

2019-08-23

The Settler State is a White Woman: Re-Conceptualizing Audra Simpson's Masculine State Through a Gendered Genealogy of Settler Colonial Statecraft in Canada

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Krill, S. R. (2019). The Settler State is a White Woman: Re-Conceptualizing Audra Simpson's Masculine State Through a Gendered Genealogy of Settler Colonial Statecraft in Canada (Master's thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada). Retrieved from <https://prism.ucalgary.ca>.
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The Settler State is a White Woman: Re-Conceptualizing Audra Simpson's Masculine State
Through a Gendered Genealogy of Settler Colonial Statecraft in Canada

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

CALGARY, ALBERTA

AUGUST, 2019

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Abstract

Audra Simpson accounts for the oppressive colonial apparatus of the Canadian state with a gendered theory of settler statecraft. The ongoing evidence of heteropatriarchal violence targeting Indigenous women in Canada points her to adopt a wholly androcentric theory in which she argues that ‘the state is a man’. From an intersectional standpoint, this does not address the complex way that gender and colonial power operate together to uphold and sustain the settler colonial regime. This thesis will challenge Audra Simpson’s male-centric theory by interrogating gender and the role of both settler men and women in Canada’s historical process of statecraft. Chapter two will present an alternative perspective to the assumed relationship between men and the settler colonial regime that Simpson puts forth, offering a gendered genealogy of settler colonial statecraft that centers men and masculinity in its analysis. This chapter will argue that theorizing the settler state ‘as a man’ in its entirety does not reflect the actual gendered process of colonial state building in Canadian history. Chapter three will conduct a similar analysis but focus on the position of white women within this history, expanding the ways in which we think about and perceive the state in gendered terms. This chapter will argue that white women were fundamental to the creation of Canada’s stable sovereign settler colonial state. This conclusion offers a more historically accurate and intersectional account of how settler colonial phenomenon is constituted by and continuously sustained through gendered systems and actors. To theorize how the significance of this research might be realized moving forward, chapter four will conclude with a discussion of the importance this research has for efforts of mainstream feminism in Canada. This chapter will argue that viewing the settler state as a white woman implicates mainstream feminists in the overturning and dismantling of colonial state apparatus as political actors working towards gender justice.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Chapter One: Introduction	1
<i>Scholarly Context and Project Justification</i>	5
<i>Methodological Considerations</i>	12
<i>Key Terms</i>	16
Chapter Two – Unpacking “The State is a Man”: Analyzing Men and Masculinity During the Historical Process of Settler Colonial Statecraft in Canada.....	20
<i>The Fur Trade</i>	23
<i>Permanent Settlement</i>	30
<i>Statecraft</i>	40
<i>Conclusion</i>	53
Chapter Three – Re-Conceptualizing the State as a Woman: The Critical Role of White Women and Femininity in Creating and Sustaining the Sovereign Settler State of Canada	55
<i>Permanent Settlement</i>	58
<i>Statecraft</i>	73
<i>Conclusion</i>	83
Chapter Four – The Settler Colonial State is a White Woman: Implications for White Settler Feminist Solidarity in Canada.....	85
<i>Laying the Groundwork for an Informed Feminist Decolonization Movement</i>	86
<i>Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women</i>	88
<i>Using History to Create a Trajectory of Decolonial Feminist Action</i>	90
<i>Conclusion</i>	95
References	97

Acknowledgments

I would like to first and foremost thank my supervisor Dr. Daniel Voth for his ongoing support and invaluable mentorship throughout this undertaking. I am incredibly grateful for the time and effort he has invested in me as a student. I would also like to thank Dr. Joshua Goldstein who has been a very generous and helpful mentor to me as I have completed this work, as well as Dr. Rebecca Sullivan for her significant investment in my personal and academic endeavors over the course of my undergraduate and graduate studies. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Robert Henry, Dr. Rain Prud'homme-Cranford, Dr. Gina Starblanket, and Dr. Melanee Thomas for providing me with new insight and perspective that helped me to grow significantly as a scholar over the past few years. I would like to thank my incredible parents, Donnie and Brad, without whom I would not be where I am today and whose help has been so critical to all of my personal and academic achievements. I am so grateful for their endless support. I would like to express my gratitude to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the University of Calgary, and the Department of Political Science for their financial assistance. I would also like to acknowledge that this thesis was undertaken on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikuni, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina, and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations.

