ANXIOUS PREOCCUPATIONS: UNEARTHING THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF SETTLER ANXIETY IN CANADIAN LITERATURE

By

Hannah Mclean Skrynsky

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Program in English Language and Literature

in conformity with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Queen's University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

October 2024

For present and future writers in Canada and their readers, what is important in Canadian literature, beyond the merits of the individual works in it, is the inheritance of the entire enterprise.

– Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden*

A tradition doesn't necessarily exist to bury you: it can also be used as material for new departures.

– Margaret Atwood, *Survival*

Abstract

This dissertation proposes that settler anxiety is a founding feature of Canadian literature and its criticism. Combining twentieth-century theories of anxiety with contemporary theory from settler colonial studies, I test this proposition by locating settler anxiety within the literary nationalism of 1970s Canada, demonstrating that anxiety about unbelonging on Indigenous lands undergirds, but is simultaneously obfuscated by, Northrop Frye's conception of the garrison mentality and Margaret Atwood's survivor/victim paradigm in *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (1971) and *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), respectively. Deploying relational approaches to questions of settler identity and belonging, I complicate Frye and Atwood's containment of indigeneity within the realm of the symbolic by contextualizing their interventions alongside contemporaneous writing by sovereigntist activists George Manuel (Secwepemc) and Harold Cardinal (Cree). I then apply this critical rethinking to a close reading of settler anxiety in Margaret Laurence's novel *The Diviners* (1974).

The project argues for the necessity of returning to Frye and Atwood's theories of Canadian identity because they have proven foundational to the development of Canadian literature as a field of study and its pedagogical engagement across secondary and postsecondary curricula, thereby registering significant impact that, I contend, reproduces the power dynamics of settler colonialism through Canadian literary studies. By returning to anxieties that undergird these theories, this dissertation rethinks settler affect both historically and in the present moment of supposed reconciliation to interrogate cultural processes that normalize settler attachments to colonial structures of power. In doing so, I

endeavour to activate the settler anxieties of today in the direction of social justice and decolonial change.

Acknowledgments

This project could not have been completed without the unwavering support of my friends, family, and colleagues. Special shout outs are in order for my friend and biggest cheerleader, Nevena, my loving parents, Anne and Paul, my granny, Marie (and her ceaseless curiosity), and my ever-patient partner, Severin. Words are failing me in this moment, but I hope I have made clear how much you all mean to me. If not, I'm happy to keep trying. I would also like to thank my second reader, Armand Garnet Ruffo, for always making time for my work, grabbing countless coffees, and motivating me to keep writing about the things I care about. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Sam McKegney, for modelling a level of kindness, generosity, and knowledge that I will always try – but likely fail – to emulate. Thank you for believing in me and my work from the beginning. Onward!

Table of Contents

Introduction

I initially tried to draft this introduction from a distance, as if I wasn't experiencing the anxiety I was writing about. At times, this distance manifested metaphorically, in the objective tenor of my topic sentences or their uneasy adoption of passive voice. At others, it was quite literal: I would read, re-read, outline, and mind-map myself into oblivion before I even considered giving complete sentences a crack. By one's own hand. I had accumulated nearly seventy-five overwritten and underexplained pages which, if read sequentially, would almost certainly have had me committed.

I remember taking the publishing practicum course in the second-year of my PhD and the professor telling us that writing often felt to her as though she were engaging in some high-stakes collaging. Being what they call a "visual learner," I really resonated with the pointedness of this layered analogy. I began to think of all the times I wrote, piecing together the results of my research, arranging their consequences alongside existing cutouts. I used to love my time at the craft table. What was so different this time? Why couldn't I collage my way to completion? Had my glue-stick run dry? Were my scissors too dull? But I knew my instruments weren't the problem; it was as if I had developed a sudden, career-ending fear of writing, a phobia which I sought to overcome by avoiding it altogether. Okay, I think I've reached the limits of this analogy. Back to the land of the literal.

This project developed out of my initial exploration of anxiety in my master's thesis "Approaching Anxiety: Reading Eden Robinson in an Era of Reconciliation" (2017). I argued that Heiltsuk-Haisla writer Eden Robinson's novel *Monkey Beach* and

short story “Terminal Avenue” exemplify an alternative approach to Canada’s reconciliation project that demands rather than evades settlers’ emotional engagement through provocation and textual representations of settler anxiety. I argued that incorporating anxiety into reconciliatory discourse undoes the benevolent self-image that Canada has constructed for itself by revealing the different affective motivations behind the nation’s treatment of Indigenous populations. But something about my methodology did not feel “right.”

I think I can articulate this feeling now as my own experience of settler anxiety, as a generative rather than sterile affect that pushed me toward the research that encapsulates this project. I felt anxious about locating settler anxiety in works which I knew were not really “for” or “about” settlerhood, and which were more concerned with representing Indigenous agency rather than settler affect. Though the protagonists of both of Robinson’s texts encounter settler complicity in the structures that have led to Indigenous subjugation, and though I went on to characterize the dystopia of “Terminal Avenue” as an outcome of unchecked and underexamined settler anxieties toward Indigenous self-determination, I felt that contemporary Indigenous literature was not the place in which to explore the affective dimensions of settler identity. For that, I would have to traverse the terrain of *Canadian* literature, my own literary inheritance.

“Anxious Preoccupations: Unearthing the Affective Dimensions of Settler Anxiety in Canadian Literature” engages Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism to rethink Canadian literary theories of collective settler identity. This approach responds to legacies of cognitive imperialism in which Western desires to “know” the Indigenous subject are met by imposing Western ontological frameworks onto Indigenous peoples.

This project's analysis of settler anxiety reverses this lens to focus on settler subjectivities, employing Indigenous critiques of settlerhood to argue that settler anxiety is a founding feature of Canadian literature and its criticism. In the years following Canada's centennial in 1967, Canadian literature was established as a scholarly discipline invested in the construction of a unique literary tradition that could translate into a coherent national identity. This project demonstrates that, despite its omission in the critical lexicon of the time, settler anxiety was intrinsic to the establishment of the Canadian literary enterprise and undergirds seminal theories of settler identity put forth by foundational theorists Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood. Applying my theory to fiction characteristic of the period's heightened nationalism, I locate settler anxiety in themes of identity and belonging as well as their critical interpretations in the final novel of Margaret Laurence's Manawaka series, *The Diviners* (1974).

I demonstrate that settler anxiety surrounding settlers' belonging on Indigenous lands undergirds Northrop Frye's conception of the garrison mentality and Margaret Atwood's survivor/victim paradigm. Explicated in Frye's *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (1971) and Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), respectively, these theories describe common tropes representing settler responses to and encounters with the land in late nineteenth and twentieth century Canadian fiction. Their objective was to construct a ubiquitous identity for the canon and by extension, the nation that reaffirmed settler Canadians' senses of belonging and entitlement to this place. Conceptualized during a period of heightened nationalist and anticolonial movements, both Frye's garrison and Atwood's survivor/victim paradigm reflect the anxieties of this socio-historical moment.

Settler unbelonging is the primary anxiety informing Canadian literary expressions of settler experiences with the land. It is displaced in Frye and Atwood through notions of settler victimry and Canadians' collective "colonial mentality," both of which obscure understandings of settler colonialism as an ongoing project requiring Indigenous dispossession, even though each writer discusses Indigeneity in oblique ways.[1] It is necessary to return to their critical work because these theorists have proven foundational to the development of Canadian literature as a field of study, and its pedagogical engagement across secondary and postsecondary curricula, thereby registering their significant impact that, I argue, reproduces the power dynamics of settler colonialism in Canadian literary studies. By returning to Frye and Atwood and unearthing the anxieties that undergird their theories, this dissertation offers an opportunity to rethink

[1] In Frye and Atwood's respective works, Indigeneity is reduced to a symbol of belonging that is potentially attainable for the settler, manifest in the "rapport with nature which the Indian symbolizes" (241). In "Conclusion to a Literary History," Frye argues that nostalgia within the pastoral myth for "some earlier social condition – pioneer life, the small town, the *habitant* rooted to his land," and "a world of peace and protection with a spontaneous response to the nature around it"— is in fact "particularly strong in Canada" (240-41). Frye goes on to argue that this influence is evidenced in Canadian popular literature, the themes of essayists, and in official documents such as the Massey Report, which begins "almost as a matter of course, with an idyllic picture of the Canada of fifty years ago, as a point of departure for its investigations" (241). Frye argues that "the Indians have not figured so largely in the myth as one might expect," suggesting that the popularity of figures such as Pauline Johnson and Grey Owl exemplifies "the kind of rapport with nature which the Indian symbolizes is central to [the myth]" (241). In her chapter "First People: Indians and Eskimos as Symbols," Atwood refers to the titular figures as Canadians' "true 'ancestors,' so it is their legends we should turn to for source material in stories and poems," offering John Newlove's poems "Resources, Certain Earths" and "The Pride" as two successful "adoption[s]" (110) – the success of the latter most expressly found in its conclusion, wherein "an amazing transformation of the whites into Indians" occurs (112). This transformation is a recurring trope in Canadian literature, ungirded by the settler figure's desire to belong on this land, and is explored under other aliases in the section "Canadian literature" of this introduction, as well as in chapters two and three of this dissertation.

settler affect historically and in the present moment of supposed reconciliation. Potentially, this work might enable the activation of contemporary settler anxieties toward social justice and change.

Historical Context

The post-centennial period has been defined as "an era of intense self-questioning" (Solecki, *Last Canadian* 6).[2] It also marks a noticeable increase in literary and critical production that espoused a self-conscious nationalism critical of its appeals to political unity.[3] Writing on the Canadian imagination, Northrop Frye marks a critical distinction between unity as "rooted in a political feeling" that is "nationalist in reference" and identity, that which is "local and regional, rooted in the imagination and works of culture" ("Preface" xx). The ways in which this tension informed competing nationalisms is well-documented in Robert Lecker's *Keepers of the Code: English Canadian Literary Anthologies and the Representation of Nation* (2013), wherein he argues that English Canadian anthologies exist "as narratives that embody the tensions and anxieties felt by their editors when faced with the challenge of constructing or

[2] Exemplary of this self-reflexive trend, Atwood's *Survival* was regarded as representing "in a strong satiric light the anxieties and aspirations of the present day" (Moss, *Patterns* 9).

[3] The creation of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in 1978 might also factor into this increase since the editors of anthologies were usually Canadian literary critics who required funding to complete them. Robert Lecker's chapter "Nation Making, Nation Breaking" in *Keepers of the Code* (2013) provides a helpful overview of the state of Canadian arts funding and literary publishing throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, emphasizing the ways that scholarship, government funding, and publishing politics dictated who could edit these large-scale anthologies, and explaining why certain literary collections – their editors' choices in authors, chronological beginnings, and themes – were more effective than others at touting a national identity.

rejecting national ideals,"[4] marking the project of literary nationalism an already anxious endeavour (3). The garrison mentality is first conceptualized in Frye's "Conclusion to a Literary History" which was originally published in 1965 as the conclusion to Carl F. Klinck's anthology *A Literary History of Canada.* I analyze "Conclusion" as part of *Bush Garden*, but also in its original context as the conclusion to Klinck's anxious anthological endeavour.

Lecker's study also demonstrates that although 1970s Canada was an explosive period in writing, anthology production in particular proliferated between the centennial and the signing of the Constitution Act (1967-1982): an estimated seven hundred anthologies, averaging about fifty per year, were published, up from an average of nine per year during the previous period beginning at the end of World War II (215).[5] The process of anthology collection was also an inherently imaginative task since "creating these anthologies involves imagining the country, imagining a community, imagining an identity" (7). They were also used to teach students about the nation's literature, which

[4] Canadian critic Johnathan Kertzer also notes literature's ability to simultaneously uphold and dismiss national ideologies when he suggests that "if nation building is a triumph of imagination, so is nation deconstructing" and is admittedly confounded by it: "Why literature should enjoy the privilege of being at once inside (part of) and outside (critical of) the prevailing ideology is a questioning deserving of its own book" (*Worrying the Nation* 12). As a starting point, he offers Canadian feminist critic Lynette Hunter's point that "once you choose to focus on literary language strategies, semiotics and rhetoric, you encourage a questioning of system, of what we take for granted as readers and writers – as well as human beings" (*Outsider Notes* 16, 21).

[5] He argues that this increase is reflective of "the number of constituencies and ideologies served by those anthologies" made possible by, for example, the Liberals' introduction of multiculturalism policy in 1971 under Trudeau Sr (215-16). It is worth noting that this multicultural perspective would go on to inform the new *Immigration Act* of 1976 which, according to the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, prioritized "family reunion, diversity, and non-discrimination" ("Immigration Policy"), and could also partially account for the increase cited by Lecker.

would "acquaint students with nationalist values" that often reflected what Lecker calls Canadian literature's "fundamental conservatism" (5-7). This pedagogical purpose to espouse conservative, nationalist morals was troubled by later critics-turned-editors such as Smaro Kamboureli, whose collection *Making a Difference: Canadian Multicultural Literature* (1996) – an anthology largely comprised of writing by Indigenous and ethnically-diverse Canadians – signalled "the end of [earlier] canonical innocence" that had embraced literature's nationalist posture (Lecker 18). Lecker argues that Kamboureli's anthology supplanted this innocence with "uncertainty and doubt about the idealized constructions of Canada" inherited from the intense self-questioning of the 1970s (18).[6] This project argues that this uncertainty was already in circulation.

It also stresses literature's role in the construction of national identities insofar as it constitutes a common site through which authors and readers can create and imagine themselves as members of a collective, participating in the process of "think[ing] nation" (Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 22). As part of the West's "print-capitalism," literature's capacity to evoke emotion was also crucial in spreading feelings of deep attachment to a nation – attachment that Benedict Anderson's study *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) deemed an affective necessity in the creation and maintenance of any nation – what he famously defined as "an imagined political community" (6).[7]

---

[6] In addition to Kamboureli's, Terry Goldie and Daniel David Moses's *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (1991) is also cited for its challenges to those Eurocentric values and identity formations.

[7] Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair (Ojibwe) notes that Indigenous nationalism pre-dates Western models of nationalism like those studied in Anderson's seminal *Imagined Communities*, and which "depend upon unifying patriotisms, coercive policing of perceived deviance, and hegemonic allegiance to the structures of the state at the expense

Anderson's study highlights the emotional sense of national *belonging* in the development of any nation-state, which marks a clear departure from previous studies of nationalism and nationhood.[8] More than twenty years later, affect and feminist theorist Sara Ahmed published the first edition of *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2004/2014), showing how "emotions become attributes of collectives" and can be manipulated by political powers who appeal to citizens' senses of belonging and, more often than not, their collective fear of losing it, to reinforce their power (Ahmed 2). Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011) would also emphasize the orchestration of public feeling as a central component of neoliberal nationalism, presenting her affective theory of cruel optimism as neoliberal subjects' main mode of attachment to the promised but ultimately unattainable "good life." In this project, I employ "the nation" as an imagined space and social reality of high importance in Canadian literature and criticism.

In 1970s Canada, desires for a readily identifiable Canadian identity and anxieties surrounding the survival of the Canadian nation-state in the face of American imperialism

---

of kinship and other loyalties" ("Critical Approaches" 21). Though I use Benedict Anderson's theory of the nation as an imagined space, it should be noted that critics have since highlighted its universalizing of the common reader/citizen, their relationship to the nation, and how that relationship is conceptualized, with postcolonial critic Partha Chatterjee commenting that in Anderson's conception, "even our imaginations must remain forever colonized" ("Whose?" 216). This project shows that the tendency to universalize the imagination of a nation's citizens also existed in the nationalist rhetoric of Canadian literary criticism of the time, aptly evidenced by the subtitle of Frye's *Bush Garden.*

[8] *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* emphasizes the role of emotion and feeling in their introduction to an excerpt of Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, suggesting that "Anderson's wide-ranging historical account of the required conditions for the birth of nationalism places affect near the center" and that "Anderson's great insight is that however it is constructed, fellow feeling must be imagined" (1830-31).

circulated simultaneously.[9] *Survival*'s discourse of Canadian victimry and survival was published within a dense matrix of international politics, literary criticism, cultural commentary, and Indigenous political activism that was also preoccupied with, if not critical of, the future of Canada's "survival." This period saw increasing anticolonial and decolonial movements, alongside the rise of indigenism as a political alternative to neoliberalism – all of which frustrated Canada's international reputation as a benevolent peacemaker by emphasizing its existence as a settler colonial nation predicated on the continued land dispossession of Indigenous peoples.[10] However, in *The Fourth World* (1971), George Manuel (Secwepemc) clarifies that this period of resistance is nothing new for Indigenous peoples:

> It is very much a mistake to identify the cultural and political renaissance that is going on among Indian societies today with a *new Indian resistance.* The fact of the matter is that there was never a time since the beginning of colonial conquest when Indian people were not resisting. (69)

And so, while this project focuses (roughly) on the period between Canada's centennial in 1967 and the codification of the Canadian Constitution in 1982 as a period of intense

---

[9] In "Conclusion" Frye suggests that there has always existed "an obvious and unquenchable desire of the Canadian cultural public to identify itself through its literature" (218).

[10] Indigenism refers to the global political organization of Indigenous populations working toward self determination within emerging human rights frameworks during the mid-twentieth century. George Manuel's (Secwepemc) World Council of Indigenous Peoples is one example of an international Indigenous rights group working toward better legal, social, and economic conditions for Indigenous populations in Canada. For more examples, and further discussion of indigenism as a pan-Indigenous project, see the section "Victimhood in Context: Neoliberal Human Rights and Indigenism" in chapter two of the present study.

political resistance for Indigenous peoples, it also emphasizes that Indigenous peoples set the precedent for such resistance in earlier periods.[11] Uncoincidentally, the anxious desire to inaugurate a national Canadian identity through literature occurred alongside Indigenous peoples' own collective desire to re-affirm their rights as the original inhabitants of Turtle Island.[12] Their increased presence in national media and international arenas of human rights simultaneously increased settler anxieties surrounding what this presence might mean for settlers' expectations of untroubled belonging. By incorporating Indigenous political responses to Canadian nationalism contemporaneous to Frye and Atwood, I unpack the disparities between settler and Indigenous understandings of Canada during the period, highlighting the more robust critiques of Canadian settler colonialism emanating from Indigenous voices which saw the ways in which Canadian nationalism was informed by the nation's settler colonial present.

Indigenous responses to Canadian nationalism produced many activist, scholarly, and literary texts foundational to Indigenous Studies and literatures. These include the felt theory of Indigenous women's autobiographical writing – Maria Campbell's (Métis) autobiography *Halfbreed* (1973) was a landmark text, helping to encourage other Indigenous authors to write about their experiences in Canada[13] – the politics writing of

[11]To borrow phrasing from Crosby and Monaghan, I am also "conscious that [my] research does not fully appreciate or account for the resistance, nuance, and survivity of Indigenous communities" (*Policing* 21).
[12]This project does not claim to account for Indigenous resistance and political activism of earlier or later periods, but its body chapters create a dialogue between the literary theories of settler identity by Frye and Atwood and the writing of scholars and activists like Manuel, as well as Harold Cardinal, Dian Million, and Vine Deloria Jr.
[13] The influence of Campbell's writing can be seen in the following decade's proliferation of Indigenous women writers in particular. See Lee Maracle's collected essays (Stó꞉lō) *I*

George Manuel's (Secwepemc) *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (1974), Harold Cardinal's (Cree) *The Unjust Society* (1969), and Howard Adams's (Métis) *Prison of Grass* (1975), and the culturally resurgent scholarship of Vine Deloria Jr.'s (Standing Rock Sioux) *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969) and *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (1972).[14]

Resistance movements like Red Power and political organizations like the National Indian Brotherhood signal the increased seizure of public discourse in both Canada and the United States during this period.[15] Glen Sean Coulthard (Dene) argues that Indigenous anti-colonial sentiments of this period "forced colonial power to modify itself" from a structure which relied on the explicit enactment of logics of assimilation and elimination in policy and ideology to our current model, wherein settler colonial power is maintained "through a seemingly more conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices" that emphasize recognition and accommodation (*Red Skin* 6). It is therefore important to look at the ways in which Canadian literary nationalism –

---

am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism (1988) and *Bobbi Lee Indian Rebel* (1990), as well as Jeannette Armstrong's (Syilx) novel *Slash* (1985) and Beatrice Mosionier's *In Search of April Raintree* (1983).

[14] George Manuel's anticolonial text, *The Fourth World*, developed the concept of the "Fourth World" to describe Indigenous realities in settler colonial nations such as Canada, promoting cultural resurgence as a tool for decolonialization. Cardinal's book was published as a direct response to the proposed dissolution of Aboriginal rights via the White Paper Act of Trudeau Sr. Adams's *Prison of Grass* is widely regarded as one of the first major scholarly accounts of the history of Canadian settlement from an Indigenous perspective. Vine Deloria Jr.'s works are seminal to the field of Indigenous studies.

[15] Coulthard identifies three watershed events "generally recognized as shaping this era of Native activism in Canada: widespread opposition to White Paper, generating pan-indigenous resistance; partial recognition of Aboriginal title in Supreme Court's 1973 Calder decision; and a cluster of events" following the oil crises of the early 1970s (*Red Skin* 4).

represented in the present study by the works of Frye, Atwood, and Laurence – emerged within and responded to this shift.

This earlier period was also rife with the anxiety of the colonial mentality, made popular by George Grant's *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (1965). Critical focus on Canadians' colonial mentality during this period also set the precedent for studying Canadian literature as expressions of collective sentiment; it is also perhaps emblematic of Frank Davey's later critique of thematic critics' "messianic attempts to define a national identity or psychosis" ("Surviving" 6). Canadian literary criticism often invoked the anxiety of the nation's attitude toward the threat of an American takeover, calling this collective anxiety Canadians' "colonial mentality" and attributing it to Canada's status as an obedient, weaker British colony, marking British colonialism as the cause of this collective anxiety.[16] These two attributes are closely linked in critical discussions of the colonial mentality: Canada maintains a weaker sense of self because of our obedience to imperial Britain, and it is precisely this weakened sense of who we are and how we fit into a world increasingly influenced by American culture and politics which makes us susceptible to American invasion. Canada's "famous problem of identity" (Frye, "Conclusion" 22) was something that the literary nationalism of Frye and Atwood attempted to address, presenting the garrison mentality and the

[16] In an analysis of Canadian cinema and its culture, Andrea Subissati contends that "cultural extinction" by way of American cultural imperialism is "the fundamental anxiety that afflicts Canadians, one that has lurked in our collective unconscious since our independence as a nation" ("Viral Culture" 30). Subissati argues that this anxiety has led to the stagnation of cinema culture in the country.

survivor/victim identity as distinct literary expressions of Canadian identity and experience.

The colonial mentality is also emblematic of what I term the comparative approach to Canadian literature and culture, evidenced by critical preoccupations with comparisons between Canada and the United States. The comparative approach often highlights American-Canadian relations as the expense of engaging relations between Indigenous and settler populations. This has consequences for how Canadian history is narrated and its corresponding identity is understood. For example, in "Preface to an Uncollected Anthology," Frye situates "the central fact of Canadian history" as "the rejection of the American Revolution" (*Bush Garden* 168). In contrast to rebellious America, Canada became a nation via a history of obedience. It is not difficult to see how a narrative of national obedience helped to support Canadians' imagined sense of benevolence, a core facet of our imagined identity in what Canadian sociologist Eva Mackey calls the "mythology of white settler innocence" (*House* 39).

According to conservative diplomat Allan Gotlieb, a comparative approach to the two countries was necessary in matters of diplomacy. Gotlieb served as Canada's Ambassador to the United States from 1981-1989. In his 2004 Benefactors Lecture for the C.D. Howe Institute, Gotlieb notes that in matters of diplomacy, "differentiation from the Americans evolved into an ingredient of our national identity" (23). For Gotlieb, there should be *more* of this ingredient, not less. His vision for Canadian foreign policy was to cultivate the two countries' relationship by acknowledging "the reality that the U.S. is the indispensible [sic] power and our ability to influence it is potentially our greatest asset" ("Romanticism and Realism" 32). He also implicitly references the colonial mentality,

taking on the diagnostic language found throughout Canadian literary criticism, calling Canada's adoption of the Free Trade Agreement in 1989 an exorcism of what he saw as a problematic, "negative factor in the Canadian *psyche*: a fear of the US and its influence"[17] (23 emphasis added). As this project demonstrates, this fear is also referred to by Canadian literary critics as Canada's greatest cultural anxiety, which gets reinscribed through continual comparison.

While I argue that this comparative approach and its resultant diagnosis of the colonial mentality often work to displace indigenous-settler relations by emphasizing Canada as a victim of British and American cultural imperialism, I also want to note that its long tradition in Canadian studies (especially literary, but also in geographic, cultural, historical, and socio-political studies) reasserts the insistence by contemporary settler colonial critics to attend to similarities across settler colonial nations. Although there are differences in Canadian and American laws, policies, and diverse communities, it is important not to allow theses differences "to obscure deep entanglements of power and mutual complicity at broader scales or the ways that settler collectives and communities can remain diverse while still operating in a clearly colonial manner" (Barker, *Making* 17-18).

[17] Gotlieb cites his own 1989 Alan B. Plaunt Memorial Lecture here. The citations are from his 2004 lecture "Romanticism and realism in Canada's Foreign Policy." Also note worthy is his reference to the Canadian "psyche," a site of study in both Frye and Atwood's respective works of criticism. Historian Lyle Dick also uses this term in his description of "the deep reservoir in the Canadian psyche" that national peacemaker myths tapped into ("A New History" 67).

Methodology

This project's analyses of settler anxiety in Canadian literature flow from the reality that, in Canada, our systems of power function under the conditions, structures, and logics of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism normalizes the continued occupation of Indigenous lands through interlocking forms of oppression and dispossession.[18] Following recent scholarship by Canadian sociologist Eva Mackey and literary scholars Dian Million (Athabascan) and Mark Rifkin (settler), this project argues that these forces exist, function, and are experienced affectively.[19]

My methodology builds on Mark Rifkin's work on "settler structures of feeling" which adapts cultural theorist Raymond Williams's seminal concept of "structures of feeling" from his works *The Long Revolution* (1961) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977) to the specific context of settler colonialism.[20] For Williams, these structures refer to thoughts and feelings that emerge simultaneously against, or in response to, hegemonic ideas, discourses, and values of a particular time period – what literary scholar John Brenkman helpfully conceptualizes as "a constellation of social perceptions and values and convictions by which a society, or social group, conducts itself and experiences its world" (*Mood and Trope* 11).[21]

---

[18] See *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* by Glen Sean Coulthard (Dene).

[19] This project relies heavily upon the affective analyses of settler colonialism in Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land Rights, Settler Decolonization* (2016) and Million's *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (2013), in particular.

[20] Williams marks a distinction between thought and feeling, calling the latter the "more active, more flexible, less singular" (*Marxism and Literature* 128).

[21] Williams initially coined this phrase in "Preface to Film" (1954) to discuss patterns of social acceptance of popular dramatic conventions. It becomes a concept used to denote

Rifkin understands these feelings to be important sites in the normalization of settler colonial power, writing that "processes and institutionalized frameworks of settlement – the exertion of control by non-Natives over Native peoples and lands – give rise to certain modes of feeling, and, reciprocally, particular affective formations among non-Natives that normalize settler presence, privilege, and power" and by extension, the disappearance of Indigenous peoples ("Settler States of Feeling" 342). Rifkin's work highlights how collective feelings contribute to settler colonial hegemony, arguing that "understanding settlement as a structure of feeling entails asking how emotions, sensations, and psychic life take part in the ongoing process of exerting non-Native authority over Indigenous politics, governance, and territoriality" (342). My project argues that settler anxiety is one of the foundational branches of Rifkin's "settler structures of feeling" and is also readily identifiable in tropes of settler belonging and identity throughout Canadian literature and criticism of the 1970s.

In addition to Rifkin's structure, I also employ Athabascan scholar Dian Million's conception of "felt theory" as a method through which the affective terrain of literary

---

the constant push-and pull of hegemonic discourses, thoughts, and feelings, and their counter-movements at a particular point in time in *The Long Revolution* (1961). In *Marxism and Literature* (1977) these movements would be further delineated into dominant, emergent, and residual to explain the structure of feeling in terms of the relationship between personal feelings and social structures. He defines structure of feeling as "a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period" (131), suggesting that the structure of feeling is not merely an individual's belief or attitude toward something in society, but represents the experience of social consciousness in process, using the term "feeling" to capture the fact that the emergent and ever changing meanings and values ascribed to these social structures are actively felt and experienced by individuals and are constantly in motion. Moreover, this experience of feltness is actually a crucial way in which these social structures persist. See also the entry for "structure of feeling" in Oxford's 2010 A Dictionary of Critical Theory (1st ed), edited by Ian Buchanan.

expression can embolden analyses of colonialism as a "felt, affective relationship" (46). Her pathbreaking scholarship in *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in An Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (2013) theorizes how experiences of settler colonialism are felt and understood affectively, and how this affective knowledge has long been expressed by Indigenous women whose community organization and autobiographical writing in the 1970s, in particular, "create[d] a new language for [Indigenous] communities to address the real multilayered facets of their histories and concerns by insisting on the inclusion of [their] lived experience, rich with emotional knowledge" (*Therapeutic Nations* 57). Million calls their critical approach an application of "felt theory" that accounts for the ways in which colonialism persists through our affective relations with one another (46). Employing felt theory is useful in a project about literary constructions of settler Canadian identity because these works by Indigenous women authors "were influential in changing Canada's idea of itself" (Million 77).

My application of felt theory does not focus on the autobiographical writings studied by Million because this project contributes to scholarship surrounding "the settler problem."[22] Focusing on the settler problem moves scholarship away from pathologizing Indigenous experiences of colonialism and reifying Indigenous peoples as *objects of*

[22] For a historical analysis of these autobiographical works, see Million's third chapter "Felt Theory" in *Therapeutic Nations*. "The settler problem" is the primary unit of analysis in settler colonial studies and refers to a unit of analysis wherein settler populations' attachments to settler colonial structures of power are the main critical focus. Examples of this scholarship in Canada include Eva Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations* (2016), Adam J. Barker and Emma Battell Lowman's *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015), and Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the Settler Within* (2010). For more on "the Indian problem," see the section "Anomie and Victimry in *Survival*" in chapter two of this dissertation, as well as Million's chapter "The 'Indian Problem': Anomie and its Discontents" from *Therapeutic Nations* (2013). For more on the autobiographies foundational to Million's theory, see her chapter "Felt Theory."

study rather than *subjects who* study. This critical reversal is also evidenced in my application of Indigenous critical thought to Frye and Atwood's theories of settler Canadian identity. My project applies Million's "felt theory" to the settler problem by looking at the ways in which Canadian literature and its criticism contribute to settler structures of feeling which attach settler populations to settler colonial structures of power. Still, I acknowledge that this application runs the risk of appropriating felt theory through decontextualization from its origins in Indigenous women's writing.

In chapter two, I highlight these origins by situating the rise of Indigenous autobiographical writing alongside the publication of *Survival*, showing that this writing was crucial to Indigenous people's rearticulation of Canada as colonial perpetrator because this writing articulated their lived experiences of colonialism—experiences which were symbolically disavowed and misrepresented in the burgeoning settler Canadian canon engaged by Atwood and Frye. In applying felt theory, this project demonstrates that at the time of Frye and Atwood's respective writing, Indigenous writers were contesting dominant conceptions of colonialism as a strictly economic structure by representing the ways in which its logics structure the relationships, attitudes, and everyday experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.[23] In short, I am not simply uprooting Indigenous thought and deploying it toward settler experiences; I am registering that the affective dimensions of settler colonialism impact settlers too,

[23] Atwood introduces colonialism in economic terms, calling Canada a "colony" which is defined by the profit it extracts for the "mother country" (31). She argues that the though there are "cultural side effects" of this process –colonial mentality is highlighted – "the root cause for them is economic" in nature (31), thereby prioritizing economics as the fundamental feature of colonialism. Frye also gestures toward these side effects when he argues that Canada "is practically the only country left in the world which is pure colony, colonial in psychology as well as in mercantile economics" ("Preface" xxix).

though differently, and Million's work is important in delineating how this affectivity manifests in literary expressions and contestations of colonialism of the period.

Building from Foucault's discursive analysis of neoliberal biopower, Million's felt theory "puts an analysis of affect and emotion […] back into our quest to understand both classic colonialism and our present in neoliberal governance, because affect is now so profoundly implicated in these neoliberal relations" (30).[24] Like Rifkin, Million also argues that affect participates in the normalization of settler colonial logics by suggesting that "Canadian colonialism is 'felt' in that it is a broad spectrum of nuances, valences/practices with the power to generate emotionally charged meaning *as common knowledge*" (46). As later sections of this introduction will discuss, both sociological and literary scholarship produced in Canada have demonstrated that common knowledges about Indigenous peoples have resulted in pervasive social stereotypes and literary tropes

[24] For more on how the conditioning of public affect is central to neoliberal governance, see Thomas Biebricher's *The Political Theory of Neoliberalism* (2018), Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011) and Eva Illouz's *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (2007). Biebricher emphasizes the now-widely held view that neoliberalism is not simply an economic doctrine and must be understood "as a discourse in political economy that explicitly addresses the noneconomic preconditions of functioning markets" and their interactive effects in other sectors (*Political Theory* 27). Wendy Brown also highlights the non-economic aspects of neoliberalism, some of which she argues emerge as unintentional effects of neoliberal reason, in her influential study of the present in *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism: The Rise of Antidemocratic Politics in the West* (2019). In discussing precarity as "the dominant structure and experience of the present moment" Berlant wonders whether precarity can be considered an affective atmosphere of neoliberalism (*Cruel Optimism* 192). Illouz argues that second-wave feminism was crucial to the construction of a "culture of emotionality" which emerged within the newly-minted middle classes of Western societies following the end of World War II (*Cold Intimacies* 4). It is precisely in this moment that we see neoliberalism emerge in response to mid-twentieth century liberalism. See chapter two for further discussion of human rights discourses as a product of neoliberalism.

that maintain ideological, social, and affective distance between settler and Indigenous populations.[25]

In *Cultural Politics*, Ahmed suggests that anxiety operates as a form of insecurity in the creation of stereotypes, explaining that "stereotypes seek to fix the meaning of the other, but the very repetition that is required to enable such a fixation renders them a site of insecurity rather than security" (64). Felt theory suggests that in attending to the ways in which colonialism constructs these emotional meanings, literature can bridge those distances rather than exacerbate them. Locating settler anxiety within these knowledges is a step toward "understanding how this kind of knowledge has perpetuated the dispossession of Indigenous nations" (Skrynsky, "Approaching" 10).

Scholars such as Audra Simpson (Mohawk) and Andrea Smith call for the building of "stronger intellectual and political solidarities" within Indigenous studies (*Theorizing* 11). They advocate engaging theories with compatible intellectual and political goals, listing Marxist, feminist, and ethnic studies as examples. To this list I would add affect theory because, as affect theorist Eve Sedgwick points out, its collapsing of traditional binaries of mind/body, thought/feeling "offers tools and techniques for non-dualistic thought" (1). This collapsing can trouble many of the same

[25] I am thinking here of Eva Mackey's sociological work in *House of Difference* (1998) and *Unsettled Expectations* (2016) as well as Jo-Ann Episkenew's (Métis) *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* (2009). For literary studies in Canada, see Leslie Monkman's *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature* (1981), Terry Goldie's *Fear and Temptation: Images of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (1989), Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian: Images of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (1992), and Daniel Coleman's *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (2006). For interdisciplinary work, see Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (2011).

western epistemological binaries that have caused harm to indigenous communities and are therefore of critical concern to Indigenous studies and its goal in promoting self-determination efforts within and across global Indigenous communities. This is why settler scholar Adam J. Barker advocates for joining the "intellectual and the affective" to achieve "fundamental changes in settler colonial relations and to expose and dismantle settler colonialism on Turtle Island" (Barker *Making* 26). In sharing the passionate belief of intellectual solidarity with his mentor, Malea Powell (Miami-Shawnee), literary scholar Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) remarks that "theory, at its best, is expansively affirmative of intellectual and ethical values rather than defensively rejectionist in its advocacy of a single, monolithic, and rigid understanding" because it opens up dialogue that can develop "important intellectual and interpersonal relationships" ("Critical Approaches" 25). Dian Million (Athabascan) suggests that "story *is* Indigenous theory" and that within Indigenous studies, orally based communal knowledges are recognized epistemic systems because they posit propositions and paradigms on how the world operates ("There is" 35).

Moreover, Million positions these storied systems as "emotionally empowered" because "they are informed with the affective content of our experience" – an emotionality which, she notes, "has made them almost unrecognizable to a Western scholarship that imagines itself objective" (35). This dualism constitutes what settler scholar Paulette Regan has called "a critical subplot in the Indigenous-settler mythos" wherein settler neutrality becomes an expression of symbolic power over Indigenous peoples (*Unsettling* 49) who remain the "affectable others" against which settler identity is constructed (Simpson et. al, *Theorizing* 218). In a plot reversal, this project relies on

Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism as a structure held together, in part, by settlers' emotional attachments to its logic from which they benefit. Critiques such as Million's demonstrate that, far from a merely economic project, colonialism is a mode of relation that continues to structure Indigenous-settler relations. This project builds from this critique by analyzing settler emotional attachments to questions of unbelonging within Frye and Atwood's seminal theories of settler identity.

My focus on Frye, Atwood, and Laurence's respective works, and my emphasis on their influence on the field of Canadian literature reflects cultural material interests in "the significance and value ascribed to particular texts, and the uses made of them, in present-day culture" (177). Cultural Materialism is an approach to literary study "which interrogates the material circumstances in which culture is produced and disseminated, with a particular focus on the ways texts are both shaped by and contest exploitative relationships" ("Cultural Materialism" *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* 176). It is informed by poststructuralism and Marxism and is sometimes referred to as the British response to American New Historicism. Williams is credited with coining the term cultural materialism to distinguish between more class-centred analyses of culture following the Marxist tradition. A distinct contribution of cultural materialists is their "scrutiny of hierarchies, oppression and forms of dissidence, including those of class, gender, sexuality, and race" (177). This project scrutinizes the hierarchies of settler colonial Canada which privilege the settler and dispossess Indigenous peoples, but it also highlights the forms of dissidence enacted by Indigenous populations in response to such hierarchies and represented in the works of Manuel and Cardinal.

New Historicism emerged as a critical response to the formalism of New Criticism, and implicitly questions the exclusionary and suppressive methods through which literary canons are created, disseminated, and valued in institutions of power such as the academy (Penguin "New Historicism"). Both New Historicism and Cultural Materialism "seek to comprehend literary texts alongside other contemporaneous discourses and in the context of the historical and social conditions under which they emerged" (Penguin 176). My analysis of representations of settler anxiety in Canadian literary discourse seeks to comprehend the conditions of settler colonialism under which CanLit emerged. Though discourses surrounding significant knowledge paradigms and social constructs are invariably shaped by particular paradigms of a given period, Williams stressed that these paradigms are constantly shifting, rendering some discourses dominant, residual, or emerging at one point and shifting again at another, making cultural materialism an effective way to move beyond analyses of the strictly hegemonic practices and discourses of a given period.[26]

Much of the current scholarship surrounding settler colonialism employs relational lenses that encourage cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogue. Scholars such as Adam J. Barker and Emma Battell-Lowman have stressed the necessity of studying settler colonialism using relational approaches because "in the broadest possible sense, settler colonialism inheres in relationships between people as collectives and between people and the more-than-human-world" (Barker 12). Moreover, they argue that, as concepts, "Indigenous" and "settler" must always be understood through a relational

[26] For more on the movement of paradigms in the shaping of structures of feeling, see Williams's *The Long Revolution* (1961) and *Marxism and Literature* (1971).

analysis because what is considered settler colonial or indigenous depends upon how we define the complementary term.[27]

Glen Sean Coulthard calls settler-Indigenous relations "a settler colonial relationship" wherein power, understood as "interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial and state power" has been maintained through hierarchical social relations that facilitate Indigenous dispossession in order to secure access to land (*Red Skin* 6-7). Crosby and Monaghan understand the incomplete project of settler colonialism "as a logic of domination *that continues in contemporary social relations* but remains continuously ruptured by the strength and perseverance of Indigenous communities" (*Policing* 21 emphasis added).

Relationality is an important lens through which to analyze Canadian literary representations of settler colonialism because as Cree scholar Donald Dwayne remarks, "colonial stories of settlement" are based on "relationship denial" resulting in a "relational psychosis" that "troubles Indigenous-Canadian relations" ("Walking" 56). Dwayne's use of the diagnostic language of "psychosis" reflects critical diagnoses of settler Canadians' "colonial mentality" in 1970s Canadian literary criticism. In his notes, Dwayne explains that he uses the term "psychosis" in order to

[27] See Barker and Battell-Lowman's *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015), pp. 48-53 and 116-20 in particular. See also the section "Always All about the Land, Always in Relation" in Barker's introduction to *Making and Breaking Settler Space: Five Centuries of Colonialization in North America* (2021). In charting literary representations of the settler/Indigenous binary, Canadian literary critic Margery Fee points out that this binary often obscured the presence of other racialized groups who settled in Canada (*Literary Land* 11).

> draw attention to the ways in which the institutional and socio-cultural perpetuation of colonial logics has trained Canadians to disregard Indigenous peoples as fellow human beings. This disregard maintains unethical relationships and manifests as cognitive blockages (psychoses) that undermine the possibility for improved relations. (56)

Dwayne's diagnosis is also reflective of Veracini's theory of the settler colonial "non-encounter" – the mirror image of the colonial encounter – "fundamentally shaped by a recuring need to disavow the presence of indigenous 'others'" (Veracini, *Settler colonialism* 2).

Relationality has also been used to describe the method with which Indigenous peoples forged international relationships to further their shared political aims of self determination and to bare witness to the violence of colonial policy.[28] According to Dwayne, "Forms of knowledge and knowing that are perceived as in motion and carefully attuned to relationality exist within many different Indigenous wisdom traditions," offering the Cree concept of *wahkohtowin* as an example.[29] As ethical guidelines for relating to both human and non-human entities, *wahkohtowin* demands situating oneself in networks of relationships (58-9).

Frye's *The Bush Garden* (1971) and Atwood's *Survival* (1972) are two of the most influential works of Canadian literary criticism. *Survival* sold more than thirty

---

[28] See p. 75 of Dian Million's *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights.* Million cites Justine Smith to refer to these relationship formations as "radical relationality." See also Justine Smith's "Indigenous Performance and Aporetic Texts" in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* vol. 59, no. 1-2, 2005, pp. 115.

[29] For more on wahkootowin as an ethic of relationality in Métis culture, see chapter three of this project.

thousand copies in its first year in print (Atwood, Introduction xvi). Both works have never been out of print and are credited with supporting the teaching of Canadian literary studies in the country's high schools and universities (Fee *Literary* 5). Both works also exemplify what Fee calls the "recursive, even tautological nature" of "Romantic nationalism" that argued Canadians' responses to a hostile, sublime, or indifferent environment constituted the defining feature of the canon (5).

The pervasiveness with which Frye's "vision" of Canada and its imagination has accumulated in, contributed to, and even defined literary culture in Canada is well-documented and always contested. Susan Glickman calls Frye's influence on Canadian literary criticism "extraordinary" (*Picturesque* 50), while Melissa Dalgleish decisively argues against critical reliance on what she terms the "influence model" to analyze the Canadian mythopoeic tradition, claiming the model, which places Frye at the centre, has left "critical gaps" in the study of the tradition's trajectory, origins, and application by other Canadian and non-Canadian poets ("Unschooled" 47). In her denunciation of the influence of influence, Dalgleish argues that "the idea of influence is often attractive to critics not because it accurately reflects the relationship between Frye and the poets but because it holds some other appeal or serves some other critical function" (47). The danger of influence, Dalgleish warns, is its fickleness when used as a yard stick to measure the relationship between poet and critic (though Dalgleish uses the verb "reflect" rather than "measure," so perhaps my fickle stick is more of a fickle mirror).

In any case, rather than offer us a shiny *new* stick/mirror with which we can measure/reflect those relations, her thesis thoughtfully extends their parameters to include international writers and theorists working within the mythopoeic tradition in an effort to

read Frye "not as the originator of the Canadian modernist mythopoeic tradition but as a participant in it" (54). Doing so, Dalgleish argues, reconfigures the relationship between Frye and the mythopoeic poetry of the Toronto poets as "reciprocal" and crucially, within a tradition that "extends beyond Toronto"[30] (54). The article's central thesis betrays the circulation of affect – the specific duality of "desire" and "anxiety" – as central to the Canadian literary enterprise:

> Situating Frye at the centre of the fifties group allows critics to ignore the possibility that the Toronto poets are engaging with the work of other mythopoeic writers. These acts of dismissal suggest that the desire to connect Canadian mythopoeia exclusively to Frye emerges from an underlying cultural anxiety that fears placing the tradition in its international contexts…. By claiming a wholly Canadian influence on the work of the Toronto poets in the figure of Frye, [critics] can claim the work of the fifties poets—and by extension, Frye's work as part of this general mid-century interest in mythopoeia—as a distinctly Canadian phenomenon. (48, 50)

Choosing to analyze Frye's *Bush Garden* and Atwood's *Survival* in the following chapters precisely because of their influence is in keeping with this project's privileging

[30] Dalgleish's article is adept at defining (and redefining) the particular schools, students, and mythical figures of CanLit. She lists "Jay Macpherson, James Reaney, Douglas Le Pan, Daryl Hine, Wilfred Watson, Eli Mandel, Margaret Atwood, and D.G. Jones" (45) as those most-often included in the Frye School of poets and goes onto make further terminological distinctions, referring to "the Frye School when addressing influence-based conceptions of the mythopoeic poets as a group" and to them as "the mythopoeic poets, the Toronto poets, or the fifties poets" in all other cases (45). Doing so is a method of "de-emphasizing Frye" in order to "make room for a more nuanced and comprehensive reading of the Toronto poets' mythopoeic development" (46).

of affect as a viable site from which to understand some of the historical, social, and cultural developments that underwrite a given literature.[31] I understand "influence" as one way we talk about, or name, the power of affectivity – the power to affect and be affected, as Spinoza would say. When we mark something as being "influential" we are identifying its capacity to shape other things. This process reflects Ahmed's concept of the "sociality of emotions" wherein she theorizes that "it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made" (*Cultural* 10). These boundaries allow us to delineate the objects of our emotions, which circulate as "sticky" in that they are "saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension" (11). Influence, understood as the affective evidence of such stickiness, is what allows me to delineate *Survival* and *The Bush Garden* as sticky, affectively saturated objects that circulate within and give shape to the ideas and images of settler imaginaries.

