Endurant Bodies/Atmospheric Borders: Race, Indigeneity, and Transmedia Art in Contemporary Canada

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ABSTRACT

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Tyler Morgenstern

Interrogating post-9/11 shifts in the institutional and discursive organization of policing and incarceration capacities, state surveillance practices, and citizenship and immigration policy, this work argues that the contemporary Canadian state manages the boundary between the (normatively white) social body it names and its Indigenous and racialized Others by way of an *atmospheric bordering regime.* An ambient system of disciplinary pressures that overreaches the state's territorial limits, this regime functions as a technology, simultaneously representational and irreducibly material, for moving bodies through and *removing bodies from* the state by consolidating and ascribing, to some bodies more than others, particular forms of racial and Indigenous difference – interrelated and co-constitutive, yet never strictly equivalent. Through this process, racialized and Indigenous bodies are variously configured as strange, backward, and contaminating; as 'points of tension' that, for threatening to rend a "shared atmosphere" (Ahmed, 2014, para. 15) of national belonging, are targeted for exclusion, expulsion, and elimination. While tracing how these dynamics weave through specific discursive artefacts (policy documents, press releases, news reports, legal proceedings, and governmental pronouncements), I also emphasize how critical representational practices might hold open the possibility of contestation. To this end, I turn to the work of four contemporary Indigenous and racialized artists working in Canada, exploring how their transmedial practices recast our embodied encounters with difference, and help us to grasp at ways of being in touch with o/Others across and *against* the racial and (settler) colonial logics embedded in the labour of atmospheric bordering.

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Introduction: Restless Edges

To write of the border, Gloria Anzaldùa claims in 1987, is to undertake the difficult work of centring an edge; to place at very the core of one's critical efforts precisely those experiences, phenomena, and epistemologies presumed to live at the periphery of a given social world. And it is to account as well, Anzaldùa suggests, for how the border lives not simply as an abstraction inscribed across an empty territory, but also in the very bodies of those who would traverse it, coming to rest in and on the flesh itself: etched into the skin, carried on the back, a wound that refuses to heal. For Anzaldùa, this is not a merely diagnostic labour. It is, rather, a transformative one: a *striving* both for a different way of living and a critical consciousness that does not abide the violent, essentialist sifting out of self from o/Other, here from there, physical from metaphysical. It is less a methodology than a world-making practice that attempts to nourish non-coercive encounters within and across difference: "the new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity…Not only does she sustain contradictions, *she turns the ambivalence into something else*" (p. 101, my emphasis). Wary, of course, of its specificity to the US-Mexico borderlands from which she wrote, this project began as an effort to think Anzaldùa's challenge in relation to another, notably less-studied site of geopolitical cleavage, one that cuts much closer to my own geographies: the Canada-United States border.

In particular, I was interested in the sweeping discursive, technical, and institutional renovation it underwent in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks; how swiftly it was transformed from the world's longest (so-called) undefended border into the world's longest *secure* border (Conway & Pasch, 2013; Roberts & Stirrup, 2013). In what, I wanted to ask, did this different sort of 'edge' consist? What legal frameworks, technical capacities, and discursive and representational strategies were involved in its production? And, more importantly, how has it impinged upon the lives and bodies of those who would traverse and contest it? Those whose very movements, socialities, subjectivities, and corpo-realities seem to disrupt its integrity? Given, for instance, the virulent racism that saturates so much post-9/11 North American political discourse and visual culture (see Puar, 2007, 2002; Thobani, 2007; Baaba Folson & Park, 2004), how has the securitization of the 49th Parallel produced new configurations of racial difference –

or modified existing ones – and how have these shifts conditioned the movement of racialized migrants into, through, and out of the space of the Canadian state?

How are these dynamics, moreover, ensconced within the ongoing exercise of settler-colonial rule in Canada, a form of governance that involves not only "the summary liquidation of Indigenous people" and "the dissolution of native societies," but also the concomitant erection of "a new colonial society on the expropriated land base" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 338)? What does it mean to securitize a border in the interest of regulating the mobility of racialized migrants when that border already, as Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson (2014) writes, cuts through and "strangulate[s]" Indigenous geographies and sovereignties (p. 3)? And if this strangulation, as Coulthard (2014, 2007), Povinelli (2006, 2011a), Lauria Morgensen (2006), Thobani (2007), Deloria (2004), and others suggest, is inextricably bound up with representational and discursive regimes that produce Indigenous bodies as out of place and out of time – fragments of a world either already extinguished or fated to disappear – how do we account for the ways in which such colonial scripts overlap and intersect with those of Islamophobia, anti-blackness, and Orientalism, all of which deeply inform post-9/11 bordering projects? How does the secure border, in other words, function as a technology for producing and governing distinct yet interlocking and mutually-reinforcing configurations of racial and Indigenous difference?

Further, following Anzaldùa, I was and remain deeply concerned with the question of critique, with the labour – for it is *work* – of imagining and enacting forms of embodied life that are otherwise to those the border can abide; "present future[s]" that overgrow the material, discursive, and political parameters of settler colonialism and migrant exclusion (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. iv). From the beginning, what I have meant to ask is this: if bordering operates in contemporary Canada as a mechanism for producing certain forms of Indigenous and racial difference, and if this mechanism is bound up with the governance of real, fleshy bodies – with moving bodies through and *removing bodies from* the space of the state – what might it take, aesthetically, discursively, and materially, to interrupt it? Put another way: in a post-9/11, duratively settler-colonial, and increasingly (though not newly) migrant-exclusionary Canada, might certain representational strategies open out ways of negotiating difference that outstrip the

assemblage of techniques by which the Canadian state not only configures racialized and Indigenous bodies as Other, but indeed precarizes the lives of those same Others?

But while Anzaldùa's call to centre the border initially helped to bring these questions into view, upon extended consideration of the actual legislative frameworks and bureaucratic processes in which Canadian bordering consists today, it began to lose something of its methodological and conceptual traction. Indeed, the very distinction between centre and edge is troubled by the ways in which recent Canadian securitization programs render the border both increasingly obdurate to passage by particular bodies *and* fundamentally de-centered, dis-placed, and discontinuous. Though the geophysical site of the border remains, in many cases, a scene of overtly militarized control, the work of bordering as I am conceiving of it is of a much broader sweep, encompassing an interlocking set of immigration and citizenship frameworks, surveillance and intelligence gathering practices, and policing and incarceration systems that operate not only away from the border, but beyond the territorial limits of the state itself, and oftentimes in ways that render those limits slippery and elusive. When border policy works, for instance, to curtail the movement of migrant populations at their points of origin, or to render naturalized citizens stateless, or yet to expel people from the state while keeping them within its physical boundaries, where exactly *is* this border that is being governed, and can it be said that the gesture of 'centring' is adequate to the task of grasping its representational, discursive, and material complexity? How are we to account for the forms of difference it consolidates when it is no longer where or what we think it is? How does one centre so restless an edge?

The essays that follow represent a sustained engagement with this problematic. Together, they comprise an effort to take seriously the question of how one is to conceptualize a border when the metaphorical resources with which it is conventionally associated – fences, walls, and roadblocks; centres and edges – are not only strained by the task, but perhaps even occlude the true scope of its operations by privileging actualized sites of control over the pervasively and increasingly *virtual* character of bordering projects in the contemporary moment (Hameed & Vukov, 2007). Here, I am following Hameed & Vukov (2007), who in their evocative reading of Ali Kazimi's 2004 film *Continuous Journey*, turn to Gilles Deleuze's account of virtuality in *Difference and Repetition* to describe Canada's post-9/11 migrant exclusion tactics as "a set of

forces or potentialities that evade visible or sensory form yet exert real effects" (p. 88), most of all on racialized bodies. Of course, the proliferation of such tactics is by no means a uniquely Canadian phenomenon. In many places around the world, conventional walling projects are now routinely conjoined with tactics and technologies – preemptive exclusion measures, drastic reductions in refugee allowances, massively distributed surveillance networks – that operate in a more spatially and jurisdictionally ambiguous register. Take, for instance, the US Department of Homeland Security's Integrated Fixed Tower program, which aims to establish a 'virtual' border fence in southern Arizona using tower-mounted surveillance cameras (Longmire, 2015).

Nonetheless, this virtuality does a very particular kind of political and discursive work vis-à-vis Canadian liberalism. In allowing "contemporary policy discourses to maintain a celebratory mythos of inclusivity that denies and erases racialized and exclusionary effects and practices" (ibid.), it helps to close the gap between the (increasingly inoperative) tolerance imperative of state multiculturalism and the post-9/11 securitization imperative to aggressively track and govern the lives of visible Others. This project is conceived in response to, and as a way of negotiating, this particularity. Cutting an itinerant path through Media Studies, Postcolonial and Critical Race Studies, Indigenous and First Peoples Studies, Art History, and Affect Theory, I attempt to account for how the increasingly ambient character of bordering in Canada is not simply coincident with but in fact forms one of the conditions of possibility for racialized modes of governance; how precisely for falling away into a kind of virtualized bureaucratic fog that fails to register its own racial and colonial specificities, the bordering practices of the contemporary Canadian state become all the more capable of reproducing a normatively white social geography predicated on both the exclusion of racialized migrants and the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples. As a way of elaborating these dynamics, I seek recourse to a conceptual and metaphorical framework that, while inspired by Anzaldùa's moving prose, nonetheless takes distance from the language of centre and edge. In its place, I offer the notion of an *atmospheric border*.

An Atmospheric Border:

To turn toward the atmospheric is to invoke at least two separate meanings of the term. Most obviously, it is suggestive of the physical object of 'the atmosphere,' that vast, all-

encompassing matrix that seems to so completely separate here from elsewhere and inside from out, even as it lacks its own proper location. An ambient meshwork of overlapping currents and flows, the atmosphere only occasionally interrupts the rhythms of the quotidian with any serious force. More often, it recedes from immediate view, forming the backdrop against which the real matter of embodied life is thought to unfold, the largely uneventful *structure* within which we find nested so many eventful social landscapes. What this description obscures, however, is the atmosphere's complex, variegated, and tumultuous internal structure. It is, after all, a striated and even sedimentary formation, consisting of so many layers that simultaneously nourish and frustrate vision; a medium whose infinitely variable patterns of transmission, absorption, refraction, reflection, and scattering throw certain geographies and morphologies into high relief while plunging others into shadow. It is a *hazy* medium, filled with cloud and dust, crossed and recrossed by errant signals, made dense with ash, smog, toxins, and waste, traversed by objects both biological and machinic, human and non-human. Moreover, despite its constitutive 'everywhereness,' it is a medium that time and again evinces the inescapable partiality of vision, that even in its immensity, cannot finally thwart the contingency of perspective: from one angle, it looks like sunset, and from another, dawn. What it reveals, in spite of itself, is the stubborn materiality and irreducible specificity of location. For even as it solicits fantasies of universal mediation – "we all live under the same sky" – it not only fails to extinguish but in fact *produces* quite specific sites and modes of apprehension; sites that are lived, felt, read, and navigated differently depending on one's location within its uneven distribution of pressure. The same sky, perhaps. But the same weather, the same storms, the same droughts and floods? Almost never.

Freighted with these connotations, the atmosphere offers us a uniquely evocative metaphor for the structure of Canada's bordering regime. As a figure – or as a resource for figuring – it helps to emphasize how in rendering exclusion, expulsion, and elimination diffuse in their constitution across social and physical space, contemporary bordering practices become in fact all the more intimately involved in the parsing of fleshy bodies along the lines of racial and Indigenous difference. Approaching the border as an atmosphere, in other words, helps us to grapple with the uneven consequences of its virtualization in the post-9/11 moment, focalizing how even those disciplinary forces that resist figuration exert real effects, contouring and

contorting how racialized bodies *in particular* negotiate the pressurized terrains of the settler state. Here, we might recall that when an atmosphere becomes sensible, it does so precisely as friction and resistance, as a kind of weight that pushes against the body from all directions. In nautical parlance, for instance, 'atmosphere' refers explicitly to a measure of pressure: an index of how much force a body can withstand before being overwhelmed, inundated, or evacuated of breath. The meteorological term 'atmospheric pressure,' similarly, describes how what seems to be little more than so much wind caught by the accident of gravity in fact *weighs* on us as we move through the world, clinging to the bodily surface, causing us to chafe, shudder, itch, and sweat. Atmospheric pressure, then, is felt at and *against* the skin. It lives as an acutely local expression of that which seems to exceed the local from the very beginning.

Drawing on these grammars, we might say that framed within the virtualized borders of a normatively white, migrant-exclusionary, and settler-colonial state, racial and Indigenous difference become pressures against which one might have to strain as they move, a kind of friction or contraction that slows and maybe even blocks one's passage into the world, that pulls all too close against the surface of one's body. We might detect an echo of Fanon (2008) here, who recounts the moment of racial recognition, or rather, the moment of being recognized *as* raced – "Look, a Negro!" – as a being "*sealed* into…crushing objecthood" (p. 82, my emphasis). This is a sealing that causes the bodily surface to become taut about its frame: "It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile" (p. 84). In this scene, the public declaration of racial difference effects a tightening of social space that Fanon lives as *a tightening of the body itself*. As one body "extend[s] into space" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 560) through the gesture of pointing, the Other to whom this pointing is directed is sealed, crushingly, in its skin. To call a border atmospheric, in other words, is to treat it as what Povinelli (2006) calls a "carnal" formation, a "physical mattering forth" of "juridical and political maneuver" that makes the flesh "available to politics" (p. 7) in particular ways, and to particular ends, constraining how and if certain bodies are able to extend into space.

This brings us to the second meaning of 'atmosphere' I want to tease out, this one perhaps less metaphoric than the first. Not simply a physical formation, atmosphere can also refer to something like mood or a general feeling. As Sara Ahmed (2014) writes, "we might

describe atmosphere as a feeling of what is around, and which might be the more affective in its murkiness or fuzziness: a surrounding influence that does not quite generate its own form" (para. 3). So deprived a body of its own, an atmosphere tends to get "picked up" (para. 7) by the bodies in its vicinity: think of how one 'feels the energy' when one walks into a boisterous room, or 'senses the tension' when a confrontation is at hand. But Ahmed contends that this is not always the case. For even when one picks up an atmosphere, one is not always welcomed into the space it fills. "We may walk into the room and 'feel the atmosphere,' but what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival. Or we might say that the atmosphere is already angled; it is always felt from a specific point" (para. 5). Note the shift in diction here: what was once a formless, murky affectivity becomes, depending on the specific relation of one's body to the spaces through which they pass, *pointed*. One feels this point – which might manifest as a being-pointed-at, as in a moment of accusation, condemnation, or even recognition ("Look, a Negro!") – most acutely when one arrives at an angle to a "shared atmosphere" (para. 15) that precedes them.

For Ahmed, this is a way of capturing the affectivity of whiteness: "I think whiteness is often experienced as an atmosphere. You walk into a room and you encounter it like a wall that is at once palpable and tangible but also hard to grasp or to reach. It is something, it is quite something. But it is difficult to put your finger on it. When you walk into the room, it can be like a door slams on your face. The tightening of bodies: the sealing of space. The discomfort when you encounter something that does not receive you*"* (para. 12, my emphasis). The recognition and attribution of racial difference *from within whiteness*, for Ahmed, is thus one way an atmosphere can become a barrier, a hardened surface that does not receive certain bodies, or a finger that points to those bodies as that which ought not to be received. "An atmosphere can be how a body is stopped, how some are barred from entry or stopped from staying. Atmospheres can be an institutional wall…a way in which some are stopped even when they appear to be welcomed in" (para. 21). In being pointed at, then, one might come to be read as a *point of tension* that ruptures, shatters, or rends a shared atmosphere. And for becoming such a point, one might find themselves targeted for excision or removal. The removal of certain bodies from a given space may in fact be one way an atmosphere is realigned with itself, how it once again comes to be "shared." "It is not just that feelings are 'in tension,'" Ahmed writes, "but that the

tension is located somewhere: in being felt by some bodies, it is attributed as caused by another, who comes to be felt as apart from the group." (para. 15).

As the discursive artefacts in which an atmospheric bordering regime consists – the seemingly endless policy documents, legislative instruments, news reports, and governmental pronouncements that strain to give 'Otherness' some kind of positive content – circulate through social space, embedding themselves in the grammars of the quotidian, they induce these sorts of affective (mis)alignments. They bring certain bodies to the surface, and indeed *surface certain bodies*, as points of tension that threaten to puncture from without or contaminate from within. Atmospheric bordering, in this way, is a mechanism that transmutes *descriptions* of Otherness into *assignations* of Otherness, where 'assignation' is understood as "the action of attributing as belonging to or originating in," as a *setting apart from* (OED). Learning from this etymology, atmospheric bordering can be thought of as a strategy for relocating the 'tension' of racial difference from the discursive, representational, and institutional scenes of its making to the racialized body itself. This process is akin to what Ahmed (2000) elsewhere calls "stranger fetishism" (p. 5), a discursive practice that "invests the figure of the stranger with a life of its own insofar as it cuts 'the stranger' off from the histories of its determination" (ibid). The production of such figures, who are seen to carry the tension of difference in their very flesh – as belonging to or originating in difference – is a means of exposing certain populations to the pressures of exclusion, expulsion, and elimination. And it is in these moments of exposure that the amorphous, virtualized disciplinary mechanisms that comprise an atmospheric border seize up, hardening against certain bodies and becoming how their movements are preempted, reversed, or stopped.

Pushing the Border Out:

It is important to note that I offer this framework in response to a specific set of legislative and policy instruments that, over the past decade, has dramatically reconfigured how different populations encounter, negotiate, and contest the limits of the Canadian state. In the wake of 9/11, working in lock-step with other Western nations, the Government of Canada moved quickly to implement a number of legislative measures designed to expand its ability to investigate, surveil, arrest, (preemptively) detain, and expel those thought to be terrorist threats.

Chief among these measures was the *Anti-Terrorism Act* of 2001, a rather frantic effort to thwart popular perceptions of Canada as an all too lenient and accommodating staging ground for terrorist activity. Among other provisions, the ATA made it easier for law enforcement agencies to obtain search and seizure warrants, and dramatically expanded the state's powers of preventative detention. While these powers were 'sunsetted' with a 2007 amendment to the ATA, multiple attempts have since been made to reinstate them, including a 2012 Senate bill known as the *Combatting Terrorism Act* and, more recently, a host of anti-terrorism measures introduced in the wake of an October, 2014 attack on Canadian parliament that left one soldier dead (MacKinnon, 2013; Ling, 2014). On January 30, 2015, for instance, Prime Minister Stephen Harper introduced a major new anti-terrorism bill into the House of Commons. Known as Bill C-51, this new framework, if passed, would allow law enforcement and intelligence agencies to "disrupt" the travel of anyone deemed a national security threat, criminalize the advocacy or promotion of terrorism, lower bureaucratic and judicial barriers to preemptive arrest and detention, and massively expand the surveillance and data sharing activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (Chase, 2015; MacLeod & Berthiaume, 2015; "Stephen Harper to make case for new powers to combat terror," 2015).

Shortly after the ATA was installed, the Canadian government extended its securitization efforts to the realm of border governance, introducing two interrelated measures meant to stem and more precisely regulate the movement of migrants into and out of Canada. In November of 2001, firstly, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) received royal assent, replacing the *Immigration Act* of 1976. Canadian prison abolition criminologist Mike Larsen (2008) writes that the IRPA "empowers the state to indefinitely imprison without charge or trial, and on the basis of secret intelligence, those non-citizens it deems to represent potential threats to national security. This takes place through the issuing of a security certificate, which explicitly declares the subject to be 'inadmissible' to Canada" (p. 21). Putatively the first step in deportation proceedings, the issuing of such certificates can in fact "mean a prolonged, indefinite term of imprisonment on Canadian soil" (Larsen, 2008, p. 21-22). This security certificate system, which "[extends] the potential limits of the violent intervention of imprisonment – for non-citizens – beyond the normal boundaries of the criminal justice system" (ibid. p. 24), is encompassed

within a comprehensive border management regime known as the *Multiple Borders Strategy* (MBS). "A broad strategy that re-charts Canada's borders for the purposes of enhanced migration regulation" (Arbel, 2014, para. 2), the MBS came into force in roughly the same moment as the IRPA. As Arbel (2014) notes, the MBS "fundamentally re-conceptualizes both the location and operation of the Canadian border. It not only re-charts, but also *de-territorializes* the Canadian border by redefining it as 'any point at which the identity of the traveler can be verified'" (para. 3). Quoting directly from the Canadian Border Services Agency, Arbel writes that the MBS casts the border "not as a geo-political line but rather a continuum of checkpoints along a route of travel from the country of origin to Canada or the United States" (ibid.). This physical redistribution of border control mechanisms works to "push the border out;" to extend it "beyond the formal edge of Canadian territory" so as to "facilitate Canada's ability to intercept individuals as far away from the actual border as possible" (ibid.). As well, it allows the Canadian government to skirt its own refugee protection provisions, insofar as such protections are only triggered once a migrant makes contact with the state's terrestrial borders (ibid). Offshore interception techniques, however, ensure that such contacts rarely occur.

Under the auspices of the MBS and IRPA, the Canadian government has implemented a number of immigration reforms that fundamentally alter how racialized migrants arrive on Canadian shores, if they manage to arrive at all. In Chapter Three of this work, for example, I discuss the *Safe Third Country Agreement*, a refugee policy pact struck in 2004 between Canada and the United States that surreptitiously coerces migrants to make asylum claims in the latter. As I will demonstrate, this policy quite explicitly condenses the logic of atmospheric bordering, insofar as it allows the Canadian state to precisely regulate the demographic and racial composition of its social body by irregularizing a whole range of migration routes, destination and origin countries, and indeed racialized bodies that lie beyond its territorial limits. In 2011, the 49th Parallel was fortified once again with the implementation of another binational pact, the so-called Canada-United States Perimeter Security Agreement. As its name might suggest, the Perimeter Security Agreement works to transform the whole of the North American continent into a single, integrated security theatre, fortified along its outermost continental edges. Among other provisions, the agreement effectively merges Canadian and American border data

collection activities, harmonizes the designation and tracking of "trusted travellers," and allows for not only the comprehensive sharing of security data between Canadian and United States authorities, but also its disclosure to certain third parties on occasions when that disclosure is deemed to be in the interest of national security (Government of Canada, 2011; Freeze & Wingrove, 2014). Here we see again how the expansion of the Canadian state's ability to track the movement of bodies into, out of, and through the spaces it claims for itself is in fact mediated by policies that more comprehensively knit that tracking into systems of transmission and disclosure that extend well beyond its own territorial limits.

Finally, in more recent years, these tendencies have found expression in reforms to Canada's citizenship regime. Measures such as the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act* of 2013, and the rather jaw-dropping *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* – both of which are considered at length in Chapter Three alongside the *Safe Third Country Agreement* – work together to make Canadian citizenship significantly more difficult to obtain, and far easier to lose. The former, for its part, imposes on would-be citizens a number of extremely onerous intention-to-reside requirements that render naturalized Canadians disproportionately vulnerable to status irregularization and even expulsion. More worryingly, the Act greatly expands and centralizes the Government of Canada's powers of citizenship *revocation*, investing the Citizenship and Immigration Minister with the ability to strip naturalized Canadians and binationals of their citizenship when they are found to be in contravention of any one of a number of poorly-defined (and in many cases innocuous) regulations.