Chapter One: Introduction

“In all of the acoustic mess of settlement, there is a clarity of one trumpeting discourse and that is of ‘the state’... The state that I seek to name has a character, it has a male character, it is more than likely white, or aspiring to an unmarked center of whiteness... and serves the interests of what is understood now as “straightness” or heterosexuality and patriarchy, the rule by men”
— Audra Simpson, *The State is a Man* (2016, para 3)

In recent years there has been an increasing effort within Canadian scholarship to identify the multifarious way power operates within the settler state, especially as the colonial structure has become sedimented and naturalized overtime. In particular, settler colonialism is now understood as a matrix system of co-constructing power forces which fuel the dispossession of Indigenous land (Coulthard, 2014; Dhamoon, 2015). Further, it has become increasingly clear that settler colonialism is a gendered phenomenon, in both structure and process (Barker, 2017; Ladner, 2009; Suzack, 2015). Settler colonization not only introduced systems of heteropatriarchy as a means of ‘civilization’ to legitimize settler superiority and access to Indigenous land¹ (Glenn, 2015; Guerrero, 2003), but also used heteropatriarchy (along with white supremacy and other systems of domination) as a gendered tool of colonial conquest to disproportionately target Indigenous women for settler state projects of elimination and assimilation (Bourgeois, 2018; Kaye, 2017). These insights have allowed for scholars to identify the settler colonial regime as founded and continuously reliant upon oppressive forces of gendered power, and in particular on structures of heteropatriarchy. This has been especially powerful within settler colonial and Indigenous studies and has critically informed movement-building efforts. As Leanne Simpson (n.d.) has argued, an “interrogation of heteropatriarchy needs to become part of our decolonizing project” (para 8). In

¹ Not all Indigenous nations were non-patriarchal before settler colonialism was introduced. Such an assertion does not account for the diverse ways that Indigenous nations employed gender organization before European contact, which varied greatly by region and community and was not always matrilineal or egalitarian as the literature often suggests.

light of this scholarship and recent efforts addressing this issue, such as the 2019 Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, it is increasingly clear that gender/heteropatriarchy must be in conversation with discussions of the settler colonial state.

Heteropatriarchy can be understood as a system of social and political dominance whereby cisgender heterosexual men have power over cisgender women and other diverse sexual and gender orientations. It is a structure combining cisgender male power alongside the privileging of cisgender and monogamous relationships. Mainstream feminists have long identified this as foundational to the social and political arrangement of the state (Connell, 2016; Valdes, 1996), while Indigenous feminist and gender scholars have argued it to be a primary tactic and mechanism of maintaining settler colonial power and control, with particularly violent outcomes for Indigenous women (Arvin et al., 2013; Million, 2014; Simpson, 2008). This latter scholarship has tended to conceptualize power within the settler state in specifically gendered ways. In her work on heteropatriarchal violence within the Canadian state, Audra Simpson (2016) centers her analysis on the “relationship between Indigenous women’s death and settler governance,” arguing the settler colonial project of Canada to be “gendered and murderous” (para 1). Simpson’s theory on the gendered process and structure of settler statecraft is characterized in the language of white androcentrism. Perhaps even beyond androcentric, her interpretation of the settler state renders it to be intrinsically and essentially masculine. This is both a theoretical and practical interpretation. In arguing the settler state to have “a male character,” ideas of settler colonial sovereignty, power, and governmentality possess distinctively masculine qualities and are attached to the male gender. It also depicts the practical political features that constitute the settler colonial state as being created and reproduced through male actors.

