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The Habits of Settlement: A Critical Phenomenology of Settlerness

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the role of settlers in maintaining settlement in Canada. I problematize settler bodies to deliberate on their potential for performing decolonization. My discussion seeks to complicate theoretical approaches that position the onto-epistemological stance of the settler as their impediment to decolonizing action. Drawing from the fields of phenomenology and affect theory, I discuss habit formation in bodies. I use case studies that discuss settler-Indigenous land relations to ground these theories of habit. I look to Indigenous leaders, artists and scholars, who offer valuable insights into the habituations of settlement as an institutionalized arrangement and a mode of behavior. I argue that settlement is a structure that emerges through settler bodies by way of their everyday being in the world. Performing settlement is therefore a habitual tendency for the settler who knows themselves in the world. A program for decolonization must address these habitual faculties beyond inducing an epistemological shift. I examine and confront settlers' habitual tendencies to consider how they can shift their bodily habits and why they might want to take up the task of decolonization. I conclude with an initial framework for bringing settlers to the difficult work of confronting the legacy of colonialism and forging respectful treaty relations with Canada's Indigenous sovereign partners.

Keywords

Summary for Lay Audience

Contemporary settlement in Canada is not an equitable arrangement that sufficiently recognizes and respects the sovereignties and treaty rights of Indigenous groups. Many settler Canadians remain unaware that the land they live on and the national economy they participate in is bound up with colonialism. Contrary to what has been implied in our national discourses of apology and multiculturalism, colonialism in Canada is not a past event. Treaties that were signed at the inception of the Canadian state were agreements meant to forge fair use of lands. Over the course of Canada's history, those agreements were not upheld by the settler state. The current system of settlement was built upon these inequitable relations, which means contemporary settlers continue to benefit from a structure that has never sufficiently been restructured.

The question of how we can bring about more equitable relations is often difficult for settlers to confront. In addition to the financial implications of steps like land repatriation, how settlers feel about returning lands to Indigenous groups often deters them from action. While some have argued that settlers need to be more open-minded, I argue that settlement is in the bodily habits of settlers. These habits come in the form of work, play, and general day-to-day activities that bring us success within the social an economic structure that is settlement. It is through these activities that settlers *feel* settlement, such as the sense of pride, security or insecurity, and/or the anticipation of future happiness. This thesis looks to the sensing and emotional faculties of settlers to understand the ways that their habits of settlement can be re-directed towards creating new habits of decolonization. I draw from the fields of phenomenology and affect theory to discuss habit formation in bodies. I look to specific case studies that discuss settler-Indigenous land relations to ground these theories of habit. I also look to Indigenous leaders, artists and scholars, who offer valuable insights into the habituations of settlement as a structure and a mode of behavior. I conclude by offering a basic framework for bringing settlers to the difficult work of decolonization.

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Introduction

My introduction to the theory and praxis of researching settlement in Canada came to me in the form of two settler scholars whose work changed the course of my studies. The first is Amber Dean, whose writing on disappeared Indigenous women and what defines whose lives and deaths matter in the context of colonial Canada reshaped my understanding of systemic violence. It is from Dean's work that I became attuned to the need for intersectional analyses for interrogating the particularities of institutionalized oppression, especially when it concerns the lives, disappearances, and deaths of Indigenous peoples. The second is Eva Mackey, whose ethnographic work I largely draw upon in this thesis to contemplate further the problem she terms "settler certainty," which she defines as the ontological certainty of settler entitlement to lands that is based on the myth of solo settler sovereignty.[1] While Dean's work helped me make the division between the lived conditions of settler and Indigenous peoples perceivable, Mackey's insights gave me the sense for how multiculturalism and Indigeneity are utilized by the state in interconnected ways to serve the outcomes of settlement. These two scholars brought me to understand colonialism as a system in which I was embedded and that I benefitted from in ways that were distinct from others. It is from their work that I began to feel certain about wanting things to be different.

I write about the knowing I acquired from reading Dean and Mackey's works because it is indicative of a much bigger and problematic issue in settler culture. Why is it that I learned about my privilege in Canadian society from two settler scholars when the works of Indigenous scholars, leaders, and artists who have taken up the task of resistance and critique have always been available? It is not as if I was unaware that Indigenous perspectives and resistance to settlement was present in my world. To focus on one example –although there have been many – I have vivid memories of watching the Oka protests broadcast on the news when I was 14 years of age. At that time, I was very uncertain as to why a golf course should be such a big deal. While I thought the developers

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[1] Eva Mackey, *Unsettled,* 132.

were aggressive, I also felt that perhaps the "Mohawk" should just give up on the spectacle they were creating before they got hurt.[2] Development happened everywhere and felt inevitable, which meant the protestors were being incredibly provocative by demanding otherwise.

Clearly, I was aware that there was a settler problem because I could see and hear about that problem on my television, in my family home, and as it was discussed in my social circles. These conversations were – as far as I can recall at present – with other settlers and they consisted of criticisms or support for the protestors' claims, mainly to bolster the opinions of all who wanted to take up space in the lively debate. I wonder now how much of the protestors I actually heard after they were filtered through news editing and the opinions of those around me.

The problem then was not that I did not hear and see Indigenous resistance and critique. The problem was perhaps that I only heard and saw a version of what they were saying, and I was perplexed about the facts surrounding the crisis. I very quickly learned that implying the protestors were wrong was the path of least resistance because fewer people in my community became angry about that stance and the ones who agreed with it calmly assured everyone that the government would shut it down. I was deeply frightened by the idea of said shut down and what it might mean for the protestors, but the confidence of the adults surrounding me made me feel better about finding a resolution. On the other hand, the people who did agree with the protesters became outraged; they would shout about facts that did not comply with what I understood to be correct about settler-Indigenous land relations. As a western European, third-generation white settler whose family found their roots in Canada by way of building, buying and developing land, it seemed impossible to me that Indigenous people should have a say in how land is used. In other words, what was happening at Oka was confusing and a topic that was best to avoid with a nod and a shrug. Although I was fearful for the protestors, what they were fighting about did not appear to affect my life directly.

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[2] Wakeham, 14. "Mohawk" is the settler ascribed name for Kanien'kehaka people.

I turn to a description of my experience of the Oka crisis because it communicates the limits of my ability at that time to intellectually comprehend the settler problem. Looking back, I might contemplate why I did not ask more questions to know more about the situation in hopes that perhaps I could have taken a more active role in the matter, even if that role was expressed just amongst my family, friends, and teachers. But to assume all I needed was better knowledge of the issue and how to bring that argument into a conversation was to overlook the feelings that kept me from acquiring that knowledge and expressing it.

Most notably, my feelings of disorientation caused me to turn away from digging deeper, and I approached conversations regarding the matter by saying as little as possible, nodding and shrugging in repetition. Eventually, my body took up the habit of avoiding settler-Indigenous issues by walking away from conversations or putting my attention elsewhere because these events *felt* too difficult to confront. These instances were perhaps what Alia Al-Saji describes as "events for which we cannot account from within our instituted system of meaning."[3] This particular inassimilable event, the one in which a settler must interpret Indigenous resistance, is not a random event to be conflated with other difficult encounters. As Al-Saji points out, the event is understood relationally to instituted systems of hierarchical relations and are thus bolstered by different oppressive apparatuses. This is to say that my bodily attitude towards the Oka crisis would not have been the same as if I had, for example, witnessed a feminist protest. Furthermore, my reaction was also likely different from the bodily attitude of an Indigenous person observing the demonstration. The way that I responded was therefore specifically a settler response to a problem that felt incomprehensible, and my inclination to turn away became habitual because I turned away in repetition instead of making myself open to the problem.

This thesis presents a phenomenology of the settler habit body to problematize the ways that settlers experience and perform settlement. I am interested in locating and

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[3] Alia Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 11. "These are [inassimilable] events for which we cannot account from within our instituted system of meaning – events that reveal, if we are open to them, the fractures in the coherence of the visual field."

interrogation the affective and bodily habitual faculties of the settler that keep them from turning towards the challenges of living settlement. More specifically, settlement, as it exists today, is not an equitable arrangement towards Indigenous groups that recognizes and respects their sovereignties and treaty rights. I aim to explore in this thesis how the habitual tendencies of settlers bring settlement into existence, and what seeing settlement as habit means for changing the existing structure. But before I can unpack the concept of the settler habit body, it is necessary to introduce the habit body concept and situate its emergence in the field of phenomenology.

While this thesis draws largely from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of the habit body, habit, as it relates to consciousness, was not initially emergent as bodily comportment as Merleau-Ponty argues. In David Hume's work, habits are considered a mental activity used to justify causality. While causality was once thought to concern objective features in the world, Hume's work showed causality to be an experiential process in which we make meaning that constitutes our consciousness.[4] For Hume, there is a difference between our inner perception – how we sense our inner selves – and introspection – how we reflect on our mental states. While inner perception is apparent to us because we are living it, introspection is highly complex and fallible. As Dermot Moran describes Hume's position, "We cannot *observe* our own mental states while occupying them. Introspection can only distort the phenomena it seeks to study, we cannot *observe* our anger, without modifying it in some way."[5] Our inner state, as we move through it, cannot be located or found as an object for analysis because we are experiencing it. Hume, therefore, viewed reason as ill-equipped to justify causality, which he argues is habits of expectation. As Michael Hammond, Jane Howarth and Russell Keat describe, "Hume argued that one's experience of causal connections should be analyzed in terms of the association (constant conjunction) of similar pairs of experiences in the past, built up so that one acquires habits of expectation (habitualities) that a particular type of event (labeled 'effect') will follow another type of event (labelled 'cause')."[6] Causality is therefore

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[4] Moran, 139.
[5] Moran, 41.
[6] Hammond et. al., 84.

constructed when we imminently make meaning of the event, and what we understand as causal relations are actually our habitual tendencies to expect certain outcomes.

Edmund Husserl, much like Hume, thought of habituation as bound up with the ways that the subject encounters the world. For Husserl, the subject would not be a subject if they did not acquire habits.[7] Habits are what the unified self has as its history or its genesis. The universals governing the genesis, as Husserl describes them, question how one is the subject they are and how they remain the same subject while they encounter new experiences.[8] These two principals of genesis more specifically deal with "what is presented in experience (passive) and what is made of what is presented (active)."[9] While passive encounters with objects are sensed experiences that can be described phenomenologically, active encounters are instances when we re-arrange physical objects and become productively active. In both cases, we rely on what we know, our habituations, in the encounter.

Husserl examined the features of habituations and how they are acquired to develop his understanding concerning the laws of association that preside over habits of expectation. While he saw Hume's laws of association to be empirical discoveries, he viewed his own to be eidetic because, they describe "a realm of the 'innate' a priori, without which an ego as such is unthinkable."[10] In which case, principal associations do not operate causally the way that Hume understood, wherein the meaning of events are imminently created. As Hammond et al. explain, "They provide the basis of all experience, including experience of causal connections. Any appeal to experience on the basis of which one could discern causality in operation would be an appeal to experience which itself is structured by these principals of association."[11] In other words, we can only recognize succession, contingency, and resemblance if we are already engaging our habituations. The universals

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[7] Hammond et. al., 81.
[8] Husserl, 38.
[9] Hammond et. al., 81.
[10] Husserl, 81.
[11] Hammond et al., 84.

governing genesis are already at work, shaping our perception of the event as it is happening.

While Hume and Husserl's work on habitualities situated habit as theoretical and cognitive acts, Martin Heidegger emphasized the ordinary lived experiences of the body in the world. Heidegger's concept of being-in-the-world sought to complicate the assumptions of modern materialism, which focused on the ways that objects in the world can be theoretically examined by disembodied subjects. Being-in-the-world was a substitute term for the divisive terms subject, object, consciousness and the world. Heidegger brought attention to the mundane everyday activities of living that allow theorization to be possible to work from the "primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways which have guided us ever since."[12] His work is described by Moran as "anti-Cartesian, anti-subjectivist, anti-dualist, and anti-intellectualist."[13] Distancing his work from the Husserlian concepts of phenomenology, which positioned cognition as the connection between humans and their world, Heidegger sought to free the thought of being from the philosophical propositions that he felt Husserl gave him to see with and instead cultivate a "pure naïveté."[14] He argues at the beginning of Being and Time that phenomenology is "opposed to all free-floating constructions and accidental findings," and is instead a form of "self-evidence."[15] To be in the world, according to Heidegger, means the body is not separate parts – arms and legs – nor separate from the mind, but rather, it is to be an integrated bodily unit, situated in a specific time and space. As Eliot Deutsch has phrased it, "I am 'embodied' in the sense … that I am my body."[16]

Human existence, the body "being there" (Dasein), became for Heidegger a project that saw habit in a negative light. More specifically, he understands habituations to be a pre-reflective way of enacting social expressions that lack individual intelligibility, and as

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[12] Heidegger, 44.
[13] Moran, 193.
[14] Moran, 228.
[15] Heidegger, 50.
[16] Deutsch, 5.

such, they express "an undifferentiated kind of intelligibility."[17] The individual, unaware of her actions in the present moment acts out what is in her but not really hers. According to James McGuirk's reading of habituation in Heidegger, "Habitual ways of being and acting, as such, distract, uproot and alienate Dasein from being-in-the-world by dissolving individual Dasein into an inauthentic self-forgetfulness or an amorphous 'they' that is everyone and no-one."[18] While Heidegger's take on habituation moves it from the cognitive and theoretical frame of Hume and Husserl into a complex being in the world that undermines mind-body dualism, it does not see habits as useful for understanding embodiment and consciousness.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty finds in habituation a certain productive quality for understanding the importance of the body's being in the world. As McGuirk describes, for Merleau-Ponty, "habits are, in fact, crucial to the constitution of the individual as individual and to her constitution as knower of the world."[19] This rendering of habits undermines the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity and instead shows subjectivity and the body to be inextricably linked. By way of this link, subjects become naturalized or objectified. Habits in this sense, "enable[s] us to think the objectification process."[20] Subjectivity, for Merleau-Ponty, cannot be understood unless it is embodied and apprehended as constantly enmeshed with the phenomenal sensing body. His term the habit body is therefore not a doing away with consciousness, but a way of comprehending how consciousness comes into being.

Merleau-Ponty's concept of the habit body is useful for problematizing settler bodies because it supports a theorization of settlement as an embodied structure that is habitually taken up by settlers to create colonizing conditions in Canada. Seen through this lens, settlement is not a final destination but a constructed and thus malleable way of being in the world. Habits are maintained, to shift habits requires the body to do differently. Many

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[17] Heidegger, 213.
[18] McGuirk, 150.
[19] McGuirk, 151.
[20] McGuirk, 151.

critiques of settler colonialism consider the ontological stance of settlers to be the main impediment to decolonizing action in the material world. I argue that this perspective delegitimizes the role that settler bodies being in the world plays in formulating their worldviews. The consciousness of the settler, who they know themselves to be, is a continuous construction of engagement with the world. This means that to know oneself as not the colonizer requires settler bodies to take up ways of extending into the world that are decolonizing. Intellectual or conceptual adjustments are not enough to change the current structure of settlement, which is at present an embodied, material, perceptual and thus affective structure that shapes the consciousness and expectations of settlers. Addressing the complexities of such a structure requires the work of a critical phenomenology of settlerness.

My investigation of the settler habit body works through a critical phenomenology methodology. Classical phenomenology brings us to the transcendental ego to understand there is no meaningful experience without someone doing the experiencing, and it brings us beyond understanding ourselves as a bare cogito "I think." As Lisa Guenther describes, "I think" is "in its most basic formulation, a relation or orientation of the thinker to the thought…I do not just think, I think *thoughts*, feel *feelings*, remember *memories*, and so forth."[21] While classical phenomenology illuminates the transcendental structures that shape our perception and habituations, it does not account for the ways that historical and social structures shape our experiential events.

While I find Merleau-Ponty's concept of the habit body to be a fantastic starting point, it is insufficient in itself to properly account for the lineage construction that is settlement in contemporary Canada. More specifically, his reading of the habit body is essential for understanding the formation of habit, but not necessarily the formation of settlement as habit. To proceed past these limitations, I look to critical phenomenology theorists, mainly Helen Ngo, Sara Ahmed and Alia Al-Saji, to further explicate the influences and pressures that settlers endure under the hegemonic structures of settlement. I read these theorists in coordination with analytical and ethnographic work from settler

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[21] Lisa Guenther, 11.

colonial studies scholars, as well as Indigenous leaders, thinkers, artists and scholars, who offer valuable insights into the habituations of settlement as a structure and a mode of settler behavior. Most importantly, I ground this work in the Canadian context to situate decolonization in the particulars of Canada's version of settlement. I am invested in the work of decolonization in Canada as a settler scholar who aims to grapple with conceptualizing my own role in restructuring settlement towards more equitable ends. While this work is not a comprehensive critical phenomenology of settlerness, I aim to begin conceptualizing decolonization by problematizing the settler body within a descriptive and theory forward approach.

The settler habit body is a term I employ to mean a body that pre-reflectively maintains settlement because its perceptual and responsive faculties habitually comply with the structure of settlement. The settler habit body is constructed at the intersection of concept, motion, and place because it maintains the abstractness of settlement in the material world. I see the settler habit body as what Ahmed might refer to as a "sweaty concept": a concept that "resists being fully comprehended in the present," and that requires description to make tangible its difficultness.[22] Sweaty concepts require describing a situation that is complex or problematic in order to reveal what is conceptual about "the usual activity of life," or in the case of settlers, what is pre-reflective.[23] Concepts are at work in what we do; the concept of settlement is at work in what settlers do. To describe settler bodies is to make visible the patterns of habituation that they use to navigate their world. The work of decolonizing settler habit bodies is sweaty because it requires the physical work of turning towards, of feeling the affective weight of resisting or complying with the normative pressures of settlement and dealing with disorientation.

My focus on the affective dimensions of performing settlement – the feeling that settler bodies experience when turning away – is mainly inspired by the work of three scholars who write in the tradition of affect theory. The first is Brian Massumi's ideas on

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[22] Ahmed, *Living*, 12.
[23] Berlant, "Thinking," 5 in Ahmed, *Living,*13.

the political ontology of threat, which sees threat as "from the future" and as what brings ever looming uncertainty. As he describes, "The threat *will have* been real for all of eternity. It will have been real because it was *felt* to be real. Whether the danger was existent or not, the menace was felt in the form of fear. What is not actually real can be felt into being. Threat does have an actual mode of existence: fear, as foreshadowing. Threat has an impending reality in the present. This actual reality is affective."[24] I find in Massumi's reading of threat the realness that settlers feel when they are coerced by affective pressures to maintain settlement.

The second is Lauren Berlant and her thoughts on "cruel optimism," which she explains "names a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible and toxic…Cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object in advance of its loss."[25] In coordination with Massumi's ideas on threat, I find in Berlant's cruel optimism the affective implications of "settler fantasies of entitlement," which Eva Mackey defines as a logic that is a "socially embedded, unconscious expectation[s] of how the world will work."[26] According to Mackey, the fantasy of settlement requires constant maintenance to make real the unnatural presence of settlers and thus always carries a threat to certainty. Settlement, as such, is a problematic object to which settlers remain attached even though it is a toxic fantasy to uphold.

The third theorist who inspired my turn to engage with the affective dimensions of settlement is Sara Ahmed. Ahmed's work on "happy objects" positions family as a happy object that identifies "those who do not reproduce its line as the cause of unhappiness."[27] Following through one's family lineage in this respect is premised on the promise of happiness. This speaks to the promise of success that settlers are offered if they continue along the lines of settlement and the ways they are coerced to maintain the lineage of

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[24] Massumi, 54.
[25] Berlant, "Cruel," 94.
[26] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 132.
[27] Ahmed, "Happy," 30.

settlement for fear of feeling they are the cause of unhappiness for other settlers. These three theorists collectively have brought me to consider the affective implications of turning away and towards the promised happiness of settlement, the threat of uncertainty regarding settler futurity, and what this means for becoming an interruption that is a different kind of problem than the settler problem.

My perception of the settler problem, as it was presented to me during the Oka crisis, was managed relationally to a line of orientation that felt familiar. To unpack this statement, I look to Sara Ahmed's books, *Queer Orientations* and *Living a Feminist Life*. In her discussions on "Lines That Direct Us," she argues that societal norms allow us to share a direction, a future point in time that we take up to share and connect with others. Norms dictate our directions by informing our aspirations and future goals. Norms coerce us to follow certain directions and not others to ensure our happiness and success. Norms provide a source of stress, a "social pressure to follow a certain course, to live a certain life, and even to reproduce that life can feel like a physical "press" on the surface of the body."[28] Norms are therefore directive along a path that is well-trodden, that has been produced by those who came before us. As Ahmed describes, "The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are in this way performative: they depend on the repetition of norms and conventions, of routes and paths taken, but they are also created as an effect of this repetition."[29] We make that path available to those who come after us by walking it and keeping it well worn.

At the age of fourteen, nodding and shrugging in repetition was my way of going along to get along. I was directed by a set of norms that allowed my life to be undisturbed provided I gave myself over to the momentum and let the stream take me. To be clear, giving myself over did not simply require my intellectual complicity with the positions of the developers or the settler state. Giving myself over meant my body had to take up space in situations moving in one way rather than another. So, I took up space by making myself

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[28] Ahmed, *Queer,* 17.
[29] Ahmed, *Queer,* 16.

small, nodding and shrugging and generally being amendable to other people's angry flailing hands or wise nods of knowing and reassurance.

At the time, my strategy for going along to get along felt harmless because I was doing nothing that was offensive, or so I thought. I understood my conduct to be a way of remaining neutral by not interrupting the flow that I understood everyone around me to be invested in. My comprehension of neutrality emerged in accordance with the liberal discourses of the time, which touted the stance that everyone was equal. The liberal value of *equality* that underpins universal representation in social and political liberal Canada assumes "a nonhierarchically ordered, "difference--blind" form of universal enfranchisement," which obscures the colonial histories on which the current state of *inequity* rests.[30] My claim to neutrality was therefore, a denial that I was living as a beneficiary in the program of settlement. However, claiming neutrality appeared to be a suitable solution that did not disrupt the current of the stream.