In many ways, *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship* sets the stage for the staggeringly racist and breathtakingly arrogant *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, announced in November, 2014. Operating under the demonstrably false presumption that Canada *qua* Canada is fundamentally free of gendered violence, *Zero Tolerance* seeks to grant the federal government the ability to more easily prevent the arrival of, and expedite the incarceration and expulsion of, those accused of partaking in such practices as early and forced marriage, polygamy, and honour killings. If the racialized dynamics of the *Multiple Borders Strategy*, the *Safe Third Country Agreement*, *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship*, and the Perimeter Security Agreement lurk under a thin patina of administrative neutrality, *Zero Tolerance* lays them

absolutely bare, reshaping transnational migratory pathways according to a sweeping cultural and racial essentialism that discursively ties the spectre of sexual and gendered violence to a non-white body understood to arrive from without; *at an angle* to the "shared atmosphere" of Canadian racial and national belonging.

None of these measures, moreover, can be sifted out from the settler-colonial frameworks within which they are situated. Any attempt, after all, to 'strengthen Canadian citizenship' or to fortify Canada's national borders begins from the presumption that the Canadian state possesses an innate legal right to determine who may and may not inhabit the expropriated lands on which it is constructed. The legislative instruments outlined above, then, ought to be seen as not only fortuitous migrant exclusion mechanisms, but also as technologies for further strangulating Indigenous social and political orders, undermining Indigenous sovereignties, and configuring Indigenous bodies as so many threatening Others that exist somewhere outside of, beneath, or prior to proper national belonging. As Sunera Thobani (2007) observes, it is difficult to imagine how any "citizenship based on the destruction of the sovereignty of Native peoples" could ever be "expanded without deepening this colonial relation" (p. 94).

The Essays:

In the coming chapters, I will argue that these are the discursive and representational instruments that allow the Canadian state to produce racialized and Indigenous bodies as strange, out of place, or out of time; bodies that can be read as points of tension, perhaps even as barbaric – a term that, in one sense, refers to that which arrives from elsewhere, something literally "outlandish" (OED). At the risk of over-burdening the reader with nomenclature, we might refer to these instruments as *assignatory performatives*: linguistic and textual acts that not only produce the subject, but produce it as *being specifically apart from* the social and bodily space of the speaking 'I;' acts that collapse the distance between "you!" and "you *there!*" Throughout this text, I will follow this assignatory performative, tracing how it shapes and informs the work of atmospheric bordering. More importantly, however, I will strain to emphasize both its mutability and its *failure* to exhaust alternative renderings of difference. Attending to a set of contemporary artistic interventions that chafe at the very limits of representation, I will demonstrate how certain aesthetic practices might help us to imagine and enact ways of being in touch with others

within, across, *and against* the racial categories embedded in the Canadian state's bordering regime; different ways, that is, of configuring the relation between 'you,' 'I,' and 'there.'

I begin by exploring how post-9/11 shifts in the structural organization of Canadian policing and incarceration practices, refracted through the blatant gender discrimination woven into the legislative fabric of Indigenous-Crown relations, confers upon Indigenous women in particular a cruel and peculiar sort of visibility. Drawing on Geraldine Pratt's (2005) reading of Giorgio Agamben, I contend that Indigenous women in contemporary Canada are disproportionately exposed to the "decompositional force" (Povinelli, 2014, para. 16) of *abandonment*, produced as subjects at once hyper-visible to the disciplinary gaze of a carceral settler state, yet simultaneously *invisible* as persons worthy of robust legal protection. Abandonment, I will argue, functions as both a representational and an irreducibly material technology for disappearing Indigenous women from the social body of the state, even as they remain within its formal territorial limits. Alongside this analysis, I take up a pair of recent works by Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore – *Architecture for a Colonial Landscape* (2006) and *Here* (2004) – tracing the ways in which they quite viscerally disclose the mechanism of Indigenous women's abandonment while refusing to ratify its underlying conditions. Paying particular mind to how these works traverse the limits between minimalist installation, digital video, live performance, and web-based streaming technology, I contend that they induce a kind of affective recasting of the scene of representation, wherein the intertwined visual, discursive, and spatial economies that sustain gendered and racialized abandonment begin to break apart. In their place, I suggest that Belmore offers a capacious decolonial feminist politics that overgrows the representational and object worlds of settler-colonial rule, and the bordering regime through which they are mediated in the contemporary moment.

In the second chapter, I develop some of the themes and critiques introduced in the first vis-à-vis a second key component of atmospheric bordering in post-9/11 Canada: the dramatic expansion and structural rearrangement of state surveillance practices. I will explore how, following the emergence of the Idle No More movement in the winter of 2012 – which saw tens of thousands of Indigenous people across Canada mobilize in opposition to federal efforts to expedite resource extraction activity on hitherto protected lands and waterways (Coulthard,

2014) – the Canadian state rapidly rearranged its surveillance capacities in the interest of containing Indigenous communities and social movements. Interpreting these shifts as the inheritance of a long-standing historical entanglement between the visual technologies associated with Western state surveillance regimes and the governance of Indigenous bodies, I draw on the work of Aaron Gordon (2008) to argue that the increasing surveillance of Indigenous people in contemporary Canada constitutes a practice of "containerization" (p. 125): a way of cathecting onto the bodily surface, and containing the body within, a form of racial difference that allows the settler state to police the limit between itself and its Indigenous Others; a means of *angling* the Indigenous subject in relation to the social body of the Canadian state. I also consider, however, how the very representational forms on which this practice relies form a site of pitched political contestation. I unpack this claim by turning to the work of Haida-Québecois artist Raymond Boisjoly, focusing on his recent digital photo series, *(And) Other Echoes.* Reading Boisjoly's work – which straddles the limits of documentary cinema, still photography, and even sound art – through recent Media Studies scholarship that explores the aesthetic and political implications of error and glitch in new media texts, I contend that by distorting the generic conventions of portrait photography, Boisjoly enacts a form of Indigenous affective and cultural transmission that scuttles Canadian-state efforts to containerize and ultimately eliminate Indigenous bodies, social worlds, and relational modalities.

Finally, in the third chapter, I attempt to integrate my sustained focus on the relationship between Canadian settler colonialism and atmospheric bordering with a consideration of post-9/11 citizenship and immigration frameworks. Emphasizing the interdictory, preemptive, and expulsive character of its migrant management tactics, I argue that the contemporary Canadian state increasingly induces what Sara Ahmed (2000) calls "strange encounters" between white, non-white, and Indigenous bodies. Through such encounters, Ahmed argues, the non-white body is rendered *strange*, "recognized as the body out of place" *in relation to* the white body, which, for its part, is configured "as (at) home." Less a scene of inclusive "interembodiment" than a provisional incorporation of otherness that ultimately gives way to practices of expulsion, the strange encounter allows for "the redefinition of social as well as bodily integrity" along the lines of racial difference. In the hopes of unsettling this circuitry, I

conclude by offer a reading of Abbas Akhavan and Marina Roy's 2012 exhibition *FIRE/FIRE*, comprised of a collection of 19th-century Japanese woodblock prints, two living matter installations, a major digital animation work, and a host of site-resonant interventions, all loosely threaded together by the transmedial migration of shared signifiers and referents. Thinking *FIRE/FIRE* in relation to both contemporary migrant-exclusion strategies and the histories of overtly racialized immigration law on which they are predicated, I argue that Akhavan and Roy establish a unique (and uniquely moving) scene of contact that, while immanent to the racialized and colonial governance of the Canadian state, is not finally reducible to the mechanism of the strange encounter. Rather, they perform what the historian Nayan Shah (2012) calls stranger intimacy, a way of being in touch with others within, across, and against state-sanctioned regimes of racial differentiation that strains for "exchanges between strangers of feelings, ideas, and actions;" exchanges freighted with "the capacity to create new ethical, political, and social formations of civic living and participation" (Shah, 2012, p. 275).

Notes on Method:

Though completed under the auspices of Media Studies, these essays – as the outline above might betray – are avowedly interdisciplinary, cutting a wide methodological and theoretical swath in the hopes of evincing something of the true sweep of atmospheric bordering. Nonetheless, throughout this work, I have laboured to offer readings of my chosen works that are simultaneously art historical, semiotic, and phenomenologically grounded. A few comments on what this means for the work as a whole are warranted here. To begin with, I have attempted to situate each work within, or in relation to, a particular set of aesthetic and generic traditions, considering how a given artist adopts, and perhaps adapts, the conventions of extant artistic movements and to what ends. In the first chapter, for instance, I consider what it might mean that, with *Architecture for a Colonial Landscape*, Rebecca Belmore cites not what we might recognize as 'traditional' Anishinaabe aesthetic forms, but rather the conventions of mid-century minimalist sculpture, conjoining that milieu's emphasis on the public, deliberative nature of meaning-making (Krauss, 1977) with an analysis of gendered violence under conditions of settler colonialism, a disciplinary matrix that structurally *precludes* certain bodies from becoming public subjects. Readers will find these considerations most fully developed in

Chapter Three, where I explore at some length the intimate material and historical relationship between Japanese woodblock printing and the development of competing imperial ambitions in and around Japan at the end of the 19th Century. This art historical work helps to more precisely contextualize the manifest semiotic content of each piece, threading their constituent signs and compositional strategies into dense networks of reference, suggestion, and connotation.

To unpack these fecund semiotic pathways, I draw primarily on the work of Roland Barthes (1979), who in *Camera Lucida* develops an account of visual semiosis that resonates with my own abiding interest in images as sites of affective investment and – recalling Sara Ahmed (2000; 2004) – orientation; as elusive, allusive, and elliptical arrangements of reference that impress upon us in particular ways. We find the trace of this approach in Barthes' much-cited distinction between a photograph's two levels of 'interest,' its s*tudium* and *punctum*. The former, for Barthes, refers to the "*average* effect" of a given photo, its ability to draw an inquisitive glance on the basis of its overall coherence with "a classic body of information," a kind of quotidian cultural matrix (p. 25-26). Given its commensurability with its surroundings, a photo that operates fully in the ambit of the studium possess only a weak semiotic power. While it can surprise by a "principle of defiance" (p. 33) and illustrate or document that which is remote from us, it strains to transmit any particularly compelling affective or critical charge. Barthes even claims that it is capable of signifying only when it assumes a "mask" that allows all that is "too impressive" to be "quickly deflected" (p. 36). This "*docile interest*" belongs to what Barthes calls a unary photograph, which "emphatically transforms 'reality'…without making it vacillate (emphasis is a power of cohesion): no duality, no indirection, no disturbance" (p. 40). The punctum, by contrast, is decidedly more solicitous, an "element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces [the viewer]," a "pointed instrument" that leaves a "wound" on his or her body (p. 26). It is a sign, or perhaps an arrangement of signs, that punctuates and punctures the image's studium. These elements, scattered across the photographic surface, are "so many *points,*" in the sense that they point toward the viewer, evincing one's implication in the image. The punctum, writes Barthes, "arouses great sympathy in me, almost a kind of tenderness" (p. 43). Tellingly, the language Barthes employs here is of a corporeal stripe. He speaks of wounds, slashes, cuts, and arousal. The punctum, then, is involved in a semiotic

process that exceeds pure visuality, working on and through the fleshy body of the viewer, inducing deeply felt and often unsettling affective (re)alignments, and leaving impressions where the studium failed to do so: "I recognize," writes Barthes, "*with my whole body*" (p. 45).

Readers will no doubt note the influence of this account on my interpretive practices. Indeed, in all three chapters, I strain to "recognize with my whole body," considering what is at stake when I – positioned to inherit and reproduce the privileges of white settler subjectivity and migrant-exclusionary national citizenship – find myself *moved* by a work that takes up questions of race, empire, Indigeneity, or colonialism. This being-moved, for Barthes and for me, is a mark of a work's critical potential; an affective sign of a generative semiotic indeterminacy. If the studium is "ultimately always coded" (p. 51), the punctum escapes this coding as an unresolved affective charge that compels the viewer to feel their way into a different understanding of the represented subject. But even as I find this account productive, I wish to take some distance from it on two key points. In the first case, Barthes, in my estimation, quite dramatically overstates the disruptive power of the punctum, freighting it not only with the ability to draw us into relation with the image, but indeed to annihilate the image altogether. Writing of a photograph of a "blind gypsy [sic] violinist," he declares, "its textures give me the certainty of being in Central Europe," adding parenthetically, "here, the photograph really transcends itself: is this not the sole proof of art? To annihilate itself as *medium,* to be no longer a sign but the thing itself?" (p. 45).

Here, the punctum becomes a trigger for a kind of virtual transport, rendering the represented figures and landscapes so utterly knowable as to totally collapse the very real material, historical, and indeed political distances between the viewer and the photographic subject. Transposed into a representational and juridical scene predicated on settler-colonial and migrant-exclusionary governance, this collapse is particularly troubling, insofar as it renders unavailable to thought the radical asymmetries built into colonial and white supremacist political formations (here, we might again detect an echo of Fanon, recalling his claim that the material conditions of coloniality thwart the 'mutuality' of recognition presumed in a Hegelian schema). As we will see in Chapters Two and Three, the production of visible, knowable others, be they racialized migrants or Indigenous populations, has historically been and in many ways remains a privilege of the colonizer, and as such is bound up with the material and symbolic violence of

colonization writ large. What I mean to say, paraphrasing Coulthard (2014) in *Red Skin, White Masks*, is that under certain material and discursive conditions, the affective realignments solicited by the punctum may in fact surreptitiously ratify the very asymmetries of location and power Barthes seems to think them capable of disrupting. Perhaps this is the movement that permits Barthes, as T.J. Demos (2013) argues through a reading of Vincent Meesen's 2009 film *Vita Nova* in *Return to the Postcolony*, to either forget or wilfully obscure his own familial ties to the French-African colonial relation he so elegantly critiques in his canonical reading of *Paris Match* in *Mythologies*. Any attempt to reckon with how we are moved by images, then, ought to be accompanied by a critical engagement with the actual conditions and effects of this movement. How are we to be moved, that is, without being moved *toward* interpretive practices that ratify wretched, abusive relations? This is a challenge I attempt to keep close at hand throughout this work.

This problem is related to a second tendency in Barthes' work that I wish to resist in my own. Even as the punctum inaugurates a form of semiosis that works directly on the viewer's embodied encounter with the image, it remains in Barthes' account, tethered to the production and transmission of *meaning.* For all its eruptive and disruptive tendencies, the punctum is still configured as a means of coming to *know* the world more fully, in greater resolution. It is, for Barthes, is a kind of aperture onto the networks of reference that pass through an image, an opening or a cut that allows the viewer to see what lies *beneath* the image surface. To be clear, I do not wish to dispute the claim that an unsettling affective charge can indeed occasion a careful, committed engagement with the referential economies in which an image is ensconced. And yet, I want to (again) emphasize 1) how when images of Others produced under conditions of violence and dispossession are understood as repositories of knowledge *about* those Others, they can and often do ratify those same exploitative conditions; and 2) the fact that the image surface itself, even without being subjected to the demand that it mean, can still impress upon us, affectively recasting our engagements with the world and those in it. We need not, in other words, purchase the Real at the expense of reality.

This second claim is central to the analyses that follow, and derives in large part from the work of Laura Marks (2000), Adrian Ivakhiv (2014), Bishnupriya Ghosh (2011), and, at least

genealogically, the work of American pragmatist philosopher C.S. Peirce. For Peirce (1997), semiosis is at least tripartite. It is the product of the sheer *quality* of a thing – its so-called firstness – our embodied reaction to or "struggle" (p. 147) over that thing and its place in the world – secondness – and finally the *representations* and sign-vehicles that mediate between quality and reaction – what Peirce calls thirdness. Firsts, seconds, and thirds, moreover, are distinct only analytically. Structurally of a piece with one another, each one is an "element" (p. 192) of some larger phenomenon. Thought in these terms, semiosis becomes a perceptual *event* that obtains in the almost ecological relation of worldly qualities to embodied reactions and representational forms; an activity that is always affective, representational, as well as cognitive. According to this schema, the image – or in my case, the artwork – need be neither punctured nor dissolved into a system of interrelated references to matter. Rather, the image becomes something with an effective, affective, and material presence in the world, invested with a 'thereness' we negotiate in multiple registers at once. In recent years, Peircian semiosis has been taken up by a number of Media Studies scholars, particularly those concerned with how we are to perceive across difference without erasing the material specificity of distinct subject positions.

In *Ecologies of the Moving Image*, for instance, Ivakhiv (2013) draws on Peirce to offer a uniquely moving account of the multiple ecologies – perceptual, affective, institutional, environmental – that sprawl out around cinematic representations of nature. For Ivakhiv, many such representations operate as Peircian firsts: radiant, disarming visual fragments that, in their sheer 'thereness,' induce a novel affective orientation toward the natural world. While this open-ended moment of apprehension certainly recalls the Barthesian punctum, it quickly gives way to a complex account of the *material conditions* in which cinema, as a technical, aesthetic, and narrative apparatus, is encompassed, including settler coloniality and capitalist resource exploitation. Ghosh (2011), similarly, works through a Peircian semiotic framework to demonstrate how images of 'global icons,' even as they circulate through vast, heavily commodified visual economies, become involved in emphatically local scenes of political contestation. Indeed, for Ghosh, the critical efficacy of many transnational images obtains precisely in the situated efforts of (subaltern) audiences to negotiate within and across the real geopolitical distances they traverse, to engage representational networks that exceed but do not

evacuate the specificity of one's own location. Finally, though operating in a decidedly more Deleuzian idiom than either Ivakhiv or Ghosh, Laura Marks (2000) comparably offers a committed phenomenological account of "intercultural cinema," centring the image surface as a site of what Sara Ahmed (2004) might call "intensifications of feeling" (p. 10) that manifest not only visually, but also in the realm of touch, taste, and scent. For Marks, precisely by *resisting* semiotic availability and skirting the demand that an image 'mean' in a particular way, many works of intercultural film and video are able to evince the affective, embodied experience of dislocation and migration. And yet even as she develops this framework, she insists upon aligning it with a critical account of the material inequalities and oppressions built into the actual experience of (im)migration. "When we speak of embodied perception," Marks writes, "we must include the embodied *blocks* to perception and full participation in the world" (p. 152).

In other words, if the affective charge associated with Barthes' punctum is to unsettle rather than ratify asymmetrical distributions of power – if it is to make the world "vacillate" – it must involve a rigorous critical engagement with those very distributions. By linking a close analysis of the discursive and institutional frameworks that comprise the Canadian state's atmospheric bordering regime with a phenomenologically-grounded account of contemporary visual art, this is precisely what I mean to do. Particularly for those viewers (and readers) who, like me, inherit the privileges of white settler subjectivity, this is a critical labour I do not think we can afford to forego. For to think seriously on how our affective alignments, orientations, and investments are shaped by state-located disciplinary regimes that produce us "as (at) home" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 53) is, perhaps, to become accountable to our ongoing implication in the structures of settler-colonial and migrant-exclusionary rule. It may be how we become and *remain* unsettled. It might be a way, as I hope to show in this work, of producing spaces where we feel ourselves, our worlds, and one another differently; spaces where we glimpse forms of community that push back against the acute, often suffocating pressures of an atmospheric border.

Chapter 1: Performing an "Elsewhere in the Here:"

Atmospheric Bordering, Incarceration, and Gendered Abandonment in Contemporary Canada

On the night of February 13th, 2014, Loretta Saunders, a twenty-six year old Inuk woman and student at St. Mary's University, disappeared after leaving her Halifax, Nova Scotia apartment building. Some two weeks later, following a wide-ranging search that (uncharacteristically) captured the attention of the national press, Saunders was discovered dead in rural New Brunswick, killed by two sublessees when she tried to collect on overdue rent. Saunders' body was found abandoned on the median of the Trans-Canada Highway, sealed in a hockey bag. At the time of her murder, Saunders had been preparing an honours thesis exploring the phenomenon of violence against Indigenous women in Canada. As her supervisor Darryl Leroux (2014) notes in a poignant tribute to his late student, Saunders was concerned to think this violence – particularly the disappearance and/or murder of some 1200 Indigenous women and girls over the past thirty years – alongside and through the juridical, institutional, and social inscriptions of Canadian settler colonialism: "theft of land base, legalized segregation and racism, residential schools for several generations, continued dispossession" (para. 10).

On March 3rd, four days after search teams recovered Saunders' body, Tyendinaga Mohawk protesters lit a fire and erected a teepee at the intersection of Shannonville Road and Highway 401, northwest of what is now Belleville, Ontario. Moved to action by Loretta's death and demanding that the federal government initiate a national inquiry into the serial disappearance and murder of Indigenous women in Canada, the Mohawk blockaded Shannonville for several days, carving out of a particularly harsh and exacting winter a small bit of hospitable space (Garlow, 2014). It was a place to gather, assert, and appear in the wake of yet another unbearable loss; a place for speaking, refusing, and remembering, but also a place for warming oneself against the bitter cold. In this sense, the blockade, though occasioned by a painful reminder of the "logic of elimination" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 387) on which settler colonialism is predicated, was not finally exhausted by grief. Rather, in the thick of loss, it seemed to retain a flicker or a trace of something else: a way of taking and holding place in a world structurally

configured so as to not house certain bodies; a something else that stood (and stands) defiantly in the face of the ongoing "social chaos" (Leroux, 2014, para. 10) of settler-colonial governance.

In this chapter, I attend to this 'something else,' asking how it might come into and disrupt the ways in which the Canadian state governs differently gendered Indigenous bodies in the contemporary moment; how it might open out the possibility of an "arrangement of existence" (Povinelli, 2014, para. 16) that does not disproportionately target Indigenous women for disappearance and/or elimination. I will attempt to develop this possibility through a close reading of the work of Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore, focusing in particular on her 2006 installation *Architecture for a Colonial Landscape,* as well as her more recent performance piece, *Here* (2014). I take these works up as a way of thematizing recent shifts in the discursive, legislative, and institutional organization of policing and incarceration practices in Canada, emphasizing how in rendering the limits of the Canadian state hazy and indistinct, such practices position Indigenous women as *simultaneously within and without* those limits, as embodied traces of an alterity that unsettles the space of the familiar-familial exactly because it is immanent to and constitutive *of* that space. It will be my claim that this peculiar representational apparatus functions as a technology for exposing Indigenous women to the "decompositional force" (Povinelli, 2014, para. 16) of abandonment.

Abandonment, Geraldine Pratt (2005) writes, drawing on the work of Giorgio Agamben, is a way of including particular bodies within a given social world precisely by way of their exclusion, a form of expulsion that operates *internal* to the community itself. With *Architecture* and *Here*, Belmore viscerally discloses the gendered and racial specificity of this mechanism, helping us to grasp how it hardens the putatively public space of the state against the bodies of Indigenous women. I will also demonstrate, though, how in enacting modes of refusal and endurance, Belmore resists ratifying the conditions of its possibility. Paying particular mind to how her transmedial passages through minimalist installation, live performance, and web-based streaming technology recast the scene of representation itself, opening it to new affective and sensory orientations, I elaborate how she begins to break apart the intertwined visual, discursive, and spatial economies that sustain gendered abandonment, making way for a decolonial feminist politics that overgrows the contours of both settler colonialism and atmospheric bordering.

Race, Space, and Gender in Settler-Colonial States:

It is perhaps necessary to begin in relatively general terms, with the category of space and its relation to the social organization of Indigeneity in settler-colonial states. The very notion of abandonment, after all, requires that we seek recourse to the grammar of inside and outside, incorporation and expulsion. At least initially, abandonment poses itself as a problem of location: where is this body in relation to that body? Where is the barrier between them? In what does it consist, and how is it governed? Indeed, as Pratt writes, abandonment is defined by a "complex *topological* relation of being neither inside nor outside the juridical order" (p. 1054, my emphasis). This turn to the language of cartography betrays something of abandonment's anchorage in the labour of *arranging* bodies in specific ways, of establishing a particular spatial distribution of embodied life. Under settler-colonial rule, however, this labour is invariably striated by the discursive production and ascription of racial difference; a process simultaneously material and representational, spatial and symbolic. As Blomley (2004) suggests, to inhabit the spaces claimed by the settler state as an Indigenous person is to find one's geographies suspended between the twin pillars of dispossession and displacement, where the former "refers to the specific processes through which settlers came to acquire title to land historically held by aboriginal people," and the latter to the "*conceptual* removal of aboriginal people…and the concomitant 'emplacement' of white settlers" (ibid, p. 109, my emphasis).