I chose Frye and Atwood's respective works precisely because of their general scope and summative approach to Canadian literary study. Their influence upon the field as examples of the dominant critical approach of the period – literary nationalism – also lends itself to my research objective to uncover the role of settler anxiety in literary theories of a collective Canadian settler identity, represented in this study by Frye's concept of the garrison mentality and Atwood's survivor/victim paradigm. Though I focus on these two literary theories, dedicating my final chapter to a close reading of how settler anxiety operates in themes of national and individual identity in Margaret

[31] This methodology algins with the arguments outlined in my literature review and built upon in my introduction which mark affect as an indispensable participant in the "materialization of bodies" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 17n10).

Laurence's *The Diviners*, it is notable that these theories (and indeed the books in which they appear) derive from focus on white, English, settler Canadian authors and audiences.

As this introduction shows, the implications of this narrowed perspective have been usefully critiqued by many scholars working in both the humanities and social sciences, and the present study often draws upon these critiques in its body chapter analyses of settler anxiety. An analysis of settler anxiety in Franco-Canadian literatures warrants an independent study, one that would greatly contribute to the critical conversations collected in the present project. *The Bush Garden* and *Survival* have been selected because of their influence in shaping both scholarly and public perceptions of Canadian literature; as such, I suggest that their claimed objectives of mapping all Canadians' "habits of metaphorical thought" (Frye, "Conclusion" 234) and our collective "national habit of mind" (Atwood, *Survival* 5), even if too general to be plausible, might have shaped many peoples' relationship – established or emerging – to Canadian literature.

In *Survival* Atwood's objective is "to outline a number of key patterns" that shape Canadian literature – a shape which is "also a reflection of a national habit of mind" (5). Cornel Pewewardy's (Comanche and Kiowa) definition of social dysconsciousness as an "uncritical habit of mind (i.e., perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given" ("From Enemy to Mascot" 176) eerily echoes Atwood's definition of Canadian literature as "a national habit of mind." Barker contends that the national narratives of Canadian benevolence constitutive of this habit produce "the affective phenomena of social dysconsciousness" which ensure "settler Canadians and Americans are conceptually

distanced and insulated from their histories of violent oppression and dispossession" (Barker 50).[32]

Prior studies of Canadians' social dysconsciousness have been interdisciplinary, often combining a sociological and literary approach to understand the material consequences of such social phenomena. Importantly, these studies emphasize that collective expectations of settler publics about Indigenous peoples, our shared history, and how this history has played out in our present, have played a significant role in maintaining settler dysconsciousness. Francis's study reveals that settlers' expectations of what an "Indian" is have structured most representations of Indigenous peoples in Canadian literature and media. These expectations look for misrepresentations and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples that fuel what Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor terms "simulations" of Indigeneity operating through the misnomer of "indian."[33] As discussed elsewhere in this introduction, Canadian literary production was at an all-time high in this period, as the establishment of countless regional writers' guilds, the Writers' Union of Canada in 1973, the Literary Press Group in 1975, and the national infrastructure of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in 1978 reflect. Many critics consider the swath of newly-minted publishing houses across the country, such as House of Anansi (which published *Survival* in 1972) and Douglas & McIntyre as

[32] I first encountered the term "social dysconsciousness" in Barker's *Making and Breaking Settler Space* (2020). Barker cites literary critic D.M. Johonson's article "From the Tomahawk Chop to the Road Block: Discourses of Savagism in Whitestream Media" (2011) in which dysconsciousness is located in the anti-Indigenous rhetoric in mainstream coverage of Indigenous resistance to colonial authorities as well as "the caricature mascots" of schools and sports teams ("Tomahawk Chop" 110).
[33] See Vizenor's *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (1998), *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (1999), and *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (2008).

part of the reverberating effects of national funding structures like the Canada Council of the Arts, established in 1957.

By 1972, nearly one hundred Canadian literature courses were available across thirty eight Canadian universities (McDougall "Teaching").[34] The emergence of now-widely-respected journals like *Journal of Canadian Fiction* (est. 1972), *Essays on Canadian Writing* (est. 1974) and *Studies in Canadian Literature* (est. 1976) also marked the rise of Canadian literary consciousness in the post-centennial period. Works like Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (1971) and Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) now constitute some of the most widely studied texts in the Canadian canon in part because of their preoccupations with and arguments about the role of literature in the creation of national identities – a role that would gain considerable critical attention following the publication of Benedict Anderson's seminal study of Western nationalism in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* in 1983.

Though completing and publishing the final novel of her widely popular Manawaka series in 1974, Margaret Laurence remains an enduring figure of Canadian literature, one whose writing "bespeaks a relevance" beyond the period of nationalism from which *The Diviners* emerged (Riegel, *Challenging* xiii). Laurence is remembered as an anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist, stances informed by her time as a young journalist

[34] In his article for *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Robert L. McDougall compares these statistics to the minimal ten half courses and two full courses dedicated to Canadian literature in 1948. Still, McDougall notes that these courses made up just 8% of the total course offerings of English departments, with considerable backlash from many scholars that challenged the studying of what they considered a lesser literary tradition than those of America or Britain.

in Manitoba, her home province and the homeland of the Métis, her time spent in Africa during the 1950s, and by her growing interest in the anticolonial writings of Octave Mannoni during this time.[35] Laurence locates the development of these sentiments much earlier, writing in her 1978 essay "Ivory Tower or Grassroots?" that

> My sense of social awareness, my feelings of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-authoritarianism, had begun, probably, in embryo form in my own childhood; they had been nurtured during my college years and immediately afterwards, in the North Winnipeg of the old Left; they had developed considerably through my African experience. (24)

Laurence further relates these feelings "to [her] own land," seemingly invoking the colonial mentality in her assessment that Canada had been under "the colonial sway" of both British colonialism and American imperialism.

The Diviners has been the subject of critical unease since its initial publication in 1974 (Keith, "Problems" 102), making it a useful text with which to demonstrate the presence and function of settler anxiety in Canadian fiction.[36] This critical unease was accompanied by an increasing critical interest in literary nationalism, which many critics found to be a useful framework in analyzing the novel's recurring themes of identity, belonging, and the relationship between Indigenous (represented in the novel by the

---

[35] In the part-autobiographical, part-travelogue *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (1965) Laurence makes clear that her "feeling about imperialism was very simple – I was against it" and that her time in Ghana and Somalia only reinforced such a stance (25). In her final work *Dance on the Earth: A Memoir* (1989), Laurence calls Mennoni's *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (1956) "a revelation," in that it "said things about colonialism and the people who had been colonized that struck [her] deeply" (155).
[36] Notably, it also won the Governor General's Literary Award that same year.

Métis family of Jules Tonnerre) and settler peoples. My third chapter "Anxious Unbelonging in Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*" locates settler anxiety across three areas: in the critical responses of Laurence's contemporaries toward the Métis character of Jules Tonnerre; in the critical responses of contemporary critics that read the relationship between Jules and the settler protagonist Morag Gunn as an allegory for a reconciled Canada; and finally, in the representations of Morag and Jules's relationship within the text, acting as their "organizing affect" which allows them to develop their identities *in relation* to one another. This reading furthers recent critical calls to approach settler-Indigenous relations relationally, as separate yet mutually affecting social positions conditioned by settler colonial structures of power that, as Rifkin suggests, are maintained affectively.

Literature Review

SETTLER ANXIETY

My conceptualization of settler anxiety draws on its role in critiques of settler colonialism that seek to "unsettle" the ways in which settler colonialism is normalized and reproduced.[37] Settler anxiety is an affect specific to the conditions of possibility imposed by settler colonialism and refers to a collective affect of settler colonial societies involving layered feelings of fear, terror, unease, restlessness, breathlessness, rootlessness, and loneliness regarding settler belonging on Indigenous lands.[38] In a

[37] See Eva Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land, and Settler Decolonization* (2016), Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (2010) as two influential examples of this scholarship in Canada.

[38] In "Anxious States and the Co-Optation of Métisness," Jennifer Adese (Métis) uses the terms "colonial anxiety" and "settler anxiety" interchangeably, noting that "in a Canadian

comparative approach, Historian Kenton Storey's *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire: Colonial Relations, Humanitarian Discourses, and the Imperial Press* (2016) examines the role of settler anxiety in facilitating colonial violence during the 1850s-60s. Storey compares newspaper coverage in Aotearoa and Vancouver Island to demonstrate the ways in which the affect energized existing public anxieties surrounding the violence of westward expansion. In the American context, Kevin Bruyneel's *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (2007) locates settler anxiety in the building of empire, particularly within the ambiguous political spaces of early twentieth century America which were somewhere between domestic and foreign. In the Australian context, Lisa Slater's *Anxieties of Belonging in Settler Colonialism: Australia, Race, and Place* (2019) presents settler anxiety as a historical subjectivity which has shaped settler societies' feelings of belonging, serving as an affective undercurrent for settler "solutions" to Indigenous sovereignty. Though there are obvious differences in the political, historical, and geographic development of these settler colonial states, such differences ought not hinder analyses of their shared settler colonial structures (Barker *Making and Breaking* 3). As an affective pillar of these structures, settler anxiety functions across borders. As a literary scholar, I am interested in locating and unpacking representations of settler anxiety in Canadian literary criticism, particularly criticism concerned with interrelated themes of identity and nation because settler anxiety is also concerned with collective notions of identity and belonging.

---

colonial context, colonial, settler colonial or settler anxieties involve feelings of fear, terror, and unease. They involve feelings of restlessness, breathlessness, rootlessness, and at times of palpable and negative loneliness that percolates within the Canadian (un)conscious" (18). In this project, I do not use these terms interchangeably. I distinguish between the anxieties of the "colonial mentality" and settler anxiety.

In Canada, "settler anxieties are generally attributed to those people and their descendants who have endeavoured to insist on a Canada that is a white, Anglophone nation-state and to affirm and defend both their own and the nation-state's legitimacy" (Adese, "Anxious States" 17) though scholars such as Malissa Phung point out that settlers-of-colour also experience settler anxiety.[39] Settler anxiety is typically studied as a widespread socio-cultural phenomenon of settler colonial nations rather than individual affect, and this project adheres to this broader scope by locating settler anxiety within Frye and Atwood's respective theories of collective Canadian identity and within Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974) written at the height of 1970s nationalism. Canadian literature betrays collective repression of a felt anxiety over what Warren Cariou (Métis) refers to as "the legitimacy of [settler] claims to belonging on what they call 'their' land" ("Haunted Prairie" 727).[40] In *Literary Land Claims* (2015) settler scholar Margery Fee summarizes settler concerns over Indigenous sovereignty as "the Indian land question" – "an old fashioned phrase" with resonance in contemporary land claims (12-13). In her sociological study of these claims, Mackey contends that notions of certainty and uncertainty are "central to the Western ontologies that were a necessary condition of the particular forms of British colonialism of North America" and are "pivotal to today's ongoing settler colonialism" (*Unsettled* 33). Mackey understands uncertainty as a form of settler anxiety which emerges "because the vibrant presence of

[39] See Phung's essay "Are People of Colour Settlers Too?" in *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation through the Lens of Diversity* (2011).
[40] Cariou goes on to attribute the proliferation of Indigenous spectral figures in Canadian literature to a "growing anxiety" rooted in settler feelings of foreignness ("Haunted Prairie" 728).

Indigenous people is a constant and uneasy reminder that the settler colonial project is incomplete and unsettled" (*Unsettled* 35).

ANXIETY

My theorization of settler anxiety as a collective affective orientation toward questions of settler belonging also draws on the phenomenological theories of anxiety (or *angst*) put forth by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927) and revisited throughout his later essays.[41] In *Being and Time*, anxiety (*angst*) is postulated as the fundamental mood of being.[42] Mood is one pillar in the equiprimordial triad of mood-speech-understanding[43] that constitutes humans' experiences of the world, or what he terms *Dasein*, Heidegger's phenomenological term for human existence, more accurately translated as being-in-the-world, from which other moods are generated (and routinely translated in English as "being-there").[44] Heidegger reflects on mood (*Stimmung*),

---

[41] For more on Heidegger's discussion of anxiety, see "What is Metaphysics?" (1929), "Postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?'" (1943), and "Introduction to 'What is Metaphysics?'" (1949), translated by William McNeil in *Pathmarks* on pp. 82-96, 231-38, and 277-90, respectively. For more on Heidegger's perspectives of the arts, see his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1950).

[42] Heidegger's presentation of anxiety was influenced by Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's nineteenth-century conception of anxiety in *Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin* (1884/1980). For Kierkegaard, anxiety is generated through one's recognition of their agency and the possibilities that may arise if it is enacted. Experiencing anxiety is to experience "the dizziness of freedom" (61).

[43] Understanding and speech are two other equally inescapable aspects of Dasein, together with mood forming Heidegger's "equiprimordial" triad, the effects of which Brenkman helpfully summarizes: "none is more original than the others, none is the source of cause of the others, none determines the others… and yet none occurs without" (3).

[44] The German "sein" is translated as "being" (derived from the infinitive "to be") and the prefix "da" is a spatial marker connoting one's "being there" or "here." Heidegger writes that "this entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term '*Dasein*'" (*Being* 7).

attunement (*Gestimmtsein*) and state of mind (*Befindlichkeit*), terms he uses interchangeably to articulate inescapability of affective encounters as part of Dasein, of being-in-the-world and being-with-others. For Heidegger, affect is the state of being in the world, of being affected and affecting things. Literary critic John Brenkman regards Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) a phenomenological analysis of affect that does not centre on consciousness and intentionality, proposing Heidegger's theorization of mood as "the first instance of that decentering" process (*Mood* 21).

Of mood, Heidegger writes that "a mood assails us. It comes neither from 'outside' nor from 'inside' but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being" (*Being* 136-37). Moods differ from emotion in their prolonged duration and sense of vagueness (Ahmed, "Not" 13). Many affect theorists consistently turn to Heidegger's theorization of mood precisely because of the decentring Brenkman identifies, which encourages us to consider the primacy of affect in human experience. Sara Ahmed paraphrases Heidegger when she writes that "it is *not* possible *not* to be in a mood" ("Not" 14) since Heidegger argues that "ontologically, mood is a primordial kind of Being… when we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood. We are never free of moods" (*Being* 136). In this way, a mood functions as what Ahmed calls "an affective lens, affecting how we are affected" ("Not" 14). In 'Conclusion to a Literary History," mood is also central to Frye's dissection of "Canadianism," which he argues is "the cultural accompaniment of Confederation and the imperialistic mood that followed it" but that "[Canadianism] came so suddenly after the pioneer period that it was still full of wilderness" (222). In chapter one, I assess the ways in which the myth of terra nullius has informed Canadian literary depictions of wilderness, arguing that it is the mythical

misnomer with which Canadian literature represents settler entitlement to Indigenous lands, functioning as one paradox in the series which confronts Frye's famous problem of identity ("Conclusion" 222).[45]

My engagement with Heidegger follows contemporary affect theorists and literary critics such as Ahmed, Brenkman, and Sianne Ngai – all of whom rely on his conception of anxiety in their analyses of socially shared affects and their representation, dissemination, and evocation in works of art. Brenkman suggests that the strength of Heidegger's work lies in its articulation "in a philosophical register of the inseparability of the affective, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions of human experience and action" and affirms "literature and its interpretation are the empathic sites of that inseparability" (*Mood* 25). My project follows Ngai's objective to recuperate negative emotions such as fear, anger, and anxiety for their critical productivity while also attending to the ways in

[45] Terra nullius, as discursive image, is a site of settler anxiety in Canadian literature. As Canada's founding legal fiction, it is the misnomer with which early Europeans and later settlers narrate their entitlement to these lands. Canadian literary critic Margery Fee calls terra nullius "a powerful land-claiming narrative" (*Literary Land* 6), while Eva Mackey's case studies of contemporary land disputes across the United States and Canada in *Unsettled Expectations* (2016) demonstrate its continued invocation by settlers who feel both legally and morally entitled to these lands. Mackey explains that though many of the settlers she interviewed did not use the term "terra nullius" explicitly, they did invoke its "logics." For example, scholars explain that terra nullius did not arise because Europeans just did not "see" Indigenous peoples, and thus truly believed the land to be "empty" or "vacant;" it emerged as part of a series of Papal Bulls that claimed any lands without Christian inhabitants were ripe for Christian invasion and occupation (Mackey *Unsettled* 47; Canadian Encyclopedia "Doctrine of Discovery"). Later, terra nullius referred not to empty lands, but lands that were *legally vacant* i.e., uncultivated and therefore unowned according to European standards of agricultural practice and land ownership such as those put forth by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, respectively (Mackey *Unsettled* 48). For more on the relationship between terra nullius and settler anxiety in Frye's garrison mentality, see chapter one.

which they normalize structures of power (*Ugly Feelings* 3-4).[46] This recuperation is necessary because negative emotions "have endured in way that other feelings once widely in circulation (like the nineteenth century feelings of 'neurasthenia' and amativeness') have not, acquiring a colloquial status that broadens the range of sociohistorical dilemmas they can be used to interpret" (Ngai 7). Although this project suggests that settler anxiety circulates within the sociohistorical "dilemma" of 1970s Canadian literary nationalism, I argue that settler anxiety's colloquial status is elided by the critical and public prioritization of Canada's "colonial mentality" and that this nationalism only exacerbated the *existing* dilemma of settler unbelonging.

Frye's criticism is rife with the language of affect, but there is particular emphasis on some of the "negative" affects noted above. Frye invokes dysphoria in "Conclusion" when he suggests that "Down to the beginning of the twentieth century at least, the Canadian who wanted to write started with a feeling of detachment from his literary tradition" (235). Other negative affects such as terror are invoked in Frye's oft-cited

[46] Negative emotions are those emotions which produce a sense of discomfort. Ngai notes that "they can also be described as 'semantically' negative, in the sense that they are saturated with socially stigmatizing meanings and values" (11). Ngai cites Paolo Virno's theory of "sentiments of disenchantment" in his essay "The Ambivalence of Disenchantment" from the theory collection *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (1996) as an example of scholarly warnings against romanticizing negative affects as inherently radical or progressive. Ngai suggests that Virno's theory demonstrates the ways in which affects of *disaffection* – fear, cynicism, anxiety – which once marked subjects' "positions of radical alienation" from capitalism – are reintegrated into the system as professional ideals of flexibility and adaptability, functioning "as the very lubricants of the economic system which they originally came into being to oppose (Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* 4). Sometimes referred to as "dysphoric affects," Ngai argues that these emotions are "marked by an ambivalence that will enable them to resist, on the one hand, their reduction to mere expressions of class resentment, and on the other, their counter-valorization as therapeutic 'solutions' to the problems they highlight and condense" (3).

suggestion that there exists within Canadian literature "a tone of deep terror in regard to nature" (227). Frye clarifies that "it is not a terror of the dangers or discomforts or even the mysteries of nature, but a *terror of the soul at something that these things manifest*" (227 emphasis added). I argue that what manifests is the unarticulated but anxiously felt unbelonging of the settler. The "terror of the soul" is an anxious awareness of its being, and the uneasy desire to locate that being and form a sense of belonging in a world conditioned by settler colonialism.

I understand the prioritization of mood by Heidegger – and current affect theorists' turns toward his thinking – as demonstrative of this project's methodology to read settler anxiety as a site of *relation* rather than individualized emotion. It is integral to the specific geographies, cultural histories, and social relations of settler colonial Canada and cannot be understood without attention to how these are represented in literature. I employ this relational lens in my theorization of settler anxiety and throughout my close readings of Atwood and Frye's respective theories as well as Laurence's novel.

This project relies on four recurring, interrelated characteristics to locate anxiety as part of an affective structure of feeling in Frye and Atwood's respective theories of Canadian literature well as one of the "organizing affects" of Laurence's novel *The Diviners*.[47] These characteristics include: 1) anxiety's formlessness and circulation as a

[47] "Structure of feeling" refers to Raymond Williams's seminal concept with which cultural theorists have since understood cultural phenomena as having (not necessarily producing) particular affective atmospheres that are socially and historically contingent. See the "What is my methodology?" section of this introduction for more on this concept and its application in this project. Literary critic Sianne Ngai defines "organizing affect" by referencing the literary concept of tone: "By 'tone' I mean a literary or cultural artefact's feeling tone… its general disposition or orientation toward its audience and the world" (*Ugly Feelings* 28). I understand it as similar to the concept of "atmosphere" in

collective mood rather than individuated emotion; 2) its lack of "object" toward which it is directed; 3) its paradoxical nature, or its desire toward and repulsion from that which is anxious; and 4) its future-orientation, or its concern with the future configuration of the world and the self within it.

Dasein is always already anxious because it is "an entity for which in its Being this very Being is an issue" (*Being* 141). Anxiety thus constitutes "the condition of ontological inquiry itself" (Brenkman, *Mood* 184). This existentialism is partially what gives anxiety its amorphous, formless quality in Heidegger and in the work of the other theorists noted above: as the inescapable mood of existence, it is always already part of Dasein, of being; it is a condition of being-in-the-world. Because "that which anxiety is anxious about is being-in-the-world itself" (*Being* 187), anxiety is concerned both with the configuration of the world and one's belonging in it.[48] What distinguishes the anxiety of the settler from this more general anxiety is that in settler anxiety, one is anxious about

---

literary criticism: an affective term denoting "the mood and feeling, the intangible quality which appeals to extra-sensory as well as sensory perception, evoked by a work of art" (Penguin "Atmosphere" 57).

[48] Similarly, affect theorists Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth argue that affect in general "marks a body's belonging to a world of encounters" (*Affect Theory Reader* 2). In his reading of Ernst Bloch's "expectation emotions" (of which anxiety is included), Frederic Jamieson makes a similar point regarding anxiety's ontological leaning in his contention that anxiety "aim[s] less at some specific object as the fetish of [its] desire than at the configuration of the world in general, or (what amounts to the same thing) at the future disposition of the self" (*Marxism* 127). Notably, the phenomenological theories of Bloch and Heidegger are often discussed in somewhat opposition, in part because of their different emphases on the role of hope vs. *angst* in their theories of being, and how these emphases led to radically different ideas about the relationship between human existence and reality. For a cogent analysis of Bloch among his contemporaries, and an argument for re-visiting his work as a way into continental philosophy's recent turn toward "new materialism" and "speculative realism," see Cat Moir's *Ernest Bloch's Speculative Materialism: Ontology, Epistemology, Politics* (2019).

belonging in a world (in Canada, more specifically) configured through and dependent upon the continuation of settler colonialism.

Both Frye and Atwood's theories are also concerned with the ways in which the world is configured through colonialism and how this configuration has impacted settler Canadians' sense of themselves and of their country. Part of this project's argument is that settler anxiety, as an affective structure of this configuration, has indeed impacted settler identity and its representation in Canadian literature, but that it has been understudied and even displaced by critics' preoccupations with the colonial mentality.

As a mood, anxiety is amorphous such that, in contrast to other negative emotions such as fear, it has no discernible object toward which it is directed; what threatens in anxiety is "nothing and no where" (*Being* 186). I locate settler anxiety in two aspects of Frye's conception of the garrison mentality: in the nothingness connoted by the imagery of terra nullius from which the settler insulates herself in the garrison, and in the erection of the garrison as a site of stability and comfort against the imagined nothingness of the land that threatens to consume the settler. As a response to this threatening nothingness, the metaphorical construction of the garrison is an anxious endeavour, erected in response to the anxiety of the "no where" that surrounds.

Alongside "the frontier" and often synonymous with "the fort," the garrison is a recurring symbol of settlement in *Bush Garden* and other contemporaneous works of literature and criticism. It is also a structure of belonging insofar as the garrison is an infrastructure of settler colonialism. In its most literal, then, the garrison functions to secure settler belonging on Indigenous lands. More figuratively, the garrison connotes a sense of stability and security for the "small and isolated communities surrounded with a

physical or psychological 'frontier'" of an "alien continent" whose "uninhabited loneliness" is capable of swallowing them whole ("Conclusion" 227; "Author's Preface" xxix; "Conclusion" 219). Though erected in Canada's past, the garrison is also a symbol of settler futurity in that it functions to secure the continuation of settler colonialism – its hierarchies, its ideologies, and its logics of dispossession and disappearance – into the future. The legitimacy of settler belonging is questioned by settler anxiety, which is made legible when the settler colonial project is revealed *as a project* (rather than natural historical inevitability of European "superiority") that is incomplete and unsettled (Mackey, *Unsettled* 35). As a symptom of Canada's colonial mentality, representations of survival and victimry are also concerned with the futurity of the settler and are therefore also sites of settler anxiety.

Atwood describes the pervasive feeling of unbelonging as settlers' "rootlessness" in an unknown land (111). She prescribes "acceptance of the land" through the adoption of Indigenous cultural material as the remedy for this rootlessness (111).[49] This is an example of the Canadian literary critical tradition of appropriating Indigenous cultural materials as symbols with which to secure settler belonging, what Kristina Fagan-Bidwell (NunatuKavut) terms the "fantasy of adoption," Louis Owens (Choctaw Cherokee) deems the settler hope of "becoming indian," Terry Goldie refers to as "indigenization," and Daniel Francis calls the "myth of transformation."[50] In chapter two, I balance

[49] Settlers' acceptance or even recognition of the land as a repository of Indigenous cultural signification is a task made complicated because of, as Grant puts it, "who we are and what we did" (*Technology and Empire* 17).

[50] See Fagan-Bidwell's essay ""Adoption as National Fantasy" in *Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture* (2005), Owens's *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (1994), Goldie's *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (1989), and Daniel Francis's *The*

Atwood's prescription of cultural appropriation as a remedy for the anxiety of settler unbelonging with Indigenous literary responses to these practices, contextualizing them within emerging conceptions of cultural resurgence as remedy for Indigenous experiences of colonial domination and dispossession.

In both Frye and Atwood's theories, the land is a contested site of unbelonging for the settler. Frye's garrison mentality is a metaphorical diagnosis of settler Canadian encounters with an unknown landscape. In Fry's conception, this diagnosis is an inevitable consequence of settlement, wherein "small and isolated communities" are "confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting… are *bound to develop* what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality" (227 emphasis added). Some critics regard Frye's metaphor as a unifying model for English Canadian literature, while others have denounced it as a "largely groundless" assertion of the already-skepticized school of thematic criticism.[51] Critic D.M.R. Bentley suggests that "whatever its origins, sources, and evidential basis, the garrison mentality is at best an idiosyncratic, limited, and reductive notion that has little explanatory power either in

---

Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (1992). Atwood's short stories "Death by Landscape" and "Wilderness Tips" exemplify the trope of becoming. Atwood invokes the diagnostic approach again by referring to this trope as "The Grey Owl Syndrome" in her essay collection *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (1991), exploring settlers' desires to be "Indian" as a cultural phenomenon: "Many white Canadians claim, as a matter of pride, some 'Indian blood'… perhaps to convince themselves that the land they live in is the one they 'ought' to be living in" (37). For more on these tropes as prescriptive remedies for settler unbelonging in *Survival*, see chapter two of this project.

[51] Canadian literary critic Jonathan Kertzer calls the garrison mentality one of the critical models that has unified English-Canadian literature (*Worrying* 21). In his essay "Rummagings: Northrop Frye's 'Garrison Mentality'" Bentley calls Frye's metaphor a "sweeping and largely groundless assertion" (5) that has since influenced, in addition to studies of literature, architectural thinking in Canada.

Canadian literature or Canadian architecture" (Bentley, "Rummagings" 6). Fee reads Frye's mental garrison as capturing "a persistent ideological strain" in settler Canada: the erection of the mental garrison represents "a disproportionate reaction" to perceived threats of Indigenous violence which "results from the fear of opening up the dangerous question of Indigenous rights to land" (8).[52] As a cultural stereotype, literary critic Susan Glickman argues that the garrison "sum[s] up and simplif[ies] literature for the benefit of those disinclined to accept complexity and inconsistency among writers" while phrases like "survival' serve as mnemonics to help teachers and students organize the canon, thereby tacitly endorsing the exclusion of texts less amenable to such categorization" (*Picturesque* 55).

CANADIAN LITERATURE

This project deploys the signifier "Canadian Literature" to refer to Canadian literature written in English by settler authors, or writers non-Indigenous to the land they call Canada. In looking to Frye and Atwood, my contention that settler anxiety functions as an enduring yet implicit trope through which writers have expressed Canadian identity is premised on their narrow conceptions of Canadian literature and, indeed, Canadian identity, as articulated throughout *Bush Garden* and *Survival.* I recognize that their theories of Canadians' garrison mentality and collective obsession with representing survivors and victims presume the possibility of a universal identity, and moreover, that

[52] In Frye's metaphor, the land from which the settler insulates herself is constructed through the discursive imagery of terra nullius.[52] In chapter one, I explore various definitions and historical applications of terra nullius, demonstrating its function as the mythical misnomer with which settlers understand their right to belong on Indigenous lands.

this universality takes the form of a white, Anglo-settler Canadian identity. Though the problematic assumptions of these works, as well as their consequences for Canadian literature, have been identified by critics beginning shortly after their respective publications,[53] the influence with which *Bush Garden* and *Survival* determined the rubrics whereby Canadian literature has been read by Canadian publics and critiqued by its scholars demands continued critical attention.[54]

The relationship between literature and national identity was an enduring theme of Canadian literary criticism during the period under study, and underscored Frye and Atwood's thematic approaches to criticism. Lecker specifically attributes the rise of thematic criticism during this period to the "straightforward, digestible, comprehensible" and pedagogically useful discussions of Canadian identity found in their respective works, attributing several literary histories and critical anthologies to their influence (*Keepers* 221, 243). *Bush Garden* and *Survival* popularized many of the symbols,

---

[53] Some examples of these early critiques of *Survival* include Robin Mathew's "Survival and Struggle in Canadian Literature" (1972), Frank Davey's "Atwood Walking Backwards" (1973), "Surviving the Paraphrase" (1976), and George Woodcock's "Horizon of Survival" (1973).

[54] For comparative critical perspectives of Canadian literature, see E.D. Blodgett's *Configurations: essays on the Canadian Literatures* (1982), *Literary Pluralities* (1998), edited by Christl Verduyn, and Susan Ingram and Irene Sywenky's *Comparative Literature in Canada: Contemporary Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Publishing in Review* (2019). For diasporic and cross-cultural perspectives, see Himani Bannerji's *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender*, (2000), Renisa Mawani's *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (2009), Smaro Kamboureli's *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada* (2009), *Cultural Grammars of Nation, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Canada,* edited by Christine Kim, Melina Baum Singer, and Sophie McCall (2012) and *Across Cultures/Across Broders: Canadian Aboriginal and Native American Literatures,* edited by Paul DePasquale, Renate Eigenbrod, and Emma Larocque (2009). For postcolonial perspectives, see Laura Moss's edited collection *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature* (2003) and *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism* (2004), edited by Cynthia Sugars.

imagery, and larger tropes found throughout Canadian fiction and poetry. Imagery and abstraction of the land express what Frye has termed the "alternating currents" of Canadian literary identity and are two enduring practices of the English Canadian canon, constituting what critic Leon Surette has termed the "topocentrism" of Canadian literary criticism ("Here is Us").

The relative accessibility of such concepts can partially explain why, "fifteen years after the backlash against thematic criticism, Frye's vision of a nation of malcontents huddled indoors, cursing the wilderness and dreaming of warmer and more civilized places, remains entrenched in the popular imagination" (Glickman 55). During this period, thematic critics such as Frye and John Moss also interpreted nature not just as empty wilderness, but as a site empty of ethics and indifferent to humanity. For example, Moss writes that "with few exceptions, Canadian writers have perceived nature itself to be amoral, impassive, indifferent. The landscape and its seasons have no ethics, no consciousness. Nature is neither wilful nor benign, malevolent nor beneficent – neither emotion nor conscious design is apparent in nature itself" (*Patterns* 111). Similarly, Frye's garrisons are erected in response to the silent, alien land in which human suffering is simply the "byproduct of [nature's] massive indifference" ("Conclusion 245).[55]

Thematic critics' reading of these recurring patterns as evidence of larger socio-cultural concerns in English Canadian society spoke to the broader nationalist sentiment of the period because this reading insisted on studying literature "as part of Canadian

[55] Moss understands the isolation of Frye's garrison as "the only alternative to being crushed by the harshness of the land and its seasons, its immensity and indifference, or being seduced to impotence by its grandeur and its abundance" (*Patterns* 13).

life" rather than "as part of an autonomous world of literature" (Frye, *Bush Garden* 216). In *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada* (1998), Johnathan Kertzer calls thematic continuity – that is, recurring literary representations of environmental and cultural factors – "the orthodox line" in literary criticism, and argues that by 1998, it had been all but abandoned by literary critics and pedagogues working in CanLit (4).

Arguably, the legacy of critical rejection of thematic analysis looms larger than its embrace. As a staunch rebuke of thematic approaches to literature, Frank Davey's 1974 essay "Surviving the Paraphrase" argues that it constructs "a formula for Canadianism" ushered by the "restrictive paralysis" of thematic criticism's "fallacy of literary determinism" ("Surviving" 6). Still, in 1998, Susan Glickman points out in *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (1998) that "those who reject the thematic method of Frye rarely attempt to discredit his actual themes" (54). Other critics like E.D. Blodgett regarded the mapping of thematic patterns across the literary history of a particular geography as "require[ing] the making of connections rather than the reflex of isolation" ("In Search" 3), and this perspective is reinforced in my readings of Frye and Atwood's metaphorical garrisons and literary victims as expressions of collective settler anxiety surrounding Canadian identity and belonging.

Frye's image of Canada has been described as "white as Wonderbread" by critic Linda Hutcheon in her introduction to newest edition of *Bush Garden* (ix). There is little discussion of Indigenous, French, or what Frye calls "immigrant" literature in either *Survival* or *Bush Garden* (216), and these absences affirm Hutcheon's critique. Regarding French-Canadian literature, Frye suggests that "every statement made in a book like this

about ‘Canadian literature’ employs the figure of synecdoche, putting a part for the whole” (“Conclusion” 219). As a result, his conclusions about English-Canadian literature “impl[y] a parallel or contrasting statement about French-Canadian literature” (219), exemplifying the colonial logic of the core-periphery which would be critiqued in the same period by postcolonial critics like Edward Said.[56]

In her 2004 introduction to *Survival*, Atwood remarks on the myopic focus of her book, suggesting that many chapters “would be quite different” so as to attend to the increasing presence of women, ethnic, and Indigenous writers on the scene (xxii).[57] Her commentary on Indigenous writers in particular only exacerbates the monograph’s initial myopia in the suggestion that the absence of Indigenous writing from the original edition simply reflected the scarcity of Indigenous writers at the time (“Introduction” xxii). As this project demonstrates, growing civil rights and anti-colonial movements of the 1970s actually produced an array of Indigenous writing, not “only biographies” (Atwood, “Introduction” xxii) even if some of these appeared shortly after *Survival*.[58]

---

[56] See Said’s *Orientalism* (1978).

[57] See the chapters “Failed Sacrifices: The Reluctant Immigrant,” “First Peoples: Indians and Eskimos as Symbols,” and “Ice Women vs. Earth Mothers: The Stone Angel and the Absent Venus.”

[58] Writer and activist Jeannette Armstrong (Syilx) credits Chief Dan George’s (Tsleil-Waututh) speech “A Lament for Confederation” – an allusion to George Grant’s widely popular *Lament for a Nation* (1965) – as “perhaps one of the earliest Native influences on my own writing” (“Four Decades” xvi). Delivered at the 1967 celebration for Canada’s centennial in Vancouver, Chief George’s speech critiqued the Canadian nation-state for its paternalist and assimilist policies to secure stolen land. George inflected his critique with a concerted appeal toward Indigenous audiences whose resistance against such oppression he lauded (“A Lament” 251). Atwood’s earlier introduction to *Survival* seems to suggest a perpetually unawareness of such voices, crediting Expo ’67 with creating “a fresh national self-confidence” (xv).

Within the field, critical works like Leslie Monkman's *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature* (1981), Terry Goldie's *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (1989), Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (1992), and Daniel Coleman's *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (2006) demonstrated that Canadian cultural narratives tend to (mis)represent Indigenous peoples as either dead, in the process of dying, or equated with nature. Dubbed "the Vanishing Indian" and "Noble Savage," these tropes are also fundamentally based on the ideology of terra nuillius: the land must be empty in order for settlers to construct their own sense of self and belonging.

As these works demonstrate, the ways in which settler identity gets represented in Canadian literature are dependent upon an articulation of difference from stereotypes of indigenous primitivism, savagery, and spiritual nobility. In *House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (1998), Eva Mackey asserts that these misrepresentations "have been wheeled as necessary, either to demonstrate settler mythologies of innocence or to provide resources for settlers to indigenize themselves" (9). Chapter two demonstrates the ways in which Atwood's construction of settler victimry and promotion of cultural appropriation as the remedy for settler unbelonging performs both.

INDIGENOUS LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

Jeannette Armstrong's edited collection *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature* (1993) is the first anthology of Indigenous literary criticism published in Canada. In her "Editor's Note" Armstrong lays out the critical

interventions of Indigenous literary study which were becoming important critical frameworks for the field. Gesturing to the framework of Indigenous literary nationalism, Armstrong suggests that "First Nations Literature will be defined by First Nations writers, readers, academics, and critics and perhaps only by writers and critics from within those varieties of First Nations contemporary practise and past practise of culture and the knowledge of it" (7). According to Daniel Heath Justice in *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History* (2006), Indigenous nationalism

> …is a concept rooted in community values, histories, and traditions that…asserts a sense of active sociopolitical agency, not simply static separatism from the world and its peoples…. Indigenous nationhood is more than simple political independence or the exercise of distinctive cultural identity; it is also an understanding of a common social interdependence within the community, the tribal web of kinship rights and responsibilities that link the People, the land, and the cosmos together in an ongoing and dynamic system of mutually affecting relationships. (24)

Robert Allen Warrior's (Osage) *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (1994) calls for Indigenous literary nationalism as an intellectual endeavour that centres Indigenous-led philosophies, cultural frameworks, and literary works and, importantly, the agency with which Indigenous peoples – scholars, communities, activists, all their relations – construct them (xviii-xix).

Craig S. Womack's (Creek/Cherokee**)** *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999) presents a methodology of literary nationalism to promote cultural resurgence in literary study. Importantly, for Womack, this literary nationalism is not exclusionary because it seeks to represent the pluralities of experience that emanate from

particular Indigenous nations and their epistemologies. Equally important, literary nationalism is not in the business of determining one's "authenticity," but is an attempt to centre a nation's self-determination and sovereignty in literary study by foregrounding the nation's relationship with the land in both critical and creative writing, practicing what he calls "Red Stick criticism."[59]

Often situated in opposition to literary nationalist approaches, hybridized or cross-cultural approaches to Indigenous literature stress the dialogic nature of interactions between Indigenous oral traditions and Western literature since colonization, suggesting that Indigenous literature is produced out of these interactions and should thus be studied within contexts of hybridity and cultural exchange. These approaches incorporate Western theoretical models and Indigenous epistemologies to generate new critical concepts with which to read Indigenous literature. Gerald Vizenor's work on "survivance" is a prominent example, which places Derrida's deconstruction concept of "trace" in dialogue with Anishinaabe epistemology, as are the dialogic approaches to Indigenous fiction proposed by Louis Owens in (Choctaw-Cherokee) in *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place* (1998) and *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (1994).

Explicitly advocating for culturally specific pedagogies, Armstrong suggests that "in reading First Nations Literature the questioning must first be an acknowledgment and recognition that the voices are culture-specific voices" who must be incorporated into

[59] The term "Red Stick criticism" is a reference to a group of nineteenth century Muskogee Creek, whose resistance against encroaching settlers culminated in the outbreak of the Creek War in 1813.

pedagogical practices (7). Armstrong thus anticipates cultural specificity as a key tool for Indigenous critics and writers to develop the field. Similarly, in an essay included in her collection, "Native Literature: Seeking a Critical Center," Kimberly Blaeser (Anishinaabe) calls for "tribal-centered criticism," a critical voice and method which "arise[s] out of the literature itself" (53-54). Million's "felt theory" is an excellent example of a critical method that arises in this way, developing out of the body of Indigenous women's autobiographical writing that permeated the 1970s.

Armstrong suggests that because of these culturally specific perspectives, Indigenous literatures are "an integral part of the deconstruction-construction of colonialism" and the reconstruction of relationships "beyond colonial thought and practise" (8). Simon Ortiz's (Acoma Pueblo) "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism" (1981) conceives of Indigenous oral tradition and literature as how Indigenous peoples "have creatively responded to forced colonization," characterizing this response as "one of resistance" (10). Importantly, for Ortiz, it is precisely this "continuing resistance" made possible by Indigenous peoples' "affirmation of knowledge of source and place" that is responsible for "a particularly nationalistic character to the Native American voice" ('Towards" 10-11). In his edited anthology *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction* (1990), Thomas King (Cherokee) clarifies that though critiquing colonialism has clearly been an important project of Native literature's ability to "open up new worlds of imagination for a non-Native audience," it is not that [writers] have consciously set out to do this," explaining this opening as a by-product of the stylistic, generic, and formal choices authors have made "*as Natives*" (xii emphasis added).

Within *Looking*, Kateri Damm's (Anishinaabe) "Says Who: Colonialism, Identity, and Defining Indigenous Literature" draws attention to the uneven power dynamics in the construction of "Indigeneity" in Canadian literature, noting that "who we are has been constructed and defined by Others to the extent that at times we too no longer know who we are" (11) and that in settler colonial nations such as Canada, "successive colonial governments have used language, the power of words backed by military fire-power to subjugate and control Indigenous peoples of the land" because "Language has been used not only to control what we do but how we are defined" (11).[60]

In a comparative analysis of the works of seminal Indigenous philosophers Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) and John Joseph Matthews (Osage), Warrior proposes the term "intellectual sovereignty" to describe these scholars' perspectives.[61] For example, he analyses Deloria's understanding of "sovereignty" as a process of community-building. Not unlike Daniel Heath Justice's later call to understand kinship as verb rather than noun, Warrior's analysis of sovereignty-as-process emphasizes sovereignty as an action performed by Indigenous community members, as "a decision we make in our minds, in our hearts, and in our bodies – to be sovereign and to find out what that means in the process," proposing intellectual sovereignty as an experiential-based criticism developed from Indigenous experiences of *practicing* sovereignty (*Tribal* 91).

---

[60] This linguistic control is also what Homi Bhabba reads in Fanon as "the colonial vocabulary" which is "shot through with arrogance, antagonism, and anxiety" that distances populations into "those hysterical masses; their blank faces, this vegetative existence" (*Wretched* 7).

[61] Simpson and Smith ask, "does intellectual sovereignty require intellectual isolationalism?" They suggest that rather than isolation, intellectual sovereignty derives from intellectual promiscuity (*Theorizing* 9).

Throughout these major frameworks, responsibility to community has been an ongoing tenant of Indigenous literary study.[62] This responsibility has been theorized by Justice as Indigenous literature's practice of "kinship" (*Why* 150). Justice writes that "kinship is best thought of as a verb rather than a noun, because kinship, in most indigenous contexts, is something that's *done* more than something that simply *is*" (150). In *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (1997) Jace Weaver's concept of "communitism" – a combination of "community" and "activism" – also advocates for ethical responsibility as a foundational feature of Indigenous literary study. Communitism understands Indigenous literature as inherently communal because "it has a proactive commitment to Native community" by "participat[ing] in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them" (*That* xii).

Indigenous literature has also been regarded as a site for the development of decolonizing methodologies, a term coined by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her book of the same name (1999). These are research approaches "that recognize and respond to the historically exclusive and dominant 'story' that has emerged from Western 'scientific' research, codified within ideologies of imperialism and colonialism" (Archibald 5-6). A

[62] Mohawk lawyer and activist Patricia Monture-Angus contends that Indigenous sovereignty is actually the political enactment of responsibility: "Although Aboriginal Peoples maintain a close relationship with the land [,] … it is not about control of the land…. Earth is mother and she nurtures us all…. It is the human race that is dependent on the earth and not vice versa…. Sovereignty, when defined as my right to be responsible [,] … requires a relationship with territory (and not a relationship based on control of that territory) …. What must be understood then is that the Aboriginal request to have our sovereignty respected is really a request to be responsible. I do not know of anywhere else in history where a group of people have fought so hard just to be responsible" (Monture-Angus, *Journeying Forward* 6).

decolonizing methodology aspires to "re-cover, re-cognize, re-create, re-present, and 're-search back'" by using Indigenous epistemologies and studying Indigenous ontological concerns (6). According to Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaw) and James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw) "perhaps the closest one can get to describing unity in Indigenous knowledge is that knowledge is the expression of the vibrant relationships between people, their ecosystems, and the other living beings and spirits that share their lands."[63] Smith suggests that all decolonizing research is focused on "the survival of peoples, cultures, and languages; the struggle to become self-determining, the need to take back control of our destinies" (142).

Stó:lō scholar Jo-Ann Archibald's (or Q'um Q'um Xiiem) *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008), a combined effort with Coast Salish and Stó:lō elders, introduces the method of "storywork" to further these aims. Storywork attends to storytelling as site of meaning and knowledge production for Indigenous communities. It attends to the particular protocols, content, and methods of delivery of Indigenous storytelling as told by storytellers. These details are important for any analysis of Indigenous storytelling because "the meanings of … traditional teachings are embedded in the structure of the narrative as much as in any words one might write in order to explain them" (Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness* xvii- xviii). Archibald's book develops theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical frameworks comprising seven principles: respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness,

[63] See *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge*. Purich, 2000, p. 42.

synergy, with the first four acting as ethical guide for researcher when working with Indigenous storytellers and knowledge systems.[64]

SETTLER COLONIAL THEORY

Settler colonial theory holds that the cultural, political, social, geographic, and economic characteristics of settler colonial nations are particular to settler colonialism as a structure of domination which requires the elimination of indigenous inhabitants.[65] In studying these characteristics, settler colonial scholars maintain critical distinctions between colonialism and settler colonialism. This project engages in critiques of colonialism and settler colonialism because Canada was formerly a British colony and currently functions as a settler colonial nation.