I did not want the bother of hesitation, of asking questions and of being the problem. The problem, as far as I could perceive, was that Indigenous peoples were resisting what was inevitable; in which case, the settler problem appeared to me to be *the problem that Indigenous peoples were to settlers*. In this definition of the settler problem, Indigenous peoples become a problem that settlers are tasked with managing into the current of the stream. This rendition echoes the historical beginnings of colonization in North America, wherein government programs sought to integrate Indigenous groups into the format of settlement. As Sarah Carter describes,

> The government undertook to protect, care for, and guide the Indians during the difficult period of transition from "savagery to civilization." It pursued a deliberate course of placing Indians upon reserves, developing an interest in labor among them, and attaching them to agriculture in order to teach them the white man's means of support. As well, instruction in agriculture would prepare them for a "higher civilization" and encourage them "to assume the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship."[31]

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[30] Nichols, "Contract," 108.
[31] Stanley, 5, in Carter, 4.

Incorporating Indigenous bodies into the economic system of settlement was thus a way of bringing them into the stream of "civilization," or more pointedly, culturally assimilating them under the assumption that their cultures were somehow deficient. I was also inhabiting this stream, and for me, it was not such a terrible place to be. I could not understand why they should bother being so bothersome as to put their own bodies at risk because I did not understand how bothered they were. Settlement in Canada appeared inevitable to me, and so it followed that Indigenous folk should not be so bothered about it. Or even worse that they should stop interrupting, stop potentially making their situation worse and just go with it.

The way that I interpreted Indigenous resistance was informed by the norms of settler society. The stream that was comfortable for me was not comfortable for them, but norms imply a direction that is shared, and I was certain they shared in the security the stream provided. The protestors were bothering settlers because they also were bothered by the settler problem, which appears to them as *the problem settlers and their settlement are to Indigenous peoples*. In this definition of the settler problem, Indigenous peoples are tasked with resisting settlers and their incessant desire to acquire lands at any cost. In her discussions on the enduring necessity of resistance, Nishnaabeg writer, musician, and academic Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains,

> They [Simpson's children] also expect that we will be there [on the land] anyway, in spite of environmental destruction, despite the violence of surveillance culture, because they were born into a centuries-old legacy of resistance, persistence, and profound love that ties our struggle to other Indigenous peoples in the Americas and throughout the world. It is not happenstance or luck that Indigenous peoples and our lands still exist after centuries of attack. This is our strategic brilliance. Our presence is our weapon, and this is visible to me at every protest, every mobilization, every time a Two Spirit person gifts us with a dance at our powwows, every time we speak our truths, every time we embody Indigenous life.[32]

Simpson's description articulates the ongoing struggle against the imposition of settlement and how it has become a multigenerational project to defend and protect Indigenous individuals, cultures, and nations from settlement. The ways that settlement seeks to

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[32] Simpson, *Always Done,* 6.

destroy Aboriginal Nations and harm individuals for the sake of lands has always positioned Indigenous peoples to have to resist.

Bringing Simpson's insights to my recollection of the Oka crisis speaks to the insularity of the settler perspective concerning the settler problem. Indigenous resistance can often appear to settlers as demands for special treatment instead of struggles to be recognized as sovereign partners. This misrecognition is largely due to Canada's liberal multicultural ethos. As Andrew Woolford explains, "The essentialized identity of the First Nation 'other,'...presents itself to the liberal mindset of the ordinary citizen as a relationship of special treatment whereby one group, based upon their ethnic identity, receives privileges that contradict excepted discourses of equal rights and responsibilities."[33] The discourses of equality and inclusion that substantiate multiculturalism are not inclusive of the complex histories of land relations and treaties. Just as this exclusion of historical lineage allows the settler to claim neutrality, it also constructs a perception of Indigenous resistance as unsubstantiated and their demands as unreasonable.

Further to this, implying there has been a clean break between historical colonialism and present – more equal – circumstances obscures the fact that colonialism continues to subject settlers' sovereign partners. The rhetoric of reconciliation, as it is positioned alongside national discourses of multiculturalism, apology, and liberal ideals is bound up with presenting this clean break, with purpose. In his discussion concerning the settler states' focus on reconciliation, David Garneau has stated,

> Re-conciliation refers to the repair of a previously existing harmonious relationship. This word choice imposes the fiction that equanimity is the status quo between Aboriginal people and Canada. Initial conciliation was tragically disrupted and will be painfully restored through the current process. In this context, the imaginary the word describes is limited to post-contact narratives. This construction anaesthetizes knowledge of the existence of pre-contact Aboriginal sovereignty. It narrates halcyon moments of co-operation before things went wrong as the seamless source of harmonious origin. And it sees the residential school era, for example, as an unfortunate deviation rather than just one aspect of the perpetual

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[33] Woolford, 137.

colonial struggle to contain and control Aboriginal people, territories, and resources.[34]

Programs of reconciliation, as Garneau describes them, are useful for state apologies that focus on residential schools as the source of Indigenous oppression, as a way to avoid presenting settlement as a systemic arrangement. This, in turn, obscures the many components that comprise settlement and that continue to operate today – such as policing and surveilling, the state's neglect in upholding their responsibilities for proper funding to First Nations schooling and healthcare, and most notably, illegal acquisition of lands.[35]

In her book *My Conversations with Canadians*, Sto:lo poet and author Lee Maracle recalls being asked what reconciliation means to her, directly after giving a talk on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Her initial thoughts were to wonder if the man understood what reconciliation meant. As Maracle recalls,

> I could not believe he jumped to this conclusion without considering the killing was not over. Did he think we were friends before those men killed us? Did he think we liked them before they killed us? Did he think I was their friend when they killed those other women? "Well stop killing us would be a good place to begin," I answered. The audience laughed. "Then maybe stop plundering our resources, stop robbing us of our children, end colonial domination – return our lands, and then we can talk about being friends. I can't believe we are having this conversation after you listened to my presentation about the murder of Indigenous women and children. It is embarrassing – not for me, but for you."[36]

In addition to laying bare the fallacy of reconciliation, Maracle's response illuminates the ways that settler perception misunderstands the lived realities of Indigenous peoples. More pointedly, Indigenous experiences of settlement that subjugate them often appear to settlers as unrelated to current systemic colonialism because, under the ethos of equality that sees colonial violence as a thing of the past, it is expected that everyone has equal opportunity to succeed. From this perspective, the imposition of violence and neglect that settlement

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[34] Garneau, 35.
[35] Mackey, "Apology"; Talaga. See Mackey's discussion to understand the functionality of focusing on residential schools in public apology and Talaga's discussion on the systemic neglect that the state enacts towards upholding their responsibilities to Indigenous communities.
[36] Maracle, 137.

inflicts upon Indigenous peoples appears to be their own moral failings.[37] Views that position Indigenous peoples as the settler problem are therefore blind to the systemic and ongoing character of settlement hidden behind national and social discourses that convey settler occupation as unrelated to Indigenous oppression and therefore, unproblematic.

The common variable between the two definitions of the settler problem is settlement, or more specifically, settlers. Settlement is a structure that is bolstered by a set of norms, and it requires bodies to bring these norms into the material world. At the same time, settlement at present is an existing material structure that bodies move around in as they live settlement. It is a path that is perceivable to them because it is available; it is well-trodden. Settlers become invested in the success of settlement because it is tied to their individual successes concerning their way of life. Taking up space as settlers along lines of orientation means traversing with others along the well-worn path. The work of traversing happens through various bodily actions such as placing one foot in front of the other to walk the path or by behaving in ways that are cooperative towards the collective exercise of traversing. The repetitiveness of traversing, of staying in line amongst others who stay in line, shapes bodies into bodies that are comfortable being in line. In this way, norms become bodily habits, "ways of acting and being in relation to others that have become second nature over time."[38]

I did not randomly invent the motions of nodding and shrugging; I learned this strategy from others who also felt they did not want to bother and by doing these actions in repetition I learned to habitually not bother. For settlers to dig a little deeper and ask questions is an interruption, it is to stop in a stream that is directing crowds of people and make themselves the source of "congestion."[39] The density of the crowd then feels hostile, less supportive than when you work with them along your mutual trajectory. But in being

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[37] Dean, xxiv; Talaga 20/55/258. See Dean's discussion on the intersectional need for understanding the conditions of disappearing Indigenous women, who have been largely represented in the media and treated by police and state authorities as if their own "poor choices" and "high risk lifestyles" were the culprit, with little consideration for the systemic arrangement of their choices and lived conditions. Also see Talaga's arguments that police, settler community and administrative services do little to protect against nor take seriously violence against Indigenous youth because they are perceived to be "less than worthy victims."

[38] Ahmed, *Living,* 45.

[39] Ahmed, *Living*, 45. I borrow the term "congestion" to describe stopping from Ahmed's discussion on Traffic Systems.

the source of annoyance, in being an interruption, "you would then experience that flow as a tangible thing: what stops you from stopping; what slows you down."[40] If we do not pause, we remain unaware of what is coercing our movements. Stops come in the form of questions such as: why would the Kanien'kehaka people put their lives at risk if they have no claim to land? Why is everyone upset that I am asking them to explain this? Why do I care that they will be upset?

To articulate these questions and their answers in language is to name a problem, which makes it exist outside of ourselves.[41] To be clear, this is not an articulation of settlement that names Indigenous peoples as the settler problem; it is an articulation that would describe the feelings settlers feel when they are being coerced into becoming a problem. The purpose of articulations is not necessarily to find an intellectual answer to the problem; it is to place words to feelings and perceptions and describe in order to make tangible what keeps us from stopping.

Thinking through lines of orientation is not only useful for understanding flow and interruption, but also the ways that one can cause a redirection. Going along to get along is what Ahmed might refer to as a turning away. To turn away is a learned behavior that is taught to us at a young age. To turn away from people who are homeless, for example, is "to screen out not only their suffering but their very existence. They are not anything to do with you."[42] Learning to turn away structures how we understand suffering, "whose suffering should affect us, or how we should be affected by those sufferings."[43] It also creates a distinction between who matters and who does not, who is a friend and who is a stranger.

I perceived my strategy of nods and shrugs to be harmless because I felt I was doing nothing that was offensive. But to be clear, I was doing nothing offensive to the other settlers in my stream. My perception of what was offensive and what was not, complied

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[40] Ahmed, *Living*, 45.
[41] Ahmed, *Living,* 34.
[42] Ahmed, *Living*, 32.
[43] Ahmed, *Living*, 32.

with the norms of my settler world. When I turned away from the task of grappling with and responding to Indigenous resistance, I was indeed being offensive by moving about as if their suffering did not matter. But if turning away is learned, then it is possible to learn to turn towards.[44] If settlers refuse to turn away and instead turn towards what is difficult, new paths are created for those who come after us.

Turning towards what is difficult so often appears to settlers as turning towards the problem that is Indigenous peoples because this is how they interpret the settler problem. Displacing the source of the problem onto their sovereign partners is how the narratives that support settlement stay intact. Programs of reconciliation and state apologies contribute to protecting these narratives by avoiding the dialogical process that is required to work with their partners. This is likely because Indigenous perspectives have the potential to undermine and re-arrange the settlement narratives. As Maracle describes, "Canada views itself as the nicest colonizer in the world. It does not ask the colonized if they agree with this, Canadians just keep repeating it to each other like bobbleheads that can't stop bobbling. It doesn't occur to them that this statement requires our agreement to be true."[45] Decolonization requires the work of listening and responding to settlement's sovereign partners, of performing mindful and respectful coordination towards land relations. The paternalistic stance of the settler state that does not enact nor facilitate ongoing coordination creates the conditions in which settlers can retell the narratives of settlement as if they do not require validation from others.

These stories and idealizations of the past and the present are not necessarily true but claim themselves to be by the settler who speaks and lives them as if settlement is a natural or justified occurrence. This is what Andrea Smith has referred to as "the logics of settler colonialism," which Mark Rifkin defines as the "social, ideological, and institutional processes through which the authority of the settler state…is enacted."[46] The right to settlement operates as a socially embedded logic, and as such, it requires the constant

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[44] Ahmed, *Living*, 32. See Ahmed's discussion on turning towards, in which she looks to Audrey Lorde to understand how we can bear witness to our becoming by using words to describe what we have learned perceptually as children.
[45] Maracle, 133.
[46] Smith "White Supremacy,"; Rifkin, "States of Feeling." 343.

performance of making colonial narratives real. Settlers take up these narratives as habitual norms while they traverse their lines of orientation. The ways that they interpret and attend to the settler problem is therefore habitually bound up in their body's perceptual and motor faculties.

Maintaining settlement for settlers is a move to uphold power and privilege. However, it is also a sensing project for settlers, which means that the project of decolonization must consider the affect of turning away to apprehend how settler bodies can bring themselves to turn towards. By emphasizing the role of feeling in this project, I am not suggesting that decolonization is possible if settlers were to feel differently. As Ahmed has described, histories of oppression come with good intentions and bad feelings; "they seem to bind together in a certain way, as if to say: by feeling bad I mean well."[47] These expressions of guilt and apology may be authentically felt, but they do little to change inequitable land relations.[48] The same is true about feelings of good intention, which excuse the privileged body that shrugs and nods because they do not intend to be offensive. The stream of colonization is always already in motion and it gathers its momentum and ability to direct with the weight and thickness of the bodies that traverse its lines; settlers do not need to intend the reproduction of settlement, they merely need to go with the flow.

It is also not sufficient for individuals to think decolonization by being self-reflexive. Self-reflexivity is a step but in itself cannot undermine the collective production of privilege and is not a substitution for action. As Andrea Smith argues, "the undoing of privilege occurs not by individuals confessing their privileges or trying to think themselves into a new subject position, but through the creation of collective structures that dismantle the systems that enable these privileges."[49] Smith's ideas on what dismantling means are akin to Judy Vaughn's stance, "You don't think your way into a different way of acting;

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[47] Ahmed, *Living*, 151.
[48] Gooder & Jacobs. See Gooder and Jacobs' critique of political and civic forms of apology.
[49] Smith, "The Problem," 264.

you act your way into a different way of thinking."[50] Settlement happens through actions taken by settler bodies, actions that are passive to the stream and simultaneously active in the stream. Decolonization will require settler bodies to take up the task with their bodies, with their actions in the material world. Turning towards is therefore not just a feeling, nor is it a thought, it is a physical movement to turn one's body in the stream and forge a new path for others to follow. This thesis seeks to understand the affect involved in turning away and turning towards to discern how settlers can find resiliency when they feel uncertain so they can commit and follow through on the performances that are required to decolonize.

To carry out the work of decolonization or teaching settlers how to be better is not something that Indigenous peoples should be tasked with. Settlers need to pick up their responsibility to treaty and regardfully coordinate with their sovereign partners. In order to establish these kinds of relationships, settlers will need to re-learn how to listen and respond to Indigenous presence and authority in respectful ways. This is to say that decisions regarding land relations – land use and the environmental implications of industry, taking portions of land away from reserves to give to industry, relocating Indigenous groups to land that is less-desirable, or impeding the growth of Indigenous-owned lands – need to be conducted in ways that are more equitably advantageous to settlement's sovereign partners.[51] However, as I have attempted to describe, the habitual perceptions and responses of settlers are informed by the norms of their settlement stream and they present obstacles for settlers' understandings of how to be decolonizing in the world. This thesis takes up this problem by interrogating what I call the settler habit body, which is a body that pre-reflectively maintains settlement. But before I can thoroughly define this concept, it is necessary to turn towards a description of settlement in Canada and unpack the structure that settler bodies are bound up with.

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[50] Judy Vaughn in Smith, "The Problem," 264.

[51] Aamjiwnaang First Nation is one example of a community living on reserve land that has significantly decreased in size because of industry infringement. Those living in the community at present face health issues because they have become surrounded by 40% of Canada's petrochemical refineries. The Caldwell First Nation's purchase of farmland in Chatham-Kent, Ontario is an example wherein settlers attempted to impeded Indigenous acquisition of lands. I take up this example in chapter 2.

Describing Settlement

Settlement in Canada is defined by a specific colonial model that requires the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from lands. Unlike other models of colonialism where imperial presence retreats back to their colonial metropoles, colonialism in countries such as Canada, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand are characterized by permanent settlement. These settlers take up residence with the intention of replacing Indigenous societies and maintain their own nation with administrative and legal bodies to sustain their dominion.[52]

Prior to the inception of the Canadian state, the British Crown signed treaty agreements with Aboriginal nations to initiate positive economic and military relations. Since 1975, Canada has signed 25 modern treaties in addition to the 70 historical treaties carried over from the British Crown. These modern treaties, also known as comprehensive land claim agreements, are necessary to define lands where treaties were never signed. European rights to Canadian lands were born from treaties, which means that early generations of settlers who gained access to lands and resources through treaties became beneficiaries because Aboriginal nations shared with them.[53] The historical foundations of European rights to lands are based upon shared responsibilities and rights to lands for both parties.[54]

While these treaties between settlers and Indigenous peoples were signed and agreed upon, they have never been upheld to the standard of benefitting both parties. This is partly because the Crown and Aboriginal peoples do not define treaty the same way. As Mackey has discussed,

> For many Indigenous peoples, treaty was and is a sacred covenant made between sovereign nations in which they agree to *ongoing* relationships of respect, friendship, and peace, and thus recognition of the *ongoing sovereignty* and rights of Aboriginal nations…[However], Canada and many Canadians "regard treaties as an extinguishment of [Aboriginal] rights, and acceptance of the supremacy of

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[52] Pasternak, 147.
[53] Royal Commission, 56.
[54] Royal Commission, 56.

the crown, and a generous gift of land to the Indians so they might have land of their own."[55]

Although Indigenous nations may regard treaty as the maintenance of relations that are equally sovereign, treaty for settlers and their state is understood to be a project of land acquisition and sole dominion. Treaty in the national settler imaginary has come to be synonymous with "Treaty Indians,"[56] an association that delinks the settler nation from its responsibility to respectful partnership and represents Indigenous peoples as dependents upon the state's benevolent governance. This illusion suppresses the role of treaty in the founding and legitimization of the state through which settlers are beneficiaries.[57] The way that the settler imaginary interprets treaty is not a naïve nor an impartial phenomenon that reflects a simple misunderstanding between the two parties; it is a functioning component of colonialism that is required to support the state's legal dominance over the sovereignties of Aboriginal nations.

Recognition of Indigenous sovereignties, rights to land, and status rights have been perpetually under threat. The government has and continues to negotiate land claims reflecting the grievances of unfulfilled treaty promises to land and the loss of reserve land or band funds that were unlawfully taken. What is problematic about this process is the way that the legal system understands – or shows little regard for – the sovereignty of Aboriginal nations. Canadian law assumes its own legitimacy over Aboriginal Nations because the Canadian constitution is interpreted to mean that while Aboriginal peoples have an inherent right to self-governance, it has to be reconciled with Crown sovereignty.[58] "Reconcile" as it is used here, does not mean a meeting half-way for both parties, but instead suggests that "the legal sovereignty of the state always supersedes Aboriginal rights."[59] The underlying ideological assumption and legal attitude on which English colonialism in Canada rests is that their authority is always un-problematic and in being

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[55] Royal Commission, 120 in Mackey, "Apology," 52.
[56] Royal Commission, 120.
[57] Royal Commission, 120.
[58] Turner, "On the Idea," 107.
[59] Mackey, "Apology," 52.

so, it can claim centrality.[60] The treaty agreements are therefore delegitimized by Canadian law, which does little to defend or respect their sovereign partners.

Settler appropriation of land was not carried out solely by legal frameworks that sought to destabilize Indigenous treaty rights and eliminate status. To legitimize ongoing land appropriation, the destruction of Indigenous cultures was deemed necessary and the ability to do so required instilling in settlers "a sense of superiority and entitlement to legally define Indigenous cultures as inferior."[61] The legal system worked in conjunction with other national policies implemented to destroy Aboriginal cultures. These policies increased between the resource extraction of the late 1700s when Indigenous peoples were advantageous for the state's resource economy and as military allies, and European settlement of the early 1800s when European settlers became concerned with acquiring land for agriculture and settlement.[62] The interconnected efforts of cultural genocide and land appropriation worked "as a means to open space for the nation with the intent of containing and assimilating Aboriginal peoples."[63]

While political apologies in Canada have been given for programs of cultural genocide, it is widely discussed that land appropriation is not given mention as its inseparable correlate. As James Daschuk has argued, "Any serious consideration of Indigenous land tenure in western Canada must consider mortality from epidemic disease as a central determinant in the occupational history of the region."[64] Apologizing for cultural assimilation strategies, such as the "sixties scoop" and residential schools, thus becomes "a synecdoche for colonialism,"[65] behind which the counterpart of land theft remains suppressed. As Jennifer Henderson has made clear, making apology of this type the most visible of Indigenous moves towards rightful reparations is advantageous for

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[60] Asch, "Calder," 110.
[61] Mackey, "Apology," 51.
[62] Mackey, "Apology," 50.
[63] Mackey, "Apology," 51.
[64] Daschuk, xv.
[65] Henderson, 67.

settlement because "from the point of view of the state – financial reparations for residential schooling can be individualized and contained in a way that land claims cannot."[66] Building upon Henderson's insights, Mackey suggests that the residential schools as synecdoche approach "transforms the broader material colonial processes into something containable and…"apologizable," precisely through vacating the pivotal role that land appropriation played in colonial processes."[67] De-associating residential schools from settlers' illegitimate land appropriation obscures the fact that land theft and cultural genocide have always worked together to realize and maintain the contemporary nation-state.

In 1991, the federal government formed the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) to help address the obstacles plaguing the relationship between Aboriginal peoples (Inuit, Métis, and First Nations), the Canadian government, and Canadian society. This initiative was brought about in response to the 1990 "Oka crisis" in Quebec, when a land dispute between Kanien'kehaka people (the "Mohawk") and the settler town of Oka, violently erupted.[68] After years of examining the issues that confront Aboriginal peoples within the evolution of settler-Indigenous relations, the RCAP published its final report in 1996. The report states that as a result of treaties, "Canadians have, over time, inherited the wealth generated by Aboriginal lands and resources...Thus...Canadians...can equally be considered participants in the treaty process ... as the contemporary beneficiaries of the treaties."[69] The RCAP's stance is that we are all treaty peoples – inclusive of the state and Canadians – and as such, "the terms of the treaties define the *rights and responsibilities of both parties*."[70] It is, therefore, the responsibility of settlers to maintain proper treaty relations, yet the incentive to do so is at odds with the national culture, which understands treaty to be a gift from the state to Aboriginal nations.