Settler colonialism, in other words, is related as much to the seizure of Indigenous land and resources as it is to the ways in which Indigenous bodies are inscribed within racialized circuits of recognition that produce them as expropriable fragments of a social order presumed to be bygone or lapsed, the bodily remnants of a prior formation that must be removed from the normatively white and eminently modern space of the settler society. In Coulthard's (2014) words, "settler-colonial rule is…a relatively diffuse set of governing relations that operate through a circumscribed mode of recognition that structurally ensures continued access to Indigenous peoples' land and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that co-opt Indigenous people into becoming instruments of their own dispossession" (p. 156). Settlement, then, might be regarded as a space-making and space-*taking* project overlaid with a racialized representational economy bounded on one side by the figure of the white settler and on the other

by a Native body targeted for extinguishment, either by outright liquidation or by more 'subtle' means, such as forced assimilation or legal, juridical, and political co-optation.

Blomley (2004), Razack (2002) and Krouse Applegate & Howard (2009), for instance, demonstrate how settler colonial formations are often marked by a powerful discursive opposition between Indigeneity and the urban. To flourish within the latter, it is often presumed, one must erase all signs of the former. Such was the underlying logic of initiatives like the American Indian Relocation Program. Begun in 1956, this program saw hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people migrate from rural reservation communities to major cities like San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles under the auspices of a vocational training initiative that promoted not only permanent urban settlement, but also complete cultural and social assimilation (Krouse Applegate & Howard, 2009). This and other such schemes, which directly reshape how Indigenous bodies inhabit the space of the settler state, seem to ensnare those bodies within a stultifying either-or proposition: *either* one fully assimilates into the social conventions of settler urbanness, emerging as a legible subject only once all visible traces of Indigeneity have been shed, *or* one retains an anchorage in the social, visual, and customary worlds of the reserve, an anchorage that one purchases at the cost of becoming inscrutable as a modern (read: white) subject. Povinelli (2006) puts it this way: "Dehumanization is the price [Indigenous people] must pay for even the most remedial forms of recognition…they are presented with a mirror that is actually a double bind – either love through liberal ideals of self-sovereignty and de-culture yourself [assimilate], or love according to the fantasy of the unchanging dictates of your tradition and dehumanize yourself [disappear]" (p. 288).

Though certainly a productive heuristic, this either-or schema does not quite hold when we examine how other axes of difference, gender chief among them, cut across the racialized economies of space that characterize settler-colonial rule. As Geraldine Pratt (2005) argues, Indigenous women who live in or migrate to the city are often implicated in its spatial and representational worlds in ways not easily reconciled with Povinelli's deculturaltion/ dehumanization binary, which, in some ways maps on to a more general inclusion/exclusion schema. Take, for instance, Razack's (2002) powerful (though not uncontested or unproblematic; see Kwe Today, 2014) analysis of the 1995 murder of Pamela George, a member of the Saulteaux

First Nation (Ojibway) and a former resident of the Sakimay reserve near Regina, Saskatchewan. As a way of supporting her two young children, George occasionally visited Regina to engage in sex work. On April 17th, 1995, during one such visit, two nineteen-year-old white men murdered George after purchasing sexual services from her in the course of a night of heavy drinking. Razack claims that in passing through and working the Stroll – an area of downtown Regina frequented by Indigenous sex workers – George was in fact passing through what she calls a "degenerate space" (p. 155): a materially-bounded urban outcropping wherein the personhood of Indigenous women is suspended and displaced by the localized convergence of white supremacy, coloniality, and patriarchy. As a result, Razack demonstrates, George was repeatedly configured throughout her own murder trial as having gotten "little more than she bargained for" (p. 127), her death reduced to an unfortunate yet somehow logical – and thus excusable – consequence of her spatial itineraries. In Razack's words, "because Pamela George was considered to belong to a space of prostitution and Aboriginality, in which violence routinely occurs… the enormity of what was done to her and her family remained largely unacknowledged" (p. 125-6).

For Razack, rather than being tethered to her outright exclusion from the urban, George's death and her posthumous configuration as a disposable (or perhaps pre-disposed) subject, was contingent upon the fact that she inhabited the city in *particular ways.* Inside its spatial limits, exposed to its circuits of gendered violence, and involved in its libidinal and erotic economies, she nonetheless remained outside its promises of sovereign legal personhood and bodily integrity; within, and yet still "apart, elsewhere" (Spivak, 1989, p. 114). Critically, for Razack, this volatile position is ensconced within the broader spatial dynamics of settler colonialism: "white settlers displaced Pamela George's ancestors, confining her to Saulteaux nation and others to reserves. Pamela George's own geographies begin here…Forced to migrate in search of work and housing, urban Aboriginal peoples in cities like Regina quickly find themselves limited to places like the Stroll" (p. 127). It is in such places, where the inclusion-exclusion binary gives way to a more complex negotiation of migration, (im)mobility, exposure, and structural domination that Indigenous women are exposed to racialized and gendered violence, burdened with a peculiar sort of visibility that positions them as what Sara Ahmed (2000) calls the "outsider inside" (p. 3); within yet without the social body of the Canadian state.

It is crucial to note, as well, that this already complex distribution of exposure is made all the more ambivalent by the fact that urban Indigenous women frequently assert themselves *as* visible subjects through ongoing practices of resistance, refusal, and endurance. In cities across Canada, Indigenous women coordinate major advocacy campaigns and political demonstrations (Culhane, 2009), run friendship centres and grassroots education initiatives (Janovicek, 2009), serve as urban clan mothers to friends and family on the move (Lobo, 2009), and create and manage innovative cultural and artistic organizations (Dowell, 2013). Clearly, then, while the spacings of the settler state are formidable engines of violence, they are not beyond reproach, and neither are Indigenous women denuded of agency before them. Following Pratt (2005), then, I want to suggest that when reduced to a matter of neatly parsed insides and outsides, the question of subjective positioning vis-á-vis settler colonialism loses touch with those more ambivalent positions, often gendered, that are neither fully inside nor fully outside its grasp. These are zones of bodily life that, while surely precarious and often abusive, are also animated by forms of agency, endurance, and possibility that demand reckoning.

Policing, Incarceration, and the Familiar-Familial:

These dynamics find clear expression in the legislative frameworks enlisted by the contemporary Canadian state to govern the limit between its own social body and those of its Others. The post-9/11 expansion and atmospheric reorganization of incarceration and policing capacities, for instance, is particularly germane to the question of how Indigenous women in contemporary Canada are structurally exposed to the force of abandonment. A 2012 Statistics Canada report notes that spending on police has increased steadily in Canada since 1996, with the exception of 2012, when nationwide spending saw a meagre drop of less than one percent. As a result, in 2012, “there were 69,539 police officers in Canada” (p. 5) a slight increase over 2011. Expressed in terms of police strength (number of officers per 100,000 population) these figures place Canada behind other settler states such as the United States and Australia, but still well ahead of nations like Finland, whose police strength has in fact *dropped* by twelve per cent since 2002, where Canada’s has increased by seven per cent over the same period. (Statistics Canada, 2012, p. 8). This increase in the number of officers on Canadian streets, perhaps unsurprisingly, has been accompanied by, and contributed to, repeated efforts to expand the federal incarceration

system. Take, for instance, the *Safe Streets and Communities Act* of 2012. Passed under the majority Conservative government of Stephen Harper, this bill explicitly aligns the Canadian criminal justice system with a so-called 'tough on crime' approach to law enforcement and incarceration, a strategy that has proven disastrous for racialized populations in nations like the United States.

A conglomeration of nine smaller bills proposed by the Conservatives over the course of their earlier tenure as a minority government, *Safe Streets and Communities,* among other provisions, established new mandatory minimum penalties (read: automatic prison sentences) for a range of offences including the possession and trafficking of illicit drugs including marijuana, restricted the use of a number of 'conditional sentencing strategies' such as house arrest, and made it easier for law enforcement agencies to track, arrest, and publicly distribute information about known offenders ("9 key elements of the crime bill," CBC News, 2011). Two years after the bill's installation as law, the Correctional Investigator of Canada Howard Sapers announced in his annual report that the Canadian prisoner population had reached an all-time high, despite the fact that the national crime rate was at its lowest point in more than two decades (Brosnahan, 2013). "The growth in the custody population," Sapers notes, "appears to be policy, not crime driven. After all, crime rates go down while incarceration rates grow" (ibid. para. 9). These trends are repeated in Saper's 2013 report to Parliament: "the most visible change during my tenure as Correctional Investigator has been the growth in the overall size, complexity, and diversity of the offender population" (para. 2). Policing and incarceration, then, have become a kind of ambient threat in post-9/11 Canada, increasingly knit into the fabric of the quotidian, more intimately involved in the ways that bodies inhabit and navigate the space of the state.

The title *Safe Streets and Communities Act* is telling in this regard, in that it perhaps unwittingly betrays how the actual labour of policing has been spatially redistributed and diffused into the domain of not only the familiar, but indeed the familial (Ahmed, 2000): the 'safe streets' and boulevards that wind through our neighbourhoods, the parks and community spaces where our children play; a 'domestic' that is both and at once home and nation, or a domestic that completes home *as* nation and vice versa. It is, in other words, a way of *reproducing the familiar-familial precisely through the structural dispersal of the means by*

which that space is secured: the recognition, differentiation, and selective governance of the stranger – the non-domestic, the unfamiliar, the 'uncommon' that, in being (already) recognized as such, "allows 'the common' to take its shape" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 29). The stranger, for threatening to break in from without, must be sequestered, held apart as a means of rendering our supposedly shared streets 'safe.' Here, the performative act of naming a "you" becomes the assignatory act of naming a "you *there,*" an act of sequestration that allows the familiar-familial to be realigned with itself, remade as a particular kind of social and bodily space. Or rather, as a space that houses particular kinds of bodies. "It is the enforcement of the boundaries between those who are already recognized as out of place…that allows those boundaries to be established," Ahmed writes (p. 26). *Safe Streets and Communities*, then, can be read as atmospheric both in its structure and its effects. Precisely in effecting a dispersal of the institutional and discursive limit between the social body of the Canadian state and its Others, it becomes a technology for producing those Others as in need of containment through arrest and incarceration. These are strategies, as Itsuji Saranillio (2013) and Dayan (2011) note, for expelling certain bodies from the space of the state while keeping them within its territorial limits – a bordering exercise that unfolds not only away from the border, but in a way that renders its very form and location indistinct.

As always, these effects are not evenly distributed. Rather, this atmospheric realignment of policing and incarceration has disproportionately impinged upon the lives of Indigenous women. According to a 2012 Public Safety Canada report, Indigenous women are now the fastest growing incarcerated group in the country. Indeed, "over the last 10 years, the representation of aboriginal women in the prison system has increased by nearly 90 per cent" ("Aboriginal women imprisoned in soaring numbers," 2012, para. 8). More recent data published by the Office of the Correctional Investigator points to the true scope of this over-representation: "while aboriginal people in Canada comprise just four per cent of the population, in federal prisons nearly one in four is Métis, Inuit or First Nations" ("Aboriginal Issues," 2014, para. 1). Indigenous women, as a result, now "comprise 33% of the total inmate population under federal jurisdiction" (ibid). An internal Department of Justice report, obtained in late 2014 by the Canadian Press under the *Access to Information Act*, corroborates these findings in dramatic fashion: "The number of

aboriginal women who were locked behind bars in federal institutions grew a staggering 97 per cent between 2002 and 2012…By comparison, the number of aboriginal men increased by a comparatively small 24 per cent during that time" (Rennie, 2014, para. 2-3). Once incarcerated, further, Indigenous women are significantly more likely to be placed in 'segregated detention,' or solitary confinement, than other prisoner groups. In a statement released in response to a 2013 report by the Office of the Correctional Investigator entitled *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, Acting Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission David Langtry states "we are still seeing a disproportionate number of Aboriginal women in solitary confinement, which creates barriers to access to rehabilitation programs….Aboriginal women in corrections do not get paroled early if at all. Not only are they over-represented, they are serving more time" (para. 4).

It must be noted that these trends have not developed in a vacuum. Rather, they are refracted through the blatant gender discrimination woven into the very legal fabric of Indigenous-Crown relations in Canada. Prior to 1985, the *Indian Act*, the primary piece of legislation governing the Canadian state's position vis-à-vis the rights, claims, and legal status of Indigenous subjects, included a so-called 'out-marriage' clause, stipulating that when an Indigenous woman marries a non-Indigenous man, or when her patrilineal heritage is unclear, her Indian Status, already a dispossessive form of colonial recognition, can be revoked by the state (Suzack, 2010; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2014). This legal maneuver not only worked, and in its long afterlife *works*, to vulnerabilize Indigenous women by depriving them the benefits of membership in federally-recognized First Nations communities (coercing many into migrating to such heavily policed urban environments as The Stroll in Regina and the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver in pursuit of employment and housing), but also effectively tethered their legal personhood to that of their husbands and fathers. Mohawk Anthropologist Audra Simpson (forthcoming) refers to this as a process of "legal femicide," a way of suspending the subjectivities of Indigenous women between the assimilationist recognition politics of the settler state, the precarity that comes with being expelled therefrom, and the (hetero)patriarchal logics that run through both. In 1985, as a result of vigorous lobbying by Indigenous women, the out-marriage clause was repealed by Bill C-31. But as Coulthard (2014) and Simpson (2014)

demonstrate, not only has this done little to reverse the gendered power dynamics introduced by the original *Indian Act*, it has also seriously exacerbated tensions and divisions within Indigenous communities. As Coulthard (2014) writes, quoting Mi'kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence, "Indian legislation in the Indian Act has functioned so completely – and yet so apparently invisibly – along gendered lines that at present the rewriting of Indian identity under Bill C-31 in ways that target men as well as women are viewed as intense violations of sovereignty, while the gendered violations of sovereignty that occurred in successive Indian Acts since 1869 have been virtually normalized as the problems of individual women" (p. 93). "The result," argues Coulthard (2014), "has been a zero-sum contest pitting the individual human right of Indigenous women to sex equality against the collective human right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination" (p. 91).

This ongoing history of "legal femicide," particularly when conjoined with the atmospheric expansion of federal policing and incarceration practices in the post-9/11 period, renders Indigenous women disproportionately vulnerable to the disciplinary intensities of the Canadian criminal justice system, subjecting them to wretched forms of expulsion and sequestration while simultaneously de-producing them as subjects worthy of robust legal protection. It is a means of configuring Indigenous women as "outsiders inside" vis-à-vis both their reservation communities and the social body of the Canadian state; bodies that can be read as both unfamiliar and unfamilial. Neither fully included nor completely excluded, they are, in Pratt's (2005) words, abandoned. "The difference between exclusion and abandonment is the fact that abandonment is an active, relational process. The one who is abandoned remains in a relationship with sovereign power: *included through exclusion*" (p. 1054). That nearly 1200 Indigenous women have either been murdered or gone missing in Canada over the past thirty years (Leblanc, 2014), even as their communities have been the subject of unrelenting police scrutiny and disproportionate levels of incarceration, is grim evidence of abandonment's split personality. It is a decompositional force that straddles the conceptual and material limits of inside and outside, visibility and invisibility, exposure and privation; "a complex and gendered layering and enfolding of geographies of public and private" (ibid., p. 1057).

Performing Abandonment:

The bordering work done by police and prisons in the contemporary moment, then, is at once representational and irreducibly material, involving both the institutional sequestration of Indigenous women and the host of discursive strategies through which they are made sequestrable. The former is not reducible to an effect of the latter, and neither can the latter be seen as merely symptomatic of the former. The two are mutually-constitutive, forming an emphatically material discursive and representational matrix through which the Canadian state attempts to govern the bodies of Indigenous women. The question, then, becomes: what might it take to unsettle this recursive mechanism? If we can imagine a scene of representation wherein Indigenous women's bodies are *not* systematically targeted for sequestration and incarceration, what would that scene be? In what semiotic and affective alignments would it consist, what modes of response would it demand, and what other arrangements of existence might it make available to thought? I want to unpack these questions by returning to the work of Rebecca Belmore, tracing how in compelling viewers to apprehend, sense, and respond at the very limits of semiotic availability, she evinces the mechanism of gendered abandonment while refusing to reify it, offering instead a spacing of the world irreconcilable with its underlying logics.

I will begin with *Architecture for a Colonial Landscape* (2006), not only because it chronologically precedes and contextualizes *Here* (2014), but also because in explicitly invoking the architectural, it immediately centres not simply the notion of space *qua* space, but also the social, institutional, and discursive organization *of* space. Indeed, as what Bourdieu (1993) calls a "field of cultural production," architecture is marked off from mere fabrication by its close affiliation with specific forms of institutional power, the university chief among them. Particularly since the early 19th Century, when the field underwent a sweeping "professionalization project" (Stevens, 1998, p. 21) that heralded its emergence as a distinct, self-governing discipline within the academy, architecture has been suggestive of a certain educational and aesthetic pedigree. Though loosely bound to such fields as craft and manufacturing by the *techne* lurking in its suffix, architecture has long aspired to shed such utilitarian associations, drawing throughout the 19th and 20th centuries on various strands of

Critical and Aesthetic Theory to position itself as a world-making practice, a way of cultivating new and better forms of social, cultural, and political life (Stevens, 1998).

But if this view of architecture has figured prominently in avant garde theoretical imaginaries, it has likewise been central to the violent machinations of imperial nation-building and statecraft. Writing of the British colonial project in India, Metcalf (2002) evocatively describes the spread of European architectural forms through the subcontinent as "political authority [taking] shape in stone" (p. xiii). "Colonial buildings," Metcalf states, "helped shape the discourse on empire" in late 19th-Century India, functioning as material inscriptions of the rhetorics, ambitions, and narratives that energized imperial adventurism (ibid.). In this sense, "to study colonial architecture is to study the allocation of power and the relationships of knowledge that made up the colonial order" (ibid. p. xi). That the title of Belmore's installation so explicitly conjoins the architectural and the colonial, then, is no small matter. It immediately signals an engagement with the bricks and mortar – the weighty, stubborn materiality – of colonial power.

But by no means is this engagement merely titular. A recurring architectural theme cuts across the whole of the work. As installed at Winnipeg's AceArtInc in 2006, *Architecture* consists of two main components. Mounted on one wall of a darkened gallery space and stretching from floor to ceiling are three vertical projection screens, each one illuminated by a data projector mounted overhead. Set roughly equidistant from one another, the brilliant screens loosely recall the grand columnar façades of European neoclassical architecture. Metcalf (2002), again in the context of colonial India, draws an explicit link between the neoclassical milieu and the convictions of the imperial British state. "Classical styles," Metcalf notes, "affirmed Britain's ties to the continent, to the Palladian traditions of palatial architecture, and beyond, to those of Imperial Rome" (p. 3). Building in the classical style thus "[made] visible Britain's imperial position as ruler" (p. 2). Moreover, in fetishizing geometrical symmetry and mathematical proportionality, classical architecture offered a way of imprinting onto occupied territories the conceptual grids of European modernity. By constructing libraries, museums, administration buildings, schools, and courthouses in the classical style, colonizers not only extended the actual reach of European epistemic, cultural, and institutional authority, but also transposed *into* a spatial register Enlightenment discourses of scientific rationalism and mastery over nature.

Belmore's columns thus condense into the gallery space a sweeping set of power relations, gesturing to how imperial nation-building projects pull a particular "spacing" (Povinelli, 2011a, p. 9) of the world into place, how they become involved in the actual matter of bodily life. Indeed, in referencing the neoclassical style, *Architecture* even seems to rehearse the moment of emplacement on which settler colonialism in particular relies. Rather than preemptively sweeping away or replacing the architectural, institutional, and material inscriptions of colonial power, Belmore quite literally *re-places* them within the confines of the gallery, forcing us to come up against them, to feel small before them, to squint against their radiant surfaces. Contrary to those who would (and, like so many 'reconciliatory' settler states, *do*) treat it as a completed historical moment, Belmore thus insists upon the overwhelming "right here, right now" (Lauria Morgensen, 2011, p. 52) of settler coloniality. *Architecture* discloses the stubborn ongoingness of settlement, the *durability* of settler-colonial rule as form of governance that manifests as a particular institutional, corporeal, and spatial arrangement of the world.

Yet even in this gesture of re-placement, something is amiss. Viewed at close range, it becomes clear that Belmore's screens are not, in fact, the marble columns of the neoclassical colonial façade, but rather a series of unvarnished wooden planks bolted together in sequence. If the screens had initially been within the circumference of Palladian grandeur, a more careful inspection reveals that they are more closely akin to a scaffold, a series of flimsy buttresses thrown up in haste, as if to prevent the roof from collapsing. Yet given that the space is already neatly divided by a row of steel columns integrated with the skeleton of the building, this scaffolding seems somehow extraneous or excessive to the space. And so if Belmore repeats the moment of settler emplacement so as to signal its persistence, she repeats it with a fundamental difference, scuttling attempts to straightforwardly align *Architecture*'s exoreferentiality with mimesis. Even as she brings the institutional and material contours of settler coloniality into view, she resists reifying them, undercutting their stability through a strategic choice of materials. Significantly, this refusal to leave untroubled the obstinacy of settler-colonial rule only becomes apparent when we lean into the screens and attend to their textures, perhaps through touch; only when we begin to feel our bodies tilting and leaning in relation to the physical space delineated by the work; only when we begin to negotiate the *material specificity of the*

relationship between the body and its social, visual, and institutional worlds. The semiotic instability of the installation, in other words, quickly shades into an embodied experience of instability. The pitching of the body evinces a moment of affective "intensification" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 24) wherein viewers become physically and sensorially implicated in the making, the persistence, and perhaps the un-making of a colonial landscape.

This bodily and affective engagement, moreover, interrupts the distanced, contemplative viewing position prized by the colonial architect. As Metcalf (2002) notes, in addition to concretizing the discursive and ideational valences of the Enlightenment project, many works of classical colonial architecture were deliberately designed to provide settlers with sweeping, picturesque views of newly conquered territories. Indeed, colonial buildings were in many ways nothing short of landscape machines, grand optical devices strategically constructed and oriented so as to emphasize the vastness, the wildness, and the *sublimity* of unknown terrains. And the sublime, as Bock (2009) and Ivakhiv (2013) remind us, is always affectively bounded on one side by awe and on the other by a desire for control. Yet in Belmore's hands, the classical façade becomes a way of frustrating this appropriative ocularity, transformed into a site where confounding and disorienting affects heave to the surface, where we are quite literally moved – slanted, angled, pitched – such that our looking becomes invariably partial, never quite able to escape the 'here' marked out by the installation.

As if to redouble this resistance to visual appropriability, Belmore all but evacuates her screens of content, projecting on each one an austere image of a burning tire set against one of three nondescript backdrops. Yet while each projection is composed in roughly the same fashion, neither the horizon line nor the space behind the tires is visually continuous across the screens. Each tire is posed on a slightly different terrain and 'photographed' from a slightly different angle, set slightly further back or slightly further forward in its respective frame than the others. The central tire even appears to be nestled into the corner of some other built environment internal to the column itself (though it should be noted that, despite these small discrepancies, Belmore's depth-of-field remains aggressively shallow and her framing claustrophobic; the projections, barely wider than the tires themselves, are abruptly bounded by darkness). What had initially appeared as some durable and perhaps even palatial built environment, then, begins to

unspool into three distinct and discontinuous sites, each one restricted to and exhausted by the distressing image of burning waste.