Colonialism refers to systemic processes by which an imperial power establishes and maintains settlements – usually economic or militaristic – in a foreign territory that becomes a colony.[66] In *Survival* Atwood understands colonialism in specifically economic terms, providing a "partial definition" of a colony as "a place from which a profit is made, *but not by the people who live* there" because "that's what colonies are for, to make money for the 'mother country'" (31). In Chapter two, I demonstrate the ways in

---

[64] Smith also suggests that decolonizing approaches can still utilize existing research methods as long as they aspire toward and follow along the values of the Indigenous communities from which this research arises. This sense of responsibility echoes the principles of Weaver's "communitism" that stress accountability to the community under study as an integral feature of Indigenous literary study.

[65] For more on the logics of settler colonial dispossession and elimination, see Lorenzo Veracini's *Settler colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (2010), Glen Sean Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014), and Patrick Wolfe's "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" in particular.

[66] See p. 11 of Claire Lyons and John Papadopoulos's *The Archaeology of Colonialism* (2002).

which Atwood's application of this definition to Canada obscures the settler colonial logics of domination and elimination in her present, allowing settlers to "take up a subject position much more appropriate to Native people in order to construct Canadians as victims of colonialism and US imperialism, and to create Canadian identity" (Mackey, *House* 61-62).

Scholars have distinguished between external and internal forms of colonialism to describe colonial relations to place: external or exogenous colonialism refers to processes of expropriation and extraction of natural resources into material wealth for the colony's imperial power. In this form of colonialism, "all things Native become recast as 'natural resources" (Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization" 4). Internal colonialism refers to the biopolitical and geopolitical management of both land and people, employing strategies of surveillance, divestment, and segregation of native populations that are at once structural and interpersonal.[67]

Williams's structure of feeling suggests that the structural and interpersonal nature of social consciousness is experienced affectively (*Marxism and Literature*). This project contends that settler anxiety, as an affect that recurs throughout interpersonal and structural conditions of settler colonial Canada, operates within the biopolitical management of internal colonialism.[68] Because literature is an exemplary site to experience, express, and conjure affect (Brenkman, *Mood* 16), it is possible to identify

[67] See p. 5 of Eve Tuck (Unangaŝ) and K. Wayne Yang's 2012 article "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor" for more on these distinctions.
[68] Million calls Metis activist Howard Adams's assessment of internalized colonialism in *Prison of Grass* an example of "new language [that] became available that made emotion of analytical importance" (*Therapeutic* 48).

the affective structures implicit in Canadian literary tropes. This project demonstrates that settler anxiety recurs in tropes of settler identity and belonging in particular. I argue that this is partially because these tropes are concerned with reaffirming the legitimacy of settler presence, obscuring or undermine the external and internal processes of colonialism that make settlement possible.

Like colonialism, settler colonialism is also defined by the creation of settlements and enactment of strategies of divestment and surveillance. The main difference between colonialism and settler colonialism is that in building these structures "settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land" (Tuck and Yang 5). In this way, land is settler colonialism's "specific, irreducible element" (Wolfe "Elimination" 388). In their 2018 study of rising contemporary government surveillance of increasingly successful Indigenous resistance movements, settler scholars Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan describe settler colonialism as a strategy of heterogenous forms of domination which draws power from its ability to normalize complicity and complacency toward settler colonial systems of power (*Policing* 20). Literary theorist Mark Rifkin's concept of "settler structures of feeling" posits settler affect as a central part of the normalizing project of settler colonialism. My project suggests that anxiety occupies a characteristically paradoxical place in this structure because it can generate what Eva Mackey identifies in her ethnographic study of contemporary land claims "a defensive hardening of unexamined self-evident assumptions" surrounding the existence of the settler state (*Unsettled* 36) at the same time that it unsettles them.

Settler colonial theory is often understood as a subdiscipline of Indigenous studies because "Indigenous scholarship has revealed settler colonialism is foundational to

studies of contemporary Canadian political, economic, cultural, and social structures" (Barker *Making* 10). Its origins can be traced to scholarship practiced in settler colonial nations like New Zealand and Australia, enacting one of its own premises that settler colonialism, as a process distinct from colonialism and imperialism, produces particular knowledges and modes of inquiry about place. Scholars such as Barker credit Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) with establishing settler colonialism as a theoretical model with which to understand the power dynamics inherent in academic research production.

The term "logics" has been used to assess the interrelated power structures of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy.[69] These logics "may vary depending on the geographic or historical context" ("Indigeneity, Settler colonialism, White Supremacy" 3). Patrick Wolfe also uses this term, arguing that "settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" and operates through a logic of elimination ("Elimination" 387). Veracini points out that settler colonial logics also work to erase the power relations through which settler colonialism is maintained ("Isopolitics").

Because settler colonial theory defines itself as a project focused on the critique and deconstruction of settler colonialism, critics such as Mackey have pointed out that the while it is successful in this regard, it has been less successful "at the more *constructive* project of documenting resistance and imagining alternatives" (*Unsettled* 23 emphasis added). Indigenous literary theory has been instrumental in championing this more constructive approach to settler colonialism by conceptualizing literature as an enduring

[69] See Andrea Smith's chapter "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy" in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century* (2012).

site of resistance for Indigenous peoples living within settler colonial conditions. Originating from Indigenous women's autobiographical writing, Million's felt theory is a prime example of Indigenous applications of literature as critical method.

Coming out of Australia, settler scholar Patrick Wolfe's *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (1999) and his widely cited essay "Settler colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" (2006) established theoretical bases still in operation, such as the definition of settler colonialism as a continual structure of domination rather than a historical event.[70] Political theorist Glen Sean Coulthard (Dene) emphasizes settler colonialism is a form of "structured dispossession" that continues to inform settler-Indigenous relations within settler colonial nations (*Red Skin* 6). This project proffers affect as an immediate site in which these relations play out.

According to Barker, the development of settler colonial theory has led to important considerations in the operation of settler colonialism, with one consideration pointing to "the production of both material cultures and cultural anxiety among settler populations as a necessary part of the colonial process" (Barker *Making* 11). This cultural anxiety was a central trope of Canadian literary criticism beginning in the late 1960s and extending throughout the literary nationalism of the 1970s, diagnosed as Canada's collective "colonial mentality."

Land is the primary motive for its continued logic of elimination that targets Indigenous land and people as it "strives for the dissolution of native societies" in order

[70] See p. 390 of Wolfe's essay "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

to build new, settler colonial societies on the expropriated land because settler colonialism "destroys to replace" (Wolfe 388). The attempted replacement of Indigenous populations with settler ones is an uneven, contradictory logic: though settler society requires what Wolfe terms the "practical elimination" of Indigenous societies from their lands, it also required their continued presence as a symbol of belonging throughout the various myths of origin of settler nations ("Elimination" 389).

Barker and Battell Lowman argue that settler colonialism is erected and maintained through the creation of interlocking structures that govern relationships to land (title, possession), systems such as the Indian Act, and stories that tie settler people to the land such as the peacemaker myth (Barker 8). This project suggests that settler anxiety emerges as a contradictory trope in Canadian literature, particularly within those concerning identity, whether national or individual.

AFFECT THEORY

Affect theory refers to an inherently interdisciplinary and highly contestable study of what emotions are, how they operate within and in-between bodies and socio-historical contexts, and why their operations are important in articulating ontological, phenomenological, and epistemological questions in fields ranging from psychology and neuroscience to philosophy and literary study.[71] Affect's interdisciplinarity allows for

[71] For examples of differing yet equally influential psychological approaches to affect, see Silvan S. Tomkins's four volumes of *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (1962/1963/1991/1992), Paul Ekman's *Emotion in the Human Face* (1972), Alan J. Fridlund's *Human Facial Expression: An Evolutionary View* (1994), and Paul E. Griffith's *What Emotions Really Are: The Problem of Psychological Categories* (1997). While Griffith's study takes up Ekman's psycho-evolutionary theory that emotions are non-intentional, pancultural responses separate from cultural beliefs and desires (Leys 7), Fridlund, a former student of Ekman's, critiques the facial expression experiments upon

what psychologist James J. Gross has deemed "incredible conceptual and empirical opportunities" for studying the what, how, and why of emotions ("The Future's So Bright" 212). Much of this interest manifested in a backward turn to classical Western studies of affect and emotion.[72] Popular among these studies are Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* a fourth century discussion of affect in his concept of *pathês* – defined as "that which leads one's condition to become so transformed that his judgment is affected, and which is accompanied by pleasure and pain (6). Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* (1677), with his definition of *afect* as "affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections" has influenced the theories of some of the most prominent affect scholars

---

which Ekman's aforementioned study and his subsequent Basic Emotion Theory (BET) are based. For diverse neuroscientific approaches, see the debate between non-cognitivist Robert B. Zajonc and cognitivist R.S. Lazarus, particularly Zajonc's "Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences" (1980) and Lazarus's response "Thoughts on the Relationship between Emotion and Cognition" (1982), both of which appeared in *American Psychologist.* For philosophic inquiries into the nature of emotion, see Martin Heidegger's theories of moods (*Stimmung*) and attunement (*Befindlichkeit)* in *Being and Time* (1927), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's rhizome and affectivity in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) and Brian Massumi's "The Autonomy of Affect" (1995) and *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002). The latter three scholars are indebted to Baruch de Spinoza's theorization of affect in *Ethics* (1677). Massumi is also responsible for translating Deleuze and Guattari's aforementioned work to English. For literary forays into affect, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank's "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins" (1995) and Sedgwick's *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003), the latter of which is an excellent example of the intersections between queer theory and affect theory.

[72] Historian Ruth Leys points to the 2009 creation of the *Emotion Review* journal by the International Society for Research on Emotion as an example of what she terms "a groundswell of interest in affect among researchers in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere" (*Ascent of Affect* 1). The present literature review of affect theory is indebted to Leys's genealogy of the field and its key debates. I found Leys's work to be the most readily accessible overview of the scientific and experiential contributions to the field in particular. These are often described in disciplinary-specific terminology unfamiliar to me as a humanities scholar.

working in literary studies including Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Brian Massumi, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Despite the richness of scholarly pursuits, the concept and study of "affect" remain highly contested: there is simply no scholarly consensus on what affect *is*. Some scholars have stressed the need to distinguish between emotion and affect whereas others have used them synonymously to refer to states of feeling, however long or short in duration, shaped by one's interaction with objects and other forms of being. What seems a basic distinction is rife with contradiction and disagreement.[73]

For psychologists like Gross, affect is the superordinate category that encompasses the evaluative nature of attitudes, the existentialism of moods, and the short-termed expression of emotions, and refers to valanced states of feeling ("The Future" 213). Following Spinoza's definition of affect as "an affection of the body" and its "capacity to affect and be affected" Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi argues that emotion and affect "follow different logics and pertain to different orders" ("Autonomy" 88). Emotion is "subjective content, the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal," marking emotion as the interiorization of affect, which Massumi uses synonymously with "intensity" that is

[73] Cultural theorist Sara Ahmed identifies a "split in theories of emotion in terms of whether emotions are tied primarily to bodily sensations or to cognition," ascribing the former "non-cognitivist" view to thinkers such as Descartes and David Hume and the latter cognitivist view to Aristotle and more recent philosophers such as Robert Solomon and Martha Nussbaum (*Cultural Politics* 5). Leys charts a similar list in her introduction to *Ascent*, noting that Nussbaum and Solomon "have stressed the intentionality of emotions, but are thought to have trouble accommodating the existence of emotions in nonhuman animals" (*Ascent* 5).

unqualified by semiotics, marking it pre-personal and therefore unrecognizable or "unqualified" intensity within the body (88).

Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank's revisiting of psychologist Silvan Tomkins theories of affect in "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold" and Brian Massumi's "The Autonomy of Affect" (both published in 1995) are two articles widely credited with instigating "the turn to affect" in literary study, with most affect scholars in agreement that these works follow a non-cognitivist approach to affect as non-intentional, pre-subjective, autonomic, bodily sensation much like Massumi.[74] In addition to Sedgwick, queer theorists such as Sara Ahmed and Laurent Berlant have since published influential works concerning the role of affect in cultural, political, and literary discourses: *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003), *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), and *Cruel Optimism* (2011), respectively.[75]

Feminist theorist Sara Ahmed begins *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2005) by discussing the futility of distinguishing between superordinate/subordinate realms of experience that are either pre-personal, bodily sensation, or cognition-based because at the level of experience, we cannot and do not experience emotion or affect distinctly but simultaneously (*Cultural Politics* 6). Her interest is in what emotions/affects *can do*, their

[74] Literary critic Sandra Ariza Moyano's "Affect Theory with Literature and Art: Between and Beyond Representation" calls these "seminal texts that mark the foundations of affect theory" (2). Ruth Leys's *The Ascent of Affect: Genealogy and Critique* writes that Sedgwick in particular "launched the turn to affect in the humanities" through her revisiting of Tomkins (2). Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth's introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader* calls the publication of these texts "a watershed moment for the most recent resurgence of interest and intrigue regarding affect" (5).
[75] Brenkman notes that many of the foundational projects of affect theory predominantly come from the work of feminist and queer theorists whose work expresses radical resistance to neoliberalism, capitalism, and liberal democracy (*Mood and Trope* 17-18).

material consequences, and how they shape one's phenomenological and hermeneutical experience of the world. This emphasizes Ahmed's larger point that "feelings do not reside in subjects or objects but are produced as *effects of circulation*" (*Cultural Politics* 8 emphasis added).

As effects of circulation, Ahmed explains her theory of the sociality of emotions:

> Emotions create the very effect of surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place…. In suggesting that emotions create the very effect of an inside and an outside, I am not then simply claiming that emotions are psychological *and* social, individual *and* collective. My model refuses the abbreviation of the 'and.' Rather, I suggest that emotions are crucial to the very constitution of the psychic and the social as objects, a process which suggests that the 'objectivity' of the psychic and social is an effect rather than a cause. (10)

Emotion is inherently mobile in Ahmed's sociality model, and this movement creates the conditions for things – people, objects, stories – to transform into sites of socially shared meaning and feeling.

This project follows Ahmed's reasoning and uses the terms emotion, feeling, and affect interchangeably to describe the cognitive, bodily, and emotional attachments between people and things. The term "attachment" is important to my application of affect because it avoids claims of cause and effect, emphasizing affect not as the product of one's orientation toward a particular object but as the means by which that object comes into view – in other words, affect is employed in this project as a kind of felt

knowing that functions alongside other, more overtly cognitive ways of knowing, like logic and reason, to give shape to one's experience. Like Ahmed, Berlant is less concerned with whether affects are hardwired, pre-cognitive auto-responses to stimuli because they "maintain the importance both of reading the gap between affect and the emotional vernaculars that stage its scene" (287). One of the most important distinctions Berlant makes is not between emotion and affect but rather "a distinction between a structure of affect and what we call that affect when we encounter it" (*Cruel* 158). Berlant explains:

> I may be or feel overwhelmed, I may be composed or feel composure; my panic might look like a stoney silence, my composure might be a manic will to control, or not. What looks like a shamed response in one decade, may look angry in another one…. What really matters are the repetitions of relation, the buildup, the pressure over time that becomes a habit that seems intuitive. (*Cruel Optimism* 158)

Berlant's construction of affect is seemingly differently from the non-cognitivism approach put forth by Massumi and others, stating that "affects have content and form. They are not species of preideological clarity, but quite the opposite: they are taught (Berlant *Cruel Optimism* 159). And though the various psychological, social, historical, and scientific approaches to affect operationalize the concept differently and for different aims, affect theorists who are interested in studying emotion "without requiring place-positions for subject and object as the first condition" of existence such as Ahmed have often turned to Heidegger's phenomenology as precedent for such reconsiderations (*Affect Theory Reader* 8).

Canadian geographer Adam J. Barker defines affect as "the diffuse force generated through the engagement between an individual and other people and things that can inspire action or change" (16).[76] In his widely studied survey of forces shaping contemporary geopolitics, *Popular Culture, Geopolitics, Identity* (2010), political geographer Jason Dittmer defines affect as "sensation linked to your environment which "can be both biological and relational" (*Popular Culture* 91).[77] Affect is biological for Dittmer because it operates between bodies as "a sense of push in the world" (92). It is relational because it influences collective behavior as "the active outcome of an encounter, taking the form of an increase or decrease in the ability of the body and mind alike to act" (92). Dittmer's emphasis on movement, change, and collective behaviour echoes Ahmed's theory of the sociality of emotions.

In short, affect theory's state of discord is one thing that affect researchers can agree on. Historian Ruth Leys's introduction to *The Ascent of Affect: Genealogy and Critique* (2017) asserts that "there is no consensus regarding the science of emotion's most basic assumptions" (1). For Leys, this has resulted in a scientific stasis of the field, "one in which the majority of researchers cling to their contested positions and research strategies, leaving fundamental questions unresolved" (1). Conversely, while the editors

[76] Barker goes on to employ Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the assemblage to his analysis of what he terms the settler colonial northern bloc (13-14). The assemblage is a useful concept to explore the interrelated structures of power that maintain settler colonialism because, as he quotes from Anderson and McFarlane's "Assemblage and Geography (2011) "it is part of a more general reconstitution of the social that seeks to blur divisions of social-material, near-far, structure-agency" (Anderson and McFarlane 124 qtd. in Barker, *Making* 14).

[77] For more on affect and geopolitics, see also Dittmer's *Diplomatic Material: Affect, Assemblage, and Foreign Policy* (2017).

of *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) agree that "there is no single, generalizable theory of affect," they do not interpret the lack of concordance as stasis but as a welcome sign of affect's capacity to collapse traditional theoretical paradigms of human/non-human, subject/object, inside/outside and exceed the initial intellectual contexts within which it is studied (4-5).[78] Aligning himself with the nondualism of Ahmed, Berlant, and Heidegger, Brenkman contends that "illusory objectification is not the answer to interpretive uncertainty; the hermeneutics of affect has to acknowledge the impossibility of certainty in the way that literary interpretation does" (*Mood* 15-16).

Because emotion has always been central to art and its criticism, it is difficult to pinpoint an originary encounter between literary criticism and affect theory.[79] Still, many critics working within these encounters mark Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank's co-authored article "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins" as having instigated "the affective turn" in literary study. Brenkman argues that the poetic language of literature "enables affect to be studied with some precision because affect resides in the language of literature not in speaking *about* feelings but in the very speaking and way of speaking" (*Mood* 9).

---

[78] For a general yet cogent summary of prominent interdisciplinary approaches, aims, and applications of affect, see pp. 6-9 in Gregg and Seigworth's *Affect Theory Reader*. See also Leys's genealogical account of the field in her introductory chapter "Setting the Stage" on pp. 1-25 in *Ascent*. Leys's historical account is much more thorough in its charting of initial premises and ongoing debates, particularly in psychological and neuroscientific scholarship on affect.

[79] In her article "Affect Theory with Literature and Art: Between and Beyond Representation" (2020), literary critic Sandra Moyano Ariza makes this point, contending that literature and art "are always enlivened by emotions," marking attempts to define the beginning of their intersection with affect theory difficult to sustain (1). One of the earliest examples of this intersection is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in which catharsis, as the expulsion of pity and fear, is regarded as the purpose of tragedy.

Looking to contemporary fiction, literary critic Emily Horton identifies a trend in twenty-first century fiction moving towards "the transpersonal and material emphasis of affect theory" ("Disaffection" 355). In this trend, it is the absence of affect which becomes the story's main conflict, manifesting in a protagonist's overall "detachment" or "estrangement" from the world and those around them ("Disaffection" 355-56).[80] Horton's analysis exemplifies how critical distinctions between emotion and affect impact close reading approaches that engage affect theory. For example, Horton's analysis employs affect as a non-intentional, pre-cognitive force in comparison to what Megan Watkins calls "the more social expression of emotion" ("Desiring" 269) reflected in the scholarship of Ahmed and Berlant because, in Horton's view, affects are "not exhausted within the boundaries of ego psychology or any other narratives grounded on the primacy of interiority and the self" (Avelar qtd. in Horton 356).[81]

In this project, I engage with affect as a collective, social force always already relevant to the ways in which people identify with certain groups and interact with one another under the particularities of their socio-historical and political conditions. I

[80] Horton analyzes Ben Lerner's *Leaving Atocha Station* (2011) and Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* (2005) as examples of this trend.

[81] Horton marks the turn toward this conception of affect in literary study as shifting attention "away from traditional readings of character and temporality as understood through deep psychology and linear causality, towards an emphasis instead on the relational and processional 'capacity to affect or be affected'" (357). This is what allows her to identify "a notably twenty-first century crisis aesthetic" in literary narratives "in which the narrative orientation relates not psychological (or even emotional) concerns so much as affective ones" ("Disaffection" 356). Horton sees affect as "a fascinating substitute for humanism's essentialism, prioritising flux, process, and connectivity as less rigid, less anthropocentric, explanations for identity" (Horton, "Disaffection" 357), following scholars such as Brian Massumi in their distinction between affect as pre-cognitive, bodily response and emotion as "subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience" or affect "owned and recognized" ("Autonomy" 28).

position settler anxiety toward belonging as the primary affect through which Canadian literature has developed as a scholarly discipline.

Key Terms

SETTLER

In this project, I use the term "settler" when discussing the intended audiences of Frye, Atwood, and Laurence's respective works.[82] "Settler" is a relational term rather than a racial category and can be used as shorthand for "settler colonial."[83] However, many Indigenous and racialized scholars working in the fields of Indigenous studies and critical race studies have called attention to the ways in which whiteness saturates the term "settler," calling for white scholars to be more accountable to the ways in which the term is often synonymized with whiteness, thereby reproducing knowledge frameworks that centre the white subject. In an open blog post to fellow white scholars aspiring toward solidarity with Indigenous and critical race studies, queer theorist Scott Lauria Morgensen champions the term "white settler" – a designation originating in these related fields – as "a potential tactic … to illuminate the power relations producing white settlers, our investments in the singular term 'settler,' and how our use of that term can reinforce

---

[83] For more on the complexities of choosing terminology that reflects Canada's history and present as a settler colonial nation, see the chapter "Settling on a Name: names for Non-Indigenous Canadians" *Indigenous Writers: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada* (2016) by Chelsea Vowel (Métis), pp. 14-17 in particular. See pp. 19-21 for various Indigenous names for settlers, such as the Kanien'kéha term "ose'ronni" roughly translating to "other people" and the Anishinaabemowin word "Zhaaganaash" meaning "outsider," though Vowel points out that at times, the latter has been used to refer to someone with a dubious character (*Indigenous Writes* 20). I point out these two terms in particular because I currently live and work on the homelands of the Anishinaabe and the Kanien'kehá:ka.

rather than challenge our power" ("White Settlers" para. 6). Thus, it is important to note that while this term is often employed to emphasize settlers' relationship to settler colonial structures of power, its relationship to whiteness must also be interrogated.[84]

The position of "settler" is central to analyses of settler colonialism and draws attention to the creation of a new social order via settler colonialism which is dependent upon the ongoing dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples. It denotes a person who has immigrated to a foreign land with the intention of living there permanently, or a person whose ancestors have done so, typically as part of broader settler colonial movements. A settler is a person who is non-Indigenous to the land they "settle"; their settlement is encouraged and protected by the laws and customs of the settler colonial government and society. Though non-European people and people of colour can also be settlers, the term usually points to "non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada who form the European-descended sociopolitical majority," since the dominant sociopolitical structures of this country "remain European in origin" (Vowel, *Indigenous Writes* 17). Scholars have noted that the term generates feelings of discomfort, dislike, and sometimes anger from settlers; these affective responses indicate that the term can be useful in unsettling practices.[85]

---

[84] For further discussion of the intersections between settlerhood, race, and power, see *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society* (2002), edited by Sherene Razack, Malinda Smith, and Sunera Thobani, Jodi Byrd's (Chickasaw) *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (2011), and Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (Goenpul Quandamooka) *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (2015).

[85] Justice calls the term "challenging" for many non-Indigenous peoples (*Why* 9). Reflecting on his experiences with other settlers during Idle No More teach-ins, Barker says that "it became clear that the affective responses to the term indicated a point of intense feeling and therefore potential intervention" (*Making* 6).

"Settler" does not refer to descendants of Africans who were kidnapped from their homelands and sold into slavery. Though slavery played a crucial role in colonization and settler colonization, it also legally stripped people of their humanity and agency, marking their involvement in settlement a violent coercion rather than deliberate choice. The point of agency has also been raised when considering refugees or others who arrive in Canada because current settler colonial practices and/or legacies have rendered their own homelands unsafe.

The term "settler Canadian" is also used throughout this project, often interchangeably with the shorter term "settler." On its own, "Canadian" refers to citizenship and does not reflect the history of how many of us arrived here,[86] so I have tried to use this term sparingly, usually within discussions of nationalism. I write "Anxious Preoccupations" as a settler scholar whose ancestors began arriving in Mi'kma'ki in the late eighteenth century, and whose family continues to live and work across these lands, including the homelands of the Anishinaabek and Kanien'kehá:ka on which I currently reside. I also have family who have settled in Queensland, Australia, on the homelands of the Turrbal and Jagera peoples, so I am deeply invested in scholarship and pedagogies that reveal the effects of these movements and how they are made possible and sustained over time. This is not to say that I wish to see settler colonialism maintained, though my family has benefitted from it. As settlers continuing to occupy Indigenous lands, we have perpetuated the harms inherent to this structure of dispossession and oppression. The lessons learned from the present research project, a decade of postsecondary, and the friendships, connections, and professional relationships

[86] Vowel makes this point in the aforementioned chapter of her book *Indigenous Writes.*

I have made during this time have taught me this legacy. I offer this project in service of the anti-colonial, self-determining efforts of the Indigenous writers and activists whose work I am indebted to, and which permeates the following pages.

INDIGENOUS

In this project, I use the term "Indigenous" as an inclusive, internationally recognized yet highly general term for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples whose homelands encompass lands claimed by Canada, although I use the latter three terms when distinctions should be made within the more general signifier "Indigenous."[87] I also use "Indigenous" to refer to those "kinship-based tribal-nation peoples" in what is now the United States.[88] Indigenous is capitalized to refer to a distinctive political peoplehood, and it is uncapitalized when used as an adjective. This peoplehood is deeply connected to place and has little to do with race or genetics. Kim TallBear explains:

> Indigenous peoples understand themselves to have emerged as coherent groups and cultures in intimate relationship with particular places, especially living and sacred landscapes. In short, indigenous peoples' 'ancestry' is not simply genetic ancestry evidenced in 'populations' but biological, cultural, and political groupings constituted in dynamic, long-standing relationships with each other and with living landscapes that define their people-specific identities and, more broadly, their indigeneity. ("Genomic" 131)

---

[87] For discussions of Canadian legal conceptions of Indigenous identity during the period under study, see Cardinal's chapter "Red Tape: Definitions and Divisions" in *The Unjust Society*, pp. 16-22.

[88] This phrasing is taken from p. 6 of Daniel Heath Justice's (Cherokee) *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018).

TallBear's words emphasize that Indigenous peoples' relationships to place constitute a fundamental feature of Indigeneity. This shared ontology has been the basis of some of the pan Indigenous movements formed during the period under study. Reflecting on his experience organizing the World Council for Indigenous Peoples in 1975, George Manuel notes that "wherever I have travelled in the Aboriginal World, there has been a common attachment to the land" (*Fourth World* 6). In contrast to western conceptions of land "that can be speculated, bought, sold, mortgaged," Manuel suggests that "the land from which [Indigenous] culture springs is like the water and the air, one and indivisible. The land is our Mother Earth," and argues that "the struggle for the past four centuries has been between these two ideas of land" (6). The centrality of land has also informed current scholarship which explores methods of Indigenous cultural resurgence as tools for decolonization. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson asserts that "the land, reflected in Nishnaabeg thought and philosophy, compels us toward resurgence in virtually every aspect" (*Dancing* 18). In chapter one, I engage with Simpson and Glen Sean Coulthard's discussions of the place-based ontology of grounded normativity, a mode of relating to the land that is based on reciprocity rather than extraction, arguing that the empty landscape within Frye's garrison mentality denies the settler such relations and furthers anxieties surrounding settler senses of belonging on these lands.

SETTLER IMAGINARY

Settler colonial theory has marked the settler collective as the primary unit of settler colonization (Veracini *Settler colonialism* 59-62), making analyses of its collective imaginary and notions of settler sovereignty important focuses for scholars interested in exploring the normalizing forces of settler colonialism. For Frye, Canadian literature is a

record of the Canadian imagination that is capable of telling us "things about this environment that nothing else will tell us" ("Conclusion" 217). Its reactions to the environment reveal Canadians' "polarization of mood" ("Author's" xxxii-xxxiii) that shifts between romantic idealism and shrewd objectivity of nature's sublimity ("Conclusion" 220). I read Frye's references to the Canadian imagination as references to the contemporary concept of "the settler imaginary."

The settler imaginary is a concept in settler colonial and Indigenous studies referring to the set of shared ideas and values that underpin common discourses of identity, nationhood, and settler-Indigenous relations within settler colonial contexts.[89] It draws on Canadian philosopher Charles Taylors's concept of "social imaginaries" to explain the "implicit background" against which normative understandings and practices of collective and individual identities are enacted in a particular society.[90] A specifically settler imaginary is one that "developed in the experience and practice of establishing colonial relations" (Bell, *Relating* 12). Bell traces a noticeable shift in the settler imaginary thanks in large part to Indigenous-led activism, leading to "the possibility of transformed imaginings and new understandings of how we (settler and indigene) fit together and how things go on between us," working toward "a *relational* imaginary" (12 emphasis added). Barker contends that "how settlers imagine themselves is a product of both metanarratives and personal or site specific experiences, and the two impact each other" (*Making* 17). Though these imaginaries change over time, Rifkin has noted that

[89] See pp. 11-12 of settler scholar Avril Bell's *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities: Beyond Domination* (2014).
[90] See Taylor's *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004).

Indigenous presence remains a constant tension within what he terms "the jurisdictional imaginary" of the settler nation of Canada ("Settler States" 343).

Settler scholar Daniel Francis's *Imaginary Indians: Images of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (1992) is an early study of the stereotypes with which Indigenous peoples are misrepresented in Canadian social imaginaries, though it should be noted that Mohawk writer E. Pauline Johnson's essay "A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction" (1892) presented this critique a century earlier.[91] In her essay "Says Who: Colonialism, Identity, and Defining Indigenous Literature" (1993) Anishinaabe writer Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm coins Johnson as the first Indigenous critic in Canada. Her essay also provides an overview of some of these stereotypes, or what Thomas King (Cherokee) has called "servants of a non-Native imagination" (*Relations* xii), that have endured since Johnson. These include tropes of "the vanishing Indian" and "noble savage" which often work together in a single narrative to represent Indigenous characters as noble figures in a state of nature whose perceived primitivism renders them unable to exist under the modern conditions of settler society. Francis reads Emily Carr's visual memoir *Klee Wyck* (1941) as an example of such narratives, arguing that while Carr "had great personal sympathy for the Indian, she nevertheless belongs to the

---

Writing within the American context, Vine Deloria Jr. discusses the consequences of these tropes for Indigenous rights movements in his chapter "The Indians of the American Imagination" from *God is Red* (1973). Deloria suggests that these misrepresentations have resulted in a lack of empathy toward Indigenous peoples, arguing that the novels which employ them depend "upon an escapist attitude for their popularity" and that "as a consequence the Indian activist movement could not make contact with a group of informed, sympathetic readers for there were none" (24). In *Fourth World,* Manuel argues that these misrepresentations constitute a "cornerstone" of settler mythologies regarding Indigenous peoples, which are underscored by "a belief that an Indian way of life meant something barbaric and savage, frozen in time and incapable of meeting the test of changing social conditions brought about by new technology" (2).

tradition of artists who took for granted that Indians were vanishing and sought to preserve an idealized image of them, not the reality of Native people" (37-38). Francis provides the "last Mohican" figure of James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) as an earlier example of this tradition practised in the American context. Charles' Mair's long poem *Tecumseh* (1886) is also another example, wherein the titular character becomes a symbol of all Indigenous peoples' "noble" demise (*Imaginary* 7).

In chapter one, I follow Frye's premise that Canadian literature is "a record of what the Canadian imagination has reacted to" (*Conclusion* 217) by engaging with Indigenous and decolonial scholarship, both current and contemporaneous to Frye, to discuss the role of the imagination in constructing and dismantling the settler colonial logics which structure these stereotypes.

Chapter Preview

Chapter one argues that settler anxiety undergirds Frye's conception of the garrison mentality, locating this anxiety in depictions of terra nullius and in the metaphorical erection of the garrison as a structure of settler colonial stability amidst an empty landscape. I define terra nullius as a discursive image which narrates the "certainty" of settler sovereignty and complicate this function by demonstrating the ways in which its invocation by Frye reveals an anxious *uncertainty* regarding settler legitimacy on Indigenous lands. Using a relational approach, I compare the isolating and empty imagery inherent to the garrison with the Indigenous concept of grounded normativity, suggesting that the relational approach to the land underscoring this concept remains perpetually out of reach for the settler, in part, because of its anxious reduction to a mere "rapport" with nature in "Conclusion to a Literary History."

In chapter two, I compare Atwood's invocation of "the victim" in *Survival* with Indigenous applications of the role as a marked political position under the emerging framework of human rights contemporaneous with Atwood. Though Atwood's invocation depends upon an articulation of both settlers and Indigenous figures as literary victims, I demonstrate that her primary identification of Canada as a colony rather than settler colonial nation obfuscates the power dynamics in the construction of these victims. I rely on Million's historical analysis of the ways in which Indigenous activists adopted victimhood within human rights discourses of the period to advocate for self-determination within settler colonial nations like Canada. Comparatively, I reveal the ways in which Atwood's articulation of Indigenous victimry is less agentive, following the settler colonial logic of *fait accompli* which frames Indigenous dispossession as an inevitable consequence of modernity. I tease out the various definitions of "the colonial mentality" in Canadian literature during this period, interpreting Atwood's invocation of the term as a symptom of existing settler anxieties surrounding their sense of belonging and quests for cultural legitimacy. Finally, I assess the ways in which Atwood's criticism promotes the appropriation of Indigenous cultural materials as a remedy for the anxieties of the colonial mentality.

Chapter three applies my theorization of settler anxiety to Margaret Laurence's novel *The Diviners* (1974), locating it in the relationship of the settler protagonist, Morag Gunn, and the Métis character Jules Tonnerre. In doing so, I challenge current scholarship that employs what I call "reconciliatory readings" that interpret the relationship as a symbol of Canada's unified diversity and reconciliatory efforts. I argue that these interpretations are anxious attempts to "rescue settler futurity" (Tuck and Yang,

"Decolonization" 13), offering an alternative reading that is less certain of the novel's reconciliatory themes. I also re-visit earlier critical receptions of the novel which focus on Morag's subjectivity by attending to the ways in which her status as a settler informs her search for identity and contextualize it within the existing anxieties and aspirations of 1970s Canadian nationalism.

This is an anxious introduction. Do we need more scholarship on Frye and Atwood? Have we exhausted the critical productivity of exhuming the anti-colonial sentiments of Laurence's work? Does attending intimately to the affective dimensions of settler experience engender decolonial possibilities? Or does it reify and reproduce contemporary structures of power? And am I the person to do this work? While I cannot be certain, I genuinely believe this uncertainty to be valuable and necessary – particularly in the wake of the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission and amidst the waning of reconciliatory discussions – and in the pages that follow, I hope to convince the reader of this as well.

To the isolated, isolation seems an indubitable certainty; they are bewitched on pain of losing their existence, not to perceive how mediated their isolation is. – Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

Chapter 1

Garrisoning Anxiety in Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the premise of terra nullius in Northrop Frye's conception of English settler Canadian identity in *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Imagination* (1971). Although largely absent from the critical lexicon during the period under study, the myth of terra nullius is embedded in Canadian literary traditions and their critical expressions in Canadian literature. In "Author's Preface" Frye describes Canada as a place filled with "empty spaces" that are "largely unknown" (xxix), deeming the north "a vast hinterland" characterized by its "uninhabited loneliness" (xxix).[92] In "Conclusion to a Literary History" Frye regards this mythological emptiness central to Canadian identity, wondering "if any other national consciousness has had so large an amount of the unknown, the unrealized, the humanly undigested, so built into it" (222). Frye's full definition of literature as conscious mythology explains that "as society develops, its mythical stories become structural principles of storytelling, its mythical concepts, sun-gods and the like, become habits of metaphorical thought" (234). The work of this chapter suggests, however, that Canadian literature has been perpetually *unconscious* of its mythology, of its reliance on the myth of terra nuillius as one of its "structural

[92] Frye invokes Tennyson's "In Memoriam A.H.H." (1850) to describe nineteenth century Canada, wherein the environment was "terrifyingly cold, empty and vast," and settler writers expressed a combination of Late Romanticism and Darwinism toward Tennyson's "nature red in tooth and claw" (245).

principles of storytelling" that manifest the "metaphorical habits of thought" of the settler imaginary.

In the beginning of "Conclusion," Frye identifies the imagination in nationalist terms, calling Canadian literature a record of "what the Canadian imagination has reacted to" (217). This focus is evidenced most explicitly by the monograph's subtitle, *Essays on the Canadian Imagination.*[93] As such, I interpret Frye's references to the Canadian imagination as references to what I call elsewhere in this project "the settler imaginary," what settler scholar Avril Bell defines as "the set of ideas and values that underpin a peculiarly settler discourse of nationhood, identity and Indigenous-settler relations" (*Relating* 11).[94] Thus, this chapter demonstrates that Canadian literature, as a record of the settler imaginary, often invokes the language and imagery of terra nullius or "empty" land. I argue that this trope is in part fuelled by its function in Frye's influential metaphor of the "garrison mentality" to depict settlers' affective response to and relationship with the land.[95] As a metaphor for "the way in which the Canadian imagination has developed

---

[93] In a project concerned with the ways Canadian literary criticism has failed Indigenous-settler relations, it should be noted who Frye crowns as "one of the ancestral voices of the Canadian imagination": Duncan Campbell Scott, architect of the modern Indian Residential School System following his stint as Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs in 1913 ("Conclusion" 247). Scott's appearance in nearly every Canadian literary anthology since A.J.M. Smith's first edition of *The Book of Canadian Poetry* in 1943 supports Frye's claim. And Frye was also known to discuss the irony of Campbell writing poetry that lamented the "vanishing Indian" at a time when he was directly responsible for implementing many of the genocidal policies of the Indian Act in his office at the DIA.

[94] Bell develops her definition by turning to Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's conception of "social imaginaries" as the basis for "widely shared sense of legitimacy" about the form, practices, and social relations of a particular society that can change over time (Taylor qtd. in Bell 11-12).

[95] In *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (1998), critic Susan Glickman contends "that the idea of the garrison is central to Canadian literature is a given among many critics even now" (55).

in its literature," the garrison mentality depends upon a confrontation between settler and the "formidable physical setting" of the empty wilderness whose "only inhabited centres are forts" ("Conclusion" 227). This chapter demonstrates that the garrison mentality interprets settlers' relationship to the land as one characterized by settlers' disconnection from nature, which both shapes and is shaped by settlers' anxieties toward belonging on these lands. My re-reading suggests that the metaphor of the garrison expresses settlers' simultaneous inability and desire to relate to the land in ways that affirm settler belonging.

Settler anxieties surrounding land relations present an interesting contradiction that this chapter interrogates in order to read the garrison as an anxious pillar of what Mark Rifkin calls "settler structures of feeling" to produce "certain modes of feeling" which "normalize settler presence, privilege, and power" ("Settler States" 342). Building upon Eva Mackey's concept of "settled expectations" developed in her monograph *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land, and Settler Decolonization* (2016), I argue that terra nullius is the mythical foundation ungirding the "certainty" with which settlers expect their land rights to continue, yet it is also invoked by Frye throughout *The Bush Garden* to express the phenomenological *uncertainty* of settlers' land encounters.[96]

In contrast to the logic of terra nullius and the insular nature of the garrison mentality is the Indigenous ontological concept of grounded normativity. In *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (2017), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg) explains that grounded normativity

[96] I draw on Mackey's study extensively to show that terra nullius reinforces settlers' certainty that their land rights are inalienable whereas Indigenous peoples' are not.

is at its core a relational model for understanding and enacting one's relationship with the land:

> The opposite of dispossession within Indigenous thought is not possession, it is deep, reciprocal, consensual *attachment*. Indigenous bodies don't relate to the land by possessing or owning it or having control over it. We relate to the land through connection – generative, affirmative, complex, overlapping, and nonlinear *relationship*. (43)

Locating the concept of grounded normativity in Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr.'s seminal work *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (1972), Dene political scientist Glen Sean Coulthard asserts that this understanding of land-as-relational is what "grounded our critique of colonialism and capitalism in the 1970s and early 1980s" (*Red Skin* 61), highlighting Deloria and Frye as contemporaries whose opposing conceptions of the land serve as further evidence of Deloria's central argument in *God Is Red.* With grounded normativity inaccessible to the settler, the land is rewritten as terra nullius, and the "Indian" relegated to symbolism, relevant to the settler only through the "rapport with nature which the Indian symbolizes" ("Conclusion" 241). Part of my argument suggests that the garrison mentality – developed by "small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological 'frontier' and confronted with "a huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting" – is a denial of the kinds of relationality that are foundational to Indigenous worldviews, which pre-exist the settler's arrival, and which become reduced to a superficial and potentially adoptable "rapport with nature." This denial is foregrounded by an anxiety about an unknown wilderness that remains

perpetually so through the insularity of the garrison. In this way, anxiety is both impetus and outcome of Frye's garrison.

The term "wilderness" recurs throughout Canadian literary criticism, often conflated with "the north" (Grant "Myths of the North" 16) to create what literary critic Shelagh Grant has called "an amorphous, obscure, yet recurrent theme in Canadian nationalism" ("Myths of the North" 17). Canadian literary critic Patricia Morley maintains that "the experience of wrestling with a rigorous northern climate and wilderness has shaped our people and, of course, their art" ("Canadian Art" 22). Literary studies such as Renée Hulan's *Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture* (2002) have argued that, rather than denoting something essential about Canadian identity, the terms "the north" and "wilderness" are contingent upon socio-historic discourses of race and gender. Importantly, these terms typically invoke terra nullius, functioning symbolically as "empty space[s] waiting endlessly for definition and as a repository of images defining the official national identity" (Hulan *Northern Experience* 6). This is also true for Frye's garrison, identified as a literal garrison in early Canadian fiction and which becomes a psychological barrier in twentieth-century writing ("Conclusion" 228). I suggest that within Frye's metaphor, there is still a longing by the settler for the reciprocity that is foundational to grounded normativity but which remains unattainable within the walls of the garrison.

This chapter also develops as part of my project's answer to Dian Million's call to study settler colonialism as a "felt, affective relationship" (*Therapeutic* 46) by attending to the absence of this relationality in Frye's theorizations of collective settler identity expressed in his "Author's Preface" and "Conclusion to a Literary History," in

Bush Garden. Attending to such absences places Canadian literary criticism in conversation with settler colonial studies which emphasizes that settler colonialism "inheres in relationships between people as collectives and between people and the more-than-human world" (Barker *Making* 12). Like terra nullius, the term "settler colonialism" remains absent throughout Frye's essays, but phases of settlement are repeatedly invoked by Frye as teleological metaphors to describe the development of Canadian literary concerns. Critic E.D. Blodgett explains that settlement metaphors in Canadian literary criticism serve a particular ideological purpose, suggesting that "the theme of a journey to settlement is of particular value in teaching the Canadian literatures" because "the theme conceals a shared belief which… permits one to look upon the land and see… 'it has no past'" ("In Search" 8 emphasis added). In *Worrying the Nation: Imaginings a National Literature in English Canada* 1998), critic Jonathan Kertzer calls the procession from frontier, to garrison, to settlement a "familiar lexicon" in Canadian literature (127).[97] As this chapter demonstrates, these phases are also used to construct the garrison mentality, marking settler colonial scholarship such as Mackey's and Indigenous critiques of colonialism like Million's useful frameworks with which to analyze Frye's metaphor for Canadian literary representations of settler land encounters.

It is necessary to investigate these representations of settler-land relations because, as Canadian geographer Adam J. Barker reminds us, collective relationships to the more-than-human world, "whether cooperative, indifferent, exploitative, or violent,"

[97] Kertzer goes on to note that, post-Oka, this lexicon "is charged with irony as soon as European colonials are recognized as colonizers. Then the purgatorial ordeal by which they embrace their nation's secret self becomes an elaborate exercise in self-deception" (127), suggesting that the earlier periods of CanLit produce a kind of literature in denial – fertile ground for the steadily accumulation of representational anxiety.

still define the socio-political and cultural narratives that structure our experiences of settler colonialism (*Making* 12). Leon Surette applies the geographic concept of "topocentrism" to describe the ways in which environment confers settler Canadians with a collective identity.[98] This chapter demonstrates that in keeping with Canadian literary traditions of abstracting place, the garrison mentality, as a metaphor for settler experiences of settler colonialism, is an anxious abstraction of settler unbelonging.

The scope of Frye's *Bush Garden* spans from Canadian literature's early beginnings to the contemporary period in which Frye was writing (*Bush Garden* was published in 1971) and is nationalist in both rhetoric and theme. I analyze his "Conclusion to a Literary History" because, as its title suggests, it is summative of Frye's critical review of the field, and also, because it reflects some of the critic's theories on the relationship between literature, mythology, and identity developed during the early-to-middle stages of his career.[99] Myth has become a crucial concept with which scholars in the humanities and social sciences understand collective denial of Canada's settler colonial history, so it is useful to assess whether Frye's work as a mythopoeic critic can

---

[98] See Surette's essay "Here is Us: the Topocentrism of Canadian Literary Criticism" in *Canadian Poetry*, no. 10, 1982, pp 44-57.