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[66] Henderson, 67.
[67] Mackey, "Apology," 50.
[68] See Wakeham's discussion on the excessive force of the state and their use of terrorism rhetoric to manage Indigenous resistance.
[69] Royal Commission, 120.
[70] Royal Commission, 120.

To summarize, settlement in Canada is a permanent colonial settlement founded on treaty agreements. These treaties initiated sovereign partnerships between the historic Crown of Canada and Aboriginal nations, and have been carried over into the contemporary state and joined by modern treaties. Recent evaluations by the RCAP on the evolution of Indigenous-settler relations has shown that treaty relations have not been responsibly upheld, which is why settler Canadians are the contemporary beneficiaries. These inequitable results have emerged by way of national policies that sought to influence national settler culture and instill in settlers a sense of superiority. As discussed, Canadian law assumes its legitimacy over Indigenous peoples, making it appear as if Aboriginal nations require the jurisdiction of Crown sovereignty. To garner this legal dominance, the state needed to define Indigenous peoples as inferior in the settler imaginary because it has no legal grounds for its dominion. National policies of cultural genocide and assimilation were thus instated to destabilize Aboriginal nations for the purposes of delegitimizing Indigenous sovereignties. Formal apologies made by the government forefront cultural assimilation programs as a synecdoche for colonialism, which obscures the core reason these programs were instituted: to legitimize land appropriation.

Describing Settlerness

The national settler culture in Canada is shaped by the state's colonizing program. While the RCAP urges settlers to actively take up the task of decolonizing relations, the incentive to perform responsible treaty relations is at odds with how the settler understands their role in Canadian society. The colonial legacy reflects an understanding of settlement as sole dominion and not partnerships, as illustrated by the discrepancy in treaty definitions between the state and Aboriginal nations and enforced by Canadian law. Based upon what has been presented to settlers through the national narratives, they understand themselves to be the rightful owners of their property with no expectation that they should consider nor respect the treaties that bind them in partnership to Aboriginal peoples. As I have discussed, this is partly because the settler imaginary sees Indigenous peoples in ways that redefine and thus reallocate the settler problem away from themselves. This, in turn, relieves the settler of immediate responsibility to upholding proper treaty relations because

it places the blame on historical events and peoples or on the perceived moral inferiority of their sovereign partners.

While the hegemonic structure in Canada seeks to accommodate pluralism, the laws and regulating systems ascribe to a liberal white framework for understanding the boundaries of freedom and nation-building.[71] Settlers who are normative within this hegemonic structure are defined by their whiteness, British heritage and being a descendant of multigenerational settlement that formed the contemporary state of Canada.[72] While newer Canadian immigrants may not fit this normative profile, they are absorbed into the structure of the settler nation through ideologies such as multiculturalism in Canada.[73] While there are many forms of multiculturalism, Canada's brand, in particular, is one if liberal culturalism, which "value[s] the sanctity of individual autonomy" under one nation and claims itself to be a model for equality.[74] Each individual who lives this autonomy is responsible for their own successes and failures because liberal frameworks deny the presence of systemic prejudice and oppression. This absorbs new Canadians into the labor force under the ideological presupposition that their hard work will determine their success within the structure of settlement. This is how settlers become involved in the Canadian economy, which is built from and continues to rely on land.

Settler bodies can be intersectionally marked, or they may carry a normative profile, and they may also take up a variety of economic and socioeconomic positionalities. What differentiates settlers from Indigenous peoples in settler society is that they do not have treaty rights and therefore are not a threat to the state's sole dominion. This means that the types of systemic oppression that settlers experience have different historical bases,

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[71] Mackey, *House,* 159. See Eva Mackey's discussion regarding the logic of 'Canada First,' whereby liberal whiteness is referred to in challenging times as the unmarked core of western culture under the assumption that it is the most rational way to peacefully function.

[72] Berger, 147. See Berger's assessment on how French whiteness was employed to demonstrate Canada's proclivity towards tolerance, a trait inherited from the British Empire, which was used to differentiate Canada from the U.S. Whiteness in Canada is therefore aligned with being British and not inclusively western European.

[73] Mackey, *House,* 68. See Eva Mackey's discussion concerning multiculturalism as 'the great national bandage" that "allows the state to highlight and manage diversity without endangering the project of nation-building."

[74] Murphy, 63.

trajectories, and affiliated narratives to substantiate unjust treatment than those inflicted upon Indigenous peoples. While the government seeks to manage marked settler bodies, it does so with the incentive of growing the labor force by collecting and integrating bodies into the economy. In contrast, Indigenous bodies are designated for destruction because the state has always sought to suppress their right to sovereign partnership. All settlers – normative or not – are beneficiaries of inequitable treaty relations either because they are descendants of early settlers or they become bound up in Canada's social practices and economy. In any case, colonialism works through the everyday performances of settler bodies, which carry forward the colonial legacy. Settlers are therefore privileged in Canadian society because their bodies and lives are valuable for enabling settlement.

Chapter Summaries

In chapter one of this thesis, I discuss the concept of the habit body to provide pertinent theoretical grounding for situating the settler habit body in subsequent chapters. The overall aim of this thesis is to re-present settler colonialism as an embodied habitual practice that is malleable to change. However, any discussions concerning change must begin with articulating the frame of habit construction within the body, more generally. I begin with a close reading of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and proceed further using critical phenomenology theorists for a more nuanced placement of bodily habits in societal context. My argument in chapter one maintains that viewing privileged bodies as habitually maintaining the status quo by *actively* holding habits brings to them the responsibility of examining their perceptual frameworks.

In chapter two, I utilize the lens of the habit body to contemplate the efficacy of settler bodies for performing decolonization. Working closely with Eva Mackey's ethnographic research on settler-Indigenous relations, I forefront the "sweaty" work of living and confronting settlement, as a settler. Bringing in terms from phenomenology, metaphysics, and affect theory, I read and interrogate settlerness. I claim that the structure of settlement is habitual in the settler body and is apparent in the ways they sense the world. I argue that a practise of resiliency to the affective implications of decolonization is

necessary. My aim in chapter two is to flesh out the shift from the theoretical work of habituation with the embodied perspective of settlerness in Canada.

The final chapter of this thesis is concerned with taking up the problematic question of how settlers can open their habitual faculties to form more equitable land relations. Looking to critical phenomenologists, I explicate how settler habitual faculties can be reshaped affectively. I draw from settler-colonial scholars and Indigenous thinkers, leaders and scholars to discuss the compatibility of Indigenous philosophies of treaty – Guswentha – with phenomenological approaches – "seeing with." My discussion in part one of this chapter picks up and investigates Eva Mackey's question, "how can we listen to others when we already *know*?"[75] My discussion in part two aims to take this investigation from understanding *how* settlers can do differently into the more concerning question of *why* settlers would take up the task of decolonizing work. I conclude by arguing that habits determine our expectations for the future, and as such, incremental changes in habits bring different expectations for our futures into view. If settler bodies begin the sweaty work of decolonization, they become open to new possibilities for understanding themselves in the world. In which case, *how* the settler does differently changes *why* they would want to be different.

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[75] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 132.

Chapter One: The Habit Body in the World

Introduction

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's structure of the habit body emerged within his body of work as a way to understand systems of relations between humans and their world. One of his most important contributions to the field of phenomenology was description as a formal methodology for reflecting on embodied human existence. To be able to articulate our pre-reflective experience is to get close to the "present and living reality" of our perception, which is useful for studying human relations as well as their relationships to language culture and society.[76] Our bodies are always approaching the world through our habits, which frame how we perceive the encounter. To describe these encounters is, therefore, to reveal, as I describe below, what is invisible in the moment of perception. To describe the burning our squinting eyes feel when it is too bright is to make apparent that there is not enough shade.

Merleau-Ponty's return to the primacy of perception brought focus to the perception of our presence in the world. Given his involvement with political commentary and analysis, he did not see his theoretical work as disconnected from his political engagement and in fact believed philosophy needed to become more real-world engaged.[77] As Moran describes, "In political terms, Merleau-Ponty saw his mission as reconciling dialectical materialism with freedom."[78] I read Merleau-Ponty's ideas on the habit body to be a political project of the body, a body that describes its experience of the world against the universalizing narratives that might tell them otherwise. To describe the sensations of being a settler in Canada makes the pressures of norms apparent against the promise of happiness that orients us towards our common goal. To describe the feeling of entitlement is to reveal the ways that settler consciousness has been shaped by the conditions of settlement. In *The Primacy of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty explains,

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[76] Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy*, 25.
[77] Moran, 397.
[78] Moran, 397.

By these words, "the primacy of perception", we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values, are constituted for us; that perception is a nascent logos; that it teaches us, outside all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself; that it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action. It is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation, but of assisting at the birth of this knowledge, to make it as sensible as the sensible, to recover the consciousness of rationality. This experience of rationality is lost when we take it for granted as self-evident, but is, on the contrary, rediscovered when it is made to appear against the background of non-human nature.[79]

The true conditions of objectivity as we sense them come to us through our faculties of habitual perception, which I will explain below as a structured way of seeing the world. Our perception, before we apply reason or rationalize it is our sense of our conditions. Perception and reason together constitute our reflexive reasoning and our pre-reflective habit. How we perceive is thus not impartial to the social and political milieu that we inhabit. Our pre-reflective experience is where we feel settlement before we can rationalize it, but we are feeling settlement none the less, and settlement is a political structure.

This chapter deliberates on the habit body to provide pertinent theoretical grounding for situating the settler habit body in subsequent chapters. The overall aim of this thesis is to re-present settler colonialism as an embodied habitual practice that is malleable to change. However, any discussions concerning change must begin with articulating the frame of habit construction within the body, more generally. To accomplish this, I build upon a close reading of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work in *Phenomenology of Perception*, to discuss the habit body as a correlative structure to the external world. I bring this lens in particular to settler bodies because it complicates propositions for decolonization that place importance on the onto-epistemological stance of the settler. Such approaches suggest that decolonization requires the settler to "think" outside settlement or be open to intellectualizing their settlement practices differently. But as I will describe in this chapter, the ways our bodies interact with the world are not separate from what we think or how we know ourselves. In which case, it is not an efficacious strategy for settlers

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[79] Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy,* 25.

to think their way to becoming decolonizing; they must know themselves as decolonizing in the world.

Bodies carry pre-reflective knowledge that assists their navigation in the world. This means that our bodies find their way around the world without explicit instruction from conscious thought. What we think and how we know the world with our bodies is not a mind over matter procedure, but a nuanced production that inextricably links our understanding of ourselves and the world with our body's exploration of it. With every movement our bodies make, their intellect, consciousness, and corporeal being are intertwined and co-constitutive.[80] The body is a subject-object because it is a material body with a consciousness that is conditioned by the world, as it conditions it. This chapter discusses the integral components of the habit body and its character to provide a basis for further chapters that problematize the habitual faculties of settlers.

The first section of this chapter unpacks the main terms and operations of the habit body. Bodily intentionality and consciousness are discussed as faculties emergent from the body's interactions with the exterior world. Bodily intentionality is a complex system that does not merely respond to intellectual instruction but responds to the world using pre-reflective perceptual engagement. Over time, the body's perceptual faculties and its responses to the world become habitual.

The second section of this chapter discusses the role of culturally instituted practices and how they come to be embedded in the habitual perceptions and bodily responses of bodies. The perceptive faculties of the body learn from and thus reflect the hegemonic order of the larger cultural milieu. This teaches our bodies how to see, it over-determines what we see, and it defines the relationships we form to other figures. These relations thus reflect the larger hierarchies of the cultural milieu and therefore influence

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[80] While my language in this chapter may at times focus on one of intellect, consciousness, or the body, it should be taken as my effort to discuss those qualities that have been differentiated by other theoretical lenses common to Western philosophical understanding, but that cannot truly be separated out from the inextricable structure of the body as far as critical phenomenology is concerned.

how the normative body performs its privilege relationally to marked bodies. Through repetition, this mode of conduct becomes habitual for privileged bodies.

The final section of this chapter contemplates the distinction between sedimentation and habit for the purposes of understanding how privileged bodies can take responsibility for their bodily habits. While sedimentation is the body's index of acquired skills – how to lift objects and walk around them – habit is the process that discerns which skills will be utilized and which will not. To maintain habits that are oppressive is thus not a passive existence, but an active way of being in the world. To focus on habit and not sedimentation facilitates an approach to changing habit bodies that perform and thus maintain systems of oppression.

Overall, my argument maintains that although habits of perception and response are un-conscious, they become habitual behavior that can be consciously analyzed. To view privileged bodies as habitually maintaining the status quo by *actively* holding habits brings to them the responsibility of examining their perceptual frameworks. As each body is unique in its relation to the hegemonic order, the task of un-monumentalizing privileged bodies will be as unique to each body as the intersections of milieu that teach its habitual perception and response.

The Body in the World

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty discusses the body as a complex perceptual system inextricably linked with consciousness and the world. He argues that "The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and for a living being, having a body means being united with a definite milieu, merging with certain projects, and being perpetually engaged therein."[81] The projects that our bodies take up pertain to our consciousness, as "consciousness itself is a project of the world."[82] When we intend towards objects with our

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[81] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 84.
[82] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* xxxii.

desires, we find ourselves in our practical and perceptual involvements with things.[83] These projects are not conducted by the thought of a movement nor the movement itself, nor are they tandem operations from thought to movement or vice versa; they are movement and consciousness of movement that give us "moments of a single whole."[84] But our movements in the world are not just for ourselves, as they are situated in the milieu of our world and, as such, they are affected by social, cultural, political, and historical forces that comprise that milieu.

My body stands in the world as an object and simultaneously as a subject. The relationship between my body as an object and as a subject is not one of complete differentiation, as "all consciousness is consciousness of something."[85] My consciousness understands my body as being a physical presence that is part of my external world. How I know and understand myself is dependent upon how I learn myself in relation to the objects I encounter outside myself and what they mean to me. This body is at once sensing and sensible, and it is what Merleau-Ponty refers to as "the phenomenal body." The meanings I make when I encounter objects in the world do not ascribe to an explanation of linear causation, whereby my interactions align with a universal meaning. I make meanings of my perceptual encounters at the intersections of my bodily intentions and the milieu I live amongst, and these intersections produce the context that is my own personal worldview. The perceptual interactions that my body has with objects and other people are therefore a self-organizing process in which my consciousness is shaped.

Since our conscious understanding is always a perceiving engagement with the world, our bodies are directed towards objects and people to fulfil our thoughts, beliefs, and desires. This intentionality is not solely a product that involves intellectual thought as

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[83] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 84. "This is the paradox of all being in the world, By carrying myself towards a world, I throw my perceptual intentions and my practical intentions against objects that appear to me, in the end, as anterior and exterior to these intensions, and which nevertheless exist for me only insofar as they arouse thoughts and desires in me."

[84] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 113. "Sometimes the patient thinks of the ideal formula of the movement, other times he throws his body into blind attempts; however, for the normal person every movement is indissolvably movement and consciousness of movement. This can be expressed by saying that, for the normal person, every movement has a *background*, and that the movements and its background are "moments of a single whole."

[85] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 5.

a separate function and master over the motility of the body; although it is sometimes the case that my body will say "don't forget your keys" and then walk towards the key bowl. Husserl's distinction between "act intentionality" and "operative intentionality" is significant here for understanding the body as having its own system of thought and action inextricably linked to objective thought and the world.[86] Act intentionality is "the intentionality of our judgements and our voluntary decisions," which are decided upon in conscious thought much like the explicit instructions I give myself to procure my keys.[87] Operative intentionality is the intentionality that appears in our desires and evaluations that we must then articulate in language.

Operative intentionality is pre-reflective, meaning it is a bodily intention that happens before we can consciously reflect on it. It is instances like these where we find ourselves unable to remember if we accomplished certain tasks, such as grabbing our keys on the way to work, until we consciously confirm it by finding our keys in our pocket. These experiences happen at the level of bodily perception and utilize our body's own awareness of ourselves in the world.[88] This means I may tell myself not to forget my keys, but I do not have to tell my body how to grasp the keys and walk to the front door. While moving about in the world at times might be an intellectual endeavor, it is intricately fused to a perceptive performance. To understand the external world requires the body "to grasp the total intention" and not just the properties, narratives, and ideas that can be intellectualized.[89] Objects carry properties that give them a unique manner of existing because they provide experiential knowledge. In other words, if I consciously remind myself to intend towards my keys, my body models my grasp to anticipate my hand's encounter with their lightness and serrated edges so as not to drop them or cut myself, without an objective thought to do so. To know my keys is therefore not only to know them in thought but know them in my hand. Husserl's operative intentionality is more akin to

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[86] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* xxxii.
[87] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* xxxii.
[88] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* xxxii.
[89] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* xxxii. "Whether it is a question of a perceive thing, an historical event, or a doctrine, 'to understand' is to grasp the total intention – not merely what these things are for representation, namely, the 'properties' of the perceived thing, the myriad of 'historical events,' and the ideas introduced by the doctrine."

Merleau-Ponty's conception of bodily intentionality, which does more than serve intellectual thought.

Bodily intentionality is my body being in the world, responding to tasks with perceptive engagement. Perceptive encounters are the body's first encounters in the world, being that they precede a child's induction into frames of understanding provided by the language they acquire to explain their experiences.[90] The child's first world is the sensible world, in which "he understands well beyond what he knows how to say, responds well beyond what he could define."[91] Open to the world by way of their senses, the child is unrestricted by the linearity of language that is insufficient for communicating the multi-dimensional character of lived experience. The moments we live in the world are moments in which our histories and our hopes and desires for the future all come to inform our perception of the present encounter. Language structures how we communicate our perception of experiences as a relating communal endeavor; therefore, the use of language translates the dynamic personal experience of the individual into a fixed interpretation for the purpose of mutual understanding.[92] However, language and perception are also not completely differentiated but are intertwined structures of meaning-making that give us different ways of grasping our circumstances. Our experience may not be reducible to language, but language lends itself to our ability to make sense of the world. Our experience has an original meaning and a related system of intentionality which allows the body to understand its world outside of linguistic representations or being subordinated to a "symbolic" or "objectifying" function.[93] Bodily intentionality is this primary perceptive system, or "practical directedness towards the world" through bodily consciousness. It is

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[90] Merleau-Ponty, *Visible/ Invisible*, 11.
[91] Merleau-Ponty, *Visible/Invisible,* 13.
[92] Moran, 405. Moran argues that "Merleau-Ponty sees the tendency towards disregarding historicality and temporality as in part due to the manner in which thought comes to expression in a language. The congealing of temporal thinking into language and concepts acts to fix meanings, to give the appearance of absoluteness. Furthermore, through language and signs the constituted human social world is brought about, and constitutes a 'system."
[93] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 141. "The motor experience of our body is not a particular case of knowledge; rather, it offers us a manner of reaching the world and the object, a "praktognosia," that must be recognized as original, and perhaps as originary. My body has its world, or understands its world without having to go through "representations," or without being subordinated to a "symbolic" or "objectifying" function.

therefore important for understanding the intending body as a more complex system than merely an expression of intellectual mastery over the body's motility.[94]

When my body encounters an object, my perception of it relies upon its spatial arrangement to other objects. As I locate my keys on the dresser's surface, I narrow my view to bring the keys into focus, which sends the other objects around it into the background. The object of my intention is the keys and the objects surrounding it create the horizon against which I can focus my intent. To bring my focus to the smaller details in the keys, to pick them up and turn them around in my hand as I inspect them, requires that I focus on some of the details while others recede. Through this object-horizon structure of perceiving, I "suspend the surroundings in order to see the object better, and to lose in the background what is gained in the figure."[95] My awareness of the dresser is therefore imperative to my view of the keys because in not being the keys, the dresser becomes the background against which the keys appear to me.

My perception of objects is learned and indexed over the course of different experiences with them. My bodily movements that I use to maneuver objects with my hands is always a perceptual exploration through which I create a bodily and conscious memory of their many sides, textures, and weights. As Merleau-Ponty describes:

> Each moment in time gives itself as a witness to all others. It shows, by taking place, "how this was bound to happen" and "how it will have ended." Each present definitively establishes a point that solicits the recognition of all others. Thus, the object is seen from all times just as it is seen from all places, and by the same means, namely, the horizon structure. The present still holds in hand the immediate past, but without positing it as an object, and since this immediate past likewise retains the past that immediately preceded it, time gone by is entirely taken up and grasped in the present.[96]

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[94] McWeeny, 259.

[95] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 70. "Even if I knew nothing of cones and rods, I would still understand that it is necessary to suspend the surroundings in order to see the object better, and to lose in the background what is gained in the figure, because to see the object is to plunge into it and because objects form a system in which one object cannot appear without concealing others."

[96] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 71.

In the present, my memories allow me to understand objects as having different angles even as my body stands to face or touch only one side of them. Looking down upon the keys on the dresser, I am aware that what I see of them in that moment is not the only perception of the keys that can be had. Although I may look at the keys, my view of them overlaps with my other sense memories to know the keys as carrying potential; I know these keys to be an extension of my body and not a one-dimensional picture.

Being that my perception is an accumulation of learned experiences, my bodily intentions have both a spatial and temporal horizon. Although object encounters happen in a distinct moment in time, those moments draw upon my past perceptual experiences. The moment that I encounter the object, it is "seen from all times just as it is seen from all places, and by the same means, namely, the horizon structure."[97] Just as the spatial horizon facilitates my perception of an object through relief, the temporal horizon structure is necessary for me to have a present that is immanent to yet differentiated from moments in history and the flow of duration into the future.[98] This distinct moment in time is where my body gains consciousness. Merleau-Ponty argues that "the present (taken broadly, with its originary horizons of past and future) has, nevertheless, a privileged status because it is the zone in which being and consciousness coincide."[99] The present is where "ultimate consciousness" can be found because it is where "my being and consciousness are one." It is also where "We indubitably communicate with ourselves by communicating with the world. We hold time in its entirety and we are present to ourselves because we are present in and towards the world."[100] The horizons that surround us help us establish our immediate "field of presence": a situation or a point in time that references other points in time and that will become a point of reference for future points in time. To be conscious, then is to

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[97] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 71.
[98] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 72. "Along with the immanent future, I also have the horizon of the past that will surround it; that is, I have my actual present as the past of that future. Thus, thanks to the double horizon of retention and protention, my present can cease to be a present that is in fact about to be carried off and destroyed by the flow of duration and can rather become a fixed and identifiable point in an objective time."
[99] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 447.
[100] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 448.

be perceptually experiencing in a moment. In which case, we are always intending towards the world to know ourselves.