Tellingly, this compositional strategy also cuts against Belmore's titular invocation of landscape, a genre central to the visual worlds of empire. Echoing and fuelling the doctrine of *terra nullius*, the landscape – in painting, photography, and cinema alike – has long offered colonizing nations a way of symbolically emptying terrains of their Indigenous inhabitants, of conceptually removing them from the spaces claimed the incipient settler state, as Blomley (2004) might put it. Rather than representing the complex social and material ecologies of Indigenous nationhood, that is, the landscape has historically worked to reduce these ecologies to a wild and mysterious Nature; a bewildering domain to be, on the one hand, consumed as a sublime aesthetic object, and on the other, conquered, civilized, and rationalized (Mitchell, 2002; Ivakhiv, 2013). Upending these conventions, Belmore's 'landscape,' nothing more than a series of strange vertical fragments fixed in awkward repose, discloses the material effects of the imperial projects through which landscape, as both a genre and a way of looking, was (and continues to be) consolidated: the erasure and extermination of Indigenous bodies, the systematic expropriation and toxic degradation of Indigenous territory, and the rupture of Indigenous arrangements of existence. Belmore's installation, then, lays bare the planks and rivets of colonial power, pointing to how its material inscriptions quite literally decompose Indigenous social worlds, evacuating them of all but the most desperate traces of embodied life, reducing them to what Povinelli (2011a) calls a "striated zone of indistinction and abandonment" (p. 128).

This return to the language of abandonment requires a pause. Above, I suggested that in contemporary Canada, abandonment is a peculiar and specifically gendered manifestation of the interlocking discursive, spatial, and institutional economies of settler-colonial governance. Akin to yet not exactly equivalent with outright exclusion, it disproportionately seizes on and hardens against Indigenous women most of all, expelling them from the social body of the Canadian state even as it exposes them to worst excesses of state power. How, one might ask, does Belmore's installation access this gendered specificity? How do the work's formal strategies – so effective at evincing the material devastation of settler-colonial rule in a general sense – touch on the ways in which Indigenous women navigate and contest the ambivalent, precarious domain between

incorporative publicity and forcible privation? If I am arguing that *Architecture* provides resources for thinking abandonment in particular, how do I account for its abrupt oscillations between light and dark, which would seem to lend themselves quite readily to a reading predicated on an inclusion-exclusion binary? In unpacking these questions, it is helpful consider how *Architecture* recalls the Minimalist sculpture and installation practices of artists like Richard Serra, Frank Stella, and Donald Judd, who in the 1960s and 70s, developed a keen interest in repetition and seriality; in eschewing narrative closure and formal balance in favour of simply "doing something over and over again" (Krauss, 1977, p. 24).

Krauss (1977) argues that this tendency toward seriality emerged in response to a post-War modern art world dominated by abstract expressionism. Where the expressionists, Krauss suggests, began from the presumption that their chosen materials possessed certain essential qualities, and that their task as artists was to draw these qualities out through evocative and expressive aesthetic grammars, the minimalists flatly rejected the notion of internal essence and, by extension, the logic of expressivity. Shunning unformed masses of marble and clay in favour of large sets of prefabricated objects – fire-bricks, fluorescent tubes, slabs of iron and steel – the serialists worked to sever the art object from any presumption of essence or interiority. The point was to make it impossible to read such objects "illusionistically or to see them as alluding to an inner life of form" (ibid. p. 250) "Instead," Krauss writes, they "remain obdurately external… objects of use rather than as vehicles of expression." This non-expressive object, conjoined with compositional strategies that posited "no hierarchical relationship" among objects – no narrative, no balance, no proper perspective, no discernible directionality – produced an art "without either logically determined points of focus or internally dictated outer limits" (ibid.).

Where many critics swiftly denounced such works as "an attack on the very possibility of art's meaningfulness" (ibid. p. 245), Krauss takes a different tack. As she writes, "minimalist sculptors began with a procedure for declaring the *externality* of meaning…These artists refused to use edges and planes to shape an object so that its external image would suggest an underlying principle of cohesion or order or tension" (ibid. p. 266). But rejecting the notion that a work's meaning is internal to the work itself does not, for Krauss, require rejecting meaning *tout court.* Rather, she suggests, "minimal artists are simply re-evaluating the logic of a particular *source* of

meaning rather than denying meaning to the aesthetic object altogether. They are asking that meaning be seen as arising from…a public, rather than a private space" (ibid. p. 262). The serialists, in other words, were attempting to construct around the art object a kind of incipient public sphere; a shared space where its meaning could be fleshed out and thought through in the open. The art object, in this light, functions as an occasion for meaning-making, rather than as its source. This function, however, only becomes operative through an aesthetic of sameness that fully cancels interiority. Put otherwise: a sensate and contestatory social body flourishes in relation to the art object only insofar as its elements are absolutely identical.

It is telling, then, that with *Architecture*, Belmore approximates the strategies of the serialists while stopping short of replicating them. On the one hand, her columnar screens – installed in sequence, evenly punctuated by darkened space, made up of prefabricated wooden planks – quite clearly recall Judd, Serra, Stella and their contemporaries. Yet on the other, the disjointed horizon line, the strange organization of space within the central column, and the inconsistent coloration across the three fields interrupt the evacuation of interiority these artists had hoped to effect. In other words, where the minimalists leveraged an aesthetics of absolute sameness and repeatability so as to relocate all traces of tension from the artwork itself to a putatively public external domain, Belmore, in situating herself at an angle to that sameness and repeatability, gestures toward some unseen point of tension *internal* to both the work and the material world it references; a something or someone that, while absent from the columns, is not yet so remote that it altogether fails to register. This 'something or someone' is disclosed by the installation's second component.

Mounted on a wall separate from the screens is a small digital video monitor that plays Belmore's 2005 video work *Fountain* on a loop. The video begins with a sweeping shot of a rocky northern beach strewn with driftwood and deadfall. As the camera drifts across this landscape – darkened by cloudy skies, emptied of bodies, and aurally textured by waves gently meeting the edge of the beach – a pile of logs in the centre of the frame bursts into flame. The fire lingers on screen for a few short moments before dissolving into a lengthy sequence that finds Belmore thrashing and struggling, as if against the threat of drowning, in the shallow waters just offshore. As her body pitches and stumbles, Belmore struggles with a metal bucket,

frantically scooping up water only to empty it once again at her own feet. For several minutes, Belmore gasps and staggers, barely able to gain her footing. Eventually, she comes to rest, leaning back on her heels in exhaustion. Slowly, she rises and marches with renewed vigour toward land. As she emerges from the water, we see that she is carrying the same bucket with which she has been struggling, only now it appears heavy and full. With a dramatic thrust, Belmore tosses the bucket's contents at the camera, but rather than water, she has tossed blood. Through the viscous red film that now coats the lens, Belmore is faintly visible in silhouette, her head and shoulders cutting an anomalous silhouette against the sky. As this final image fades, the sound of wind returns, wrapping closely around Belmore's exhausted breathing.

If the near-seriality of *Architecture* is suggestive of an incipient public sphere rent by some elided internal tension, *Fountain* announces this elided element to be the body of the Indigenous woman. Located outside the installation's columnar façade, yet not quite excluded from the exhibition space altogether, Belmore gasps for air in plain sight, demanding that we acknowledge "the difficulty of inhabiting a body" that is *in* the world, but "not *at home* in the world" (Ahmed, 2014b, para. 3, my emphasis). Neither fully inside nor fully outside the work, she quite literally inhabits and indeed enacts the space of abandonment: that zone of embodied life wherein the atmospheric pressures of settler coloniality seize up; where they close in on the body – *this* body – such that it remains in our midst, but just barely; very nearly overcome by the threat of inundation. For those looking into this zone as observers, of course, the waters that would engulf Belmore appear to neither rise nor swell. And yet if her tumbling body and laboured breathing can be taken as any indication, for Belmore, they exhaust and overwhelm. They are in this sense a signal of the irreducible material specificity of abandonment, pointing to how decompositional force touches on some bodies more than others; how resistance, strain, and tension, however ambiently distributed through social space, remain lopsided in their respective matterings-forth, already magnetized by the discursive, representational, and institutional organization of gender and Indigeneity within worlds conditioned by settler-colonial rule. In other words, where *Architecture*'s façade, defined by a imperfect oscillation between light and dark, delineates some putatively public yet troubled domain, *Fountain* pulls the bodily and material source of that unease into focus – or rather, the body that has been *produced* as the

source of that unease. The video reveals a "domain of bodily life" that "operates as the sequestered or disavowed condition for the sphere of appearance…the structuring absence that governs and makes possible the public sphere" (Butler, 2012, para. 17); the unfamiliar that allows the familiar to take its shape.

An Elsewhere in the h/Here:

But even as Belmore lays these wretched dynamics bare, she does not leave them unscathed, and neither does she imply that they are somehow beyond contestation. The instability that runs through the work, after all, remains; the projection screens are still threatened by the very images they transmit, with the burning tires licking menacingly at the dry wooden planks. And perhaps more importantly, Belmore's body, though confined to the strange bracket of *Fountain,* persists. She endures in and across the striations of the colonial landscape, able to muster enough energy to hurl a bucket of blood toward the camera in a visceral gesture of defiance and condemnation. Even in the thick of abandonment, then, there remains the possibility of something else; a flicker of endurance and refusal that commands the effort of our attention precisely because it lives so near the edge of extinguishment. *Architecture* thus leaves off with an injunction, unspoken yet deeply felt: to cultivate what Martineau and Ritskes (2014) call an "elsewhere in the here; a present future beyond the imaginative and territorial bounds of colonialism" (p. iv).

It is with this challenge in mind that we can take up Belmore's transmedial performance work, *Here.* Prosaic on its surface, *Here* nonetheless offers an elegant meditation on what, precisely, an alternative arrangement of existence might look like under contemporary conditions; what it might take, and how it might feel, to both imagine and enact a world that does not take the serial abandonment of Indigenous women as one of its constitutive conditions. Co-commissioned by the University of Winnipeg Institute for Women's & Gender Studies and the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG), *Here* took place on March 1st, 2014 – a waypoint between the discovery of Loretta Saunders' body and the beginning of the Tyendinaga Blockade – as part of an exhibition entitled *Off the Beaten Path: Women, Art and Violence.* The performance component of the piece, which took place at an unspecified location in Winnipeg, consisted of Belmore tending to an open-air fire as she offered passersby servings of tea and bannock. The

performance was filmed and streamed online by the Hemispheric Institute at New York University, as well as projected inside the WAG. The camera, which framed the scene such that participants were shown only from the knees down, also recorded on-site audio, transmitting to those watching the performance from afar (myself included) small fragments of conversation, outbursts of laughter, and the crackling of burning logs.

Both textually and formally, *Here* is worlds apart from *Architecture*, marked by a sense of tenderness that parts ways with the latter's more visceral affective charge. Stretched over the course of two hours and limited to a single, unchanging frame, the work even takes on a certain meditative quality, asking us to dwell upon and dwell *within* the space it marks out; to be and remain in the company of others, and to warm ourselves astride the fire. Indeed, where in *Architecture*, the figure of the fire seemed to signal the disaggregation of Indigenous social worlds and the reduction of embodied life to all but its most toxic remnants, in *Here*, it operates as a point of convergence. It is on the one hand a 'real' gathering place, a site where fleshy, sensate bodies come together to converse, joke, and partake in one another's company. And on the other, it conjoins and mediates between two distinct visual registers: live performance and video. This conjunction, as Nick Kaye (2007) observes, is a weighty one. For Kaye, when video, a putatively disembodied and eminently transposable medium, bisects the emphatically physical and often hyperlocal extensions of performance, one does not defeat the other. Rather, the conjunction opens toward an ambivalent visual and affective realm wherein multiple times, places, and bodies become present to one another outside presumptions of real geophysical proximity. Writing specifically of John Cage and Nam June Paik, artists whose practices have become emblematic of such transmedial passages, Kaye maintains that *contra* those who would oppose the mediatic and the performative, identifying liveness exclusively with the former, mediated performance is in fact uniquely positioned to actualize otherwise-impossible sites of lived encounter; sites that would be preemptively undone by given spacings of the world.

And so by conjoining the diffusive character of digital video with an almost parochial performative gesture – the one operative through rather than in spite of the other – *Here* actualizes a space of encounter wherein disparate places and bodies come into contact with one another. Not finally a work of suture or repair, *Here* – stretched across many discontinuous sites

that are not quite h/*Here*, but that are also not exactly *not* h/*Here* – nonetheless seems capable of reaching across the negative spaces that rend the visual horizon of *Architecture.* Immanent to and simultaneous with the ongoing decomposition of Indigenous social worlds, it is nonetheless actively engaged in producing alternative proximities and intersubjectivities. As Kaye (2007) writes, the work "contains the divisions it claims to overcome, so, in the very uncertainty of the 'where' and 'when' of its image's occurrence it presents a return of that which mediation and recording would seem to defeat: the presence of vision to events elsewhere" (p. 16). Not only does *Here* cast a representational scene that travels across medial forms and geographic space, but inheres in that very travelling, constituting an altogether different conceptual framework through which to think notions of space, location, and relationality. As Butler (2012) has written, "when the scene travels, it is both there *and* here, and if it were not spanning both locations – indeed multiple locations – it would not be the scene that it is" (para. 23).

Yet once again, Belmore couples this spatial and visual indeterminacy with an insistent and obstinate materiality. For even as it drifts across so many screens and sites, Belmore's fire remains anchored in the real, heterotopic space of Winnipeg; a city marked not only by extremely high rates of violence against Indigenous women (Seshia, 2010), but also by the nation's highest per capita concentration of urban police units (Statistics Canada, 2012). It is in this sense not so much a floating signifier, some ultimately arbitrary sign untethered from all material reference, as an interface or a point of contact between discrepant social worlds; a medial artefact that puts us in relation with specific heterotopic spaces without allowing us to mistake them for our own. As viewers of the livestream, after all, we do not directly feel the fire's warmth, and neither do we smell the smoke or taste the tea and bannock. The work may bring distinct places and bodies into contact, yet it stops short of presuming these places and bodies to be materially indistinct, unweighted by the disciplinary force of settler colonialism and the pressures of atmospheric bordering.

Attending to this obdurate materiality helps us to return to a consideration of how such pressures become gendered. As Krista Geneviève Lynes (2014) writes, artworks that dwell not on the body as such, but on the object and historical worlds that condition embodied experience, "[challenge] the normative dimensions of bodily boundaries, and thus [engage] questions of

gender and sexuality, even absent the female body in the work" (para. 6). For Lynes (ibid.), a feminist artistic praxis obtains in the attempt to supersede issues of representation and move instead toward "accounts of relation–relations of power that contain powerful inscriptions of gender, race, and class with real material effects" (para. 5). Perhaps counterintuitively, then, an art that effaces the body as such in fact engages its material specificity, throwing into relief *how* that body comes to be gendered, sexed, raced, and classed in relation to the particular social and discursive worlds in which it is involved. In emphasizing the material boundedness of the viewer's location in space while simultaneously *decentering* the Indigenous woman as a visible figure, *Here* opens toward just such a praxis. It evinces an engagement not simply with the body *qua* body, but also with the worlds in which that body is located, with which it must negotiate, and through which it must travel. It begs us to consider not only what the body is in some abstract or categorical sense, but also how the world coheres around and impresses upon bodies in particular ways, bringing them into the world as certain *kinds* of bodies; bodies that are differentially organized and located by so many co-constitutive axes of difference: gender, race, Indigeneity. In short, what *Here* brings into focus is the fact that, even if we are all 'here,' we are here differently, our respective degrees and experiences of effacement bounded by distributions of power that cannot be cleanly divorced from actual material contexts, legislative frameworks, representational practices, and genealogical determinations.

Like *Architecture*, then, *Here* leaves off with its own injunction: if we mean to take up the feminist work of thinking through and resisting violence against Indigenous women, we can never presume this project to be severable from a wider critique of the ways in which the settler state and its atmospheric bordering regime shape the relationship between Indigenous bodies, gender, space, and law. Put another way: in the context of settler colonialism, it will not do to predicate one's feminism on the woman's body as such, and not simply because of the violent essentialism bound up in that approach. One must also account for how that body emerges in relation to emphatically material and deeply racialized and gendered of economies of institutional power. With *Here*, Belmore condenses these considerations, making way for a capacious, intersectional feminist praxis alert to the complex ways in which different bodies are both together and apart in worlds conditioned by settler-colonial rule.

Indeed, that I am related to but clearly *not* of a piece with those gathered around the fire forces me, a white male settler occupying Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) territory, to acknowledge that in entering the work, I become involved in a set of spatial, subjective, and objective relations that I did not author and over which I do not have dominion. In a moment of unlearning both decolonial and feminist in nature, I am forced to divest myself of the fantasy that I am ultimately free to access, inhabit, and pass through space without first accounting for, *and becoming accountable to*, those gendered forms of colonial power on which my mobility is predicated – the sequestrations, the disappearances, the abandonments. To be sure, Belmore constructs an "elsewhere in the here" to which I am invited. But this invitation is freighted, extended only on the condition that I learn to follow the contours of Indigenous world-making projects, dwelling on the unequal circuits of effacement, exposure, and vulnerability that produce me as a particular kind of gendered subject. My invitation to this otherwise comes with a demand "to theorize the relinquishment of power" (Moreton-Robinson, 2000, p. 186). *Here* thus establishes a dense matrix of obligation and responsibility. It forms a call to take seriously the ways in which the settler state unevenly distributes (im)mobility among differently gendered Indigenous and settler bodies; a call to struggle for and enact a world that houses bodies differently.

These are precisely the sort of broad, difficult relations that an atmospheric bordering regime, bound up with settler-colonial governance, cannot abide. They are relations that do not reduce the encounter with Otherness to an occasion for reproducing exclusionary, expulsive, and eliminationist forms of community. They are, rather, relations that compel an ongoing, committed, and above all *critical* engagement with the conditions of their own becoming, as well a sensitivity to precisely those discursive, representational, and performative strategies that, as I have tried to argue in this chapter, produce certain bodies as unfamiliar, that target some more than others for sequestration. They are, in other words, relations that belong to a different sort of world than the one currently on offer from the state; part of the social and affective fabric that makes up a 'here' that is coming, and already enduring.

Chapter 2: Endurance in/as Error

Indigenous Cultural Transmission Against Settler State Surveillance in *(And) Other Echoes.*

In the previous chapter, I began to elaborate the relationship between atmospheric bordering and the (gendered) exercise of settler-colonial rule in contemporary Canada. Considering the post-9/11 expansion of federal policing and incarceration capacities alongside the overtly gender discriminatory legislative frameworks that circumscribe Indigenous-Crown relations, I attempted to show how Indigenous women come to be disproportionately exposed to the acute pressure of *abandonment:* a way of positioning a particular body both inside and outside the realm of legal subjectivity and personhood, or an inclusion purchased at the cost of forcible exclusion, deprivation, and privation. Dramatically over-policed and over-incarcerated, yet simultaneously overlooked as full legal subjects (and indeed, actively *deproduced* as such through instruments like the *Indian Act* and Bill C-31), Indigenous women's individual and collective geographies, I tried to suggest, are today structurally constrained in ways that suspend them between the "contradictory ironies of invisibility and hypervisibility" (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, p. xv); their bodies inscribed with a particular form of Indigenous difference that enables the state to harden against them, to *point to them* as bodies that can be neither received by nor housed within the Canadian social body.

In this chapter, I want to extend some of the themes and critiques developed over the course of this analysis to a second key dimension of atmospheric bordering in contemporary Canada: (settler) state surveillance. In what follows, I will examine how in becoming increasingly atmospheric in structure – thoroughly transnationalized, spatially discontinuous, and comprehensively integrated with security and intelligence networks that exceed its territorial borders – post-9/11 Canadian state surveillance practices also become the more atmospheric in their effects, helping to configure Indigenous bodies as both out of place and out of time; bodies that are, as Aaron Gordon (2008) writes, "containerized," confined to particular subjective brackets that exceed and threaten to rupture a shared atmosphere of national belonging. "Through containerization," Gordon argues, "the state turns the skin into an envelope for the body, so that the skin becomes the limit that separates inside from outside, this body from that

body…By turning the skin into an envelope, the state tries to determine what can pass between bodies and, thus, how subjects relate to one another" (p. 125). Containerization, in other words, is a technology of differentiation that works directly on and through the bodily surface, parsing which bodies will and will not be permitted to pass into the *social* body of the state, constraining how and to what extent affects will circulate between them. While locating these tendencies in the contemporary moment, I will also trace how they are in many ways the inheritance of a much longer historical entanglement between the production and governance of Indigenous difference, and those representational modalities and visual technologies – such as portrait photography and ethnographic documentary – that have been fundamental components of Western state surveillance regimes since the 19th Century.

But while this ongoing history is certainly fortuitous, what I mean to demonstrate in this chapter is that it is neither complete nor impervious to rupture. On the contrary, in the latter half of this essay I will explore how the very representational forms in which settler state surveillance consists can and do function as sites of pitched political contestation, wherein Indigenous subjects might disrupt the containerizing gaze of the settler state. This is a claim I will unpack by turning to the work of Raymond Boisjoly (Haida-Québecois), focusing in particular on a recent piece entitled *(And) Other Echoes*, a series of heavily distorted digital portraits adapted from Kent MacKenzie's 1961 neorealist docudrama *The Exiles.* Thinking with recent Media Studies scholarship that explores the aesthetic and political implications of error, noise, and glitch in new media texts (Nunes, 2011), I want to contend that by simultaneously citing and distorting the conventions of portrait photography – transforming it from an instrument of differentiation and containment into a complex site of affective investment and cultural transmission – Boisjoly marks the failure of settler state surveillance to do what it is supposed to do: produce and contain Indigenous bodies as racialized fragments of a disappearing (or already disappeared) past. In evincing the endurance and indeed the proliferation of Indigenous social and cultural life across the borders of settler states in the contemporary moment, I argue that *(And) Other Echoes* emerges within the representational circuitry of Canadian settler-colonialism and atmospheric bordering as a kind of glitch or fatal error; or rather, as an *error of fatality*, a sign that the logic of elimination on which settler colonial rule is predicated lives, but only in a failed and partial form.

Settler State Surveillance and Atmospheric Bordering:

In September of 2014, *The Toronto Star* published a small and rather mundane-looking set of government documents obtained under the federal *Access to Information Act* by staff reporter Alex Boutilier. Its meagre page count notwithstanding, the release package contained a number of rather staggering details, revealing that over the past eight years, the Canadian government and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have directly monitored some 800 protests, rallies, marches, speeches, and panel discussions in every corner of the country (Boutilier, 2014a). One of the events captured in the report revolves around a figure readers may recall from the previous chapter: Darryl Leroux, Loretta Saunders' former thesis supervisor and Assistant Professor of Sociology at St. Mary's University in Halifax. Almost exactly a year prior to the *Star*'s publication of the documents, Leroux visited Concordia University in Montréal, Québec, where he led a public panel exploring "alternative concepts of colonialism throughout Quebec's history, touching on topics like feminism and black activism in Montreal in the 1960s" (Boutilier, 2014b, para. 6). Despite the fact that the panel, according to Boutilier, featured "no discussion of activism or organizing a protest" (ibid.), it nonetheless found its way into the RCMP's expansive field of vision, disconcerting and threatening enough to warrant active state surveillance.

