lake, believed Quinn was withholding food rations in order to force Mistahi-maskwa's band to leave the lands around the settlement.[283] Quinn once reported John Delaney, the farm instructor, to the Indian Commissioner for giving out rations to the Cree without requiring work.[284] On April 2nd of 1885, Kâ-papâmahcahkwêw ordered the hostages to leave the settlement and go to another camp on the shores of Frog Lake. Agent Quinn refused to go. Kâ-papâmahcahkwêw asked him again. Agent Quinn replied, "No, I am not going over. I will be staying at my house as before. I refuse to take orders from anybody here."[285] Kâ-papâmahcahkwêw then warned him once more, "My brother I beg you to leave with the rest. It will save trouble for you and everybody here." Once more, Agent Quinn repeated that he would not go anywhere.

At Frog Lake, nine settlers were killed including the Indian Agent Thomas Quinn as well as Charles Gouin (the Métis Indian agency carpenter). After the "massacre," the Plains Cree left the Fort to evade arrest from the NWMP and the Canadian militia. With several families, and two white women, Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock, as captives, the fugitive group were chased by the Canadian forces for several months. A band of Woods Cree were also taken

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[282] F. L. Barron, James Burgess Waldram, and University of Regina Canadian Plains Research Center, *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition* (University of Regina Press, 1986), 148.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid.
[285] See the account of the Frog Lake massacre in Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Until Death, Indians in the Northwest Rebellion*.

captive by the Plains Cree, however, this is a dynamic overlooked by white narratives of captivity.[286] Instead, popular attention focused on the horrific treatment of the two white women who had recently lost their husbands. The Canadian troops following the group were galvanized by imaginations of the white women taken captive by savage Indians.[287] After Delaney and Gowanlock were freed, the two women initially offered critiques of the government's administration of Indian affairs and spoke highly of the Cree as well as the considerable assistance received from the Métis families during their "captivity". However**,** over time, the women began to intensely demonize their Cree and Métis "captors" in part to appeal to the well-known colonial genre of captivity narratives.[288]

After surrendering, Mistahi-maska was imprisoned until 1887 when he was released because the government did not want him to die in their captivity. He died a year later. In November of 1885, eight Plains Cree men were hung for murder. Two for their involvement in deaths at Battleford: Itka (Crooked Leg) and Waywahnitch (Man Without Blood).[289] The remaining six were killed for their involvement with the Frog Lake deaths: Manchoose (Bad Arrow), Nahpase (Iron Body), A-pis-chas-koos (Little Bear), Kit-ahwah-ke-ni (Miserable Man), Pah pah-me-kee-sick (Walking the Sky), and Kâ-papâmahcahkwêw (Wandering Spirit).[290]

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[286] Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 60.
[287] Ibid., 61–62.
[288] In *Capturing Women: the Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West,* Carter examines the release of the book, *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear: The Life and Adventures of Theresa Gowanlock and Theresa Delaney*, by Gowanlock and Delaney. She argues that the eventual representation of capitivity, offered by Gowanlock and Delaney, and propagated by the state and media, helped make morally legitimate the violent repression of Indigenous and Métis communities.
[289] Here I cite names stemming from the knowledge that during the trial, Canadian courts often referred to these men as numbers. I also remember names to remember the lives taken for the construction of Canadian security. Descriptions of the mass hanging come from "Battleford Hangings, 1885 Riel Rebellion," *Saskatchewan Indian*, July 1972. Names come from both the *Saskatchewan Indian* article and Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Until Death, Indians in the Northwest Rebellion*.
[290] "Battleford Hangings, 1885 Riel Rebellion," *Saskatchewan Indian*.

Canada's largest mass hanging. A Massacre. The day of the hangings, all Indigenous students at a nearby residential school "were taken out to witness the event."[291] This forced witnessing was "to remind them of what would happen if one made trouble with the crown and to provide a lasting reminder of the white man's power and authority."[292] Before death, Itka "called on the Indian witnesses to never forget how the white man had treated them."[293] The state refused to release their bodies. They are currently buried "at the base of a sandy ravine on the North Saskatchewan River. The mass grave site was capped with a concrete slab in 1954."[294] Don Chatsis, a descendant of one of the Cut Knife warriors, describes, "'It would have defeated the whole purpose of the hanging if they let those people [bodies] go.'"[295] This is but one of the horrific moments of history that allowed the colonial state to secure territory. Elders remember the bravery of the condemned men and how they sang on the hanging platform in the face of death.[296]

The North West Mounted Police first came to the area in order to "deal with the large numbers of desperate Indians searching for the vanishing bison herds along the border."[297] As bison populations dwindled in the north, they arrived to enforce law in the "Unorganized Districts". But they were also there to tame a "'fretful realm' and make the West a safe place to settle."[298] In the aftermath of the Northwest Rebellion, a pass system was introduced that confined First Nations to reserves.[299] The only way they could leave the reserves was with a pass

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[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Until Death, Indians in the Northwest Rebellion*, 225.
[294] Ibid., 227.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1890-1914*, 17.
[298] Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford : Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West*, 34.
[299] F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," *Prairie Forum* 13, no. 1 (1988): 25–42.

given to them by agents. Passes were used in some areas up until the mid-1930s. Communities persistently ignored the constricting policies of the state, refusing to obey colonial law. However, over the next century, Canadian settlement would continue to displace Indigenous communities and a variety of other creatures from their homes: a kind of displacement that pushed communities to migrate while stranding some in homelands deprived of the characteristics that made them liveable.[300] This state of displacement undergirds settler sensations of security and energy abundance.

As a child, my grandma told me a variety of stories about growing up in Alberta. The smell of raspberries always reminds me of her garden. Nothing tasted better than those raspberries freshly picked in the hot sun. Raspberries are one of the plants that can no longer thrive in the Athabasca region due to high salinity levels.[301] The separation of oil from the sands is not a clean cut process. It leaves traces that come in the form of tailings ponds: vast stores of metallic, saline, and hydrocarbon remnants.[302] From the oceanic lives generating our automobiles, to the prior deaths, devastations, and struggles for survival which make up our bodily existence, those who came before us live on in us. For as much as the violence persists, so do those who struggle against it. Though the Canadian government listed "Little Bear" as one of

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[300] Rob Nixon describes this experience of being stranded as "displacement without moving". Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 19.

[301] The Terrestrial Subgroup of the Reclamation Working Group of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association, *Guidelines for Reclamation to Forest Vegetation in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region*, 9.

[302] Further, as water is "recycled" from these "ponds," a high level of salt is produced. Saline is one of the major obstacles to "reclaiming" landscapes: the name they give industry and state efforts to return the land to its prior, untarnished, condition. When I walked the trail through the Wapisiw reclaimed nature zone during my visit to Fort McMurray, I was aware that the solid feeling ground I walked was a tailings pond from 1967 to 1997. In an effort to return the land back to what it was before all that is the oil sands happened, Suncor workers stick dead trees in the ground with their roots up to the sky, hoping to call birds back to the area. The birds have to re-learn a landscape for regardless of industry intentions, it is not the same as before, nor are the birds, whose lungs, and bones, and feathers, and ways of moving have been transformed as their homes were transformed. The birds and the land remembers even as industry-led reclamation projects attempt to cover the past up. The industrial present is haunted by actions and memories of the past. Re-producing a before is an impossible task. A colonial economy, that alters water, air, and land, has also changed our bodies. But, this doesn't mean that the past is successfully erased.

the dead, Mistahi-maska's son, Âyimisîs, successfully evaded capture by leading a group of Plains Cree into exile in Montana.[303] After the US deported the Cree, Âyimisîs faced charges upon his return to Canada. These charges "were dismissed for lack of evidence because the sole witness, the Indian widow of Tom Quinn, refused to identify them."[304] Tom Quinn's wife, known as either Jane Quinn or Owl Sitting, was Cree, a member of Big Bear's band.[305] She had a child to care for after Quinn died. Neither Gowanlock or Delaney, the two white women taken "captive," were with child, and yet, they received an immensely larger pension than Owl Sitting.[306] Further, Owl Sitting was only granted a pension "'upon the understanding that she would leave a moral life.'" When she left to Montana after the events of Frog Lake, she received no government aid. Only after her return to the Blood reserve, her home reservation, in 1912, was Owl Sitting again eligible for a government pension. Yet, she was forced to wait until the chief of police at Fort Macleod reported that she was a "'hard working woman with a good reputation in the district." Even though Owl Sitting married into colonial power, the state rendered her life and her child's life as less valuable than the lives of Gowanlock or Delaney. Yet, she refused to appear as state witness and this refusal saved Âyimisîs's life.

Âyimisîs's daughter, Isabelle Little Bear, also lived to tell her story. On the *Elk Point History* website, a site that holds an account of my ancestor's settlement, an interview with

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[303] Âyimisîs's name is translated as both Little Bad Man and Little Bear. I've chosen to use Little Bear because histories of Little Bear's exile to Montana after the Frog Lake Massacre describe him as Big Bear's son. See Doug Cuthand, *Askiwina: A Cree World* (Regina: Coteau Books, 2007), 38, doi:10.1016/j.futures.2005.01.003; Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Until Death, Indians in the Northwest Rebellion, 230*. In *Loyal until Death*, the index cites the name Imasees which then leads to a page describing Little Bear's exile. See also "Seven Fires Prophecy: Survival Mode: Chief Little Bear," *Anishinabe History*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.anishinabe-history.com/history/chief-little-bear.shtml.

[304] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Until Death, Indians in the Northwest Rebellion*, 230.

[305] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 2006), 117.

[306] See Carter's description of difference in pensions between Jane Quinn (Owl Sitting) and Gowanlock and Delaney in *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West*, 125–126.

Isabelle Little Bear from 1968 is featured.[307] She recalls abusive priests and the starvation of her people. She remembers Quinn's cruelty and the lack of consensus amongst her people about what actions to take prior to, during, and following, the events at Frog Lake. She also describes the feasting and ceremonious singing of war songs subsequent to the "massacre". After surrender to colonial forces, Isabelle Little Bear relates that her community fell into "extremely hard times." "With no arms or knives with which to hunt or even horses on which to pack our belongings (our horses had also been confiscated) we tried to move from place to place but found no suitable home where we could derive a living." She emphasizes that under White Man's customs, "we are not thriving yet." She concludes the interview with a vision of the future:

> I shall never see the complete change and many of you who now have heard my story will not see it either. However, I have faith that someday, my people will work hand in hand with the White Man and it will be then that the once proud Indian of the Canadian Plains will be absorbed with his fellow countrymen, without prejudice. The past glory of my people will have long since gone out like our camp fires and all that will remain shall be contained in a short descriptive paragraph of a history book.
> I hope I haven't lived in vain.[308]

Her words expressing a deep fear of assimilation and cultural erasure, simultaneous, to the knowledge that White Man's customs would not allow her people to thrive.

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[307] Isabelle Little Bear, "My Own Story" (The Bonnyville Tribune, 1968), http://www.elkpointhistory.ca/beginnings/regional-histories/kehewin/isabelle-little-bear.
[308] Ibid.