In addition to helping us establish our presence, our horizons determine the quality of that presence and ultimately our consciousness. According to Merleau-Ponty, our intending bodies perceive the world in accordance with a multitude of horizons that comprise the particulars of our individual situation:

> The life of consciousness – epistemic life, the life of desire, or perceptual life – is underpinned by an "intentional arc" that projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation, or rather, that ensures that we are situated within all of these relationships. The intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity.[101]

The intentional arc draws together the intertwined aspects of our existence, making them inseparable components that influence our lives. How our bodies perceive the world and respond to it is informed and conditioned by the material and immaterial relationships, influences, and obstacles that make up the milieu of our world and are part of this intentional arc. My field of presence when I grasp my keys does not exist in a vacuum because the meaning that is made in that moment tethers together my consciousness, my external horizons, and my perceiving body. The multitude of horizons under which I perceive my tardiness informs my body's pre-reflective performance to swiftly grasp the keys, find the door, and start my car.

The Habit Body

As my body flows through moments, it's motions pre-reflectively draw upon a system of equivalent positions that it has learned in previous spaces and times. This is the makeup of my body schema, which Merleau-Ponty describes as an understanding of one's body as possessing a variety of motor tasks that are instantly transposable.[102] The transposibility of movements is not as simple as applying an individual movement to

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[101] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 137.
[102] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 142.

individual stimuli because the activities and conditions with which my body performs are never identical. Grasping my keys might resemble my motions to reach and grasp for the salt on the table, but how my body carries out these tasks requires different amalgamations of perception and engagement. The objects that I handle solicit my touch differently by way of their material make-up.

The reach and grasp I use to procure my keys are not simply predicated on a cognitive evaluation of comparative length, whereby I consciously recognize the reach is two feet. Places in space are not objective positions in relation to the position of our bodies but are points that solicit and capture our intentions, and through this performance I learn the space by bestowing intention and meaning onto an object. Objects also become extensions of our bodies, whereby we understand space through them. When I pass the saltshaker to my friend, I know that the shaker adds inches to my reach, and I find my friend's grasp at the other end of it and not at my fingertips. Passing the salt is a different spatial estimation than inserting my keys into my car door yet, in both cases my body's motor functions employ the actions of reach, grasp, and maneuvering an object as an extension of the body.

The system of equivalences our bodies acquire that inform the process of transposibility become habitual for our bodies. For our bodies to be habitual means that they understand the world in a way that is pre-reflective because they have sedimented experiences of those actions in the body. This is what Merleau-Ponty asserts is the body's way of "gearing into" the world, which he means as the body's grasp that attunes it to the world, or the way in which the body takes hold of and adapts to the world around it.[103] The body's ability to gear in helps it incorporate new understandings that then become sedimented once the body can carry out the task appropriately. The body's ability to transpose these sedimentations means it carries not only "a system of current positions, but

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[103] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 497. Endnote 47 Translator Donald Landes explains Merleau-Ponty's terms "the gearing"…"to gear into" as "Although the image is certainly one of "gears" fitting together, Merleau-Ponty draws upon the figurative aspects of this image such that the "fit" is something that is to be accomplished in the act, not something pre-determined by the shape of the gears and teeth. This is captured by the sense of the English verb "to gear (in)to" when it is used to mean "to adjust" or "to adapt" something to a particular purpose."

also, and consequently, as an open system of an infinity of equivalent positions in different orientations."[104] This is more precisely what Merleau-Ponty terms "the body schema," which he describes as "not merely an experience of my body, but rather an experience of my body in the world."[105] Although these movements take place below the level of conscious activity, bodily habits cannot be reduced to reflex because each circumstance requires that the body become accustomed to something new. In which case, we can say that habit occupies the overlapping space of conscious and non-conscious being, a space in which our body conjures the accord between "what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the realization."[106]

Distinguishing between the habitual body and the actual body, Merleau-Ponty argues that the two bodies consistently co-penetrate each other.[107] The actual body is the body of reflexive existence, meaning it allows me to understand the physiological processes of how to reach and grasp. The habitual body is the pre-reflexive body that knows how to reach, grasp and handle the saltshaker or the keys as part of its own being. These two bodies co-penetrate each other as we switch between movements and adjust to the task required. This is how we stitch together our body's intentions with objects to realize our consciousness.

To summarize, this section has discussed the basic characteristics that comprise the habit body. Our bodies in the world allow us to perceive and are therefore essential to attaining consciousness. How we know ourselves is dependent on how we know ourselves in relation to the temporal and spatial perceptual encounters we have with the external world. We extend our bodies towards objects we interact with to fulfil our intentions and desires, which are imminently connected to our past experiences and future aspirations.

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[104] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 142.
[105] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 142.
[106] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 146.
[107] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 84. Merleau-Ponty discusses the habit body and the actual body in regards to patients who have lost a limb: "In the case we are considering, the ambiguity of knowledge amounts to this: it is as though our body comprises two distinct layers, that of the habitual body and that of the actual body. Gestures of manipulation that appear in the first have disappeared in the second, and the problem of how I can feel endowed with a limb that I no longer have in fact comes down to knowing how the habitual body can act as a guarantee for the actual body."

Our body's pre-reflective knowledge of the world is what makes it possible for us to move about without intellectual instruction, and it is built upon the body's accumulation of experiences in which it employs transposable motor tasks. Our body schema is where each new exploration that requires transposable action becomes indexed or sedimented. The process of transposibility becomes habitual for our bodies, which means that our bodies can perform tasks as pre-reflective habits. This is how my body knows to handle my keys and the saltshaker appropriately without explicit instructions, and how it settles into the new shape.

Our pre-reflective ways of being in the world are premised on two distinct yet interrelated habits of the body: habitual perception and habitual bodily response. These two functions do not necessarily correlate in any causal way but nourish each other to create bodies that habitually carry forward social and political structures in the world. Although our movements are pre-reflective, they are not inherently static. But before the discussion of changeable bodies can be had, it is necessary to understand how bodies bring culturally instituted worldviews into existence. What is at stake when bodies become correlates of these structures is the quality of consciousness that is produced. In the next section, I focus specifically on privileged bodies who tend to take up their positionalities in the world at the expense of their others.

Habitual Perception and Bodily Response

Perceptual habits formed in the individual are also cultivated in relation to the cultural level. Cultural habits of perception are ways of perceiving that have been instituted, whereby they produce influential new ways of understanding people, things, and relations between them.[108] Habits that are shared culturally often reflect a sense for what is normative. Normative qualities are determined by hegemonic ideals, against which perceived bodies are judged. This implement of measure is not established in relation to true innateness of any particular body or bodies, but functions as fantasy or "an ontological

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[108] Fielding, 156. "Ways of perceiving are also habits at the cultural and historical level –new ways of perceiving are instituted, and these institutions found new ways of moving and hence understanding, becoming part of the background against which things, people, and relations appear."

principal in the sense of a ground and an origin."[109] In *Broken Hegemonies*, Reiner Schürmann refers to this presence as "hegemonic phantasm":

> In order to constitute the phenomenality of phenomena, in order to universalize them, a representational order must organize itself around a principle, a phantasmic referent measuring all representations. A hegemonic phantasm so conceived not only directs us to refer everything to it, but has, furthermore, an endless supply of significations, that is to say, normative measures. It is the position [*posé*] to which all practical and cognitive laws relate, in the final instance, all acts and all phenomena.[110]

The hegemonic phantasm is hegemonic in its being a horizon against which the figure is perceived relationally. It is phantasmic because it disappears in the moment that we encounter the figure, making the illusion appear real and absolute instead of a way our perception is learned and structured.

Linda Alcoff's work in *Visible Identities* speaks to the point that culturally instituted ways of perceiving act through the object-horizon to sediment perceptual habits. She argues that race is a structure of contemporary perception that constitutes the horizon rather than the figure that stands out. Racialization is a learned perceptual habit and it presents to us the figure and defines racialized people just as it becomes "tacit, almost hidden from view, and thus almost immune from critical reflection."[111] This horizon, against which all acts that I perceive stand out, is what I understand to be the natural setting of my thoughts. The learned-ness of my perception is difficult to locate and interrogate because my perception is a pre-reflective understanding of the world that precedes conscious evaluation. This does not mean that these habits of perception cannot change, but to change them requires making the faculties of perceiving visible.

While Alcoff and Schürmann bring attention to how race works from the ground of the object-horizon structure, Alia Al-Saji's work on *The Racialization of Muslim Veils* brings attention to what this means for revealing the figure. Al-Saji argues that each time

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[109] Reynolds, 245.
[110] Schürmann, 11.
[111] Alcoff, 188.

a Muslim woman is perceived against western representations of Muslim women, she is marked or pre-determined as oppressed. The woman is not simply seen as veiled, nor is she seen as she appears to herself or even as she might describe herself and her individual circumstances as not oppressive. She is seen as a pre-determined discursive representation who "cannot be seen as otherwise," and who " cannot be seen as a subject who takes up and constitutes itself through that oppression."[112] The Muslim woman becomes visible as a figure whose victimhood and voiceless-ness is overdetermined. Simultaneously, the woman becomes invisible in that her perceived lack of subjectivity means she needs to be spoken for in political life, divesting her of a self-originating voice.[113] The object-horizon structure then does not simply operate to reveal the figure or object in itself. Instead, it reveals and conceals particular traits of the figure whereby it appears already loaded with meaning.

In *The Habits of Racism*, Helen Ngo discusses the habitual reactions that emerge from white women's interactions with racialized others. Movements such as tensing, flinching, and moving away, are all examples of unthinking racist bodily habits that she carries in her bodily repertoire and that are "available to her upon the unanticipated interaction with a Black man."[114] These reactions cannot necessarily be explained by bodily reflex or unconscious bias because reactions vary dependent upon the stereotypes perceived. This is to say that the woman's reaction to two differently racialized men would not be identical. The habitual reaction correlates with the stereotype, just as Merleau-Ponty describes habit as "the power of responding with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation.[115] The horizon and its ability to comport itself as a hegemonic phantasm is thus an integral component for habituating racializing perception *and* response.

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[112] Al-Saji, "Racialization," 885.
[113] Al-Saji, "Racialization," 877. "That the image of the Muslim woman forms a kind of 'constitutive outside' (to use Judith Butler's term) explains the exclusionary and silencing function played by this representation. Although what is represented as inevitably oppressive is the Muslim veil in general, it is representations of the veil themselves that demand and enforce the exclusion of Muslim women."
[114] Ngo, 23.
[115] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 143.

While these habits are perceptual toward the figure-horizon arrangement, they are also premised on the perception of one's own body as situated within the event. The unanticipated encounter between the white woman and the racialized man in Ngo's description of racist bodily habits is again useful for grounding this claim. A white woman who fears the stereotype of the Black man will react differently than the racialized man she encounters during the unexpected meeting. This is because the body of the perceiver is "the always unimplied third term of the figure-background structure, and each figure appears perspectivally against the double horizon of external space and bodily space." [116] The white woman's awareness of her body as having an intersection of certain qualities – whiteness, petite stature, femininity –informs her perception of the figure she perceives, under the hegemonic horizon. Not only does her body understand him to be representative of violence, but her body also understands itself as being a likely victim to that violence. Her reaction is therefore not just to a stereotype she understands cognitively nor one that is implied by the object-horizon structure. The interaction she has engages her entire body in the meaning-making system underpinned by the hegemonic order.

For the racialized man in the encounter, the woman may pose an immediate physical threat should she panic and call out for help although, additionally he feels her to be a psychic threat. Aware of his own perceptible bodily qualities and what they mean within the hegemonic horizon, he perceives her gaze as overdetermining him from the outside by correlating his body with violent perpetrators.[117] The habitual perception and bodily reactions that emerge from both people are therefore in accord with the figure they encounter, as it is imbued with particular attributes by the phantasmic horizon. But their reactions also reflect what the hegemonic order determines they will be to each other – perpetrator and victim – as bodies that make meaning of that order through lived experience.

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[116] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 103.
[117] Fanon, 95. See Frantz Fanon's discussion of the white gaze.

The Performance of Privilege

Bodily racism is one example of many sedimented biases that reflect the hegemonic horizon. These implements of measure condition our bodily extensions into the world, thereby shaping our consciousness. The performance of privilege exemplifies a style of bodily comportment that is acquired from receiving anticipated responses from the world.[118] For Merleau-Ponty, the flow between action and response is how the body understands itself as geared into the world, a world that it successfully knows or is trying to correct itself to know with every move it makes. Privileged bodies will, therefore, understand how to extend themselves differently than bodies that do not fit the desired or normative form.

The sense of entitlement and bodily confidence will vary between individuals in particular circumstances. Performances in spaces like predominantly white male corporate settings in North America might elicit unexpected or variant responses from bodies who feel themselves to be a source of unease for those around them – such as nervousness, a wavering voice, or an overly stern demeanor. These bodies become conscious of themselves by extending into spaces where they encounter significantly more obstacles than their normative colleagues. The hostility of these environments creates for them an uneasy passage through space, demonstrating that bodily relations to space are not equal and as such, spaces are not neutral.

In contrast, privileged bodies that are uninhibited and unobstructed will take up physical or aural space with confidence. These bodies extend themselves under the assumption that they belong in particular settings because their movements within the field of perception feel natural. Unable to perceive the kinds of obstacles that marked bodies encounter, privileged bodies approach others assuming that all behavior is innate to a person's moral fiber. While the marked body may choose to avoid the corporate setting

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[118] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 261. "My body is geared into the world when my perception provides me with the most varied and the most clearly articulated spectacle possible, and when my motor intentions, as they unfold, receive the responses they anticipate from the world."

because of its aggressiveness towards them,[119] they are perceived to be unambitious or incapable by the normative figure who believes all bodies experience space as they do.[120] The consciousness of the privileged body is therefore different from its others because it understands itself as naturally unproblematic.

If the bodies of marked others appear as problematic – or as an object that causes unease – then the privileged person can justify and feel entitled to even the most extreme reactions. This is how bodily habits carry forth the hegemonic order and realize systems of oppression.[121] Examples of this are readily seen in biased legal administration and police brutality towards African American men in the United States. In Judith Butler's reading of the Rodney King beating she discusses how the perception of African American men as dangerous, worth less, and requiring control, led to the "phantasmic production of 'intention' that was put upon King's frozen body."[122] Although King lay unmoving in the street as he was violently struck, he was understood as likely to endanger and therefore deserving of the blows he received. The faculties through which King was perceived made him visible in a particular way whereby what is known and believed makes the figure visible fixed with meaning. Through this frame, King is seen *a priori* as an agent of violence, and as such, his self-defense is interpreted as violent expression. Conversely, the movements of privileged bodies are more often than not given credence when their actions are perceived under the hegemonic horizon and hence, the verdict of the King case determined the four officers "not guilty." The discursive representation of the violent Black man was re-inscribed through the bodies of the police officers who created a violent performance of perpetrator and victim, and the hegemonic order was re-established through the phantasmic production of "intention" that was circulated throughout the media.

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[119] Ngo, 75. See Ngo's discussion on the ways that "racialization and racism can change one's bodily disposition on the level of inclination and desire."

[120] Sullivan, "Expansiveness," 250. See Sullivan's argument regarding the ontological expansion of the white privileged class as premised on the denial of the spatiality of situation.

[121] Examples of these reactions herald the criminalization of blackness and are referred to in academia and on social media by the phrase "living while black." See Howell et al. on the long-standing practice of policing black people for mundane actions.

[122] Butler, 18.

Thus far, I have presented a view of the privileged habit body as an important player in the reproduction of systems of oppression. Bodies take on cultural habits of perception because their movements are informed by the hegemonic horizon. Under this horizon, the ideal determines the confines of what normative is as a measure against which bodies are judged. The hegemonic horizon is a phantasm because it disappears in order to present the figure to us and leads us to believe we see the figure through the natural setting of our thoughts. This, in effect, conceals the hegemonic influence on our perception, which has taught us how to see the figure as it is presented to us already loaded with meaning. This perceptual framework sediments in the body to produce habitual perception that is biased in accordance with the hegemonic order.

Our perceptual habits carry a fortifying relationship with our habitual reactions that further obscures our ability to locate the ways our habitual faculties are being structured. As discussed, habitual reactions are pre-reflective but not bodily reflex, as they are responses unique to each encounter. These reactions are also based upon our learned perception of the figure and therefore, what the hegemonic order determines they are to our bodies. While privileged bodies extend with confidence and the expectation of ease because they encounter fewer obstacles, marked bodies extend with caution or avoid certain spaces altogether to avoid hostility and unease. The privileged body, unable to perceive the multitude of obstacles presented to other bodies, understands the other as morally worth less than their unproblematic selves. Based on their habitual perception of marked bodies as problematic or potentially problematic, normative bodies can justify extreme reactions that are pre-reflective or even conscious because they are perceived to be worthy of credence. The performance of those reactions re-inscribes and re-establishes the hegemonic power relations of bodies and does little to make the phantasmic perceptual framework visible.

As I have discussed, our pre-reflective ways of being in the world are premised on two distinct yet interrelated habits of the body: habitual perception and habitual bodily response. These two functions nourish each other to create bodies that carry forward hegemonic structures into the world as habit. While habit bodies extend into the world pre-reflectively, they are not necessarily unchangeable or unchanging. I turn now to Ngo's

discussion on the theoretical concepts of habit versus sedimentation to locate agency and responsibility within the overlapping space of conscious and non-conscious being. Ultimately, my intention is to un-monumentalize privileged bodies.

Sedimentation and Habit

The construction of perceptual habit is reliant upon a process of cumulative learning, whereby each transposable event sediments in the body a new layer of understanding. The information gathered builds in the body "an historical record of experience, context, emotions, taboos and desires" that can be called upon to perform future actions.[123] Sedimentation is not a conceptual understanding through which I am able to stitch together images or other mental perceptions of my surroundings. My surroundings are familiar to me because "I hold "in my hands" or "in my legs" its principal distances and directions, and only if a multitude of threads run out toward it from my body."[124] I hold in my legs the number of paces to the dresser and in my hands the grasp I use for my keys. The perceptual acquisition of my surroundings presents to me my consciousness, and in doing so, it structures my understanding of the world in relation to my personal horizons. Habit bodies are formed based upon a particular body's understanding of itself in the world, which means that my body is constantly learning how to perceive a world that is not understood as the same by everybody. This is how an individual's body schema takes shape, as a correlate structure of their perceived world which then comes to determine how we perceive the world.

In *The Habits of Racism*, Helen Ngo discusses the tension between sedimentation and habit regarding their utility for future action. She argues that while the metaphor of sedimentation is useful for describing the "settling in" of body habit, it also implies "a relative inertia or passivity" in regards to future-looking.[125] Sedimentation is restrictive in the sense that it brings us no further than the descriptive histories that accumulate and

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[123] Guenther, 13.
[124] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 131-2.
[125] Ngo, 4.

ground the past in our bodies. A focus on sedimentation then is a focus on a past that is heavy, geologically solidified, and inert in the body.[126] Viewing the body as a sedimented being is perhaps a difficult approach for understanding the body's capabilities of "I can" mainly because it overly determines the body's possibilities.

Habit, in contrast, employs the motor capabilities that make up the body schema to launch us forward and influence which new skills my body can acquire. The habit body evaluates the outer world that it perceives through sensing that is learned and transposable. My evaluation with each movement is an understanding of my body as capable or incapable of interacting with some objects and desiring some objects more than others. Merleau-Ponty explains this procedure through the example of acquiring dance skills, whereby the new skill of dance draws upon the already acquired movements of walking and running.[127] This progression of motility means I can – I sense I can – acquire the skill of dance based on the skills my body schema already holds and makes available to me. This also influences the translation of the new skill into my body schema, such as a ballet dancer and a street dancer might adapt to the style of breakdance differently.[128] The habit body gives me a sense of what is possible based on what I sense to be my existing capabilities, but it is always open to acquiring new sedimentations that alter past habits.

The relationship between sedimentation and habit is not one of direct correspondence. Merleau-Ponty makes clear that habits do not directly draw upon hardened layers of sedimentation, as habits are formed and maintained through a process that requires constant reworking of our movements to express "the energy of our present consciousness."[129] While sedimented layers are ever-present in the body, habits require the work of holding them "in my hands" and "in my legs." What is presented to the body in the moment is evaluated by the perceiving body as it negotiates within the various horizons that nourish its understanding of its past and its future prospects. The skills that the body

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[126] Ngo, 38.
[127] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 144.
[128] Ngo, 4. The dance style adaptation example is Ngo's.
[129] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 132.

then applies emerge from its sedimentations as a pre-reflective event, but the body must be discerning based on its future-looking intentions. This is to say that if a trained ballerina takes up breakdance her bodily comportment must do away with the balletic style of arm and leg extensions but keep her power and flexibility. This is a process of bodily knowing that is pre-reflective, but as she develops her habitual movements, they can be consciously reflected upon. This reflection can come in the form of a teacher or peers who assess her performance as part of the process through which she applies their instruction to actively hone her craft. The task of transposition, therefore, inhabits the overlapping space of conscious and non-conscious being, the space in which our body conjures the accord between "what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the realization."[130]

I bring attention to Ngo's insights on the relationship between habit and sedimentation because I am concerned with problematizing the ways that privileged bodies take up space. Seen from the perspective of sedimentation, the privileged body is determined to be a figure that perpetually recreates the status quo. However, understanding privileged bodies as habitually maintaining the status quo by *actively* holding habits brings the responsibility of interrogating their perceptual frameworks back to them. As Ngo argues, this implication undermines their ability to do nothing and fallback on blaming marked bodies or the hegemonic structures they can claim are coercing their behavior.[131] With this in mind, it is also always the case that the expectation of responsibility needs to consider the heterogeneous make-up of bodies in relation to the normative measure. Being aware of one's body as the implied third term of the object-horizon structure is necessary to reflect upon the ways that bodies are complex in their ability to take up privilege in some spaces and not others. Our task of taking responsibility for our habits is then, as unique as the bodily horizons that inform our habitual perception and response.