While it is tempting to dismiss the surveillance of Leroux's panel as something of an anomaly, it is in fact exemplary of what is increasingly the norm in contemporary Canada. Particularly since the emergence of Idle No More in the winter of 2012 – a decentralized movement of Indigenous peoples sparked by the introduction of Bill C-45, a so-called 'budget implementation act' that, in rescinding thousands of environmental regulations, surreptitiously undermined Indigenous nations' abilities to autonomously govern, protect, and distribute their natural resources (Coulthard, 2014) – Ottawa has dramatically intensified its surveillance of Indigenous bodies and communities. In addition to employing such punitive measures as the *First Nations Financial Transparency Act*, which threatens to withhold federal funding from First Nations governments unless they consent to paternalistic monitoring stipulations, the Canadian state today routinely monitors activist mobilizations that centre such issues as Indigenous sovereignty, violence against Indigenous women, the ongoing expropriation and destruction of Indigenous land and resources, and the spectacular inadequacy of housing,

schooling, and other basic infrastructure in many First Nations communities (Proulx, 2014). The documents published in the *Star,* for instance, are dominated by such events, with eleven of the nineteen entries on the first page alone referencing First Nations political demonstration.

Indeed, in a September, 2013 article for *Maclean's* magazine, reporter Justin Ling details just how closely the Government of Canada monitored actions associated with Idle No More, especially after Chief Theresa Spence of Kattawapiskak First Nation initiated a hunger strike on Victoria Island, near Parliament Hill in Ottawa. In the days and weeks following the announcement of Spence's demonstration, the government moved quickly to establish a vast response network spanning multiple security, intelligence, and defense agencies, including CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service), Aboriginal Affairs, ITAC (Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre), and the highly-secretive GOC (Government Operations Centre). In a follow-up article for the *National Post*, Ling (2014) writes that "the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was involved in preparing an *all-of-government approach* to dealing with the First Nations protests" (para. 2, my emphasis). "Helped in no small part by CSIS," Ottawa "was planning for every eventuality, concerned by the decentralized, leaderless nature of the protests and the multiple motivations and influences that drove them" (para. 5). Faced with a growing Indigenous resistance movement predicated not only on concrete financial and infrastructural demands, but also on the (re)assertion of Indigenous sovereignty and the refusal of settler-colonial rule (Coulthard, 2014), the Canadian state moved swiftly in the direction of *containment*, mobilizing its interlocking surveillance capacities in an anxious attempt to map the movement's amorphous contours, to give it a shape, a name, and most importantly, a body.

Sara Ahmed, in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) writes that the threat posed by the 'terrorist' is not so much that we might unwittingly happen upon that figure in the street, but quite the opposite: that it might pass us by, that we might *fail to recognize it* precisely because the quality 'terrorist' "does not reside positively in any one body" (p. 79). It is, rather, a lingering, ambient threat, bound up with a rhizomatic metaphorical grammar of sleeper cells, subterranean tunnels, and domestic radicals. The terrorist – a figure without a body, or a perhaps an improperly bodied figure – threatens the limits of recognition precisely because it passes over those limits without registering itself as such in the process. It is this ontological and corporeal

indeterminacy that for Ahmed drives the sweeping securitization of social space in the post-9/11 moment: "It is the structural possibility that the terrorist may *pass us by* that justifies the expansion of [multiple] forms of intelligence, surveillance and the rights of detention" (ibid.). Surveillance and intelligence gathering is, then, a way of *producing* the stranger that might otherwise slip past, of collapsing a figural threat into a fleshy body that can be appropriately policed, contained, and sealed up at its epidermal limit; a way of "ontologizing the stranger" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 5). We might consider this an atmospheric strategy, insofar as it relocates the tension of subjective differentiation from a particular scene of legal, political, representational, and discursive activity – that of post-9/11 'anti-terrorism' governmentality – to a specific kind of body, which in turn becomes recognized as the *source* of that tension. These same dynamics saturated much of the popular response to Idle No More. As Glen Coulthard (2014) writes, for example, "right-wing ideologue Christie Blatchford referred to Chief Spence's peaceful hunger strike as an act of 'intimidation, if not terrorism: She is, after all, holding the state hostage to vaguely articulated demands" (p. 161). In a similar turn, *National Post* columnist Kelly McParland "speculated that Idle No More's lack of focus and clarity was a result of the movement having been 'seized' by the forces of Occupy Wall Street" (ibid.). In both cases, it is exactly the movement's ambiguity and 'lack of focus' – the possibility that we might fail to recognize it for what it is – that is articulated as threat. The 'vagueness' of Chief Spence's demands, for Blatchford, becomes outright terroristic, where McParland reads the same as a symptom of some nefarious transnational scheme that undermines the movement's credibility as a legitimately Indigenous response to Canadian settler governance.

Though neither of these comments derive directly from state agencies, they nonetheless demonstrate just how threatening the "leaderless nature" of Idle No More became among high profile opinion leaders, and just how *desperate* such figures were to contain the movement in a specific, recognizable body. Audra Simpson (forthcoming) forcefully illustrates this latter impulse when she writes of the almost pathological fixation on Chief Spence's fat that took shape in the popular press over the course of her strike, with several major media personalities and government officials reading (and mocking) her fleshiness as a sign of indulgence and excess, fraudulence and trickery, anger and resentfulness. The (gendered) Indigenous body, in

this drama, becomes a vehicle or perhaps a container for a particular kind of alterity, one that seems to intrude into the realm of 'proper' political practice from without; that cannot be reconciled to and in fact *threatens* contemporary Canadian statecraft. Spence is transformed, in her actual fleshiness, into an ontologized stranger, a body that contains and is contained by the difference ascribed to her by those invested in the defense of the Canadian state.

These atmospheric effects follow from the increasingly atmospheric structure of the Canadian state's surveillance architecture, a trend that, while particularly pronounced in the post-9/11 period, in fact has a deep historical provenance. Indeed, since Confederation, the Canadian state's efforts to track the movement of Indigenous bodies has been almost as much a transnational affair as a domestic one. For instance, even before the Canada-United States border was fully institutionalized in the Pacific Northwest, American and Canadian officials regularly collaborated across the 49th parallel to keep tabs on the movement of Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian migrant workers, as well as the many Indigenous border runners who helped them to skirt restrictive national immigration regimes (Chang, 2012). "With white settlers serving as [their] shock troops," the two states enthusiastically "collected information, distributed regulations, and imposed spatial order" throughout the region, mapping out "a geography of exclusions where the indigenous other would be tucked away, given as little land as possible, marginalized in its own territory" (ibid. p. 10). Canada's domestic surveillance regime was extended even further beyond its own territorial limits during the Second World War, when Britain (and, by extension, its remaining settler colonies) and the United States entered into a highly secretive signals intelligence and information sharing pact, an arrangement formalized with the so-called UKUSA Agreement of 1946 (Farrell, 2013). In 1955, in a bid to strengthen this union in the face of escalating Cold War espionage and the growing diplomatic independence of the colonies, the terms of the original Agreement were amended so as to transform it into a new five-member (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and Britain) signals intelligence alliance known as the Five Eyes. Not only did this reformed alliance afford its members access to perhaps the first truly global surveillance network, it also reasserted – in precisely the moment that decolonial and anti-imperial resistance movements were sweeping the global south – the geospatial and political contours of British imperialism, threading the old

metropole together with its now (mostly) self-governing settler colonies. But this reassertion was also a mutation, a reproduction of the lineaments of empire that simultaneously transposed them into the hazy realm of signals, radiation, and electromagnetic pulses.

Until quite recently, little was known about the structure and organization of the Five Eyes community. Records disclosed by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden in 2012 and 2013, however, reveal that since 9/11, its operations have become exhaustively integrated, carried out over heavily encrypted and proprietary digital communication networks that operate outside the regulatory scaffolds of any one nation-state (Nyst, 2013). Not only is "all intelligence information" collected by member states "shared by default," but as Nyst (2013) writes, "the level of cooperation under the agreement is so complete that the national product is often indistinguishable" (para. 6). In the North American context, this comprehensive integration is compounded by such bilateral security pacts as the Canada-United States Perimeter Security Agreement, which effectively merges Canadian and American border data collection practices, and the recently-introduced *Anti-Terror Act*, which provides for a massive expansion of CSIS's interdepartmental and transnational data sharing practices (MacLeod & Berthiaume, 2015). And yet even as the 'national product' of Canadian state surveillance falls away into this abstract bureaucratic haze, it remains emphatically material and localized in its effects, working within the discursive, representational, and legislative parameters of Canadian settler colonialism to tether to some bodies more than others the lingering, figural spectre of an Indigenous alterity that threatens the social body of the state itself. The atmospheric organization of Canadian state surveillance is thus not simply coincident with but in fact forms one of the *conditions* for the governance of Indigenous bodies 'at home;' a strategy for configuring Indigeneity as that which interrupts the discursive slippage between home and nation discussed in the previous chapter.

Surveillance, Indigeneity, and the Portrait:

But if these surveillance practices have operated, both historically and in the contemporary moment, through the collection of signals intelligence, they have in equal measure been mediated by a wide range of visual technologies. Since the late 19th Century, forms such as the portrait photograph have offered Western states a powerful means of tracking and disciplining not only domestic subjects, but also the subjects of empire; of simultaneously

taxonomizing racialized bodies and mapping onto those taxonomies essentialist accounts of Indigenous 'backwardness' that work to deny the coevalness of Native and Western societies (Fabian, 2014; Simpson, 2014). It is precisely this close association between the portrait, state surveillance regimes, and the production of Indigenous difference that Boisjoly unsettles with *(And) Other Echoes.* Developing a transmedial digital imaging process that strains the limits between still photography and documentary, evocative abstraction and realist representation, and even signal and noise, Boisjoly transforms the portrait from a technology of containment into a rich site of affective indeterminacy, casting a representational scene wherein the 'echoes' of various Indigenous social worlds, even those separated by historical and geographic distance, can be heard in and through one another, resonating across the borders of settler states. A consideration, then, of how precisely the portrait conjoins state surveillance with the making and governance of Indigenous difference, especially in the Canadian context, is warranted here.

As Alan Sekula (1986) writes, almost immediately following its emergence in the mid-1800s, portrait photography took on two primary functions. On the one hand, it spread rapidly as a commercial novelty among the growing urban proletariat in Europe, allowing the "honorific" function of Baroque portrait painting to "proliferate downward" (p. 6) across the borders of class. On the other, however, it took on a distinctly *repressive* function, seized on by state governments and expanding law enforcement agencies as the harbinger of "a new legalistic truth," a technology that promised to replace the vagaries of oral and written records with the "mute testimony" of visible evidence, and in turn, "[unmask] the disguises, the alibis, the excuses and multiple biographies of those who find or place themselves on the wrong side of the law" (ibid.). In this sense, Sekula argues, "photographic portraiture began to perform a role no painted portrait could have performed in the same thorough and rigorous fashion:" the state-sanctioned production of *otherness* (ibid.). "This role derived not from any honorific portrait tradition, but from the imperatives of medical and anatomical illustration," particularly as developed in such fields as phrenology, physiognomy, and anthropometry, all of which sought to establish 'empirical' links between a person's physical traits (especially head size) and their so-called characterological dispositions (ibid., p. 7; Lalvani, 1996). Situated at the nexus of this belief in the evidentiary capacity of the bodily surface and the rapid expansion of state

disciplinary mechanisms at the end of the 1800s (prisons, hospitals, police forces), the portrait became a promising tool for not only identifying but producing pathogenic bodies, a way of defining "both the *generalized look* – the typology – and the *contingent instance* of deviance*"* (Sekula, 1986, p. 7).

Taken alone however, the portrait proved insufficient for consolidating state surveillance regimes capable of reliably and efficiently identifying criminals and recidivists. This potential would only be realized by figures such as Alphonse Bertillon, who, as Director of the Identification Bureau of the Paris Prefecture of Police, combined the unique representational powers of portrait photography with the explanatory and predictive capacities of Gaussian statistics, drawing heavily on the work of social statistician Adolphe Quetelet and his notion of the "average man," or *l'homme moyen* (Sekula, 1986, p. 22). For Quetelet, the average man was "an ideal, not only of social health, but of social stability and beauty." The criminal, by contrast, was a "perturbing force," an error in the most literal sense of the term: an outlying case that erred from the imaginary social mean represented by *l'homme moyen* (ibid.). Bertillon took Quetelet's insights to heart, mapping his mean-deviant schema onto a rapidly expanding criminal photographic archive to develop "the first effective modern system of criminal identification" (ibid, p. 18). Bertillon's system turned on the development of thousands of detailed index cards, each featuring rigorously standardized photographic portraits and thorough anthropometric descriptions of a known criminal. Organized in "a comprehensive, statistically based filing system" (ibid.), these cards allowed clerks to quickly discern whether a given offender was a recidivist. "Yoking anthropometics, the optical precision of the camera, a refined physiognomic vocabulary, and statistics," Bertillon "sought to break the professional criminal's mastery of disguises, false identities, multiple biographies, and alibis" (ibid. p. 27). His, in other words, was a *containerizing* system predicated on the elimination all forms of corporeal and identificatory excess; on reducing the body to its epidermal surfaces and translating them into a series of statistically predictable visual and textual variables.

Once cemented, this alliance between anthropometry, statistical analysis, photographic portraiture, and state surveillance was quickly incorporated into the disciplinary apparatus of empire, offering Western states a means of "[appropriating] the 'reality' of other cultures into an

ordered structure" (Edwards, 1992, p. 6). Often working under the auspices of anthropological field research, the colonial photographers of the late 19th and early 20th Century generated a vast visual archive of Indigenous bodies, at times holding them up as "living monuments of a noble [but disappearing] race" (Dippie, 1996), at others configuring them as irreparably primitive – representing the "childhood of mankind" (Edwards, 1996) – and still at others subjecting them to anthropometric quantification so as to justify claims of White intellectual and moral superiority (Pinney, 1996). Canada was never outside these dynamics. In 1925, for instance, an Oxford anthropologist named Beatrice Blackwood arrived in Southern Alberta armed with a camera. Concerned to "understand which behaviours and physical appearances" among a given population "were responses to social and economic circumstances and which were inherited," Blackwood produced "33 referentially anthropometric photographs of Kainai people," a Blackfoot-speaking community whose members now reside primarily on Treaty Seven land near Calgary (Peers & Brown, 2009, p. 267). Though many of her images emphasize the 'traditional-ness' of Kainai life, the majority are "informally anthropometric in their paired front and side poses" (ibid.), closely recalling Bertillion's austere compositional strategies.

Edward S. Curtis, similarly, spent a significant portion of his career in Canada, photographing the Indigenous nations of the Northwest Coast in his trademark romantic style, carefully staging his portraits so as to uphold the stereotype of the noble, disappearing Native (Jackson, 1992). Finely (if anachronistically) detailed and evocatively composed, Curtis' portraits bear little resemblance to Bertillon's criminal photographs and even seem somewhat remote from Blackwood's images of the Kainai. Nonetheless, his work remains of a piece with their underlying logics. As Jackson (1992) writes, "Victorian anthropology lent scientific credibility to the categorization of human beings according to physical criteria such as skin color, facial characteristics and cranial capacity…It was this mindset that Curtis inherited and applied in the context of America's expanding western frontier" (p. 91). Thus while neither Blackwood nor Curtis operated under Canadian state sponsorship, their work evinces how the technical, institutional, and discursive organization of portrait photography came to bear directly on the containerization of Indigenous bodies in Canada in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

These tendencies persist in the contemporary moment, discernible in the multiple technologies and legislative frameworks the Canadian state employs to surveil Indigenous populations. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, for instance, in addition to supporting the federal government's Idle No More response network (which, by virtue of its association with CSIS and CSEC, is enmeshed within a vast, transnational surveillance regime), administers the Indian Registration, Status, and Status Card system, "the official record identifying all Status Indians in Canada" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010). Pairing a standardized facial portrait with detailed demographic data, the Status Card – in no small measure an inheritance of Bertillion's index cards – renders eminently visible to the federal government the ways in which Indigenous subjects access state services and cross national borders. As well, as a component of the wider Registration system, it helps empower the state to legally *annul* a person's Indigeneity on the basis of unclear patrilineal parentage, and for women prior to 1985, outmarriage. In this sense, as Mi'kmaq lawyer and legal scholar Pam Palamater notes in a recent interview with CBC News (Porter, 2014), the Status Card and Registration system is effectively a termination policy, a way of *eliminating* natives as legal subjects: "even if [the federal government] lose a court case and have to reinstate Indians back to the Indian register, they make sure to incorporate other rules so that you're losing other Indians… the ultimate goal is so that at the end of the day there will be no Indians" (para. 10).

Error, Echo, Exile, Endurance:

In tracing these systems and processes, however, it is important to note that for as long as colonial photographers have turned the camera on Indigenous communities, Indigenous actors have adapted it to their own ends. As Sherry Farrell Racette (2011) writes, far from being fully captured or contained by the portrait, Indigenous sitters "frequently negotiated their position in front of the camera as they secured financial compensation for serving as models in staged photographs, or initiated family photographs from itinerant photographers and the studios that became increasingly accessible" (ibid). Moreover, many Indigenous people became actively involved in the photographic production process. George Hunt, a self-taught Scots-Tlingit photographer, even collaborated with Edward Curtis, serving as a director for his short film *In The Land of the Headhunters* (Farrell Racette, 2011). For Farrell Racette, figures such as Hunt

were involved in a process of *indigenizing* the camera, deploying it within and through the conventions, desires, and needs of Indigenous social life. As she writes of prolific Inuk photographer Peter Pitseolak, "[he] was not intimidated by the camera and treated it like any other piece of arctic technology, learning through careful observation, playing, experimenting, and discovering its limitations experientially…He wrapped his camera in caribou hide and through physical manipulation and experimentation, acquired intimate knowledge and the capacity to *make the camera Inuit*" (p. 74, my emphasis). It is with this notion of indigenization in mind that I want to return to the work of Raymond Boisjoly, considering how his engagements with the portrait introduce a note of ambivalence into the representational economies of settler-colonial rule; how *(And) Other Echoes* unsettles the visual circuity I have traced above by passing through them as noise, interrupting the silent, seamless transmissions that sustain atmospheric bordering and settler state surveillance in the contemporary moment.

Originally installed in 2013 at the Simon Fraser University Art Gallery in Vancouver, and re-installed in 2014 as part of the Montreal Biennial exhibition at the Musée d'Art Contemporain, *(And) Other Echoes* is the result of a multi-step transmedial imaging process that begins with Boisjoly's selection of his source material: Kent McKenzie's 1961 neorealist docudrama, *The Exiles*, a film relatively unknown to cinema historians and scholars until 2008 when it received its first DVD release. Set in the late 1950s, *The Exiles* follows a small cast of non-professional Indigenous actors over the course of a raucous twelve hours spent in and around the now-demolished Bunker Hill neighbourhood of Los Angeles. To transform this footage into a series of completed portraits, Boisjoly plays it on a mobile device like an iPad or an iPhone, and while the film is running, captures an image of the screen using a flatbed scanner. The resulting images are highly distorted, the play between the surface of the device, the sharp light of the scanner, and the constant variability of a pixelated visual field generating scrambled bands of digital noise that cut through the frame. Installed, *(And) Other Echoes* consists of twelve such images (36 by 48 inches each) rear face mounted on sheets of highly polished, dark grey-tinted acrylic glass and hung in a single row, roughly at eye level. While in each portrait some kind of visible subject is retained, it is often twisted, doubled, and scattered across the image surface, rendered discontinuous and indistinct, but not altogether illegible.

Particularly in the context of the 2014 Montreal Biennial, an exhibition that featured a number of unconventional and experimental installation techniques, *(And) Other Echoes* seems to almost hamfistedly cite the modernist exhibition strategies pioneered by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., founding director of the MoMA. Drawing on "the new installation methods for painting and sculpture that were being developed within the international avant-gardes in the 1920s and 1930s, Barr covered the MoMA's walls with natural-color monk's cloth and eliminated skying," breaking with a more decorative exhibition tradition wherein works would be clustered tightly together and set against finely detailed backdrops (Staniszewski, 1998, p. 62). Not only did Barr's renovation of the exhibition space – defined in part by the sort of eye-level hangs and "spacious arrangements" that Boisjoly adopts – quickly become standard practice in the contemporary art world, it also effected a shift in the status of the artwork itself. Formerly understood as one of so many "decorative elements within an overpowering architecture," Barr's exhibitions rearticulated the work of art as an autonomous "aesthetic [element]," a singular object that retained its status as art irrespective of its surroundings (Stanisewski, 1998, p. 62-66). Barr's exhibitions, that is, configured the artwork as an irreducible singularity, severing it from broader forces of social determination, insulating its meaning from public deliberation, and turning it away from the conditions of its production. In some sense, these strategies *ontologized* the artwork, assigning meaning not to the negotiable and negotiated space between viewer and visual surface, but rather to the art object itself. In this description, we can hear something of Ahmed's (2000) account of how surveillance practices invest the figure of the stranger with a "life of its own" (p. 5) precisely by splitting it off from the discursive and material conditions of its making, configuring its strangeness as objective and essential, rather than produced and assigned. There is, then, an odd resonance between the spatial arrangement of Boisjoly's portraits and the containerizing logic of state surveillance. Sekula's (1986) words are instructive here: "every proper portrait has its lurking, objectifying inverse in the files of the police….a covert Hobbesian logic links the terrain of the 'National Gallery' with that of the 'Police Act'" (p. 7).

And yet just as this oblique link begins to come into view, it is unsettled in at least two senses. On the one hand, if *(And) Other Echoes* loosely mimics the high modern exhibition techniques pioneered by the European avant garde and Barr, Jr., its spare, repetitive formal

character simultaneously recalls the work of the Minimalists, particularly those who turned to serialized compositional strategies in the 1960s and 1970s. As I detailed in the previous chapter, this latter milieu coalesced as a decidedly critical response to the high modern ontologization of the art object, working relentlessly to cleave sculpture, installation, painting, and performance from any kind of expressive logic. Favouring a compositional approach Donald Judd once bluntly summed up as "one thing after another," the Minimalists, to return to Krauss' (1977) words, insisted upon the absolute "externality of meaning," denying the art object a life of its own by "asking that meaning be seen as arising from….a public, rather than a private space" (p. 262). A work's meaning, in other words, was not seen to reside positively in the work itself, but rather in the shared, social space *around* the work, coming into focus through deliberation, debate, and negotiation. From the beginning, then, Boisjoly encodes into his portraits a fundamental ambivalence. In frustrating efforts to sift his Minimalist influences out from his referentially modern exhibition techniques, he effects a series of slippages between internality and externality, containment and excess, and publicity and privation that make it difficult to discern precisely how the work positions both its viewers – dispassionate observers, or engaged participants? – and its ostensible subjects – self-contained aesthetic objects to be carefully pondered and scrupulously analyzed, or incomplete and fundamentally contingent discursive constructions?

This instability is compounded by the visual sign of the glitch, as well as Boisjoly's choice to face mount his portraits on sheets of highly polished tinted acrylic. Together, these elements render the manifest content of each image all but invisible. Here, Boisjoly works directly against the portrait's genealogical configuration as a technology of exposure, a visual form that, given its putatively indexical relation to its subject, is often presumed to escape the necessary incompleteness of reference. Even as he solicits it, then, Boisjoly deflects, refracts, and indeed *glitches* our looking, visually marking the photo's inevitable failure to represent its subject – and in turn, our inevitable failure to *apprehend* that subject – 'as it is;' to reduce it to a visually appropriable and statistically quantifiable surface. Once again, Boisjoly throws our status as viewers into question, revealing as already partial and error-prone both the medium of photography *and* our ways of reading it. This multiplication of error is particularly compelling if

we recall that the portrait only fully matured as an instrument of state surveillance when fused with Gaussian grammars of average, probability, and most importantly, standard error – a measure of dispersion that, in practice, does little more than affirm the explanatory and diagnostic power of the mean. What, then, might it mean for Boisjoly to enact a form of error that obfuscates rather than elucidates, that inhabits a visual space of indistinction and distortion, rather than one of clarity, that *unsettles* the viewing subject precisely by divorcing error from any stabilizing central tendency? To parse this question, it is helpful to dwell momentarily on the notion of error itself, considering what interpretive, aesthetic, and political possibilities reside in the gap it opens between sign(al) and meaning.