Elk Point, where my grandmother grew up, is within the boundaries of Treaty 6: one of the treaties signed before the Canadian government's interest in Northern Alberta. I tenderly ask my grandma, "so Elk Point is somewhere between the Frog Lake Cree and Saddle Lake?" No, she tells me, to the East of Elk Point is Frog Lake Cree Nation and to the West of Elk Point is St. Paul. The Saddle Lake Cree live West of St. Paul. I'm still not sure whose land Elk Point is on but maybe that's part of the story. Treaty 6 was first signed in 1876: a time when bison were disappearing, and Chiefs realized that if they chose not to sign the treaty, their people might starve. Mistahi-maska was the last Chief to sign Treaty 6. He refused initial state entreaties, wanting to push for better terms for his people. My grandma told us a story when we were children. A story about when a group of Crees came to her mother's door dressed in "full regalia." Her mother could not understand what they wanted, and why they were there. Or perhaps, she knew too well. Another part of the story I am not sure of. The settlers of Elk Point knew of the Frog Lake massacre: newspapers told of a horrific crime committed by beastly men. They were told that the honor of white women was imperiled by savage men. The movements of those Crees onto my great grandmother's farmlands, as well as the movements of Âyimisîs and Isabelle Little Bear, during a time of intensified colonial containment speak to the persistent unsettling politics of Indigenous communities post-colonial contact. Despite and in spite of it all, Indigenous life continued to haunt, refuse, and unsettle settler geographies.

IV. On Abundance

The Abundant was not Inevitable

Since the first colonial vision of bitumen, figuring out how to successfully untrap bitumen from sandstone has kept many up at night. During the early permeation of colonial order into northern areas, scientists and investors began working on solving the "riddle" of the tar sands.[309] The quest was to find a way to transform land, not predisposed to extraction, into a profitable resource. Whereas crude oil whipped up dreams of availability and ease, the tar sands as a resource were deeper, heavier, and entrapped. In the Athabascan sands, oil was not immediately recognizable as black, liquid, gold. The tar sands required a vastly different kind of imaginative, technological, and political work to transform into a resource than crude oil. This is in part why the substance is referred to as tar, rather than oil. Activists want the public to understand the immense work that goes into making this substance a useable form of energy. In contrast, the industry continues to call this material the oil sands, in order to draw on imaginaries of abundance. What I hope to show in this chapter is that past visions of the land allowed for the production of the abundant. Only by re-vitalizing visions of the land as wild and empty could oil become euphoric-inducing abundance.

Early strategies to extract bitumen from the sands ranged from trying to pump out the bitumen with conventional oil rigs to setting the tar sands on fire; from blasting at it to having micro-organisms feed on it.[310] As shown in my last chapter, the possibility of testing, and

[309] Alan Phillips, "Will They Solve the Riddle of the Athabasca Tar Sands," *Macleans*, February 2, 1957, 18-19, 50-53.
[310] Pratt, *The Tar Sands: Syncrude and the Politics of Oil*, 36.

examining, relied upon security forces, the attainment of the land through treaty, and the attempted emptying of the land. As scientists and venture capitalists came to the region, all they could see were the "outcroppings": hints of "the riches hidden below."[311] They asked, how much oil did the oil drenched sands indicate? How could the sands be made profitable? Speculations that some have described as "playing games with the hidden history of the earth".[312] In 1882, Geologist Robert Bell concluded that the visible oil sands on the banks of the Athabasca were evidence of a larger underground crude oil reservoir.[313] His theory garnered the attention of the Dominion government who ordered the Geological Survey to begin drilling. The Survey drilled a depth of 1100 feet without finding the promised petroleum. They kept drilling without any luck, inducing the government to cancel the exploration project.

At about the same time that surveyors and geologists were mapping resources in Alberta and after gold had been discovered in the Madoc region of Ontario, the Toronto Stock and Mining Exchange (TSME) was established. The founding of the TSME in 1868 prefaced the Crown's decision to begin using scrip to acquire land. Using scrip to acquire Métis land began shortly after the first Métis resistance movement in 1869. Unlike the treaty making process, Métis scrip exchanges occurred on an individual basis. The government offered Métis peoples scrip, a certificate, which was then redeemable for land or money.[314] If Métis families chose to exchange their scrip for land, they had to visit Lands Title offices which were considerable distances away from where the Métis lived. When they were eventually allotted land, it was

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[311] "Geologic History," *Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program*. 1/18/2016 10:46:00 PM[312] Philip Smith, *The Treasure-Seekers: The Men Who Built Home Oil* (Toronto: Macmillian Canada, 1979), vii.
[313] Chastko, *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto*, 2.
[314] "Métis Scrip | Our Legacy," *Kinanāskomitin*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_scrip.

often in the South, far away from their homes. Scrip was a tool to eradicate Métis connections to land. Scrip buyers, sometimes operating for the same outfit, often pre-arranged a set price for scrip. But the use of scrip to dispossess Métis of their lands was not just the crimes of shuffling papers and fraudulent signs, bodies were coerced and papers extracted.[315] As the Métis association of Alberta points out, scrip "was expressly designed to facilitate speculation," aiding the transfer of capital from Métis persons to Euro-Canadian entrepreneurs.[316] Most scrip ended up in the hands of land speculators, many of whom worked for the western banks. The majority ended up in the hands of the Winnipeg based Merchant's Bank of Canada (now the Bank of Montreal), with another sizeable number owned by the Edmonton based Imperial Bank of Canada (now CIBC).[317] Further, similar to the Treaty process in Northern Alberta, the government failed to include everyone in their allocations of scrip.

By 1899, two years after the Geological Survey of Canada confirmed resources in Athabasca and the same year the "Half-Breed Scrip and Treaty 8 commission" entered the region, a second mining exchange, the Standard Stock and Mining Exchange (SSME), was established. This established Toronto "as the heart of the North American mining sector, and also made it the continental capital of stock market fraud."[318] The exchanges throve on the orchestrated hysteria surrounding discoveries. More than likely, some of the land speculators stealing Métis scrip were participants in the frenzied atmospheres of the SSME and the TSME: investors whipped into a frenzy by the idea of frothing oil and "a terra incognita -- rude and

[315] Emile Pelletier, *The Exploitation of Métis Land* (Winnipeg: Métis Federation Press, 1975).
[316] Métis Association of Alberta et al., *Métis Land Rights in Alberta: A Political History* (Edmonton: Métis Association of Alberta, 1981), 90–92.
[317] McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History: 1788-1920s*, 196.
[318] Alain Deneault and William Sacher, *Imperial Canada Inc.*, 197.

dangerous" full of "barbarous Indians and perpetual frost."[319] These two economic institutions would merge in 1934, becoming the Toronto Stock Exchange. Three out of four of the world's mining companies operate out of Canada.[320] The country offers the worldwide extractive sector an exceptionally customized trading environment of permissive regulations and preferential tax structures. A colonial history of violent exchanges has allowed Canada to emerge as a judicial and regulatory haven for extractive industries worldwide.[321] Another integral accident of the Canadian economy.

Meanwhile, as scientists and investors remained unsure of how to transform the north into the extractable, crude oil frenzies took off in the south of Alberta. The northern and southern appearances of abundance competed with each other for investment and exploration, yet, as time passed, the exploitation of southern conventional oil would lay the scaffolding for the emergence of the petropolis Fort McMurray. The appearance of oil in the south and central regions of Alberta shaped the cities of Calgary (the Turner Valley oilfield), Edmonton (the Leduc-Woodbend oilfield), and in time, Fort McMurray (the Athabasca sands) as well. Calgary, as the initial area of successful extraction, became the home of corporate offices and oil companies, whereas Edmonton saw an influx of workers after the later Leduc discovery. Companies chose to keep their offices in Calgary despite the gradual shift of abundance north. Southern production set up the infrastructure necessary for the appearance of northern abundance. However, the appearance of oil required the diminishment of other natures. The explorations of both Edmonton and Calgary were made possible in the post treaty years by the re-organization of the prairies for agricultural ends and the related containment of local Indigenous populations into reserves.

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[319] Charles Mair, *Through the Mackenzie Basin: An Account of the Signing of Treaty No. 8 and the Scrip Commission, 1899* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999).
[320] Deneault and Sacher, *Imperial Canada Inc.*
[321] Ibid.

After Calgary Petroleum Products, managed by Archie Dingman, struck oil in the Turner Valley near Calgary in 1913, a *Calgary Herald* article described that the city exploded into "the wildest and most irresponsible kind of delirium."[322] However, even before the strike, the *Herald* spectacularly predicted, "there exists in southern Alberta an oil field second to none in North America." These dreams of abundance grew through displacements. Before the first well in Turner Valley began operating, Archie Dingman sought to buy up parts of Tsuu T'ina land, directly south of Calgary. Eventually in 1913, the band surrendered the northeastern corner of the lands. They were starving due to the withholding of rations and intensely pressured by a variety of settlers; the Department of Indian Affairs, the Reverend John McDougall, the Inspector of Indian Agencies John Markle, and the Department of the Militia and Defense.[323] While these various forces of settlement all came with different motives, they assisted each other in the goal of securing a surrender. Calgary's desire to buy the land for a city park co-existed with the Dingman's desire to explore for oil. The land was eventually 'lawfully' surrendered, leased and later bought by the military even though the military had been using these lands as early as the 1890s.[324] The dispossession was justified through narratives of low population density and that the Tsuu T'ina were misusing the land. The abundant required Indigenous communities to be dispossessed of their lands.

Some say John Ware was the one who *actually* discovered the Turner Valley oil. He did it with a flick of a match. He is also remembered as the person who brought the first long horned cattle to southern Alberta. Before life in the North, Ware lived as a slave in South Carolina until

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[322] See Philip Smith's description of Calgary oil delirium in *The Treasure-Seekers: The Men Who Built Home Oil*, 18–19.
[323] Keith Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance, Indigenous Communities in Western Canada 1877-1927* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2009), 203.
[324] Patricia K. Wood, "Pressured from All Sides: The February 1913 Surrender of the Northeast Corner of the Tsuu T'ina Nation," *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, no. 1 (January 2004): 112–29, doi:10.1016/S0305-7488(02)00082-8.

the end of the Civil War granted him a certain freedom. He moved west to Texas in search of opportunity and a new life. Eventually, he was asked to take cattle north, first to Montana and then to Canada. In September of 1882, he entered Alberta with a group of white cowboys. "He was free – a lone black man on a frontier that was meant to be white."[325] As the group made the journey towards Calgary, they stopped in a hotel on their way where a sign was posted: "Indians and niggers charged double rates."[326] The freedom of the frontier was not meant for all. But Ware also had stakes in the Alberta frontier. He was lured by the promise of opportunities previously denied while living enslaved. After the Northwest Rebellion broke out in 1885, he joined Stimson's Rangers: a home guard created to protect settler land from Indigenous resistances. The Blackfoot called him Metoxy Sex Apee Quin: Bad Black White Man.[327]

In his book, *Blacks in Deep Snow,* Colin Thomson traces the northern migration of John Ware from the south.[328] Thomson notes that Ware's arrival in Alberta occurred as many Blacks had hopes about the freedoms and possibilities of the north. In 1910, a Black-owned newspaper based in Clearview, Oklahoma, printed an article titled, "Alberta, the Home for the Colored Race."[329] However, the making of a pure and wholesome realm of settlement required both the containment and eradication of Indigenous peoples as well as the attempted exclusion of Blacks. In 1911, the Edmonton Trades and Labour Council passed a resolution that the influx of Blacks would inevitably lower the standard of living. Since most Blacks came with significant savings, medical examinations were used as an excuse to deport migrants considered "unfit to work." In

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[325] Colin Thomson, *Blacks in Deep Snow: Black Pioneers in Canada* (Don Mills, Ontario: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1979), 30.
[326] Ibid.
[327] Karina Joan Vernon, "The Black Prairies: History, Subjectivity, Writing" (Dissertation for a Doctory of Philosophy in English, University of Victoria, 2008), 3, http://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8080/bitstream/handle/1828/896/Vernon%20Thesis%5B1%5D.pdf?sequence=1.
[328] Thomson, *Blacks in Deep Snow: Black Pioneers in Canada*, 77–83.
[329] Ibid.

spite of racist white settlers, a large number of Blacks created homes in Alberta. Amber Valley, just east of the town Athabasca, became one of the largest places of Black settlement.