Such a conclusion is reached when focusing on the oppressive outcomes of the settler colonial state as it intersects with gendered modes of power. Framing the settler state in the masculine language of heteropatriarchy, or what Jaimes Guerrero (2003) defines as “patriarchal colonialism,” results in a narrative which centers the male abuse of power². This has critical implications for understanding how systems of gender facilitate oppressive outcomes of Indigenous dispossession within the state. The tendency to conceptualize settler colonial and heteropatriarchal power in the masculine leads to assumptions about *how* this power is reinforced and perpetuated and *who* exercises and upholds this power. To Audra Simpson, the settler colonial state, and the actors who uphold and reproduce its power, are men. Further, the gender which upholds white heteropatriarchy within the settler state is entirely male. Given that systems of settler colonialism are a “matrix of domination” (Dhamoon, 2011, 2015), in which individuals simultaneously experience and also perpetuate oppression in relation to others marked by difference, this binary approach to theorizing gender and settler colonial statecraft does not provide a complete understanding of how this gendered reality actually takes form in Canada. A masculine interpretation of the state too quickly makes the assumption that gendered modes of power which constitute settler colonial structure are reproduced solely by men. Simpson’s theory of the male state thus requires further interrogation.

Previous discussions of settler colonialism and gender have focused on the outcomes and implications of gendered power *within* the settler state as an already-existing structure, rather than analyzing how gender critically operates to *create* the structure of the settler colonial state itself. It is not well understood how gender played a role in facilitating the creation (and ongoing

² This is not always a straightforward assertion. For example, I would read Glen Coulthard’s (2014) discussion of “settler-colonial misogyny” (p. 177) as one which characterizes this misogynistic structure in terms of binary power relations (male power – female oppression). Unless scholars identify the intersectional nature of misogyny/patriarchy/gendered oppression as it is reproduced by both male and female (and other) individuals, these power dynamics are most often assumed to be in the masculine.

maintenance) of the settler colonial state. This thesis will demonstrate how a different perspective of gender and the settler state emerges when considering a different starting place of analysis. It will argue that conceptualizing settler colonial statecraft in Canada at a point in history which predates the formal existence of the state reveals a more intersectional and historically accurate understanding of the complex way gender was employed to construct and make possible the ongoing existence of the Canadian settler colonial regime. Scott Morgenson has touched on this idea by arguing that gender and sexuality fundamentally serve to generate the power relations of settler colonialism (2012, p. 15), but his analysis focuses on making a case for why gender and sexuality must be central to discussions of settler colonial politics. This thesis will expand upon such an assertion to provide a more in-depth understanding of the actual ways gender served to generate the existence of the settler colonial state itself. Building upon the vast body of scholarship which has argued that “settler colonialism has been and continues to be a gendered process” (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 10), this research will argue that gender was fundamental to the formation of the settler colonial state, but not in consistently masculine terms as Simpson suggests. This insight opens up a space to critically challenge assumptions of the settler colonial state as being an already-existing masculine entity, revealing a political history which offers an alternative approach to understanding the relationship between gender and settler colonial statecraft in Canada.

From an intersectional perspective, the masculine framework of settler colonial statecraft provided by Audra Simpson results in a limited interpretation of how gendered power operates within the state. Discussions of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism should not assumedly position men as the dominating forces of oppression and women as those who always experience its marginalizing consequences. This perpetuates a male/female binary understanding of how power operates within and through the settler state and has resulted in white women being left out