Though often used in a relatively general sense, as something of a synonym for 'mistake,' Nunes (2011) contends that since the second half of the 20th Century, two quite specific definitions of error have dominated Western communications and systems theory. On the one hand is an approach developed by Norbert Wiener in his 1950 text *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society.* For Wiener, error was nothing more than a discrepancy between the intended message and the message received, a miscommunication that cancelled or annulled the sender's intentions. The simplicity of this definition, however, belies Wiener's belief that error was deeply threatening, something that fundamentally undermined the stability of a communications system and left it vulnerable to manipulation by nefarious external actors. As such, it was only permissible within a system insofar as it could be captured and reincorporated into that system as feedback: an errant signal that triggered a programmed response designed to prevent further error. Approached on Wiener's terms, then, "error, as captured, predictable deviation *serves* order through feedback and systematic control" (Nunes, 2011, p. 12).

A distinct account of error, however, emerges in Shannon & Weaver's *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, published the year before *The Human Use of Human Beings*. In this text, "what occurs in place of Wiener's vision of error as deviation from intended results is Shannon's concept of 'equivocation." While this model retains Wiener's focus on the intentions of senders, Nunes argues that Shannon & Weaver ultimately recast "not only the relationship between information and error," but also "the role that error itself plays within the communicative system. Error, in effect, communicates as information *without a purpose*–or at

cross-purposes to programmatic control" (p. 13). For Shannon & Weaver, then, error war not so much a cancellation of signal as the introduction of uncertainty into a message, a "proliferation of choice" that exceeds both the sender's intentions and the feedback mechanisms that sustain systematic control (ibid.) – not a failure to mean *tout court*, but a failure to mean *within the parameters of a given system of order and control.* Drawing on this second approach, Nunes (2011) develops error into both a critical methodology and an aesthetics capable of disrupting what he calls a hegemonic "cybernetic ideology" that, above all else, prizes the seamless transmission of data between those globally-distributed nodes of power that comprise contemporary networks of control (p. 3). "Rather than serving as an impediment to otherwise clear communication," Nunes writes that we might better understand error as an occasion "for an alternate mode of expression" (p. 15). He even offers the concept of a "poetics of noise," an expressive modality that "foregrounds the creative potential of the errant and the unintended outcome…within an existing (actual) system of meaning or order" (p. 16).

In noise, then, we find something akin to Martineau and Ritskes' (2014) "elsewhere in the here" (p. iv), explored in the previous chapter; a something else immanent to yet in excess of a given ordering of representation, sensation, and knowledge. Drawing these two concepts together, might read the digital noise and visual glitches that flash across Boisjoly's portraits as either enacting or perhaps simply disclosing a moment of generative failure within the representational economies of settler colonialism, "a creative potential that escapes purpose and systematic control" (Nunes, 2011, p. 17). Emanating from another time, place, and social world – the Indigenous geographies charted in McKenzie's *The Exiles* – they become the indeterminate visual traces of alternate modes of expression; energetic inscriptions of some other way of looking, knowing, and apprehending that cannot quite be accommodated by those visual economies and technologies of representation that since the late 19th Century have systematically containerized Indigenous bodies and orderings of life. And this is not a merely semiotic matter. Rather, the 'something else' that lives in the space of error also unsettles the sensorium, quite literally moving the body through space in particular ways. In an effort to see through the glitches that populate *(And) Other Echoes*, one must pull close to the image surface, squint against the darkened acrylic, and rather clumsily attempt to evade one's own reflection.

Repeatedly leaning into and out of the work, we physically evince an irresolvable oscillation between solicitation and refusal, internality and externality, proximity and distance. It is a work that demands that we *angle ourselves otherwise*. The work's title compounds this ambivalence, with the ambiguous phrase *(And) Other Echoes* announcing a sonorous experience that the stubbornly mute images fail to provide, or from which they err. The images thus induce within the viewer's body a kind of sensory error that parallels (or echoes) the visual sign of the glitch.

If the portrait has historically been and remains a way of ascribing to Indigenous bodies a form of racial difference that marks them as prior to, outside of, or irreconcilable with white Western modernity and political life, *Echoes* emerges within this process as a profoundly unsettling error, casting a scene of semiotic and affective indeterminacy wherein distinctions between coming and going, arrival and departure, and past and present begin to break down. Again the work's title is telling: the parenthetical 'And' forms a sort of suspended conjunction that interrupts the lateral, narrative movement from one thing to the next. And it is in this suspension, this error of continuity, that different configurations of place, relation, and relation *across* place start to become sensible. The work, then, is the richer for failing to resolve, the more sonorous for sitting mute. It fills the room with bewildering echoes and unfinished narratives that radiate outward in all directions, gathering up around the viewing subject an atmosphere of sorts; one that grows out of a slippage in the representational and photographic economies of settler colonialism.

"place to place from time to time:"

We can speculate on the meaning and effect of this slippage by attending to the work's source material. A precarious historical artifact in itself, Kent Mackenzie's 1961 film *The Exiles* was shot over the course of about three years in and around the Bunker Hill neighbourhood of Los Angeles (Patterson, 2010). Once the centre of financial and political authority in the city, Bunker Hill was dramatically transformed by the pressures of the Great Depression. As its original residents, mostly wealthy land owners and financiers, gradually moved west toward the Pacific coast, property values in the neighbourhood dropped precipitously, making it an appealing destination for the tens of thousands of low-income and migrant workers driven to California by a collapsing agricultural economy in the American heartland. Cheap tenement

housing flourished in the area and in relatively short order, it had become a vibrant, intercultural working class community (Davis, 2001). As early as 1929, however, municipal officials were in the throes of what would become a decades-long effort to raze the neighbourhood, for not only did it "picturesquely [overlook] downtown," making it tantalizing to real estate developers, it also "brusquely interrupted real-estate values between the new City Hall and the great department stores on Seventh Street" (ibid. p. 38). A chorus of reformers, bent on establishing LA as key node in an incipient transpacific economy, routinely dismissed the neighbourhood as a "blight," leveraging unseemly statistics regarding its high arrest rates and struggles with communicable ailments to configure it – citing a colonial script that sought the closure of the western frontier – as a bulwark "preventing the national expansion westward" (ibid).

Calls for demolition intensified in the post-War period, particularly as Hollywood flourished and mid-Century urbanism – focused on the rapid construction of freeways and single-family housing – swept the continent. This escalating campaign to raze Bunker Hill coincided, however, with the 1956 emergence of the Indian Relocation Program, which resulted in thousands of Indigenous people migrating to LA from reservations in New Mexico and Arizona and subsequently settling in the neighbourhood (Krouse Applegate & Howard, 2009; Davis, 2001). Production on *The Exiles* began approximately two years into this massive migration. The film thus emerges in the midst of a curious historical tangle. On the one hand, it serves as a compelling record of urban Indigenous life in mid-20th Century America, a rarity in a colonial photographic and cinematic archive dominated by images of savage primitives and bygone nobles – the sort of figures that one finds, for instance, in Edward Curtis' *In the Land of the Headhunters*. And yet this unique portrayal is in many ways the direct result of a settler state-sponsored relocation initiative explicitly predicated on the erasure of Indigenous cultural practices and social orders. Moreover, even as Mackenzie captures the vitality of Indigenous life in Bunker Hill, the entire landscape on which he and his performers stand teeters on the edge of destruction, sat squarely in the crosshairs of municipal officials eager to write the last chapter of the American imperial narrative. *The Exiles*, then, is a particularly fragile and idiosyncratic media text, poised between erasure and endurance, settlement and displacement.

Formally, narratively, and aesthetically, the film reflects this fraught historical context. Mackenzie opens, for instance, on a rather inauspicious note. Accompanied by the low, quarter-note pulse of 'tribal' drumming, a montage of Edward Curtis photographs fills the screen. Soon, an authoritative male voiceover emerges, reciting a text that not only coheres with a conventional native decline narrative, but also glosses over the historical facts of Indigenous genocide. It does not take long, however, for Mackenzie to double back on this framing device. Indigenous figures are portrayed throughout *The Exiles* as fully modern subjects, fluent in the conventions of urban life, yet also actively involved in the production of specifically Indigenous social geographies (Winchell & Zonn, 2012). Though these itineraries are fraught with difficulty – the film is textured by heavy drinking, bar fights, spousal neglect, and cutting moments of isolation – the characters' struggles do not seem to follow from some essential incommensurability between Indigeneity and urban modernity. Rather, they stem from individual and collective attempts to negotiate the real complexities of a social world in flux, to reckon with competing personal aspirations, to articulate discrepant understandings of Indigenous identity, and to stay afloat amid the quotidian pressures of life on limited means.

There is, then, a level of narrative and representational nuance to Mackenzie's film that sets it apart from so much of what populates the colonial cinematic and photographic archive. More closely affiliated with the moody poetics of Italian Neorealism than either the stark observationalism that became dominant in American documentary in the 1960s or the racist paternalism of so much ethnographic salvage documentary, *The Exiles* bristles with ambivalence and discord. Its opening montage notwithstanding, it exhibits an uncommon reluctance to rehearse teleological decline narratives, as well as an openness to those forms of Indigenous life that veer off from the spatial, temporal, and subjective brackets of settler-colonial governance. Though at one point nearly lost to history, it persists as a highly mobile media text, a unique record of *errant* Indigenous itineraries, and of bodies that refuse to abide the stifling contours of colonial recognition.

(And) Other Echoes, I want to suggest, offers a kind of visual and auditory aperture onto these itineraries, allowing them to radiate, proliferate, and indeed *echo* across the increasingly securitized and surveilled borders of settler states in the contemporary moment, confounding the

very terms on which those states strain to produce Indigenous bodies as irreconcilably Other; to *contain* them in and as an alterity structurally targeted for elimination. As Boisjoly's chosen images pass from celluloid to digital code, from Bunker Hill to Montreal, from documentary cinema to abstract portrait, and from sonority to museal silence, they thus accrete a kind of sensory, semiotic, and narrative excess that scuttles the interlocking logics of differentiation, containerization, and elimination that underwrite a settler-colonial atmospheric bordering regime. Like Belmore emerging from the shallow waters in *Fountain,* Boisjoly's images come to the surface freighted with emphatically material histories (and presents) of displacement and demolition, yet they remain strangely energetic. Distorted, glitched, and scrambled, they ricochet across and echo through remote times and places even as they hang mute on the gallery wall. The work thus demands of its viewer an ambiguous, unsettling engagement with the sensorium, charging us with the bewildering task of discerning movement and futurity in stillness and endurance. If elimination is the ideational engine that drives settler-colonial governance, and containerizing representational practices constitute one of its most persistent manifestations, *(And) Other Echoes* emerges within this mechanism as an error that cannot be recuperated as feedback, an unruly scene of Indigenous affective and cultural transmission that defies containment, and makes room for alternative articulations of place and relation. We might even say that its glitches mark the failure of settler colonialism to do "what it is supposed to do:" "eliminate Indigenous people; take all their land; absorb them into a white, property-owning body politic" (Simpson, 2014, p. 7-8).

Thus, in precisely the moment the Canadian states leverages its surveillance capacities to contain Indigenous enactments of sovereignty and cultural vitality within a governable body, *Echoes* develops a visual "poetics of noise" that pushes "against the limits of colonial knowing and sensing," unsettling the friction-free circulation of images and signals on which settler state surveillance relies (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. IV). A small piece of text that accompanies Boisjoly's portraits, printed on the floor of the gallery, poignantly condenses this poetics:

what had happened to our world,
they were in that very place,
now they were not,
now I am not but I will be,
I carry it with us for us,

place to place from time to time,
again and again now and forever,
never to finally know,
but still careful
but still concerned,
but still,
and still,

Interrupted by so many ellipses, gaps, and repetitions, the text reads like a corrupted audio file. As some lines lurch forward, pulling away from an imagined margin, we are forced repeatedly to leave off and pick up elsewhere, hardly able to scan a line without stumbling over a change in tense. Unfinished lines, moreover, are punctuated not by the full-stop of a period, but rather by commas and unmarked caesuras; with sudden turns and suggestions that there is something more, and something *else*, to come. The text is a collection of tiny echoes and errors that open on to one another, overlapping at uneven intervals and multiplying interpretive and affective possibility; always shifting in ways that rupture narrative coherence. Like the portraits, the text radically expands the terms of relationality, implicitly posing the question of what forms it might take absent pre-given narratives, statistically-determined outcomes, and neatly parsed heres and theres, pasts and presents, selves and Others: "*they were in that very place,/now they were not,/now I am not but I will be,/...place to place from time to time.*"

(And) Other Echoes, then, establishes something like an atmosphere, drawing together a viscous tangle of unfinished histories, possible futures, affective intensities, and perplexing subjective positions that charge the gallery space with the energy of an otherwise. It is a site where differently located bodies come into relation "within and apart from settler governance" (Simpson, 2014, p. 11), where settlers in particular must divest themselves of inherited teleologies, follow Indigenous articulations of place and relationality, and learn new ways of sensing and knowing the world. It moves us to listen closely to what we see, and to look carefully for those worlds that become possible when the constant chatter of settler-colonial governance is silenced and the insistent gaze of settler surveillance scrambled. These are worlds that grow out of the difficult labor of "living in the face of an expectant and a *foretold* cultural and political death" (ibid., p. 3), the labor of cultivating forms of representation, apprehension, and affective and cultural transmission that refuse to be contained.

Chapter Three: From Strange Encounters to Stranger Intimacy

Touching (an) Otherwise in Abbas Akhavan & Marina Roy's *FIRE/FIRE*

To this point, I have focused primarily on the relation between the Canadian state's atmospheric bordering regime and the exercise of settler-colonial governance. I began by exploring how the recent reorganization of federal incarceration practices helps to consolidate a gendered and racialized disciplinary matrix that complicates the work of 'locating' the border between the Canadian state and its Indigenous others, insofar as it enables a peculiar sort of expulsion – abandonment – that operates internal to the state's territorial limits while simultaneously rendering them diffuse and indistinct. In the previous chapter, I extended this discussion to the question of settler state surveillance, demonstrating how the 'domestic' governance of Indigenous bodies and social movements not only intersects but is in fact of a piece with both the distributed structure of the Canadian state's surveillance infrastructure, and the visual genealogies on which it is predicated. While these essays have helped to ground my argument within the institutional and discursive parameters of Canadian settler colonialism, they have also neglected to substantively address the relationship *between* these dynamics and the management of racialized and migratory bodies through contemporary citizenship and immigration policy. In this chapter, I turn directly to this relation, unpacking something of how Canada's post-9/11 immigration regime, increasingly diffuse and atmospheric in character, conjoins the labour of excluding and expelling racialized migrants from the social body of the state with the ongoing dispossession and elimination of Indigenous subjects.

More specifically, I will demonstrate how this regime induces what Sara Ahmed (2000) calls strange encounters between white, non-white, and Indigenous bodies. Framed within the normative, unmarked whiteness of Western (settler) societies, these are encounters that "serve to embody the subject" such that the stranger, or the one who seems to come from without, "becomes recognized *as the body out of place*" (p. 39, emphasis in original). The strange encounter describes a coming together of differently-raced bodies that occasions (and simultaneously ratifies) a moving apart, a social event that manifests as a racialized spacing of the world: "the particular bodies that move apart allow the redefinition of social as well as bodily

integrity: black *bodies* are expelled from the white *social body*" (ibid, my emphasis). Or as Ahmed writes elsewhere, "as the outsider inside, the alien [racialized Other] takes on a spatial function, establishing relations of proximity and distance within the home(land). Aliens allow the demarcation of spaces of belonging: by coming too close to home, they establish the very necessity of policing the borders of knowable and inhabitable terrains" (p. 3). Thus if the encounter is typically understood as a moment of "inter-embodiment" wherein the presumed limits of one body shade into those of another, the *strange* encounter casts "inter-embodiment as a site of differentiation rather than inclusion," an incorporation of a provisional sort that ultimately gives way to excision. In this purging of what is seen to arrive from without – this *estrangement* of what is "dangerous, uncontrollable, dirty, engulfing" (p. 53) – the social body is reconciled to both itself and the spaces it inhabits. These interlocking "processes of incorporation and expulsion," Ahmed writes, "produce assimilable and unassimilable bodies" (p. 50), parsed according to a racial difference inscribed on the skin by specific discursive frameworks.

Examining of three recent pieces of Canadian immigration and citizenship policy (the 2004 *Safe Third Country Agreement* (STCA), the 2012 *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act,* and the recently announced *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*), I will demonstrate how Canada's post-9/11 immigration regime constitutes just such a technology of estrangement. After tracing how these documents configure racialized, migratory, and Indigenous bodies as *strange* – bodies whose skins come to function as "the locus of social differentiation" (p. 50) and so proffer "a mechanism for the containment of social space" (p. 48) – I will turn once again to the realm of artistic practice, asking how particular aesthetic strategies might rend the racialized (and racializing) mechanism of the strange encounter. Here, I will take up the work of Abbas Akhavan and Marina Roy, focusing on their joint exhibition *FIRE/FIRE*, installed in 2012 at Vancouver's Centre A. Threading 19th-Century Japanese woodblock prints (Ukiyo-e) together with digital animation, living matter installations, and site-resonant interventions that obliquely reference the complex racial and colonial histories that mark Canada's Pacific coast in general, and the urban scene of Vancouver in particular, Akhavan and Roy, I will argue, open a space of intimate encounter that while certainly immanent to the differentiating logics that found and maintain the Canadian state, cannot be contained by them. I

will contend that *FIRE/FIRE* casts a scene of what historian Nayan Shah (2012) calls "stranger intimacy," establishing a space saturated with "possibilities and tensions that…produce radical alternatives to nation-state and class-privileged citizenship" (p. 32). Far from inducing and exacerbating estrangement, stranger intimacy, as I will demonstrate through my reading of *FIRE/FIRE*, strains for a way of being in touch with others across and against the state's racial grammars, for "exchanges between strangers of feelings, beliefs, ideas, and actions" that "have the capacity to create new ethical, political, and social formations of civic living" (ibid., p. 275).

Technologies of Estrangement:

Over the last decade in Canada, the struggle over and for such spaces of exchange has become particularly fraught. As briefly reviewed in the introduction to this work, since 9/11, the federal government has repeatedly amended its citizenship, immigration, and asylum regulations in ways that irregularize established migratory pathways, erode migrants' access to arms-length appeal mechanisms, centralize and (further) politicize control over deportation proceedings, and spatially redistribute refugee screening checkpoints such that they operate outside the state's humanitarian obligations to asylum seekers. I want to begin by considering three such measures at length, not only as a way of locating *FIRE/FIRE* within a particular legislative and discursive context, but also to trace how the differentiating logic of the strange encounter weaves through the Canadian state's efforts to govern the mobility of racialized bodies – "how some are barred from entry or stopped from staying" (Ahmed, 2014, para. 21), how an atmosphere becomes "a wall…palpable and tangible but also hard to grasp or to reach" (ibid., para. 12).

For chronological convenience, we can begin with the *Safe Third Country Agreement* (STCA), a bilateral refugee policy pact signed by the Canadian and United States governments in 2004 under the auspices of the *Multiple Borders Strategy*. Rather than investing signatory governments with expanded powers of expulsion, as a so-called 'interdiction' policy, the STCA is predicated on a "preemptive and deterrent logic" that "[seeks] to deter and limit potential movements of people before they occur" (Hameed & Vukov, 2007, p. 92). A shrewd manipulation of Canada's obligations under the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees – which stipulates "that no one shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom"

(p. 3) – the STCA declares both Canada and the United States "safe countries" for refugees. Though a seemingly innocuous gesture, this minor revision surreptitiously coerces refugees into making asylum claims in their first country of arrival, rather than arriving in one country and making a later claim in the other. This effectively blocks the arrival of all those who would claim asylum in Canada, but cannot secure direct, uninterrupted passage from their countries of origin. Under the STCA, an emergency stop in the United States, for instance, would likely disqualify a South American refugee from making an asylum claim north of the 49th parallel. Nested in this system of deterrence is an obfuscatory bureaucratic snare. As the Canadian Council for Refugees (2005) writes, "the effect of interdiction is to render the human rights violations suffered by asylum seekers invisible in the country of intended asylum, since they never arrive. Thus, the impact of safe third is largely invisible: there are no media reports about individuals being deported to the threat of death or torture; citizens do not lobby politicians on behalf of families who never make it here" (p. ii).

Rubbed out of the picture, as well, is the question of race. "By couching the policy in terms of *administratively permissible forms* of movement and travel" instead of explicitly specifying undesirable source countries, the state ensures that "the racialized effects of limiting specific populations with respect to the movements they undertake remain unnamed" (Hameed & Vukov, 2007, p. 92). By thus irregularizing the already-tenuous migratory pathways that render the Canadian national space porous to migratory bodies, policies like the STCA "are spatialized along geopolitical *and ultimately racialized routes of passage* between destination countries, transit/buffer zones where border rejections, detention and deportations are enacted, and the source countries and zones from which racialized populations originate" (p. 92, my emphasis). It proffers, in other words, a means of "effecting exclusions while leaving them 'unnamed' in the letter of the policy text, enacting 'a racist strategy without naming race'" (Hameed & Vukov, 2007, p. 93). The STCA, in this sense, conjoins the logic of atmospheric bordering with that of the strange encounter. Precisely by stretching the exercise of state power across a geographically discontinuous array of origin countries, buffer zones, and migratory pathways, the STCA offers the federal government a largely invisible means of regulating the racial composition of the state itself; of producing a social body "imagined through being related to, and separated from

particular bodily others" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 44) who seem to vanish into the thick fog of contemporary border management techniques; of establishing a barrier at once hard and obdurate to passage, yet dis-placed almost to the point of invisibility.

But if these racial dynamics are somewhat insulated from public view by the STCA's bland language of "administrative permissibility," they are laid staggeringly bare in a more recent piece of Canadian immigration legislation. In November, 2014, Immigration Minister Chris Alexander announced his intention to table a bill in the House of Commons entitled the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*. Designed to curb an alleged rise in honour killings, early and forced marriages, polygamy, and other so-called "barbaric cultural practices" in Canada, *Zero Tolerance* proposes a series of amendments to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act,* the *Civil Marriage Act,* and the federal *Criminal Code*. In ensemble, these amendments would make it easier for the Canadian government to block the arrival of migrants accused of participating in such practices, while simultaneously expanding its powers of incarceration and expulsion. A press release distributed on the occasion of the Bill's announcement tersely states, in a moment of rather breathtaking arrogance, that "Canada will not tolerate any type of violence against women or girls, including spousal abuse, violence in the name of so-called 'honour,' or other, mostly gender-based violence" (Government of Canada, 2014, para. 1). No mention, of course, is made of the approximately 1200 Indigenous women and girls who have either been murdered or gone missing in Canada over the last thirty years, nor of the innumerable others who have experienced violence at the hands of white settlers, be they civilians or agents of the state (a distinction that holds only tenuously).