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[130] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 146.
[131] Ngo, 43.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a reading of the habit body as a vehicle for being in the world. Our bodies in the world allow us to perceive and are therefore essential to attaining consciousness. The quality of that consciousness is predicated upon the many horizons in which we perceive space, objects and ourselves, relationally. These horizons are influenced by hegemonic beliefs that structure our relations but appear to us as the natural setting of our thoughts. When the learned-ness of our perceptual framework alludes us, we understand the figure – who appears to us loaded with meaning – as being innately represented. This is how privileged bodies, who do not experience the same obstacles as marked bodies, perceive others to be problematic and deserving of oppressive or biased response. The ways in which we perceive figures and our responses to them become habitual as we perform them. What is at stake in this process is that bodies become correlates of oppressive systems and as such their actions re-instate the status quo.

In addition to discussing the habit body as a vehicle for maintaining hegemonic order, I have also conferred alongside Ngo that habits of bodies are open to change. While the habit body caries sedimentations of past experiences that it can draw upon, it discerns which sedimentations it will use based on its immediate circumstances and intentions and future aspirations. This means that the habit body is not condemned to repeat patterns of biased perception and response, provided their habits are given reflection and interrogation. To take responsibility for our habitual modes of being in the world requires us to be aware that bodily relations to space are not equal and space is not neural. How we conduct ourselves in space is relational to the figures around us under our own unique personal horizons. We must therefore develop a mode of self-reflexivity that speaks to the particularities of the bodily horizons that inform our habit bodies.

Chapter Two: The Settler Habit Body

Introduction

In this chapter, I bring the lens of the habit body to investigate the efficacy of settler bodies for performing decolonization. I discuss case studies that are concerned with the contentious issues of settler-Indigenous relations. I apply and contextualise key terms derived from phenomenology, metaphysics, and affect theory (anchorage points, perspective, ontological expansiveness, and pressure points) to read and describe settlerness. My overarching aim in this chapter is to demonstrate how to shift from the theoretical work of habituation into an embodied perspective of settlerness in 21st century Canada.

This chapter builds upon the work of Eva Mackey because her ethnographic research with settlers is descriptive and conceptual and therefore provides a "sweaty" basis for analysing the settler habit body.[132] Focusing on land rights conflicts in Canada and the US, Mackey investigates "settler certainty," which she describes as the ontological certainty of settler entitlement to lands that is based on the myth of solo settler sovereignty.[133] This myth is kept alive over generations and involves narratives that herald the progressiveness and necessity of settlement and the hard-fought wins of settlers. According to Mackey, the arguments settlers use to oppose Indigenous land rights seem to be the only ones available to them, perhaps because they are premised upon "long-standing and unquestioned ontologies and epistemologies."[134] She asserts that such onto-epistemological arguments are deep-seated, persistent, flexibly applicable over time and in various contexts, and developed over centuries to produce the self-evident certainty of entitlement.[135] The specificities of these justifications rely upon contrived understandings of Indigenous lifeways, which are regarded as "inferior, undeserving and unacceptable," and Indigenous land claims, which are thought to be "unreasonable, unnatural and

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[132] See my discussion in chapter 1 regarding Sara Ahmed's sweaty concepts.
[133] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 132.
[134] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 36.
[135] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 125.

dangerous."[136] The arguments that prop up the right to settlement conjure the nurturing relationships between land acquisition and the calumny of Aboriginal nations.

For Mackey, the lineage of colonialism has merged the epistemological work of ideology with administrative, policing, and legal structural and material efforts to solidify a settled form of property relations. These relations are frequently referred to by settlers as the expected order that has been, and therefore always should be. Re-iterated over the course of centuries, these moments of referral are expressions of "settled expectations," wherein "fantasies of entitlement" are present as axiomatic assumptions of settler peoples.[137] Mackey argues that the axiomatic assumptions of settlers act as "cognitive prisons" that need to be unsettled in order for them to take up the task of re-imagining how they can be otherwise and bring about equitable land relations.[138] She also argues that because colonization is a material process, decolonization must also be a material process that includes repatriation.[139] However, in order for settlers to be able to "imagine the possibilities of such material change and conceptual re-imagining," they will have to undergo what Mackey refers to as an "epistemological shift" towards a stance of settler uncertainty and openness, as a starting point to practise and imagine otherwise."[140]

In the first section of this chapter, I seek to complicate Mackey's assertion that an epistemological shift is an efficacious strategy for decolonization. I argue that contemporary settlement is not a structure that begins from the mental faculties of the settler. While their epistemological slant may give the settler justification for their entitlement, it is their bodies that are responsible for performing the tasks of settlement. The relationship between how the settler intellectually justifies their entitlement and how their bodies carry out the tasks of settlement is inextricably linked but, as I will discuss, carnal knowing is the settler's first knowing. Settlement is therefore not as much a cognitive prison as it is a material world in which settler bodies are enmeshed.

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[136] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 125.
[137] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 34.
[138] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 125.
[139] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 125.
[140] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 126.

Drawing briefly upon Shannon Sullivan, Mackey considers ontological expansiveness as a philosophical basis that "underpins both the strategy and rationale for the self-ascribed entitlement to conquer the world."[141] Ontological expansiveness is a way of being in the world for privileged bodies, who extend with the attitude that all spaces are and should be open to their presence because they possess superior knowledge. Mackey's focus on ontological expansiveness positions it as an intellectual way of knowing the world that settlers use to justify their rights to dominate negotiations regarding land relations, based on their perception that they know more and know better than their sovereign partners. I elaborate on Mackey's discussion using Sullivan's work to explore *how* ontological expansiveness is bound up with the habitual perceptual and response faculties of the settler habit body, whereby their knowing more or better is a way that their body knows the world. In drawing attention to the integral function that being in the world provides for making the settler body, I aim to give a more nuanced argument for the necessity of material decolonization.

In the second section of this chapter, I take up Mackey's assertion that the axiomatic assumptions of settlers' certainty need to be unsettled to open the settler to material decolonization. I build upon my discussion in part one, which represents the epistemological paradigm of the settler as inextricably linked to the sedimentations in their body, to determine that unsettling their certainty requires interrupting their habitual faculties. Drawing upon Merleau-Ponty's concept of anchorage points, I unpack the differences between interruptions to settler certainty that impede decolonizing action and those that are required. I conclude that settlers must be anchored in some way in colonization in order for them to become decolonizing.

The final section of this chapter expands upon my claim that the structure of settlement that is habitual in the settler body is useful for the work of decolonization. I work with Ahmed's insights concerning lines of orientation to show that traversing lines of settlement orients settlers by way of normative pressures. These pressures are familiar to the settler body as ways of knowing the world. Difficult encounters for the settler introduce the feeling of new pressures that threaten their ways of knowing because they carry the

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[141] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 183.

potential to reveal knowing as also not-knowing. I argue that to turn towards these challenges is to face up to accepting that the onto-epistemological perspective of settlers is situated. To engage with such confrontations is not an exercise of intellectually accepting this assertion, it is an exercise of practising resiliency during the event of *feeling* ruptured. Ultimately, this chapter argues that in order for decolonizing strategies to be successful, they need to work with the intricacies of the settler habit body.

Living Settlement

In her discussions on Western epistemological frameworks, Mackey argues that the ontological certainty of settlers is based on epistemologies of mastery. In this framework, the acquisition of knowledge garners power and determines who is the authority. This is to say that if I can claim to know more than anyone else, then I can claim to know what is best for all. Such claims secure knowledge and protect it from being diminished by way of interrogation or reform. In addition to being an accumulative project of knowing more, epistemology is also social, which means that knowing is a general cognitive ideal that is hierarchical and ascribes to normative *ways* of knowing.[142] Colonialism has always sought to subsume Indigenous worldviews into Western – national – frameworks that claim themselves to be superior.[143] The seemingly self-evident superiority of settlers is bolstered by claims of *knowing more* and *knowing better,* and it ensures their certainty of entitlement to lands.

To focus on the mental aspects of knowing disregards the embodied-ness of subjectivity and the constitutive function our senses provide for our knowing. To know ourselves as superior is not just an intellectual knowing, but a sensing endeavor that allows us to feel and become conscious of our superiority. Early colonialism, for example, did not accumulate knowledge of lands and people only by way of ideas or mental imagery. Colonialism in Canada was built upon traversing and mapping lands, trading with people, and generally immersing settler bodies in the world. Colonialism is a material structure in

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[142] Mills, 110.
[143] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 126.

which settler bodies move about to work, play, and generally live their everyday lives. For modern settlers, each perceptual extension they make is an interaction with the physical landscapes, administrative and legal systems, and social domain that they perceive in accordance with horizons that are hegemonic. Their immediate field of presence, how they sense within their situation, is what forms their consciousness of being. As I discuss in chapter one, horizons determine how we apprehend figures by giving us a perceptual framework to evaluate them, overdetermine them, and dictate the nature of our relationship to them. The habitual perceptions and responses of settlers provide them with a sense of superiority over Aboriginal peoples. This social order permeates settlers' extensions into space and bolsters their understanding of themselves as *inhabiting* an "omniscient position" that claims itself to be above Indigenous sovereignty.[144] The entitlement to know, or to express one's knowing thus requires a feeling of certainty that settlers acquire from habitually taking up space as specialists of knowing. The ontological certainty of settlers is therefore bound up with bodily performances.

I turn now to Sullivan's work on ontological expansiveness because I see it as purposeful for bringing the cognitive knowing that Mackey suggests impedes performances of material decolonization, to the settler habit body. While Sullivan writes in the tradition of American pragmatism and not phenomenology her work is descriptive, whereby social transactions are taken to reveal the unconscious habits of whiteness. While Mackey turns to Sullivan to argue that the model of ontological expansiveness has been the philosophical basis for the epistemological legacies we have inherited, I see Sullivan's work to be saying more about how those philosophies are experienced and reified.

Ontological expansiveness is defined as the tendency for people with social privilege to assume that all spaces are and should be available for extending oneself unproblematically.[145] These spaces can be geographical, within which one's body moves around the space, or spaces where their movement is a figurative expression, such as

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144 Nicoll, 21.
145 Sullivan, "Expansiveness," 249

linguistic, artistic, or economic presence.[146] Ontological expansiveness as it is performed by early colonizers emerged from a particular set of wilderness narratives and *terra nullius* arguments. [147] Lands that were thought to be uninhabited because they were not developed in the eyes of the colonizer were assumed to be available to those most qualified to implement the settlement project.

Settlement at present is a structure that does not require settlers to acknowledge these narratives, which they may even perceive to be ridiculous and unfair. Current national attitudes towards colonization, such as those displayed in official apologies, position colonialism in Canada as a past event, as a way to show contemporary settlement as an advancement.[148] However, Mackey has found that settlers recall these stories when they feel their rights are threatened, to strengthen their "fantasies of entitlement." She defines these fantasies as built upon a logic that is "socially embedded, unconscious expectations of how the world will work;" This logic is "relied upon to reaffirm social locations, perceptions and benefits of privilege that have been legitimized through repeated experiences across lifetimes and generations."[149] What I find notable in Mackey's account is not that settlers are telling a story that they learned as if it is an indisputable logical explanation. More problematically, their fantasies have become real and legitimate to them through repeated experiences that precede their lifetime but carry through their living settlement.

Ontological expansiveness can be found when settlers tend towards performances of epistemological domination in instances of land relations. In these scenarios, the settler who believes they know more defines a problem that impacts Indigenous peoples and then determines the solution without any self-reflection on the situatedness of their perspective and its limitations for forming equitable outcomes. Mackey's ethnographic work analyses

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[146] Sullivan, "Expansiveness," 249.
[147] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 183.
[148] Mackey, "Apology," 49. "The apology may be mobilized to contribute to Canada's global mythology as a benevolent multicultural nation which treats its Native people well, or as Harper asserted in 2009, as a nation with "no history of colonialism." Thus, the act of a representative of the federal government speaking a few words enables the imagined community of Canada to see itself as one step closer to expiating the racialized colonial encounters of the past."
[149] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 11.

such events against ideological assumptions that stabilize settler certainty. In one scenario, the Caldwell First Nations was met with resistance during negotiations to purchase agricultural land in Chatham-Kent, Ontario. The Chatham-Kent Community Network (CKCN), which is comprised of settlers, argued that "providing Indians with such *good* agricultural land in Chatham-Kent was a waste."[150] Underpinning their assumptions were "normative judgements about the inferiority of Indigenous peoples" that are often used to "bolster the sense of entitlement to superintend Indigenous peoples."[151] Mackey found that settlers' comments on the matter were suggestive of Lockean ideals concerning labor and the superiority of "improving labor," which they initially felt the Caldwell were not capable of nor intending to accomplish. Some of their statements expressed concern that the Caldwell would let the land fall fallow and swampy, to return it to the state of nature. Mackey argues that these assumptions echo Locke's conceptualization that "people who exist in "a state of nature" are not seen to have rational societies and governance."[152] Settlers began to focus on the issue of land drainage, and they became concerned that the Caldwell would follow their own rules and not comply with provincial regulations or work with the community. These issues continued to be a source of distress for the community, even though the Caldwell clearly stated their willingness to work with the local community and form an agreement with the municipal government, on several occasions.

The strong reactions voiced by the community in Chatham-Kent were indicative of their insecurities regarding control. One man named James stated his doubt regarding what he perceived to be a juristic imbalance:

> E[va]: In the case of drainage, wouldn't the reserve and the municipality make some kind of agreement?
> J[ames]: Who *enforces* it? If a reserve and a municipality reach an agreement, and the municipality violates that agreement, the natives can go to the provincial government and say "They're not living up to their agreement" – and force them to live up to it! But there's *nobody to force the natives*...There's no clause that says if

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[150] Mackey, *Unsettled*, 92.
[151] Mackey, *Unsettled*, 92. Mackey articulates this inferiority as, "In my interviews in New York State, Indigenous peoples were often seen as potentially archaic or uncivilized, caught in the past within a modern nation." During one particular interview, one settler argued, "This is 2002 and how far do you want to take your culture? Do you want to take it back to human sacrifices and cannibalism?"
[152] Mackey, *Unsettled*, 94.

the natives don't negotiate on good faith "we'll come in and impose a settlement."
So, there's *no threat to the natives*, but there's *certainly a threat to the
municipality*.[153]

Mackey finds in this and other concerns raised by settlers that their source of insecurity
was not the drainage issue but shifting relations of power and authority. While the Caldwell
First Nation's Chief Larry Johnson states in his letter to the Chatham-Kent community that
they were willing to negotiate and compromise, he also pointed out that the Caldwell are a
separate government with authority over their land.[154] The basis on which control was
being allotted shifted. Settlers initially resorted to historically rooted narratives concerning
their superior farming knowledge and abilities and doubled down on this claim when they
defined and pressed the problem of drainage. They became increasingly uncertain when
they found their claims to superiority were no longer substantial enough to superintend the
Caldwell.

The example of the Caldwell First Nation land purchase dispute exemplifies how
settlers tend to perform epistemological domination by attempting to control the situation
without any self-reflection on the situatedness of their perspective and its limitations for
forming equitable outcomes. I refer to the perspective of the settler as "situated" because
the settler body perceives and responds in accordance with the particularities of their
individual horizons. Under these conditions, their relationship to Indigenous peoples is
overdetermined by the hegemonic horizon which works to instill hierarchies. The settler's
certainty that they know and therefore should decide for others appears to them as a natural
state of being because the horizon that issues their sense of superiority disappears in the
moment they perceive the figure.

The perspectives of settler bodies can thus be differentiated from the perspectives
of Indigenous bodies, not only because their bodies perceive each other relationally under
a hegemonic horizon, but also because Indigenous cosmologies and worldviews are not

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[153] Mackey, "*Unsettled*," 95.
[154] Mackey, *Unsettled*," 97. The Chief's letter to the community ends with, "Our Council is a government, one that is
recognized in Canadian Federal legislation as well as in the Canadian constitution. We have the authority to make laws
for our people and our land. We intend to do so – and we intend to do so in a way that also respects the rights of our
neighbours."

necessarily ascribable to Euro-western philosophies.[155] Epistemological domination is therefore not merely a problem of settlers assuming they know more, but that their onto-epistemological frames for understanding the world are superior to Indigenous ways of knowing. David Garneau has called the wielding of knowledge in power relations "the colonial attitude," which he defines as "a drive to see, to traverse, to know, to translate (to make equivalent), to own, and to exploit."[156] The claim to settlement is based on the entire historical trajectory of living colonialism through which settlers can claim to be the knower over the known, a self-proclaimed stance of total mastery. [157]

The sense of ontological expansiveness that underpins epistemological domination does not always present itself in the form of blatantly racist historical narratives that see Indigenous peoples as incapable. In *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang discuss their term, "settler moves to innocence," which they define as a series of "strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all."[158] These strategies, which find the settler claiming their innocence to reconcile their guilt and complicity and reframe settler futurity, appear in six themes. The first theme is "settler nativism," wherein "settlers locate or invent a long-lost ancestor who is rumored to have had "Indian blood," and they use this claim to mark themselves as blameless in the attempted eradications of Indigenous peoples."[159] This move to innocence allows settlers to expand into spaces under the assumption that they can deflect their settler identity.[160] Settler nativism gives the settler a sense of superior power because they can move between

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[155] While many Indigenous scholars have shown incompatibility, see in particular Metis scholar Zoe Todd' "Ontology is just another word for colonialism"; Mohawk and Anishnaabe scholar Vanessa Watts, who provides a clear understanding how Haudenosaunee or Anishnaabe cosmology, as examples of Indigenous Place-thought, differ from the epistemological-ontological divide of the hegemonic settler culture in Canada. Watts clearly shows the ways that colonization happens when Indigenous cosmology is subsumed under the hegemony of settler ontology; and Dolleen Tisawii'ashii Manning, 155, whose work takes a phenomenological lens to describe the ontology of North American Algonquian language family, whose components – particularly mnidoo (spirit/mystery, "potency, potential") – are "difficult to translate linguistically with all of its intricacies intact."
[156] Garneau, 32.
[157] Bell, 855.
[158] Tuck and Yang, 10.
[159] Tuck and Yang, 10.
[160] Deloria, 2, in Tuck and Yang, 11.

spaces as either a settler or a settler who is biologically akin to Indigenous peoples and also as a morally evolved settler who is invested through ancestry in being an ally.

The second theme is "settler adoption fantasies," or fantasies in which the settler "becomes without becoming" [Indigenous].[161] Such moves to innocence find the settler adopting Indigenous practices and knowledge to take the place of the other. Adoption fantasies mostly "refer to those narratives in the settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping."[162] The disintegration of Indigenous futurity is romanticized in this fantasy as a way to bolster settler futurity, which is repainted as a heroic effort. Sara Ahmed describes this theme as she sees it in the movie *Dances with Wolves*,

> to the point of being able to dance their dances...the white man in this example is able to "to become without becoming"...He alone is transformed through his encounter with the Sioux, while they remain the mechanism for his transformation. He becomes the authentic knower while they remain what is to be known and consumed, and spit out again, as good Indians who confirm the white man's position as hero of the story...the Sioux remain objects, while Kevin Costner is able to go anywhere and be anything.[163]

This second strategy allows the settler to become enlightened by knowing the other, which substantiates their position as an authentic knower over the known. Through the adoption fantasy, the settler garners their sense of superiority by way of the implied heroic efforts and the specialized knowledge they acquire, which equips them to become the safe keeper of lands.

The third theme is "colonial equivocation," whereby differentiated experiences of oppression are referred to as colonization. This claim maintains that "we are all colonized" in some way – by the patriarchy, by capitalism – in which case none of us are settlers. Vocalizations such as multiculturalism display this theme and are detrimental to

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[161] Tuck and Yang 14.
[162] Tuck and Yang 14.
[163] Ahmed, "Strange," 32 as discussed by Razack, 79.

decolonization because they "ambiguously avoid engaging with settler colonialism; they are ambivalent about minority/people of color/colonized Others as settlers; they are cryptic about Indigenous land rights in spaces inhabited by people of color."[164] This strategic move to innocence allows settlers to feel that they are directly invested in eradicating the strife of others, which they identify as comparable to their own, even though their claims to being colonized do more to obscure the importance of Indigenous sovereignty and benefit their status as beneficiaries of treaty relations. Colonial equivocation facilitates the liberal notion of equality, through which settlers can feel confident to move about as if spaces are devoid of social hierarchies.

The fourth move to innocence that Tuck and Yang identify is termed "free your mind and the rest will follow." This strategic program asserts the importance of decolonizing the mind by pursuing critical consciousness. The focus of this approach is to enhance the knowing of the settler, by way of education and self-reflexive critique of settler epistemology. Tuck and Yang argue that such approaches are not sufficient for decolonization because they "allow conscientization to stand in for the more uncomfortable task of relinquishing stolen land."[165] The gap that these authors identify, between epistemological interrogation and material action put towards decolonization, is precisely what I aim to tackle in this thesis by emphasizing habit construction in settler bodies as an inextricable link between bodily performance and epistemological stance. Tuck and Yang point to this disconnect when they state, "Until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism. So, we respectfully disagree with George Clinton and Funkadelic (1970) and En Vogue (1992) when they assert that if you "free your mind, the rest (your ass) will follow."[166] I take from Tuck and Yang's viewpoint that decolonizing action generally is not a system of oppression that is solved with a one size fits all strategy – what is suitable for George Clinton and the others mentioned is not suitable for Indigenous decolonization – which is why colonial equivocation is detrimental to instilling change. But coming back to the strategy of

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[164] Tuck and Yang, 19.
[165] Tuck and Yang, 19.
[166] Tuck and Yang, 19.

conscientization, it is a form of ontological expansiveness because it arms the settler with a knowledgeable discourse of hyper criticality from which they can find a sense of moral righteousness and confidence to take up space with their knowing. Scenarios where white people witness racism against people of color and then proceed to explain structural racism to the racialized individual, exemplify instances where the privileged overextend their criticality with confidence. In such cases, the feeling that one knows and knows better provides the impetus for expansiveness, under the assumption that "helping" is unproblematic.