Karina Joan Vernon points out that rememberings of John Ware occur with a simultaneous burial of black history: the forgetting of all those who came before him, the Black "fur traders, interpreters, cowboys, ranchers, and labourers who were on the prairies during the nineteenth century, both before and during the same time as Ware," as well as the Black farmers, homesteaders, business-owners and educated black elite who came after him, in the twentieth century.[330] There is also a forgetting of the Black slaves whose labour built the foundations of Canada.[331] While Canadian history books frequently mention the migration histories of Mennonite, Chinese, Jewish, Icelandic, Russian, and Eastern European communities, as well as two streams of Black migration, namely Black loyalists in Nova Scotia and the Underground Railway, the movement of Blacks into the prairies and the west is buried. In 1858, 600 Black Californians moved to so-called British Columbia en masse. From 1905 to 1912, during the settlement of the prairies, over 1600 Black pioneers came to participate in the shaping of land. The frontier imaginary compels the effacement of Black settlers in order to foreclose Black futures of prosperity and abundance.

Ware's ranch was in Millarville, the place where James and Robert Turner first homesteaded in 1887.[332] The two Turner brothers cut hay and grazed cattle toward the south fork of the Sheep Valley; the area that would one day be called the Turner Valley, and would become the home of Alberta's first oil boom; an area that was a homeland for the Stoney or Nakoda

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[330] Vernon, "The Black Prairies: History, Subjectivity, Writing," 3.
[331] Thomson, *Blacks in Deep Snow: Black Pioneers in Canada,* preface.
[332] Turner Valley Historical Society and Alberta Community Development, "Turner Valley District Driving Tour" (Alberta Community Development, 1993), http://culture.alberta.ca/heritage-and-museums/resources/historical-walking-and-driving-tours/docs/Tour-Turner-Valley.pdf.

people. Grant MacEwan's biography, *John Ware's Cow Country,* notes Ware's encounters with the Stoneys. During Ware's patrol with the Stimson rangers, he was violent towards the First Nations he met in the area around Millarville. MacEwan recounts,

> When Fred Ings and John Ware were combining a range ride with patrol duty, they came upon a fresh carcass of beef and a couple of young Stoney nearby. The surly young bucks denied doing the slaughter, but John knew they were guilty and began uncoiling his rope as if preparing for a routine hanging back there in the 164 hills. "If yo didn' kill this one, yo p'obably killed some othas," he said as he looked around, pretending to be searching the landscape for a suitable tree.[333]

Vernon notes the racializing and demonizing renderings alive in MacEwan's memorization but also wonders whether or not Ware's actions towards First Nations was informed by his own traumas of slavery. Ware's policing of the Stoney youth for the killing of settler cows speaks to an utterly complicated environmental politics of settlement wherein the Black man defends white schemes of property. Why is Ware remembered as other Black pioneers are forgotten? Vernon asks, is it because he was not a rebellious Black subject but instead a dutiful subject of the nation-state and thus rewarded in Canadian national memories?[334] Or, do we also want to remember him as *more* violent than his "pacifistic" white companion considering we live within what Leanne Simpson describes as "a colonial system that is designed at its core to destroy black and indigenous love"?[335]

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[333] Grant MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1976), 73.
[334] Vernon, "The Black Prairies: History, Subjectivity, Writing," 164.
[335] Leanne Simpson, "An Indigenous View on #BlackLivesMatter," *Yes Magazine*, December 5, 2014, http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/indigenous-view-black-lives-matter-leanne-simpson.

Vernon's family came to the prairies from Honduras, settling in Calgary, part of what she describes as a wave of Black professionals in the 1980s. She traces her life as a Black settler in Alberta to the first wave of Black migration to pioneer settlements like Amber Valley, Breton, Campsie, and Wildwood. In the period of 1905 to 1912, Black families settled the prairies simultaneous to my great grandparents. Vernon looks to the cookbook, *A Little Taste of Soul,* as a way to connect with these ancestors. The book, published by the Black Pioneer Descendents Society in 2005, Vernon contends, acts as a collection of ancestral knowledge. In a recipe, entitled, "Linda Peko's Smothered Moose Steak Strips," Linda Peko Campbell writes,

> To honor the First Nation peoples, some of whom are family and good friends, we offer this dish as a symbol of the large and small game that they taught our great grandparents to hunt. We thank them for the herbal knowledge, medicines, and survival skills that they shared with us and for being good neighbours! Without their genuine compassion and kindness, many of our families would have been hard pressed to make it through the cold Canadian winters. I personally have shared the bounty of enough moose meat for a winter from a kind First Nations chief! I remember as a small child waking up to find our water pasture on my Uncle Roy Carother's place in Amber Valley, full of tipis and families, who camped and used our well for water and to rest and water their horses and make camp while traveling to a new site. I remember my dismay when I would awake to find they had broken camp. May God bless you, your children, and your children's children to the 100th generation![336]

[336] Black Pioneer Descendants Society, *Black Pioneer Centennial: A Little Taste of Soul* (Edmonton: Black Pioneer Descendants Society, 2005).

A story that differs than the one I told earlier of my great grandmother and grandmother's interactions with the Indigenous communities their farms displaced. Was my great grandmother a good neighbour? When I call and ask her to again tell me about the First Nations who stayed on her family's farmland, she tells me they were there to use the well. My grandma who lived through the depression to learn never leave food unfinished, and yet, whose history differed immensely from the Black child. Vernon writes, "The native's presence is fleetingly observed by a child of a people with their own long and painful history of bondage, displacement, and exodus, but in this scene the child and her family are firmly and safely resettled."[337] She concludes, even as the family is settled and settles in that particular moment, that doesn't foreclose the possibility of unsettlement, of movement towards other modes of co-existence and co-becoming, for the recipe also speaks of Black gratitude for Indigenous aid and knowledge.

What Campbell's recipe asks us to remember, Vernon suggests, is how frontier land was and is shaped through contingent spaces of encounter, what Mary Pratt calls "contact zones": spaces of "copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power."[338] Too often, these complicated relations are flattened into a vision of history that understands white claims to territory as inevitable and complete, while also failing to make visible how spaces of contact are spaces of exchange that alter all who participate, whether for better or for worse. Imaginations of the land and history change when we re-imagine land as molded by a diverse variety of actors, both human and not. We can think of 1857, when Dan Williams took part in the Palliser expedition charting Western Canada for the Canadian Pacific Railway. An expedition that was also tasked with colonial

[337] Vernon, "The Black Prairies: History, Subjectivity, Writing."
[338] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 7.

botany, and which led Williams to a life out west. There, he married a Beaver woman named Thela, daughter of the Beaver Chief, Komaxala. The Beaver people thought he was a Black spirit with special powers, both good and evil, because of his black skin and firearm. When Thela was struck by lightning and went mute, it was believed Williams' presence angered the gods. One day he would be arrested for shooting at a Hudson's Bay Company agent because of the price they offered for his furs.[339] Another story specifies that after he was arrested, the North West Mounted Police shot Thela dead who was trying to protect him.[340]

The humans of this story, white, Black, and Indigenous, are complicatedly entangled with each other, and the natural world. Williams shot at a representative of the colonial economy, and Thela tried to protect him from arrest. The harm of lightning was interpreted as the fault of the outsider, Williams. The lightning struck and rendered Thela mute. The lightning signaled the desires of the sacred. Williams collected plants for imperial export. Animals were required for the fur trade economy to exist. He mapped Indigenous lands that would one day be home to a railway. This railway would be built with exploited Chinese labour and enabled settlement across the land. On November 7, 1885, an iron spike was driven into the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) at Craigellachie, British Columbia to signal the railway's completion. This completion ensured security forces could be transported to the Northwest in time to quell any future Rebellions. The iron, another colonial resource. Histories and worlds emerge through these complicated, thorny, and asymmetrical dynamics. Williams was eventually hung for murder, two years after Swift Runner for wîhtikôw killings in 1878. Even as the displaced can also displace, his death at the hands of a colonial police force reminds us of how certain bodies are made more disposable than others. For an extractive cartography to entrench itself in a territory, it must

[339] See Thomson's history/histories of Williams in *Blacks in Deep Snow: Black Pioneers in Canada, 61-63*.
[340] Ibid.

convince the public that extraction is the inevitable progress of reason and modernity, glossing over the other histories, futures, ways of relating to each other, and modes of technological ecological relation that exist. Abundance thrives through the belief that humans (read white men) and technology can control and organize the colonized (Indigenous, and Migrating bodies from a variety of places) and the natural world in a complete way. But, this is never the case for if the empire can deploy Orwellian technologies of repression, its outcasts have the goddesses of chaos on their side.[341]

For instance, in 1922, a railway, connecting southern Alberta to the north, reached the "Old Waterways" (now called Draper), an area just south of Fort McMurray. This transportation infrastructure enabled the freighting of heavy machinery to the north.[342] The railway was largely built across muskeg. Muskeg is a northern type of bog or wetland, the name is an Algonquin term which means "grassy bog". It is made up of wet mud, a moss called sphagnum which absorbs huge amounts of water, and plants in a decompositional relation with bacteria and fungi. The Muskeg of the Athabasca region is approximately 10000 years old and was blanketed by glaciers during the most recent ice age. For the railway, "it was a dangerous substance to build on, trains were subject to frequent derailments."[343] The railway infrastructure could only be built by successfully learning how to build on top of muskeg, and yet, this was a tenuous process, filled with accidents, due to the particularities of muskeg as a terrain. The idea that white men mastered the land, and possessed ultimate knowledge about the land was and is only possible

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[341] Slight adaptation of Davis's concluding sentiment in "The Urbanization of Empire: Megacities and the Laws of Chaos," *Social Text* 22, no. 4 81 (December 1, 2004): 9–15, doi:10.1215/01642472-22-4_81-9.
[342] Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, *Nistawaya: "Where the Rivers Meet" - First Nation Traditional Land Use Study*, 46; "The Alberta and Great Waterways Railway," *Atlas of Alberta Railways*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://railways.library.ualberta.ca/Chapters-11-6/.
[343] "History," *Fort McMurray Tourism*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.fortmcmurraytourism.com/explore-wood-buffalo/history.

through the erasure of alterity. After railway engineers learned how to build on top of Muskeg, the local Cree community would have their own encounters with the railway. The state's introduction of residential schools forced Crees to move from a reserve, east of Fort McMurray, to cabins and shacks by the railway tracks in the Waterways area.[344] Some would refuse, understanding that it was difficult to make a living in the town. They chose to keep their children in the bush and teach them about the land, about the muskeg.

Producing the Abundant

In 1920, scientists from McGill University announced that the oil sands were only suitable for producing road asphalts and not petroleum.[345] The Canadian government endorsed the findings, and stripped funding from oil sands research. This led to the provincialization of oil sands research: the province, in conjunction with the University of Alberta, created The Scientific and Industrial Research Council of Alberta, the first provincial research organization in Canada.[346] The Scientific and Industrial Research Council was the precursor to the industry-oriented think tank, the Alberta Research Council, and played a huge role in the building of extractive knowledge. In the early 1920s, while working with the Council, Dr. Karl A. Clark and Sydney Blair figured out a hot water separation process. While their work built on the work of those before them, this process made possible the extraction of bitumen from the northern oil sands.