In Alexander's press release, gendered violence is thus configured as the unique affliction of "those wishing to come to Canada," rather than as a constitutive feature of Canadian settler-colonial and migrant-exclusionary rule. So cleaved from the social body of the Canadian state and transformed into a kind of foreign pathogen – a spectre that seems to arrive from without – the threat of gendered violence becomes yet another means of expelling and excluding non-white bodies from the state. *Zero Tolerance*, for instance, introduces into the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* "a new polygamy-specific inadmissibility provision…meaning: temporary residents and permanent residents who practice polygamy in Canada could be found inadmissible

on that basis alone, without the need for a criminal conviction; and if found inadmissible, the person could then be subject to removal" (para. 4). A rather jaw-dropping instance of what Sunera Thobani (2007) calls national "exaltation" (p. 5), the Bill effectively declares Canada free of violence against women (rather than *predicated on and sustained by* the gendered violence of colonialism and migrant exclusion), and suggests further that what violence does exist within the state's borders must have been imported by barbaric migrants who exceed the limits of liberal tolerance. Rarely does one find Gayatri Spivak's (1988) infamous formula – white men saving brown women from brown men (p. 93) – so completely stirred to life, or the figure of Ahmed's (2000) strange body – the body that "function[s] as the border that defines both the space into which the familiar body…cannot cross, and the space in which such a body constitutes itself as (at) home" (p. 53) – so fully enfleshed. What *Zero Tolerance* makes clear is that the discursive production of such bodies "involves *a refusal to recognise how violence is structured by, and legitimated through, the formation of home and community as such*" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 36). This is perhaps another way of diagnosing the work of atmospheric bordering as I have been describing it: a mechanism for relocating the 'tension' of racial difference and differentiation from the discursive scene of its making to a particular (non-white) body such that this body can be read as a 'point of tension' that threatens to rend the state.

While the staggering racism of *Zero Tolerance* might seem a rather crass and transparent effort to stir up nationalist fervour, it is more productively understood as a galling yet logical outgrowth of the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act.* Originally introduced as Bill C-24 and signed into law in the summer of 2014, *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship* subjects migrants and dual nationals to a number of precarizing measures. In addition to imposing onerous residency requirements on would-be citizens that create "two tiers of citizenship – natural born Canadians who can travel and live abroad without restriction and naturalized Canadians who would risk their status if they were ever to leave Canada" (Canadian Bar Association, 2014, p. 2), the Act also grants the federal government expanded powers of citizenship revocation that in almost all cases operate independent of judicial oversight. As the Canadian Bar Association argues, under C-24, "the revocation process will primarily be a paper one, where the Minister gives notice of intent to revoke, the person responds and a decision is made by the Minister…

There is no longer any recourse to the Governor in Council" (p. 3). The Act, in other words, transforms revocation into a largely discretionary matter, initiated by the Minister in response to any one of a litany of often innocuous offences. Those who have a claim on citizenship in a state with which Canada is engaged in armed conflict, for instance, risk having their Canadian citizenship revoked. The Act also empowers the Minister to initiate revocation proceedings when a citizen is found to be affiliated with a terrorist organization, an already-racialized designation that in Canada captures such groups as Hamas, recently delisted as a terror organization by the general court of the European Union (Beaumont, 2014). These powers of revocation effectively grant the Government of Canada the ability to render certain subjects stateless, to strip them of legal status and deport them even when they have no country of origin to return to.

Thus where interdiction and exclusion policies like the STCA and *Zero Tolerance* conjoin the work of racial differentiation with the irregularization of established migratory pathways, citizenship frameworks such as those established under C-24 in fact *open up* migratory pathways, but only insofar as they permit the state to undertake the performative work of purging itself of those contaminating elements presumed to arrive from without. C-24, then, rather comfortably abides the logic of the strange encounter, bringing racialized and migratory bodies *into* a scene of legal representation and recognition, but only in ways that occasion their excision; an oscillation that works to realign the space of the state with a normative whiteness.

Historical Roots/Routes:

While it is of course important to critique these migrant exclusion tactics in the present tense, it is also essential that they be situated historically, understood as the inheritance of an abiding commitment on the part of the Canadian state to strictly govern the lives and movements of racialized migrants while simultaneously exploiting their labour so as to expedite the seizure of Indigenous land and resources. With *FIRE/FIRE*, Akhavan and Roy bring a small portion of this legacy to the surface, namely the implementation of anti-Asian immigration policies in the half-century following Confederation. Yet rather than posing it as some regrettable but ultimately completed past, they configure it as a challenge in and for the present; a set of tensions and discourses that continue to shape the governance of racialized and Indigenous bodies in Canada. Transforming a collection of 19th-Century Japanese woodblock prints (Ukiyo-e) – a visual

archive materially and semiotically tethered to early modern processes of imperial statecraft and racial differentiation – into transmedial objects of passage, conjunction, and slippage, Akhavan and Roy enact a kind of temporal frame shift that compels viewers to reckon with how the historical production of strange bodies necessarily circumscribes contemporary efforts to establish intimate contact across and against the racial grammars of the Canadian state.

To its would-be interpreters, *FIRE/FIRE* poses a bewildering problem of narrative and form, combining an impressive collection of Ukiyo-e with a wide range of artistic traditions and historical references that, for failing to cohere under any one generic banner, make it difficult to parse exactly where to begin, where to end, and what to emphasize along the way. In this sense, the exhibition rhymes with the histories it marks, its aesthetic and formal unwieldiness a perhaps-unintentional reflection of the complex ways in which Asian migrants have been differentially raced, constrained, and governed in Canada since Confederation. In a nationalist historiography dominated by narratives and images of white European settlers taming an otherwise empty wilderness, non-white migrants have typically been configured as 'late arrivals' to Canada, a discursive frame that has proven particularly durable in the Pacific Northwest (see Roy, 1989). But as Anderson (1991) argues, Chinese immigrants have been present in British Columbia "from the very earliest point of non-Indigenous settlement" (p. 34). Nearly a decade before Confederation, "in 1858-9, approximately 2000 Chinese came from further south on the Pacific Coast to the goldfields at the middle course of the Fraser River" (ibid.). By 1867, Chinese workers were employed throughout the province, holding "skilled jobs in saw mills on Burrard Inlet and in salmon canneries on the Fraser and Skeena rivers and Puget Sound. Others worked in coal mining at Nanaimo and Wellington, in land clearing, and telegraph-line construction" (ibid., p. 35). Recounting these early migration and labour patterns helps to disrupt the racist construction of British Columbia as 'white man's country' (Roy, 1989). But even so, it is crucial that they also be understood as the bleeding edge of settler-colonial resource theft in the region. From the earliest moments of non-Indigenous settlement on the Pacific coast, the Canadian settler state relied heavily on the selective importation and exploitation of non-white bodies to carry out the work of Indigenous dispossession.

These patterns widened in subsequent years. With the fall of the isolationist Tokugawa Shogunate and the 'opening' of Japan by US Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853 and 1854, Japanese migrant labourers began arriving on Canadian shores in markedly greater numbers (these shifts, as I will elaborate below, also helped to establish a robust transnational trade in the Japanese popular arts, including ukiyo-e). Where Dominion officials and white workers often looked upon Chinese labourers with suspicion and outright disgust (Thobani, 2007), they tended to adopt a more lenient, if still racialized and paternalistic, stance toward the Japanese, who were thought to hold "a conception of progress and civilization more assimilable to the European cultural tradition than its more mysterious Oriental neighbour" (Anderson, 1991, p. 59); a belief no doubt shepherded by the new Meiji government's overtly industrial and avowedly imperialist political ambitions. Through the 1800s, this confluence of white paternalism and Meiji expansionism afforded Japanese migrants the necessary political and economic leverage to establish themselves as both labourers and business owners in a number of cities along the Pacific coast. In Vancouver, for instance, a tight-knit Japanese quarter developed around Oppenheimer Park in what is now the city's Downtown Eastside, only a few blocks northeast of the low-lying swamplands around Pender Street (near the current site of Centre A) where Chinese workers had, by this point, established a provisional community of their own.

As the number of Asian migrant workers in British Columbia grew, however, barely-concealed racial tensions began to surface. Prominent white labour leaders regularly excoriated the 'Asiatic' races in the press for stealing jobs, and routinely called on federal and provincial legislators to enact policies that would halt the influx of non-white labour. In response to this persistent lobbying, in 1885, the federal government passed the *Chinese Immigration Act*, which imposed a fifty-dollar head tax on every would-be migrant in the hopes of rendering immigration financially untenable (Thobani, 2007). For the time being, Japanese migrants were spared such overt persecution, largely due to the fact that the Canadian government, working in lock-step with British economic interests, was concerned to maintain friendly relations with the new Meiji government (Price, 2011). White labour and community leaders, however, were not so discriminate, and regularly agitated across the colour line. In 1886, for instance, much of Vancouver was destroyed in a massive fire. As reconstruction began, members and affiliates of

organizations like the Asiatic Exclusion League aggressively lobbied city aldermen to enact regulations preventing Asian businesses from re-opening (Roy, 1989). This bureaucratic 'driving out' was followed in 1887 by a violent attack on Chinese labourers in a Coal Harbour work camp (Anderson, 1991). In the wake of these episodes and facing increasing pressure from provincial legislators, in 1903, Liberal Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier amended the *Chinese Immigration Act*, transforming it into the *Chinese Exclusion Act,* which increased the entry tax from fifty to one hundred dollars, and eventually to five hundred dollars (ibid.).

Around the same time, South Asian migrants, primarily Sikh men from Punjab, began arriving in British Columbia. Initially, South Asian workers roused little suspicion, their numbers too low and anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese sentiments running too high to mark them out as serious threats. Moreover, not only were Punjabi Sikhs technically citizens of the British Empire, and so legally more difficult to exclude, they were also relatively well regarded throughout the colonies, known for their "history of resilience against invasion" in colonial India (Sharma, 2004, p. 38). As Shah (2012) writes, Punjabi men were often viewed in British Columbia as "worldly, cosmopolitan, adaptable…dashing, resourceful, and hardworking. The military self-discipline and masculine prowess of Punjabi men was widely praised" (p. 35). These perceptions, however, began to shift in first decade of the 20th Century. As Sharma (2004) writes, "by 1906, the 'colour' presence of South Asians….impacted white British Columbia, resulting in a ban on any further South Asians entering the country as early as 1908 (p. 38-39). This ban took the form of the so-called Continuous Journey ordinance, which stipulated that all ships carrying South Asian migrants would only be permitted to land in Vancouver on the condition that they had arrived directly from India. Though not explicitly racialized in the manner of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, Continuous Journey – in many ways the historical antecedent of Safe Third Country (Hameed & Vukov, 2007) – was nonetheless white supremacist in its effects, imposed shortly after many transpacific shipping companies had suspended direct routes between India and Vancouver in response to aggressive lobbying on the part of the Canadian government (Anderson, 2013).

These policies, discourses, and practices of racial exclusion manifested not only episodically, such as when a white mob ransacked Vancouver's Chinatown in 1907, but also

spatially, producing what Chang (2012) calls a "geography of exclusion" (p. 10) wherein racialized communities were confined to particular spaces within the urban scene – Chinatown, Japantown, the Downtown Eastside – and Indigenous people were dispossessed of their land to make way *for* that scene. Indeed, it is little coincidence that less than a decade before the passage of the *Chinese Immigration Act*, the Government of Canada instituted the *Indian Act*, which, by instigating a sweeping reservationization program, 'legally' expropriated vast swaths of Coast Salish territory in and around what is now Vancouver. By so decomposing Indigenous geographies while simultaneously instituting a system of racist exclusion policies, the incipient Canadian state consolidated a decidedly white social body nourished on stolen land and resources. In this account, we can hear echoes of the strange encounter: a bringing-together of differently raced bodies that works to (re)establish whiteness as a social, spatial, and bodily norm precisely by occasioning practices of exclusion and expulsion

Towards a Stranger Intimacy:

Though distinctly wretched, this history of unwilled and abusive proximity is by no means impervious to puncture. On the contrary, it is pockmarked by instances of solidarious and non-coercive contact that confound state-sanctioned racial categories. As Price (2011) notes, even in the thick of the Second World War, as the overtly racist immigration policies aggravated relations between Japanese- and Chinese-Canadians – already strained by Japanese imperial aggression in Mainland China – practices of "cross-community solidarity that had emerged in the 1930s" persisted in ways that "would challenge the government's policies" of racial differentiation in the post-war period (p. 95). Similarly, even as British subjects residing in an avowedly white supremacist Canada, South Asian migrants on the Pacific coast regularly collaborated with their colleagues, kin, and allies across racial and geopolitical borders to support the anti-colonial struggle on the Indian subcontinent (Shah, 2012). Following the imposition of the *Chinese Exclusion Act,* moreover*,* a network of Indigenous border runners flourished in the Pacific Northwest, offering Chinese workers fleeing racial violence in the United States (relatively) safe passage into Canada at rates far lower than those imposed by the Laurier government (Chang, 2012). These are the forms of contact – unanticipated, unsanctioned, developed within and against the actual conditions of migrant-exclusionary and

settler-colonial rule – that I identify with Shah's notion of stranger intimacy. And they are, as well, the forms of contact that Akhavan and Roy enact in the contemporary moment with *FIRE/ FIRE,* bringing them into focus by transforming an inherited ukiyo-e archive into an aperture onto the making of racial difference within and across overlapping imperial formations.

Popular in Japan throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries, particularly among the urban middle classes, ukiyo-e only became widely available in the West following the 'opening' of Japan by Commodore Matthew Perry, who in 1854 arrived in Japanese waters equipped with seven ships, 2000 military personnel, and a mandate to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with a hitherto isolationist Japanese state. To be sure, Perry's arrival hastened the collapse of the censorious Tokugawa Shogunate and fuelled the emergence of the decidedly expansionist Meiji regime. Even before this point, however, Tokugawa rule was balanced on shifting ground, rattled by the spread of Christianity among Japanese commoners in the 18th and 19th Centuries, beset by several popular revolts, and rendered somewhat porous by the development of trade relations with the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal beginning in the early 17th Century (Lambourne, 2005; Smits, 2006). As a result, many of the first ukiyo-e transported back to Europe were in fact tinted with Dutch inks and printed on Dutch papers (Breuer, 2010). Almost from the beginning, then, they were what Laura Marks (2000) might call "transnational objects," insofar as they "contain[ed] a social history in fragmentary form" (p. 120), freighted with a referential burden inscribed not only through semiosis "*but through physical contact"* (p. 80). Early ukiyo-e were quite literally coloured by the 17th-century expansion of European imperial ambitions, circulated through space by the threat of American military intervention, and visually marked by the pitched political struggles that characterized Tokugawa rule, particularly its later stages. In the 1790s, for instance, as a way of kneecapping the growing power of the merchant class, the Shogunate moved to severely restrict the trade in ukiyo-e by effectively banning one of its most popular genres: the portrait. With human figuration mostly forbidden, "printmakers turned to landscape, bird, and animal prints" as well as "distinguished subjects from history and literature" (Breuer, 2010, p. 14). It is in this moment that such master printmakers as Katsushika Hokusai come to prominence both in Japan and abroad, hailed for

developing a unique pastoral style wherein natural elements such as tree branches, curling waves, and bamboo groves elegantly distinguish foreground from background (ibid.).

After 1854, a vibrant commercial trade in popular art and literature flourished between Japan and Europe, leading many ukiyo-e artists to adopt from the latter such techniques as vanishing-point and atmospheric perspective, and by the same token, moving a number of European impressionists to imitate, and oftentimes directly copy, ukiyo-e compositional strategies. As Labourne (2005) writes, for figures like Degas, Manet, Whistler, and particularly Van Gogh, the Japan of ukiyo-e printing was "a Utopian dream…composed of such familiar themes as Mount Fuji, geishas, 'morning glory' flowers and typical landscapes of all four seasons" (p 47). In a letter to Gaugin written on the occasion of his first visit to the south of France, this visual imaginary even becomes for Van Gogh a means of virtual transport: "I always remember the emotions which the trip from Paris to Arles evoked. How I kept watching to see if I had already reached Japan! Childish, isn't it? (ibid.). In such statements, where one rural landscape is substituted effortlessly for another, we see how ukiyo-e worked to produce for European artists like Van Gogh an eminently accessible but highly specific Japan; a Japan cleaved from its actual physical and political conditions – romantic, pastoral, and isolated as opposed to thoroughly modern, rapidly industrializing, and increasingly imperialist. Many gallerists and collectors shared in these sentiments and scrambled to acquire ukiyo-e as artefacts of a 'traditional' Japan threatened by Meiji industrialization, altogether ignoring their status as transnational objects produced in active dialogue with a shifting political landscape (Lambourne, 2005). By 1876, Breuer (2010) notes, this taste for *Japonisme* had spread to North America, gaining a particularly sturdy foothold along the Pacific coast. By the end of the 19th Century, the Japanese popular arts had become a major influence on Modernist figures such as Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as those associated with the Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements.

Following Edward Said's (2003) prescient critique of Orientalism, we might regard this turn-of-the-century fascination with ukiyo-e as symptomatic of a wider attempt on the part of Western societies to not only produce but indeed control a particular space of racial and cultural difference through the collection, circulation, and interpretation of visual objects, reading it as what Said calls a "*distribution* of geopolitical awareness into…aesthetic texts" (p. 13). *FIRE/*

FIRE, in this sense, centres a visual archive that emerges from and surreptitiously records a peculiar and power-laden moment of contact between the 'Orient' and the West. Materially speaking, ukiyo-e mark the entangled trajectories of visual culture, imperial state power, and capitalist accumulation in and across the Pacific on the cusp of the 20th Century. Freighted with the physical traces of political contestation, they "[journey] across the globe and across history, taxonomizing and recording the sweep of colonialism and capitalism" (Hameed & Vukov, 2007, p. 100). And yet discursively, they have consistently worked to produce an essential, flattened 'Japaneseness' that marks East off from West, and by implication, non-white off from white; proffering a way of "'cutting off' figures from the social and material relations which overdetermine their existence" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 5). Recalling the strange encounter, they are taken up as means of approaching racial difference that in fact reproduces the space of whiteness from which that approach proceeds. That this all unfolds in the same moment that states like Canada were scrambling to constrain the mobility of real Japanese, Chinese, and South Asian bodies is, I think, less than coincidental. Rather, what is being fleshed out simultaneously in both domains, the aesthetic and the legislative, is a set of discursive and representational strategies for reconstituting the whiteness of Western (settler) states in the midst of accelerating transnational migration; for *regulating the porosity of whiteness* as a spatial, corporeal, and visual category.

It matters, then, that with *FIRE/FIRE,* Akhavan and Roy recover something of the restlessness of the ukiyo-e archive, treating the prints not as projections of some static cultural essence, but rather as points of interpretive and affective ambivalence that compel us to apprehend Otherness otherwise, engaging with the historical variability of its substance. Consider Roy's major contribution to the exhibition, *one hundred years later.* In this twenty-minute digital animation work, set to play on a loop along one of Centre A's sprawling rear walls, Roy enlists the ukiyo-e as source material, gleaning from them a series of landscapes and domestic spaces before which the action of the film unfolds. But while the scenes are familiar – serene ponds set amid gently rolling hills, sparsely populated coastlines, mountain ranges that fade into a thin atmospheric haze, bedrooms and parlours bounded by shoji screens – the figures that populate them are quite decidedly not. Where prior to the Tokugawa ban on portraiture and figuration ukiyo-e often featured images of courtesans, kabuki performers, merchants, and

groups of women gathered in private drawing rooms, Roy's landscapes are traversed by a cast of crudely-drawn and jerkily-animated figures known as yokai. These are bewildering, mutant-like creatures whose contours only occasionally approximate those of the human body. Sometimes menacing and often darkly humorous, Roy's yokai engage throughout the film in a series of odd encounters and rituals, absent any clear narrative arc. At one point, an amorphous, fleshy mound – its body pockmarked with dozens of eyes – shuffles listlessly astride what appears to be a painting of human skulls piled in a pyramid, hung vertically in the style of much early ukiyo-e portraiture. Later, we see the same figure feasting on fish plucked from a pond by way of a kind of mutated proboscis. In another sequence, a bizarre phallic creature with one eye spills a bucket of what appears to be either ink or oil into a swiftly moving stream, triggering a cut to a shot of viscous fluids that bubble and lurch across screen in abstract compositions. The film proceeds episodically in this fashion, alternating between the clumsy slapstick of the yokai and the arbitrary drift of apparently immiscible fluids.

Set atop a swirling, dissonant electronic soundtrack, the film hardly seems the place to look for specifically human practices of intimacy that contest racialized representational and governmental regimes. Indeed, according to the exhibition catalogue, *one hundred years later* is meant to "allegorize the aftermath of human *disaster* and environmental collapse" (Centre A, 2012, my emphasis). In one sense, this is clearly the case. Oil spills, earthquakes, rolling heaps of skulls, hovering fish carcasses, tsunami swells, and barrels of toxic waste left abandoned on white sand beaches make it impossible to miss Roy's rather apocalyptic environmental critique. The work's title even ominously points toward some antecedent though unnamed mutagenic catastrophe. But this metaphorics of disaster, I think, does not quite account for the strange humour that runs through the piece, those little pockets of affective easing that invite us into an otherwise unsettling and, at times, menacing filmic space. And it misses as well the sense that, while much has clearly changed, not quite all has been lost. Recognizable traces of what came before not only persist, but are taken up and adapted anew – however clumsily, awkwardly, *strangely* – by different yet not altogether impossible forms of life. There is in the piece a more complicated negotiation of erasure and persistence, and familiarity and strangeness, than an unqualified focus on catastrophe can abide; an ambivalence that derives, at least in part, from the

film's formal and technical qualities. Situated at the intersection of archival exhibition and digital animation, *one hundred years later* resists making any clear, periodizing distinctions between past, present, and future. What was once a resource for articulating a static Japanese backwardness (ukiyo-e) becomes, by way of Roy's animations, the very setting against which new forms of embodiment and sociality take shape; forms that we do not quite, or not *yet*, know how to recognize. And yet in some ways, these 'new forms' simply index the itinerancy already latent in the print as a transnational object, emerging as strange manifestations of those dutifully disavowed genealogies of physical contact and social antagonism that sit just below the surface(s) of empire, striated by the (often violent) making and governance of difference. In *one hundred years later*, then, we begin to sense a complex toggling of the temporal, an instability in the relation of past to present to future that takes shape in and through the flesh of yokai.

Hameed & Vukov (2007) explore similar tendencies in Ali Kazimi's 2004 film *Continuous Journey*, which makes use of what little archival material there is to be had to (re)animate the *Komagata Maru* incident of 1914, wherein a charter ship carrying hundreds of South Asian migrants was blocked, under the Continuous Journey ordinance of 1908, from docking in Vancouver. After sitting anchored in Burrard Inlet for two months, the ship was turned back to India, where upon disembarking, eighteen of its passengers were shot to death and many others imprisoned. Stirred to motion, Kazimi's archival fragments become "recollection objects" that "[imbue] the animations with a charged and visceral quality, the affective traces of the director's desire for an archive of the virtualized, disappeared tracks of the event" (p. 96). Here, for Hameed & Vukov (2007), animation does more than simply animate, it also recovers that which has been forcibly occluded by state-sanctioned practices of historical erasure, excavating from a scant visual archive what Laura Marks calls "a trace of anim*ism*;" an affective inscription of a given image's "contact with the event of erasure and expulsion" (as cited in Hameed & Vukov, p. 98). Roy's film similarly bristles with this kind of animism, enlisting animation as a strategy for bringing to the image surface those complex histories of contact obscured by ossified representational regimes.

one hundred years later, then, seems to me less about how catastrophe splits a before off from an after, and more about living and reckoning with the actual complexity *of* the before in

the durative space of the after. The film's title, after all, names an open temporal interval, an after deprived of any singular before; an effect without a cause, or rather, with a cause that fails to complete itself, that continues in and as its effect(s) – a cause that does not cease to cause. It is in this interval that we must contend with the question of how we are to live, and how we are to be in touch with others, when the past reasserts itself in the present as a possible future, all the while chafing at the very limits of apprehension and representation: how am I to live with these bodies I do not know, and do not yet know *how* to know? How will I come to know them? On what or whose terms? What does it mean to live with these others, and what embodied forms does that living take, when the totalizing temporal structure of catastrophe *fails*? *one hundred years later* does not hazard solutions to these questions, and neither will I. But in the very act of making them available to thought, it has already placed us as viewers at a substantial remove from those legal, discursive, and representational frameworks enlisted by the contemporary Canadian state to produce stifling and reductive configurations of racial and Indigenous difference.