The fifth strategy is what Tuck and Yang refer to as "At risk-ing / Asterisk-ing Indigenous peoples." This move to innocence is concerned with "the ways in which Indigenous peoples are counted, codified, represented, and included/disincluded by educational researchers and other social science researchers."[167] The visibility of Indigenous peoples in research and pedagogy represents them in two ways. The first is as "at risk" peoples, wherein they are described as "on the verge of extinction, culturally and economically bereft, engaged or soon-to-be engaged in self-destructive behaviors which can interrupt their school careers and seamless absorption into the economy."[168] These representations are present despite it being well known that the educational success of Indigenous students requires instruction in their languages and not in English, teachers who are familiar with their communities, and curricula that are designed to be "compelling, relevant, inspiring and meaningful" to their lives.[169]

Simultaneously, this research renders Indigenous communities asterisk peoples, "meaning they are represented by an asterisk in large and crucial data sets, many of which are conducted to inform public policy that impacts our/their lives."[170] This strategy of representation positions Indigenous peoples in the margins of public discourse and conceals the erasure of Indigenous presence within the particularities of public policy. Tuck

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[167] Tuck and Yang, 22.
[168] Tuck and Yang, 22.
[169] Tuck and Yang 2012:22
[170] Villegas in Tuck and Yang, 22.

and Yang argue that this strategy is a move to innocence because it is "a token gesture, an inclusion and an enclosure of Native people into the politics of equity" while it does not properly represent "Indigenous politics, educational concerns and epistemologies."[171] These kinds of renderings comprise a core of knowing Indigenous peoples that is assimilative because it evaluates Indigenous sovereignty, ways of knowing, and ways of being within the onto-epistemological structure of settlement. Although this knowledge does not accurately represent the capabilities of Indigenous peoples, settlers can refer to them when substantiating their sense of superiority and their entitlement to superintend Indigenous peoples.

The final theme that Tuck and Yang discuss as a settler move to innocence is what they term "re-occupation and urban homesteading" which takes up the occupy movement and urban re-settling as an expression of re-occupation on stolen land. While the occupy movement was a welcome resistance strategy for the economically marginalized, its program elucidated the incommensurability between the political agendas of "re-occupy" and "decolonize."[172] Although the movement was anti-capitalist, it was also pro-colonial, as the authors state: "That is, the ideal of "redistribution of wealth" camouflages how much of that wealth is land, Native land. In Occupy, the "99%" is invoked as a deserving supermajority, in contrast to the unearned wealth of the "1%." It renders Indigenous peoples (a 0.9% 'super-minority') completely invisible and absorbed, just an asterisk group to be subsumed into the legion of occupiers."[173] As a strategy that re-distributes wealth amongst settlers with no regard for the stolen lands that created that wealth, the occupy movement was a re-inscription of colonialism that obscured Indigenous land rights.

Another occupation movement that conjures similar outcomes is urban homesteading, which "is the practice of re-settling urban land in the fashion of self-styled pioneers in a mythical frontier."[174] "Tradition" is emphasized in homesteading, and as such

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[171] Tuck and Yang, 22.
[172] Tuck and Yang, 23.
[173] Tuck and Yang, 23.
[174] Tuck and Yang, 28.

this lifestyle often involves re-colonizing tactics, such as: claiming "Indian-like spirituality while evading Indigenous sovereignty and the modern presence of actual urban Native peoples;" "Claiming land for the Commons and asserting consensus as the rule of the Commons, [which] erases existing, prior, and future Native land rights, decolonial leadership, and forms of self-government."[175] Occupy movements are settler moves to innocence because they are anti-capitalist and thus appear to be beneficial for addressing the oppression of Indigenous peoples.

The overarching concern of these six moves to innocence finds the settler extending into space under the assumption that they are doing good things, whilst they evade land repatriation and other forms of material decolonization that directly affect their lives. Claiming innocence in these ways, which settlers take to be productive and morally sound, is more than an intellectual stance on social justice. Most importantly, these moves to innocence require settler bodies to take up space based on their claims to superior knowledge. This is to say that settlers perform these particular strategies because they seek to address socio-political problems, and they believe that they possess the know-how to accomplish the task. This becomes epistemological domination because settlers are not aware that their perspective on the matter is situated, and in assuming they know enough and know best how to confront the problem, they over-determine the scope of solutions.

The settler body, believing itself to be all-knowing, can take up space in settler society with confidence. This is not to imply that all settlers navigate uninhibited and unobstructed, but their movements are not impeded in the same ways that Indigenous peoples experience. Settlers extend themselves under the assumption that they belong in particular settings because their movements within their field of perception feel natural. Unable to perceive the kinds of obstacles that Indigenous bodies encounter, the settler assumes that all liberal behavior is innate to a person's moral fiber. While Indigenous peoples might choose to avoid particular settings that are hostile to them or be pushed into

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[175] Tuck and Yang, 28.

particular spaces by the state's neglect, their circumstances are perceived to be their own moral failings by the settler who believes all bodies experience space as they do.[176]

To objectivize space in this manner is a condition of ontological expansiveness. According to Sullivan, ontological expansiveness is an unconscious habit performed by those with white class privilege, and it "operates by denying the spatiality of situation."[177] Within this line of thinking, spatiality is assumed to be objective and thus neutral by the privileged figure. However, lived spatiality is where intending bodies move about in relation to other figures and horizons that give spatiality "racial, ethnic, and linguistic meaning."[178] The settler learns to extend with mastery and control by denying spatialized power relations, or more specifically, the privilege they acquire through these structures. While the settler can sense the power dynamics enough to perceive their knowing as superior, they understand their right to take up space as a specialist, as a natural event that should also be apparent to others. Each extension reifies the settler's privilege spatially and sediments in them the reassurance that they belong everywhere.

While ontological expansiveness in Sullivan's work is associated with whiteness specifically, it defines a privileged bodily comportment with the world that impacts the lives of others. Which bodies are privileged and which are not is determined by the perceptive qualities of the body and the place in which the body extends. As discussed, settler bodies are privileged in Canada because their interactions in the world carry out the colonizing endeavor of the state, which gives their extensions a particular comportment. These interactions include everyday involvement in the Canadian economy – benefitting from it and laboring in it – which is largely dependent and built upon stolen lands, to further

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[176] Talaga, 20/55/258 Talaga argues that treaties worked along with the Indian Act to isolate Indigenous peoples on reserves while it opened up the rest of the land to white colonial settlers. The federal government was meant to fund schools for Indigenous children after it shut residential schools but never kept their promise. The state's neglect in maintaining basic health necessities, education and medical facilities produces dire conditions on reserves, whereby parents on Ontario's northern reserves are forced to send their youth away to settler schools in Thunder Bay where they are subjected to violent racism. Police, settler community and administrative services do little to protect against nor take seriously violence against Indigenous youth because they are perceived to be "less than worthy victims."

[177] Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness;* Sullivan, "Expansiveness," 250. The concept of ontological expansiveness was developed by Sullivan *in Revealing Whiteness* to term the racial privilege of white people. In "Expansiveness" she uses it to also discuss the privilege of men.

[178] Sullivan, "Expansiveness," 250.

one's life and financial gain. This is not to diminish the fact that the marked bodies of settlers do experience systemic oppression in Canadian society. I only wish to draw attention to a line of delineation that distinguishes the maltreatment of Indigenous peoples from the marked bodies of settlers. As I have discussed, Indigenous peoples have been and are managed and policed differently than marked settlers because they are treaty holders and therefore possess legitimate sovereignties that threaten the state's claim to sole dominion. The bodily comportment of settlers extend the settlement endeavor, meaning, as Kyle Powys White has argued, it carries forward the "desire, conscious and tacit, to erase Indigenous peoples."[179] These desires do not necessarily appear to the settler as Indigenous destruction, but reveal themselves as innocuous hopes for settler futurity.[180] The settler body knows pre-reflectively how to strive to make it happen by engaging in the everyday events of settlement, which are simultaneously inequitable to Indigenous peoples.

Thus far, I have attempted to show that colonization in Canada is not premised on the cognitive prisons or axiomatic assumptions that comprise settler knowing. Settlers are certain of their place in colonial Canada from living settlement, by occupying space with their *performances* of epistemological domination which become pre-reflective habits. To know is to traverse, to sense, and to interact with other figures, objects, and landscapes. For the contemporary settler, the embodied project of colonialism is laid out before them, sensible and available to establish their conscious understanding of their place in the world. Settlement is, therefore, not just an epistemological project that can be thwarted by thinking differently. It has been turned into material forms that are external to the settler and that their bodies learn to pre-reflectively navigate so that colonization becomes sedimented in their bodies. The necessity of material decolonization is therefore an integral component for settlers to understand their capacity for decolonization.

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[179] Whyte, 57.

[180] See thesis introduction for discussion on how the national narratives "relieve the settler of immediate responsibility to upholding proper treaty relations because it places the blame on historical events and peoples."

Anchorage, Perspective, and Disorientation

Mackey's ethnographic account of settler entitlement discusses the disorientation that settlers feel when their rights to land are diminished or threatened.[181] Their response is to defend their lineage of presence – their hard work and struggle on the lands – and to behave in accordance with their lineage of knowing what to argue to remain a settler that keeps settlement alive. While Mackey argues that socially embedded fantasies of entitlement are merely expectations that have become common-sense only to settlers and are, therefore, *a perspective* that requires constant maintenance to acquire material form,[182] I have discussed that these arguments are a perspective that is inextricably linked to the sedimentations and habitual faculties of the settler. Challenges to this perspective are thus impediments to the settler habit body, not just the intellectual arguments that they wield. This is perhaps why Mackey describes the affect that these confrontations have on the settler as being a felt experience, during which the settler utilizes the long-held arguments of settlement to push back against their "state of vertigo."[183]

Mackey's use of the term "vertigo" echoes Merleau-Ponty's assertion that bodies who are perceptually unmoored from the continuity that facilitates their habitual states find themselves in a state of vertigo and nausea.[184] To define and explain the importance of continuity, I turn to Merleau-Ponty's ideas on anchorage points, which are the moorings through which bodies stabilize their worldviews and garner their certainty.[185] Anchorage points are conceptual locations in the world at which subjects "gear in" by way of a spatial contract between their body and the world. These points include the vertical and horizontal positionings of door frames, windows and other objects that help us adjust our bodily movements to accomplish tasks. When I walk across the front hall to get my keys, my body

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[181] Mackey, *Unsettled.* See Mackey's ethnographic work on settlement disputes.

[182] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 11. Settler fantasies of entitlement to lands is defined by Mackey as built upon *a logic* that is a "socially embedded, unconscious expectations of how the world will work, and are relied upon to reaffirm social locations, perceptions and benefits of privilege that have been legitimized through repeated experiences across lifetimes and generations."

[183] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 18. This is Mackey's description of settlers in an unsettled state of being.

[184] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 265.

[185] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 259-261/264.

takes up the directions given to me by the objects in the room, which allow me to know how far up to raise my grasp, or what "up" is more generally. Objects in space and their spatial relations to each other provide for the perceiving body points of reference with which the body expresses its motility. By adjusting my bodily movements to these anchorage points, my phenomenal body gears into the world to have a maximal grip on the situation.

When bodies become accustomed to moving about in a field of perception, they take up what Merleau-Ponty calls "a spatial level" within space. A spatial level is a point at which "maximum clarity in perception and action specifies a perceptual *ground*, a background for [my] life, a general milieu for the coexistence of [my] body and the world."[186] An individual possesses the world with his/her body as they gear into that spatial level at the intersection of their motor intentions and perceptual field.[187] Each new spatial level that is encountered requires the subject to re-attain their sense of familiarity through bodily spatiality, by changing his/her approach to the environment. Such re-orientations inherently involve new comportments of the body to adjust accordingly.

When I walk into my front hall to grasp my keys, the dresser and its perceptible qualities line up with the floor, the door frame and the other features of the room. The relationality of these objects to one another creates for my body a directional frame that I grasp by adjusting my comportment: my reach, my steps to approach, and my balance. My body navigates this room with ease because it has sedimented the knowledge required to be amongst the objects that frame its movements and that also allow my phenomenal body to be open to new situations and reshaping. Finding anchorage in this perceptual frame is always necessary for my body to become grounded, grasp or "possess" the world, so it can move about and extend with confidence and freedom of action.[188]

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[186] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 261.
[187] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 261.
[188] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 261.

As we move through the world, we perceive it through the frame of our individual perspective. Anchorage points are involved in establishing our perspective because they act as a ground or a horizon against which we perceive and move around. As Merleau-Ponty explains, the act of perceiving is how we make meaning of what we perceive:

> The coast flows by before our eyes if we keep our eyes fixed upon the ship's railing, while the boat moves when we stare at the coast. Of two luminous points in the dark, one immobile and the other moving, the one that we focus upon seems to be moving. The cloud flies over the steeple and the river flows beneath the bridge when we stare at the cloud or the river. The steeple falls through the sky and the bridge slides over the congealed river when we stare at the steeple or the bridge. What gives the status "moving object" to one part of the field, and the status "background" to another is the manner in which we establish our relations to it through the act of looking.[189]

When we perceive, the eye is never a neutral object that records moving objects. The eye is directed to see some objects as moving and some as not depending on which anchorage points ground the body in the spectacle. As a component of our object-horizon visual structure, anchorage points must blur from view to make an object visible. Anchorage points are thus "not an explicit perception," meaning, "they are not presented directly to our perception, they circumvent it and haunt it through a pre-reflective operation whose results appear to us as ready-made."[190] Much like a phantasmic horizon that pre-determines our relationships to others, anchorage points help us differentiate within our visual field that which we value as the figure and as the background.[191]

Anchorage points are what give us a feeling of security and stability to move about in the world with confidence. The settler may find certainty to perform epistemological domination when their perspective becomes anchored in ways that organize the world in accordance with their sense of entitlement. The Caldwell land purchase perhaps exemplifies how settlers' anchorage in the situation defined the value of the disputed object. The community saw the land through their individual and collective perspectives, which I have argued can be differentiated from Indigenous perspectives. From this

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[189] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 290.
[190] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 292.
[191] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 289.

positionality, the value of the land was in its potential for farming. As discussed, Mackey points to this as a Lockean conceptualization of land. The land was not, for example, valued as an object that held potential for cultivating more equitable settler-Indigenous land relations. The former interpretation of land that settlers focused on reified their certainty of entitlement, whereas the latter threatened this certainty because it meant acknowledging sovereign partners who do not need superintending. Mackey points out that entitlement is the expected order for settlers because they believe it has been and therefore, always should be the natural state of affairs. The way that the Chatham-Kent community took up anchorage in the situation, maintained continuity between spatial levels to preserve their certainty.

As we move through the world, we move through different spatial levels and take them up in accordance with other anchorage points that are presented to us. Our perception of these anchorage points is always the exercise of adjusting to and gearing into a new level. Merleau-Ponty argues that the body's adaptivity to new levels is necessary for allowing it to move with confidence from one spatial level to the next. When continuity is broken, such as when one enters a funhouse of oddly shaped mirrors, the body becomes disoriented. In such cases, the tasks one might find simple, such as walking around a corner or across a room, become difficult. The body must learn to move differently, and the confidence of bodily extension must be rebuilt to accommodate the situation. Finding confidence of movement in the funhouse happens because our bodies explore it and in exploring it, the body begins to know itself as capable of navigating that particular maze of mirrors.

Drawing upon the visual experiments of George Stratton, Merleau-Ponty explains directionality as something that is not objective but found by the body. During these experiments, subjects who wear mirror inversion glasses for uninterrupted periods of time begin to sense a different placement of up from down based on their need to align their motility with their visual field.[192] Objects and spatial relations that the body senses as

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[192] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 256. "As soon as the tactile body links up with the visual body, the region of the visual field where the subject's feet appeared ceases to be defined as "up." This designation returns to the region where the head appears, and the region containing the feet again becomes "down."

anchorage do not signal any real direction until our bodies make it real by finding their way around; as Merleau-Ponty explains, "What counts for the orientation of the spectacle is not my body, such as it in fact exists, as a thing in objective space, but rather my body as a system of possible actions, a virtual body whose phenomenal "place" is defined by its task and by its situation. My body is wherever it has something to do."[193] What we understand to be up and down is based on what we perceive to be up and down and how our bodies find it. The exercise of wearing mirror inversion glasses induces a state of discontinuity when moving between spatial levels. Similarly, when we find our way around the funhouse, we are not moving in accordance with objective cardinal directions. When we walk "around" a slanted corner or "up" a slope and "diagonally down" a twisted staircase we determine what "around," "up," and "diagonally down" are in relation to the series of previous spatial levels we have moved through. Each new spatial level is encountered as sequential from the last, and we carry into the new spatial level the sedimented corporal knowledge of previous levels. Our bodies become adept at moving between levels by finding continuity between them. While our initial experiences in the funhouse are disorienting, spending uninterrupted time in the house allows our bodies to sediment new ways of navigating the world, until we eventually find continuity.

As discussed, habitual perception and response emerges from the body's sedimented experiences in the world that become pre-reflective. Taking our bodies from the work of walking to dancing, or from ballet to break dancing, are vague examples of where we can see our bodies draw upon our sedimentations. Our motility is intricate and nuanced; our sedimentations are drawn upon with every move we make, whereby some skills are selected while others are left behind. The movements of dance are comprised of much smaller and more intricate expressions of our body's agility that simultaneously call upon the flex of muscles and movement of bones in complex coordination. But most importantly, these expressions happen in relation to space and to the very ground upon which the dancer dances, for we cannot feel ourselves kick up or to the left unless we perceive what down and right is.

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[193] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 260.

Anchorage points become the perceptual frame in which we understand our bodies. They are the stabilizers through which the body's perception and response faculties become habitual. This is to say that once inversion glasses are placed on the eyes, it interrupts pre-reflective habits and the body must re-learn how to move about its environment. Moving from a spatial level that the body knows – prior to inversion glasses where the dresser, the keys and the door are as I know them – to a spatial level that is inverted induces disorientation because there is a break in perceptual continuity. If I enter a front hall that is inverted, my body is no longer sure about how to get to my keys and leave the house.

If we understand settlers' epistemological stance to be inextricably linked to the habitual faculties of the settler habit body, then settlers feel epistemological shifts. But more importantly, what does this feeling do for making settlers decolonial? Seen through the lens of the habit body, the axiomatic assumptions of settlers are more than a fallacious tale they tell each other, it is a feeling of well-being in their world. The experience of disorder that occurs when perceptual continuity is broken is not merely a thinking experience or a cognitive awareness of difference. As Merleau-Ponty argues, disorientation is the vital "experience of vertigo and nausea, which is the consciousness of, and the horror caused by, our contingency."[194] As I have discussed, the stability of our consciousness is dependent upon being able to perceive one moment from the next, but as a moment that is imminent yet related to our past and future aspirations. To become aware of how contingent the world is, creates uncertainty, yet it is also the contingency of the world that allows for change. Our aspirations are based on what we perceive is possible, or more specifically, our aspirations are formed at the intersection of our perception and our motility, which are inherently intertwined.

The breaking of continuity is, therefore sensed by the settler, and it conjures a threat that is deeper than challenging the logic of an intellectual argument. When settlers' property and expectant futures are suddenly threatened, they *feel* "endangered, uncertain and angry."[195] The unmooring causes them to latch onto what can make them *feel* secure,

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[194] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 265.
[195] Mackey, *Phenomenology,* 19.

not necessarily what can be argued.[196] To unmoor the settler elicits a change in their bodily comportment but not one that is likely to open them to new ways of sensing and acting. It tends to cause them to reach for certainty, to find continuity at any cost because they are under duress. At present, finding continuity is always available for them because the settler world offers more certainty for colonizing reaches than decolonizing reaches. In effect, making the settler uncertain works against opening them up to imagining material decolonization because it provokes them to claim colonialism as secure ground.

I would also like to make clear that breaking perceptual continuity is not the same as interrupting the stream, which I have described alongside Ahmed as being a disruption. While it is true that I will stop or hesitate before I begin to gear into my now inverted world, I am feeling the pressure of threatening circumstances which is different from feeling the pressure of norms. Under this pressure, I feel unmoored because my body is between what it knows and what it does not yet know; I am being forced to re-learn myself in relation to the inverted space. This is a problematic strategy for the project of decolonization because as I have argued, settlers are embedded in a material world of colonization in which they know themselves. A world that is decolonial is not available for the settler to inhabit and re-learn themselves; they must participate in actively creating that world. For settlers to be decolonizing, they need to be moored – on some level – to the norms that comprise the material and phenomenal structure that they resist; to gear into this world is to know what is different from it and why it needs to change. The work of decolonization is in the changing of settler habits, in making a different comportment that modifies which sedimentations are employed and which are left behind. To change our comportment requires us to perceive the existing structure differently so our bodies gear into the world differently and change the phenomenal relation. This is how settlers' bodies become decolonized as correlates to their surroundings, which become decolonized worlds.

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[196] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 11. Settlers' fantasies of entitlement, as Mackey explains, are emergent from "repetitive embedding and realizing of settler assertions of certainty and entitlement," which entails the retelling of stories that are "grounded in delusions of entitlement based on arguments that should make no sense even to those who created them and turned them into laws." These rationales have a pattern of logic that are upheld by being socially embedded, not by being fact but by being an expectation that is carried out through settler bodies; living settlement is how these fantasies become true for the settler.

In this section, I have argued that challenges to settlers' long-held arguments are felt because they are inextricably linked to their body's sedimentations and habitual faculties. Unsettling their paradigms of knowing means unmooring their habitual faculties, which is not only an intellectual shift but a sensation of vertigo and nausea. Unmooring is sensed by the settler, and it conjures a threat that is deeper than challenging the logic of an intellectual argument because it makes them feel endangered. Unmooring thus causes settlers to latch onto what can make them *feel* secure and thus works against the prospects of decolonization because it provokes them towards reclaiming settlement. Although stops and interruptions are involved in the process of breaking the continuity, unmooring is not productive for performing decolonization because it eliminates the work of decolonization that is necessary to change the habits of settlers.

Pressures and Turns

The lines of settlement that bodies traverse are not seamless insular tunnels that make them impervious to the pressures of decisions. The repetitions of norms that we perform are applied to our choices and intentions and inform the movements and comportments we make. It does not follow that because we are gifted the lineage of colonialism settlers must reproduce it. The lines of colonialism are dotted with decisions and inclinations. Each of these dots are what Ahmed refers to as "stress points:" the points at which norms provide a source of stress, a "social pressure to follow a certain course, to live a certain life, and even to reproduce that life."[197] The accumulation of these stress points orients us to face the same way along the collective trajectory.