as a site of gendered critique in discussions aimed at dismantling this colonial power³. This has been reflected in scholarship, as there has been little to no research dedicated to understanding the political relationship between white women and the settler colonial state. Simpson's theory presents conceptual and practical limitations to understanding the settler state broadly, as well as its relationship to gender, heteropatriarchy, and other intersecting modes of power. This thesis will argue that the process of settler colonial statecraft was not *only* carried out by white men in Canadian history, and will position white women as a fundamental condition of possibility⁴ by which the settler colonial state of Canada could form in the nineteenth century. The creation of the Canadian state critically relied on both settler men *and* women to create the conditions necessary for building up a permanent colonial political order. Viewing the settler colonial state as fundamentally reliant on the presence of white women in particular draws attention to the conceptual and practical limitations of reductive and binary accounts of the settler state (and its relationship to gender), while illuminating the importance of employing critically intersectional approaches to understanding how settler colonial domination is sustained in Canada through a multitude of interconnected forces and systems.

Scholarly Context and Project Justification

This project is situated within the broader context of settler colonial studies, namely its recent turn towards engaging in multidimensional and intersectional approaches to understanding settler colonial power, and the importance of gender within this conversation. The field of settler colonial studies has notably risen to prominence since its recent conceptualization in the 1990s.

³ The male-female binary is not only an issue in terms of understanding who exercises and reproduces power and oppression, it also leaves out other non-binary individuals and those who identify on the wide spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations. Including a more diverse and queer-centered analysis is out of the scope of this project, however the intersectional critique presented in this thesis may have implications for unpacking how settler colonial power is reproduced by individuals outside of this binary as well.

⁴ I use this term to denote a foundational or underlying qualification that must be met before another phenomenon can be realized. Here, this term speaks to the necessary features or circumstances that must exist before a larger political project can be achieved.

The typology of ‘colonialism’ was critiqued for its inability to succinctly explain the various social, political, and economic conditions which shape and determine how settlements come to be and are maintained. In response, scholarship began taking note of settler colonialism as an “important and legitimate subtype of imperialism and colonialism” (Prochaska, 1990, p. 7). As Edmonds and Carey (2013) reflect, scholars began to argue that “colonies where ‘settlers had come to stay’ presented particularly contested and often violent material and cultural dynamics which required specific scholarly as well as activist interrogation” (p. 2). Emerging as conceptually distinct from previous theories and processes of colonialism, settler colonialism began to challenge scholarship to engage with new questions and approaches to investigate how orders of colonial and imperial domination operate within and through the structures and processes of settlement. The result of settler colonial studies has been “a consolidation or integration of debates over Indigenous dispossession and sovereignty that were otherwise fragmented and disconnected” (p. 2).

As a relatively new field, it is somewhat remarkable the extent to which settler colonialism has become institutionalized within the academy, proving itself to be an important and distinct category of inquiry that “demands particular analytical attention” (p. 2). Understanding and conceptualizing its process and structure requires distinct theoretical approaches from those used to understand ‘traditional’ colonialism. As a separate category of analysis, Lorenzo Veracini (2013) posits settler colonialism to exist “beyond the colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial worlds” (p. 321), while Wolfe (2006) concurs that as “a specific social formation... it is desirable to retain that specificity” (p. 401). This also has important implications for projects of decolonization and anticolonization. As Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest, “relying solely on postcolonial literatures or theories of colonality that ignore settler colonialism will not help to envision the shape that decolonization must take in settler colonial contexts” (p. 5). This surge of

academic interest in studying settler colonial societies also launched a major reconsideration of the role settlement played in the colonization of Canada specifically. Speaking to the rise of settler colonial studies in the Canadian context, historian Jerry Bannister (2016) wrote of settler colonialism as marking a critical “tipping point” and “larger cultural shift” towards understanding Canada as a settler colonial state and space.