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[344] Fort McMurray #468 First Nation, *Nistawaya: "Where the Rivers Meet" - First Nation Traditional Land Use Study*, 47–48.
[345] Chastko, *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto*, 12.
[346] Ibid., 13.

The two published a paper entitled "The Bituminous Sands of Alberta," that meticulously chronicled the appearance and disappearance of the bituminous sands along the banks of the Athabasca and the substance's viability as a commodity.[347] In the paper, the region only comes into existence with the first white men that traversed "Unorganized Athabasca". The two dedicate one sentence to Alexander Mackenzie's "special reference to the bitumen seepages and to the boatmen heating the bitumen with spruce gum to compound a boat-mending material." Asides from the citation of Mackenzie's narrative, the landscape is utterly emptied out of its first inhabitants and their knowledges of place. The only visible force in the region is the bitumen; a substance which overwhelms the sensorium of the visitors. In response, the bitumen is intensively examined, photographed, mapped, described, and sampled. All of this scientific procedure with the hope that once "the incoherent nature" is known, technology can conquer. Initial attempts by Clark and Blair to separate bitumen from the sands failed almost completely.[348] A large power-driven meat mincer was acquired with the hope that the "thorough maceration" of the bituminous sand might be advantageous. The transformation of the Athabasca bitumen to "sweet crude oil" is not at all smooth or immediate like the myths of technological brilliance or recoverability would have us believe.

As the Alberta government concretized its knowledge infrastructure through the creation of the Scientific and Industrial Research Council, the federal government institutionalized epistemic violence by making it mandatory for every Indigenous child, between the ages of seven and sixteen, to attend residential schools in 1920. The schools were operated by the Government of Canada and Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and United

[347] K.A. Clark and S.M. Blair, *The Bituminous Sands of Alberta* (Edmonton: W.D. McLean Acting King's Printer, 1927), 4-7.
[348] Ibid., Part II, 18-19.

churches.[349] The NWMP, and later the provincial police force, enforced federal policy by policing attendance. In 1928, the Alberta government passed the Sexual Sterilization Act: an act which allowed for the sterilization of any residential inmate. 3500 Indigenous women were sterilized.[350] Extractive desires of the colonial state reached into the future, foreclosing Indigenous life while opening up the frontier. Eradicating Indigenous women's capacity to reproduce is tied up with the transformation of land into resource; another tactic employed by the state to disappear a population whose interests were divergent from the economy. As time passed, state policies of sterilization were overtaken by an economy that imposed itself on Indigenous female and two spirit bodies. Whether this be through a positive feedback loop between oil, money, workers, drugs, violence, and the disappearance of Indigenous women and two spirit peoples, or the toxic permeation of Indigenous bodies, the genocidal impulses of the colonial state continue to be felt.[351]

In the 1930s, natural resources rights were transferred to the province through the Alberta Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, even though federal interest in the project would persist over time. The province's new ownership of mineral rights further deprived Indigenous communities of claims to land as the Resource Transfer Agreement allowed for the forgetting of original Treaties.[352] This period saw various entrepreneurs try to attract outside investor interest through spectacular claims about the utility of bitumen. After producing several barrels of

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[349] "Indian Residential Schools Commemoration Project: About Indian Residential Schools," *Anishinabek Nation*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.anishinabek.ca/irscp/irscp-about-residential.asp.
[350] Amelia Reimer, "The Colonial Roots of Mental Health and Addiction among Indigenous Peoples in Canada," *The Independent*, October 8, 2015, http://theindependent.ca/2015/10/08/the-colonial-roots-of-mental-health-and-addiction-among-indigenous-peoples-in-canada/.
[351] Native Youth Sexual Health Network, "Statement Made by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network to the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council," accessed October 23, 2015, http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/march112014.pdf.
[352] Robert Miller et al., *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 134.

unrefined bitumen in the 1930s, Robert C. Fitzsimmons describe the sands as "'excellent for paving, laying built-up roofs, processing into roof coatings, plastic gums, lap cement, caulking, compounds, waterproofing, marine gum, fence post preserver, boat pitch, belt dressing, mineral rubber, and skin disease medicine.'"[353] Fitzsimmons opened the first processing plant, Bitumount, where he developed his own imperfect version of the hot water extraction technique. After the plant was taken over by Montreal financier Lloyd Champion to eventually become the Great Canadian Oil Sands, Fitzsimmons would assert that the international oil industry deliberately forestalled development, sitting on leases, and blocking production, until they would prove profitable in the global market. In a bitter pamphlet, he relayed that the tar sands would not be developed "until all oil fields recoverable from wells ran low".[354]

Fears about the insecurity of resources led to an increased interest in the Athabasca region during World War Two. The 1940s saw the construction of the CANOL ("Canadian oil") pipeline: a project that made Fort McMurray a home base for the 3000 soldiers working on the project, at a time when the town was only 1000.[355] After the "discovery" of the southern Leduc-Woodbend fields in 1947, the town of Leduc boomed and northern abundance again became less visible. A town that was named after Father Leduc: the man who extracted Swift Runner's confession before he was hung.[356] Before his hanging, Swift Runner looked at Father Leduc and uttered, "I am the least of men and do not merit even being called a man."[357] Or, at least, that is

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[353] Pratt, *The Tar Sands: Syncrude and the Politics of Oil*, 40–41.
[354] Ibid.
[355] The pipeline was eventually abandoned, left for animals like moose and caribou to encounter with dismay, getting their antlers tangled in telephone wires, as they moved through the territory. Eventually, the disintegrating wartime energy infrastructure would be turned into the Canol Heritage Trail. CBC News, "WWII-Era Telephone Lines Snag N.W.T. Moose, Caribou," *CBC News*, July 8, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/wwii-era-telephone-lines-snag-n-w-t-moose-caribou-1.2700166.
[356] Carlson, "Reviving Witiko (Windigo)," 376.
[357] Andrew Hanon, "Evil Spirit Made Man Eat Family," *Vancouver 24 Hrs*, August 1, 2008, http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/News/weirdnews/2008/07/20/6221826-sun.html.

what is remembered. Another story recalls Swift Runner, *Ka-Ki-Si-Kutchin*, refusing to spend his last night with a priest, knowing that since white men were the cause of his ruin, their God wouldn't amount to much salvation.[358] His community knew the cruelty of the punishment.[359] Still, Leduc's name persists on the landscape Swift Runner was taken from.

The 'discovery' of the Leduc oil occurred at a moment when Imperial oil had almost given up on the central region after drilling 133 consecutive dry wells. In a promotional film produced by Imperial oil, the narrator focuses in on the "good earth" of grain and agricultural abundance as the state of land before "other men sought another harvest for it, a harvest we needed."[360] The abundance of southern agriculture would preface a new landscape of abundance; that of oil. Agricultural settlement and abundance pushed Indigenous communities into reserves, allowing for the discovery. In Amiskwacîwâskahkan*,* ᐊᒥᐢᑲᐧᒌᐋᐧᐢᑲᐦᐃᑲᐣ (Cree for Beaver Hills House),[361] or what others know as Edmonton, during the late nineteenth century, the pioneers demanded that an Indigenous tribe, the Papaschase band, be removed twenty miles south of the North Saskatchewan river. Papaschase land stretched from the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, as far west as the town of Devon, and as far east as the town of Tofield. Shirley Gladu, a current member of the Papaschase nation, relates traditional Papaschase lands stretched south to Leduc.[362] Settlers began to build lodges and cut lumber on the Papaschase lands. Eventually, the land was sold to settlers after three men signed a surrender document. The band was displaced to

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358 Jana Pruden, "Hanged: A Special Series about the History of Capital Punishment in Alberta," *Edmonton Journal*, 2011, http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/hanged/swiftrunner.html.
359 Ibid.
360 Imperial Oil Company, *Huge Oil Reserve Struck near Leduc, Alberta*, video found in CBC archive, accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/huge-oil-reserve-struck-near-leduc-alberta.
361 Little Cree Books, "Amiskwacîwâskahikan," accessed January 18, 2016, http://littlecreebooks.com/amiskwaciwaskahikan/.
362 Stewart, "Propositions from Under Mill Creek Bridge: A Practice of Reading," 255.

various reserves, but to this day, continue to contest the surrender as illegitimate.[363] With the discovery, "Oil drilling firms, geophysical companies and supply houses rushed" to Edmonton leading to a huge population boom in the city.[364] A population built a home as those who used to move through the land (the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakoda, Tsuu T'ina, Chipewyan, and other Indigenous, human and nonhuman, inhabitants) were and are displaced. "And with each swell of oil, came a swell of investors' money," the Imperial Oil video about the Leduc discovery narrates amidst frenzied chaotic music and shots of men on rigs.[365]

Because of conventional oil finds during the earlier part of the twentieth century, northern unconventional resources became less of a priority. The abundance of conventional reserves in the south allowed conventional producers to determine the province's energy policies.[366] However, this changed after the Turner Valley wells began declining in the 1940s. In early December of 1950, Sidney Blair released a report that claimed the oil sands were "entering the stage of possible commercial development." Announcements of northern recoverability reaped excitement; the *Calgary Herald* praised the oil sands as "a vital cog in the democratic arsenal if war cuts off other oil supplies." Outside interest such as the Anglo-Persian oil company (now British petroleum) arrived, lured by the report's speculations, only to eventually cast significant doubts on the findings. With the first oil sands conference already set in motion, the province shifted course and began publicly encouraging the development of the sands as "in the interest of the Province and of Canada as a whole, and, further, to the security of this continent." During the conference, in front of an audience of oil executives, scientists, and government officials, Nathan

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[363] Papachase First Nation #136, "History of Papaschase," accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.papaschase.ca/history.html.
[364] W. C. Wonders, "Repercussions of war and oil on Edmonton, Alberta," *Cahiers de géographie du Québec* 3, no. 6 (1959): 343-351, doi:10.7202/020190ar.
[365] Imperial Oil Company, *Huge Oil Reserve Struck near Leduc, Alberta*.
[366] See Chastko's history of the Turner Valley oil reserves, the release of the 1950 report, and the lead up to Fort McMurray's boom in *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto,* 61, 83-89.

Tanner, the Albertan Minister of Mines, announced twenty-one year leases on oil sands land, explaining that the leasing strategy would "encourage immediate development" of the oil sands and "further the security of this continent." Tanner emphasized that the oil sand were "a test from Heaven to ensure that a 'Christian way of life' survived." Northern Alberta was presented as a Godly site of abundance. If left undeveloped, Albertan life would fall into sin, disorder, communism, tyranny, the damnation of the insecure.

At the same time as Tanner referred to the threat of insecurity and the global dangers of communism and dictatorship, North American carbon-heavy forms of life were being constructed as to keep the appearance of abundance at bay. In the early 1950s, American automobile companies designed cars which effectively doubled the horsepower of passenger car engines within a decade.[367] This along with ways of eating, traveling, lodging, and consuming, that also required immense quantities of fossil fuels, as well as the blocking of development in the Middle East, made it so oil reserves would always be scarce, and thus allow profits to thrive.[368] Proving Fitzsimmons bitter conclusions about the failure of Bitumount correct, transnational oil companies also put pressure on the Albertan government to stall development. In 1949, after the discovery of the unconventional reserves in the south, industry representatives successfully lobbied the provincial government to introduce a pro-rationing system.[369] While a certain amount of abundance was necessary as to create an atmosphere of speculative investment, the availability of too much oil would destabilize global oil prices.