To traverse lines of orientation, such as settlement, is to navigate in repetition the particulars of the outside world. Ahmed writes, "depending on which way one turns," the objects and world presented to us changes.[198] Which way we turn determines which objects are in reach. Accessible arrangements of objects allow us to know ourselves; therefore, when settlers experience stress points and adjust or turn in accordance with them, the

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[197] Ahmed, *Queer,* 17.
[198] Ahmed, *Queer,* 15.

objects that appear become useful for understanding their conscious being as correlative to the normative structures. What does not come into view cannot influence the construction of settler consciousness. Lines of colonization face us away from the happenings that disrupt the collective trajectory when they turn us towards goals. As I have discussed, being taught to turn away from what is difficult makes determinant who is friend and who is stranger. Turning away in repetition sediments in our bodies whose lives matter.

The lines towards our collective goal become an investment because they require the work of enduring the pressure of normativity. This pressure becomes familiar to our bodies, leaving impressions that change its surface. We feel this pressure as the reassurance of certainty; certainty that we will be directed by pressure. Our propensity to turn away from what we have been taught to ignore is a turning towards the familiarity that is the sensation of being pressed into becoming a settler. The ways that we perceive become habitual from navigating relationally to this pressure. The body's comportment deals with this pressure by making itself small underneath it or shrugging and nodding off its adversaries to protect it. Turning towards what is difficult provides a pressure as well, but one that is unfamiliar. To turn towards causes a disruption, and the sensation of that disruption is always presented by a normative pressure that calls the event a disruption. These are the moments in which settlers must choose which burden of pressure they take up.

I bring attention to these moments because it is overly simplistic to paint the experience of settler life as being unconstrained. Norms and epistemological slants are not experienced by settlers unproblematically. Their bodies are not free of the pressures to be settler, to achieve in the system of settlement by being productive. Interruptions to this productivity may come in the form of difficult encounters that threaten to rupture our knowing. These are the instances when we feel we must turn away in order to make our knowing make sense. The phenomenological implications for the settler who believes they know more and know better is an experience of contradiction. For our knowing to feel superior, we must also be conscious that there are other ways of knowing that we perceive to be lesser. Settlement in Canada claims its superiority on the assumption that its authority

is unproblematic.[199] The events that challenge our knowing are those that reveal settlement to be problematic. These moments are the ones that call into question our norms, which imply a direction that is shared. Situations like these are phenomenal because they indicate the limits of our intellectual understanding. To turn away from grappling with what is difficult requires that we not know how the systems that benefit us are negatively afflicting others. Our becoming settler thus requires that we perform our knowing in ways that require knowing to not-know.[200] To turn towards and engage with such confrontations is not an exercise of intellectually accepting this assertion; it is an exercise of practicing resiliency in the event of feeling ruptured.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered the intricacies of the settler habit body for understanding decolonization. Settlement needs to be understood as a structure that works through settler bodies, in which sedimentations of how to settle become habitual. The epistemological certainty and ontological expansiveness of the settler are not the source of settlement, but the reasoning and justification that is inextricable to what the settler body knows. The settler understands themselves to be omniscient because they take up this position in space and with each extension their reassurance that they belong everywhere becomes sedimented. Events that challenge settler entitlement are therefore not merely challenges to their intellectual arguments as much as they are challenges to their habit bodies, which feel the affects as disorientation. Changes to the continuity of settler's perceptual anchorage are not useful for decolonization because they cause the settler to reclaim settlement. The work of decolonization must be done by settler bodies who feel the structure they resist so they can sense what decolonization is. The work of decolonization is thus the work of changing settlers' habitual movements that seek out the certainty and familiarity of normative pressure. Learning how to be resilient and turn towards while being in the colonial world is learning to be decolonial.

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[199] See introduction: "The underlying ideological assumption and legal attitude on which English colonialism in Canada rests is that their authority is always un-problematic and in being so, it can claim centrality."
[200] Mills, 110.

Chapter Three: "Seeing With," Across the Rows

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with confronting the problematic question of how settlers can restructure their habitual faculties and "see with" Indigenous peoples to form more equitable land relations. I employ key terms from critical phenomenologists Alia Al-Saji and Sara Ahmed ("seeing with," critical-ethical vision, and stress points) to unpack the processes and affective implications of opening settlers' habitual faculties. I draw from settler colonial studies scholars and Indigenous thinkers, philosophers and scholars to demonstrate the compatibility of Indigenous philosophies of treaty (Guswentha) and the phenomenological approach of "seeing with". I conclude by offering some insights into the motivations that might bring settlers to do the difficult work of decolonization.

In *A Phenomenology of Critical-Ethical Vision*, Alia Al-Saji contemplates the efficacy of seeing with others for reshaping vision. Building upon Merleau-Ponty and Henri Bergson, she revisits the claim that vision is inherently objectifying and categorizing to ask "*can vision see differently*? That is, can vision accommodate a critical reflection of its own conditions and an ethical attitude to otherness of what it sees?"[201] For Al-Saji, objectifying vision is a habitual and sedimented way of seeing and learning. In which case, a critical vision – one that sees differently – must discern habits of objectified seeing and the social structures that contextualize and motivate their formation—what Gail Weiss has called their "social reference."[202] I draw upon Al-Saji's work in this chapter and bring her ideas regarding critical-ethical vision in conversation with Ahmed's lines of orientation to think through the hesitations and turns that the settler habit body is asked to make during performances of decolonization.

While this chapter gives its focus to vision, seeing is discussed as one component of the sensing body that works in accordance with others. Vision and the limits of its capacity produces objectifying vision when it is taken to be *the* way of knowing, or as a

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[201] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 375.
[202] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 375.

way of knowing isolated from the other affective faculties of the settler body. Al-Saji's concept of critical vision is concerned with opening the habits of objectifying vision by seeing through the affective field – what is sensed – rather than just relying on the field of vision. The affective field is the integration of our sensing faculties, of which vision is merely a part. This would allow us to see "conditions that make visibility and objectification possible—conditions which are diacritical, social, historical and material."[203] Critical vision in this form would make apparent what is phantasmically present in the moment of seeing, what brings us to understand the figure and our relationship to them.

However, as Al-Saji also points out, critical vision that is not also ethical is insufficient for seeing differently. She argues,

> The critical without the ethical remains detached from lived experience and risks falling back into the trap of totalizing vision—the desire to make all that is unseen visible in order to know and possess it. This is the equivalent of making visible the socially constituted subject-positions in which we find ourselves, but forgetting the diversity of subjectivities acting, responding and resisting therein (thus reducing the thickness of those subjectivities to their subject-positions).[204]

To make critical vision ethical, the seer must see themselves as implicated in these systems and dimensions, complicitly or otherwise. To see critically the conditions in which the other lives is not as sufficient as also seeing our involvement in how those conditions arise and are reproduced. Conversely, having an ethical vision that is not also critical risks obscuring the differentiations of our experiences within power structures and histories, which leads us to believe our sufferings and successes are unrelated to those of the other. The integration of critical and ethical is thus required for seeing differently.

In the first section of this chapter, I bring together Al-Saji's work on critical-ethical vision and Sara Ahmed's ideas on stress points to problematize the settler habit body. I argue that taking up the project of "seeing with" others is advantageous for settler performances of decolonization. To "see with" allows the settler to critically interrogate

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[203] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 375.
[204] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 376.

their perspective to reshape the way that they see. It also allows the settler possibilities for ethically engaging in this work by reflecting on their complicity in the matters of colonialism. I also discuss what seeing critically-ethically might mean for restructuring what settlers know, whereby they shift from relating to others as *the* knower into relating as *a* knower amongst others.

In part two of this chapter, I discuss the usefulness of "seeing with" for performances of decolonization in regard to the original agreements of treaty. I look to the Two Row Wampum – or the Guswentha – as an example of how settlers could maintain treaty. Wampum, as it relates to settlement, represents a series of treaties developed during the 17th century between the Haudenosaunee (the Five Nations of the Iroquois) and the Dutch settlers in New Netherland (New York).[205] More specifically, wampum provides a strategy for equitable relations and respectful coordination concerning the maintenance of partnerships. I argue that the habitual faculties of the settler body make it efficacious for a decolonizing program that is *guided* by the principals of the Guswentha because habit construction is adaptable. If relations are attended to in ways that create habits of "seeing with" then decolonization is possible.[206] I bring in Al-Saji's point that social structures and the lived experiences of individuals are interrelated concerning the institution of norms. This means that decolonizing settler bodies and decolonizing instituted structures is an inherently conjoined project. Turning toward thus induces alterations to what is normative, in which case, the project of decolonization can initiate a shift from the uncomfortable work of enduring oscillating pressures during inassimilable events until the repetition of these acts is felt as the normative pressure. I conclude that turning towards and performing acts of decolonization can be taken on by the body as a habitual way of being in the world, and to reshape normative structures that, in turn, encourage the settler to be decolonial.

Ultimately, this chapter argues that setter conduct in settler-Indigenous relations is habitual and is, therefore, adaptable and open to restructuring. My argument in part one

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[205] Ganondagan.
[206] My emphasis on *guided* is to distinguish "seeing with" from appropriation, which is a difference made clear in Al-Saji's concept of "seeing with."

picks up and investigates Eva Mackey's question, "how can we listen to others when we already *know*?"[207] My discussion in part two aims to take this investigation from understanding *how* settlers can do differently into the more concerning question of *why* settlers would take up the task of decolonizing work.

Objectifying Vision and the Affect of Hesitation

Objectifying vision emerges when the conditions of what we see become invisible. In previous chapters, I have discussed the body as the unimplied third term in the object-horizon structure of seeing. I have summarized Merleau-Ponty's work to explain that the objects we gaze upon are seen by way of diacritical dimensions that makes the object visible to us – the plays of light and shadow that our vision works with to differentiate objects from their surroundings. I have also discussed the social structures – or norms – that have become institutionalized and that phantasmically disappear at the moment they shape our vision. But the physiognomy of my body – my two eyes in the front of my head – also contribute to the formation of my perspective because I cannot see from every perspective at once and I also cannot see myself seeing. [208] My gaze casts itself into objects, which solicit my intentions, and they become objects for my gaze because I try to make sense of them. The situatedness of my body as a pair of eyes that exist in a particular point in space is forgotten along with the disappearing horizons that determine how and what I see. I thus take the object to be fully present to me and in its "natural" state.[209] This self-erasure contributes to the ways that privileged bodies see others as morally deficient as opposed to navigating systems of coercion, and it is what prohibits our habits of seeing to appear uncomplicated and "natural."

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[207] Mackey, *Unsettled*, 132.

[208] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 94. "The tip of my nose and the contours of my eye sockets are all that I see of my own head. I can, of course, see my eyes in a three-faced mirror, but these are the eyes of someone who is observing, and I can barely catch a glimpse of my living gaze when a mirror on the street unexpectedly reflects my own image back at me."

[209] Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy*, 167/29; Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 379. Al-Saji quotes Merleau-Ponty: Objectifying vision "works in and without us; it hides itself in making the object visible. To see the object, it is not necessarily *not* to see the play of shadows and light around it. The visible in the profane sense forgets it premises."

What is lost to vision is the relationality of my body to the object that I gaze upon. My social positionality, my physical positionality in space and the scope of my vision all shape my ability to perceive and are forgotten during the encounter. My relationship to the object is severed, and I understand myself as unrelated to it. To see an object is thus to not see the conditions in which it is seen. As I have also discussed, this is why the epistemological domination performed by settlers is a certainty of knowing that is also a knowing not to know; for the settler to understand their knowing, it must appear against ways of knowing that make their knowing appear to them as superior.

While these conditions may elude us when our sight defines the object, we can still sense their presence. Our eyes may not be able to see themselves seeing, but our other faculties of sensing are implicitly present with our bodies. We can see others responding to our seeing, which makes us aware of ourselves as seers, or as Merleau-Ponty states, " through other eyes we are for ourselves fully visible."[210] What disappears so we can see the figure is what Merleau-Ponty refers to as "felt in our experience as no more than a certain lack."[211] In not having enough of the frame visible, in having parts of it lacking – invisible or obscured – we come to see a particular object by seeing it in a particular way. This invisible yet felt experience is exemplified in settlers' performances of epistemological domination, wherein they claim space as specialists of knowing who are most equipped to address settler-Indigenous land issues. During these performances, the conditions that make Indigenous presence appear to settlers as inferior, disappears in the moment of perception. But the settler's sense of superiority, their sense of their body's "I can," is inherently tied to their sense that Indigenous peoples cannot because they perceive under horizons of institutionalized hierarchies. What is forgotten during the encounter are the social, historical, material, and diacritical conditions that have become settlers' sedimented understandings of settler-Indigenous relations, but these elements are always present as affect because they are implicit in forming perception.

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[210] Merleau-Ponty, *Visible/Invisible,* 143.
[211] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology,* 153/179.

For settlers to know themselves as the knower over the known, they must also know to not know, or more pointedly, to *not* heed the affective weight of what they can feel but cannot see. This is to say that when settlers endure points of pressure, their choice to endure under the weight of what is familiar requires them to ignore the pressure that makes the familiar strange or that threatens their sense of familiarity. The ways in which they perceive Indigenous presence is habitual but so is their inclination to stay the normative course, as turning away becomes habitual. Turning away during encounters thus shapes what settlers understand the practical possibilities to be; the "I can" of their body who knows itself in the world.

In her discussions on critical-ethical vision, Al-Saji understands realms of visuality as overlapping with affectivity during objectifying vision. Al-Saji explains this overlap as, "The realm of visible objectivity is, [then,] narrower than that of affectivity."[212] While the dimensions that imbue the object with their qualities become invisible to vision, they are not lost to our senses:

> With respect to the world, systems of diacritical difference, the histories of oppression and social structures that allow meaning to appear are seen only insofar as they are reduced to the attributes of objects. While these dimensions work in us and affect us, invisibly and unconsciously, allowing us to see, it is by means of their elision that the realm of visible objectivity is defined. This is to say that such dimensions – whether material, diacritical, historical, or social, whether bodily or worldly – have affective but not "objective existence.[213]

What is affectively present, shapes what we see and gives meaning to the figure, and this meaning is understood to be innate to them. This is how meaning comes to appear in the first place as part of the situation that our bodies make by being in the world. What we see is not all that we can sense. In which case, the dimensions that are elided can be found by looking to affection.

I understand this overlap of affect and visible objectivity to be present at the moment of initial interpellation when the settler encounters what is difficult. These events

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[212] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 379.
[213] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 379.

would include any situation in which the settler feels the instability of their sense of entitlement, such as being told they are not welcome in particular spaces. In moments such as these, the settler is confronted with complications that threaten the stability of their settlement narratives, which secure their right to be everywhere and know everything. The settler body feels the vulnerability of its sense of normalcy, to rupture. The oscillations of pressures that accompany the visual event signify the space in between sedimentation and habitual response. It is in this space that the settler body might leave its habitual perception unquestioned and shift into defending their entitlement, to close down the feeling of discomfort or fear. This is the seamless performance that Al-Saji argues can be opened up if we attentively employ hesitation before we act.

In considering what constitutes critical vision, Al-Saji discusses the tactic of hesitation as an affective strategy for interrupting the unconscious flow from habitual perception to response. She argues that hesitation "creates an opening in habits and makes them visible for themselves and within the world."[214] By delaying habitual reaction, hesitation "open[s] the way from affectivity to memory."[215] The body, in this moment, has the time to feel and remember, and in doing so does not automatically repeat the past but remembers it. As Al-Saji argues, "Through affect, the body waits before acting; it has the time not only to perceive, but also to remember. It is in this way that affect symbolizes, for Bergson, a body's hold on time, its duration. For to feel is to no longer to repeat the past automatically, but to imagine and remember it."[216] While the settler may not be able to see all that is hidden, they can "marginally" encounter "the surprised revelation of a blind spot in vision, of invisibles to which vision is indebted." [217] This is how habit becomes visible in memory so it can be reflected upon.

Visualizing habit, as Al-Saji suggests is not completely dissimilar to the example of dance I have discussed alongside Helen Ngo and Merleau-Ponty. Visualizing the habits

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[214] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 380.
[215] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 383.
[216] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 386.
[217] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 385. Critical vision must "remember the blind spot it cannot make visible directly but can only marginally see in its moments of hesitation." AA 2009:380

of taking up dance can come in the form of a teacher or peers who assess a dancer's performance – their habits of movement – as part of the process through which the dancer hones their craft. In this case, the dancer must "see with" her teacher and peers and merge their perspective with what she senses to be her own, in order to successfully integrate new moves and sedimentations. However, unlike the settler, the dancer comes to this task aware that she does not know how to adapt her body to the new style of dance. The dancer then takes the perspectives of others to be insightful and valuable; she does not assume she knows more or better. She is also willingly adapting her body to new rules because she senses the value of the dance form. In which case, the dancer seeks not to hesitate but to repeat the past, to sediment in her body the new form of movement. The dancer's process exemplifies habit change that is possible were settlers to "see with" their sovereign partners. However, settler bodies are immersed in the structure of settlement, which shapes their habitual faculties in ways that devalue Indigenous perspectives. Hesitation is therefore valuable for the settler because it creates an opening through which they can marginally encounter their habits.

Epistemological domination is such a habit, a tendency for settlers to behave as if they know best how to take actions when problems arise. In *Unsettled Expectation*s, Mackey recounts an instance where a settler community member from Seneca Falls, New York, took a risk and attempted to connect with the Cayuga Nation without reproducing the domineering dynamics of settled relations. The local towns of Seneca Falls, Union Springs and Ithaca had expressed hostility towards the Cayuga because of their land claim, which had been tied up in legalities since 1980. Julie Uticone became concerned about the situation in 1999, which she saw as rapidly escalating.[218] In response to the growing climate of hate, Uticone reached out to the Cayuga Nation to find out what she should do, instead of turning away from the situation or deciding amongst other settlers what should be done. According to Mackey, Julie "took the risk to reach out to cross the historical binary boundaries and distance that often exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

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[218] Mackey, *Unsettled*, 176. Evidence of this escalation was found in the streets of Seneca Falls, where settlers had posted signs that read, "Who will win, the farmer's heartbeat or the Indian's drum beat?," "Scalp the land claim, NRA Forever," and "We fought four wars for this land."

people."[219] Julie did not assume the right to determine the best course of action without consulting with the Cayuga, nor did she assume she knew how to support them. When her connection to the Cayuga was eventually established, new alliances were formed. Julie and her husband founded the group SHARE (Strengthening Haudenosaunee American Relations through Education), which was openly supported by Bernadette "Birdie" Hill, Heron Clan Mother of the Cayuga Nation.

Julie's hesitation was born out of her awareness that the habitual tendencies of settlers to "help" Indigenous peoples are often paternalistic and ethnocentric. But how she acted in the moment, how she extended her body, came with *feelings* of uncertainty regarding how she might jeopardize her membership in her community and how she might be received by the Cayuga. These are the pressures that Julie *felt* when she stopped in the stream to consult with the Cayuga on where and how to turn. Hesitation is where the body has time to perceive and remember, to no longer repeat the past, but it is a sensed experience. What became visible to Julie was that she had a blind spot, which she *felt* as her inability to know what to do and how to proceed without reproducing colonizing relations. Julie established new relations because her body found them in the world. The shift from hesitation to memory is therefore not just a cognitive adjustment, but a way of relearning the world with our bodies.

According to Al-Saji, memory must take two implicated forms for us to visualize habits. The first is memory of the present – "the diacritical and seemingly formal conditions of actual visibility – the structures, social and otherwise, that configure what we see."[220] The second is the memory of the past, including a memory of what was never present for our vision – "the habitualities and sedimentations, the instituted ways of seeing and vertical historicity, that make my vision what it is in the present." Critical memory that is limited to remembering only the present misses the material and historical grounds of vision and how "a *way* of seeing, and of making visible comes to be instituted as a system of visibility

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[219] Mackey, *Unsettled*, 177.
[220] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 383.

that counts."[221] What is habitual in settler bodies has a past. This past is the blind spot in their vision where the partiality and situatedness of their vision and its social reference to a particular order of difference and meaning, become the norm.[222] Al-Saji argues that while critical vision does not make this blind spot visible explicitly, it appears marginally and affectively by revealing "coincidence" to be a "constituted" and "anticipating" way of seeing.[223] Hesitation thus makes space for affectivity to move into critical memory, to reveal one's seeing as situated.

The role of critical memory is beneficial for opening the seam between sedimentation and habitual faculties because it reworks pre-reflective inclinations. Critical memory, as Al-Saji describes it, has three purposes as it pertains to opening habit.

> First, it is the memory of habituation; it serves to contextualize and historicize our habits, to show them as habits. Secondly, the memory itself is already a destabilization of habit; it replaces the performance of habit. And, thirdly, memory connects habit to its dynamic temporal and affective ground, to the duration that makes habit possible, even while it is being continually reconfigured by habits acquired. This duration is more than any given habit; it is, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, the pre-personal dimension of embodiment that permits not only habit formation, but also change.[224]

Hesitating that leads to critical memory then, fractures habituality by re-presenting the perceived naturalness of habit as habit, by getting in the way and interrupting the body's pre-reflective tendencies, and by revealing habits to be temporally constructed. In regard to the reliance habit has on duration, this perhaps speaks of the moments of agency where one has the ability to alter their habits. Just as Ahmed recognizes stress points along lines of orientation as points where turning is possible, conceptualizing habits as formed over time allows one to grasp the malleability of their habit formation. In other words, duration is required to make habits and thus make new habits to alter our pre-reflective inclinations.

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[221] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 384.
[222] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 384.
[223] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 387. "Marginally and affectively, the delayed objectification is prefigured bot not objectively seen. This is not to say that what is seen escapes the habitual schemas of objectifying vision, but that the seeming coincidence between my habits of seeing and the visible is decentered, revealing these habits and their social references as the constitutive margin or frame of my field of vision."
[224] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 386.

The project of critical vision, as described thus far, is a vision that sees social structures in generalizing terms; in ways that are "oddly unsituated and disembodied."[225] To amend this, Al-Saji asserts that hesitation must also not forget "the heterogeneity of the ways in which these structures are taken up, lived, repeated and subverted – a heterogeneity which means that these structures are not monolithic but shift."[226] Seeing critically is not merely a project of seeing social structures or the history of them, but also how they are interconnected to one's positionality and complicity within them. In which case, hesitation is useful for settlers to see the colonial legacy as implicated in producing their current conditions, but also as the ways that their complicity recreates their status as beneficiary.