In Roy's hands, the ukiyo-e encompassed in *FIRE/FIRE* thus cease to function as technologies of containment that produce a set of eminently knowable bodies and terrains. Recast as transmedial recollection objects, they induce an atmosphere of bewilderment and indeterminacy wherein what is at stake is not simply whether we do or do not know the Other, but also the very substance of otherness. In *one hundred years later*, any attempt to neatly parse self and other is overwhelmed by a proliferation of corporealities, socialities, and histories. We might say that the film induces an encounter with otherness that permits neither a retreat back into nor a reinscription of the self and its attendant social worlds. Instead, it opens toward a freighted ethical challenge: how do we apprehend and relate to others when the very boundary between self and o/Other proves utterly inadequate to the actual complexity of embodied difference, when the strange encounter *fails to do what it is supposed to do*? Returning to the problem at the heart of this work, we might put the question this way: in the small opening that forms when settler-colonial and migrant-exclusionary forms of governance fail to do what they are meant to (and they quite clearly do; Indigenous communities and social orders endure, albeit in a strangulated form, and racialized migrants continue to make lives for themselves, however precarious) and yet persist in a durative present – causes that keep on causing – what alternative

social worlds can we imagine? How else can we envision being in touch, even when our proximities are unwilled, an ongoing effect of coercion, exploitation, or dispossession?

To ask this question is, in my estimation, to begin to struggle for stranger intimacy: a way (or ways) of being in touch across racial difference that are immanent yet irreducible to the discursive, visual, and political frameworks that strain to reproduce the unmarked whiteness of the state. Without dissolving the material facts of embodied difference and historical antagonism – on the contrary, precisely by excavating and visually rearticulating these facts in ways that trouble extant representational regimes – *one hundred years later* evinces not only how "multiple cosmologies, ethics, expressions, and structures of feeling are brought into dialogue through overlapping diasporas and migration," but also how alternative arrangements of existence might take shape through these unwieldy flows. "This perception of world-making does not ignore durable inequalities," Shah (2012) writes, "but rather dislodges the notion that systems of inequality and the identities that are enlisted to buttress them are perpetual, unchangeable, and without alternative" (p. 281-82). Roy marks this possibility, helping us to grasp that even as the acute pressures of an atmospheric bordering regime matter forth, they come up short of themselves. Not only do they fail to fully extinguish alternative social worlds, in some cases they may inadvertently *capacitate* those worlds, creating conditions under which precarious subjects, labouring in, across, and against the racial categories ascribed them by the state, might gather up what Berlant (2013) calls "transformative proximities" (p. 82). These are proximities – intimacies – saturated with "the capacity to create new ethical, political, and social formations of civic living and participation" (Shah, 2012, p. 275).

Claims:

These possibilities come more clearly into focus when we turn to Akhavan's contributions to *FIRE/FIRE*, two of which I want address here. The first, installed opposite *one hundred years later*, consists of two home aquariums filled with marine flora and fauna: kelps and seaweeds, anemones, urchins, snails, prawns, and most significantly, catfish and salmon fry, two figures that shoulder a particularly substantial semiotic burden. To begin with, not only does the catfish make a noteworthy appearance in *one hundred years later*, it also figures prominently in the ukiyo-e archive more broadly construed. Indeed, as Smits (2006) notes, catfish prints,

known as Namazu-e, comprise a ukiyo-e subgenre in and of themselves, taking both their cue and their name from a figure in Japanese folklore known as Namazu, a giant catfish whose aggressive thrashing is thought to cause earthquakes. Little surprise, then, that Namazu-e first came to prominence in the second half of the 1850s, after a massive earthquake devastated the Japanese administrative capital of Edo, killing some 10,000 people. Within weeks of the earthquake "over 400 varieties of earthquake-related prints were on the market, the majority of which featured images of giant catfish, often with anthropometric figures" (p. 1054). Far from representing a crisis-induced lapse into pre-modern spiritualism, however, Smits argues that the explosion of Namazu-e in this period was a decidedly modern phenomenon. The genre, he suggests, offered Japanese printmakers banned from producing portraits an opportunity "to express an emerging consciousness of Japanese national identity and to make veiled political statements" in the tempestuous final decades of the Tokugawa Shogunate, punctuated by "crop failures, natural disasters, and epidemics" (p. 1046), and finally, the 1854 arrival of Commodore Perry. For the people of Edo, Smits writes, the earthquake of 1855 was not a random event. On the contrary, it was understood as one in this larger series of natural disasters and imperial upheavals that remade the very fabric of Japanese social and political life at the end of the 19th Century. In this sense, namazu-e and the folkloric figure of the catfish offered a means of negotiating, through a visual grammar at once traditional and modern, a landscape that was both literally and figuratively shifting underfoot.

A similar argument can be made regarding the figure of the salmon. Like Namazu, the salmon features prominently in Coast Salish mythological and spiritual orders, and in addition, remains one of the main sources of food in many Pacific Northwest Indigenous communities. But, again like Namazu, it is also ensconced within a number of thoroughly modern political antagonisms, having played a prominent role in the consolidation and contestation of Canadian colonial governance. As Harris (2001) writes, the "legal capture of salmon in British Columbia" has, since Confederation, been one of the Canadian state's key strategies for establishing authority over Indigenous peoples in the region. By denying the legitimacy of Indigenous harvesting and allocation strategies – a "web of entitlements, prohibitions, and sanctions… allowing certain activities, proscribing others, permitting one group to catch fish at certain times

in particular locations with particular technology, prohibiting others" (ibid., p. 4) – the Dominion worked tirelessly in its first years to terminate subsistence extraction and replace it with a far more intensive, federally-regulated commercial fishery (a fishery that would have floundered were it not for the widespread exploitation of Japanese and Chinese migrant workers in salmon canning facilities throughout British Columbia's Lower Mainland). Encompassed within broader practices of settler-colonial land and resource theft, this 'legal' seizure of Pacific salmon stocks has ensured that the management of salmon breeding grounds, the development of commercial fish farming facilities, and the question of how salmon can be collected, by whom, and in what numbers, have remained points of (con)tension between Indigenous communities and the Canadian state into the contemporary moment.

And so to bring these two figures – the salmon and the catfish – together in the very heart of the Downtown Eastside, a place where the ongoing process of Indigenous dispossession squarely meets the state-sponsored governance of racialized bodies (Culhane & Robertson, 2005), is no small matter. On the contrary, Akhavan's aquariums strike me as perhaps *FIRE/ FIRE*'s most heavily-freighted component, testifying quite elegantly to how imperial and settler-colonial political orders live not only as discursive abstractions, but *in and through* the actual flesh of bodies, both human and non-human; how thoroughly and insidiously they embed themselves in the ecological, geophysical, and indeed geological conditions of existence. What's more, by confining to the distinctly petit bourgeois space of the home aquarium the convoluted political and social histories accreted to the bodies of the fish, Akhavan evinces how such histories, immense in their genealogical breadth and depths, are often *miniaturized* as they pass through the capitalist circuitry of imperial state-building; how, like so many ukiyo-e before them, they become reified as consumable, objective markers of difference that reveal little, if anything, of the material and discursive processes through which that difference is produced. In this sense, Akhavan's aquariums might be read as a rather damning critique of how the real complexity of imperial and settler-colonial rule – the true sweep of its bodily, spatial, and discursive operations – is so routinely whittled down to only those fragments that can be contained and *domesticated,* by which I mean: transformed into a resource for reproducing the 'the domestic,' for generating out of a particular social distribution of life a space that is home. Or rather, a space that can be

lived *as* home by a certain kind of body. One finds support for this reading in the catalogue materials that accompany *FIRE/FIRE:* "in cultivating fish in the gallery the artist wishes to point to compartmentalized zones of biopolitical control" (Centre A, 2012, para. 2).

Clearly, I do not wish to contest this reading. But in the same way that I feel Roy's *one hundred years later* does more than simply record catastrophe, I feel that Akhavan's aquariums are not exactly reducible to this condemnatory performance of containment. For even within these "compartmentalized zones," there is a peculiar kind of intimacy at work, one that does not finally resolve into the familiar-familial, the domestic, the domesticable. It is rather an intimacy that takes the form of an echo, an affective vibration that passes between two seemingly distinct yet structurally entangled histories of political contestation – in the history of namazu-e, we can hear something of the history of Canadian settler-colonialism, and vice versa. Though one never dissolves into the other, they nonetheless rhyme in particular ways; evincing how the representational, discursive, and corporeal economies of imperial and settler-colonial statecraft shade into one another, constituting a complex, transnational field of power and refusal. In these fecund moments, when it becomes possible to glimpse one history of a people negotiating the strictures of (settler) state power through another, what can be learned of the multiplicity of ways in which the actual matter of embodied life – the ground on which we stand, the potentially unknown bodies in whose company we find ourselves, the atmospheres we 'pick up' (or don't), *the waters in which we swim* – becomes involved in interrelated struggles for and against certain arrangements of existence? Given their due, these moments might place on our world-making projects a weighty ethical charge. They form an injunction to engage the deep material, representational, and discursive complexity of how difference is *made* across remote scenes of encounter, rather than simply accepting a regime of differentiation that brusquely parses and instrumentalizes distinct bodies, either by reducing some to the labour power required to exploit others, or by expelling some as a means of reproducing a form of community that writes others out from the beginning. Such an injunction, I think, might help us to grasp at a world that allows us to live our up-againstness otherwise.

This reading is condensed in one final detail of the exhibition, delicate and easily missed. The polished concrete floor of Centre A is crossed and recrossed with shallow cracks – physical

traces of the building's settling into place, its coming-to-rest amid the convoluted histories of antagonism sedimented into the streets of the Downtown Eastside, and woven as well into the discursive and representational formations I have recounted in this chapter. For *FIRE/FIRE*, Akhavan meticulously lined these small fissures with gold leaf, creating a work entitled *Claim* that obliquely references yet another Japanese aesthetic tradition: a method of mending broken ceramics known as kintsugi. In kintsugi, a broken vessel is reconstituted using a thick resin or lacquer. The exposed resin lines are then coated in gold and/or silver powders such that the vessel appears shot through with metallic veins. For many kintsugi practitioners, this process exceeds the matter of repair, brushing as well against a spiritual or metaphysical register (Iten, 2008). It is a means of embedding in the vessel a visible trace of its social history; a way of beginning this history again, or simply carrying it forth, that visually marks a cataclysmic past. As Iten (2008) writes, "when restoring with lacquer, the intention is not to render the damage wholly invisible, but rather to use the injury as the central element for the metamorphosis of the damaged ceramic into an object imbued with new characteristics…an appearance that exerts a completely different effect" (p. 18).

To return to the grammar I have deployed in this chapter, ceramics mended through kintsugi become akin to the recollection object described by Marks (2000); an object that bears its history not only through metaphor and semiosis, but also through the trace of actual physical contact. There are, however, two kinds of contact to consider here. The first is that of the shattering sort; that cruel, catastrophic contact that splinters the vessel in the first place. The second is a sort that mends without ever presuming to complete; a meticulous laying on of hands, a way of touching that requires that we pull close to what endures, dwelling on the question of how those fragments might be "imbued with new characteristics," arranged so as to "[exert] a completely different effect." It is this second form of contact that Akhavan makes legible with *Claim,* offering it as a challenge to, or perhaps more appropriately *a claim upon,* the viewer: a challenge to reckon with the shards of difficult histories – expulsion, exclusion, extermination – in the present and *for* a different sort of future, a future that "exerts a completely different effect;" to find ways of living the here and now, as well as the may-yet-be, while never obscuring how that which is 'passed' lives on in the very matter of bodily life. To feel and respond to the

claim(s) of history while still claiming alternative futures. Thinking with the recent work of Judith Butler, Lynes, Paul & Morgenstern (forthcoming) suggest that claiming is a way of "signalling a capacity for agency in the taking of place," a "gathering up, a collecting of the space itself, *a seizing and a reconfiguring* of the matter of the material environment." It is a way of touching that allows one to carry on, or perhaps to begin again, while always remaining alert to the ongoingness of what came before, the causes that keep causing. And in this carrying-on, to build; to build something different, and indeed to build differently. To gather something up – a vessel, a space, a relation, a world – that holds water. And to gather it otherwise.

Conclusion: For Complicated Beginnings

> "There is no such thing as a merely given, available starting point: beginnings have to be *made* for each project in such a way as to *enable* what follows from them." - Edward Said, *Orientalism* (2003, p. 16)

I began this project by marking out a structuring ambivalence, a trouble of sorts. I began with the difficulty of centring a "restless edge," of locating that which not only eludes location, but indeed runs up against its very limits, frustrating efforts to sift centre out from periphery, proximity from remoteness, here and now from there and then. Thinking with Edward Said, I feel in retrospect that this problem, posed initially as one of methodology and procedure, is just as much conceptual, narratological, and above all political; a question not only of how or with what one begins (how one locates their object or site of study), but of what is at *stake* when one begins, or presumes oneself able to begin. Having now charted an admittedly vast and at times overwhelming critical itinerary – one I have often strained to keep in check, moving laterally in pursuit of relation even while insisting upon the too-frequently obscured genealogical depths of the particular – I want to reflect on the ambivalence of the beginning (*my* beginning), for I think that in it I can discern something of how to end.

Said's remark, part of *Orientalism*'s oft-cited introductory chapter, is a comment on imperial power: the power to define and to delineate, to parse, explain, and represent the Other within a textually- and narratively-mediated scene of colonial encounter. This is a power with a sharp, cleaving edge: "the idea of beginning," Said writes, "indeed the act of beginning, necessarily involves an act of delimitation by which something is cut out of a great mass of material, separated from the mass, and made to stand for, as well as *be* a starting point, a beginning" (ibid.) As a textual, historical, or aesthetic object, then, the beginning sweeps up the very real mess we invariably make in and of the work of definition, hiding frayed edges in tidy hemlines and seams. And for Said, this sweeping up, this suturing, makes certain things possible. It allows us to say certain things but not others, to tell certain stories, to hear and make certain claims, to follow certain trajectories, and of course, to draw certain conclusions about people and places. If we take Said at his word, the notion of narrative as a temporally coherent progression of causally related events – a beginning and an end threaded together by a long, sequential

middle – begins to look like something of a farce, insofar as the end is there from and indeed *in* the beginning, if only germinally. Once we begin, that is, we are already a good portion of the way to the end: a rather dissatisfying and even alarming prospect. For if this is the case, what room is there, and what room can there possibly be, to imagine a different outcome? To make things turn out otherwise? What ground remains, if any, to rewrite the most wretched of stories?

These questions solicit comparisons to the figure of the border. For the border, like the beginning, is a cleavage between inside and out, things included and things excluded. And it is a cleavage that *makes things happen.* A border, as we have seen, can render certain bodies stranger than others. It can relocate a body that is quite clearly in and of the here-and-now to a there-and-then presumed to be lapsed, bygone, and extinguished. It can expose certain populations to incisive, unwilled, and unrelenting forms of visibility while rubbing others out altogether. It can even transform marine animals into objects of political antagonism, the south of France into pre-Meiji Japan, and vital Indigenous nations into empty, appropriable wilderness. The institutional, discursive, and representational frameworks that work to maintain the border's integrity against those who would contest it (what I have been calling a bordering regime) do the work of 'tidying up' these complicated conjuring tricks; producing the border as a neat slash with no refuse and no lingering signs of damage, embedding it seamlessly in the very constitution of a shared atmosphere of national and racial belonging.

In settler states such as Canada, this affinity between the border and the beginning is more than metaphorical, more than a likeness. "It is something, it is quite something" (Ahmed, 2014, para. 12). For if the settler state's civilizational narrative is to hold, the border *must* signify and be a beginning. The space called Canada must begin with the inscription of the borders that define that space, lest the state admit that something else – something vibrant, vital, robust, and legitimate – came before it. The borders of settler states, then, are the geopolitical enactment of what Elizabeth Povinelli (2011b) calls the "governance of the prior;" technologies that mark the state out as something new, a beginning with no antecedents, no loose threads, *no causes that keep on causing*. "The story that settler-colonial nation-states tend to tell about themselves," writes Audra Simpson (2014), "is that they are new; they are beneficent; they have successfully 'settled' all issues prior to their beginning." (p. 177). This 'settling,' of course, involves the

extermination of Indigenous populations, the appropriation and expropriation of their land and resources, the strangulation of Indigenous political and social orders, and, as I have tried to show, the selective importation and exploitation of other non-white and migratory bodies. These are the ends written into the beginnings that the settler state claims for itself; the conclusions that almost collapse the possibility that things might yet be different. Almost, but not quite.

If I began by marking the difficulty of beginning, and if throughout these pages I have laboured a grammar of ambivalence, indeterminacy, and unsettledness, I have done so in the hopes of cultivating this 'not quite,' of prying apart beginnings and ends, and of questioning the necessity, the apparent inevitability, of their coherence. This has all been, in other words, a way of insisting on the "complicated beginnings" (Simpson, 2014, p. 177) of not only my own project, but more importantly, the forms of power it has sought to describe, name, and critique; a way of staking out atmospheric bordering as a discontinuous and fundamentally *uneven* project, bound up with the ongoing and incomplete exercise of settler-colonial rule, the strict yet contested management of racialized populations, and the wide range of representational, discursive, and institutional strategies that enframe both. Thinking with and through the work of four contemporary artists, I have tried to show that while the Canadian state's post-9/11 bordering regime *does* many things – chiefly, produces and inscribes forms of difference that allow some bodies more than others to be targeted for incarceration, abandonment, containment, exclusion, expulsion, and exploitation – it does so with great difficulty, and always fails to do so completely. As a discursive matrix and an actual institutional structure, the atmospheric border *strains* to do its work. And in straining, it sometimes skips and lags. Sometimes a glitch will come to the surface, pointing to a fecund incompleteness that was always there, but never admitted. Sometimes, in spite of and against itself, it capacitates precisely the forms of intimate contact and solidarious alliance it is designed to foreclose. And sometimes it comes up short of exhausting alternative arrangements of existence, unable to sequester or contain every possibility of an otherwise. Though fortuitous, it is halting and ragged, frayed by ongoing practices of endurance, continuance, and contestation, by those ways of living that refuse to abide the totalizing temporal and discursive structure of the beginning. The challenge I have tried to take up with this project is how those invested in refusing state violence and the bordering regimes

through which it operates are to tug at these loose threads; how we are to build a robust discursive, representational, and aesthetic ground on which to stake an anti-white supremacist and decolonial political imaginary keyed to the complex legal and juridical maneuvers of a settler state that reterritorializes itself along the lines of racial and Indigenous difference precisely by *deterritorializing* the exercise of its own power.

This is not to suggest that any one set of images, or yet any one mode of image production, is in itself sufficient to the task of dismantling entrenched systems of oppression and dispossession. But in closing, it bears emphasizing that I likewise am not convinced of the 'mereness' of images in the face of such systems. I do not understand the works explored in the preceding pages simply as representations of a given social world, nor as purely speculative fictions reducible to their semiotic content. On the contrary, it has been my contention that they constitute affectively-charged *interventions* into a very particular scene of political contestation, subjectivation, and carnal maneuver, a scene that can be separated out into its representational and material aspects only analytically; a field of power that moves bodies through and removes bodies from the space of the state precisely by *producing and representing* those bodies as (re)moveable. Together, these works help to throw into relief, and so make available to a contestatory and oppositional political imaginary, the co-constitutive discursive and institutional mechanisms that work to consolidate the marks of alterity while simultaneously *concealing* such operations in the very body of the fetishized stranger (Ahmed, 2000). T.J. Demos (2013) puts it this way: these works "investigate, probe and analyze what has been done, and in doing so, they provide numerous suggestions – if not ideologically programmatic or politically activist – for what is to be done otherwise" (p. 18).

In not only representing but indeed recasting the scene of representation itself, then, they challenge the viewer to cultivate new accountabilities to and orientations toward the world, to feel oneself as woven into both the fabric and the fabrication of a particular distribution of bodily life, and to think seriously on how this fabric might be spun into new configurations. To consider how it might be transformed into a cloth that wraps and folds differently – neither a container nor a scrim onto which state-sanctioned fantasies of difference may be projected. To write a different ending out of complicated beginnings. They are, perhaps, what Mignolo (2014) has called

"decolonial gestures" (p. 4): movements that involve, and are involved in, an effort to 'delink' from "the colonial matrix of power" (p. 9), to contest the specific discursive, institutional, and indeed aesthetic projects that erode and eliminate the lifeworlds of racialized and colonized subjects. Decolonial gesture, Mignolo claims, liberates a "vibration of the senses" (p. 11) that causes colonialty to shudder; that makes the world as we know it vacillate, as Barthes might have it. Such an art, as Martineau and Ritskes (2014) put it, drawing on both Indigenous and Black radical critical traditions, "disrupts colonial hegemony by fracturing the sensible architecture that is constitutive of the aesthetic regime itself – the normative order, or 'distribution of the sensible' – that frames *both political and artistic potentialities,* as such" (p. i-ii, my emphasis).

And so while this project might be seen to stake all too much on the aesthetic, particularly given the increasingly violent ways in which Western nation states govern racialized bodies, it is an investment I am willing to risk. Indeed, it is one I think we must risk. For under conditions of settler-colonial and migrant-exclusionary rule, wherein what is at stake is not simply what is and is not seen, but what *can and cannot be seen* – which bodies, which social worlds, and which arrangements of existence will be admitted into the realm of the possible, and which will be eliminated – representational work *is* material work. It is a working on, through, and within the actual matter of life, as well as a working *against* the ways in which that life is systematically curtailed and truncated, extended to some bodies more than others.

Invariably, questions remain. Over the course of this research, for instance, I have become particularly concerned with the stubborn gravitational pull of what we might call white settler affectivity. By this I mean: the ways in which the experience of 'being unsettled,' its critical potentialities notwithstanding, might surreptitiously re-anchor decolonial and anti-racist political imaginaries around the white settler subject. For if the former is understood to become available to political life through the affective rearrangement of the latter, does this not serve to ratify the corporeal, representational, and affective economies of white supremacist settler-colonial rule, insofar it seems to require that Indigenous and racial difference pass through the white body to become legible as such? If this is so, does the experience of being unsettled not give itself away as a veiled form of reconciliation that allows the white settler subject to be realigned both with itself and the institutional, historical, and discursive conditions of its

making? In other words, when I claim that I am moved by a particular representational or aesthetic scene, am I not also perhaps *moving the scene itself,* drawing it back into the very folds of power it seeks to escape? When one is moved, what else is moving, and in what directions?

While I do not have sufficient leave in these pages to take this challenge up with the rigour it deserves, I can offer it as a provocation to those invested in conceptualizing the relationship between the production of racialized bodies, the governance of national borders, and settler-colonial rule in the contemporary moment. In brief, it seems to me that the task is this: to find ways of being moved while refusing to be moved toward conditions and arrangements that ratify the expulsion and elimination of racialized and Indigenous bodies; to become and *remain* unsettled, resisting the multiplicity of ways in which settler states work to complete and institutionalize generative moments of affective and intersubjective indeterminacy; and to swiftly dispense with any presumption that the white settler subject can be reconciled to itself and the conditions of its becoming without assenting, even if only tacitly, to the systematic de-production of Indigenous and other non-white lives. This last point, I think, is tantamount to advocating the destruction of whiteness as a subjectivating and corporealizing technology. And so while I do not mean to deny the critical potential of white settler affectivity *tout court* (to do so would be to render this project quite meaningless), what I am claiming is that for that potential to live, it must be actively and tirelessly turned against the structures that would suture it to the tidy beginnings and reconciled futures claimed by the white settler state. Becoming unsettled, as Sara Ahmed (2004) writes, “cannot be a moment in the passage to pride” (p. 119). This is, to be sure, a sprawling challenge. But this is the point. Ragged endings make for complicated beginnings.

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