It is from this rising field of settler colonial discourse, and the acknowledgment of settler colonial power as an enduring, insidious (and gendered) form of governance, that an increasingly diversified field of settler colonial studies has recently emerged. In 2013, the journal of Settler Colonial Studies sought to “continue to traverse temporal, geographical and disciplinary boundaries and present multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research on settler colonialism” (Edmonds & Carey, p. 3). From such work, settler-colonialism is now firmly understood as a “multi-fronted project” (Arvin et al., 2013, p.13). The result has been an increasingly diverse approach to analyzing settler colonial phenomenon alongside a prioritizing and incorporation of settler colonial analysis within a multitude of fields. In doing so, settler colonial discourse has attempted to generate an increasing “anti-colonial consciousness” (Byrd, 2011, p. xxx) between and across disciplines, serving to actively confront settler colonial logics which continually subjugate Indigenous peoples by normalizing the settler state as a foundation for other diverse claims. There has also been an increasing emphasis on the diverse political manifestations of settler colonialism. As an analytical and political category, settler colonialism has provided scholars with a set of interpretive tools that allow for multiple forms of power which move through and operate within the settler colonial state to be interrogated. Scholars have increasingly dedicated more attention to “other sites and relations of power that inform our settler-colonial present” (Coulthard,

2014, p. 15), in an attempt to understand the various facets and sites of oppression that require attention from projects of decolonization.

This project seeks to join in this effort to further the conceptual refinement of settler colonialism and its need to adopt a multi-relational approach to understand how systems of domination operate with and through each other to serve the goals of the settler colonial state. In particular, this research emerges from an understanding that identifying settler colonialism as a *gendered* multi-relational phenomenon brings the complex and diverse mechanisms of power which sustain the settler colonial relationship into clearer view. Scott Morgenson (2012) claims that “gendered and sexual power relations appear to be so intrinsic to procedures of indigenous elimination and settler indigenization that these processes will not be fully understood until sexuality and gender are centered in their analysis” (p. 15). It is also now understood that the erasure of Indigenous women and gender systems was a critical mechanism of settler colonial statecraft that served to secure settler permanence/domination and ensure Indigenous elimination/dispossession in Canada (Bourgeois, 2015; Weaver, 2009). This research will further specify how settler colonial state formation in Canada was and is a deeply gendered structure and process, and in critiquing Audra Simpson’s masculine state, will illuminate the necessity for critically intersectional approaches to understanding how settler colonial phenomenon is upheld and reproduced through gendered systems and actors. As the ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has prompted scholars such as Simpson to identify the gendered nature of settler colonial state oppression in order to dismantle this violent phenomenon, theorizing new connections and relationships between gender, heteropatriarchy, and the settler colonial regime, as well as the political actors operating within these systems, contributes to identifying and unpacking the complex apparatus reproducing gendered colonial violence against

Indigenous women in Canada. The decision to focus this research on the gendered dimensions of settler colonial state domination, and in particular white women within this structure and process, is further justified on three academic grounds.

First, there has been a proliferation of Indigenous feminist and gender scholarship in recent years which has argued that heteropatriarchy is a foundational characteristic and mechanism of the settler colonial state. Indigenous feminism has made “substantial advances in understanding the connections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy” (Arvin et al., 2015, p. 11), leading to an increasingly gendered focus of both Indigenous scholarship and movement building in recent years. These insights have provided a critique of how the settler colonial state is upheld through gendered violence and structures of heteropatriarchy. Scholars have demonstrated how the disproportionate marginalization experienced by Indigenous women in settler states is a durable and ongoing feature of settler colonial power relations (Million, 2014), and as settler colonial power has become naturalized and sedimented overtime, these gendered dimensions of the settler colonial state have become increasingly complex and elusive. Indigenous feminism has responded by working to unpack and deconstruct gendered colonial violence as it is reproduced within the state, encouraging efforts of decolonization to prioritize gender in theory and praxis. As Kiera Ladner (2009) has argued, efforts must continually be taken to “reframe decolonization as a gendered project” (p. 72). In order for settler colonial studies and theory to achieve decolonizing outcomes, it must be in conversation with Indigenous studies (Snelgrove et al., 2014), and especially with Indigenous feminism which has identified gender as integral to the settler colonial state. In part, this thesis uses the gendered decolonial project put forth by Indigenous feminism as a jumping off point for its analysis of how gendered power and white women operate to create and uphold the settler colonial state.