[99] It should be noted that "Conclusion" was originally published six years earlier in 1965 as part of Carl F. Klinck's influential survey *A Literary History of Canada* (1965). While this chapter engages with a few targeted instances of Frye's earlier work on myth and literature, I give more space to some of the later criticism that either adopts, extends, or critiques Frye's theory of the garrison mentality, performs similar abstractions of place, and/or applies the discourse of terra nullius in questions of setter national identity. These conversations exemplify Frye's influence on his contemporaries as well as later critics. For further discussion of Frye's theories on the function of myth, see Glen Robert Gill's *Northrop Frye and the Phenomenology of Myth* (2006). For more comprehensive overviews of Frye's extensive body of work and its influence on Canadian literary criticism, see Branko Gorjup's *Mythologizing Canada: Essays on the Canadian Literary Imagination* (1997) and *Northrop Frye's Canadian Literary Criticism and its Influence* (2009).

contribute to these critical conversations. Later sociological studies like Mackey's *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (1998/2002) demonstrate that national myths such as the "myth of benevolence" significantly influence how a nation's identity gets conceptualized, narrated, and reinscribed by the settler majority. Her work shows that like the myth of benevolence, the myth of terra nullius harmfully misrepresents Canadian history by erasing the conquest and attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples by settlers and their colonial governments.

I refer to both settlers and their provincial and federal governments as active agents in settler colonial Canada because physical violence toward Indigenous peoples is perpetrated not just by state authorities but also individual homesteaders and smaller groups of settlers, enacting what critics have termed "frontier violence."[100] Like the more state-sanctioned violence of "Indian policy" and all-out war, frontier violence is also motivated by settler desire for more land within the contact zone of the frontier. The frontier has been conceptualized by scholars such as Jeffrey Monaghan, Timothy Raeymaeker, and Benedikt Korf as a "contested site" and "state of exception" ripe for

[100] For more interdisciplinary research on theoretical models of the frontier and the legacy of frontier violence across settler colonial nations, see Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Dirk Moses's *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (2005), Timothy Raeymaeker and Benedikt Korf's *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflict, and Borderlands* (2013), Jeffrey Monaghan's article "Mounties in the Frontier: Circulations, Anxieties, and Myths of Settler Colonial Policing in Canada" in *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2013, pp. 122-148, and Mattias Borg Rasmussen and Christian Lund's co-authored "Reconfiguring frontier spaces: The Territorialization of Resource Control" in *World Development,* vol. 101, 2018, pp. 388-399. Frye conceives of the frontier as existing "all around one, a part and a condition of one's whole imaginative being" ("Conclusion" 222). Frye's comment reflects the later concept of "conceptualized landscapes," defined as natural spaces imbued with human significance (Dent "False Frontiers" 66). The ways in which Frye imbues the land with "human significance" – that is, settler significance – will be thoroughly taken up in this chapter.

violent confrontations between settler and indigenous cultures within settler colonial nations. Patrick Wolfe has noted that frontier homicide, far from being insular to the history and conception of the American "wild west," is characteristic of settler colonial strategies of elimination in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand ("Elimination" 388).

Canadian-specific studies such as Mackey's, as well as earlier studies like Leslie Monkman's *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature* (1981) and Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (1992) show that literary tropes and social mythologies also enact settler colonialism's logic of elimination. Paradoxically, far from being altogether absent or eliminated from these "nationalist myths," Indigenous peoples are subsumed within as "necessary players" in that "they are the colourful recipients of benevolence, the necessary 'others' who reflect back white Canada's self-image of tolerance"[101] (Mackey, *House* 15). Such studies also set the precedent for this chapter's interdisciplinary lens since all of the studies mentioned link these literary tropes to material effects in Indigenous-settler relations under conditions of settler colonialism, and even more so to their expression as socio-literary phenomena like national mythologies of settler benevolence and pervasive stereotypes of Indigenous peoples.[102] In their expositions of Canadian national identity, the centennial celebrations that preceded the decade under

[101] In his introduction to *A Native Heritage,* Monkman makes a similar claim regarding the refracted process by which settlers construct their sense of self when he writes that "in each era of Canadian literary history, writers have turned to the Indian and his culture for standards by which to measure the values and goals of white Canadian society" (3).
[102] For more on tropes as stereotypes, see Chapter three wherein I discuss the way these stereotypes get reinscribed through what Million refers to as "comfortable knowledges" about Indigenous peoples. These knowledges reflect Anishinaabe theorist Gerald Vizenor's concept of "simulations" because they too misrepresent Indigenous experiences of colonialism.

study made manifest the complementary myths of Canadian benevolence and terra nullius, highlighting some of settler Canadian society's achievements within a vast, empty landscape whose history did not begin until the arrival of Europeans.[103]

But we need not return to 1967 to find examples of the enduring impact of such national mythologies. In July 2022, Pope Francis I visited Canada during his "Walking Together" Tour, meeting with several Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit communities across Alberta, Quebec, and Nunavut in an effort to practice reconciliation by apologizing for the Catholic Church's role in Canada's Indian Residential School System (IRSS). His visit is a reminder that myth of terra nullius and its expression in the papal bull of the Doctrine of Discovery continues to bear material, emotional, psychological, and political consequences in our contemporary moment. The tour, also called the "penitential pilgrimage," was the result of the most recent visit to the Vatican by Indigenous delegates in March 2022 during which the delegates asked the pope to come to Canada to make a "genuine, heartfelt apology" to survivors and their families.[104] The delegation also urged the pope to release any IRSS records that might aid in locating the remains of other

[103] The "Indians of Canada" pavilion at the '67 expo is a notable exception to this trend. Its Indigenous creators and hosts adamantly fought against the myth of peaceful cooperation within an empty territory in which the rest of the expo reveled, with one section of the pavilion reading: "You have stolen our native land, our culture, our Soul…" Listen to or view the transcript for Leah-Simone Bowen and Falen Johnson's (Mohawk/Tuscarora) episode "The Secret Life of Canada: The Indian Pavilion at Expo 67" for a retrospective view of the exposition's nationalism and who it left out.

[104] See Chavez, Nicole. "Canadian Indigenous leaders push for residential schools apology in Pope Francis meeting." *CNN World,* 29 March 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/29/americas/pope-francis-canada-residential-schools/index.html#:~:text=At%20the%20Vatican%2C%20representatives%20for,in%20the%20residential%20schools%20system. Accessed 3 May.

missing children following the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the former site of Kamloops Indian Residential School in May 2021.

Undergirding their urging was the delegates' request that the pope renounce the fifteenth century Doctrine of Discovery – the papal bull that claimed Indigenous land "terra nullius" or "empty" in order to justify European invasion. The pope's renouncement would fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 49th Call to Action which asks religious groups to "repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples," naming the Doctrine and its complementary concept of terra nullius directly.[105] As Canada's founding "legal fiction," its repudiation would, according to University of Alberta law professor Tamara Baldhead Pearl (Plains Cree), "force the courts to recognize Indigenous nations as sovereign, and this means that treaties would be required as a foundation of Crown sovereignty," rather than the Doctrine, and "would have significant symbolic value" that could influence the Supreme Court's conduct toward Indigenous nations moving forward.[106]

The delegates' request serves as a reminder that the legacy of terra nullius continues to be felt by Indigenous communities. Its fictive nature makes the concept an apt site of study for literary scholars whose work is predicated on uncovering the ways fiction informs reality and vice versa. Comprehensive literary studies of the past three decades have revealed the extent to which imagery of an uninhabited, empty wilderness

[105] See *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2012).
[106] See the newspaper article "Doctrine of Discovery is a 'legal fiction,' but revoking it won't herald immediate changes, experts say" by Brett Forester (Chippewa) for Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), 29 July 2022.

dominated earlier periods of Canadian fiction, poetry, and painting.[107] It is useful to understand how the mythical story of terra nullius functions in Frye's criticism to shed light on its endurance as a trope within Canadian literature and as a national mythology. Thus, the scope and theme of *Bush Garden* make the monograph an effective reference for this study's focus on the nationalism of the 1970s and its influence on the critical and creative concerns of influential CanLit writers of the period: Northrop Frye, Margaret Atwood, and Margaret Laurence. Re-reading seminal theories of settler identity in Canadian literature can help us in navigating their legacy in our present moment of supposed reconciliation.

Although the other essays collected in *Bush Garden* are equally relevant to a discussion of Frye's influence on the ubiquity of settler national identity as the topic du jour in Canadian literary criticism of the time, I focus on the "Author's Preface" and "Conclusion" for a few reasons. Firstly, because both the "Preface" and "Conclusion" contain many of the broader questions regarding Canadian identity that would go on to inform Frye's later critical oeuvre; and secondly, because the other essays focus mainly on Canadian painting and poetry which fall outside the scope of this project and which appear peripheral to Frye's broader scope of "the Canadian imagination" in "Conclusion," and which is most relevant to this study.

---

[107] See Leslie Monkman's *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English Canadian Literature* (1981); Terry Goldie's *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (1989); Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian: Images of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (1990); for a sociological perspective that supports the findings of these literary studies, see and Eva Mackey's *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (1998). All studies reappear throughout this chapter's review of Canadian scholarship on terra nullius and settler national identity.

AFFECT AND IMAGINATION AS SITES OF COLLECTIVITY

In "Conclusion," Frye's conceptualization of the social function of literature is in keeping with this project's cultural materialist approach to literary study. It is notable that, like Atwood's *Survival*, Frye's *Bush Garden* speaks of literature in terms that are now legible under the literary approach of cultural materialism. In *Bush Garden,* Frye understands literature as a site of cultural meaning-making that impacts the way collectives, particularly those under conditions of nationalism, understand themselves. For example, he begins his "Conclusion" by linking the study of Canadian literature to the study of Canadian life more broadly, noting that literature in Canada is "most significantly studied as a part of Canadian life than as a part of an autonomous world of literature" because "the verbal imagination operates as a ferment in all cultural life" (216). The verbal imagination is akin to what Frye terms elsewhere as Canadians' "social imagination" or "literary imagination as a force and function of life generally" (216, 217). For Frye, then, literature is also to be understood phenomenologically, as expressive of humans' experiences of cultural life in a particular place and time; it is precisely literature's phenomenological status that marks Canadian literature "an indispensible aid to the knowledge of Canada… [and] what the Canadian imagination has reacted to, and … tells us things about this environment that nothing else will tell us" (217). These conceptions of Canadian literature support this project's general exploration of settler imaginaries as sites of literary meaning and this chapter's specific study of the ways that these imaginaries represent "things about this environment," according to Frye.

This chapter does not problematize the collective lens through which Frye's essays examine the settler Canadian imagination because it fits with my project's

theorization of settler anxiety as a site of collective rather than individual affect. Mackey also promotes a collective approach to analyzing such affects because in settler nations "they are not simply individual emotions that occur naturally or spontaneously" but work to naturalize the processes of settlement so that the experiences of everyday settler colonialism appear fixed and permanent (*Unsettled* 18).[108] This collective approach is emphasized in the political writing of Secwepemc activist George Manuel, who, in 1974, reminds his audience that "however personally we may experience one course [of colonialism] or another – the particular course may indeed change our lives for generations to come – it is still a matter of detail within a *common* pattern" (*Fourth* 59-60 emphasis mine). In his political manifesto *The Fourth World*: *An Indian Reality* (1974), published just three years after Frye's *Bush Garden,* Manuel identifies this pattern as settler colonialism's power to control what is leveraged as "the common good" in a settler society (60). People become convinced of its morality and ethics only "when their own capacity to imagine ways in which they can govern themselves has been destroyed" (60), signalling the imagination as a foundational site of inquiry and of possibility in critiques of settler colonialism. Emphasis on the imagination as a site of revolutionary world-building would be taken up by Indigenous literary critics as a way to promote the polemic possibilities of storytelling, such as in Daniel Heath Justice's influential *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018). And though Manuel may be referring to settler colonialism's attack on Indigenous sovereignty – or Indigenous capacities to imagine

[108] Revealing settler colonialism as an impermanent project rather than natural outcome of historical movements is also central to earlier critiques of Canadian settler colonialism. For example, in his Foreword to George Manuel's *Fourth World,* Vine Deloria Jr. reads Manuel's vision as a reminder that "no political and economic structure has to be" (xii).

sovereignty within a colonial system – we can also read the destruction of the imagination as a consequence of the failure of the settler to recognize "the common good" not as a neutral, neoliberal construct, but as a contested site of settler affect.

This chapter also unpacks Frye's invocation of "the imagination" throughout *Bush Garden* to contribute to current discussions in settler colonial studies and literary study that situate the imagination as a site of colonial/decolonial struggle.[109] In the first chapter of *The Educated Imagination* (1963), Frye calls the imagination "the power of constructing possible models of human experience" (22). Literary critic Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) asserts the primacy of the imagination in struggles for a models ungoverned by colonialism, stating that "we can't possibly live otherwise until we first imagine otherwise" (*Why* 156). Calling for an interdisciplinary approach to dismantling the interrelated forces of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalism, Audra Simpson (Mohawk) and Andrea Smith remark that decolonization, as an intellectual project "would necessarily be broad-based as anyone and everyone who can help think of and *imagine ways out of* the moral and political impasse of recognition and into different

[109] Frye's oeuvre attests to his belief in the power of the imagination as a site of perception and creation. His first work, *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), conveys many of the central tenants of Frye's theories of the imagination and of myth that he works through in later writing. For example, it is in this book that Frye develops his phenomenological account of myth as something that originates in consciousness and structures the external world. For a good overview of Frye's development as a mythopoeic critic, see Glen Robert Gill's *Northrop Frye and the Phenomenology of Myth* (2006). This chapter mainly engages with his writing on the imagination in "Conclusion to a Literary History." See Daniel Heath Justice's (Cherokee) *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018) and *Experiments in Imagining Otherwise* (2021) by poet and critic Lola Olufemi for literary conceptualizations of the imagination as a creative site for potential liberation. For discussions on the role of the imagination in decolonial studies, see the introduction to Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith's *Theorizing Native Studie* (2014). For an example contemporaneous with Frye, see George Manuel's *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (1974).

modes of possibility would have to be enjoined to this intellectual and political process" (*Theorizing* 10 emphasis added). Analyzing Frye's invocation of the Canadian imagination as "the settler imaginary" emphasizes the role of the imagination in constructing and dismantling settler colonial models of experience.

Canadian geographer Adam J. Barker suggests that "how settlers imagine themselves is a product of both *metanarratives* and personal or site-specific *experiences*, and the two impact each other" (*Making* 17), echoing Frye's phenomenological approach to the study of myth. Reading the case studies of settler-Indigenous relations in contemporary land claims disputes comprised in Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations* (2016), Barker contends that metanarratives like terra nullius – and settler "taken-for-granted understandings [there]of" – have had a deleterious effect on the contemporary settler imaginary by making Indigenous claims to territory "unimaginable" (25). "Confronted with the unimaginable," Barker continues, "many of these settler people became unsettled – destabilized, uncertain, and conflicted – and thus sought to rapidly re-establish comfort at the expense of actually engaging with Indigenous people and their voices" (25). Writing on the enduring themes of isolation in Canadian fiction in 1974 – the same year *Fourth World* was published – literary critic John Moss articulates a similar critique of the nearsightedness of the settler imaginary that results in anxiety.[110] Moss writes: "If there is no awareness that a difference exists between the way things are and the way things might other wise be, if there is not a response to alternative realities, then the effect of conflicting experience is not isolation but disorientation or *angst*" (*Patterns*

[110] The following quotation derives from his chapter entitled "The Mentality of Exile," another example of the diagnostic lean of 1970s Canadian literary criticism.

11). Notably, *angst* is also German for anxiety, and is the term used throughout Heidegger's theorization of the affect in *Being and Time*.[111]

Furthermore, Moss's use of the term "awareness" connotes a conscientiousness that "imagination" does not, though both he and Manuel suggest that a lack of either results in a failure to see beyond oneself and one's circumstances. Manuel both historicizes and politicizes this failure, offering the Two Row Wampum as an early demonstration that "it is only through the mutual acknowledgement of the other's reality that it is possible to travel on parallel courses and avoid collision[112]" (8). Moss, on the other hand, diagnoses it in his suggestion that the effects of "no awareness" toward "the ways things might otherwise be," is angst (8). Moss uses disorientation and angst seemingly interchangeably, in keeping with Canadian criticism's diagnostic approach to literary study that I discussed in this project's introduction, and which we see in the following chapter wherein Atwood diagnoses the ailment of our literature to be "an intolerable anxiety" (*Survival* 28). Moss's diagnosis is important to this project's insistence on reading the presence of anxiety in 1970s Canadian criticism as a founding trope of the field. Moreover, the continuity with which Manuel and Barker mark the imagination as an enduring site of setter colonial critique nearly fifty years after the first

[111] For more on Heidegger's influence on theories of anxiety in contemporary affect studies, see the section "Anxiety" in this project's introduction.
[112] In this project's final chapter, which engages with the writing of Margaret Laurence, I suggest that initially, there is no mutual acknowledgement of the other's reality between the settler protagonist, Morag, and her friend/lover, Jules Tonnerre, a Métis man whose family has been displaced since Riel, and that this poses a potential barrier for their relationship. I argue that in one particular scene, Morag espouses rhetoric that suggests she continues to live inside the myth of Canadian benevolence, whereas Jules and his family remain firmly outside of such national narratives.

publication of *Fourth World* is striking and is suggestive of further scholarly connections across these periods which might contribute to current decolonial scholarship.

As a mythopoeic critic, Frye was always concerned with the ways that social forces and literature influenced one another, particularly through the interplay between the socio-cultural forces of myth and literature, the latter of which he defined as "conscious mythology" ("Conclusion" 234). Frye's first monograph *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) "fertilized Canadian literature with a strong interest in myth themes" (Gill 13). Frye's own interest in the relationship between myth and literature spans his vast critical oeuvre. In "Conclusion," Frye's contention that "as society develops, its mythical stories become structural principles of storytelling…. become habits of metaphorical thought" (234) is explicitly mythopoeic, echoing his point in his "Preface" that myth does not operate as an aesthetic or literary device like allusion but forms the structural principle of a poem's meaning as it is expressed through figurative language (xxxv). As the readings in this chapter demonstrate, the mythical story of terra nullius structures "habits of metaphorical thought" ("Conclusion" 234) evidenced in Frye's criticism, made most explicit in the images of an "obliterated environment" that is uninhabited and isolating ("Preface" xxix).

THE MYTHICAL MISNOMER OF TERRA NULLIUS

I invoke the term terra nullius using a deconstructive approach, as a term with multiple significations: as national myth, legal fiction, and discursive imagery. Terra nullius is discursive, in the Foucauldian sense of the term, because it is central to how Canadian settler colonial history has been written, understood, and spoken about for centuries. As a discursive term, it connotes significant power relations between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and with the land. For example, Mackey's sociological work in *Unsettled* has shown that terra nullius plays a key role in how settler communities involved in land disputes argue for and understand their entitlement to Indigenous lands (*Unsettled* 99).

Much scholarship clarifies that, as a legal concept, terra nullius is an important part of how natural law conceives of property and is thus essential to studies of settler colonialism in Canada. Legal scholar Tracey Lindberg (Rocky Mountain Cree) explains that this term did not mean that the land was totally devoid of human presence, but that it was legally vacant, and thus open for settler occupation ("Doctrine" 107). This is because Indigenous societies were not recognized by settler governments or peoples as such because their social organizations often bore little resemblance to the patriarchal, industrial, and emerging capitalist societies of Europe.

Terra nullius is also what Manuel refers to as a "racial myth" that was "created to justify the seizure of our land base" (*Fourth World* 221). Intertwining logics of social Darwinism, Lockean notions of property, Hobbesian theories of the state if nature, and narratives of "manifest destiny" regarded Indigenous societies as less evolved than those from which settlers came, and this was partially because of Indigenous peoples' understandings of and relationships to the natural world. A core tenant of both Indigenous epistemological and ontological thought places human beings and the natural world in a non-dominating, holistic relationship governed by principles of mutual respect and reciprocity. As feminist scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Goenpul) makes clear, "Our [Indigenous] ontological relationship to land, the ways that country is constitutive of us, and therefore the inalienable nature of our relation to land, marks a radical, indeed

incommensurable, difference between us and the non-Indigenous" ("Indigenous Belonging" 31). "Anxious Preoccupations" makes the case that this difference has affected settler Canadian writing insofar as it represents settlers writers' constant preoccupation with writing the settler into place by representing the land as empty until it is imbued with the neuroses of the settler.

In contrast to this empty abstraction of place, Political scientist Glen Sean Coulthard (Dene) regards the ontological foundation of Indigenous lifeways as grounded normativity (*Red Skin* 60). This framework runs counter to European understandings of land-as-property in a growing industrial world, made possible by extracting the land's natural resources and exchanging them for profit. The ontological nature of Indigenous relationships to land is most anxious for the settler because it represents an unattainable sense of belonging that occupies so much of Canadian literature and its criticism.

Terra nullius is also imagery because it evokes images of the land as empty wilderness, while also evoking feelings of isolation and foreignness, epitomized in Frye's metaphor of one "being silently swallowed by an alien continent" (222, 219). Though the term terra nullius remains absent from *Bush Garden*, it often operates under the imagery of "wilderness." This imagery has been employed by countless settlers within a range of anthropological, historical, political, and literary accounts of Canada. As anthropologist Brenda Guernsey contends,

> First Nations landscapes were never read or interpreted within their own particular cultural contexts but were read and interpreted through the colonial lens of a wilderness. Erasing First Nations landscapes and replacing them with a preconceived understanding of "wilderness" allowed the landscape to be

physically, socially, conceptually cleared for the colonial settlement of the land. ("Constructing" 121-22).

Terra nullius also functions as a discursive image of Canada's past, which only begins with settlement. Rosemary Sullivan writes that Canadian literature's "ongoing dialogue with the wilderness" represents "an obsessive, repetitive effort to relive (and perhaps reframe) that moment of original encounter" with the land ("The Forest" 39). Theorizing the slow progression of Canadian literature, Frye argues that Canada, unlike America, had not yet experienced "a period, of a certain magnitude, as Aristotle would say, in which a social imagination can take root and establish a tradition" precisely because "English Canada was first a part of the wilderness, then a part of North America and the British Empire, and then a part of the world," having "gone through these revolutions too quickly for a tradition of writing to be found in any one of them" ("Conclusion" 221). This "foreshortening" of Canadian history, as Frye puts it, begins with the imagery of terra nullius as a "wilderness" and is a partial antecedent for his now infamous thesis on the preoccupation of Canadian literature.[113]

Such imagery is also inherently a site of settler affect in *Bush Garden* insofar as imagery of an "unknown," "unrealized," "humanly undigested" wilderness (222) is almost always followed by how this space makes the settler *feel.* References to the wilderness in "Preface" and "Conclusion" combine the isolating imagery of terra nullius and the language of affect to construct a setting marked by its "uninhabited loneliness"

[113] For Frye, writers are "disturbed, not so much by our famous problem of identity, important as that is, as by a series of paradoxes in what confronts that identity. It is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?'" (222).

("Preface" xxix). Both terra nullius and the feelings it evokes are necessarily part of the nationalist project for Frye: "To feel 'Canadian'" according to Frye, "was to feel part of a no-man's-land" (222), marking terra nullius as a crucially affective site upon which settler identity develops.

Terra nullius is most often invoked as the founding legal fiction upon which Canada's settlement and sovereignty rests. It is a legal fiction because its literal meaning inaccurately denotes the land as empty, devoid of Indigenous presence. Later, its usage and meaning connoting "unoccupied" or uncultivated land became intertwined with the natural philosophies of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke which espouse a strict definition of occupied land that only recognizes European agricultural practices as capable of establishing occupation. Mackey's study argues that both terra nullius and Hobbes's "state of nature" thesis produced the particular attitudes and practices toward the land which render the matter of settler occupation – and its continuance in the future – an invariable certainty for the settler (*Unsettled* 34). Importantly, this certainty is experienced affectively by the settler, as a sense of comfort generated by the supposed stability of settler territorial control.

Terra nullius is a national myth insofar as we understand myth to be a "framework of identification continually incarnate in literature and more broadly, culture" whose factiousness does not determine its influence (Frye, *Great Code* 41).[114] It is national

[114] In *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (1982), Frye contends that studies of myth should not be interested in the historical "truth" of their narratives, but of the ways in which those narratives are constructed, altered, yet persistent over time (41). Thus, the power of myth does not lie in the content's historical accuracy but in its structural principles.

insofar as it is a crucial part of the story of Canada's settlement espoused by settler societies.[115] Although terra nullius has been deemed "no longer explicitly present in the Canadian public consciousness,"[116] the Indigenous delegates' requests to rescind the Doctrine makes clear that the concept has never disappeared from Indigenous public consciousness. Mackey's case studies – ten years of research on conflicts over Indigenous land rights that culminated in *Unsettled Expectations* (2016) – also demonstrate the long-standing discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples' acknowledgment of the "implicit violence of the epistemology of the Doctrine" in the everyday lives of many Indigenous peoples (39). Mackey recalls attending a public event about Indigenous rights at Syracuse University with two Onondaga women, when one nudges her, gesturing: "They keep looking at us. They think Indians should be dead. Gone. But we're not." Later, the women go on to name the Doctrine as "the basis of it all. They always thought we'd be gone" (qtd. in Mackey 39).

The reasons for disparities in settler and Indigenous awareness of terra nullius are not difficult to imagine, as many Canadians refuse to acknowledge the imperial, colonial, and settler colonial legacies of this country, including the legal fictions that enable settler Canadians to enjoy some of the highest standards of living in the world. Barker suggests

---

[115] For more on terra nullius as a justification for settlement, see Carol Pateman and Charles Mills's *The Settler Contract: Contract and Domination* (2007).

[116] This phrasing is taken from archaeologist Joshua Dent's 2013 article "False Frontiers: Archaeology and the Myth of the Canadian Wilderness," which does an excellent job discussing archaeology's role in perpetuating terra nullius and offering counter-methods to debunk it. It should also be noted that this statement was probably true in 2013, since it was published nine years before the Walking Together Tour and the delegates' visit to the Vatican familiarized the concept within the public sphere (evidenced by its reference by many news outlets covering the event and disseminating its outcomes to the Canadian public).

that this refusal is also the consequence of settlers' inability to imagine a future beyond the settler colonial structures of Canada's present because most of us – that is, settler Canadians – "take these nations' settler colonial contours so much for granted that the systems of originary dispossession and domination are made invisible to settler people or recede both figuratively and literally into the landscape" (*Making and Breaking* 4-5). We can see this figurative recession in Canadian writers' desire to metaphorize the land to the point of obliteration. In this way, Frye's "obliterated environment" is not the product of globalizing forces' attack on locality nor simply another expression of terra nuillius – it is the result of patterns of abstraction which have disassociated the settler from the material consequences of such a process. Frye's obliterated environment is not what we encountered – it is what we have created.[117]

Whether a denial or taken-for-granted view of history, this logic underpins settler expectations – what Mackey defines as "a long standing, structured, collective privilege … [that has] been socially legitimized as a 'right' to land and other privileges, historically and in the present, through colonial and national projects" (*Unsettled* 9). Importantly, these expectations are part of settlers' "fantasy of entitlement" reinforced through a

[117] In "Preface" Frye suggests that an obliterated environment is a generalized sense of place caused by the "global civilization of jet planes, international hotels, and disappearing landmarks" (xxix) – what we may describe today as globalization. The generalized quality of an obliterated environment negates "the sense of a specific environment as something that provides a circumference for an imagination" (xxix). He goes on to suggest that Canada "with its empty spaces, its largely unknown lakes and river and islands, its division of language, its dependence on immense railways to hold it physically together has had this peculiar problem of an obliterated environment throughout most of its history" (xxix). He attributes this perpetual obliteration to Canada's colonial mentality, since "it is practically the only country left in the world, which is a pure colony, colonial in psychology as well as in mercantile economics" (xxix). For more on the colonial mentality, see the following chapter.

generational social legitimization of the myth of terra nullius (*Unsettled* 9-10). Mackey found that, within her cases studies, "people who rejected land rights often defended their own rights to land by mobilizing concepts, frameworks, and feelings that were powerfully familiar," including "a deep sense of entitlement and a supposedly natural right to own and develop property/land, even if it may have been taken from Indigenous people" (8). In her chapter "Fantasizing and Legitimating Possession," Mackey explains that terra nullius and the Doctrine of Discovery are often used as "shorthand… to indicate complex processes that had numerous inconsistencies and continuities across time and space" referring to "a set of powerful and ubiquitous conceptual frameworks underpinning the so-called 'natural law' foundations of international law" (47).

Terra nullius is thus an essential concept in understanding how British colonialism transformed into settler colonialism and eventually gave way to settler colonial nations like Canada (Pateman, *Settler Contract* 35). Mackey explains that the myth gained traction through the legal philosophies of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes which emphasized husbandry as foundational to property ownership, remaking land into property. Together, Hobbesian and Lockean philosophies declared this property nonexistent in North America's "state of nature" – characterized by its lack of culture and society, producing in men "continual fear, and danger of violent death," as well as a life "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"– until the arrival of Europeans.[118] In these legal

[118] For a comprehensive overview of the implementation of these philosophies in Canada and United States, refer to the chapter "Fantasizing and Legitimating Possession" in Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations.* See also James Sákéj Youngblood Henderson's "The Context of the State of Nature" in Marie Battiste's edited collection *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (2000), pp. 11-38, for more on the primacy of the "state of nature" premise in defining the terms of modern statehood in the West.

frameworks, far from a literal, visual understanding of the land as empty, terra nullius was employed to mean lands were "legally unowned," only occupied by societies whose relationships with or "use" of the land remained invisible to colonialists under the Lockean and Hobbesian rubrics of "subduing" the earth for man's benefit to property.[119]

GARRISONED ANXIETY V. GROUNDED NORMATIVITY

The transformation of the natural world into property is central to the construction of settler colonial societies and their narratives of identity (Mackey, *Unsettled* 49). This transformation is also reflected in Frye's metaphor of the garrison. The garrison itself is a structure of Lockean property, the erection of which provides the sense of security, stability, and comfort that settler colonialism promises for settler subjects. To clarify, I am not suggesting that Frye agreed with the philosophical ideas of Hobbes and Locke. Framing Frye as an intellectual ally of Locke in particular is unsupported by both Frye's work and its interpretation by critics. For example, Frye invokes the Hobbesian term "state of nature" throughout the second chapter of his *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* to connote pre-industrial states of human existence (1991). His first chapter in *Fearful Symmetry* entitled "The Case Against Locke" is an excellent example of the differences between Frye and Locke's theories of the mind; in fact Gill contends that Frye's theory of the imagination represents "nothing less than the total reversal of the Lockean model of reflective thought" (*Phenomenology* 112). The point I want to stress

[119] This wording appears in Locke's *Second Treatise* (1690): "God, when he gave the world in common to all mankind, commanded man … to subdue the earth, i.e., improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour. He that in obedience to his command of God, subdued, tilled, and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property, which another had no title to, nor could without injury take form him" (34).

here is that clearly Frye was familiar with their philosophies, and we can see that Frye's garrison, as a metaphorical structure designed to secure the settler in place, follows the same Lockean logic that transforms the land into property and equates property to ownership – what we may think of as natural law's legal expression of settler belonging.

The term "garrison mentality" exemplifies the Canadian critical tradition of abstracting place to make Canadian identity legible and has been named one of the critical models that has come to unify English Canadian literature (Kertzer *Worrying* 21). In *Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction* (1974) John Moss contends that "nature is a pervasive and determining factor in much of the Canadian experience" (Moss *Patterns* 111). Similarly in "Conclusion," Frye asserts that "imminence of the natural world" forms the centre of the Canadian writing tradition in part because writing, understood as an expression of "the creative instinct," "has a great deal to do with the assertion of territorial rights" ("Conclusion" 249; "Preface" xxvii). The writing process "starts with a reportage, a single mind reacting to what is set over against it" ("Conclusion" 235). Set over and against the landscapes of The North, the Canadian writer writes Canada into "metaphor, as an object that required translation to be understood by the European imagination" (Blodgett "In Search" 7).

Left untranslated, the natural world can be terrifying to the settler, whose literary tradition according to Frye expresses "a tone of deep terror in regard to nature" which, following the late Romantic tradition, becomes "nature red in tooth and claw" ("Conclusion" 227, 245). Part of my argument suggests that what's terrifying, dangerous, and uncomfortable for settlers lies not with the "wilderness" of a "no-man's land" (222) but with the anxious uncertainty of whether we belong in it. This anxiety is future-

oriented (will we still be here?) and as the land disputes in *Unsettled Expectations* suggest, we are anxious about the possibility of a future ungoverned by our presence and supposed ownership of the land we feel entitled to,[120] affirming Ngai's point that anxiety is aimed "at the configuration of the world in general, or at the *future disposition of the self*" (*Ugly Feelings*, 209 emphasis added).[121] Configuring the natural world in the traditional tenor of Canadian terror, Frye introduces the garrison mentality as a psycho-affective response to the isolating experience of settlement:

> Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological "frontier," separated from one another and from their American and British cultural sources: communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for

[120] Mackey's study is also deeply affective. Her term "settled expectations" derives from the affective expressions of settlers currently involved in land disputes with Indigenous nations. These settlers "consistently referred to the threats and dangers of land rights to the nation and to a deep sense of entitlement and a supposedly natural right to own and develop property, even if it may have been taken from Indigenous people" (8). Mackey explains: "They felt they had laboured and improved the land and helped build the nation…. On these grounds, they felt certain of their entitlement to the land and expected it to be ongoing and unchallenged" (8). Though Mackey makes a point to differentiate her use of "entitlement" from its more common use in describing a particular "attitude," calling it a "longstanding, structured, collective privilege" (9), she nonetheless affirms the importance of affective interventions in studies of settler colonialism which seek to undermine its legitimacy, noting that "feelings are important to take seriously, not only for the above reasons, but also because they are entry points to understand important characteristics of how emotions and social structures are connected, and how individuals become enmeshed in broader collective ideologies and practices" (19).

[121] Frye points to Canadian literature's repeated representation of characters' "sense of probing into the distance, of fixing the eyes on the skyline" as part of the "Canadian sensibility" that was "inherited from the *voyageurs*" ("Conclusion" 224). He wonders "how many Canadian novels associate nobility of character with a faraway look or base their perorations on a long-range perspective" (225). Is this faraway look spatial or temporal, I wonder? In Chapter 3, I analyze Laurence's *The Diviners* which both begins and ends with the protagonist's probing into the distance, watching the river as it "flowed both ways" (Laurence 3, 525).

> the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting – such communities are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality. (227)

Frye's language of "small and isolated communities" reflects Moss's later insistence that isolation forms a central pattern in English Canadian fiction. In *Patterns,* Moss's theorization of isolation (as felt, as being *in*) as "a transitive concept" that "does not describe a state of mind or a locale, but the effect of both" (11) echoes the abstract registry with which Frye and other critics mentioned in this chapter understand representations of settler identity as inextricable from representations of place in Canadian literature. Moreover, the insular nature of the garrison exemplifies what settler critic Aldon Lynn Nielsen calls "the language of white thought" and its tendencies to "create the boundaries of its existence and to determine what will not be allowed inside" (qtd. in Vizenor 10).

For Frye, the land is key to understanding how settler Canadian writers make their identities legible to other settlers because "everything that is central in Canadian writing seems to be marked by the imminence of the natural world" (249). Not only is the imminence of the natural world – termed the "frontier," "land," "nature" and "environment" by Frye – ubiquitous to Canadian writing, but settlers' interactions with that imminence forms the basis for settlers' literary representations of self; as Frye's famous question suggests, the Canadian sensibility is "less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?'" (222). The internal self-questioning of the settler is projected outward onto the landscape throughout Frye's "Conclusion," marking settlers' experiences with nature a pivotal site of inquiry for the

Canadian critic. If Canadian writing is marked by the imminence of nature, I argue that this imminence has been registered as profoundly anxious in Canadian writing. By definition, something that is imminent is that which is not yet here but "impending threateningly" "ready to befall or overtake one," literally "projecting or leaning forward" ("Imminent"). Frye's language of "imminence" reflects Sianne Ngai's discussion of anxiety as an expectant, future-oriented affect directed at "the configuration of the world in general, or at the future disposition of the self" (*Ugly Feelings* 209). The configuration of the landscape as "unknown," "unrealized," and "humanly undigested" ("Conclusion" 222) – that is, as terra nullius – might play into this anxiety, functioning as one in the "series of paradoxes" that confronts settler identity in its attempted erasure of the Indigenous presence that works to reveal the illogical premise of "empty" land.

Frye's language of imminence here also reflects psychologist Stanley Rachman's popular conception of anxiety as a "tense, unsettling anticipation of a threatening but vague event" (*Anxiety* 3). Sara Ahmed notes that this conception of anxiety is often constructed against conceptions of fear "insofar as fear has an object" that it identifies as threatening. In anxiety, however, "one's thoughts often move quickly between different objects…. In other words, anxiety tends to stick to objects" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 64). It is in this circulation where "anxiety becomes an approach to objects rather than as with fear, being produced by an object's approach" (64). These conceptions are informed by Heidegger's earlier work on anxiety in his 1927 magnum opus *Being and Time* wherein he conceives of anxiety as being "nowhere": "when something threatening brings itself close, anxiety does not 'see' any definite 'here' or 'yonder' from which it comes. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what

threatens is nowhere" (1927/1963 231). These imaginary anxieties might also be understood as anxiety that points "nowhere" or has no object. I contend that engagement with these anxieties is capable of moving us toward a greater freedom, especially when we can locate them as always already existing as a settler approach to that which troubles the settler Canadian enterprise.

In "Conclusion," Frye uses affective terms to map the trajectory of settlers' responses to the land, and Canadians' shifting attitudes toward nature articulated most clearly by our psychological garrisons.[122] Like much of Canadian literary theory, Frye's garrison mentality is expressed as a binary, having at once "a dominating herd mind in which nothing original can grow" and "a more creative side… one that has had positive effects on our intellectual life" (228). [123] Early on, Frye makes his affinity for the latter clear, noting that his theory is "more concerned" with the creative capacity of the garrison because it offers us a metaphorical image for "the way in which the Canadian imagination has developed in its literature" (227). He goes on to explore how this creativity comes to represent nature in earlier vs. contemporary Canadian literature, further dividing this creativity into the affective concept of "moods": "one romantic, traditional and idealistic, the other shrewd, observant, and humorous" (220). These moods produce two representations of nature which Frye uses various language to explicate for his audience. At times, one half is romantic, patriotic, and idealist toward nature; at other times, these same representations express a "nostalgia for a world of

[122] Note that Frye distinguishes between literal and metaphorical garrisons, assigning the former to an earlier period, citing what many consider the first Canadian novel, Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), as evidence of these literal depictions; "Novelists of our day" Frye writes, "write of a psychological one" (228).

peace and protection, with a spontaneous response to the nature around it" (241). The other half represents nature through realism and "a more intellectualized" tradition "with a more cosmopolitan bias" (237) that alters our garrison mentality by the mid-twentieth century, when "the centre of Canadian life moves from the fortress to the metropolis" (233).[124] In this way, the garrison mentality also functions as a metaphor for the settler experiences of colonialism expressed in our literature.

In his writing on the garrison, Moss suggests that the surrounding environment "retained the characteristic ambivalence and fascination of the unknown" (*Patterns* 16), once again imposing the settlers' responses of ambivalence and fascination onto the environment.[125] Like Frye, Moss terms this environment the "frontier," imbuing it with an "aggressiveness," "harshness," and "indifference" that the garrison continuously tries to tame (13). The binary between garrison and nature is one way in which Canadian writers represent "the fundamental state of existence from which man continually attempts to insulate himself" (120). Hobbes might interpret this fundamental state as the state of nature and the formation of absolute sovereign power as the insulated garrison. Heidegger might call this fundamental state Dasein, but whether the state of nature or simply the state of being, Frye's invocation shows that this fundamental state is almost always expressed through the discourse of terra nullius, which Frye understands

[124] Frye cites the work of Morley Callaghan and Mazo de la Roche as evidence of this shift.
[125] *Ambivalence* marks the title of a 1990 anthology on Canadian literature edited by Om P. Juneja and Chandra Mohan, wherein they argue that like isolation, ambivalence is "a state of mind entertaining antithetical values and feelings causing stress, irresolution, and inertia" (xvi).

teleologically, and it is precisely nature's "huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable" force that provokes the garrison mentality.[126]

When the garrison, "a perilous enterprise" and "closely knit and beleaguered society," multiplies, "a dominating herd-mind in which nothing original can grow" appears, signalling "something anticultural" in Canadian life, citing Canada's "two solitudes" – also an inherently isolationist image – as an example of such a cultural antithesis (228). For Frye, though, the garrison still retains a creative side that Frye argues "has had positive effects on our intellectual life" and it is this side that he develops throughout "Conclusion" (228). Frye relegates the creative garrison mentality's romantic representations of nature to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He characterizes the majority of Canadian writing during this period as "formula-writing" that relies not on the conscious mythology of "literature" capable of creating an "autonomous world that gives us an imaginative perspective on the actual one" but on "social mythology" – that which is produced by society rather than the writer with the objective of "persuad[ing] us to accept existing social values" (236-37).

He goes on to reinscribe this type of writing as "popular literature," defining it by the affective responses of its readers: it relaxes, soothes, and quiets the mind (237). The difference between popular literature and literature that is conscious of its mythology lies in "the position of the reader's mind at the end, in whether he is being encouraged to remain within his habitual social responses or whether he is being prodded into making the steep and lonely climb into the imaginative world" (238). He forays into the then-

[126] Note that Frye is still theorizing the collective in his use of the term "communities."

popular psychoanalytic language of the Freudian "superego," noting that popular literature "operates on Freudian principles, releasing sexual and powerful fantasies without disturbing the anxieties of the superego" (238). Frye seems to agree with me that much of Canadian literature is a soothing alleviation or avoidance of our anxieties, though we probably differ on their nature.[127]

In any case, what lies "at the heart" of all social mythology, Frye says, is "the pastoral myth" which, in its "most common form is associated with childhood, or with some earlier social condition – the pioneer life, the small town, the habitant rooted to *his* land" (240-41 emphasis added). This myth overpowers Canada's popular literature of this period, and even though "Indians… were seen as nineteenth-century literary conventions" (235), Frye claims that on the contrary, they "have not figured so largely in the myth as one might expect" (241). Though not the focus of the present study, future research might complicate the presence of the Canadian pastoral myth in literature by attending to what author and critic Joyelle McSweeney has termed the "necropastoral," which is defined as "the manifestation of the infectiousness, anxiety, and contagion occultly present in the hygienic borders of the classical pastoral" (*Necropastoral* 3).

As the empty unknowable, nature is expressed in Frye's identification of its "vast unconsciousness" that confronts "the human mind" which has "nothing but human and

[127] His writing also seems conscious of the power dynamics, the role of dominance, in these literary traditions, noting that "the garrison mentality is that of its officers: it can tolerate only the conservative idealism of its ruling class, which for Canada means the moral and propertied middle class" (238). The "propertied" identity of the middle class thus further inscribes the domination and ownership of the land as the main way in which settlers' understand their relationship to it. Perhaps this relationship is not so much an "ontological priority" as it is the "ontological property" of settler colonial logic.

moral values to cling to it" (227). This confrontation results in "an unanswerable denial of those values" (227). Nature's "unanswerable denial" reflects a recurring theme throughout Frye's work which pits nature as a silent entity capable of consuming the settler who attempts to write about it: we are "silently swallowed by an alien continent" (219), our articulations become "strangled," (222) and in such an environment human suffering becomes "a by-product of a massive indifference which, whatever else it may be, is not morally explicable" (245). For the late nineteenth century writer in particular, the "terrifyingly cold, empty, and vast" environment confronts him with "a moral silence deeper than any physical silence, though the latter frequently symbolizes the former" (245). Importantly, this physical emptiness gets reinscribed as a moral emptiness which the poet can do nothing but react to elegiacally or "sombrely" (245) since "the riddle of unconsciousness in nature is one that no moralizing or intellectualizing can answer" (245). In this way, these empty landscapes appear "not just as geographical locations but a field of semiotic functions" (Dickinson "Is a History?" 3) in Canadian literature. Writing on prairie literature, Henry Kreisel calls this abstraction "a necessity, inherited from earlier explorers, to appropriate the unknown through ideological translation" ("The Prairie" 7-8).

As this chapter demonstrates, terra nullius *is* this process of ideological translation, and what allows the possibility of appropriating the "unknown." The discursive imagery of terra nullius erases other possible relational approaches to Frye's famous question of "Where is here?" by rendering the psychological frontier from which the settler insulates herself with the garrison empty and silent until it is imbued with the neuroses of the settler. These are a not developed out of "a terror of the dangers or

discomforts of even the mysteries of nature, but a terror of the soul at *something that these things manifest*" ("Conclusion" 227). This presents a double abstraction of the land as a vessel for settler self-discovery: the "discomforts" or "mysteries of nature" are already figurative expressions, but they also manifest an unidentifiable "something" that terrorizes the soul.

"Unanswerable" and "morally inexplicable," Frye's readings of the environment make clear that the settler and the land cannot communicate because they do not understand one another, and this mutual illegibility, for Frye, is typically expressed in affective terms: our cities "express a rather *arrogant* abstraction of nature" – the affective offshoot of "the conquest of nature by an intelligence that does not *love it*" (226 emphasis mine). Moreover, the settler's absence of affection and mutual respect toward the land extends to Frye's choice of pronoun since, as biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi) reminds us in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013), "saying 'it' makes a living land into 'natural resource'" capable of being conquered and exploited (57). If grammar "is just the way we chart relationships in language," then perhaps it also reflects our relationships with one another (57). Relating to the land as object, as "it," also expresses another arrogant abstraction that Kimmerer's work suggests is made manifest by Western science's delineation between subject and object (49). The connotations of conquest reflect the hierarchal understanding of the settler's relationship to the land, a relationship argued to be the driving force behind much of Canadian literature and criticism, with settler scholar Sam Solecki famously calling it "an ontological priority" for the field (*Last Canadian* 20). Canadian philosopher George Grant suggests

> That conquering relation to place has left its mark within us. When we go to the Rockies, we may have a sense that gods are there. But if so they cannot manifest themselves to us as ours. They are gods of another race, and we cannot know them because of what we are and what we did. There can be nothing immemorial for us except the landscape as object. (*Technology and Empire* 345)

Can we consider Grant's "gods" connotative of an other-than-human force "immemorial" in the landscape of the Rockies? If so, we might also read Grant's words as a lament for "that conquering relation" which has rendered the reciprocal relations of grounded normativity permanently inaccessible to the settler.