The tricky dilemma about writing histories of oil is that shortages, scarcity and crisis have consistently been manipulated and manufactured by oil industries in order to secure profit.

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[367] Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, 41.
[368] Ibid.
[369] Chastko, *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto*, 82.

Power is interwoven with weaving imaginations of supply and scarcity. And yet, the two are somehow related, visions of scarcity compel extractive imaginaries. Seven years after the Alberta government introduced a pro-rationing system, Hubbert began speaking about peak oil. The oil industry's awareness that reserves would diminish over time began to simmer. The following year, in 1958, senior geologist M.L. Natland made a proposal to the Research Council of Alberta: use nuclear power to release the oil from the tar sands. He came up with the idea while working in Saudi Arabia. Watching the sun bleed into the horizon, Natland began to think about using the intense heat and power of the nuclear to free up oil. Natland's idea was a part of Operation Plowshare: "a larger United States-based movement to harness the power of nuclear explosions for peaceful application."[370] He submitted the proposal, "Project Oilsand," which "suggested that Richfield Oil Corporation detonate a nine-kiloton nuclear warhead underground to test his hypothesis (the yield of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was estimated at 12.5 kilotons)."[371] This idea was based on a belief that nuclear heat would create a large quantity of oil with a reduced viscosity, transforming the thick and heavy sands into conventional oil. A proposition that would have amounted to utter environmental decimation. Natland's proposal was eventually abandoned due to Canada's shift towards a disarmament politics, however, it signaled a resurgence of extractive imaginaries of the Albertan North, imaginaries that made possible the abundant.[372]

[370] Which is all to say that proposals for "peaceful" or "green" uses of nuclear energy are not very "peaceful" or "green". Government of Alberta, "Project Oilsand - Alberta Energy Heritage," *Alberta Culture and Tourism*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://history.alberta.ca/energyheritage/sands/mega-projects/setting-the-stage/the-second-athabasca-oil-sands-conference/project-oil-sand.aspx.
[371] Chastko, *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto*, 97.
[372] Ibid.

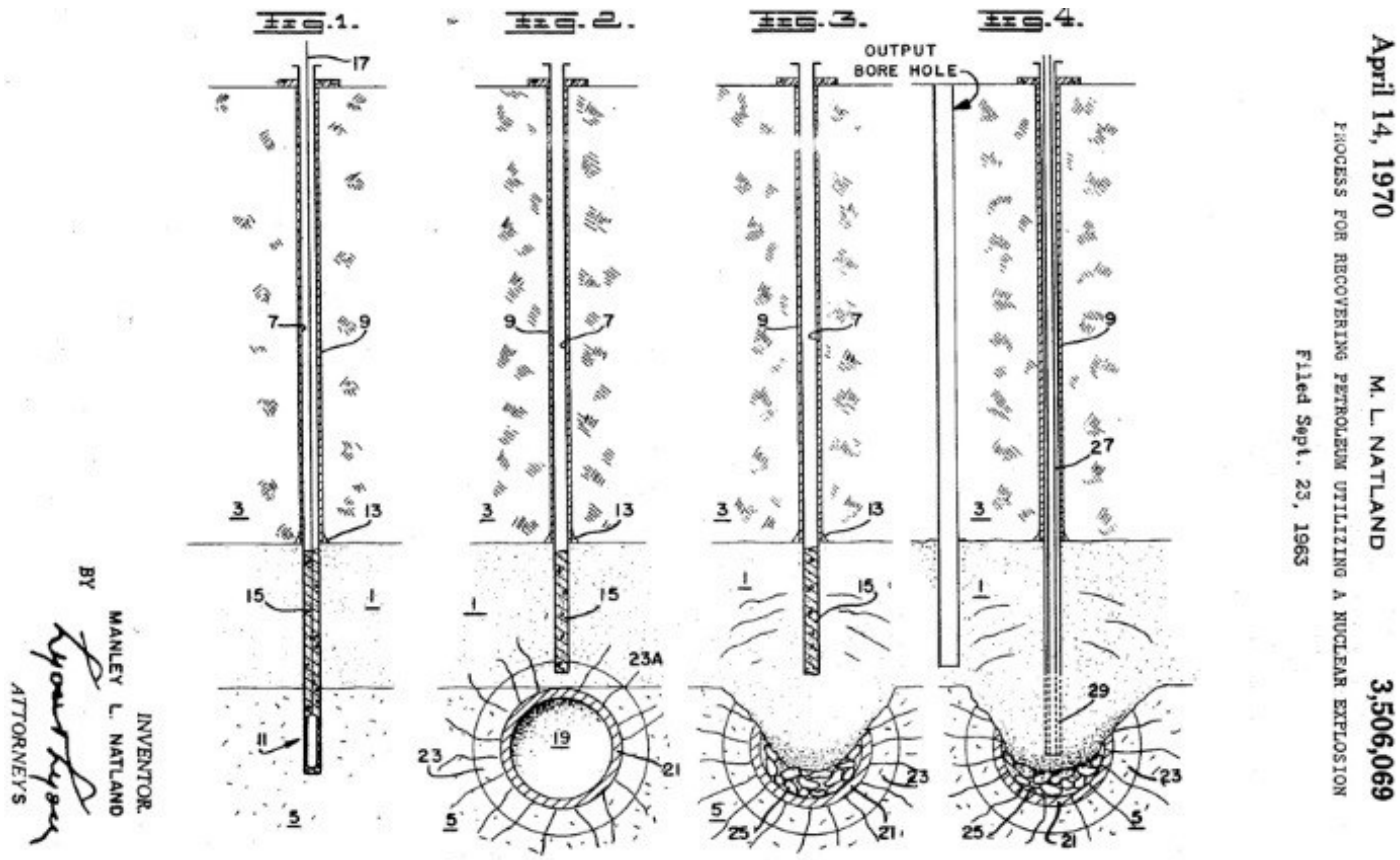

Figure 7. "Process for recovering petroleum utilizing a nuclear explosion." (M.L. Natland. US Patent 3,506,069, filed Sept. 23, 1963, and issued Apr. 14, 1970.)

Here, we return to the futurists from the introduction: Howard Pew and Herman Kahn. At this point, they began envisioning the tar sands as the solution to North American energy security. But, as emphasized throughout this thesis, this vision was long in the making, and existed with a variety of other visions of what the land could, may, and should become. J. Howard Pew was one of the venture capitalists who responded to Nathan Tanner's religiously drenched apocalyptic provocation seriously. He took out a double 100,000 acre lease in 1952 and in 1967, he opened the first open pit mine, declaring, "No nation can long be secure in this

atomic age unless it be amply supplied with petroleum."[373] With Pew's mine and the threat of peak oil in the air, inventors began to believe that over time, the Athabasca region *would* be viable and profitable. However, due to technological restraints, the vast majority of the Athabasca deposits remained inaccessible. Despite the invention of hot water separation, technologies still needed to be developed that could access the deeper, heavier kinds of petroleum. Following the capping of Leduc #1 in the 1970s,[374] companies began testing two methods of in situ drilling: cyclic steam stimulation, CSS, and steam assisted gravity drilling, SAG-D. Drawing on Clark and Blair's hot water separation process, both techniques involved injecting hot steam into the earth to melt the bitumen so it can then be transported through pipelines for processing. While CSS was the first technique of in situ drilling developed and used by oil companies, SAG-D would eventually become the more commonly used method due to higher recovery rates.[375]

The first complete SAG-D test took place in Cold Lake in 1978.[376] By the 1990s, the technology began to show high recovery rates, leading major companies and independent companies to invest in SAG-D. The first SAG-D bitumen made it to market in late 2001. A year later, the *Oil & Gas Journal* announced that the Alberta reserves were *recoverable*. And with the abundant, came cancerous expansion. The production of the abundant is much thornier than a coherent international oil industry forcing development at its whim. The abundant did not come into sight simply due to a peak in conventional oil supplies, high oil prices, and the right technology, it was the result of multifold encounters between animals, plants, the land and its

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[373] Sweeny, *Black Bonanza, Alberta's Oil Sands and the Race to Secure North America's Energy Future*, 101.
[374] Ustina Markus, *Oil and Gas: The Business and Politics of Energy* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 121.
[375] Though, this might change in the future as the oil industry attempts to mine deeper within the earth.
[376] Government of Alberta, "Roger Butler and In Situ Development - Alberta Energy Heritage," *Alberta Culture and Tourism*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://history.alberta.ca/energyheritage/sands/underground-developments/in-situ-development/roger-butler.aspx.

first inhabitants, explorers, wildlife rangers, scientists, police, technological infrastructure, and an unknowability we can call chaos. Still, to see the abundant, required a history of land dispossession: the abundant could only become visible in a landscape marked by the traumas of colonialism in which certain lives and stories had been diminished.

The Abundant

"The world is coming to an end. At one time the earth was almost destroyed by water and the next time it will be destroyed by fire. The world will be coming to an end very soon, an indication of that is the change in the weather."

– Fred McDonald

"Yedariyé will take the sun. People in Vancouver will drown. The stars will fall and start the world on fire."

– Peter Whitedeer

"The world is going to burst in flames very soon because, it is getting close to the end of the world; a result of pollution… If the world burns everything will come back."

– Victoria Mercredi

The words above were spoken by Athabascan elders in the 1990s, Phillip Coutu and Lorraine Hoffman-Mercredi suggest they signal our entrance into an era of fire.[377] Fire which the two authors explain represents the destruction Western culture has wrought on the land and northern Indigenous life. The abundance of oil speeds up our entry into the fire. Capitalism's

[377] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, 81–82.

consumption of buried sunshine, for the dead plants and animals of fossil fuels were fed by the sun, brings us closer to the sun.[378] Some will feel the heat before others. Only by excluding different visions can the colonial vision of land as the to-be-extracted become Truth. But, these authoritative visions, Anna Tsing writes, are tentative, haunted "by the disappointments of past visions," and a public that does not easily forget.[379] "Continued life on earth depends on getting our knowledge into as good as shape as possible." This demands "paying more rather than less attention to the multiplicity of knowledge claims." She continues, "Hauntings sometimes open the way to such dialogue: What visions have we been formed by, yet forgotten? What visions have we let shrivel, fester, or fall away?" For many foresaw this devastation, and attempted to prevent it from taking place.

In the 1960s, the building of B.C. Hydro's Bennett Dam wrought change on the landscape. The lives of water animals such as the muskrat and moose were altered. After seeing the first commercial application of the hot water separation process in Howard Pew's mine, the scientist Karl Clark, who conceived of the process, told his daughter "I don't ever want to go up again."[380] He saw what a mine meant for the trees he adored. They were slashed and cleared for the extraction of bitumen. As he died of cancer, he remembered the trees. A cancer survivor from Fort Chip mourned those same trees cleared for the first mine. As the years past, she would see other lives displaced and extracted as oil sands infrastructure spread across the landscape. Between the 1970s and early 2000s, horizontal drilling techniques improved allowing previously unexploited Indigenous territories to become possible sites of extraction.

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[378] Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*.
[379] Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, 81.
[380] Nikiforuk, *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent*, 94.