Second, the Indigenous resurgence movement has adopted an increasingly gendered focus, and settler colonial studies has a responsibility to respond accordingly. In close relation to the above discussion, the rise of Indigenous feminism as a prominent intellectual discourse has provided a rich academic foundation from which feminist resurgence has mobilized (Barker, 2017; Green, 2016; Kermoal, 2016; Simpson, 2017; Suzack, 2015). Indigenous feminist and queer scholars have argued that resurgence theory must necessarily include a gendered analysis in order to avoid reproducing the sexist outcomes and strategies of previous political movements. As Simpson, Nanibush and Williams (2012) write, the “resurgence of Indigenous nations” is emerging in conjunction with “a framework that interrogates the colonial logics of bio-power – race, gender, and sexuality” (p. 2). This, they argue, is just the very first step toward a larger project of resurgence not entrenched in heteropatriarchy. Focusing on gender within Indigenous politics has been politically significant, as Indigenous women and scholars have mobilized movements such as Idle No More, Walking with Our Sisters, and Families of Sisters and Spirit. The reason this is relevant to this particular project (and perhaps all projects with decolonizing aims), emerges from scholarship which has also argued that settler colonial studies must necessarily be in conversation with Indigenous resurgence efforts (Elliott, 2018; Snelgrove et al., 2014), as well as their various gendered dimensions. Settler colonial scholarship must align itself with efforts to dismantle oppressive power structures and systems of domination, otherwise it will remain complicit in the upholding of settler colonial structure. As this research is enmeshed in settler colonial studies, it must be responsive and in conversation with the gendered resurgence project of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This project will analyze historical colonial gender systems which have served to maintain settler colonial power relations and fuel the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous land,

people, and women within the Canadian state, in order to theorize new ways of dismantling this oppressive sexist structure to create a decolonial future.

Finally, there has been an ongoing call for mainstream feminist and gender studies to interrogate and problematize the intersections of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy in its scholarship and analysis. While gender has critically influenced the discipline of settler colonialism, the integration and prioritizing of settler colonialism within mainstream gender discourse has not followed suit. Though critical feminist scholars such as Rita Dhamoon have taken seriously the need for settler colonial analysis and interrogation within the discourse, such scholarship has remained limited to date. As Dhamoon (2015) argues, “the focus on settler colonialism remains under-theorized within mainstream and even women of colour feminisms” (p. 31). Indigenous women have responded by critiquing mainstream feminism for its ignorance to, and association with, settler colonial oppression. Scholars such as Sandy Grande (2003) have argued that feminism’s failure to acknowledge “the complicity of white women in the history of domination” has “position[ed] mainstream feminism alongside other colonialist discourses” (p. 329). Rauna Kuokkanen (2015) has critiqued that mainstream feminist discourse demonstrates little acceptance of the fact that settler colonial states are built upon the exploitation and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their territories. This thesis will produce a more intersectional feminist scholarship attuned to the oppressive mechanisms of the settler colonial state by analyzing white women’s relationship to colonial domination and then theorizing how this relationship might then be decolonized. It will also answer the call put forth by Arvin et al. (2013) for white feminist scholarship to meaningfully “attend to the links between heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism” (p. 9), by diagnosing the historical relationship white women have to the heteropatriarchal structures of the settler colonial state.