Indeed, the silent amorality of Frye's natural world is in stark contrast to grounded normativity described by Coulthard

> as a mode of reciprocal relationship (which itself is informed by place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge) capable of "teach[ing] us about living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, nondominating and nonexploitative way. (*Red Skin* 60)

In Coulthard's view, the land serves as an ontological and ethical framework rooted in place-based practices and knowledges whereby those indigenous to it understand their responsibilities to the world around them (60). "Seen in this light," Coulthard continues, "it is a profound misunderstanding to think of land or place as simply some material object of profound importance to Indigenous cultures (although it is this too)" (61). For Coulthard, the land is fundamentally relational because it is "a way of knowing, of

experiencing, and relating to the world and with others" (61), especially for those whose ideology is spatially oriented.[128]

Building on Coulthard's use of grounded normativity in his rejection of recognition politics in *Red Skin,* Simpson writes that "colonialism has strangled grounded normativity" by attempting to define its praxis under the terms of neoliberalism "so that it isn't so much a way of being in the world but a quaint cultural difference that makes one interesting" (23-24). Simpson's comments are a reminder that the work of this chapter is not to subsume Indigenous ontologies within the neoliberal narrative of Canadian multiculturalism; instead, it is to re-centre discussions of land in critiques of settler colonialism as it manifests in, and is reproduced by, both Canadian literature and its criticism. This re-centring compels us to take into view all of the insidious mutations with which settler colonialism maintains settler control over land, its "specific, irreducible element" (Wolfe "Elimination" 388). Frye's depiction of a "cold," "empty," "vast," "unthinking" environment that "manifests" our terrors is hardly reciprocal – the land in Frye's *Bush Garden* is not a "field of relations"[129] but rather serves to "manifest" the "terrors of the soul" of the settler (227). The garrison negates the reciprocity of grounded

[128] Coulthard cites Deloria Jr.'s comparison of the spatial-orientations of American Indian/Indigenous spiritualities to the time-oriented ones of the Western European Judeo-Christian tradition as further evidence for his formulation of grounded normativity, that "ethical framework provided by these place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge" which understands the land as a field of relations rather than a material resource. Deloria underscores that these ideological differences are "of great philosophical importance" because "when one group is concerned with the philosophical problem of space and the other with the philosophical problem of time, then the statements of either group do not make much sense" (qtd. in Coulthard 60).

[129] This phrasing can be found on page 23 of Deloria's chapter "Power and Place Equal Personality" in *Power and Place: Indian Education in America (2001),* which he edited with Daniel Wildcat (Yuchi, Muskogee).

normativity and replaces it with a kind of disunity that prioritizes the settlers' desire for self-knowledge and comfort over any obligations for ethical relations. These ethics remain hidden from the settler, whose experiences within the land remain rooted in a silent denial, a "shutting out of the whole moral creation."[130]

CONCLUSION

This chapter's focus on Frye's invocation of terra nullius is in keeping with contemporary interest in the ways in which this myth persists as Canada's founding legal fiction. The pervasive effects of this myth are necessarily studied interdisciplinary, with sociologists, political scientists, geographers, and literary critics participating in constructing genealogies of terra nullius and its ongoing influence within settler colonial societies like Canada. Quoting legal scholar Tracy Lindberg (Rocky Mountain Cree), Mackey emphasizes the effects of terra nullius as a colonial framework for understanding the relationship between land, power, and personhood, noting that the "imperative of dehumanization" (Lindberg qtd. in Mackey) of Indigenous personhood and nationhood is embedded in both terra nullius and the doctrine of discovery which were mobilized soon after Confederation (*Unsettled* 59). Its function in the national project of confederation marks terra nullius a useful concept with which settlers avoid including Indigenous peoples in their narrating of Canada's national beginnings.

The myth of terra nullius works to erase Indigenous peoples from their lands in order to make room for the settler. This absence allows the settler to refrain from engaging with the settler-Indigenous relationships that would otherwise frame those

[130] In his "Conclusion," Frye attributes this line to a "a sharp-witted Methodist circuit rider" (227).

questions of who and where we are as the existential evidence of our history as a coercive settler-colonial state. Furthermore, reading this absence as an expression of settler anxiety might also help us to account for the "series of paradoxes" that Frye claims confront Canadian identity if we understand those paradoxes as the anxious acknowledgements that Canadian sovereignty is itself an aporia.

This chapter employs a relational approach to Frye's garrison mentality by analyzing it in relation to grounded normativity to understand the garrison as a metaphorical structure upheld in part by settler anxieties surrounding our sense of belonging. The chapter demonstrates the ways that settler anxiety toward both Indigenous and settler relationships to place has influenced the development of Canadian literary criticism during the 1970s. This anxiety gets expressed in Frye's "Conclusion" and "Preface' through the invocation of terra nullius as a discursive image that erases Indigenous grounded normativity and replaces it with settler abstractions of place as an uninhabited loneliness devoid of the moral and ethical lessons inherent to Indigenous ontologies of place. This approach in keeping with this project's goal to understand colonialism "as a felt, affective relationship" (Million 46), because it invites us to consider the garrison as one of, or perhaps part of, Rifkin's "settler structures of feeling" that also work to uphold settler colonialism in Canada. In Canadian literature, the garrison mentality is thus a crucial site of symbolic settler unbelonging, constructed as a barrier against the "unanswerable" amorality of a landscape imagined as empty by the settler.

My reading re-situates land, and Indigenous claims and relationships to it, as the central preoccupation of Canadian literature even when it is symbolically disavowed,

thereby answering calls by Indigenous and other scholars to de-metaphorize Indigenous-settler relations and focus on relationships to the land – what Patrick Wolfe, Taiaiake Alfred, Glen Sean Coulthard, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and many others have asserted is the driving force behind the settler colonial structure. Anxiety is Canadian literature's "organizing affect" in that it is one of the fundamental expressions of the settler experience and informs, shapes, organizes Canadian literature so that it *can* embody the contradictions Frye, Atwood, and other critics continue to engage with.

The field's reliance on the logic of terra nuillius, which has disallowed the critical reciprocity needed to engage with questions of self and place, is also important to note. The work of this chapter aspires toward such critical reciprocity. In the following chapter, I analyze the ways in which the survivor/victim paradigm of Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* is predicated on reading settler anxiety as Canadian literature's organizing affect. I build upon my analysis of the garrison mentality by engaging with the diagnostic concept of "the colonial mentality" as the impetus for settler narratives of survival and victimry.

Our central idea is one which generates, not the excitement and sense of adventure or danger which The Frontier holds out, not the smugness and/or sense of security, of everything in its place, which The Island can offer, but an almost intolerable anxiety.

Naming your own condition, your own disease, is not necessarily the same as acquiescing it. Diagnosis is the first step.

– Margaret Atwood, *Survival*

Chapter 2

The "Almost Intolerable Anxiety" of Margaret Atwood's *Survival*

INTRODUCTION

In 1972, House of Anansi published Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, creating a public consciousness about Canadian literature and criticism absent in the preceding decades. In a 1976 interview with Mary Ellis Gibson, Atwood observes that prior to 1972, Canadian literature "wasn't visible at all," and furthermore, that there was no readily accessible Canadian criticism "for the general reader" ("A Conversation" 105). As *Survival*'s intended audience, the general reader is treated as "reader as citizen," calling attention to Atwood's particularly nationalist objective – and this project's insistence on reading "the nation" as an important unit of analysis in Canadian and Indigenous literary scholarship – to "outline a number of key patterns" so that Canadians can "distinguish this species from all others, Canadian literature from the other literatures"[131] (8, 5). Reflecting in 2012, Atwood links this

[131] Atwood is explicit in her politicization of literary criticism – in particular, that brand of literary nationalism which pervaded the period in which she wrote *Survival.* She begins by stating her intention "to produce a short, easy-to-use guide to Canadian literature, largely for the benefit of students and of those teachers in high schools, community colleges and universities who suddenly find themselves teaching a subject they have never studied: 'Canlit,'" calling the teaching of Canadian literature "a political act" because of its ability to engender public interest and inquiry about Canada, and furthering this project's focus on the circulation of public affect – understood here as public interest, or investment – as a site of study for literary scholarship (3;7). She further politicizes *Survival* as a hybrid between personal statement and political manifesto but extends this hybridity to the nature of literature in general, "if only by default" (6). Though it may read as anecdotal, I think Atwood's definition of literature as both personal and political resonates with the ways in which Indigenous literatures and their criticisms have conceptualized "story" and "storytelling" as integral facets of human experience. This holistic view of story also extends to their role in the normalization of and resistance to political ideologies like neoliberalism and its attending -isms of free

objective to a study of "Canada itself" since "one of the axioms of this book is that a literature has something to do with the people who create it, and that the people who create it have something to do with where they live" (v). For Atwood, literature is a resource toward self-knowledge because "literature is not only a mirror, it is also a map, a geography of the mind… if we can learn to read it as *our* literature, as the product of who and where we have been" (12). Accordingly, *Survival,* as one such map was necessary in 1972 because of the lack of both public interest in and knowledge of CanLit.

In 2004, Atwood reasserts her purpose was to not only prove that Canadian literature existed but that "it had different preoccupations, which were specific to its own history and geopolitics" ("Introduction" xviii). Connecting the study of Canadian literature to the study of its socio-historical and geopolitical context – a move critic Frank Davey condemned in 1974 as "bad sociology" in its attempt to analyze the "extra literary" ("Surviving" 5) – Atwood's method anticipated the New Historicist and Cultural Materialist approaches to literary study that would dominate the field in decades following.[132] But as a work of thematic criticism, *Survival* was criticized for its

---

market capitalism and individualism as they structure individual and collective life in neoliberal nations. Neoliberalism is singled out because it gained considerable traction during the period under analysis, and because of scholarly emphasis on the cultivation of public "comfort," as a normalizing practice of neoliberal ideologies, as reviewed in this project's introduction. The inseparability of story to political life, as a tenant of Indigenous literary thought, is evidenced in many of the works consulted for this project, including Vine Deloria Jr.'s *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (1973), Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories* (2003), and Daniel Health Justice's *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018).

[132] It is fair to suggest that although these methods were still being worked through at the time of *Survival*, Atwood still recognizes an emerging shift away from authorial intent and toward these more contextual methods. This recognition can be seen in the introductory chapter "What, Why, and Where Is Here" wherein Atwood remarks that "until recently our authors were treated *only* as private people. Authors are also transmitters of their culture" (5).

"disregard for literary history" as well as its reductive quality, for what it leaves out in its charting of "the superabundance of victims in Canadian literature"[133] (*Survival* 36).

Still, *Survival*'s opening section "What, Why, Where Is Here?" gestures to important questions that have since occupied literary study: is teaching literature a political act? (7); are comparative approaches necessary in articulating a literary tradition's coherence? (10); and is literary study capable of producing self-knowledge (12)? Furthermore, the book engages with key issues that have been taken up by scholars across Canadian literature, Indigenous literature, and settler colonial studies, and which have informed the present study: the colonial mentality as a psycho-affective consequence of colonialism (31), the myth of terra nullius[134] (11; 12; 51), the fiction of neutrality and/or benevolence of settler identity (96; 100) and the appropriation of Indigeneity as a symbol of belonging (75; 95; 110; 112). Not merely an "inherited cliché," *Survival* stoked the flames of both public and scholarly curiosity, conversation, and claims about Canadian literature that have yet to be extinguished.[135]

Recent settler colonial scholarship theorizes these co-constitutive myths and attitudes as pervading metanarratives that, alongside personal, everyday experiences,

---

[133] In "Surviving the Paraphrase," Davey levels both criticisms at *Survival*, arguing that Atwood's thesis of victimization is constructed "by ignoring its ubiquity in contemporary world literature" (5). I am citing Davey's essay as part of a collection of essays published under the same title by Turnstone in 1983. Its reprint, including an added preface by Eli Mandel, speaks to Davey's enduring influence as a staunch critic of thematic criticism in Canada.

[134] See the previous chapter for a discussion of this myth in Frye's theory of the garrison mentality.

[135] In his study on whether the nationalism of Dennis Lee's *Civil Elegies* could be interpreted in what he describes as 2005's post-national present, Lecker calls *Survival* an "inherited cliché" because "no one really believed the thematic critics' argument that Canadians were essentially a fallen people" (*The Cadence of Civil Elegies* 6).

construct an imagined settler identity that negates the primacy of settler-Indigenous relations in settler identity formation[136] (Barker *Making* 17). Focus on settler-Indigenous relationships follows scholarly assertions that settler colonialism "inheres in relationships between people as collectives," which structure larger socio-political categories, social behavior and attitudes, and cultural narratives in settler colonial societies (Barker 12). Thus, the settler and Indigenous figures who populate these narratives should be studied through a relational analysis that emphasizes their formation as a non-discrete, non-binary dual (Barker and Battell Lowman *Settler*). This chapter follows this premise and reasserts that the only way to understand settler identity and its representations in Canadian literature is *in relation* – that is, in relation to Indigenous narratives of identity and everyday experiences of colonialism.[137]

---

[136] For more scholarship that centres Indigenous-settler relations in deconstructions of settler colonialism in Canada and the United States, see Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014), Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land, and Decolonization* (2016), Rifkin's "Settler States of Feeling: National Belonging and the Erasure of Native American Presence" (2011) and *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (2014), Regan's *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (2010), Barker's *Making and Breaking Settler Space: Five Centuries of Colonization in North America* (2021), Barker and Battell Lowman's *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015) and Dian Million's *Therapeutic Nations: Healing In An Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (2016), the latter of which is employed at length in this chapter's contextualization of Atwood's survivor/victim paradigm within the rise of human rights discourse beginning in the middle of the twentieth century. For a review of these studies in conversation, see this project's introduction.

[137] This relational approach to settler identity includes studying the settler figure *in relation* to those misrepresentations of Indigeneity that constitute Francis's "imaginary Indians" and Vizenor's "simulations" and make up the enduring tropes of Canadian literature, like the "vanishing Indian" and "noble savage." These studies emphasize that, because these figures are constructed by settler narratives of dominance, they serve the wider goals of settler colonialism, including settler control over territory. A relational approach might explore the ways in which the construction of "the vanishing Indian"

Narratives of colonial experience are important to consult because, as Dian Million (Athabascan) remarks, "colonialism meant that Canada came to legally control and socially modify all aspects of Indigenous life and law," characterizing this widespread colonial control of Indigenous populations as a form of Foucault's "biopower – a power that is concerned with 'life itself'" (*Therapeutic* 41). Narrating the felt, lived experiences of colonial biopolitics forms the basis of Million's "felt theory" – an approach to writing spearheaded by Indigenous women's writing of the 1970s and 80s that depicted the emotional impacts of colonialism on Indigenous life and became "influential in changing Canada's idea of itself" (Million 77). Indigenous women's articulations championed emotionality and intuition as sites of community-building, resistance, and knowledge production by "insisting on the inclusion of lived experience, rich with emotional knowledges, of what pain and grief and hope meant or mean now in our pasts and futures" (Million 56). In this way, narratives of felt theory wielded rather than sheathed the subjectivity of historical narration and in doing so "exploded the measured 'objective' accounts of Canadian colonial histories" (Million 56). From this period onward, Indigenous literatures have been theorized as important counternarratives or "alternative truths… alternate historical views" (Million 67) to Canadian metanarratives which augment Canada's history of settler colonialism into a fable of inalienable settler sovereignty through peaceful cooperation.

As studies like Eva Mackey's *Unsettled Expectations* have shown, it is precisely their power to "unsettle" settler mythologies, to reveal the underlying attitudes and

---

figure, for instance, served in the construction of a settler figure who belonged in and was entitled to such territory.

ideologies with which they persist in our settler colonial present, that has made Indigenous literatures' narratives of agency, cultural resurgence, and colonial resistance central to what, in 1993, Jeannette Armstrong (Syilx) referred to as "the deconstruction-construction of colonialism," as well as to current analyses of settler colonialism (Armstrong *Looking* 8). In this chapter, I look to Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) as participating in the construction of the enduring settler myths of identity to which Indigenous counternarratives have responded.

The treatment of Indigenous literatures as counternarratives can also be understood as an example of working *in relation*, of reading Indigenous and Canadian literatures – their theories, and criticisms – as developing alongside one another under the shared conditions of settler colonialism. This method of analysis is in keeping with the theoretical model of relationality put forth by Battell Lowman and Barker in *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015) and which informs this project's theoretical approach to settler anxiety as a site of affect made legible by centering Indigenous-settler relations in my readings of Frye, Atwood, and Laurence, respectively.

In this chapter, I compare settler and Indigenous applications of the position of "victim" by reading Atwood's claim in *Survival* that Canada is a "collective victim" (31) alongside Dian Million's (Athabascan) historical analysis of "the victim" as a "marked political position" available to Indigenous political activists via the emerging human rights discourses of the 1970s (Million *Therapeutic Nations* 12). Atwood's thesis depends upon the encapsulation of *both* settler and Indigenous characters as literary victims, and I explore the various critical maneuvers with which this thesis precludes discussions of settler colonial power dynamics in the making of these victims.

Atwood invites readers to forgo distinctions between representations of collective and individual victimry, conceptualizing her model of the four Basic Victim Positions as "the same whether you are a victimized country, a victimized minority group or a victimized individual" (32). Later, she contradicts her earlier collapsing of the collective/individual by claiming that she has presented this model "as though it were based on individual rather than social experience," admitting that "perhaps the terms would shift slightly if you were to substitute 'we' or 'our class' or 'our country for 'I,' and you'd then get a more complicated analysis of Canadian colonialism" (37). This chapter aims to do just that – to offer a more complicated analysis of Canadian colonialism by analyzing Atwood's critical invocation of the "the victim" against its broader socio-political function within a new "international system of mediation" between collective victims and colonial perpetrators (Million *Therapeutic* 81).

In keeping with my analytical focus on "the victim" I argue that Atwood's interpretation of Canadian literary depictions of Indigenous peoples as "closed inside Position Two" of her four Basic Victim Positions – "the position within which Victors and Victims are inevitable, fated to suffer and to inflict suffering because that's what the universe is like" (*Survival* 109) – relies on the same settler colonial logic that writes the violent duality of settlement and Indigenous dispossession – what Patrick Wolfe refers to as *fait accompli* (Wolfe "Elimination" 392). This chapter reads Atwood's interpretative claim that "the Indian" characters in Margaret Laurence's *The Fire Dwellers* (1969) and George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (1967) symbolize "the ultimate victim of social oppression and deprivation" (*Survival* 102) alongside Million's analysis of "the Indian" as an anomic figure in mid-twentieth century Canadian society and settler social

imaginaries (*Therapeutic Nations* 83). As a condition of social and moral instability produced by an absence of values, anomie became the language with which sociologists synonymized Canada's "Indian problem" in the mid-twentieth century, rendering anomie as another *fait accompli*, as a *natural outcome* of Indigenous peoples' inability to adapt to white settler society (Million 82-84). I compare *Survival*'s application of "the victim" to the more agentive applications of this role by Indigenous activists during the same period, exploring the ways in which Indigenous adoptions of victimhood under the rubric of neoliberal human rights both helped and hurt efforts toward self determination (Million *Therapeutic* 81). This comparison shows the stark contrasts between Indigenous peoples' political application of "the victim" as a political strategy and its presence as a fixed, passive, and ultimately tragic identity for Indigenous characters in Canadian literary narratives.

I assess the ways in which Atwood's positioning of "the Indian" as social victim reflected contemporary discourses of anomie; however, I complicate this with Million's assertion that, under the developing human rights framework, the emerging roles of "victim" and "perpetrator" represented a "conceptual shift *away* from anomie" by allowing collective victims to name the processes of colonialism and their resultant settler colonial nations as perpetrators (*Therapeutic* 88). Million's historicization of the terms "victim" and "anomie" contextualizes Atwood's usage of the former within the broader, complex moment of a period in which the collective victimry became linked to the cultural, social, political, geographical, and emotional impacts of colonialism, revealing how *Survival*'s figuration of "the Indian" as the passive "social victim" (Atwood 103) of an unnamed perpetrator both does and does not reflect this new model of victimhood.

Atwood locates Canada's national identity as a "collective victim" in the nation's past as a former British colony perpetually victimized by the economic goals of imperial Britain (31). I argue that this identity precluded readers' recognition of Canada as a settler colonial nation in Atwood's present, and potentially stalled settler critics, readers, and publics from engaging with the settler colonial conditions which structure settler-Indigenous relations. I take to task Atwood's claim that the colonial mentality, as a "cultural side effect" of Canada's victimization, is principally caused by the economic demands of colonialism by offering an interpretation of the colonial mentality as a symptom of lingering anxieties surrounding settlers' senses of belonging and quests for cultural legitimacy.

I read the chapter "First Peoples: Indians and Eskimos as Symbols" as an example of the larger Canadian literary trend to promote settler writers' appropriation of Indigenous cultural material and land-based practices as a remedy for the "rootlessness" of settler unbelonging (Atwood 111) – and, as I argue here, for the cultural anxieties diagnosed as Canada's colonial mentality. Employing a relational approach to *Survival*'s discussions of culture and identity, I consider Indigenous literary responses to settler practices of cultural appropriation – both current and contemporary to *Survival* – which situate acts of appropriation within the power dynamics of settler colonialism and contextualize them within emerging conceptions of culture as a therapeutic tool for the social revitalization of Indigenous nations (Million 84). In doing so, I demonstrate the consequential differences between Indigenous and settler applications of culture-as-colonial-remedy. In these readings, I also review the appropriative trope of adopting Indigeneity and its attending criticisms to establish its significance to the fields of

Indigenous and Canadian literatures before applying it to my reading of Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974) in the following chapter.

VICTIMHOOD IN CONTEXT: NEOLIBERAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INDIGENISM

In the period during which Atwood produced *Survival*, Indigenous political movements across the globe reflected a developing "powerful political consciousness" referred to by Million as "indigenism" (13). Indigenism organized Indigenous peoples across state borders "on the basis of shared cultural tenets and experiences" in order to stand against "unrestrained socialist and capitalist development"[138] (14). Writing in 1974, Secwepemc activist George Manuel locates this common experience in global Indigenous peoples' "common attachment to the land" (*The Fourth World* 5). This commonality persists under conditions of colonialism which he also understands as "another common bond… growing among the colonized peoples of the world" (5), understandings which undoubtedly informed his founding of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1975. The neoliberal humanitarianism conditions of post-WWII were crucial to indigenism's development as an alternative political model for Indigenous populations of both socialist and capitalist countries (Million 13). In this reorganized order, the logics of Keynesian welfare-state capitalism which governed nation-state economies were replaced by neoliberalism, what David Harvey regards as "a hegemonic discourse… now part of the

[138] Million cites the Four Directions Council, Grand Council of the Crees, Indigenous World Association, Indian Law Resource Center, Inuit Circumpolar Conference, National Aboriginal and Islander Legal Service, National Indian Youth Council, South American Indian Council, and Manuel's World Council of Indigenous Peoples as examples of Indigenous organizations of the period (15).

commonsense way we interpret, live in, and understand the world[139]" (*Brief History* 3). Neoliberalism can be considered the dominant ideology of western nations that promotes aggressive individualism and market deregulation as the means toward greater "freedom" for citizens of those nations. Harvey's definition of neoliberalism points to its role in structuring everyday epistemologies, whereas Million's emphasizes its ontological underpinnings, arguing that neoliberalism "constitutes a *mentality* of government – to produce national well-being … and crucially the nature of the persons upon whom they should act" (152 emphasis added). Many scholars – historians and political scientists in particular – have studied the historical overlap between neoliberalism and human rights. However, as political scientist Jessica Morefield notes, though many of these studies – such as Samuel Moyn's *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (2018) – make much of their temporal correlation, they still have trouble articulating the nature of it, viewing the two as separate global logics (Morefield "Why Neoliberalism"). Morefield offers Jessica Whyte's *The Morals of the Market: Human Rights and the Rise of Neoliberalism* (2019) as an exception in its argument that the project of human rights emerged from the sustained neoliberal belief that the success of a free market required an

[139] For more on neoliberal ideology, see David Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005) and Nancy Fraser's *The Old Is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born: From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump and Beyond* (2019), whose scholarship Million engages with throughout *Therapeutic Nations*. See also Fraser's 2009 article "Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History" in the *New Left Review* which sparked fierce critical debate surrounding the nature of second-wave feminism's relationship to neoliberalism and which Million also cites. For an overview of neoliberalism as it pertains to Canadian multiculturalism, see Will Kymlicka's recent works: *The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies*, co-edited with Keith Banting (2017), the article "Solidarity in Diverse Societies: Beyond Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Welfare Chauvinism" in the 2015 volume 3, issue 1 of *Comparative Migration Studies*, and his chapter "Neoliberal Multiculturalism?" in Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont's *Social Resilience in the Neo-Liberal Era* (2013).

underlying moral authority or "extra-economic vision" which could be legally enforced to sanction specific forms of state intervention.

Whyte writes of the first meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1947 in Mont Pèlerin to demonstrate that those members who would go on to form the neoliberal Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS) did so by mirroring the 1948 Declaration's rhetorical emphasis on the preservation of human dignity and freedom in their political argument that communist and socialist forces were the real threat to universal freedom. In their view, "freedom" meant adhering to a capitalist market; and as studies like Million's and Whyte's attest, human rights did indeed become the moral framework with which neoliberal states could condemn the socialism of emerging postcolonial nations attempting to redistribute wealth by nationalizing their natural resources. It was these initial attempts at decolonization by the Third World that resonated with Indigenous peoples and instigated their entry into the human rights arena (Million 13).

Following the post-WWII implosion of European colonialism, nation-states replaced imperial empires, and these states' relationships to their citizens became central to an understanding and enactment of human rights. "The nation" thus became the central figure of international politics and, following the UN General Assembly's 1948 adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights, became a potential perpetrator against its individual citizens (Million 9). Many scholars note the role of the Holocaust in instigating this new moral framework for the nation-as-perpetrator. For example, Million invokes political scientist Claude Denis's argument that the Holocaust signalled a "limit experience" that divides time *before* or *after,* shifting what was considered possible in western democratic

imaginaries[140] (qtd. in Million 72). Million articulates the effects of positioning the Holocaust as the instigating event for human rights for Indigenous claims to genocide[141]:

> Before this particular mass murder, *there was no imaginary for genocide*, no matter how many millions of Americans or African inhabitants died as a result of civilizing and enslavement campaigns. There was no genocide before the German state mass-murdered Jews, and no law addressing genocide…. The conquering of the Americas is refused as primary genocide because Europeans had no compunction about killing humans *that were not then* considered human. (72 emphasis added)

The Holocaust therefore "established the post-WWII moral ground for relations between those with great power and those who are subject to its effects" (Million 73). Accordingly, the protection of human rights became the nation's *moral* duty, and the United Nations the arbiters of that morality (Million 9).[142]

---

[140] See Claude Denis's *We Are Not You: First Nations and Canadian Modernity* published by Broadview Press, 1997.

[141] To clarify the influence of the Holocaust on the development of human rights as an extra-state forum, Million cites Michael Ignatieff and Amy Gutmann who note that human rights were intended "to give individuals the civic courage to stand up when the state ordered them to do wrong" as was the case in Nazi Germany (*Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry* 5).

[142] Million's emphasis on morals reflects Whyte and others' emphasis on the creation and normalization of moral values as central to the neoliberal human rights project. Notions of national morality appear in later discussions on Canada's international reputation as "peacekeeper," how this reputation depends upon perceptions of the nation's predisposition for peace, the ways that *Survival* reinforced such perceptions, and how those perceptions contributed to a misrepresentation of Canadian colonialism and Indigenous experiences thereof; this is particularly explicit in the chapter "First People: Indians and Eskimos as Symbols" wherein Atwood suggests that when it comes to the treatment of Indigenous peoples, "Canadians have a slightly better track record" (96).

Whyte and Million's analyses show that, despite claims by its governing body (the United Nations), the West's adoption of a human rights framework was never morally neutral; it espoused a humanitarian ethos to sanction the political interference of UN "peacekeepers" in the politically destabilized regions of a "post" colonial world (Million 11). This interference was also shaped by a therapeutic turn that positioned the healing of "historical trauma" as the responsibility of the very nation states who caused it. In the following paragraphs, I explore the significance of this turn in relation to the "marked political position" of the victim by reviewing Million's analysis of how Indigenous peoples in Canada both resisted and mobilized this position within the new neoliberal human rights framework.

Popularized in 1988 by Lakota psychiatrist Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, "historical trauma" became the new term with which to assess the social ills that plagued Indigenous populations of settler colonial nations like Canada, helping to link colonialism "in direct causal relationship to Indigenous people's contemporary poor health, both physical and mental, substance abuse, suicide risk, and early death, understood as a holistic, tightly intertwined effect. The colonized subject became a *trauma victim*" (Million 5 emphasis added). Million is quick to point to the growing body of Indigenous autobiographical writing at the time as another crucial element in Indigenous peoples' rearticulation of Canada as colonial perpetrator. Often written by Indigenous women such as Jeannette Armstrong (Syilx), Lee Maracle (Stó:lō), and Maria Campbell (Métis), these narratives are the basis for Million's felt theory, an approach that employs lived, affective

experiences of colonialism as valuable sources of knowledges about its structures.[143] By articulating their lived experiences of colonialism, these authors were "influential in changing Canada's idea of itself" because their experiences challenged common-sense frameworks of the state and settler publics which pitted Indigeneity as a problem to be solved, creating new languages and conceptual models with which communities could understand, articulate, and dismantle colonial conditions (Million 77, 56).

Much of this writing exposed the failure of Canadian assimilation policies and practices, including the state-sanctioned abuse of Indigenous children at Canada's residential schools. Thus, Indigenous peoples in Canada "would claim victimhood based on Canada's failure to manage the church schools, and on Indian policy that amounted to state terror over a span of generations" (81). These experiences of state terror were,

> …mobilized within an international system of mediation, between 'victims' and 'perpetrators' making it necessary for [Indigenous peoples] to fully assume this victimhood at the same time they sought political power and autonomy, spheres that speak very opposite languages. (81)

Victimhood worked for Indigenous communities seeking justice because it connected present pain with past injustices, mapped these injustices across generations, and linked

[143] Many of these writers can be found in *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada, An Anthology* edited by Jeanne Martha Perreault and Sylvia Vance (1993). Armstrong's collection of criticism *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature* (1993) provides critical commentary on the creative works of Indigenous writers across Turtle Island. For discussions of Indigenous women's writing by other Indigenous women writers, see the essays on Maria Campbell's 1973 *Halfbreed* by Janice Acoose (Saulteaux/Métis), Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm (Ojibwe), and Victoria Lena Manyarrows (Cherokee).

them to the structure of settler colonialism in Canada (92-93). But throughout *Therapeutic Nations*, Million questions whether becoming the subjects of a humanitarian project shaped by the language of victimry "assists or appropriates Indigenous peoples from being subjects of their own polities negotiating for political empowerment" (6). In *Survival*, Atwood's readings of "the Indian as the ultimate victim of social oppression and deprivation" validate Million's concerns (Atwood 102). Atwood's rendering of Indigenous suffering as "a yardstick against which the whites can measure their own and find it lacking" limits literary representations of Indigeneity to the realm of victimhood (*Survival* 104). As "variants themselves of the victim motif" (*Survival* 109), these representations are read as foils to settler claims to victimry, and the underlying conditions of settler colonial domination remain unread. The result is a rather de-politicized discussion of the role of the victim which runs counter to Million's insistence that the co-constitutive roles of victim/perpetrator be understood as "marked political positions" (*Therapeutic* 12).

Thus, even though this language allowed Indigenous peoples to name the nation as perpetrator of shared historical trauma, centring discussion on victims' ability to heal from these state wounds also "mov[es] the focus from one of political self-determination to one where self-determination becomes intertwined with state-determined biopolitical programs for emotional and psychological self-care informed by trauma" (*Therapeutic* 6). This point is reinforced by Million's assertion that although human rights and humanitarianism can encompass Indigenous hopes for justice, they also encompass "multiple agendas and none are neutral, never merely aligned with the powerless" (12). This caveat to the ability of human rights to address Indigenous self-determination is also

reflected in Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) and K. Wayne Yang's "Decolonization Is Not A Metaphor" (2012). Tuck and Yang position decolonization outside the discourse and agenda of civil and human rights-based social projects because "decolonization wants something different than those forms of justice," a difference which, when placed alongside the limitations of neoliberal human rights, points toward Indigenous self-determination ("Decolonization" 2). And so, although Indigenism is now recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2006), its self-determination goals put into question the legitimacy of the settler colonial nations whose very founding relies on the denial of such autonomy. As Whyte and Million make clear, these are the same settler nations who wield the power to intervene in the political affairs of "developing" countries whose instability can be traced to centuries of European colonialism. As such, Indigenism occupies a tenuous space in twenty and twenty-first century human rights discourses. However, understanding Indigenous applications of victimhood as an enactment of their political agency, whether successful or unsuccessful under the rubric of neoliberal human rights, helps to counter Atwood's readings of "the Indian" as a passive victim of an unnamed perpetrator, which I interrogate in the following sections.

ANOMIE AND VICTIMRY IN SURVIVAL

New discourses of human and civil rights at this time functioned to normalize Indigenism's function as a "founding illogic in western liberal desires for justice for colonial acts" by subsuming Indigenous peoples under Canada's "minority" populations (Million, *Therapeutic* 73). In the process, Indigenous claims to self-determination were often positioned as the "domestic affairs" of nation-states (12). This move did little to

protect Indigenous peoples from the genocidal policies and practices on which Canada and the United States were founded. It also widened the socio-political gaps between Indigenous and settler populations in these countries by strengthening settler stereotypes of Indigenous peoples' inability to adapt to settler society. Rather than collective victims of historical trauma caused by ongoing colonialism, Indigenous populations were often regarded as an abhorrent anomaly in Canada's otherwise steady progression through modernity. This anomaly was termed Canada's domestic "Indian Problem" by politicians, sociologists, and other elites, and was upheld by an emerging reliance on anomie to describe the collective breakdown of certain groups.

The "Indian" was the titular character in Canada's domestic "Indian Problem." Prior to the shift toward historical trauma, anomie was the main framework with which sociologists understood this "problem."[144] Developed in Durkheim's study of rising suicide rates in industrial-capitalist societies, anomie is a diagnosis of instability in a social group whose values and standards have broken down because of rapid societal changes. Critics of Durkheim's theory of anomie point out that the theory does not take into the power dynamics that shape the societal changes which give rise to these breakdowns. Thus, a major problem in applying anomic research models to Indigenous communities is the lack of engagement with the ways in which the power dynamics of settler colonialism – predicated on Indigenous dispossession and settler survival – affect social disintegration. In her chapter "The Indian Problem," Million argues that anomie

[144] More recent studies like Adam J. Barker and Emma Battell Lowman's *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015) assert that Canada has never actually had an "Indian problem," and that the problem remains firmly in the attitudes and beliefs of settler populations toward Indigenous peoples.

structured public attitudes and understandings of Indigenous peoples in Canada, citing Canadian sociologists Richard King's 1967 *The School at Mopass* and Henry Zentner's 1973 essay "Reservation Social Structure and Anomie: A Case Study" as scholarly examples that assessed the "damaged identity" of the anomic "Indian" as a consequence of Indigenous peoples' inferiority (83). On the one hand, we can understand these studies as historic examples of "damage-centred research" of marginalized communities – what Tuck defines as "research that operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation" ("Suspending Damage" 413). As pathologizing frameworks that partially rely on deficit models – identifying what a community lacks to explain some failure or underachievement – damaged-centre research pigeonholes these communities as "damaged" or "broken" so that oppression comes to singularly define them (413). On the other hand, Tuck notes that damage-centred research is "more socially and historically situated" than deficit models because it "looks to historical exploitation, domination, and colonization to explain contemporary brokenness such as poverty, poor health, and low literacy" (413). Because the main critique of anomie is its lack of attention to power, it would be inaccurate to synonymize anomic research with damage-centred research.

Thus, damaged-centred research's focus on "domination" is more in keeping with the model of historical trauma noted earlier because both incorporate an analysis of power to link social inequities to the legacy of colonization. However, both anomie and damage-centred research models have a similar effect in that they reduce marginalized communities to sites of damage and ill-repair. Furthermore, anomie follows the logic of the widely debated "fatal impact thesis" which posits that contact with Europeans

irreparably contaminated Indigenous societies. Criticisms of this theory are similar to those of anomie, in that neither concept pays attention to the agency and resistance of the supposedly "irreparable" communities in question, exemplifying Tuck's point that solely focusing on damage – even when it is historically situated within processes of domination – risks reducing Indigenous peoples to powerless victims of uninterrupted oppression. Anomie compounds this risk by suggesting that communities become anomic because of their inability to adapt to changes in social norms and values without attention to the modes with which these changes are imposed. In this way, anomie follows the settler colonial logic which requires that "the culpability" for its damages "be projected onto its victims" (McKegney, *Carrying* 31). Characterizing Indigenous populations as anomic also affected Indigenous-settler relations because it

> allowed Canadians an analysis of Indian malady without attributing it specifically to their Indian policy, the Indians' loss of land and the destruction of traditional economies, or their residential schooling. Their anomie is a natural outcome, their racial inability or cultural inability to adapt to encroaching white society. (Million 84)

Far from connecting Indigenous oppression and social disintegration to the structures and logics of Canada's settler colonial society, anomie hardened existing settler attitudes toward Indigenous populations that saw any damage or disintegration as the consequence of their failure to assimilate to a society that was believed to be "an inevitable by-product of modern history – the global move toward industrialization, the consolidation of diverse peoples into nations, and the expansion of political democracy" (Hoxie qtd. in Barker

41). The following paragraphs dissect the ways in which anomie does and does not fit with Atwood's readings of Indigenous characters as victims in Canadian fiction.

Anomie can be applied to Atwood's readings of Indigenous victims because she reads this victimry as a consequence of their inability to adapt to settler society. For example, she reads Farley's Mowat's *The People of the Deer* (1951/1975) as a "prose elegy on a vanishing race, a race destroyed by the intrusion of a technologically 'superior' race whose values it adopts but which are unsuited to the land," exemplifying the "vanishing Indian" trope (101). Similarly, the literary sketches of Emily Carr's *Klee Wyck* (1941) are seen as storying "the dying native culture" (note that here there is one, singular native culture).[145] In her reading of *People*, Atwood's placing of 'superior' in quotation marks undermines claims to racial superiority, and her statement that "the Indians can be idealized only when they're about to vanish" suggests that *Survival* is not always reinscribing these readings but is, at times, pointing to them as the tired parlance of Canadian literature's representations of "the Indian" as vanishing, noble, or inferior.[146] Still, phrasing Indigenous extinction as a "problem" with which the narrator "can empathize" but which he cannot solve echoes sociological diagnoses of Canada's "Indian problem" as an anomic affair in which the settler plays the passive onlooker. Importantly, reliance on anomie as an answer for the discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous qualities of life also meant that a recognition of settler peoples' entanglement

[145] Atwood gets slightly closer to acknowledging settler complicity in Indigenous oppression when she remarks that "although the causes are not explicitly set forth" in the text, "they are there in the sharply drawn details of the sketches" of the missionaries heading Canada's residential schools (102).
[146] See pp. 95-96 for an example of the ways that *Survival* both reaffirms and resists these readings.

with and benefitting from processes of settler colonialization were also left unrealized.[147] This is because, as Million notes, anomie "allowed Canadians an analysis of Indian malady" that did not require a corresponding analysis of settlers' complicity therein. Thus, an important feature of anomie is its ability to maintain what settler scholar Sam McKegney refers to as settlers' genuine "wish to view themselves/ourselves as good" by viewing Indigenous suffering as the result of some kind of maladaptation with which settlers have little to do (*Carrying* 31). I argue that we can see this settler unaccountability in Atwood's readings, which shift focus from representations of Indigenous suffering to settler characters' responses toward such representations.

Much like the self-professed futility of Mowat's protagonist, Stacey MacAindra, the settler protagonist in Margaret Laurence's *The Fire Dwellers* (1969) "can sympathize" with the Métis character Val Tonnerre, "but ultimately the spectacle of Indian-as-victim embarrasses her: not only is there nothing she can do to help, but she can't even identify completely"[148] (*Survival* 104). Stacey's feelings of "sympathy" might be read as an expression of the settler "wish" to be "good," but this wish is complicated by the extent of Val's victimry, or suffering, which becomes a foil to the settler character's identification with the victim position. Moreover, Stacey's perceived inertia exemplifies Million's argument that the concept of anomie allowed Canadians to sidestep responsibility for Indigenous suffering, ignoring the ways in which settlers are "entangled

[147] Discussions of settler colonial power necessarily implicate the settler public because settler colonial theory stresses that the settler collective is the primary unit of the process of settler colonization (Veracini *Settler Colonialism).*

[148] See the final body chapter of this project for an analysis of settler identity and anxiety in relation to Indigeneity in Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974), the final novel in the Manawaka series.

with colonial power and practices at multiple scales" (Barker *Making* 18). Positioning Indigenous suffering as "a yardstick against which the whites can measure their own and find it lacking," Atwood suggests that settler writers' represent Indigenous victims not out of a sense of guilt or complicity or even interest, but because, as victims, they function "as exotic participants in [Canadian writers'] own favourite game…. *identification* – identification with a victim, whether white or red (104, 109 emphasis added). Indeed, Atwood reads many of the victim motifs of Canadian literature, from Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* to Margaret Laurence's Manawaka series, as depictions of settler responses to suffering, as "the mentality of the Canadian onlooker who needs to identify with victims" (107). This positioning also almost always naturalizes it – *of course* the Indigenous characters are suffering – and Atwood's emphasis on the settler characters' passive responses reinforces reading their suffering as an inevitable byproduct of Canada's "progress" toward modernity, a progress settlers benefit from but are supposedly powerless to stop. Atwood not only positions passivity as the settler character's response to Indigenous suffering in works of fiction, but also extends this passivity to her readings of the Indigenous characters who suffer.

As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, these characters are firmly fixed within "Position Two" of the four Basic Victim Positions, "the position within which Victors and Victims are inevitable, fated to suffer and to inflict suffering because that's what the universe is like" (*Survival* 109). The inevitability with which Atwood articulates Position Two mirrors the colonial logic of *fait accompli* in that any suffering is "fated" (109). Like the passivity Atwood ascribes to Indigenous characters, this logic ignores the centuries of resistance enacted by historical and contemporary Indigenous communities

by normalizing the dominance and dispossession on which colonialism is predicated (Coulthard, *Red Skin* 7, 15). Atwood's rendering of Indigenous characters as the "victims" in these works of Canadian fiction does not reflect the shift from anomie to historical trauma, the latter of which necessarily involves the recognition and enactment of the victim's agency in identifying the state as perpetrator of the collective trauma of Indigenous communities. Atwood's Indian-as-victim-motif interpretation reduces these characters to their suffering and denies potentially agentive readings; their suffering becomes their only function in settlers' "favourite game" of identification with victimry. Moreover, the perpetrator of this suffering remains unarticulated throughout the chapter – the closest we get is the ironic nod to a "technologically superior race" in the reading of Mowat – suggesting that the terminology of "the victim" in *Survival* reflects the earlier concept of anomie rather than the emerging language of historical trauma.

FIGURATIONS OF THE SETTLER IN *SURVIVAL*

Analyzing Atwood's application of the role of the victim in *Survival* is important because it is bound up in the country's history of colonialism. In keeping with this chapter's goal and Atwood's encouragement to provide "a more complicated analysis of Canadian colonialism," this section begins by unpacking *Survival*'s approach to this history. Atwood's lengthiest engagement with CanLit representations of colonial history comes in the chapter "Ancestral Totems: Explorers, Settlers," wherein the term "settler" describes a figure of Canada's past who is defined by "bare survival" against the "hostile elements and/or natives" (27). The term is only used in this chapter and does not appear in the rest of *Survival*, firmly fixing "the settler" as a figure of Canada's colonial past that remains disarticulated from Atwood's settler colonial present. Barker has argued that

since 2013, the term "settler" exploded in use within both public and academic spheres thanks to the work of Indigenous-led groups like Idle-No-More. Barker stresses that the term has latent affective dimensions which were brought to the fore in the teach-ins held by the movement. Specifically, he recalls the discomfort expressed by settler participants in response to the term (*Making* 6) which we can also read as an expression of settler anxiety given that this discomfort is a felt denial of the settler position. In the rest of *Survival*, Atwood refers to the characters, readers, and authors as "Canadians," highlighting the book as a work of nationalist criticism.

These moments of discomfort contribute to the process of unsettling, wherein mythologies of Canada's history as a peaceful, benevolent, co-operative exchange between Europeans and Indigenous peoples are revealed to an individual *as* myths that work to conceal exploitative and dispossessive realities. This process has an important affective dimension in that it allows us to see the emotions with which settler-Indigenous relations have been conditioned – what settler scholar Paulette Regan has identified as the "distrust, anger, denial, distancing, shame, fear, and guilt – that keep us mired in a colonial relationship" (*Unsettling* 21). Tuck and Yang argue that settler calls to fast-track reconciliatory efforts in light of these revelations are motivated by a form of settler anxiety: "disturbed by her own settler status, [the settler] tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being oneself" ("Decolonization" 9).