In 1983, the Fort McKay First Nation, who live just north of Fort McMurray, and in the then burgeoning heart of extraction, blockaded a logging company. Following their Chief Dorothy McDonald, the Fort McKay First Nation attempted to create structures to survive colonial encroachment. A variety of tactics were engaged: from blockades to the recording of oral histories, from suing industries in colonial courts to the setting up of Indigenous worker training programs.[381] 1988 saw the Lubicon Cree build barricades on four main roads leading to oil fields on their unceded traditional territories. Extraction requires the clearing of trees, and communities chose to stall the rapid expansion, taking side with the trees. However, there were compromises and contradictions made in attempts to resist colonial encroachment such as the Fort McKay First Nation's choice to train workers for employment in the oil industry and seek justice through a colonial legal system. Survival at times requires less than desirable alliances such as defining rights and identities through the Canadian legal system or "independence via capitalist economic development."[382] That said, as Glen Coulthard argues, when Indigenous resistance tactics seek out colonial recognition, "these strategies threaten to erode the most egalitarian, nonauthoritarian, and sustainable characteristics of traditional Indigenous cultural practices and forms of social organization."[383] As another example of this, we can think about the 1990 *Métis Settlements Accord Implementation Act*: an act that granted the Métis a land base. While the state finally recognized the Métis right to a land base, some land, such as land Métis families had long relations with in the Fort McMurray area, was lost in the early 1960s with the

[381] Cora Voyageur, "They Called Her Chief," in *Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West through Women's History*, ed. Sarah Carter et al. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 355–62.
[382] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 42.
[383] Ibid.

opening of the first mine.[384] Beginning in the 1990s, Métis fisherman Big Ray Ladacouer began catching deformed fish in the northern community of Fort Chipewyan.[385] Métis communities, such as those whose ways of life were interwoven with the Conklin area, have had their ways of life made insecure due to the oil industry's out of control expansion.[386] Yet, families continue to pick berries, hunt, and trap as their lands become unfamiliar with the proliferation of roads, seismic testing, man camps, plants, and outsiders. In terms of resistance strategies, different worlds and futures are offered by berrypicking, and siding with the trees, than working with the resource sector.

The surge of neoliberalist politics in the 1980s and 1990s helped lay the scaffolding for the 2000s boom. With Ralph Klein's election in 1992, the government lowered provincial taxes, fostering an investor-friendly climate.[387] Prior to 1996, Ottawa's taxation scheme favored conventional mining projects over in situ projects. In the 1996 budget, the state offered tax incentives to spur the oil sands industry and also eliminated the distinction between in situ and conventional mining projects. These new taxation schemes triggered an investment boom for several small and medium-sized companies, like Koch Oil Sands, Murphy Oil and Black Rock Ventures.[388] The 1990s was a period of intensive liberalization where both provincial and federal governments made investment appealing through research and development funding as well as low taxation and royalty regimes.[389] Canadian banks financed the Alberta oil sands, providing the huge financial flows necessary to construct extractive infrastructure, and in doing so, built on

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[384] Carol Christian, "Tight-Knit Métis Community Has Deep Roots in Local History," *Your McMurray Magazine*, January 27, 2015, http://yourmcmurraymagazine.com/features/459.
[385] Neela Banerjee, "In Canada's Alberta Province, Oil Sands Boom Is a Two-Edged Sword," *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 2013, http://articles.latimes.com/2013/oct/21/world/la-fg-canada-oilsands-cancer-20131021.
[386] Claudia Cattaneo, "New Oil Sands Chapter," March 20, 2011, http://www.financialpost.com/news/energy/sands+chapter/4479860/story.html.
[387] Chastko, *Developing Alberta's Oil Sands: From Karl Clark to Kyoto*, 213.
[388] Ibid., 220.
[389] Le Billon and Carter, "Securing Alberta's Tar Sands," 173.

the legacy of colonial dispossession through scrip. This most recent molding of the legal-economic infrastructure created a terrain in which industry could prosper.

The 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a resurgence of energy security discourses. Lobby groups such as the American Petroleum Industry ran campaigns around the slogan: "Energy Security? The answer might be closer than you think."[390] And then the boom. A moment where "Opportunity was everywhere."[391] In 2002, as described in the introduction, 174.8 billion barrels of oil were found to be "recoverable using current technology." By 2007, the Canadian dollar hit a high of $1.10 against the US dollar.[392] Overall, an estimated 700, 000 people moved to the province between the years of 1996 and 2006.[393] This is not to mention the workers who arrived, without government recognition, due to their lack of immigration status. Nor the temporary workers nor those who commuted from depleted communities across North America.[394] Calgary saw a boom in office towers[395] while Edmonton was named murder capital in 2011.[396] With the boom, came a thriving underground economy of sex work, drugs, and crime. Between 1999 and

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[390] Ibid., 174.
[391] Where in at least once instance, $300 million was lost through a fraudulent scheme that took advantage of the tempting dream of big returns. While this scheme involved the lure of gold, it was funded by the savings of those who lived in a province of oil abundance. Most of the $300 million disappeared into the world of private jets, a palatial ranch in Honduras, and luxury bass-fishing lodge. Edna Coulic took her life in 2008, after she invested in worthless shell companies with names such as Syndicated Gold Depository SA, Base Metals Corp. LLC, and Merendon Mining Corp. Ltd. She was wined and dined, promised future riches, and the dream turned into a speculation based on nothing there. Barrie McKenna, "Largest Ponzi Scheme in Canadian History Exploited Boom Time Alberta," *The Globe and Mail*, February 15, 2015, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/largest-ponzi-scheme-in-canadian-history-exploited-boom-time-alberta/article23010870/.
[392] Tavia Grant and Claire Neary, "A Brief History of the Canadian Dollar," *The Globe and Mail*, June 1, 2007, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/a-brief-history-of-the-canadian-dollar/article1366590/.
[393] Nikiforuk, *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent*, 25.
[394] Ibid., 24, 51. In the year 2007 alone, Alberta applied for 100,000 temporary workers. Between 2000 and 2010, 340,000 from the Maritimes, as one example of an economically depleted region, came to Fort McMurray to work.
[395] Linda Baker, "A Boom in Office Towers in Calgary," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/21/business/21calgary.html.
[396] "Deadmonton: Scrambling To Curb The Violence," *The Huffington Post*, October 8, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2011/08/10/deadmonton-alberta-murder-rate_n_923925.html.

2013, an estimated $201 billion was invested in the oil sands.[397] Only months after his election as a prime minister in 2006, Stephen Harper told a room of British investors that the oil sands are "an enterprise of epic proportions, akin to the building of the pyramids or China's Great Wall. Only bigger."[398]

By 2009, land to the east was seeing acid rain.[399] Later, one would be able to read the boom by looking at tree rings, the trees would be marked by this trauma.[400] Yet, this new world, the world of oil abundance, energy security, and fire, bares traces of much older worlds. As Stuart Hall puts it, this new world has been "inscribed" in "an earlier positioning."[401] Jacqui Alexander expands on his thought, "That 'earlier positioning' refers to a much longer history of colonialism that has undergone a series of metamorphoses but that, nonetheless, continues to traffic in this terrain that is being designated as 'new.'"[402] With the abundant comes the re-generation of earlier anxieties concerning colonial security as well as genocidal colonial ecologies. However, in this re-generation, colonial regimes of repression continue to be met by rebellious refusals.

In the 2000s, under the federal Conservative government, several laws were passed including Bill C-45: an omnibus bill which introduced drastic changes to the *Indian Act*, the *Fisheries Act,* the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act,* and the *Navigable Water Act* (as

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[397] Government of Alberta, "Facts and Statistics," Alberta Energy, accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.energy.alberta.ca/oilsands/791.asp.
[398] Paul Wells, Tamsin McMahon, and Alex Ballingall, "How Ottawa Runs on Oil," *Macleans*, March 23, 2012, http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/oil-power/.
[399] Bob Weber, "Alberta Oil Sands Lead to Acid Rain in Saskatchewan, Data Suggests," *The Globe and Mail*, August 12, 2009, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/technology/science/alberta-oil-sands-lead-to-acid-rain-in-saskatchewan-data-suggests/article4283668/.
[400] See Geoffrey Kershaw's study of tree rings, "Talking to Trees: A Dendrochronological Assessment of the Atmospheric Pollution Effects of Athabasca Bitumen Mining Downwind from the Industry" (Master's thesis in Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, 2013), http://hdl.handle.net/10222/21674.
[401] Stuart Hall, "Popular-Democratic vs. Authoritarian-Populism: Two Ways of 'Taking Democracy Seriously,'" in *Marxism and Democracy*, ed. A. Hunt (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), 157–85.
[402] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*, 93.

well as many others) and triggered Indigenous mobilizations throughout the country. In Saskatoon, during late October of 2012, after the bill's passing, four women held a teach-in concerning Bill C-45 sparking the vibrant fires of the Idle No More movement. While the Idle No More movement was long in the making, drawing inspiration from enduring legacies of sustained indigenous struggle, the Kino-nda-niimi collective describes that, this teach-in, with the help of social media and grassroots Indigenous activists, "inspired a continent wide movement with hundreds of thousands of people from Indigenous communities and urban centers participating in sharing sessions, protests, blockades and round dances in public spaces and on the land, in our homelands, and in sacred spaces."[403] Drawing on their traditional roles as guardians of the land, Indigenous women and Two-spirited people nourish this rebellion, building and contributing to a history of rebellions.[404] Their role in this movement is not equivalent to Western ideas of feminism for their aim is to "restore Indigenous nationhood, which includes gender equality and respect for gender fluidity."[405] Idle No More takes place within a larger resurgence movement rebelling against "the permanence" of settler extractive geographies to "not just 'dream alternative realities' but to create them, on the ground in the physical world, in spite of being occupied."[406]

Yet, facing Indigenous claims to territory and militant land defense, the Canadian state re-vitalized an atmosphere of security in order to protect northern extraction.[407] In 2012, the state

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[403] Kino-nda-niimi Collective, *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement*, 22.
[404] Chelsea Vowel explains, "The goal is not to attain gender equality, but rather to restore Indigenous nationhood, which includes gender equality and respect for gender fluidity." Vowel, "Indigenous Women and Two-Spirited People: Our Work Is Decolonization!"
[405] Ibid.
[406] Leanne Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 3 (July 2, 2014): 1.
[407] Preston, "Neoliberal Settler Colonialism, Canada and the Tar Sands."

established a new Royal Canadian Mounted Police led anti-terrorism unit in June 2012 - the K Division Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET).[408] According to the Energy Resources Conservation Board, the K Division was designed to protect the tar sands industry, including "'400,000 kilometers of pipeline; more than 176,000 operating oil and gas wells; eight oil sands mines; five upgraders; and 250 in-situ oil extraction facilities'".[409] What makes the state's representations of terrorism so palatable is the way in which they tap into, and emerge from, a history in which the colonized have frequently been encountered as "threatening." From early frontier imaginations to the Oka conflict, state and media narratives have long rendered Indigenous environmentalisms as threatening.[410] When this white imaginary of violence and security succeeds, it is able to position actors into frameworks of illegibility under labels such as rioter, radical, warrior, terrorist, and criminal. Significantly, such articulations are not limited to the state alone. The state's passing of Bill C-51, a bill whose ambiguous language made it permissible for the state to intensify surveillance on those who threatened "economic infrastructure," was directly aimed at suppressing militant environmentalisms such as Indigenous blockades. When Greenpeace representatives attended the parliamentary hearing concerning Bill C-51, they concluded their submission by declaring that those who participate in actions such as

[408] Ibid., 43; The RCMP traces its institutional roots to the North West Mounted Police, the police force that opened up the northern frontier.
[409] Ibid., 43-44.
[410] Kerstin Knopf, "Terra - Terror - Terrorism?: Land, Colonization, and Protest in Canadian Aboriginal Literature," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 27, no. 2 (December 2007): 293–329; Preston, "Neoliberal Settler Colonialism, Canada and the Tar Sands"; Shiri Pasternak, "The Wars At Home: What State Surveillance of an Indigenous Rights Campaigner Tells Us About Real Risk in Canada," *DeSmog Canada*, November 2, 2014, http://www.desmog.ca/2014/11/02/wars-home-what-state-surveillance-indigenous-rights-campaigner-tells-us-about-real-risk-canada; Shiri Pasternak, "Occupy(ed) Canada: The Political Economy of Indigenous Dispossession in Canada," *Rabble.ca*, October 20, 2011, http://rabble.ca/news/2011/10/occupyed-canada-political-economy-indigenous-dispossession-canada.