The moment of hesitation, as Al-Saji explains it, is an opening for possibility but the affective experience of this space is not consistent across bodies. While she describes it as an "openness to alterity in experiences of waiting, wonder and surprise," this is not necessarily the case for privileged bodies.[227] Indeed, I do not think this account properly describes the settler experience. Hesitation for the settler entails making space to see marginally and affectively, which is a difficult encounter with beginning to know that which they know to not know. I argue that although hesitation offers settlers possibilities to see the social structures, diacritical dimensions, and their positionality to their others, hesitation is the moment when they engage in the discomfort of grappling and negotiating between turning towards what feels familiar and turning towards what feels uncertain. These moments are what Al-Saji refers to as an affectivity that feels "powerless," whereby openness to alterity is taken up in "an attitude of self-conservation and closure – especially when it is one's privileged positionality and the imaginary seamlessness of one's bodily capacities that are at stake."[228] She argues that in response, there must be an attentive effort made to maintain the moment of hesitation and remain in the feeling of powerlessness, which is generative because it lets in other ways of seeing that challenge our own.

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[225] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 385.
[226] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 385.
[227] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 387.
[228] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 387.

At this point, I wish to come back to Ahmed's insights on becoming an obstacle along communal lines of orientation because it intersects with Al-Saji's ideas regarding hesitation. The affective weights they both describe are useful for making tangible that which cannot initially be objectified. For Al-Saji, hesitation is needed "not only in order to reveal the play of social structures and diacritical dimensions, but also in order to show how the weight of multiple pasts, of historicity and habituation, institute and naturalize these structures while at once fracturing their consistency and stability."[229] For Ahmed, becoming an obstacle is to become an inconvenience to the stream, to feel the pressure of the conditions that stop you from stopping, as a tangible thing. What is made tangible can then be reshaped by turning a different way and forging a new path for bodies to take up. What they both motion towards is the immersion of bodies in the interplay between one's individual lived experience and the structures that become institutionalized. This is where one feels the weight of having to negotiate the volatile process of becoming certain and the vulnerability of that certainty to repetitive ruptures. However, these are also the moments that are fruitful for altering the course of what has been, which could be why the oscillations of pressures are intense. Hesitating or becoming an obstacle by stopping fractures the consistency of the stream, whereby what is streaming must build up behind the body who waits, eventually move around it or follow the new course it forges when it turns towards.

The negotiations that settlers endure when they hesitate are at once productive for maintaining *and* reshaping the institutionalization of social structures and diacritical dimensions. Seeing marginally and affectively itself constitutes a difficult encounter for the settler, mainly because their sense of superiority is illuminated as hierarchically constructed with negative implications for Indigenous peoples. What the settler perceives to be a norm – a direction that is shared – is revealed to be a purposeful illusion for their benefit. Bringing attention to settlers' affective scope in the areas where it is wider than their objective vision reveals their knowing to be partial. But let us not forget that during this work the settler is not alone, as these tensions are socially structured. He/She/They is/are presented with difficult encounters because other ways of seeing and knowing

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[229] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 385.

challenge their expectations and put their sense of entitlement in question. The stream then becomes oscillating pressures of push and pull when inassimilable events arise.

Inassimilable events are what I have discussed as difficult encounters that interpolate us affectively. These occurrences are those that we cannot explain using our instituted system of meaning.[230] Al-Saji argues that there are two ways of seeing such events. The first is by refusing to see them in any other way than through the normative organization of the field. This is what Merleau-Ponty refers to as a "pathological" response, whereby the normative schema of objectifying vision is willfully maintained even though the affectivity cannot be reconciled with the history and sociality of the level. This vision is unhesitating and seeks to assimilate the seen into its already established ways of knowing. Moving from level to level in this instance requires no change in habitual faculties. I understand this pathological vision to be the more certain choice for settlers who encounter difficult events; the choice that knows to not know.

The second way of seeing inassimilable events is by "seeing with" others. This requires one to hesitate and allow the event to "insinuate into our vision as the dimension according to which the visual field is restructured," which changes how we see.[231] Al-Saji discusses the two ways in which one can "see with." The first sees others as familiar, but to whom we are indifferent. This form of "seeing with" risks becoming objectifying vision because it elides "the lateral dependence of my vision upon others whose affective influence is appropriated or denied." Problematically, this "seeing with" serves to render vision as neutral, impartial and the seen as inassimilable.[232] The second form of "seeing with" draws upon hesitation as an attentive effort to hold open possibilities of seeing according to the aspects of the field of vision that have become invisible because they are

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[230] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 388. "These are [inassimilable] events for which we cannot account from within our instituted system of meaning – events that reveal, if we are open to them, the fractures in the coherence of the visual field."

[231] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 388.

[232] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 390.

subsumed or excluded from what we see.[233] This "seeing with" holds the potential for allowing us to see in ways that correspond to others

"Seeing with" in its second form is what Al-Saji argues makes critical vision ethical. It is not to see through the eyes of the other, nor dismiss what they see as inferior to our ways of seeing. "Seeing with" is to comprehend that our own eyes are already other because they belong to a system of vision in which our quotidian existence with others is visible and invisible to us.[234] To approach our vision with such reflexivity is to recognize "the obligation of a shared vision," the maintenance of which is the difficult effort of being attentive to our co-existence with others.[235] This is perhaps the form of "seeing with" found in the actions of Julie Uticone. Julie was aware that her view of the situation belonged to a larger structure that typically treated Indigenous sovereignty in paternalistic and ethnocentric ways. Perhaps when she hesitated, Julie was determined to make an attentive effort to hold open the possibilities of "seeing with" the Cayuga, who were typically excluded.

When we hesitate and allow events to insinuate into our vision and alter the way we see, anchorage inherently plays an important role. To understand our own vision as implicated in social structures and diacritical dimensions that we have inherited by way of the colonial legacy is to acknowledge that the sedimentations we have acquired correspond to the current state of colonialism that we actively take up with our everyday lives. How we take up anchorage, how we place our self in space, provides a starting point for affectively investigating what we – and those who came before us – can only marginally perceive. Instead of pathologically ignoring the affective weight of difficult events by preserving the perspective of one's anchorage, settlers can use hesitation to investigate their anchorage with the intention of purposefully performing its re-arrangement. If we

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[233] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 391. "It is to attempt to see according to a different affective atmosphere, to see with temporalities and memories revealed as positioned differentially within the field of vision – concrete historicities that have become invisible by being either subsumed to, or excluded from, my visual field."

[234] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 391. "This is the promise that Merleau-Ponty's account of lateral passivity holds: to glimpse the intercorporeal, social and historical institution of my own vision, to remember my affective dependence on the alterity whose invisibility my vision takes for granted."

[235] Irigaray, 403 in Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 391. Al-Saji takes the description "the obligation of a shared vision" from Irigaray.

bring attention to our affected state when we extend into spaces and place importance on what our bodies feel when we think we know, we might realize we know more, and we know better. "Seeing with" is thus a way of seeing that challenges the epistemological stance of *the* knower over the known but it offers settlers the opportunity to re-understand themselves as *a* knower in co-existence with others.

In this section, I have put Al-Saji's ideas regarding "seeing with" in conversation with Ahmed's concept of stress points to further problematize the settler habit body. I have discussed the importance of affect during difficult encounters, especially inassimilable events where the settler must comprehend circumstances that cannot be explained by their frames of knowing. Performing hesitation attentively during these moments is important for opening up the habitual faculties of the settler, so they can marginally see the blind spot in their vision. Their critical vision must also be ethically taken up, meaning, settlers must face up to the ways that their positionality and complicity are implicated in the social structures and diacritical dimensions that shape how they see and what this means for their being beneficiaries of these structures. Maintaining the moment of hesitation in this way is the difficult and uncomfortable work of enduring the oscillating pressures of powerlessness and possibility for change. The choices that settlers make, in coordination with their others, have the potential to maintain the colonial legacy or reshape it.

I have also discussed "seeing with" as a constructive tool for opening the habitual faculties of the settler. By focusing on the field of affect that is wider than the scope of their vision, the settler can tap into knowledge that previously went unnoticed or perhaps ignored. While "seeing with" challenges the settler's epistemological inclination to dominate others with their certainty of knowing, it also opens them up to new ways of knowing that include knowing themselves as a knower amongst others. "Seeing with," I argue, is an appropriate way to address Mackey's concern regarding how settlers can see when they think they know. However, it still remains that the work of "seeing with" *feels* difficult, as it requires enduring the oscillating pressures of uncertainty while new ways of seeing and being the world become sedimented. Even if settlers acknowledge that they have the capacity to "see with," I question what would make them want to take up the

arduous task of seeing differently. The following section seeks to unpack why settlers might turn towards the task of grappling with inassimilable events to reshape their habits.

Affect, Motivation, and Change

While this thesis approaches decolonization by problematizing settler bodies, decolonization is necessarily a joint effort between Indigenous peoples and settlers. I have sought to integrate Al-Saji's work, specifically, into this project because it discusses "seeing with" as a practice that avoids the pitfalls of inassimilable events; mainly, the two dominating moves of appropriation or denial of other ways of knowing. Instead, "seeing with" requires "lateral passivity," which is to remember the affective dependence on alterity and understand this dependency as "the obligation of a shared vision."[236] But most importantly, as Al-Saji argues, a shared vision is not a philosophical reflection with an epistemological beginning, but a shift in visual practices that are "a change at the level of habits of seeing to interrupt the seamless objectifying representation and the exclusions this implies."[237] Seeing attentively then requires holding open the moment of hesitation, feeling the oscillations of pressures, and responding under the affective weight of sensing, feeling, checking, and questioning.

At this point, I want to turn back to Mackey's work to illuminate the ways that it also sees decolonization as action, or as she phrases it, "treaty as a verb." To perform decolonization is to perform treaty, and for settlers this means taking responsibility for upholding the agreements that were made and through which they benefit. Although I have attempted to complicate Mackey's insights by arguing that settlers' obstacles to decolonization pertain to their body's "I can" rather than only their epistemological paradigms, I am merely trying to locate the affective point of possibility which I see as a viable opening for settlers to begin acquiring new habits of conduct. But to be clear, my

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[236] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 391. "Lateral passivity" is Merleau-Ponty in AL-Saji; "the obligation of a shared vision" is Irigaray in Al-Saji.
[237] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 391.

intention is to provide an argument that emphasizes the need for settlers to perform treaty as an essential point of departure.

A general model for how settlers can partner and maintain treaty is perhaps best described by The Covenant Chain, which represents a series of treaties developed during the 17ᵗʰ century between the Haudenosaunee (the Five Nations of the Iroquois) and the Dutch settlers in New Netherland (New York). The Covenant Chain is depicted in Guswentha, or more specifically the Two Row Wampum treaty belt, which shows five stripes of alternating white and purple rows running parallel along the length of the belt. At the center of the belt, between the purple rows, are rows of white that represent the space of relations between people.
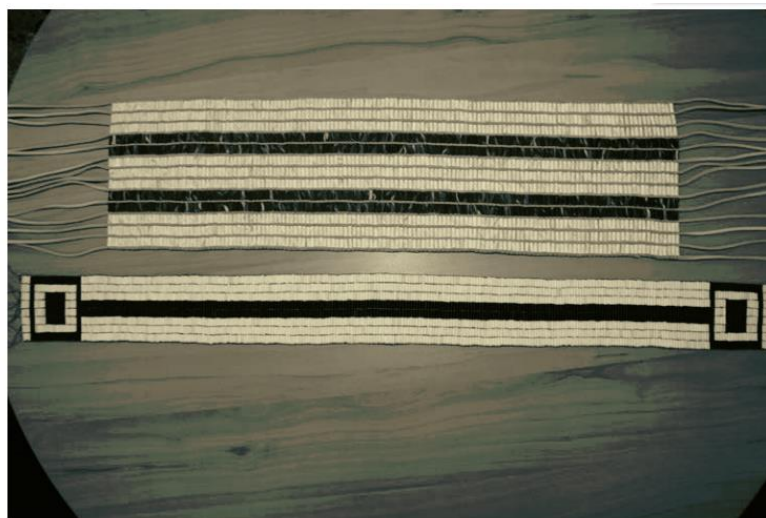

Fig. 1: Two replica teaching wampum belts. The bottom belt indicates the alliance between the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy – the Mohawks, Senecas, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas, and Tuscaroras – and the British Crown. The top belt is the Two Row wampum.

There are many interpretations of wampum that discuss the autonomy and the interrelatedness of the purple rows. Some of which understand the rows to be expressions of difference, "paths that never converge," and clear and permanent separations of nations.[238] Other interpretations focus on the three beaded rows between the purple rows,

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[238] Cairns, 92 in Turner, *Pipe,* 45.

which represent the three principals of conduct: friendship, peace, and longevity.[239] In either case, the middle rows are the space in which the relationship is conducted, built over time and into the future. As the initial Dutch treaty proposal is recorded in the Haudenosaunee tradition,

> You say you are our father and I am your son. We say, We will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers. This wampum belt confirms our words. These two rows will symbolize two paths or two vessels, travelling down the same river together. One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian people, their laws, their customs and their ways. The other, a ship, will be for the white people and their laws, their customs and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our boat. Neither of us will make the compulsory laws not interfere in the internal affairs of the other. Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel. The agreement has been kept by the Iroquois to this date.[240]

Treaty, as it is conducted through wampum, is not meant to be a paternalist relationship, but one of respectful autonomy and interdependence. As Susan Hill has argued, without the three principals that bind the vessels together, "the two vessels could drift apart and potentially be washed onto the bank (or crash into the rocks). This agreement was meant to provide security for both sides."[241]

Wampum as Daniel Heath Justice describes, is a writing technology used extensively throughout the Eastern Woodlands of North America.[242] He explains that "wampum functions most significantly – and successfully – when it is in relationship with a living people who are literate in its meaningful textual traditions" – traditions of representation in communities and histories – as well as the traditions of wampum belt production.[243] Both aspects of tradition "are constitutive participants in the meaning making of wampum exchange; they are not simply the medium through which the exchange takes place."[244] As master storyteller Tehanetorens (Mohawk) describes, "Wampum strings served as credentials or as a certificate of authority. No Iroquois chief

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[239] Turner, *Pipe,* 54; Brace; Hill, 30.
[240] Ganondagan.
[241] Hill, 30.
[242] Justice, 300.
[243] Justice, 302.
[244] Justice, 302.

would listen to a messenger or pay attention to a report until he received official information through a runner who carried the proper wampum string or belt. Wampum guaranteed a message or a promise. Treaties meant nothing unless they were accompanied by wampum. Belts were given and received at treaties as seals of friendship."[245]

I pair in this discussion the Guswentha with Al-Saji's "seeing with" because I find in them an intersection that is useful for conceptualizing aspirations for the settler habit body. The relations that the Guswentha represents are complex in the ways that they understand the negotiations between autonomy and interdependence to be in flux. This definition conflicts with Western enlightenment frameworks, which understand "property-based assumptions about autonomy, freedom and property as boundedness and separation."[246] As Mackey writes, "Western frameworks conceive of autonomy in terms of one nation, one community and one singular peoples with clear boundaries and fences in between: in some ways, autonomy is seen as a kind of property."[247]

In contrast, the flexibility of autonomy that the Guswentha understands differs in its sophisticated focus on being autonomous within tensions of relations. Its attention to non-fixed ways of understanding autonomy are akin to what Kyle Whyte describes as collective continuance:

> When we zoom in on experience and time, *collective continuance* refers to an understanding of existence as living through diverse, constantly changing relationships with different species, ancestors, future generations, and spiritual and ecological beings (e.g. water). These relationships are infused with responsibilities. So, *continuance* refers to living through constant motion and diversity within a *collective* of responsibility-laden relationships.[248]

Whyte describes this style of relating as one that embraces "migration, motion, fluidity, vibration, and expansion/contraction," and thus provides an adaptive capacity and fluidity that supports moral relationships across durations of diverse conditions.[249] Collective

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[245] Tehanetorens,12.
[246] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 137.
[247] Mackey, *Unsettled,* 137.
[248] Whyte, 56.
[249] Whyte, 57.

continuance, as Whyte describes it, is what colonialism seeks to erase, and it does so by fixing Indigenous mobility and migration for the purposes of settlement and land claims.

As discussed, performances of settlement carried out by settler bodies are habits that require maintenance and that are therefore open to be re-directed towards different ends, such as decolonization. It is this adaptive quality that I find to be a complimentary attribute for rebuilding settler habitual faculties in coordination with the Guswentha. The concept of the Guswentha requires the task of renewal, or what is referred to as "polishing the covenant chain."[250] Caring for the chain in this way means we are "aware that the relationship is not new, that it is not beginning now; it has roots deep in the past and it changes over time."[251] To polish is to renew what is already there, to actively engage in flexible ways in a joint project to establish positive relations. The habit body that can bring itself to perform this type of work is one that is anchored in their row and is aware that their vision is not their own but a form of vision that is bound up with ways of seeing. It is also a body that is attentive, aware, and hesitating because it is actively restructuring – or polishing – its vision while it is learning itself in the rows of peace, friendship and longevity. The flexibility of this task is to find certainty not in the rigidity of an autonomy that seeks to fix relations, but in the certainty of trusting our partners during the ebbs and flows of conditions that are constantly in flux. These are the kinds of equitable relations that take time to develop and that settlement has sought to damage. But by actively engaging with this work within the middle Guswentha rows, while utilizing the adaptive qualities of our habit bodies to "see with", we can begin to know ourselves differently, extend with confidence, and start to imagine the possibilities for changing the course of settlement.

For my final transition, I want to turn towards the difficult question that this thesis means to address: Why would settlers do this work? Colonization is a line that has been traversed for centuries, and for individual settlers this means the inheritance of a lineage

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[250] Brandão, in Mackey, *Unsettled,* 140.
[251] Brandão, in Mackey, *Unsettled,* 140.

that binds them to other settlers by way of collective labor to keep the path clear.[252] The collective lines of direction that settlers take up are investments in communal hope because the longer we tread them the harder it is to deviate from the supported journey to get somewhere.[253] This is perhaps why reshaping these lines as we turn different ways is sensed as heavy and laborious. Turning different ways requires us to engage with feelings of mourning and loss for a desired future, and the work of cobbling together new support systems. This endeavor is not an epistemological shift as much as it is an affective performance of learning to hesitate, "seeing with," and taking up space differently; all of which are new ways of being in the world for the privileged body. Resiliency, dedication and commitment will therefore be vital for settlers to decolonize.

In moments of hesitation, when our bodies are opening to perceive differently and deciding which way they should turn, the affective work may feel drastic. This is because the body in that moment is still facing what it stands to lose and how it knows itself. Once the body has turned towards, its perspective changes and new objects emerge in its perceptive fields to know itself differently; as Ahmed argues, "Depending on which way one turns, different worlds might even come into view."[254] Turning is thus effective for settlers becoming other than decolonizing, and perhaps most importantly because the more settlers repeat these turns their bodies acquire the shape of decolonization.[255] Decolonizing turns then become performances that the settler body understands as an "I can" possibility. What eventually becomes familiar is the pressure of decolonizing turns.

Creating the habit of turning towards also alters the structures and dimensions of institutionalized norms. As discussed, social structures motivate us; they inform our habitual perception as sedimentations. The relationship between social structures and

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[252] Ahmed, *Living*, 46. Ahmed discusses collective labor to keep the path clear as a support system.

[253] Ahmed, *Living,* 18. "You make an investment in going [on the path], and the going extends the investment. You keep going in hope you are getting somewhere. When we don't give up, when we persist, when we are "under pressure" to arrive, to get somewhere, we give ourselves over to the line."

[254] Ahmed, *Queer,* 15.

[255] Ahmed, *Queer,* 15. "If such turns are repeated over time, then bodies acquire the very shape of that direction. It is not, then, that bodies simply have a direction, or that they follow directions, in moving this way or that. Rather, in moving this way rather than that, and moving in this way again and again, the surfaces of bodies *in turn* acquire their shape. Bodies are "directed" and they take the shape of this direction."

seeing is dialogical, we sense in accordance to these structures but by resisting them or turning a different way we alter them; Al-Saji describes this process when she writes, "The circularity between habit and institution, bodies and social horizons, means that vision is neither mere social construction nor individual accomplishment, but an institution and a historicity that is always taken up and resumed."[256] Colonization works through settler bodies, and this is how settlement is maintained as a material structure through which settlers know themselves as colonizers. But habit does not only recast settler bodies. Habit also makes the perceived world appear differently, or perhaps re-organized to fit our new ways of seeing. [257] In which case, restructuring habits will eventually allow us to see new possibilities and find different meanings and norms of settlement that take precedence over the need to reify certainty. The pressures of decolonizing turns, once felt as difficult encounters, may begin to feel normal, and with repetition may, even become habitual. This is how new structures of settlement can be built, by taking difficult turns and forging new paths until the quality of normative pressure changes. What then becomes possible for the settler is new ways of understanding their extensions into space, land relations, and what it means to polish the Covenant Chain.

Conclusion

This final chapter has attempted to address the problematic question of how settlers can restructure their habitual faculties to see otherwise than objectifying vision. Alongside Al-Saji, I have argued that settlers can see affectively, within a critical-ethical vision, to confront their complicity in colonization and to re-know themselves as a knower amongst others. I have drawn an intersection between Al-Saji and Ahmed's tactics of hesitation and stops to discuss settlement as coercive pressures and what it feels to endure those pressures while turning towards what is difficult. Negotiating within these pressures is productive for maintaining *and* reshaping the institutionalization of social structures and diacritical

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[256] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 387.
[257] Al-Saji, "Critical-Ethical," 377. "But it is not only the body that is recast by habit, the perceived world is differentiated and configured in new ways; it appears differently. Indeed, visibility takes on a particular organization that corresponds to our habits of seeing; certain differences, and hence meanings, become salient while other dimensions are invisible."

dimensions that bring us to re-producing settlement. To restructure the visual field by seeing affectively is how settlers can "see with" Indigenous perspectives in ways that avoid the pitfalls of appropriation or denial.

I have also discussed how seeing affectively is a strategy that is complimentary to Guswentha and polishing the covenant chain. Bodily habits require maintenance, and as such they become malleable to new techniques for relating in the world. If settlers were to take up decolonizing action by polishing and renewing their relations to their sovereign partners, by giving affective weight to the autonomous and interconnected relationship they are enmeshed in, they could alter the character of settlement. Ultimately, our habits as settlers determine our expectations for the future, and as such, incremental changes to our habits bring different expectations for our futures into view. If we begin the sweaty work of decolonization, then we become open to new possibilities to express our agency and responsibly attend to the legacy of colonialism. How we do differently carries the potential to change why we want to be different.

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