The potential effects of Atwood's historicization of "the settler" vary. On the one hand, read in our contemporary moment of heightened identity politics, and alongside calls by Indigenous literary scholars to practice positioning of oneself in close reading the

cultural, historical, and social themes of a given text, *Survival*'s temporal framing of the settler as an "ancestral" figure *could* encourage contemporary settler audiences to situate themselves within these longer histories of settlement. In this way, the settler reader could view themselves as the inheritor of this history. On the other hand, it could hinder contemporary settler readers from identifying *as a settler* at all. It could sustain settler disengagement with Canada's present-day structure as a settler colonial nation in the same way that identification of Canada as a colony might.

In the following sections, I close read the ways that *Survival* positions Canada's collective colonial mentality as a "cultural side effect" of Canada's identity as "a victim," "an oppressed minority," that is "exploited" by the economic demands of British colonialism (31) and highlight how anxiety functions therein. I distinguish between three critical definitions of the colonial mentality available at the time of Atwood's writing to clarify how it is used in *Survival*. I draw out the significance of Atwood's identification of Canada as a colony rather than as a settler colonial nation, suggesting it may partially explain Atwood's seemingly unironic adoption of "the victim" to characterize the collective identity of settler Canada. Scholars such as Mackey have already noted that, in nationalist narratives like *Survival*, white settlers often "take up a subject position much more appropriate to Native people in order to construct Canadians as victims of colonialism and US imperialism, and to create Canadian identity" (*House* 61-62). This section is interested in *how* the taking up of this subject position – the position of the victim – is made possible in Atwood's victim/survival framework. This positioning is significant because it ignores the fact that the project of settler colonialism is structured to

ensure settler survival, not victimry, and that this is accomplished not least through the disappearance of Indigenous populations by colonial policy and practice.

As this project has shown, Canadian literature also participated in this attempted disappearance through the enduring trope of "the vanishing Indian," and recurring imagery and themes of terra nullius. In the final section of this chapter, I suggest that the trope of "adopting Indigeneity" is another method of erasure, whereby settler characters' adoption of Indigenous cultural material like stories, ceremonies, and symbols is made possible by writing the death of the Indigene, creating a sense of belonging otherwise unattainable, and assuaging underlying anxieties that accompany settlement. Though it could be argued that by framing settler Canada as the collective victim of colonialism, Atwood's writing also disappears the very real victimization of Indigenous peoples by colonial forces, this argument seems a bit reductive in that it focuses on Indigenous victimry and merely diagnoses it as the result of colonialism. This diagnosis has been important to the development of the fields of Indigenous and Canadian literary studies, and to settler colonial theory, but it is not the focus of this project. Moreover, Atwood does not just omit discussions of Indigenous suffering or depictions thereof; as we saw in previous sections, she situates Indigenous and settler victimry on a sliding "aggression-suffering scale" and pigeonholes readings of Indigenous victimry as "a yardstick of suffering against which the whites can measure their own and find it lacking" (96, 104). These are perhaps perverse examples of "reading in relation" that do little to explore the complexities of representing victimhood as it is conditioned by colonialism.

A firm belief with which I have approached this chapter (and my research more generally) is that settler colonialism harms *all* populations caught up in its processes of

exploitation, resource extraction, and biopolitical management (including the use of surveillance, education, and policing to ensure the continuation of settler supremacy and what Tuck and Yang refer to as "internal colonialism") ("Decolonization" 4-5). In Canada, this structure causes harm to settler populations because it promotes an uncritical, romanticized history of Canadian settlement. As part of the biopolitical project of internal colonialism, the management of settlers' emotional attachments to this narrative has been one way to sustain them over time and across vast distances. The disruption or "unsettling" of these attachments has been crucial to decolonizing and Indigenizing these narratives and histories in recent decades. This unsettling is both ontological and epistemological because it requires the settler to critically question who they are, how they come to "know" what they know, and how these might be related, making the unsettling process a deeply personal, felt experience.

For these reasons, I do not read the role of the victim as belonging to one group or inaccessible to another; I do not suggest that settlers cannot write about victimhood because they are the perpetrators of Indigenous victimhood. Of course they can, but writers that do this must understand that a convincing portrayal of the settler-as-victim is an increasingly challenging task given the more holistic, representative frameworks like settler colonial theory with which Canada's settler colonial structure are now understood.[149] What I have tried to do in this chapter is to demonstrate how Atwood arrives at her theory of Canadian identity by focusing on how it does and does not attend to the settler and Indigenous relations and to the settler colonial contexts under which this

[149] I am specifically talking about works that engage with themes of settler colonialism and/or depict Indigenous-settler relations.

identity is conditioned.[150] In previous sections, this has meant exploring the historical conditions under which "the victim" became a legible position from which Indigenous peoples could articulate their experiences of colonialism. In the following section, I focus on the concept of the colonial mentality as a symptom of Canada's victimization, reading this victimry as another settler "move to innocence" motivated by anxieties surrounding settler complicity in Indigenous erasure and settler feelings of foreignness. Focusing on her introductory chapter "Survival," I unpack Atwood's central thesis to argue that settler anxiety – that is, anxieties' specific to or conditioned by experiences of settler colonialism – is fundamental to her theory of Canadian literature.

ANXIOUS SURVIVAL

Anxiety is foundational to Atwood's thesis that survival is Canada's central literary symbol. It is a specifically settler affect because it is conceptualized as a response to processes of colonialism and settler colonialism. Atwood invites readers to understand "survival" as both a national symbol and ideology, emphasizing *Survival* as a work of nationalist literary criticism and linking literature to the creation and maintenance of national ideals. She employs simile to liken national symbols to national beliefs only to immediately replace it with metaphor: "the symbol, then – be it a word, phrase, idea, image, or all of these – functions like a system of beliefs, (it *is* a system of beliefs, though

[150] Whether or not Atwood's argument that Canadian literature is obsessed with representing victims because we were once a colony is convincing was a topic of heated debate for contemporary literary critics and the public alike. And without doing the field work, I would go so far as to say that it is probably less convincing today than ever before given the paradigm shifts noted above. But again, proving the accuracy of her argument is not my focus; if it were, I would start by re-reading the works she close reads in *Survival* to see whether her theory can survive, whether there is in fact "a superabundance" of victimized protagonists in CanLit (Atwood 36).

not always a formal one) which holds the country together and helps the people in it to co-operate for common ends" (26).[151] Atwood first articulates her argument that "Survival, or *la Survivance*" is the central symbol/ideology of Canadian literature by comparing it to her suggested symbols for American and British literatures: the frontier and the island, respectively. This is an example of the common comparative approach to Canadian literature discussed in this project's introduction. The other common approach highlighted in this project, what I have termed the diagnostic approach, is also employed in Atwood's pronouncement that

> our central symbol is one which generates, not the excitement and sense of adventure or danger which The Frontier holds out, not the smugness and/or sense of security, of everything in its place, which The Island can offer, but an almost intolerable anxiety. (28)

Both approaches hinge upon articulating the affective quality of these literary symbols, with the "almost intolerable" anxiety of Canada's symbol made manifest through rhetorical negation: what it is "not." These qualities can be understood as attitudes insofar as Atwood states explicitly that *Survival* is "a book of patterns… of theme, image, and attitude which hold [Canadian] literature together" (4). Further emphasizing the national objective of her criticism, Atwood metaphorizes these patterns as "a reflection of a national habit of mind," treating the works that express these patterns "as though they were written by Canada" (5). The patterns of survival are articulated chronologically,

[151] By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the presumed homogeneity of these beliefs would become a major critique of nationalist scholarship by postcolonial scholars. See Partha Chatterjee's "Whose Imagined Communities?" for an example (1993).

from narratives representing settlers' survival of early settlement to those representing concerns over national survival in Atwood's contemporary period.

Atwood distinguishes between three kinds of narrative survival in Canadian literature that represent an author's encounter with their colonial environment. The first distinction positions early explorer and settler figures in stark opposition with their Indigenous counterparts as they experience "bare survival in the face of hostile elements and/or natives," subtly casting Indigeneity as a historic barrier to early settlement and belonging alongside the external barriers of the land and climate (27-28).[152] Atwood's framework also reflects the common trope of equating Indigenous characters/people with the landscape, rendering both "external barriers" to the survival of the settler. The second refers to narratives of "grim survival" in the wake of a temporally ambiguous crisis or disaster; and the third, most pertinent to this project, are the least literal and most contemporary narratives of what Atwood terms "cultural survival" (27).[153] Atwood further distinguishes between French cultural survival narratives responding to the hegemonic presence of English culture, and the emerging cultural survival of English Canada in the face of America's growing global presence during Atwood's contemporary period (27). Survival, as Canada's national literary symbol, is anxious in part because its narratives of bare, grim, and cultural survival under conditions of colonialism do not produce the affective attitudes of excitement or smugness.

[152] Atwood provides E.J. Pratt's *Brébeuf and His Brethren* (1940) as an ironic example of bare survival.
[153] Pratt's *The Titanic* (1935) exemplifies grim survival.

I read Atwood's comparative symbols to signify the collective affective responses of America, Britain, and Canada to colonialism: the frontier becomes a symbol of the ultimate American adventure story of manifest destiny, while the island's smug sense of security is generated by the economic and military dominance of an imperial power whose identity, unlike Canada's, is never in question, since the colony is initially made in its image. The comparative approach thus highlights a crucial feature of the colonial mentality put forth in *Survival*: its expression as a cultural inferiority in comparison to the established cultural identity expressed by British literature. This sense of inferiority is tied to Canada's famous identity problem, supported by Mackey's assertion that "Canadians, according to Atwood, need to build a sense of self because they have been denied full personhood as a result of British colonialism or American imperialism" (*House* 59). Narratives of survival – particularly cultural survival – are those in which we find Canada's collective colonial mentality as a cultural side effect of Canada's colonial history, in which Canada is rewritten as an exploited victim of British imperialism (31).

The comparative approach with which Atwood articulates her argument reveals that settler anxiety is inherent to the concept of Canada's colonial mentality. This anxiety is twofold: it reflects settler Canadians' collective sense of cultural inferiority when compared to the literary traditions of imperial Britain, but it also reflects an anxiety toward "part of a tendency to believe that the Great Good Place was, culturally speaking, elsewhere" (Atwood "Introduction" xvii), which informs how *Survival* identifies Canada as both collective victim and survivor of colonialism.

THE COLONIAL MENTALITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS[154]

This section distinguishes between three critical understandings of the colonial mentality that each reveal the conditioning of public affect -- both colonized and colonizer -- as a central feature of the project of colonialism and an important motivation for Atwood's critical work in *Survival.* The concept of internalized colonialism in Franz Fanon's decolonizing work in *Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Mask* constitutes the first critical distinction, wherein he explores Black experiences of colonial oppression in 1950s France and later, in the Algerian anticolonial struggles of the 1960s. Though not termed a mentality per se, internalized colonialism is still focused on the emotional and psychological impacts of colonialism. Fanon's approach is referred to by postcolonial scholar Homi K. Bhabha as a "phenomenology of decolonization" that stresses the importance of unpacking the psycho-affective experiences of colonialism as part of decolonizing efforts ("Foreword" xx-xxi). I understand Fanon's work to be an early example of decolonial scholarship focusing on the felt, everyday experiences of colonialism for colonized subjects. Fanon's oft-cited chapter "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" in *Black Skin*, for example, offers "dramatic explor[ation] [of] the psycho-affective predicament" of the black man through the "discriminatory gaze of racist recognition" by a white child. In his "Foreword" to *Wretched,* Bhabha calls this an example of "violent psycho-affective conditions" which also appear throughout Fanon's descriptions of internalized colonialism in both *Wretched* and *Black Skin* (xx).[155]

---

[154] The title of this section borrows from Million's chapter "The 'Indian Problem': Anomie and Its Discontents."

[155] Importantly, Bhabha renders these conditions "nervous," reinforcing this project's conceptualization of anxiety as an affect inherent to experiences of colonialism. The full

The second definition of the colonial mentality presents the concept as a kind of mental paralysis concealing the ways in which colonialism has predetermined the conditions of possibility for Canadian writers. Within the settler colonial nation of Canada, the diagnosis of Canadians' colonial mentality posed an infectious critical concern for cultural and literary critics already embattled in the nationalist politics of the 1960s and 1970s. George Grant's seminal *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (1965) located the central problem for English-Canadian nationalism in the country's inevitable Americanization, while Dennis Lee's oft-cited essay "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space" (1974) declares the author's awakening from the colonial mentality permeating the cadence of his country. Lecker's critical study of Lee's long-poem *Civil Elegies* reads the colonial mentality as a kind of paradox that forms when the speaker of Lee's poem experiences the "paralysis of knowing about his colonized consciousness" (*Cadence* 65). For these critics, anxiety is certainly a symptom of colonialism, but it is not a response to questions of settler belonging and is instead framed as part of a recognition of Canada's colonial status and what this might mean in terms of threats to Canadian independence. The anxiety identified by Lee and Grant was not so much about Canadians' ability to belong, but rather to survival in the face of American imperialism, both cultural and economic. After the implementation of multiculturalism policy in 1971, belonging figured in both public and political conversations surrounding Canada's cultural mosaic, asking how diverse immigrant

---

quote reads as follows: "The nervous conditions and political agitations of psycho affectivity compose and decompose the compartmentalized worlds of colonialism and metropolitan racism" (xix).

populations could share in a sense of belonging whose attainability was not necessary questioned by the settler public.

However, the unease with which Canadian *writing* approaches settler belonging complicates these conversations. Lee writes in *Civil Elegies* that "Every thing we own will / disappear; nothing / belongs to us, and / only that nothing is home"; his poetic personae laments settlers' "taking" of the land "…that is primal, and native" and "which is not claimed by its own" in their "greedy innocence." These allusions to settler anxiety exemplify what Daniel Francis calls settler Canadians' "second thoughts" regarding their treatment of Indigenous populations (*Imaginary* 223). Moreover, these thoughts are sustained by settlers' anxieties that any sense of belonging or feeling "at home" is unattainable because they are not indigenous to the land (223). Importantly, this anxiety toward indigeneity is rarely self-admitted (223). This is true for both Lee and Grant as well as Atwood; in each of their works, anxiety is framed as part of the project of sustaining settler survival in the face of American cultural, political, and economic hegemony. Indigeneity does not pose a threat because it is framed as an available commodity with which to assert settler Canadians' sense of identity and, by extension, independence.

In Atwood's *Survival* the colonial mentality is first and foremost an attitude. It is shorthand for the settler's defeatist mentality toward British – and later – American cultural hegemony. It is rooted in feelings of cultural inferiority, usually as an explanation for Canadians' disinterest in their own writing traditions, which were "frequently treated as a dreary joke an oxymoron, a big yawn" (Atwood "Introduction" xv). Throughout Canadian literary criticism, this sense of cultural inferiority also underpins the second

definition of the colonial mentality as an awakening to the ever-present threat of American culture absorbing, transforming, and ultimately destroying the presence of a distinct Canadian culture – the realization of which Grant laments in his eulogetic *Lament*.[156] Atwood notes that the greatest threat to the sense of Canadian-ness that she hoped her criticism would cultivate is the seemingly endless supply of American cultural imports, framing Canada's widespread colonial mentality as an assortment of cultural side effects of what she understands as essentially economic root causes:

> Let us suppose in short that Canada is a colony. A partial definition of a colony is that it is a place from which a profit is made, but *not by the people who live there:* the major profit from a colony is made in the centre of the empire. That's what colonies are for, to make money for the "mother country," and that's what – since the days of Rome and, more recently, of the Thirteen Colonies – they have always been for. Of course there are cultural effects which are often identified as "the colonial mentality," and it is these which are examined here; but the root cause for them is economic. (31)

Contrary to Atwood's contention, the present dissertation sees economics as only one aspect of Canada's colonial status. This perspective echoes current holistic theories of settler colonialism by Indigenous and settler colonial scholars stress that settler colonialism as an ongoing structure undergirds not just the economic but also the social,

[156] The colonial mentality is also perhaps emblematic of Davey's critique of thematic critics' "messianic attempts to define a national identity or psychosis" ("Surviving" 6). Atwood's diagnosis of Canadian writers' "neurosis" in writing the victim is one example of this attempt (Atwood *Survival* 31).

political, cultural, and affective relations of contemporary Canada.[157] This repositions the colonial mentality as a symptom of Canada's settler colonial *infrastructure*, which is built upon dynamics of domination that ultimately result in the dispossession of Indigenous lands, and not just as an adverse reaction to colonial economics.

Atwood's rendering of the colonial mentality as a symptom of purely economic relations conceals settler colonialism's totalizing nature and underemphasizes Canada's own history of domination and exploitation of Indigenous lands and people. Indeed, contemporary students of decolonial thought might find it surprising that references to a "colonial mentality" have nothing to do with – or perhaps try to co-opt – theories of internalized oppression from seminal decolonial texts like Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*[158] (1952/2008). This is no where clearer than in Atwood's supposition that as a former British colony "Canada as a whole is a victim, or an 'oppressed minority,' or 'exploited'" (*Survival* 31). However, I also hope to prove the productivity of re-examining the theoretical maneuvers that facilitated Atwood's claims to victimry as part of literary study's contributions to decolonial scholarship. As Atwood remarks, "literature is not only a mirror, it is also a map, a geography of the mind… if we can learn to read it

[157] Fanon's focus on the colonized's "psycho-affective" experiences of colonialism in both *Wretched* and *Black Skin* set the precedent for current holistic studies of settler colonialism like those put forth by Barker, Coulthard, Million, and Mackey. In his "Foreword" to Grove Press's 2004 edition of *Wretched*, Homi K. Bhabha asserts that this focus remains "Fanon's greatest contribution to our understanding of ethical judgement and political experience" within colonial contexts (xix). For more on the psycho-affectivity of colonialism, see Fanon's chapter "On Violence" in *Wretched* and "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" in *Black Skin*.

[158] Additionally, Canadian political analyses like Howard Adams's *Prison of Grass* (1975) and George Manuel's *The Fourth World* (1974) responded to the growing nationalism of their contemporary period by also examining internalized oppression as a learned, felt shame for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

as *our* literature, as the product of who and where we have been" (*Survival* 12). This type of reading can reveal important insights into some of the ways that Canadian literary criticism has prioritized and engaged in the study of settler identity without locating it in the settler-Indigenous relationship continually conditioned by settler colonialism.

On the contrary, rather than look to colonialism as the highly adaptative, psycho-affective totalizing project of settler colonial nations, Atwood's invocation of the colonial mentality highlights what are often described as fundamental differences between Canada and the United States. These differences are often regarded as the natural consequences of their varied historical relationships with imperial Britain: America rebelled, Canada obeyed.[159] It is unreasonable, I think, to suggest that these historical trajectories did not have tangible impacts on their respective development; what is of interest is how these differences become mythologized through an imagined Canadian propensity for law and order, for following the rules.

Works like Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian* (1993), Eva Mackey's *House of Difference* (1999), and Jeffrey Monaghan's "Mounties in the Frontier: Circulations, Anxieties, and Myths of Settler Colonial Policing in Canada" (2013) have argued that Canada's imagined propensity for order has been personified by the figure of the Mountie

[159] Mackey locates this adaptability as a feature of earlier politics of recognition evident in the 1763 Proclamation, arguing that this document "did not recognize aboriginal people in a manner that might threaten the colonial project. Instead, the recognition of difference and the granting of land rights were part of a *flexible strategy* to manage the Anglo-colonial project at a difficult and potentially dangerous time" (*House* 40). She also links this flexibility to British strategies of accommodation toward French culture, culminating in the Québec Act of 1774. Mackey notes that "managing cultural difference" "demanded a different approach" that was "flexible, recognising and enabling certain populations in the interest of controlling others" (40-41).

in Canadian national narratives. Writing on the peacemaker myth in *Unsettling the Settler Within* (2010), settler scholar Paulette Regan cites historian Elizabeth Furniss to connect this figure to Canada's reimagined story of westward expansion: "in Canada the dominant heroic figure is the Mountie, and a dominant narrative theme is what could be called 'conquest through benevolence'" (*Burden of History* 63 qtd. in Regan 103).[160] Regan's work, along with Mackey's *House of Difference,* have shown that this logic informs the interdependent myths of Canadian national benevolence, tolerance, and peacemaking which erase Indigenous histories and experiences of state oppression.[161] However, Mackey clarifies that the important question in studying these myths is not whether Indigenous peoples are erased in this mythology or even whether they are portrayed positively but rather "*who* decides *when* and *how*" Indigenous peoples are or are not represented in nationalist narratives. By extension, a study of national narratives must necessarily engage with questions of self-determination that informed Indigenous political activism of the 1970s and which remain central to contemporary Indigenous political efforts.

FROM COLONY TO NATION AND BACK AGAIN

One way in which Atwood positions Canada as a collective victim of colonialism is by identifying Canada as a colony rather than a settler colonial nation, directing readers

[160] For more studies on and discussions of the Mountie's role in constructing Canadian national identity, see Regan's chapter "Deconstructing the "Deconstructing Canada's Peacemaker Myth" in *Unsettling*.

[161] I have made this argument elsewhere, in my master's thesis "Approaching Anxiety: Reading Eden Robinson in an Era of Reconciliation" (2017), pointing out that the myth of benevolence underwrites "narratives of nationhood dependent upon the symbolic and literal erasure of the settler state's unjust treatment of Indigenous peoples that would otherwise expose the hypocrisy of such narratives" (46).

to name Britain as the site of colonial power instead of Canada (31). By rendering Canada a colony, her writing shifts focus from power relations *within* Canada to those between the imperial core (Britain) and the colonial periphery (Canada). According to settler colonial studies scholar Lorenzo Veracini, a colony is a political body "dominated by an exogenous agency" but can also be defined as "an exogenous entity that *reproduces* itself in a given environment," pointing to the colony as an extension of its imperial power, or the "localized ascendency" of its agency (*Settler Colonialism* 2-3). Barker has argued that in both definitions, a colony is defined by "the active creation of an imbalance of power" that results in the making of a geographical imperial core and colonial periphery (*Making* 34).[162] In *Survival* this imbalance of power is understood in economic terms between core/periphery; Atwood's "partial definition" of a colony is "a place from which a profit is made but not by the people who live there: the major profit from a colony is made in the centre of the empire. That's what colonies are for, to make money for the 'mother country'" (31). This definition reflects current settler colonial studies and Indigenous studies definitions of exogenous or exploitation colonization, but Atwood's definition is indeed only partial since it omits the motivation for colonial extraction and source of profit: the land.[163] Tuck and Yang's definition of exogenous colonialism as "the expropriation of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants, and

[162] For more on the infrastructure that consolidated British power across the vast distances between core and periphery, see pp. 35-40 of Barker's chapter "Cores and Peripheries: From Imperial Contact to Settler Colonial Claims" in *Making*.
[163] See Wolfe's "Settler colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" (2006) and Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View* (2019).

human beings" draws attention to the land as the major source of these profits ("Decolonization" 4).

Shifting from colonialism to settler colonialism, the once-temporary infrastructure of the colony – frontiers, homesteads, garrisons, ports, barracks, roads, trading posts, and so on – become permanent structures of settlement. The colony is no longer separated from the imperial centre, or metropole; it becomes it. This process of settlement requires more land to sustain the growing settler populations, marking access to Indigenous territory as "settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element" (Wolfe "Elimination" 388). Battell-Lowman and Barker's trio of settler colonial structures, systems, and stories that "tie settler people to the land" is one theory to describe the way in which settler control over territory is reinforced. These requirements of settlement are lost in Atwood's premise that Canada remains a colony; the focus on colonialism and omission of Canada's settler colonial contemporary encourages readers to view the colony as a site of wealth extraction for the imperial core, leaving the "total appropriation of Indigenous life and land" undiscussed and marking the "selective expropriation of profit-producing fragments" (Tuck and Yang "Decolonization" 5) of colonial economics the key element in Atwood's colonial history. The settler populations of Canada are rewritten as powerless victims of this extraction. It is this sense of victimhood with which Atwood diagnoses Canadian writers "the same neurosis" to write the victim (31). Furthermore, the absent registry of settler colonialism ignores that Canada, as a settler colonial nation, is structured to secure settler supremacy over indigenous populations – it is built with the settler in mind (Tuck and Yang "Decolonization" 5). Thus, Atwood's conception of Canada as a victim of colonialism relies on reading Canada as a colony rather than a

settler colonial nation whose survival *depends upon and is an extension of* the survival of the settler. By emphasizing Canadian victimry *Survival* misses the myriad ways in which

> settler peoples of this continent are entangled with colonial power and practices at multiple scales: as imperial architects and elites, as active, localized primary colonists, as transient labour… dependent on colonial states and nationalisms for social cohesion, as both architects and profiteers of neocolonialism… and as the subjects of contemporary juridical neocolonialism in their own territories. (Barker 16)

Moreover, by situating Canada as a collective victim, *Survival* presents victimhood as a solution to the defeatism lamented by Grant, insofar as it is presented as a national identity distinct from those of its American and British counterparts. As "victims" of the colonial mentality, settler Canadian presence is reinforced, but remains at constant risk of subsumption by increasing Americanization. However, CanLit's most enduring solution to the famous problem of Canadian identity can be found not in the espousal of a pre-determined victimhood, but in what Kristina Fagan-Bidwell (NunatuKavut) calls the "fantasy of becoming" Indigenous by settler writers. In this way, culture becomes the remedy to the interrelated problems of identity and belonging for settler communities. The following section explores how *Survival* furthers this tradition by promoting the appropriation of Indigenous cultural materials as a solution to settler Canadian uncertainty. First, I unpack the depoliticization/re-politicization of culture in human rights and Indigenism discourses at the time of *Survival,* suggesting that Atwood participates in the former. Then, I more explicitly link the desire to become indigenous to the anxieties of settlers embroiled in the project of settler colonialism, close reading the ways that

Survival exemplifies such anxious existentialism by connecting Atwood's appropriative remedy to Frye's famous question of identity.

CULTURE AS REMEDY, APPROPRIATING TO BELONG

Million traces a shift in understandings and applications of anomie in the 1970s that positioned culture as central to anomie and its treatment.[164] Swiss psychiatrist Wolfgang Jilek conceived of anomie as a form of "cultural chaos" resulting from "a disassociation between culturally defined aspirations and socially structured means"[165] (qtd. in Million 84). Jilek locates the source of the breakdown of a group's values and standards in social conditions rather than as a symptom of the groups themselves. This reconceptualization of anomie occurred at the same time that Indigenism would invoke culture "as holistic resources that could potentially alleviate and reverse colonial disintegration"[166] (84-85). Framing culture as a tool for healing also emphasized the role of nation as potential perpetrator. This proved embarrassing for a nation that banned Indigenous cultural ceremonies and other practices in previous decades yet whose predilection for tolerance remained a hallmark of its international reputation.[167] The new framework for anomie is no longer about solving the "Indian problem" but about healing lingering symptoms of historical trauma; framing colonialism as the cause of such trauma

---

[164] This shift also coincides with the shift in colonial policy noted previously.
[165] See Jilek's *Salish Indian Mental Health and Culture Change: Psychohygienic and Therapeutic Aspects of the Guardian Spirit Ceremonial* (1974) and *Indian Healing: Shamanic Ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest Today* (1982), both of which Million cites in her discussion of this shift.
[166] For the differences and similarities between Manuel, Adams, and Cardinal's invocation of Indigenous cultures as positive tools in the fight against colonialism, see pp. 85-87 of Million.
[167] The federal government's banning of the potlatch ceremony, for example, lasted from 1885-1951.

by Indigenous scholars like Brave Heart effectively challenged sociologists like King who saw the "Indian Problem" as an abnormality in Canadian settler society rather than as a consequence of its structure.

Million points out that though this new understanding emphasized cultural practice as therapy, it did not see culture as political (84). In fact, the movement toward culture-as-treatment gained further traction under neoliberalism because, as Million argues, neoliberal thought promotes culture "as human capital, as labor, or as the potential for development of resources attached to cultural identity" (Million 159). In Canadian literature, Indigenous cultures are rendered potential resources for establishing a settler cultural identity and sense of belonging that could counter the lingering discomforts of settlement.

Importantly, the depoliticization and appropriation of Indigenous cultures would be counteracted by the cultural resurgence efforts inherent in the political movement of Indigenism, which recognized cultures "as holistic resources" that could address the ongoing subjugation of Indigenous peoples in colonial contexts (Million 85). The re-politicization of culture would reach a pinnacle in the 1990s debates surrounding white writers' appropriation of Indigenous cultural material for artistic purposes. Chippewa activist and writer Lenore Keeshig-Tobias was a prominent voice in these debates, urging Canadian writers to consider the historical and ongoing censorship of Indigenous cultural expression through policies like the potlach ban and the banning of Indigenous languages in residential schools, and how these power dynamics affect the agency with which Indigenous peoples have been able to cultivate their own relationships to and writings about their cultures. In her essay "The Disempowerment of First North American Native

Peoples and Empowerment Through Their Writing," (1990) Jeannette Armstrong (Syilx) addresses the settler public directly: "we wish to know, and you need to understand, why it is that you want to own our stories, our art, our beautiful crafts, our ceremonies, but you do not appreciate or wish to recognize that these things of beauty arise out of the beauty of our people" (145). Armstrong's rhetorical question emphasizes that settlers' superficial reverence for Indigenous cultural material only exacerbates the superficiality that characterized settler-Indigenous relations during this period, and the power dynamics noted by Keeshig-Tobias enabled settlers to pick and choose which materials to appropriate or to erase.

The appropriation of Indigenous cultures is prescribed by Atwood as a remedy to the anxiety that characterizes the Canadian colonial mentality, linking the survival of Canadian cultural identity to settler writers' ability to appropriation the "legends" and "symbols" of Indigenous inhabitants (*Survival* 110). Atwood argues that "The Indians and Eskimos are seen as our true 'ancestors,' so it is their legends we should turn to for source material for stories and poems" (110). She close reads John Newlove's poem "The Pride" (1964) as "the most telling adoption of the Indians as ancestors" (*Survival* 111): its concluding lines speak of settlers' "…knowledge of / our origins, and where / we are in truth, / whose land this is / and is to be," and are interpreted as "an amazing transformation of the whites into Indians" made possible by an "acceptance of the land, which is done at least partly through legends, stories and words" (111-112). Atwood's reading reflects a longstanding tradition in Canadian literature wherein Canadian writers incorporate Indigenous cultural symbols, stories, and figures into narratives of settler self-discovery in order to construct a sense of history and identity that ties the settler to

the land and thus solves Frye's famous problem of identity. Atwood paraphrases this problem when she asks, "what do you do for a past if you are a white, relatively new to the continent and rootless?" (111). The answer to this question can be found in what Francis has called the "myth of transformation" that he argues "lies at the heart of Canadian culture" and translates into an existential "need" to *become* indigenous (223).[168]

In her analysis of tropes of adoption in settler fiction, Fagan-Bidwell (NunatuKavut) remarks that "many believe that this fear of being without a history or identity is Canada's greatest anxiety," arguing that narratives like Barbara Kingsolver's *Pigs in Heaven* (1993) and Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974) draw upon settler fantasies of "both being adopted by and adopting Natives" wherein the adoptees "are the distillations of and the solutions to national dilemmas" of identity and belonging ("Adoption" 252-53).[169] Anticipating Fagan-Bidwell's emphasis on adoption as a recurring settler fantasy, Atwood writes that in Canadian literature, "The Indians and Eskimos have rarely been considered in and for themselves" and are typically "made into projections of something in the white Canadian psyche, a fear or a wish" (*Survival* 95). These projections are often constituted by settlers' affective relationships to a land that remains unknown to them, exacerbating settler feelings of foreignness. In the previous chapter, Frye's garrison mentality responds to the settler psyche's "fear" of "being silently swallowed by an alien continent" while emphasizing feelings of foreignness

[168] In *Fear and Temptation: Images of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (1989), Terry Goldie addresses this impossible compulsion as "indigenization."

[169] The following chapter draws on Fagan-Bidwell's analysis of Laurence's *Diviners* to explore the ways in which the generation of settler anxiety through the relationship between the novel's settler protagonist, Morag, and her Métis lover, Jules, complicates Morag's search for identity and expressions of settler belonging within the narrative.

(*Bush Garden* 219). In *Survival* Atwood reviews Canadian literary equations of Indigeneity with nature, reading the Indigenous figures in works like Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* (1966) and Emily Carr's *Klee Wyck* (1941) as "potential source[s] of magic" through their "knowledge about the natural-supernatural world which the white man renounced when he became 'civilized'" (109). In this reading, Indigenous relationships to the land which constitute what Coulthard has termed "ontological frameworks" for knowing and being within the world are othered, reduced to an exotic "magic" inaccessible to the "rational" settler whose civility has minimized their relationship to and learning from the natural world.[170]

The connection between Indigeneity and land is also made explicit in Atwood's response that "the answer to rootlessness lies in acceptance of the land" accomplished through the appropriation of Indigenous cultural material (111). In this way, appropriation becomes the remedy to the famous settler identity problem. But this appropriation is complicated by two important factors made clear by scholars like Francis and Vizenor (Anishinaabe): firstly, that in the majority of Canadian literature, representations of indigeneity are in fact settlers' misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples and cultures – or, to use Vizenor's term, "simulations" of indigeneity – and secondly, that this legacy has meant that Canadians remain unaware of or unable to read culturally coded material even when it is available.

[170] For more on the ways in which Canadian literature participated in the construction of a national civility largely influenced by popular notions of British restraint, impartiality, and orderliness, see Daniel Coleman's *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (2006).

Atwood emphasizes the inaccessibility of this material to the settler literary figure in her chapter "Nature the Monster" wherein she works through the Canadian literary trope of terra nullius. In this trope, nature is "seen as dead, or alive but indifferent, or alive and actively hostile towards man" (51-52). She offers three potential readings of the trope within Douglas LePan's poem "A Country Without a Mythology" (1948). The first reading interprets the poem's personae figure of "the stranger" as traversing "a land without 'monuments or landmarks,' among 'a savage people' who are silent and moody, or, when they speak, incomprehensible," offering the lack of "emblems of tradition-saturated European civilization" as the cause for the stranger's disconnection from the land (Atwood 49). The second reading places a moral symbolism on the inaccessible, empty land, with nature either "with[holding] all revelation" from the stranger or "[having] no revelation to give, no 'sign' or 'emblem,'" (Atwood 51) echoing Frye's interpretation of terra nullius imagery as representing nature's "silent amorality" as discussed in the previous chapter. The final reading suggests that, far from empty, "there *is* an image of the divine present in the landscape – the 'manitou'" but that the stranger "has not been able to recognize it" in his hurry to impose those "emblems of tradition-saturated European civilization" (50-51). Atwood's emphasis on "emblems," "images," and "signs" reinforces her reading of the CanLit tradition of appropriating Indigeneity – and its equation with the natural world – "for symbolic purposes" which are usually tied to the construction of settler belonging within an otherwise unfamiliar landscape (95).

Indeed, symbolism remains the only registry through which Atwood engages with the Indigenous cultures and land-based knowledges that Million argues "represent ways of thinking about the world [that are] truly different from capitalism" (*Therapeutic*

162). These epistemologies are appropriated for the purpose of representing settler belonging, rendering their" legends, stories, and words" as opportunities for settlers to "identify" with "the pride of place and the sense of belonging and origin" that they symbolize (*Survival* 112). Importantly, Million makes no distinction between ways of knowing and culture, noting that "epistemologies *are* the cultures that everyone is always referring to – they are ways of knowing" and in this way do not exist or function as they do in Canadian literature, as "a symbolic practice… that has to refer to somewhere else for its 'authenticity'" (162-63). In addition to its epistemological function, cultural practice was also beginning to be understood and applied as a treatment for anomie by Western sociologists during the larger therapeutic turn discussed earlier in this chapter. Though Indigenous cultural practices remained central to discussions of settler belonging and identity in *Survival*, these functions remain absent in Atwood's writing which limited discussions of culture to a readily available resource from which to extract symbols for settler belonging.

CONCLUSION

This chapter advocates for continued critical attention to *Survival*'s espousing of settler victimry not because it is necessarily an accurate assessment of Canadian fiction but rather because it lays bare how both literary creation and literary study by settler Canadians constitute an anxious enterprise that is at once fascinated with Indigeneity and yet constantly serves to obfuscate the realities of settler colonialism. In order to extend the critical conversation surrounding Atwood's survival/victim paradigm, I place the text in dialogue with Dian Million's *Therapeutic Nations* (2016) which traces the growing use of therapeutic language of trauma in the development of international human rights

discourses throughout the 1970s. This period also saw the rise of Indigenous narratives utilizing this language to express the lived experience of Indigenous peoples under Canadian colonialism to international audiences invested in notions of neoliberal justice and its achievement under an emerging human rights framework. This language helped to reposition nation-states – particularly western democracies – as potential perpetrators of crimes against collective groups. Million's historical analysis of an emerging "international system of mediation between 'victims' and 'perpetrators'" shows the limits of this therapeutic ethos for Indigenous self-determination efforts that represent a founding illogic to the imagined Canadian propensity for "justice" that underwrites national myths of benevolent tolerance (75). Though neoliberalism continued to grow in influence throughout settler colonial nations like Canada and the United States, Million's analysis also highlights counter-movements already underway: the growing solidarity among international Indigenous populations – all sharing common experiences of colonial dispossession and other forms of biopower – led to the formalization of indigenism "as both political identity and as lived ways of life" that "presents a founding illogic in western liberal desires for justice for colonial acts" (13, 73).

I understand this illogic to be at least partially related to, or expressive of, the ways in which Indigenism's emphasis on Indigenous shared experiences of land dispossession by colonial governments forces those settlers with "western liberal desires for justice" to confront their complicity in and benefits from the colonial project. Their desire for justice is at odds with what Barker identifies as "a great deal of personal and social energy to denying the existence of settler colonialism, the damage of colonization, and the personal implication of being part of and benefitting from a settler colonial

society" (*Making* 17). As such, Indigenism's land-centred politics inherently recognizes that "the bottom line relationship between Canada and Canadian Aboriginal peoples is and shall always be land" (Million 133). This chapter's invocation of these politics answers calls by Indigenous activists and writers to centre land in current discussions of and efforts toward Indigenous self-determination and in critiques of settler-Indigenous relations within Canada.

This chapter has also shown that much of *Survival* reinforces rather than challenges the negation of Indigenous-settler relations in its analysis of Canadian identity as an inescapable victim of colonialism. Its descriptions of empty landscapes, diagnosis of Canadian cultural anxiety toward American hegemony, claims of Canada's "slightly better track record" in its treatment of Indigenous peoples (Atwood 96), and promotion of settler writers' appropriations of Indigenous myths and legends (Atwood 110) often read as what Tuck and Yang have referred to as "settler moves to innocence" ("Decolonization" 10). These moves preclude the settler author/citizen/reader from critical assessment of the ways that they benefit from the power relations that are inherent to Canada's settler colonial structure by self-positioning the settler as the victim of British imperialism and bypassing Canada's identity as a settler colonial nation. And though the book's scholarship – including this project – consistently reads it as a work of nationalist literary criticism, not least because of its focus on constructing a national literary identity readily accessible to the public, its central thesis that this national identity is symbolized by narratives of "Survival, *la Survivance*" is rooted in Canada's history as a *colony* rather than in its present as a settler colonial *nation*. Moreover, discussions of Indigenous-settler relations in *Survival* service settler conceptions of the self. These

conceptions are dependent upon fantasies of settler Canadian victimization that deny the ways in which settler colonialism is structured to ensure settler Canadian survival.

This chapter has interrogated the critical sleights of hand by which settler anxieties surrounding the violence of colonial dispossession and genocide are displaced and performatively disavowed by fantasies of settler victimization. It also adds political and historical nuance to what I've termed elsewhere the diagnostic approach to Canadian literature by literary critics, whereby critics employ psychological and medical metaphors to both assess and diagnose the literature. Importantly, this chapter reads Atwood's diagnosis of the "*almost* intolerable anxiety" generated by Canadian victim motifs as a strategy of displacement that works to assuage lingering anxieties surrounding settler complicity in colonial violence so that the anxiety of Canadian victimry is only ever *almost* intolerable – it ultimately does not demand change but is, rather, implicated in its own reproduction.

This chapter also argues that Canadian literary scholarship on the colonial mentality perpetuates themes of Canadian victimry at the hands of US imperialism, thereby situating the Canadian-US relationship as the central colonial relationship in Canadian literary criticism of the last century. Critical focus on Canada's relationship with the United States has important consequences for literary critics' ability to critique Canadian settler colonialism, particularly given that settler colonialism is governed by the uneven power dynamics between Indigenous peoples and settlers. It is precisely this dynamic of domination by settlers that, for Coulthard, continues "to facilitate the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority" (6). At the time of *Survival*, this relationship received little critical attention but still cropped up

in Canadian fiction, and, as the final chapter in this project demonstrates, it is characterized by a collective settler anxiety toward the implications of this domineering set of relations for settlers' claims to benevolence and belonging. Narratives of benevolence, like the national peacemaker myth and the "impartial" Mountie, work to solidify settler belonging by attributing Canadian confederacy as a natural consequence of Canadians' "morally superior" approach to colonial expansion – an approach framed throughout CanLit as an inheritance of the British penchant for impartiality. This was in direct contrast to the violent process of US westward expansion, represented by the American mythos and national symbol of the "frontier." Canada' s imagined identity as a more benevolent, tolerant polity is bound up in the maintenance of this contrast which is itself part of the myth-making enterprise that misrepresents Canada's past and present injustices toward Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples are reduced to the symbolic sphere to such a degree that, in *Survival*, any representations of Indigenous oppression are seen "as variants themselves of the victim motif" of Canadian literature, re-affirming the generalized qualities of the victim positions (109).[171] In this way, discussions of Indigenous-settler relations in *Survival* service settler conceptions of the self. In the following chapter, I build upon existing Canadian literary criticism that reads Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* as a female bildungsroman by attending to ways in which the settler identity of protagonist Morag Gunn impacts her developing subjectivity and shapes her ongoing relationship with Métis character Jules Tonnerre. Applying this project's – and settler colonial studies'

[171] See the next chapter's discussion of literary critic W.J. Keith's reading of Jules Tonnerre as "socio-political symbol" in Laurence's *Diviners* (1974) as further evidence of this reductive symbolic registry in Canadian literary criticism.

– assertion that settler colonialism resides in and reproduces through relationships, my close readings suggest that Morag and Jules's relationship incites Morag's settler anxiety toward her sense of belonging and challenges contemporary criticism that reads Morag and Jules as an allegory for a reconciled Canada.

Try to feel, in your heart's core, the reality of others. This is the most painful thing in the world, probably, and the most necessary.

– Margaret Laurence, "My Final Hour"

Chapter 3

Anxious Unbelonging in Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*

INTRODUCTION

Since its release in 1974, *The Diviners* has occupied a predominant space within Canadian literature and the settler imaginary. As the last novel in the beloved Manawaka series, its pages exist as the culmination of Laurence's commentary on what it's like to grow up in and eventually escape the peering eyes of a small prairie town in twentieth-century Manitoba. In his 1997 collection *Challenging Territory: The Writing of Margaret Laurence*, literary scholar Christian Riegel remarks: "a nerve was struck in the Canadian psyche with the humanity Laurence displayed in her fictional portrayals of Canada" (xi). That nerve quickly developed into a larger urge to read Laurence's work alongside the rising sense of nationalism that permeated Canadian society throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s.[172] Providing a body of work that fulfilled the needs of "a Canadian public eager to explore their own identity," Laurence's enduring reputation "bespeaks" what Riegel calls "a relevance to her writing that exceeds considerations of Canadian identity

[172] Canada adopted an official policy of multiculturalism under Pierre Trudeau and his liberal government in 1971 which was written into the Canadian Charter of Rights in 1982. Many attribute the creation of this policy to the earlier Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism established by PM Lester B. Pearson in 1963, which was itself a response to the growing Francophone nationalism in Quebec during this time. In addition to this policy, the economic boom that followed WWII created intense labour demands that required the federal government to revise its immigration policy – a policy that, until 1967's "open door policy", restricted newcomers on the basis of race, class, and religion (*Canadian Encyclopedia* "Immigration Policy"). By 1976, Trudeau and the liberal government passed the *Immigration Act* which radically revised the nation's immigration policy to reflect the development of the new superpower, the United Nations, and its burgeoning neoliberal politics expressed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These intersecting events reveal a much larger international backdrop against which Canada's nationalist surge might be understood.

and nationalism alone" (xiii). According to Clara Thomas, Laurence's friend and critic, "neither her readers nor her audiences could possibly doubt the sincerity of [Laurence's] convictions about Canadian nationality" ("Myth and Manitoba" 55). She cites Laurence's speech at the Simon Fraser Convocation in spring of 1977 as evidence that these convictions are not only nationalist in nature, but also literary:

> The calibre and scope of our literature now is such that it can be read and taught simply because it is interesting, worth reading and worth teaching. But for us it has an added dimension as well. It is our own; it speaks to us, through its many and varied voices, of things which are close to our hearts; it links with our ancestors and with one another.... [we do] have a great need to possess our own land, to know our own heritage, to value ourselves in relation to a world community *[S.F. U. Week,* vol. 8, no. 5].[173]

Highlighting Laurence's invocation of "heritage" and "ancestors," Thomas reiterates that Laurence's "deep involvement in Canadian cultural nationalism" is predicated on the writer's sense of what she has called "a feeling of our own people, of our place of belonging" (*S.F.U. Week,* Ibid.). Propelled in part by official policies that attempted to outline who, exactly, belonged to the nation, such as Trudeau's failed 1969 "Statement of

[173] An obviously settler point-of-view, Laurence speaks of Turtle Island in terms of ownership. Still, her claim that Canadians wish to "to possess our own land" implies that we do not already, despite settler's deeply entrenched "fantasies of entitlement" to this land (Mackey, *Unsettled* 9). As chapter one has discussed, these fantasies are maintained by state power and the settler majority to "justify our legitimacy" (Asch, *Being Here* 6) and originate within Lockean notions of ownership that champion European sovereignty over the land at the moment of contact. I wonder if Laurence's invocation of ownership is an extension of this legacy of Lockean legality, or if it's a Freudian slip of the settler variety, unravelling the interlacing social, cultural, political, and affective threads that fuse these fantasies together to become the fabric of settler life.

the Government of Canada on Indian Policy"[174] and later the "Multiculturalism Act" in 1971,[175] the rising sense of nationalism within the settler majority underpins the novel's exploration of identity and belonging through the orphaned protagonist, Morag Gunn. Published at the same time that Canadian literature as a field of study became institutionalized in secondary and post secondary schools across the country, *The Diviners* serves as a literary artefact of one of the ways in which settlers sought to understand and represent their identity in emphatically nationalist terms.