"the destruction of infrastructure or property" should bear the brunt of the law.[411] In doing so, they shored up the belief that the colonial property schemes are legally and morally grounded. Reflecting on Black and Indigenous affinity and the vilification of Black rioting after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by Darren Wilson, Leanne Simpson asks, "why is there more outrage in American and Canadian societies over property damage than toward the state-sanctioned violence that is normalized in the everyday lives of indigenous and black people?"[412]

Colonial energy security demands the insecurity of those who find themselves on the underside of a global capitalist economy. Workers in Fort McMurray either come from Indigenous communities living in proximity to extraction sites, economically depleted places like Newfoundland or the Maritimes, or other struggling rural communities throughout North America. If not, companies fly in temporary workers. Abuse of these workers is so widespread that the Alberta government handled 800 complaints in just one three-month period in 2008.[413] Yet, the number of state received complaints cannot begin to illustrate the vastness of abuse. In the temporary foreign workers program, workers ability to stay is tied to their employer. What Harsha Walia calls a modern apartheid: two different sets of laws for two populations—white and non-white.[414] Silence pervades because peoples' lives are tied to their employers.

With predominantly male work camps, sexual and gendered violence is an integral aspect of boom culture. It disproportionately affects Indigenous women and two spirited people as well as trans and cis women of color. Women, who come to Fort McMurray from the global South through the live-in caregiver program, out of a hope for economic mobility only to work in

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[411] Joanna Kerr, "Bill C-51 Hearing: Greenpeace Refutes Criminalizing Democratic Dissent in Canada," *Greenpeace Canada*, March 12, 2015, http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/blog/Blogentry/bill-c-51-hearing-greenpeace-refutes-criminal/blog/52313/.
[412] Simpson, "An Indigenous View on #BlackLivesMatter."
[413] Ibid.
[414] H. Walia, "Transient Servitude: Migrant Labour in Canada and the Apartheid of Citizenship," *Race & Class* 52, no. 1 (July 1, 2010): 71–84, doi:10.1177/0306396810371766.

conditions of verbal, physical, and sexual violence. The live-in caregiver program bonds workers to their employers, making it extremely hard for women to speak out against violence. Publically addressing abusive working conditions is an immense act of courage when one's livelihood, as well as that of one's family, depends on that job. Staying silent is also a courageous act when one's decisions and agencies are entangled with a home altered by colonialism, capitalist land grabs, and climate change. The majority of live-in caregivers in Fort McMurray are Filipina.[415] Their island home slowly becomes water as Fort McMurray amplifies the Sun's heat and they care for the workforce's children.

Reminiscent of Turner's frontier thesis, migrants come to Fort McMurray looking for opportunities. I spoke with one woman whose husband was paid $25,000 by an oil company to come to Fort Mac from India as a skilled temporary worker. When I mentioned hearing of workers who had developed "allergies" to the tar sands, she defensively asserted that Canada was the best place she has ever lived and worked, and that the oil industry has a huge "safety culture." Senses of safety and gratefulness to the Canadian state divide migrant populations as certain groups are handpicked as skilled elites or investors and thus relatively welcomed. However, unlike the American frontiersmen Turner theorized, some populations displaced from the global South do not always triumph over violence to become democratic, strong, freedom loving individualists. When systematic racism negates the possibility of employment, certain Somalis begin working insecure jobs: the labour of underground economies. Imam Abdi Hersy, a member of Calgary's Somali community, has lost count of how many young people from the

[415] Sara Dorow, Marcella Cassiano, and Chad Doerksen, "Live-in Caregivers in Fort McMurray: A Socioeconomic Footprint," Report for On the Move Partnership with the Depart of Sociology at the University of Alberta (Edmonton, January 2015), http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Live-in-Caregivers-in-Fort-McMurray-Dorow-et-al.-January-2015.pdf.

Somali community have been killed in Alberta in recent years.[416] Here, we again are left to grapple with a configuration of power that manages both life and death.[417] Yet, the continued presence of Somalis within states that make them "illegal," "criminal," or "disposable," is disruptive even as this mode of disruption is not necessarily understood by leftist imaginaries of what is political.[418]

Stemming from Anna Tsing's inquiry into the hauntings that we have "been formed by, yet forgotten," what I've hoped to emphasize in this chapter is how displacement, insecurity, and criminality, are the necessary underside of abundance. I've turned to this underside, or underbridge, curious about what happens when we attempt to re-visit that which haunts visions of abundance. To conclude, I will ask, how can these hauntings allow for radical re-imaginings of the land, each other, and deeply ingrained notions of security, violence, and belonging?

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[416] Deaths in the Somali community occur as white workers protest about jobs being given to foreigners. CBC News, "Calgary Shootings Leave Somali Community Reeling," January 3, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-s-somali-community-saddened-by-recent-deaths-1.2888923; "Oil Sands Workers Complain They Were Laid off and Replaced by Foreigners Making Half the Wage," *Financial Post*, February 7, 2014, http://business.financialpost.com/news/energy/oil-sands-workers-foreigners-imperial-2014.

[417] See Achille Mhembe's expansion of Foucault's regimes of biopower (life management) in his articulation of the necropolitical. A. Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 11–40, doi:10.1215/08992363-15-1-11.

[418] As Jackie Wang argues, when "we rely on appeals to innocence, we foreclose a form of resistance that is outside the limits of law, and instead ally ourselves with the State." Wang, "Against Innocence: Race, Gender, and The Politics of Safety."

V. Conclusion

Radical Imaginations

"After God was killed in the bourgeois revolution, He went underground in order to be utilized as oil by its descendants."

- Antti Salminen & Tere Vadén[419]

"The world was born yearning to be a home for everyone."

– Eduardo Galeano[420]

"Without new visions we don't know what to build, only what to knock down. We not only end up confused, rudderless, and cynical, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics but a process that can and must transform us."

– Robin Kelley[421]

Oil is God. A reigning presence that defines how life is led in Western Empire. From our computers to our food systems, the presence of Oil rules us. Yet, as I write this thesis, we are told that the Athabasca region has left a state of abundance to enter the realm of oil downturn. Workers have been let off and projects have been cancelled.[422] Perhaps, partly due to the new carbon boom in the United State, and an array of new carbon booms, that have occurred across

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[419] Antti Salminen and Tere Vadén, *Energy and Experience: An Essay in Nafthology* (Chicago 60608: MCM' Publishing, 2015), 1.
[420] Parul Sehgal, "An Interview with Eduardo Galeano," *Publishers Weekly*, April 27, 2009, http://parulsehgal.com/2009/05/08/through-the-looking-glass-an-interview-with-eduardo-galeano/.
[421] Robin Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), xii.
[422] Stephen Ewart, "Ewart: Oilpatch Layoffs Confirm Recession More than Statistics Canada," *Calgary Herald*, September 2, 2015, http://calgaryherald.com/business/energy/ewart-oilpatch-layoffs-confirm-recession-more-than-statistics-canada.

the world. Perhaps, due to the more nefarious ebbs and flows of scarcity and abundance that characterize the oil industry. Perhaps, workers are being fired because the new forms of oil extraction in Northern Athabasca require less of a work force.[423] 2013 saw "oil sands investment reaching the new record high of $32.7 billion."[424] What work is that money doing and what does that capital mean amidst an atmosphere of downturn? What futures are linked to that speculative investment?

Numbers tell us only eighteen percent of the Athabasca deposits are shallow enough to mine from the surface.[425] The rest of the deposits must be accessed in other ways such as in situ drilling. By 2012, in situ production surpassed open pit mining.[426] The oil industry's turn to the tar sands was accompanied by a turn to other "unconventional" resources (tight gas, coal bed methane, shale gas, oil shale, heavy oil, and gas hydrates) and more extreme extraction techniques. As these resources and extraction techniques become conventional, new modes of extraction will become unconventional. Over time, as that eighty-two percent of the remaining deposit is also depleted, technological, political, and speculative ecological work, as well as regimes of violence, will be needed to make the abundant appear. The Geologist's glass: it never really empties, just becomes a different form. Already, the amount of carbon we have extracted has made the world uninhabitable for many but, as time continues, new stores of carbon will be "discovered." What pain do underground aquifers feel as we drill deeper into the earth? How

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[423] SAG-D, the in situ mining technology used to extract oil found deeper within the earth, relies on less workers than the truck and shovel method. The truck and shovel method which was previously the most commonly used method in the Alberta oil sands was surpassed by in situ methods like SAG-D in 2012. The expanse of geographical entanglements of in situ oil mining have led to the exploitation of previously unextractible regions. In situ mining projects stretches to the unceded Indigenous territories of BC for in situ relies on liquid natural gas, to Sarnia, a chemical processing center in Ontario that surrounds the Aamjiwnaang community.

[424] Government of Alberta, "Facts and Statistics."

[425] William Donahue, "In Situ Oil Sands – Get Ready for Massive Water Demands in Northern and Central Alberta | Water Matters," *Water Matters*, August 26, 2010, http://www.water-matters.org/story/401.

[426] Government of Alberta, "In Situ Development - Alberta Energy Heritage," accessed January 18, 2016, http://history.alberta.ca/energyheritage/sands/underground-developments/in-situ-development/default.aspx.

much of northern Albertan fossil fuels will stay in the ground? A question that I can only answer with another speculation.

Figure 8. Map of Alberta oil sands. (2006, NormanEinstein, Wikimedia Commons. Source Website: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Athabasca_Oil_Sands_map.png.)

The Grosmont deposit. "A Sleeping Giant." A deeper, harder, heavier version of the Athabasca formation. What the industry calls a carbonate bitumen. As the *Alberta Oil* magazine describes, "If only one third of the carbonate resource were proven recoverable, Canada could become the top-ranking country in the world in terms of oil reserves, ahead of Saudi Arabia and Venezuela." Looking at the map above, imagine an area that stretches from the south western edge of the Cold Lake deposit, just north of Edmonton, to a northern limit beyond the Athabasca oil sands deposit. An area that already messily blends with current realms of extraction as it quietly sleeps underneath. But, "there's a catch" for there always is; to date, "no company has managed to commercially produce oil from the formation despite various attempts dating back to the '70s. Carbonate bitumen is not included in provincial reserve estimates."[427] Some think SAG-D is the solution. Starting in 2007, Koch industries starting buying up land leases, geologists believe "a large portion of the reservoir beneath is carbonates." And so we wait, as the "out of control" expansion continues. Like cancer, the pain of extraction proliferates. When will the next recovery be announced?

During my visit to the northern town of Fort Chipewyan, I found myself amidst a community where cancer and death permeates conversation because of the downstream effects of oil. Community members tell me of death: of youth suicide, of rare cancers, of diabetes induced by high food prices, of residential school traumas, and of contaminated lands and animals. A dark irony pervades as the regional government builds a swimming pool because children are not allowed to swim in the lake. The community will not have the money to keep the pool running. People are advised against hunting and fishing but they continue to because it is a way of life. The air up north is crisp and smells of the earth. Somedays, the air carries sulfur. I speak with

[427] Jesse Snyder, "Sleeping Giant: Can Canada's Other Mammoth Bitumen Deposit Be Commercialized?," *Alberta Oil Magazine*, September 15, 2014, http://www.albertaoilmagazine.com/2014/09/sleeping-giant/.

Alice, the Dene woman I mentioned earlier, as her grandchildren and dogs run around a yard brimming with plant life. We speak of how the oil industry is moving north, and she tells me with all the harm endured by the water, the industry is already here and has been here for a while. We speak of recent explorations in the middle of Lake Athabasca. She guesses they're looking for uranium. Eldorado.[428] Uranium city, located on the northern shore of Lake Athabasca, was abandoned by industry and government in the 1980s. The memory of the site lingers, she tells me, there are still green tailings ponds. Here, oil expansion forecloses the possibility of a future, and if at some point, it ends, she quotes another elder, the men will walk away with their money into the sun. But, in the face of extractive futures, the future contains worlds to be fought for: "We have to stand up until the end. It's not about us, it's for our grandchildren, and great grandchildren and those not born yet. We need to leave something for them."

With energy security comes an insecurity that is felt by the land, and by communities inhabiting localities of precarity across the earth. The two are co-constitutive, energy security is made through insecurity. Over 145 black bears were culled in 2012 because they foraged for food in Fort McMurray work camps and there is no room to ask, why they are there in the first place?[429] What hunger and displacement caused them to forage? In 2014, a black bear killed an oil sands worker.[430] Storms. Droughts. Spills. Leaks. Resource Rebellions. Cancer. We are buried in a thick history, but, this doesn't mean that *better* worlds are not possible. The crafting

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[428] Uranium remains a substance the industry believes could one day replace liquid natural gas as power for unconventional oil extraction. Sweeny, *Black Bonanza, Alberta's Oil Sands and the Race to Secure North America's Energy Future*, 143; John Lorinc, "Using Nuclear Power to Extract Oil?," *New York Times*, April 27, 2009, http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/using-nuclear-power-to-extract-oil/.
[429] "145 Black Bears Killed In Oil Sands," *The Huffington Post*, February 22, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/02/22/black-bears-wildlife-alberta-oil-sands-tar_n_1293109.html.
[430] "Oilsands Worker Killed by Black Bear," *Global News*, May 7, 2014, http://globalnews.ca/news/1317616/oilsands-worker-killed-by-black-bear/.

of more liveable worlds is something we are all responsible for, although differently so. That said, even if the Athabascan downturn signals another revolution--a green revolution is what they might call it---we need to be weary of "the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us."[431] For a move beyond oil doesn't necessarily translate to a move beyond global capitalism and colonialism. Nor does the appearance of downturn mean that we have indeed moved beyond oil (see Figure 9 below depicting proposed and already existing major pipelines).

[431] Michel Foucault, "Preface," in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

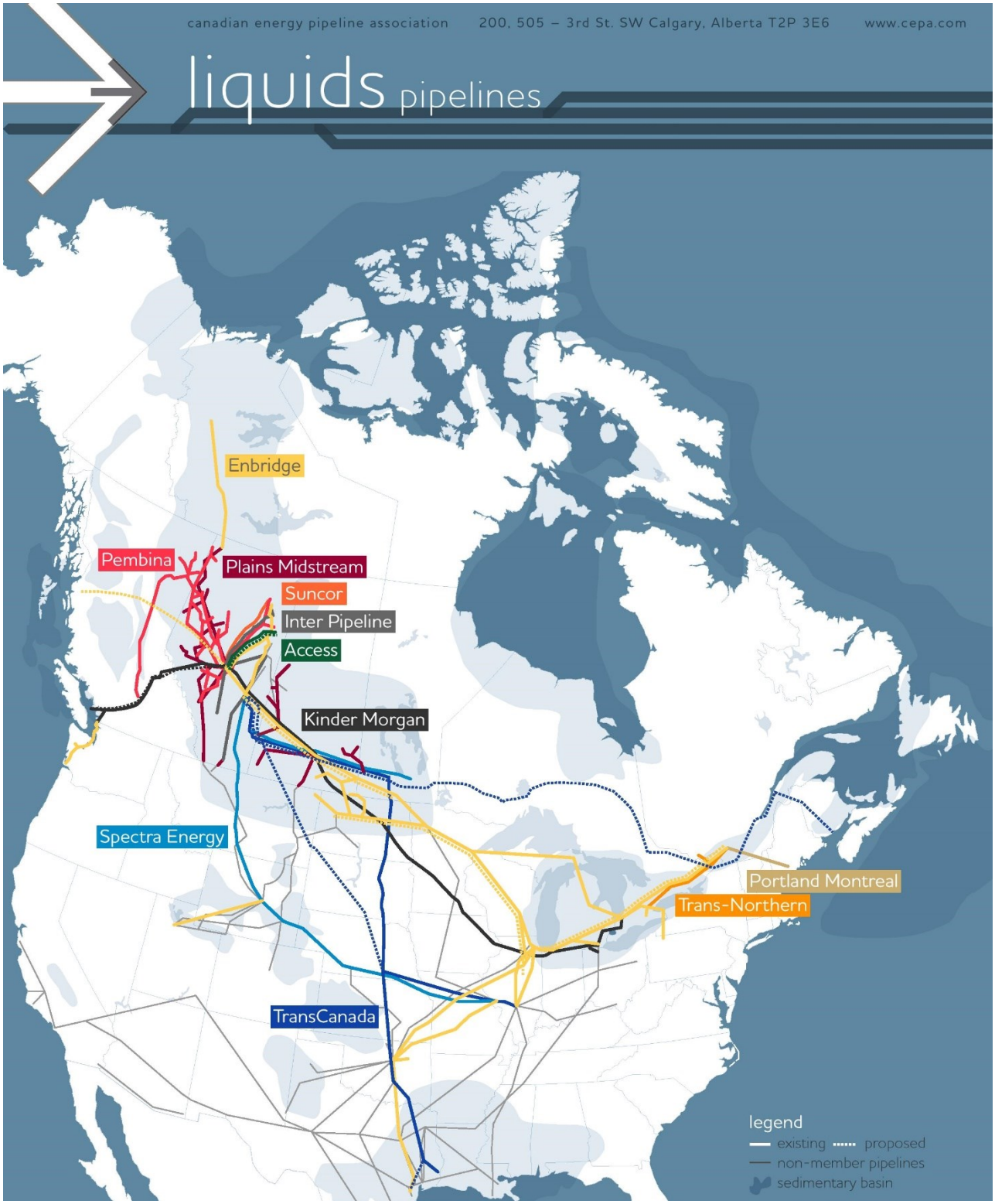

Figure 9. North American Liquid Pipelines. (Map by Canadian Energy Pipeline Association. Accessed December 6, 2015. Reproduced with permission from: http://www.cepa.com/library/maps.)

To move beyond, we need what Taiaiake Alfred calls a radical imagination, or perhaps an incredible array of radical imaginations, with which we can think, live, dream, and be with *differently*. In today's petrol permeated ecology, Alfred describes that a radical imagination "would mean rejecting the image of this land and everything on and in it as merely resources for capitalist enterprise."[432] This radical envisioning of the future requires tending to different modes of interrelation that are environmentally based. This type of future creating would ask for dramatic re-envisionings of what media we fuel and what media we make disposable. It would demand a dramatic alteration of every component of our energy-intensive lives. It would ask those "cultured in the North American mainstream to reimagine themselves in relation to the land and others and start to see this place as a real, sacred homeland, instead of an encountered commodity destined to be used and abused to satisfy impulses and desires implanted in their heads by European imperial text."[433] This radical imagination would require re-envisioning the land, each other, and deeply ingrained notions of security, violence, and belonging.

Here, I shift, and conclude with something else. The hope of alternative futurities. After the era of fire, Phillip and Coutu write, is an era of the earth, of the ground, of regeneration: an era of creative forces, of new visions and imaginations.[434] I find hope in recent announcements that potential trajectories for oil have been abandoned. Due to a global environmental movement led by Indigenous and racialized frontline communities, and fought in a variety of localities by both humans and nonhumans, certain imaginations of how to ship oil to international markets have for the instant been put to the side.[435] We can find a radical hope in this movement as well

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[432] Taiaiake Alfred, "What Is Radical Imagination?"
[433] Ibid.
[434] Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi, *Inkonze : The Stones of Traditional Knowledge*, 10.
[435] The Keystone XL pipeline as well as using tankers off the unceded coasts known as B.C. are two oil projects that have recently been abandoned.

as in creative imaginings that seek out the abolishment of colonial borders.[436] This radical hope is brimming in small instances of ecological co-becoming that shift the functionings of global economies, as well as the powerful refusals of grassroots social movements demanding alternative futurities. Radically different futures continue to thrive in the multiplicity of interrelations that make up global life despite the violent entrenchment of colonial economies; from Zapatista seed projects to the mutual aid network created by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, from the Tar Sands Healing Walks to mass movements against Colonial borders,[437] alternate worlds persist. Radical hope is found in these alternate worlds and alternate modes of interrelation.

This hope is also found in a photograph series by Amy Malbeuf, a Métis artist living in the land known to some as Alberta. Her artist statement lists the following words: landscape, transformation, memory, medicine, post-memory, colour, earth, collapse, blood, revolution, hyperbole, space, physical, trajectory, indigenous, poison, cold, survivance, future, story, love, magic, responsibility, language, ancestors, home.[438] The series shows her performing surrounded by winter, snow, mountains and trees. She wears a white body suit, and marches into the snow, blending her body with the vast whiteness of the covered earth. She takes the white suit off to show her layered colors beneath. She unlayers, stripping colored suit after colored suit. She moves through the colors before lowering her body to the ground, naked. Her ear to the ground.

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[436] Amongst the inevitable, there has been a vitalizing anti-colonial scifi movement. Walidah Imarisha and adrienne mare brown, eds., *Octavia's Brood* (Oakland: AK Press, 2015); RPM, "The Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape," *Revolutions Per Minute: Indigenous Music Culture*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://rpm.fm/music/download-indigenous-futurisms-mixtape/.

[437] Schools for Chiapas, "GMO-Free Zapatista Seed Corn," accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/store/coffee-corn-and-agricultural/gmo-free-zapatista-seed-corn/; "Native Youth Sexual Health Network," accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/; Tar Sands Healing Walk, "Stories," accessed December 6, 2015, http://www.healingwalk.org/stories.html; Democracy Now, *Over 1.5 Million March for Immigrant Rights in One of Largest Days of Protest in U.S. History*, accessed January 18, 2016, http://www.democracynow.org/2006/5/2/over_1_5_million_march_for.

[438] Amy Malbeuf, "About," *Artist Statement*, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.amymalbeuf.ca/about-avenue/.

Body breathing. “Unbodied Rebirth.” Memory and postmemory. Identity and the land. Her ancestors. Your ancestors. Their stories and the future. Bodies interwoven with the earth. Trees, Mountains, and Dirt. Trauma. Transformation. What does she hear below?

Figure 10. Still from "Unbodied Rebirth". (Amy Malbeuf. Banff National Park. 2011. Reproduced with permission from artist. Source website: http://www.amymalbeuf.ca/#/still-avenue/.)

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