I locate moments of affective close reading in existing *Diviners* scholarship to explore how these moments interact with critical readings that focus on the intersections of Morag's identity as a woman and writer (Verduyn "Contra" 55) and as a "divided subject" (Davis "Narrating Nation" 109) with an "unsettled attitude" toward the ways in which language can both contradict and reaffirm social conventions (Verduyn 55). I extend these analyses of Morag's intersecting identity as a woman and writer to include "settler." Doing so redirects attention toward the novel's nationalist themes that many critics read as reaffirming settler belonging. Read as an expression of settler anxiety, Morag's "unsettled attitude" challenges these nationalistic readings by undermining the settler "fantasy of entitlement" to Turtle Island, to borrow Mackey's words. Locating these moments of anxiety within the novel shows that such anxiety exists, paradoxically, at the height of Canadian nationalism, suggesting that these nationalistic attitudes are, in part, motivated by a desire to alleviate settler anxiety toward our right to belong. Though

[174] This document is known and often referred to as the "White Paper Act."
[175] See my third chapter for a more comprehensive discussion of the impact of these policies on Indigenous rights in Canada through an analysis of George Manuel's (Secwepemc) *The Fourth World* (1974) and Harold Cardinal's (Cree) *The Unjust Society* (1969) as direct responses to these policies.

this chapter focuses exclusively on tracing settler anxiety throughout Laurence's novel, it should be noted that intersections of gender, class, and race may impact the ways in settler anxiety is represented across settler Canadian texts. Differences may appear in analyses of settler anxiety in works by male writers, or those featuring male protagonists; however, the charting of these differences warrants further study that extends beyond the scope of the present project.

"RIVER OF NOW AND THEN": REVIEWING *THE DIVINERS* CRITICISM

In his 1985 article "Folklore, Popular Culture and Individuation" literary critic Terry Goldie notes that "Morag's narrative remains within the bounds of realism" and that her "individuation is never divorced from her socialization" (105-6). I read the dual processes of individuation and socialization affectively to suggest that settler anxiety is also functioning on both the individual and collective level. Doing so avoids solipsistic readings of settler anxiety as an individuated emotion untethered to the psycho-affective structure of settler Canada, which, as my introduction argues, is upheld in part by settler anxieties toward our right to belong. More recently, Laura K. Davis's critical collection *Margaret Laurence Writes Africa and Canada* (2017) makes the necessary move to read Morag the "divided subject" within the context of these emerging multiculturalist attitudes; she does this to show how the novel "might've played into and helped to shape a new and shifting sense of Canada's national imaginary" (110). Her work puts early poststructuralist readings, which focus on the novel's problematization of language, within the multiculturalist, nationalist context of the time, reading Morag's search for her identity as an allegory for Canada's own search for an identity that was both nationally felt and internationally recognized.

I read Davis's contribution to *Diviners* scholarship as a primary example of the way in which the novel's representations of settler anxiety engender what I term "reconciliatory readings" by settler critics. These readings look to the novel as promoting a nation "unified in its diversity" through its "reparative gestures" between Indigenous (specifically, Métis) and settler peoples (Davis 107). This chapter argues that reconciliatory readings are an attempt to "rescue settler futurity" (Tuck and Yang 13) and in doing so overlook the ways in which Laurence's novel spurs an alternative critical awareness through its depictions of settler anxiety.[176] In attempting to answer this critical call, this chapter re-focuses discussions of Morag's subjectivity toward her status as a settler to bring settler anxiety to bear on understandings of a complex moment in Canadian literary and political history that nuances understandings of fraught nationalism in a Canadian literary context. Noting the affective undercurrents of *Diviners* scholarship helps link them to the broader affective orientations implicit in Canadian literature and its corresponding criticism. I do this through an affective analysis of Morag's relationship with Jules Tonnerre, a Métis character whose continued presence in the town of Manawaka implicitly works to undermine Morag's sense of belonging – a desire that sustains "settler fantasies of entitlement" (*Unsettled* 18).

Morag expresses such settler entitlement one day when she and Jules find themselves traversing the Nuisance Grounds, the name given to the garbage dump where her adoptive father Christie works. She tells Jules that her "family's been around here for

[176] Reconciliatory readings might also be thought of as a "settler move to innocence" (3), following the arguments of Eve Tuck (Unangax̂) and K. Wayne Yang's influential 2012 article "Decolonization is not a metaphor". Tuck and Yang assert that these moves are often attempts by non-Indigenous people to "alleviate the impacts of colonization" and "ultimately represent settler fantasies of easier paths to reconciliation" (4).

longer than anybody in this whole goddamn town" to which Jules grins "not longer than mine" (83). The novel repeatedly offers moments in which Morag's sense of entitlement is undermined by her unease. These moments shift the tone of the novel, marking settler anxiety, or unease, as the novel's "organizing affect," described by affect theorist Sianne Ngai as a text's "general disposition or orientation toward its audience and the world" (*Ugly Feelings* 28). While she is wandering through the Wachakwa Valley she encounters a bridge, wondering "Who built it? Why does it still stay here, rickety, swaying?... Whose is it? Not hers, that is for sure. Something doesn't want her to be here at all" (146-147). Suggestively, Morag's intuitions are cut short when "she hears someone" on the other side of the bridge – Jules Tonnerre. The passage's structure subtly links Jules's presence with Morag's unease and offers him as a potential answer to Morag's question of who built the bridge. As he begins "rocking the bridge" Morag "moves further back from it" (147), symbolizing the way in which settler anxiety can lead to settler dissociation from spaces in which their right to belong is challenged, symbolized by Jules' disruptive rocking.

The first chapter ends with a five-year-old Morag recollecting the circumstance of her parents' deaths and moving in with Christie Logan, one of her father's friends from the war, and his wife, Prin. "I remember their deaths, but not their lives" Morag admits, "yet they're inside me, flowing unknown in my blood and moving unrecognized in my skull" (21). I read this moment as an admission of affect – that which is "inside" Morag, "flowing unknown" in her blood, "moving unrecognized" in her skull (21). Understood as "the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces that can serve to drive us toward movement…

and toward thought" (*Affect Theory Reader* 2), affect makes for a fittingly ambiguous force to turn to in order to make sense of the memories Morag holds. I read the pronoun "they" as an ambiguous reference to her parents' deaths, their lives, their memories -- invented or otherwise -- which Morag carries with her. In this way, we can read Morag's admission that they're "inside" her as an expression of affective *as* knowledge. This knowledge is independent from Morag's – and readers' – ability to distinguish "true" details about her parents from those that she "embroidered later on" (20). Ultimately, though, *The Diviners* suggests that notions of truth get constructed somewhere in-between the personal and collective, represented by Morag and the town of Manawaka.

Arguably, most *Diviners* scholarship reflects this bifold. Many of Laurence's contemporaries tended to focus on Morag's individuation as the novel's primary site of meaning-making[177]. On the other hand, more recent criticism of the last 20 years, such as Kristina Bidwell's (NunatuKavut) essay "Adoption as National Fantasy" (2005) and Davis's aforementioned *Margaret Laurence Writes Africa and Canada* (2017) meld Morag's journey of becoming with Canada's, thereby attending to the novel's nationalist dimensions: "Morag rectifies her own position as an orphan," Davis remarks, "and metaphorically, Canada's position as such, by learning to divine personal and national meaning" (127). These dimensions reflect Canada's emerging national imaginary of the period. Davis notes that this imaginary gained prominence at the same time that it "denied the presence of Aboriginal peoples and forgot its own history as an invader-

[177] See Christl Verduyn's 1991 essay "Contra/diction/s: Language in Laurence's *The Diviners*"; Terry Goldie's 1985 effort "Folklore, popular culture and individuation in *Surfacing* and *The Diviners*"; Clara Thomas's 1976 piece "The Wild Garden and the Manawaka World" as examples of this lean in the novel's early scholarship.

settler colony" (122). Thus, themes surrounding personal histories, forgotten origins, and the search for identity abound in both early and contemporary *Diviners* criticism. Moreover, these themes implicate the novel within a larger nationalist discourse that, as Davis reminds us, depended upon the obfuscation of Canada's settler colonial history.

Understanding the heightened nationalism of 1970s Canada and the questions that it raised for Canadians regarding national identity is important in understanding the novel's exploration of identity through the character Morag. Morag's sense of unbelonging constitutes her character's central internal conflict: it is reinforced not only by her status as an orphaned girl adopted by the town's garbage collector but by the absence of a connection to her familial history. This absence is further emphasized by Christie's copy of *The Clans and Tartans of Scotland*, wherein Morag learns that "the chieftainship of Clan Gunn is undetermined at the present time" (55). Morag yearns to establish ties between herself and her father's clan but the novel renders this impossible through the literal erasure of its lineage. In an attempt to rectify the absent Gunn's for his adopted daughter, Christie constructs an imagined ancestor for Morag: Piper Gunn. Christie's stories of Piper Gunn and his wife's immigration to the Red River serve to reinforce Morag's settler identity and situate it as a direct inheritance of the historicity of the Red River Settlement. This history is told differently by both Jules and Christie, serving as an emblematic reminder of the ways in which the novel offers multiple versions of Canadian history without "present[ing] any of them as definitive" (Davis 125). Importantly, Jules's identity as Métis also situates his character within this history and serves to illuminate rather than obscure the competing claims to the land on which Christie's stories of Piper Gunn take place. In Christie's version, titled "Christie's Tale of

Piper Gunn and the Long March" Morag asks if "they were bad, the halfbreeds and them" (Laurence 98) to which he responds,

"'Bad?' He repeats the word as though he is trying to think what it means.
'No,' he says at last. 'They weren't bad. They were – just there" (99).

Though Christie's response that "they were – just there" could be read as a problematic portraiture of Indigenous passivity – an effective trope that erases the ways in which Indigenous nations actively resisted settler colonial encroachments on their lands – Christie's subsequent invocations of Louis Riel and the Red River Resistance as historical examples of Métis agency complicate such readings. Instead, I argue that Christie's protracted pause serves as an opportunity for readers to also consider "what it means" to recognize Métis presence on the prairies. These opportunities encourage alternative critical inquiries that can complicate histories of nationhood that problematically subsume Indigenous agency within Canada's narrative of progress, especially in the context of westward expansionism.

"LORDS OF THE PRAIRIES: PARADOXICAL PORTRAYLS OF MÉTIS IDENTITY

Laurence's depiction of Jules as Métis and not as First Nations is another way in which the novel complicates its contemporary nationalism by invoking multiple histories of the land that both Morag and the town of Manawaka occupy. The inconsistency with which Métis identity is represented in *The Diviners* aligns with recent developments within the field of Métis studies that map the imposition by settler governments of their own sets of criteria to define the parameters of Métis identity. By depicting Jules as Métis, the novel works to challenge the settler myth of terra nuillius espoused by a young

Morag as she remembers "stacks of books that once belonged to Alisdair Gunn, Morag's grandfather, who came here a long time ago and built the house and started the farm when probably nothing was here except buffalo grass and Indians" (9). In ascribing this assumption to a not-yet-five-year-old Morag, the novel frames terra nuillius as a categorically juvenile understanding of the land's history, and in the pages that follow, repeatedly undermines the veracity of the myth's depiction of empty land through its invocations of Jules and the Tonnerre family as direct descendants of the Métis who fought alongside Riel during what Jules refers to as "The Troubles" (84).[178] When Morag asks him "What's that?" Jules's reply highlights her settler status and connects it to a habitual unknowing: "Out west, there. *You* wouldn't know. You don't know nothin' (84). Through Jules, the novel encourages readers to consider the limits of their own knowledge of this history and their place within it.

On one hand, Laurence reinforces Chris Andersen and Jennifer Adese's (Métis) point that Métis identity is rooted in the historical cultural and geographical specificity of the Northwest Plains (Sakitawak) and the Red River Region[179] by emphasizing the novel's prairie setting and invoking the historical displacement of the Métis on their homeland by settler forces. When a married Morag runs into Jules in Toronto, he tells her of his father Lazarus's death, and the town's refusal to bury him in the town graveyard and have "his

[178] Jules's lineage is further highlighted when he tells Morag that he got his name from his "grandad [who] was lucky he never got killed, there" (84). Before dismissing Morag's questions, he reaches farther into his family's past, reasserting the continued presence of his peoples while guarding against Morag's infringement on his familial history, telling her "It ain't none of yer business" (84).

[179] See Chris Andersen and Jennifer Adese's *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies* (2021) for a comprehensive discussion of the historical and ongoing debates surrounding Métis identity, and emerging critical interventions by Métis scholars working in the field of Métis studies, many of whom are featured in this book.

halfbreed bones spoiling their cemetery" (313). Morag laments "The Métis, once lords of the prairies. Now refused burial space in their own land" (313), invoking the history of westward settlement and drawing out its ongoing implications for the Métis nation. Their daughter Pique's eventual journey to Galloping Mountain – where the remaining Tonnerres have migrated – reinforces the Tonnerres' displacement from their homeland of Red River but also works to broaden the scope with which the Métis' homeland is typically mapped[180]. Moreover, the novel takes care to emphasize that the story of the Tonnerre's forced relocation is one of many: when Pique phones Morag from her new home, Morag thinks to herself that "although at this point [Pique's journey] might feel to her unique, was not unique" (512). In this way, *The Diviners* highlights the marginalization and displacement of the Métis the on their own land and in doing so frustrates the terra nuillius myth that it initially characterizes the region's historicity.

On the other hand, Laurence's depiction of Jules and Morag's daughter, Pique – as a symbol of Canada's reconciled future – leans on a racialized conception of Métis-as-mixed that, as Métis political scientist Daniel Voth argues, disempowers Métis politics and peoplehood.[181] In his chapter "The Race Question in Canada and the Politics of

[180] Métis historian Brenda Macdougall affirms in her 2010 monograph *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* that "because of its size and role in nationalist movements, the Red River has been the focal point of Métis historical discourse", creating within the field a kind of "Red River myopia" that has spurned studies of other parts of the Métis homeland (2). Macdougall points out that historians have responded by expanding their peripherals to recognize "that a Métis identity developed in many parts of North America, and concepts of nationalism could and did take many forms" (2).

[181] Voth begins his chapter with an anecdote from the 2007 Manitoba NDP premier's dinner that highlights the historical continuity of the imposition of settler conceptions on Métis identity. He remembers a joke told by an Indigenous representative, Eric Robinson (Cree) to the majority settler audience in which Robinson remarks that Métis representative Greg Dewar – who was also in attendance – represented "at least half" of

Racial Mixing" Voth traces the operationalization of racial mixing as a political strategy, concluding that, as early as 1839, racial mixing was wielded by the settler government as a "unifying tool in what would become the political project of Canada"[182] in its pacification of minority populations (68). Since then, this strategy has informed both governmental classifications as well as public perceptions of Métis-as-mixed, effectively misrepresenting indigeneity as strictly quantitative and thereby calculating the Métis as less threatening than First Nations to settler Canada's political order (88). It is imperative, then, to read Davis's interpretation of Morag "as the mother of a mixed-race child" who "symbolically gives birth to a new kind of nation" (123) alongside Métis scholars' ongoing critiques of settler contrivances of Métis identity so as not to replicate them.

Early criticism of the novel has difficulty finding its footing in its analysis of Jules, best exemplified by literary critic W.J. Keith's 1988 comment that "Jules Tonnerre is a little too insistent as a socio-political symbol to be wholly credible as a major figure within Morag's life" ("Problems" 111). He chastises Laurence for "forcing a political point" by having Morag enter into a "sexual relationship with the 'socially deprived' Jules", a relationship Keith views as serving "the interests of social concern and plot symmetry" (111) without defining the "political point" he accuses Laurence of forcing,

---

First Nations interests (67). Voth remembers that an exchange of glances between he and Dewar confirmed that neither of them found the joke humorous, despite the raucous laughter coming from the rest of the room. Voth makes the point of his anecdote clear, echoing Million's language of "comfortable knowledges" that settlers hold about Indigeneity: "That Robinson made the joke, or that the room laughed, was not likely malicious. Rather, it alludes to a deep and contrived level of comfort with *knowing* what racial mixing creates in the Canadian experience" (68).

[182] In the same chapter, see Voth's analysis of Lord Durham's 1839 Report on the racial composition of Upper and Lower Canada as a strategy for maintaining English dominance in both regions.

nor articulating the symbolism he ascribes to Jules. His reduction of Jules as a mere "socio-political symbol" is unsubstantiated by the significance placed upon Jules and Morag's relationship throughout the novel. Jules eventually becomes the father of Morag's child, Pique, whom she names after Jules's sister, but "cannot actually call… by the name of Piquette" (358). Moreover, Jules is the only recurring character from Morag's childhood in Manawaka that appears throughout the novel's five sections. The sixth section, "Album" is comprised of the musical arrangements for the songs Jules and Pique write and subsequently share with Morag. The section begins with "The Ballad of Jules Tonnerre" and ends with "Pique's Song" about her family in Galloping Mountain. For these reasons, I think characterizing Jules as a "major figure within Morag's life" is in fact "wholly credible" – even if Laurence's portrayal of nuanced, multi-faceted, and culturally informed Métis identity may at times be strained.[183]

These responses appear to be influenced by the very nationalistic machinery and settler anxiety that the novel both betrays and complicates, allowing them to bypass the novel's politics while nonetheless confirming their relevance in understanding the novel's legacy of "critical unease" (Keith 102). Despite their inarticulation, Peterman's remark regarding the novel's "urgently felt" political qualities is tinged with affect whose probing might get us closer to a cogent analysis of how affect is at play within and throughout the novel's critical reception. As Clara Thomas notes, during the 1970s "many critics and reviewers began to attend to the politics of nationalism, finding in Laurence's

[183] In a 1978 special issue of *Journal of Canadian Studies* dedicated to Margaret Laurence's fiction, critic Michael Peterman recites a similarly ambiguous refrain when he remarked that the novel's "explicit political qualities [were]… more clearly defined and more urgently felt" than in Laurence's earlier work, yet Peterman also fails, ironically, to "clearly define" the exact nature of these political qualities.

work certain approaches designed to speak particularly to Canadians" (qtd. in Irvine's "Updating Critical Spaces" 188). Thus, we might extend this critical uneasiness to the novel's engagement with nationalism as it is allegorized, Davis's and Bidwell's work argue, by Morag and Jules's relationship.

Davis allegorizes Morag's relationships with the men in her life – the Englishman Brooke, the Scot Dan McRaith, and the Métis Jules – as Canada's relationship with imperial Britain, Scotland, and Indigenous nations[184] to argue that *The Diviners* "foregrounds, re-situates, and re-figures the central and important historical and contemporary relation as that of settler-descendant and the Aboriginal person, rather than the British or French" ("Narrating Nation 118). She argues that the novel "constructed the future of the Canadian nation in familial terms through the characters of Morag, Jules, and their daughter Pique" by simultaneously employing and challenging the "traditional notion of the family" as a means of critiquing its embeddedness in patriarchy (109), reading the distance between Jules and Morag as feminist revisioning of the familial structure, one that maintains Morag's fiercely fought-for independence in the wake of her divorce from Brooke. Though Davis's analysis aptly employs the critical contributions of feminist theory to Laurence's revisioning of familial relationships and their national allegories, it nonetheless sentimentalizes the profound distance – both geographical and

[184] The language of Davis's allegory belies a pan-Indigenous reading of Jules insofar as it only extends the nation-to-nation terminology to Britain and Scotland, omitting reference to the particular *nation* that Jules represents (the Métis nation), generalizing his position within the allegory as that of all "Aboriginal peoples" (118).

metaphorical – between Jules and Morag and the settler-Indigenous relations they represent.[185]

This chapter argues that this distance represents an incommensurability between the "two streams of heritage" of Western Canada represented in the novel: the Scottish settlers and the Métis.[186] It follows the novel's conflicting representations of this distance as at times, welcomed by each character, and at others, a product of what Dian Million, in her summary of Niels Braroe's study *Indian and White: Self Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community* (1975), refers to as a "densely woven communal Canadian 'ignorance' that developed as "a finely tuned knowledge production that worked to create an almost total separation between the 'races'" (Million 47). Jules maintains his distance from Morag when she comes to stay with him after leaving Brooke in Toronto before she moves to Vancouver. He tells her that she can "stay as long as [she] need[s] to. But not

---

[185] Though commending Davis's *Margaret Laurence Writes Africa and Canada* as one of the first critical discussions of Laurence's published and unpublished letters, critic Chigbo A. Anyaduba still problematizes her "congratulatory reading" of Laurence's African novels and Manawaka series, which he laments "sacrifices critical perception for claims that at best remain sentimental" ("Margaret Laurence Writes" 227). Hoping not to earn a similar assessment, this chapter investigates the ways in which settler sentiments toward Indigeneity constitute an affective inquiry into Indigenous-settler relations that remains critical of the ways settler colonialism conditions these sentiments.

[186] Davis writes that, by reconstructing Canada's "two streams of heritage" as English and Métis rather than English and French in The Diviners, Laurence took a position that resisted the hegemony of central Canada's "two solitudes" by replacing those "two solitudes" with Western Canada's "two streams" ("Narrating Nation 111). Laurence's replacement of the term "solitudes" with "streams" is perhaps a nod to her use of river imagery throughout the novel. Echoing the foci of earlier criticism, Thomas reads the river as symbolic of Morag's continual "musings on time" that she further argues frame Morag's "entire journey towards self-acceptance" and self-knowledge ("Wild Garden" 401). Both assessments relate the river's significance to Morag's ability to know herself, or unknow or "unsettle" the past. By the end of the novel, Morag's initial certainty that "the river flowed both ways" morphs into a proclamation of comfortable uncertainty: Morag, gazing out her window, notes that "the river, as so often here, *seemed* to flow both ways" (525 emphasis added).

too long, or it'll turn out bad. As I ought to know" (327). His conscious dissociation is also expressed affectively when he tells her he was "gonna sing some of the songs [he wrote] to you" but decides against it: "But I got a feeling I won't, not now." When she asks him why not, he ascribes Braroe's "densely woven communal Canadian ignorance" to Morag, replying "I don't guess you'd hear them, really" (327), thereby asserting the impact of socially charged ignorance on their relationship. In other cases, this distance represents a shared desire to respect one another's independence, as exemplified in a letter Jules sends to Morag after Morag sends Jules a picture of newborn Pique. Jules replies that Morag "sure [is] a crazy woman" but that "it is up to you" (358). His ambiguous reference to "it" reads as a reference to Morag's life generally, and her decision to have Pique more specifically, solidifying Jules as a figure that respects her independence rather than as a force that attempts to stifle it, like her ex-husband Brooke.

Contemporary critical assessments such as Davis's have taken care to attend to Jules's character in their analyses of the novel's engagement with questions of identity and belonging within the nationalist context of 1970s Canada. However, Davis's assessment still enacts a reconciliatory reading that simplifies the novel's presentation of this nationalism by reading Jules and Morag's daughter Pique as the literal birth of a reconciled Canada. This reading exemplifies Bidwell-Fagan's claim that the novel struck "a deep and perhaps unconscious chord in European settlers and their descendants" in that it enacted a "desire for a nation that combines and reconciles white and Native peoples" ("Adoption" 251). I extend Bidwell-Fagan's analysis by reading this desire as an affective alleviation to the anxious uncertainty of settler belonging and locating such affective refrains within the novel's representations of Jules and Morag's relationship.

Rendering the distance between Jules and Morag as a symbol of incommensurability complicates the novel's larger nationalist themes as well as those critical assessments that celebrate the novel as promoting a nation "unified in its diversity" through its "reparative gestures" (Davis 107).

The novel and its attending criticism not only reinforce the conception of Métis -as-mixed, but also problematically present the possibility of *becoming* indigenous as a solution to settler unbelonging. Morag often adopts language that is specific to Indigenous organizations of family and society, in her attempts to feel, though uncomfortably, at home on Turtle Island, proposing that she keeps the old photographs that spur her memories because "perhaps they're my totems, or contain a portion of my spirit" (6). Davis's remark that "through Jules, it is as if Morag feels a kind of kinship with the Metis nation" (109) also exudes this trope of settlers becoming indigenous. Firstly, Davis's claims of Morag's "kinship" with the Métis nation should be tested against Métis conceptions and practices of kinship. Even though Jules and Morag have reproduced, their bond maintains a strict distance that neither party seems eager to close, favouring independence over attachment.[187] To be sure, the term "kinship" seems a bit overreaching in its description of Morag's relationship with Jules. Métis scholars working within the field of Métis studies often understand kinship alongside the concept of wahkootowin, a Cree term that Métis scholar Brenda Macdougall translates directly as "relationship" in order to stress the relationality with which many Indigenous nations –

[187] These lines from Joni Mitchell's classic 1974 bop "Help Me" perhaps best encompass the thesis of Morag and Jules's relationship: we love our lovin' / but not like we love our freedom."

including the Métis – continue to understand their responsibilities to one another and organize their societies. Macdougall explains:

> Strictly translated, wahkotoowin can be defined as 'relationship' or 'relative,' but this belies much of the meaning and sentiment that the term and its derivatives actually express. The significance ascribed to familial relationships or the concept of relatedness was an idealized social value by which Metis people attempted to order their society. When the value became operationalized, it reflected behaviours that were evident in daily interactions, decision making, and treatment of one another. In short, family, as expressed through wahkootowin, was a 'style of life' that reflected a shared cultural identity. ("*Wahkotoowin:* Family and Cultural Identity" 433)

In addressing Andersen's proposal to use models of Indigenous "peoplehood" to understand Indigenous collectivity in place of western conceptions of "nationhood," Cree- Métis scholar Robert L.A. Hancock marks a further connection between wahkootowin and kinship, arguing that kinship, "as a glue that binds a people together" is "crucial both for the peoplehood model and for the application of that model in the Metis context" ("The Power of Peoplehood" 53). Elaborating on his glue metaphor, Hancock cites literary scholar Daniel Health Justice's (Cherokee) definition of kinship as "a delicate web of rights and responsibilities" noting that Justice's definition frames kinship as "an action, not merely a thing" (53). In the novel, Morag's search for her identity is an often-isolating endeavour that certainly impacts her relationships but is never fully rectified by any of them, as Morag attests: "I know that whatever I'm going to do next, or wherever I go, it'll have to be on my own" (319). Kinship's principles of reciprocity and

community-building do not fit with Morag's "go-it-alone" mentality, so to extend her and Jules's relationship as one of kinship with an entire nation reads as inaccurate.

Rather than a form of familial tie, Bidwell-Fagan calls their relationship a "nationalistic fantasy" wherein European culture is reconciled with that of Indigenous nations whose presence within the settler imagination "represent[s] an authentic North American identity" ("Adoption as National Fantasy" 251). She goes on to explain that "the fantasy of becoming Indigenous, or 'going Indian' reflects a *longing* to be confidently at home on the North American continent (251 emphasis added). Bidwell-Fagan's analysis is also an affective one: the settler fantasy of becoming is motivated by a longing to belong, the same longing that so much of Canadian settler literature has taken as its primary focus in its representations of settler life. Indigenous ancestral ties and ongoing relationships with their land are co-opted by the settler fantasy of becoming and by extension, belonging. Davis's reconciliatory reading of Jules and Morag's relationship further renders Jules's Indigeneity as a tool in Morag's search for belonging. This reading replicates the illogic of the myth of benevolence, which necessitates Indigenous presence as the recipients of such benevolence, insofar as both narratives use Indigeneity to construct a specific image of settler identity that rewrites the genocidal practices of nation-building as a peaceful cooperation between Indigenous nations and European settlers. Mackey remarks that Indigenous peoples have been constructed as "necessary players in nationalist myths… who reflect back white Canada's self-image of tolerance" (*House of Difference* 15). Leslie Monkman makes a similar claim regarding the role of Indigenous peoples in settler stories of nationhood nearly twenty years earlier in *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature* noting that "in each era of

Canadian literary history, writers have turned to the Indian and his culture for standards by which to measure the values and goals of white Canadian society" (3). These patterns of misrepresentation are themselves alleviations of settler anxiety toward our psychic preoccupation with "belonging" – what settler scholar Paulette Regan has remarked as a suspicion long-held by settlers that we can never be at home on Turtle Island (*Unsettling* 106). This chapter challenges those critiques that reduce Jules to a "necessary player" in the novel's nationalism by offering an alternative reading of Jules and Morag's relationship. This reading hinges on analysis of the affective moments between the two characters as evidence for Morag's settler anxiety to argue that the novel represents less a "desire for a nation that combines and reconciles white and Native peoples" ("Adoption" 251) and more of an anxious acknowledgment that this reconciliation is impossible if the insidious mythology of settler benevolence continues its uncritical reign as Canada's founding fiction. The novel takes care to emphasize a pluralistic version of Canadian history through Christie's copy of *The Clans and Tartans of Scotland,* his stories of Morag's ancestor, Piper Gunn, and Jules's tales of his great-grandfather, Rider Tonnerre during the Red River Resistance. These pluralisms challenge singular versions of Canadian history, which are most explicitly represented by the lessons Morag learns in history class, where she first meets Jules.

"NOT LONGER THAN MINE": ANXIOUS UNBELONGING IN THE BALLAD OF JULES AND MORAG

Jules is first introduced to readers through the "Memorybank movie: "The Thistle Shamrock Rose Entwine the Maple Leaf Forever" during a moment of mutual concession between he and Morag about the banalities of history class. A young Morag sits in the

classroom unaware that the teacher has called on her to spell 'Egypt' because she "is not here. She is in the Wachakwa valley" (77), where the Tonnerre family shack resides.[188] When she fails to answer her teacher, she "takes a quick glance to see if anybody is still looking at her" and "catches the eye of Skinner Tonnerre[189] who also sits in the back row out of choice, who "grins at her" and to whom Morag, "astounded, grins back" (78). We learn that Jules is "taller than any of the other boys and has better muscles" and that he is older than the rest of the class because he and his dad, Lazarus Tonnerre "disappear for weeks, setting traplines way up at Galloping Mountain" (79). Morag's description of the Tonnerre family is couched in Manawaka gossip and prejudice: "[they're] called *those breeds,* meaning halfbreeds," she notes, followed by her simplistic explanation that "they are part Indian, part French, from away back. They are mysterious" (79). Wondering if "Skinner does notice the passing remarks" or "just doesn't let on. Like her" (79), Morag immediately rejects their potentially shared sentiments, concluding "He is *not* like her" (79), replicating the assumptive attitudes of the people of Manawaka who "talk about [the Tonnerres] but don't talk *to* them" (79). This phrasing appears a few pages earlier when

[188] The valley's naturalized depictions of "couch grass high around her" and "thick chokecherry bushes" provide an alternative setting to the rigid social structures that organize her school and more broadly, the town of Manawaka (77). But it also reinscribes the common trope of equating Indigenous peoples and cultures with nature, a practice which confines Indigenous peoples and cultures to Canada's naturalized past and limits their representation in literature and by extension, the settler imaginary, as inactive agents in present. See Chapter 4 "Becoming Indigenous" of Mackey's *House of Difference* (2002); Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian* (1992), and Leslie Monkman's *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature* (1981) on the pervasiveness of this trope in settler Canadian fiction and poetry.

[189] Jules is referred to as his childhood nickname, Skinner, in the memorybank movies. When a young Morag inquires as to why, he offers a several suggestions: "some say it's cause I useda be so damn skinny. Some say it's 'cause I am real good at skinning any damn t'ing, rabbit, muskrat, even deer" (84).

Morag overhears her teachers talking about her from the teachers' lounge but "doesn't let on. If you let on, ever, you're done for" (71). Morag's motto exemplifies an intentional suppression of affect, implicit in the act of "letting on" as a means of enduring the judgement and expectations placed upon her by her teachers, who function here as a synecdoche for Manawaka society. As Verduyn puts it, young Morag is eager to "learn the language of society, to *know* the rules" ("Contra" 56). Morag's determination to never "let on" renders expression of affect an obstacle to such knowledge and in doing so alludes to affect's potential as a subversive ontological alternative to the rigid expectations imposed by normative society, represented by Manawaka.

This passage is rife with affective undertones that set up a moment of mutuality if only to undermine it. The undercutting of this moment of potential apperception suggests a disassociation between the settler and Métis communities that Morag and Jules represent, one that further troubles Davis's claims of "kinship."[190] Morag's reciprocation of Jules's knowing grin can be read as a moment of affect represented by the prefatory verb "astounded," marking a kind of immediacy to the moment in which Morag responds.[191] Still, Morag undermines this moment of potential recognition when she

---

[190] In the introduction to *Affect Theory Reader* (2010) which she co-edited, cultural theorist Melissa Gregg cites American music writer Greil Marcus's anecdote on Henri Lefebvre's theory of the affective moment that is helpful in articulating my insistence on the "moment" as a site of study germane to my analysis of this scene: "social theorists had to examine not just institutions but moments – moments of love, poetry, justice, resignation, hate, desire – and he insisted that within the mysterious but actual realm of every day these moments were at once all-powerful and powerless…. The rub was that no one knew how to talk about such moments" ("Critical Response" 79). Gregg contends that these moments "do not arise in order to be deciphered or decoded or delineated but, rather, must be nurtured into lived practices of the everyday as perpetually finer-grained postures for collective inhabitation" (*Affect Theory* 21).

[191] Still, applying the term "response" to this moment seems a bit incongruent with my theorization of affect as an existing terrain comprised of the *interaction* between

concludes that "he is *not* like her" and proceeds not to look at Jules for the rest of the day (79). Sara Ahmed's conception of "shared feelings" clarifies Morag's dissociation. Ahmed describes shared feelings as "like a thickness in the air" that "not only heighten tension but are also in tension" (*Cultural Politics* 17). She goes on to note that "emotions in their very intensity involve miscommunication, such that even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don't necessarily have the same relationship to feeling" (17). Morag's grin, as an expression of affect, represents her shared feeling with Jules at the same time that it demonstrates Morag's orientation toward this moment of mutuality as one of profound discomfort. She feels as though she should not share any feelings with Jules because to do so would suggest they are more similar than they are different – a suggestion Morag categorically rejects through her insistence that "he is *not* like her" (80). In this way, despite their brief affective alignment, Morag's feelings remain "in tension" with Jules's and exemplify Ahmed's rendering of the complex relationality inherent in the concept of affect.

The passage's structure hints at the novel's nationalistic themes and challenges their inherently settler point of view. Immediately after Morag's rejection of their

---

individuals and collectives. This theorization stresses relationality and, in this way, reaffirms sociologists Nick J. Fox and Pam Alldred's claim that an affective ontology is "less interested in being, per se, than in relations *between* things" *(Affect and Literature* 356). As I mention in my introduction, I do not wish to make definitive claims regarding what affect *is:* its distinction as either a precognitive, bodily sensation or conscious response is to "assume the objectivity of the very distinction between inside and outside" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 9) and thereby replicate the epistemological binaries that affect theory, as demonstrated by Fox and Alldred, seeks to trouble. So, I call this a moment of affect as a way of pointing to its presence without implying the claims to causality that the term "response" suggests.

commonality, the class is instructed to sing "The Maple Leaf Forever"[192]— a song that celebrates General Wolfe's 1759 victory over the French that led to English supremacy in the region. Through its narrative structure, this passage links Morag's exclusionist definition of Jules as "not like her" to the exclusion of the French and Indigenous peoples the song celebrates. Her encounter with Jules becomes another moment of contact within this exclusionary history, suggesting that the make-up of her present-day Manawaka is in fact a product of this history. This exclusion contradicts the song's inclusionary image of Canada, espoused explicitly in the final image of "the thistle shamrock rose entwine / The maple leaf forever!" (80). Morag "loves this song and sings with all her guts. She also knows what the emblems mean" (80) and goes onto list whose families in Manawaka these emblems represent: "Thistle is Scots, like she and Christie" she begins, "Shamrock is Irish like the Connors and Reillys and them. Rose is English, like Prin, once of good family" (80). Morag's love for the song derives from the sense of belonging it engenders. She fiercely defends the sense of belonging that the Scottish thistle represents for her and Christie, expressed in the parenthetical assertion that it represents "(others, of course, too, including some stuck-up kids, but *her,* definitely, and they better not forget it)" (80). Morag performs her settler longing when she "sings with all her guts"; this longing gets displaced, however, when "suddenly she looks over to see if Skinner Tonnerre is singing" and notes that "he is not singing now" (80). Jules's silence is emphasized by the offsetting of this line, mirroring the Tonnerres' and, by extension, Métis exclusion from

[192] The lyrics of the song appear phonetically, as Morag hears them: "In the days of yore / From Britain's shore / Wolfe the donkless hero came (what means *Donkless?*) / And planted firm / Britannia's flag / On Can-na-da's fair do-main / Here may it wave / Our boas' our pride / And join in LUV together / The thistle shamrock rose entwine / The maple leaf forever! (79-80).

both the song and Morag's subsequent list of lineages. His silence directly contrasts Morag's enthusiastic singing, underscoring its function as foil to Morag's performance of her settler sense of belonging. The narrative's use of Jules's full name further highlights his family's omission from the song and its settler point of view. The song is a prime example of the "reassurances" that Bidwell argues the novel offers its predominately white audience, and to which she accredits the novel's enduring popularity ("Adoption" 264). The fact that the children sing the song in a history class asks readers to consider the Tonnerres' omission as something that is *taught,* and Morag's performative crooning demonstrates the ways in which these lessons fortify settler feelings of superiority. The adverb "suddenly" functions similarly to her "astounded" grin a few passages earlier, marking Morag's sustained attentiveness to Jules as a visceral, affective force that she seems unable to regulate and is emblematic of an anxiety specific to her settler identity.

Deeply relational, Morag's anxious uncertainty arises during Jules's refusal to sing and thus celebrate a version of Canadian history that privileges the settler *through* Indigenous erasure. Upon registering Jules's refusal, Morag contends, "He comes from nowhere. He isn't anybody," reinforcing her description of the Tonnerres as "mysterious" (79) a page earlier. Her insistence on the obscurity of Jules's lineage is contradicted by the impact of his presence: the memorybank movie ends as an anxious Morag "stops singing, not knowing why. Then she feels silly about stopping, so sings again" (80). At first, the song is joyfully received by Morag; her enthusiastic singing might also be read as a way for a young Morag to re-align herself with her peers after the public embarrassment of being called upon by the teacher while she daydreams of Wachakwa (78). But what's most important to my analysis is the way in which Morag's anxiety

circumvents her ability to "remain comfortably at home" by troubling her sense of belonging that I argue the song's patriotism initially generates for her. Detailed in this project's introduction, my rendering of anxiety as an amorphous, dysphoric affect also helps us read the affective whiplash Morag experiences when she "stops singing," "feels silly," so "starts singing again" (80) as symptomatic of Morag's settler anxiety toward Jules's refusal and what it might mean for her sense of belonging. Jules's silence creates the conditions under which Morag questions her enthusiastic identification with the thistle and in doing so avoids reading his silence as a double erasure of Métis presence. Instead, Jules's deliberate refusal reaffirms his presence in the classroom and contravenes the absence of his people from the song's exclusionary image of nationhood.

Though it's tempting to arrive at the cynical conclusion that Morag does not actually learn to challenge the specifically settler point of view of Canadian history the song espouses, since Morag admits that she does not know why she stops singing (80), paying attention to the affective residue of Morag's response shows us that Morag does in fact develop a different affective relationship to the patriotism the song is clearly meant to elicit, even if she can't consciously articulate "why." The affective whiplash Morag experiences (80) suggests that her affective orientation toward the song has morphed into an anxious uncertainty about her settler identity, a far cry from the comfortable certainty its images of thistles and shamrocks once offered. In this moment, Regan's long-held suspicion of settler unbelonging surfaces, and its representation within a novel whose primary audience is, as Bidwell-Fagan notes, settler, layers its potential as a moment of subversive affect. It is true that Morag does not explicitly denounce the song's didacticism, but I want to suggest that Morag's admission that she does not *know* why she

stops singing is not evidence of her continued ignorance of the exclusionary nature of the "The Maple Leaf Forever"; rather, I read it as evidence of the way in which the novel offers affect as a productive *unknowing*. Though she "sings again," Morag's affective relationship to the song and its setter point of view is irretrievably altered; it will never offer the sense of belonging it once did and in this way disrupts her stable subject position.

Part of the incommensurable distance between Morag and Jules stems from Jules's inability to live within the bounds of the settler mythologies discussed in previous chapters of this project. Verduyn's rendering of Jules as a character "whose experiences and representations of 'reality' contradict its conventions" ("Contra" 53) reaffirms Jules as a character living outside of the mythologies of Canadian benevolence that conventionalize Manawaka settler society. He is conscious that these myths do not reflect his lived experience as a Métis man and instead reflect what Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor has called "manifest manners" – that is, "racialist notions and misnomers sustained in archives and lexicons as 'authentic' representations of *indian* cultures" (*Manifest Manners* vii). As a pervasive misnomer, Vizenor writes that the "indian" "has no referent to real native cultures and communities" and is thus a "simulation" whose presence signals "the absence of real natives" (vii). Jules invokes the simulation when he runs into Morag in Toronto as an adult and describes his experiences working as a singer. He insists, "you should see me. One-man circus. Satin shirt with a lotta beadwork, and sometimes a phoney doeskin jacket with fringes and a lotta plastic porcupine quills in patterns. That's what *they* like" (311 emphasis added). Jules's comments not only reflect Vizenor's concept of 'the Indian' as "simulation" but also situate these simulations as the

products of settler desire – what "they like" (311). The Tonnerres' experiences of violence, racism, and geographical dislocation exemplify their marginalization, and the repeated imagery of their isolated shack in the Wachakwa Valley link their marginality to the historical displacement of the Métis by settlers and their governments following the 1885 Red River Resistance.

Like many works of Indigenous fiction, autobiography, and memoir, the Tonnerres' experiences contradict the settler myths of benevolent tolerance to offer a counternarrative to settler stories of peaceful co-habitation between settler immigrants and Indigenous nations. In noting the influence of myth on reality, Lumbee legal scholar Robert A. Williams contends that "myths have consequences" and that in Canada "popular myths that shape our historical imaginary extol the virtues of the 'pioneer spirit' and the practices of 'civilizing new frontiers' and 'settling empty lands'" (qtd. in Regan *Unsettling* 68). Million notes that many of these consequences can be characterized as a profound distance between settlers and Indigenous peoples, whose segregation occurred not just geographically but, as Million reminds us, through a "deep seated social distancing that was neither hidden nor apologetic" (*Therapeutic Nations* 82). Though I locate this distance primarily between Jules and Morag, it also features in her relationship with their daughter, Pique.

THE FELT KNOWLEDGE OF PIQUETTE GUNN TONNERRE

A telephone conversation between Morag and Pique exemplifies the visceral violence this distance often provokes. Pique tells her mother that she "nearly got busted" but when Morag inquires "what for" Pique goes silent until her mother's coaxing provokes a response: "Cool it, eh?... it was outside of some little nothing-type town just

inside Manitoba…" (122). Though Pique tries to deflect her mother's prodding, she continues: "a car went by, and it was this bunch of, like, you know, kind of middle-aged guys, pretty jowly and obviously the local businessmen or something. So they see me, yes? I take one look and think *uh-uh.* So you know what they do then?" Morag replies that she "can't imagine," with the text undermining such naivety, noting "She could, though, and none of it was human" (123). Pique goes on to tell her mother that they began throwing beer bottles at her, with one of the men cracking a bottle and "heav[ing] it at [her], meantime yelling all kinds of shit. Well, the glass got me on the arm, and I guess the blood kind of scared them. They took off" (123).[193]

In the chapter "Gendered Racialized Sexuality" from *Therapeutic Nations* (2013), Million unpacks the ways in which gendered racialized violence toward Indigenous women is expressed in Amnesty International's report *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada*[194] (2007) Million notes that this report follows a prolific body of work by Indigenous women detailing their experiences and analyses of this violence that spans at least four decades (33). As a late addition to this corpus, the report "highlight[s] the different discourses that exist in Canada… for explaining this violence" whose endurance Million attributes to the "considerable Canadian indifference to Indigenous women's lives" that can be identified as a "recognizable history" (Million 33, 35). Million's affective analysis renders this

[193] Pique's story is important to note in the wake of contemporary Indigenous movements that have spoken out against the disproportionate violence affecting Indigenous women, most notably Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).
[194] Million specifies that AI's report is based off The Sisters in Spirit campaign, an effort co-founded by the families of the disappeared women and girls and Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) (53).

endemic violence as the product of a bifold enterprise of settler discourses of Indigenous "immorality" and the affective indifference they generate. Her charge that these "moral stigmata are produced and attached to race, gender, and sexualities as lived structures of feeling" reinforces her analysis of colonialism as a "felt, affective relationship" (46) that inspired this project. As a counterforce to settler discourses of violent indifference, Million posits Indigenous women's narratives as a form of "felt knowledge" about their lived experiences of gendered and racialized violence – violence that constitutes "the moral affective heart of capitalism and colonialism" (56). I argue that in *The Diviners,* the affective language Pique employs to relay her story can be read as an expression of her felt knowledge that exposes settler violence toward Indigenous women.

Read today, *The Diviners'* 1974 release date is a testament to the continuance of settler violence and indifference toward Indigenous life. Pique's story exemplifies Indigenous women's felt knowledge that their Indigeneity is often a target for settler violence. That Pique tells her story in the novel's present-day further unmasks this violence as an ongoing feature of settler-Indigenous relations. Pique expresses the feltness of her knowledge of perpetual danger when she suggests that "maybe what they really would've liked was to lay me and then slit my throat. I had that *feeling*" (123 emphasis added). She extends her felt knowledge to explain that she was arrested after stopping at a house to ask for a place to wash: "I guess it was just I was walking through their town, by myself, like, and how I got the bleeding arm would've been too uncomfortable for them to know, probably" (124).

Pique's comments reflect Million's concept of "comfortable knowledges" which reinforce stereotypes about Indigenous peoples as a means of justifying their

marginalization in Canadian society and are, I argue, the affective undercurrents that sustain Braroe's "densely woven communal ignorance." The residents of the house perform communal ignorance by rejecting the truth of what happened to Pique in an effort to remain "comfortable" in their "knowledge" about what her Indigeneity means. The maintenance of this comfort is another "settler move to innocence" that Unangax̂ scholar Eve Tuck and ethnic studies scholar K. Wayne Yang describe as "problematically attempt[ing] to reconcile settler guilt and complicity" (3). Of course, it's impossible to know whether or not the residents felt any kind of guilt or complicity in the violence toward Pique based on the details Laurence provides, but their decision to call the police is itself a violent denial of Pique's reality as something "too uncomfortable for them to know" (124). The scene becomes a performance of how settler mythology – maintained by these "comfortable knowledges" – recreates Indigenous culpability and responsibility for the violence to which Indigenous peoples are subjected. Likewise, Pique is imagined by the residents as the source of the violence by which she is targeted. Their response is evidence of their shared desire to stick to those comfortable misconceptions of Indigenous peoples that render their experiences of violence as somehow inevitable, or even worse, deserved. These misconceptions are, cyclically, a product of those finely tuned knowledge productions that galvanize settler moves to innocence.

Like his daughter, Jules is cognizant of the pervasiveness of settler comfort in constructing narratives of Indigenous immorality. Morag unwittingly invokes Million's comfortable knowledges when she responds to Jules's demand that she tell him what happened in the aftermath of the fire that killed his sister Piquette and her children years

before. She ends by telling Jules that "it was said so, afterwards, that she'd been on the home-brew" (320), to which Jules "laughs bitterly" and counters, "It would be said" (320). Jules's bitter recognition of the stereotypes the townspeople thrust upon his family emphasizes their pervasiveness within the settler imaginary. His use of the auxiliary verb "would" – a verb that can express past, present, and future actions – suggests that this pervasiveness extends temporally, too, and further highlights how these comfortable knowledges constitute both historical and ongoing settler misperceptions about Indigenous peoples. The violence of these misperceptions is emphasized when Morag continues her recollection of the fire and Jules "cries out in some kind of pain which cannot be touched by her" (321). Morag's inability to touch his pain reflects the distance that I argue structures their relationship, which, in this passage, is a product of Braroe's "finely tuned ignorance" that remains unrecognized by Morag yet powerfully present for Jules. Their distance is compounded by Jules's painful declaration "I hate you… I hate all of you. Every goddamn one" (322) that effectually stresses Morag's settler status and binds her to the settler publics that de-humanize Jules and Pique as simulation and stereotype.

IMPLICATIONS OF INCOMMENSURABILITY: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS, FINAL FEELINGS

Most of this chapter is concerned with analyzing the affective moments created by Jules and Morag in order to show how settler anxiety conditions them. In doing so, it offers an alternative analysis to the novel's dominant critical discourse that reads Morag and Jules's relationship as representative of a reconciled Canada in allegorical terms. My analysis returns to their everyday encounters, those moments of affective exchange that at

once shape and are shaped by the psycho-affective structure of settler Canada upheld, in part, by a specifically *settler* anxiety toward Indigeneity. This anxiety gets represented within *The Diviners* as a persistent feature of Morag and Jules's relationship and denies settler audiences the satisfaction that other reconciliatory readings might proffer. Moving from the allegorical to the everyday shows how these encounters can add up to something like a psycho-affective structure in that they constitute those "structures of feeling" that uphold settler dominance not just through policy and other governmental machinations, but through shared sentiments of superiority that are themselves reflective of the settler-Canadian government's perpetually paternalistic approach to Indigenous-settler relations. My focus on the relationship between Jules and Morag follows affect as a thoroughly relational force that accumulates in the "in-between-ness" of encounters. The accumulation of settler anxiety in the encounters between Morag and Jules is an implicit reminder that affect contains "no natural projects; thus, affect might be imperceptible or incite or mobilize intensities of any possibility in any situation" (*Therapeutic* 49). I mobilize Morag's settler anxiety as the site of my analysis in order to incite alternative understandings of *The Diviners* that do not take away from its nationalistic themes but complicate them, rendering the novel as text that betrays settler anxiety precisely *because* of its inherent nationalism.

Moreover, focusing on affect's relationality avoids solipsistic readings of settler anxiety as an individual emotion by stressing its operation as a branch of Canada's settler structures of feeling. In analyzing *The Diviners* as a settler, my efforts to avoid such readings required me to consider the limitations of posing settler anxiety as a potentially generative affect through which we might de-naturalize settler colonial power structures.

I need to be attuned to the ways in which affect has operated to normalize such structures and situate Indigenous peoples as "the affectable others who become incorporated into settler subjectivity in order to establish settler claims to self determination" (Simpson et. al *Theorizing Native Studies* 218). This project hopes to situate settler anxiety as a fruitful contribution to analyses of the "settler problem," offering an alternative avenue of settler colonial inquiry that does not rely on the pathologization of Indigenous peoples as "affectable others."

Analyzing the representations of settler anxiety within *The Diviners* can also reveal its role as the novel's "organizing affect" and further locate its presence within the multiculturalist moment within which the novel was written and received. From the 1970s onward, the story of Canada's tolerant nationhood is framed within the policy of multiculturalism, a policy the Canadian government defines as "a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity" (qtd. In Monkman's *A Native Heritage* 15). This period saw a renewed interest in carving out a nationalist literature reflective of those multiculturalist values just coming into view by a settler public. Revisiting the literature of this particular moment in Canadian history with an eye for its affective refrains shows us the continuity with which settler anxiety both evades and pervades the settler imaginary and reaffirms its foundational role in constructing narratives of a tolerant, benevolent nationhood promoted by official policy.

It may be argued that all action begins with unease, but if so, that unease must not only direct us back into the past, but must also situate us squarely within the problems and opportunities of the present.

– Warren Cariou, “Haunted Prairie”

Conclusion

"Anxious Preoccupations" has demonstrated that settler anxiety influenced Canadian literature at a pivotal moment of its development into a scholarly discipline. It has demonstrated that the heightened nationalism of the 1970s was energized by increasing desires for a national identity that could distinguish Canada from the imperial legacies of Britain and America. Many Canadian writers believed that literature was the site from which this identity could be excavated and articulated to an anxious public, and it was this belief that fuelled much of the critical output of the period, including that of Frye and Atwood. As this project makes clear, this nationalism was fuelled by simultaneous desires and anxieties surrounding the future of the Canadian settler state. The project applies a new reading strategy to literary nationalism that attends to these affects in order to yield a better understanding of the critical concerns that dominated 1970s Canadian literary study.

In charting Canadian literary representations of settler anxiety as both rupture and reinforcement of the settler colonial logics of replacement and erasure, this project hopes to contribute to unsettling scholarship's objective of de-naturalizing the continuity of settler colonial project. Literary studies like those of Francis have demonstrated that settler colonialism's attempted erasure of Indigeneity is done discursively and symbolically, through tropes of vanishing Indians and empty landscapes, and this project has also shown how these function in the criticisms of Atwood and Frye, respectively. It has also demonstrated that this erasure was part of a two-step process of making room for the settler, culminating in their attempted "replacement" of Indigenous peoples as the 'real' *habitants* of the land. Chapter two demonstrates how Atwood frames this

replacement as seemingly possible in Canadian literature through an inheritance of Indigeneity via cultural materials, but reads the intolerable anxiety of our enduring symbol of survival as an anxious acknowledgement of this impossibility. This impossibility is foregrounded in chapter one, wherein Frye's invocation terra nullius in his construction of the garrison becomes an anxious solipsism with which settler-Indigenous relations are obscured. The Hobbesian construction of the garrison as a secure barrier against the formidable unknown is challenged by my reading of its isolating imagery as further evidence of the settler's disconnection from and denial of the relations that already exist within Indigenous ontological frameworks such as grounded normativity. Though the anxieties that motivate its construction appear to be externalized through the menacing setting of an empty and unknown wilderness, philosophy tells us that this is an externalization of anxieties inherent to the process and experience of settlement: it is the desire/anxiety to belong, and the confrontation of this impossibility. This is settler anxiety. As anxiety is fundamental to the experience and awareness of one's existence, so too is settler anxiety fundamental to the settlers' experience and awareness (however fleeting) of their existence in settler colonial contexts. In this way, the security connoted by the garrison, as a structure of settlement, exists alongside the insecurities that prompted its construction, and the security of settlement is haunted by the insecurity of its potential failure, or incompleteness.

These layers of insecurity are themselves layered displacements of engagement with Indigenous-settler relations. In Canadian literature, we can see this displacement in the figure of the "Imaginary Indian" who functions in the canon not as a symbol of *Indigeneity* but rather a symbol of settlers' messianic struggle to solve our famous

problem of identity,[195] to know ourselves, while simultaneously denying our existence *as settlers.* This predicament has been exacerbated by the influence of Atwood's early identification of Canada as victimized colony, which only denies the reality of our settler colonial present and makes it easier for many Canadians to continuously see themselves as something (anything!) other than settler colonizers. This project suggests that this denial is also made possible by CanLit critics' comparative and diagnostic approaches to Canadian identity, out of which we exist on the world stage as the impartial underdogs of twentieth-century anti-colonialism, the gentler alternative to the aggressive Americans, or their neurotic neighbour weathering a chronic case of the colonial mentality.

Although this project focuses on locating settler anxiety in the critical and creative production of the post-centennial period, my findings illuminate problems and opportunities of our contemporary moment. Future research could also test this project's central claim that settler anxiety is a founding feature of Canadian literature by locating its affective refrains in other periods. I hypothesize that representations of settler anxiety would be most explicit in periods immediately pre-and post confederacy, wherein desires for national identity and its articulation in print were heightened.[196]

Though we live in an era often defined by the globalizing forces of late capitalism, the discovery of 215 unmarked graves of Indigenous children at the former

---

[195] Francis essentially says the same thing in Arsenal's back-blurb of *Imaginary Indians* but does a better job at highlighting the role of anxiety in the making of this figure: "The Imaginary Indian has been and continues to be … just about anything the non-Native culture has wanted it to be, and the contradictory stories non-Natives tell about Imaginary Indians are really stories about themselves and the uncertainties that make up their cultural heritage."

[196] Leslie Monkman asserts that "the quest for a national literature becomes increasingly explicit in the years surrounding confederation" (*Towards* 1).

site of Kamloops Residential School in 2021 has thrust the violence perpetuated by the Canadian government (and *Canadians*) in the Indian Residential School System back into the spotlight, leaving many to question the sincerity of Canada's reputation as a benevolent peacemaker for the first time. When I spoke with family and friends about the findings at Kamloops, many invoked the same rhetorical question in an attempt to make sense of things: but how could this have happened *here*? Their rhetorical disbelief suggests that the national mythologies of Canadian benevolence continue to hold sway over public perceptions of what being "Canadian" means. Chapter one's discussion of Pope Francis I's visit to Canada at the behest of Indigenous delegates highlights that this disbelief is often a luxury reserved for settler populations, and that the legacies of the complementary mythologies of settler benevolence and terra nullius continue to be felt by Indigenous communities in Canada.

Moreover, these recent events have reinvigorated scholarly interest in the seemingly antiquated political unit of "the nation" as publics continue to grapple with the violent incongruity between their common conceptions of Canadian benevolence and the crimes perpetrated by Canadian colonial governments and an ignorant or indifferent (depends on who you ask) public. Chapter two emphasizes that identifying Canada as colonial perpetrator was a recurring theme in the autobiographical writing foundational to Million's felt theory, and that this identification extended to Indigenous peoples' participation in an emerging international system of mediation between collective victims and colonial perpetrators informed by the anticolonial sentiments of post-WII. The chapter also contextualizes Atwood's invocation of "the victim" in *Survival* within the neoliberalism underscoring this system. One recurring point of inquiry into both

neoliberalism and settler colonialism has been their ability to absorb and then transform the revolutionary discourses produced within and against their structures of power so that they reify rather than revolutionize existing hegemonies.[197] Future literary studies might continue this line of inquiry by focusing on the role of literature in this transformative process.

Recent critics working in the fields of Indigenous literatures and decolonial scholarship have wagered that the ability to imagine worlds ungoverned by settler colonialism and its attending ideologies is central to literature's capacity to facilitate decolonial change. Returning to seminal theorizations of a collective Canadian imagination like those espoused in *Bush Garden* is one way that Canadian literary criticism might contribute to such discussions. Reading these works through the socio-cultural concept of "the settler imaginary" – developed out of the work of another prominent Canadianist, Charles Taylor – enables a more critical lens through which to read references to a singular Canadian imagination in early Canadian literary criticism.

At the broadest level, this project's conceptualization of settler anxiety as one pillar of Mark Rifkin's "settler structures of feeling" has demonstrated that settler

[197] For more on this dilemma, see this project's introduction, as well as Virno's "Sentiments of Disenchantment" (1996) and the introduction to Ngai's *Ugly Feelings* (2005). Notably, this transformative feature of neoliberalism was also central to Marxist critiques of capitalism by scholars working within the Frankfurt School tradition of critical theory in the mid-twentieth century. More recently, Jennifer Henderson's critique of Canada's current "culture of redress" in "The Camp, the school, and the Child: Discursive Exchanges and (Neo)liberal Axioms in the Culture of Redress" (2013) explicitly links Canada's paternalism to broader neoliberal ideology: "The critique of the paternalistic welfare state is not the same as the demand for acknowledgement of the way that history sediments present inequities, but the frequent absorption of the latter within the former tells us something about neoliberalism's remarkable powers of co-optation, how it can enlist critique in the entrenchment of its own common sense" (63).

colonialism is maintained through the normalization and obfuscation of settler attachments to its structures of power. This is accomplished, in part, through the construction of powerful mythologies of settlement that circulate within and help to shape settler imaginaries, narrating the certainty with which settler populations defend their right to belong. This project has contributed to contemporary unsettling methodologies by deploying settler anxiety as a complex feeling with which to unsettle such imagined certainties.

Moreover, this project has shown that the complementary mythologies of settler benevolence and empty landscapes were pivotal to the development of Canadian literary studies in the 1970s, particularly within literary nationalist projects like *Bush Garden* and *Survival*. Building from existing interdisciplinary scholarship on settler mythologies of imagined benevolence and peaceful settlement, this project has demonstrated the critical productivity of approaching these mythologies as emotionally charged narratives that reinscribe settlers' attachments to settler colonial structures of power in an attempt to affirm settler belonging.

Though the myth terra nullius figures prominently in my analysis of Frye's garrison mentality, future research might broaden critical considerations of myth by returning to Frye's legacy as a mythopoeic critic. Canadian scholars such as Eva Mackey and Paulette Regan have already demonstrated how national myths of Canadian benevolence have rewritten the violence of settlement as a peaceful cooperation between Indigenous, French, and English populations, so it would be fruitful to place these critiques in conversation with Canada's preeminent scholar of mythopoeia. As this project has hopefully made clear, the goal of creating these dialogues is not to exhume

Frye as a critical punching-bag, but to understand the influence of his legacy on contemporary understandings of Canadian identity and nationhood.

By combining contemporary theory from settler colonial studies with twentieth-century theories of anxiety, this project demonstrates that both settler anxiety and anxiety more broadly are concerned with securing a sense of belonging in the world, and advocates for further inquiries into their theoretical overlaps. Crucially, this project demonstrates that confronting this sense of belonging was a defining problem of Canadian literature that the anxious nationalism of the 1970s only exacerbated in its preoccupations with constructing a coherent national identity that was both nationally felt and internationally recognized. As such, anxieties surrounding Canadian cultural identity and sovereignty were already in circulation during the period under study, most explicitly via the concept of Canadians' "colonial mentality." Though this project argues that critical preoccupations with this concept reveal colonialism to be an important *historical* process in the literary criticism of the period – and indeed central to Atwood's construction of Canadian victimry – this diagnosis nonetheless obscured critical engagement with Canada's history and ongoing existence as a settler colonial *nation*. Moreover, this diagnosis framed the relationship between Canada and United States as the central colonial relationship represented in Canadian literary criticism, potentially stalling critical recognition of the primacy of Indigenous-settler relations in constructions of Canadian identity.

The theme of contradiction has been an implicit thread throughout this project's engagement with settler anxiety an inherently contradictory affect that encompasses the existential desire to belong that must continuously contend with the fear of its

impossibility. Contradiction has long been a concept employed by Canadian literary critics seeking to explicate recurring thematic binaries, identity paradoxes, and "strategies of ambivalence" inherent to the field's development.[198] Future scholarship might extend these initial inquiries into the role of contradiction in Canadian literary study, and apply my theorizations of anxiety as an inherently contradictory – or perhaps ambivalent – affect to further understand its influence upon the field. This line of inquiry might lead us to further unpack Frye's infamous paradoxes of Canadian identity.

Critiques of settler colonialism have also consistently highlighted the contradictory nature of Canada's assimilist policies toward Indigenous peoples which purport to assimilate Indigenous populations into the settler majority but actually exclude them in practice, operating within what Glen Sean Coulthard calls "the genocidal exclusion/assimilation double."[199] Uncoincidentally, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples characterizes the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the

---

[198] This phrasing comes from the introduction to Om P. Juneja and Chandra Mohan's critical collection *Ambivalence: Studies in Canadian Literature* (1990) and includes the formalistic devices of ambiguity, irony, paradox, subversion, and parody (xvi). The editors argue that it is with these strategies that Candain writing "authenticates itself" within the "constraining and liberating" conditions of colonial space (xvi). Margery Fee argues that "a hallmark of Canadian nationalist literary criticism has been its flexibility in negotiating multiple contradictions," offering the contradiction as an explanatory concept with which to understand "some of the strange qualities of imaginary Indians" within the field (*Literary* 4).

[199] These contradictory policies include the Pass System, implemented between 1885-1951 to restrict Indigenous movement across spaces and prevent collective organizing, and the Peasant Farm Policy (1889-1897), which legally enforced unfair farming practices for Indigenous farmers in the prairies, severely limiting Indigenous agricultural production and participation in Canadian economies. For more information on these contradictory policies, see Rebecca Bateman's "Talking with the Plow: Agricultural Policy and Indian Farming in the Canadian and U.S. Prairies" (1996) as well as Sarah Carter's *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (1990/2019).

Canadian nation state as "a fundamental contradiction at the heart of Canada" (*Report* vol. 1, p. 15). And though contemporary reconciliation purports to address this contradiction, it has been criticized as an ineffectual project in this regard insofar as it advances teleological narratives of Canada in which Indigenous survivors' ability to forgive past wrongs is positioned as the next step toward Canada's progressively reconciled future.[200] "Anxious Preoccupations" responds to these critiques by rendering settler anxiety a fruitful site of collective affect from which scholars can contribute to studying "the settler problem" in its assertion that settlers are emotionally attached to the settler colonial structures that reconciliation purportedly works to dismantle.

Furthermore, by focusing on settler and Indigenous land relations in my analyses of Frye and Atwood, this project hopes to answer current calls by Indigenous scholars and activists to centre issues of land rights and responsibilities in reconciliatory discourses, emphasizing the land as settler colonialism's "specific, irreducible element."[201] Though this project does not engage these reconciliatory discourses directly, these critiques are relevant to any discourse on Indigenous-settler relations.

Attending to settler colonialism as a structure of felt relations between settler and Indigenous populations means uncovering other affects that uphold this structure. Though this project has focused on settler anxiety as a crucial yet understudied affect that informs

---

[200] See the introduction to my master's thesis "Approaching Anxiety: Reading Eden Robinson in an Era of Reconciliation" (2017). For more critiques, see *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2016), edited by Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō/Skwah) and Keavy Martin and *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress* (2013) edited by Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham.

[201] This phrasing comes from p. 388 of Wolfe's article. For more on settler colonialism, see the literature review section of this project's introduction.

the development of Canadian literary criticism, it has also gestured to other prominent affects with which settlers' relationships to an unknown and empty landscape are articulated by Frye and Atwood, including but not limited to feelings of terror, fear, and indifference. As discussed in this project's introduction, settler indifference toward Indigenous peoples has been a recurring affect characterizing Indigenous-settler relations in both Canada and the United States. Harold Cardinal begins his critique of these relations in *Unjust Society* by centring affect in his argument that Indigenous-settler histories are plagued by settlers' disinterest and indifference toward Indigenous peoples (1), with Indigenous peoples living "behind a buckskin curtain of indifference" (1). This is because "the people of Canada simply have not been moved by the problem" (6), a contention that echoes Deloria's critique of American literary depictions of the doomed indigene.[202] Indifference is thus an affective barrier preventing Indigenous and settler populations from understanding and communicating with one another.

Future literary scholarship might build upon chapter one's analysis of the garrison mentality as an anxious metaphorization of settler interactions with an imagined terra nullius by attending to repeated interpretations of the *land* itself as a site of indifference in *Bush Garden* and throughout other criticism of the period.[203] Could this interpretation be another settler colonial strategy of displacement? How do the processes of externalization and projection inherent to philosophical conceptualizations of anxiety figure into this displacement? Or, if these processes are driven by anxiety's simultaneous

[202] See the entry for "Settler Imaginary" in this project's introduction. See also Deloria's chapter "The Indians of the American Imagination" in *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (1973).
[203] See this project's introduction for further examples of these interpretations.

desire toward and repulsion from that which is anxious, as Heidegger and Kierkegard suggest, can anxiety – as an abundance of (contradictory) affect – be leveraged to analyze the *lack of affect* that characterizes indifference?

Furthermore, this project has demonstrated that settler anxiety has the potential to disrupt the comfort generated by Canadian literature's recurring tropes of vanishing "Indians" and the settler figures who peacefully inherit their attachments to a landscape otherwise unfamiliar and inaccessible. Chapter two shows that Atwood attempts to secure settler futurity and assuage anxieties of unbelonging by advocating for CanLit's appropriative approach to Indigenous cultures. For both Frye and Atwood, these cultures confer the sense of belonging generated through generational knowledges of and non-dominating relations with the land, and both scholars emphasize the cultivation of cultural connections to the land as central to settler belonging – the attainment of which signifies the "success" of Canadian settlement. As this project's literature review of settler anxiety makes clear, settlement produces all kinds of accompanying anxieties in settler populations, including the colonial mentality that this project has distinguished from settler anxiety. The garrison mentality is, in part, a metaphor for early settlers' psycho-affective experiences of settlement, of "the conquest of nature by an intelligence that does not love it" (Frye, "Conclusion" 226), so future research might continue to parse the distinctions between these psycho-affective concepts and assess their critical productivity in explaining the prevailing anxieties of our present.

Settler desire to belong is often underscored by the anxious acknowledgment of its impossibility, and it is this conflicting structure of feeling that the concept of settler anxiety signifies. Chapter one demonstrates that these conflicts uphold Frye's garrison as

an anxious structure of settlement. Its translation into collective mentality is another example of the prevailing diagnostic approaches to questions of Canadian literary identity championed by the literary nationalism of the period, which include Atwood's conception of the colonial mentality as a "cultural side effect" of Canada's colonial past. Chapter two makes the case that this cause-and-effect thesis foreshortened Canadian literary critics' engagements with Canada's settler colonial present despite the presence of existing Indigenous critiques of Canada's paternalist and assimilationist policies linking them to the larger structure of settler colonialism.

The anxious desire to appropriate Indigeneity to assuage feelings of unbelonging has clear relevance in our contemporary moment in which claims to indigenous ancestry have proliferated. The people who make these claims have been labelled "pretendians" by Canadian media; the CBC documentary of the same name follows Drew Hayden Taylor (Anishinaabe) as he travels across the country to investigate the motivations behind such claims, and current scholarship and media attest to their affectivity. For example, in *Making and Breaking Settler Space* (2021), geographer Adam J. Barker suggests that "it is a deeply affective move to claim a material link to the land via remote or fictitious Indigenous ancestors so that one may solidify belonging and displace Indigenous challenges by becoming indigenous and therefore permanently beyond critique" (54). Similarly, in the introduction to the new edition of *Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney* (2021), literary critic and writer Armand Garnet Ruffo (Ojibwe) suggests that, despite the surge of programs and initiatives promoting equity and diversity, many claims to Indigeneity are not motivated by material gain, but rather the

"sense of belonging and legitimacy against a history of settler colonialism" which Indigeneity confers (5).[204]

This project historicizes this trend within the developing field of Canadian literary studies and connects it to the settler colonial imperative which destroys to replace.[205] I argue that its legacy as an appropriative remedy within seminal theories of Canadian literature significantly shaped the way critics' defined and diagnosed settler subjectivity and our collective desire to belong. The work of chapter two has suggested that desire to become indigenous is really just the desire to belong, and that this desire is translated into recurring tropes of settlers becoming indigenous and the vanishing "Indians" and "noble savages" whose disappearance enables this transformation. Still, further study might complicate this assertion by reading the desire to belong in Canadian literature as the settler desire to possess, following Moreton-Robinson's critique of settler nationalism in *The White Possessive* (2015). This complication would allow for a more in-depth analysis of the ways in which settler belonging is an extension of the settler fantasy of entitlement to Indigenous lands, and how Canadian literature perpetuates this fantasy through tropes of becoming.

---

[204] In his article "Northern Shadows: Literature in the age of Reconciliation and 'Peak' Diversity" (2017), Canadian journalist Stephen Marche invokes the diagnostic approach to describe this desire as the "pathology" of "very profound, very substantial Canadian dream—to become something different from the people of the countries they abandoned, to belong here for real." Referring to this desire as the collective "pathology" of Canadian publics, Marche also touches on the contradictory nature of settler colonial logics in his assertion that "the becoming of Grey Owl also reveals the heart of the pathology: The mainstream of Canadian life is so totally incapable of recognizing Indigenous existence, requires so completely their obliteration, that the only way to represent First Nations is by pretending to be them" (November 2017).

[205] This imperative appears on p. 388 of Wolfe's seminal article "Settler colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

Chapter three interrogates reconciliatory readings of *The Diviners* that insist upon reading Morag and Jules's daughter as a symbol of reconciled settler-Indigenous relations by arguing that these readings present the possibility of *becoming* indigenous as a solution to settler unbelonging. I offer an alternative reading of Jules and Morag's relationship that hinges on analysis of Morag's settler anxiety, which circulates within but is never fully assuaged by their connection. Future literary studies that employ similar close-reading strategies might return to other influential fiction of the period – perhaps beginning with a broader analysis of the Tonnerres within the Manawaka series – to further investigate tropes of appropriation and adoption as symbolic solutions to thematic unbelonging, and the critical frameworks that perpetuate this logic.

This project is not a remedy for the anxieties it has unearthed. It remains in perpetual preoccupation with them. But that's the point: to sit with, to sift through. Atwood begins *Survival* by defining literature as both mirror and map, a geography of the mind. It is my hope that this project functions similarly, as a mirror and map for Canadian literary scholars to confront rather than displace, to unearth rather than bury, the anxious legacy of their literary inheritance.

Works Cited

Adams, Howard. *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View.* 1975. Fifth House Books, 1995.

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotions.* Routledge, 2004.

---. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life.* Duke University Press, 2012.

Andersen, Chris. *Métis: Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood.* University of British Columbia Press, 2014.

Andersen, Chris, and Jennifer Adese. *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies.* University of British Columba Press, 2021.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso, 1983.

Anyaduba, Chigbo A. Review of *Margaret Laurence Writes Africa and Canada,* by Laura K. Davis. *University of Toronto Quarterly* vol. 88, no. 3, 2019, pp. 226-228. https://doi.org/10.3138/utq.88.3.hr78.

Appleford, Rob. "A Response to Sam McKegney's 'Strategies for Ethical Engagement: An Open Letter Concerning Non-Native Scholars of Native Literatures." *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* vol. 21, no. 3, 2009, pp. 56-65.

Archibald, Jo-Ann, et. al. *Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology*. Bloomsbury, 2019.

Ariza, Sandra Moyano. “Affect Theory with Literature and Art: Between and Beyond Representation.” *Athenea Digital*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2020, pp. 1-24.

Armstrong, Jeannette. *Looking at the Words of our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature.* Theytus Books Ltd., 1993.

---. “Landing Speaking.” *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, edited by Simon Ortiz. University of Arizona Press, 1998, pp. 174-95.

Atwood, Margaret. *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature.* 1972. House of Anansi Press, 2012.

---. “Surviving the Critics: Mathews and Misrepresentation.” *This Magazine is about Schools,* vol. 7, no. 1, 1973, pp. 29-33.

---. Interview with Mary Ellis Gibson. “A Conversation with Margaret Atwood.” *Chicago Review,* vol. 27, no. 4, 1976, pp. 105-113.

---. *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature.* University of Michigan, 1995.

Asch, Michael. “From Terra Nullius to Affirmation: Reconciling Aboriginal Rights with the Canadian Constitution.” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society,* vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 23-39.

Avelar, Idelbar. *The Untimely Present.* Duke University Press, 1999.

Bannerji, Himani. Himani Bannerji’s *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender.* Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2000.

Barker, Adam J. *Making and Breaking Settler Space: Five Centuries of Colonization in North America.* University of British Columbia Press, 2021.

Barker, Adam J., and Emma Battell Lowman. *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada.* Fernwood, 2015.

Bell, Avery. *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities: Beyond Domination.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Bentley, D.M.R. Preface. "Rummagings: Northrop Frye's 'Garrison Mentality.'" *Canadian Poetry*, no. 58, 2006, pp. 5-9.

Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism.* Duke University Press, 2011.

Blackburn, Carole. "Searching for Guarantees in the Midst of Uncertainty: Negotiating Aboriginal Rights and Title in British Columbia." *American Anthropologist,* vol. 107, no. 4, 2005, pp. 586-596.

---. "Producing Legitimacy: Reconciliation and Negotiation of Aboriginal Rights in Canada." *Journal of the Anthropological Institute,* vol. 13, no. 3, 2007, pp. 622-638.

Blaeser, Kimberly. "Native Literature: Seeking a Critical Centre." *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature,* Theytus Books, 1993, pp. 51-62.

Blodgett, E.D. *Configuration: Essays on the Canadian Literatures*. ECW Press, 1982.

Bordo, Jonathan. “Jack Pine – Wilderness Sublime or the Erasure of the Aboriginal Presence from the Landscape.” *Journal of Canadian Studies,* vol. 27, no. 4, 1992, pp. 98-128.

---. “Picture and Witness at the Site of the Wilderness.” *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 26, no. 2, 2000, pp. 224-247.

---. *Place Matters: Critical Topographies in Word and Image.* McGill-Queen’s, 2022.

Braroe, Niels Winther. *Indian and White: Self-Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community.* Standford University Press, 1975.

Brenkman, John. *Mood and Trope: The Rhetoric and Poetics of Affect.* University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society.* 1969. Douglas & McIntyre, 1999.

Cariou, Warren. “Haunted Prairie: Aboriginal ‘Ghosts’ and the Spectres of Settlement.” *University of Toronto Quarterly,* vol. 75, no. 2, 2006, pp. 727-734.

Coleman, Daniel. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada.* University of Toronto Press, 2008.

Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.* University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Crosby, Andrew, and Jeffrey Monaghan. *Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State.* Fernwood Publishing, 2018.

Dalgleish, Melissa. “Frye Unschooled: Mythopoeic Modernism in Canada.” *English Studies in Canada,* vol. 37, no. 2, 2011, pp. 43-66.

Damm, Kateri. “Says Who: Colonialism, Identity, and Defining Indigenous Literature.” *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature,* Theytus Books, 1993, pp. 9-26.

Da Silva, Denise Ferreira. *Toward a Global Idea of Race.* University of Minnesota UP, 2007.

Davey, Frank. “Atwood Walking Backwards.” *Open Letter,* no. 5, 1973, pp. 81-84.

---. *Surviving the Paraphrase.* Turnstone Press, 1983.

Davis, Laura K. *Margaret Laurence Writes Africa and Canada.* Wilfred Laurier Press, 2016.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Deloria Jr., Vine. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto.* 1969. University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

---. *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*. 1972. Fulcrum Publishing, 2002.

DePasquale, Paul, Renate Eigenbrod, and Emma Larocque, editors. *Across Cultures/Across Broders: Canadian Aboriginal and Native American Literatures.* Broadview Press, 2009.

Dick, Lyle. “‘A New History for the New Millennium’: Canada: A People’s History.” *The Canadian Historical Review,* vol. 85, no. 1, 2004, pp. 85-109.

Donald, Dwayne. “We Need a New Story: Walking and the *wâhkôhtowin* Imagination.” *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2021, pp. 53-63.

Fagan, Kristina. “Adoption and National Fantasy in Barbara Kingsolver’s *Pigs in Heaven* and Margaret Laurence’s *The Diviners*.” *Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture*, edited by Marianne Novy, Michigan UP, 2001, pp. 251-266.

Fagan, Kristina, Daniel Heath Justice, Keavy Martin, Sam McKegney, Deanna Reder, et al. “Canadian Indian Literary Nationalism? Critical Approaches in Canadian Indigenous Contexts – a Collaborative Interlogue.” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies,* vol. 29, no. ½, 2009, pp. 19-44.

Fanon, Franz. *Black Skin, White Masks.* 1952. Grove Press, 2008.

---. *The Wretched of the Earth.* 1961. Grove Press, 2004.

Fee, Margery. *Literary Land Claims: The “Indian Land Question” from Pontiac’s War to Attawapiskat.* Wilfred Laurier Press, 2015.

Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture.* Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.

Fraser, Nancy. ““Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History” *New Left Review*, no. 56, 2009, pp. 97-117.

---. *The Old is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born: From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump and Beyond.* Verso, 2019.

Frye, Northrop. *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination.* 1971. House of Anansi Press, 2017.

Furniss, Elizabeth. *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community.* University of British Columbina Press, 1999.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays.* Basic Books, 1973.

Glickman, Susan. *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Sublime.* McGill-Queen's, 1998.

Gotlieb, Allan. "Romanticism and Realism in Canada's Foreign Policy." C.D. Howe Institute Benefactors Lecture, 3 November 2004, Toronto, Keynote Address.

Gorner, Paul. *Heidegger's* Being and Time*: An Introduction.* Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Grant, George. *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism.* McGill-Queen's University Press, 1965.

---. *Technology and Empire.* House of Anansi Press, 1969.

Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth, editors. "An Inventory of Shimmers." *The Affect Theory Reader.* Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 1-28.

Gross, James J. "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades." *Emotion Review* vol 2, no. 3, 2010, pp. 212-216.

Hancock, Robert L.A. "The Power of Peoplehood: Reimagining Metis Relationships, Research, and Responsibilities." *A People and a Nation: New Directions in*

Contemporary Métis Studies, edited by Chris Andersen and Jennifer Adese, University of British Columba Press, 2021, pp. 40-66.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford University Press, 2005.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time.* Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Harper & Row, 1962.

---. *Pathmarks.* Edited and translated by William McNeil, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Hinshelwood, R.D. "Anxiety: Melanie Klein's 'Deeper' Layers." *Metalepsis,* vol. 1, 2020, pp. 25-41.

Horton, Emily. "Contemporary Crisis Fictions: Twenty-First Century Disaffections." *Affect and Literature*, edited by Alex Houen, 2020, pp. 355-372.

Houen, Alex, editor. Introduction. *Affect and Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 1-30.

Hulan, Renée. *Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture.* McGill-Queen's Press, 2002.

Ignatieff, Michael and Amy Gutman. *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry.* Princeton University Press, 2001.

Ingram, Susan, and Irene Sywenky, editors. *Comparative Literature in Canada: Contemporary Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Publishing in Review.* Lexington Books, 2019.

Jedwab, Jack. “Multiculturalism”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 20 March 2020, *Historical Canada*. www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/multiculturalism. Accessed 20 October 2021.

Jilek, Wolfgang. *Salish Indian Mental Health and Culture Change: Psychohygienic and Therapeutic Aspects of the Guardian Spirit Ceremonial.* Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Inc., 1974.

---. *Indian Healing: Shamanic Ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest Today.* Hancock House, 1982.

Johnson, D.M. “From the Tomahawk Chop to the Road Block: Discourses of Savagism in Whitestream Media.” *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2011, pp. 104–34. https://doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2011.0005.

Justice, Daniel Heath. *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History.* University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

---. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter.* Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2018.

Kamboureli, Smaro, editor. *Making a Difference: Canadian Multicultural Literature.* Oxford University Press, 1996.

---. *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada.* Oxford University Press, 2000.

Keeshig-Tobias, Lenore. “Stop Stealing Native Stories.” *Introduction to Indigenous Literary Criticism in Canada*, edited by Heather Macfarlane and Armand Garnet Ruffo, Broadview Press, 2015, pp. 33-36.

Keith, W.J. “The Problems of Close Reading.” *Canadian Studies* vol. 23, no. 3, 1988.

Kertzer, Jonathan. *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada.* University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Kierkegaard’s Writings, VIII, Volume 8: Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin.* 1844. Translated by Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson, Princeton University Press, 1980.

Kim, Chrstine, Melina Baum Singer, and Sophie McCall, editors. *Cultural Grammars of Nation, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Canada.* Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012.

King, Thomas, editor. *All my Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction*. McClelland & Stewart, 1990.

---. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative.* Dead Dog Café, 2003.

Klein, Melanie. *Love, Guilt, and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945.* Hogarth, 1929.

Kymlicka, Will. “Neoliberal Multiculturalism?” *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era,* edited by Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 99-126.

---. “Solidarity in Diverse Societies: Beyond Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Welfare Chauvinism” *Comparative Migration Studies,* vol. 3, no. 1, 2015, https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-015-0017-4.

Kymlicka, Will and Keith Banting. *The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies.* Oxford University Press, 2017.

Lacombe, Michèle. "On Critical Frameworks for Analyzing Indigenous Literature: The Case of *Monkey Beach*." *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, no. 41, 2010, pp. 253-276.

Laurence, Margaret. *The Diviners.* 1974. Penguin, 2017.

---. "S.F.U. Week." Simon Fraser Convocation, Spring 1977, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver BC. Keynote Address.

Lee, Dennis. *Civil Elegies and Other Poems.* House of Anansi Press, 1972.

---. "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space" *boundary2,* vol. 3, no. 1, 1974, pp. 151-168.

Lecker, Robert. *The Cadence of Civil Elegies.* Cormorant Books Inc., 2006.

---. *Keepers of the Code: English-Canadian Literary Anthologies and the Representation of Nation.* University of Toronto Press, 2013.

Leys, Ruth. *The Ascent of Affect: Genealogy and Critique.* University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Lindberg, Tracey. "The Doctrine of Discovery in Canada." *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies,* edited by Robert J. Miler, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg, Oxford University Press, pp. 89-125.

Macdougall, Brenda. *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan.* University of British Columbia Press, 2010.

Mackey, Eva. *The House of Difference:* Cultural *Politics and National Identity in Canada.* University of Toronto Press, 2002.

---. *Unsettled Expectations: Uncertainty, Land, and Settler Decolonization.* Fernwood, 2016.

Manuel, George. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality.* Collier-Macmillan, 1974.

Marche, Stephen. "Northern Shadows: Literature in the Age of Reconciliation and "Peak" Diversity." *Literary Review of Canada*, Nov. 2017. https://reviewcanada.ca/magazine/2017/11/northern-shadows/.

Marcus, Griel. "Critical Response." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* vol. 3, no. 1, 1986, pp. 74-85.

Massumi, Brian. "The Autonomy of Affect." *Cultural Critique,* no. 31, 1995, pp. 83-109.

Mathews, Robin. "Survival and Struggle in Canadian Literature: a Review of Margaret Atwood's *Survival*." *This Magazine is about Schools*, vol. 6., no. 4, 1972/73, pp. 109-124.

---. *Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution.* Steel Rail, 1978.

Mawani, Renisa. *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921.* University of British Columbia Press, 2009.

Mawson, Chris. *Psychoanalysis and Anxiety: From Knowing to Being.* Routledge, 2019.

McKegney, Sam. “Strategies for Ethical Engagement: An Open Letter Concerning Non-Native Scholars of Native Literatures.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* vol. 20, no. 4, 2008, pp. 56-67.

---. *Carrying the Burden of Peace: Reimagining Indigenous Masculinities through Story.* University of Regina Press, 2021.

Metcalf, John. *What is a Canadian Literature?* Red Kite Press, 1988.

Million, Dian. *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights.* Arizona UP, 2013.

Monaghan, Jeffrey. “Mounties in the Frontier: Circulations, Anxieties, and Myths of Settler Colonial Policing in Canada” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2013, pp. 122-148.

Monkman, Leslie. *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature.* University of Toronto Press, 1981, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctv5j03vf.

Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. “I Still Call Australia Home: Indigenous Belonging and Place in a Postcolonising Society.” *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, edited by Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castada, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Sheller, Routledge, 2003, pp. 23-40.

Morgensen, Scott Lauria. “White Settlers and Indigenous Solidarity: Confronting White Supremacy, Answering Decolonial Alliances.” *Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education, and Society,* https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/05/26/white-

settlers-and-indigenous-solidarity-confronting-white-supremacy-answering-decolonial-alliances/, Accessed Sept. 2023.

Moss, Laura, editor. *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature.* Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2003.

Mussell, Simon. *Critical Theory and Feeling: The Affective Politics of the Early Frankfurt School.* Manchester University Press, 2017.

Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings.* Harvard University Press, 2005.

Ortiz, Simon. "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism." *MELUS*, ol. 8, no. 2, 1981, pp. 7-12.

Owens, Louis. *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel.* University of Oklahoma Press, 1994.

---. *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place.* University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.

Pateman, Carol, and Charles Mills. *The Settler Contract: Contract and Domination.* Polity Press, 2007, pp. 35-78.

Peterman, Michael. "Margaret Laurence." *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 13, no. 3, 1978, pp. 1-104. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.13.3.1.

Pivato, Joseph. "Atwood's Survival: A Critique."

Rachman, Stanley. *Anxiety.* 2nd ed., Psychology Press, 2004.

Reder, Deanna and Linda M. Morra. *Learn, Teach, Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures, 1st ed.* Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2016.

Regan, Paulette. *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth telling, and Reconciliation in Canada,* UBC Press, 2010.

Riddell-Dixon, Elizabeth. "Walking the Talk: A Prerequisite for Effective Multilateralism in the Twenty-First Century" *Independence in an Age of Empire: Assessing Unilateralism and Multilateralism,* edited by Graham F. Walker, Dalhousie Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, 2004.

Riegel, Christian. *Challenging Territory: The Writing of Margaret Laurence.* University of Alberta Press, 1997.

Rifkin, Mark. "Settler States of Feeling: National Belonging and the Erasure of Native American Presence." A Companion to American Literary Studies, edited by Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, Blackwell, 2011, pp. 342-55. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444343809.ch21.

---. *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance.* University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Ruffo, Armand Garnet. Introduction. *Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney, A New Edition.* Wolsak & Wynn, 2021.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* Pantheon Books, 1978.

---. *Culture and Imperialism.* Vintage, 1993.

Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve and Adam Frank. “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins.” *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 21, no. 2, 1995, pp. 496-522. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343932

Simpson, Audra and Andrea Smith. *Theorizing Native Studies.* Duke University Press, 2014.

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *Dancing On Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Recreation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence.* Arbeiter Ring, 2011.

---. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance.* University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

Smith, Andrea. “Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy.” *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century.* University of California Press, 2012.

Skrynsky, Hannah Mclean. *Approaching Anxiety: Reading Eden Robinson in an Era of Reconciliation.* 2017. Queen’s University, MA Thesis.

Smith, Andrea. “Indigeneity, Settler colonialism, White Supremacy.” *Global Dialogue,* vol. 12, no. 2, 2010, pp. 1-13.

Smith, Tuhiwai Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.* Zed Books, 1999.

Spinoza, Baruch de. *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works. Edited and translated by Edwin Curley, Princeton University Press, 1994.*

“Structure of Feeling.” *A Dictionary of Critical Theory.* 1st ed. 2010.

Subissati, Andrea. “Viral Culture: Canadian Cultural Protectionism and Pontypool.” *The Canadian Horror Film: Terror of the Soul*, edited by Gina Freitag and André Loiselle, University of Toronto Press, 2015, pp. 30-46.

Sugars, Cynthia, editor. *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism.* Broadview Press, 2004.

Taylor, Charles. *The Ethics of Authenticity.* CBC Press, 1991.

---. *Modern Social Imaginaries.* Duke University Press, 2004.

Teuton, Christopher B. “Theorizing American Indian Literature: Applying Oral Concepts to Written Traditions.” *Reasoning Together: the Native Critics Collective*, edited by Daniel Justice, Christopher B. Teuton, and Craig Womack University of Oklahoma Press, 2008, pp. 193-215.

Thomas, Clara “The Wild Garden and the Manawaka World” *MFS* vol. 22, no. 3, 1976, pp. 401-11.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015. Lorimer & Company, 2015.

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40.

United Nations General Assembly. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR). New York: United Nations General Assembly, 1948.

Verduyn, Christl. “Contra/diction/s: Language in Laurence’s *The Diviners.*” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 26, no. 3, 1991, pp. 52-67.

---. *Literary Pluralities.* Broadview Press, 1998.

Virno, Paolo, et. al. “The Ambivalence of Disenchantment.” *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics,* edited by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 13-36.

Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance.* University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Voth, Daniel. “The Race Question in Canada and the Politics of Racial Mixing.” *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies,* edited by Chris Andersen and Jennifer Adese, University of British Columba Press, 2021, pp. 67-91.

Vowel, Chelsea. “Settling on a Name for non-Indigenous Canadians.” *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada,* Highwater Press, 2016, pp. 14-22.

Warrior, Robert. *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions.* University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Watkins, Megan. “Desiring Recognition, Accumulating Affect.” *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 269–285.

Warrior, Robert Allen. *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions.* University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Weaver, Jace. *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and the Native American Community.* Oxford University Press, 1997.

Weaver, Jace, Womack, Craig S., and Robert Allen Warrior. *American Indian Literary Nationalism.* University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society, 1780-1950.* 1960. Columbia University Press, 1983.

---. *The Long Revolution.* 1961. Broadview Press, 2001.

---. *Marxism and Literature.* 1977. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Womack, Craig S. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism.* University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Woodcock, George. Editorial. "Horizons of Survival." *Canadian Literature*, no. 55, 1973, pp. 3-6.