Methodological Considerations

Audra Simpson engages with an analysis that points to a masculine gendering of the *state*. She identifies the state as the “one trumpeting discourse” amidst the aggregation of parts constituting settler colonial phenomenon. In line with other Indigenous scholars and the discourse of settler colonial thought, the state is central to theorizing how power, oppression, settlement, and the enduring nature of Indigenous genocide, assimilation, and erasure is maintained in Canada. Understanding the complexities of the settler colonial state is not an easily reducible task, however providing a simplified framework of the central tenants which create and maintain a settler colonial state will allow for a more succinct interrogation of how these elements are gendered. The literature on settler colonialism, as well as Indigenous studies and Indigenous feminism, presents three broad thematics which characterize the settler colonial state, and more specifically the process of settler statecraft: permanence, dispossession, and domination. The permanent nature of the state is what distinguishes the ‘colonial’ from the ‘settler colonial’—colonizers come to stay and create an enduring political structure on Indigenous land that is separate from the metropole (Krautwurst, 2006; Masta & Tori, 2019; Verancini, 2011; Woolford & Benvenuto, 2015). This permanence is characterized by dispossession –the settler state requires an ongoing access to territory which it achieves by dispossessing Indigenous peoples from their lands (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Glenn, 2015; Verancini, 2010; Wolfe, 1999, 2006). Finally, the settler state relies on hierarchical power relations of domination to secure this permanence and dispossession (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Saranillio, 2015; Voyageur, 2011). These characteristics of statecraft are summarized by Glen Coulthard (2014), who writes of the settler colonial state as a “relationship where power... has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining

authority” (p. 6-7). A settler colonial state requires a political relationship of domination between the Indigenous and settler population that allows for ongoing settler access to land and Indigenous dispossession from it, secured and sedimented permanently into an enduring state structure and process. These tenants craft a more succinct analytical framework of the political conditions which make possible the formation and reproduction of a settler colonial regime.

Settler colonial statecraft occurs when the above conditions of permanence, dispossession, and domination are generated and created by settler actors to build and sustain a colonial state structure. This project will address the gendered policies of leadership involved in statecraft but will primarily focus on what it means for settlers to build and create the conditions of ‘a state’ in Canada’s (gendered) settler colonial context. This process of statecraft was not always an intentional undertaking –settler actors have historically engaged in certain activities where colonial statecraft was a byproduct of their actions (such as the creation of permanent forts during the fur trade to increase profit, the cultivation of land by settler farmers for agricultural expansion, and the role of women as mothers which reproduced a settler population). Settlers have engaged in the process of statecraft by operating through various intersecting systems and relationships that, in part, serve to generate the necessary conditions for sustaining a colonial order. This project will interrogate the historical relationship between settler women and men, gender, and the conditions required to form a stable settler state. This will provide a more succinct understanding of how the process of settler colonial statecraft was facilitated through the intersections of settler actors and gendered systems in Canadian history. Though Simpson addresses the entire Canadian state in her work, this project will focus on the process of statecraft as it unfolded in the Canadian West. State development in Western Canada provides the greatest amount of archival evidence and detailed history that allows for a gendered account of statecraft to emerge.

In order to present an alternative account of how gender creates and informs the settler state, the historical foundations of gender in relation to the process of settler colonial statecraft require an interrogation. Audra Simpson's analysis takes place mostly in the present (~2016), though she identifies the process of statecraft as beginning in the mid-nineteenth century (para 12). From a settler colonial perspective, a historical approach is important and relevant to understanding current systems of colonial oppression and gendered violence. As an enduring structure and not an event (Wolfe, 2006), characterized by a political structure and process which has shape-shifted overtime (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Corntassel, 2008), the critical role of gender during state formation is not contained in a historical past, but is structurally linked to state formations in the present. A discussion of gendered history provides insight to understanding how the sedimented and naturalized state mechanisms of permanence, dispossession, and dominance are reproduced through gender today. The central analysis of this thesis is rooted in a text-based historical approach that draws primary and secondary evidence from archival sources to craft a gendered genealogy of settler colonial statecraft in Canada loosely between the years of 1700-1900. These historical texts have been analyzed with specific attention to gender, white women, and the above framework of settler colonial statecraft. Following this historical interrogation, the final part of this project brings this history into the present to theorize how feminism might productively respond, positioning this research as a foundation for moving toward renewed dialogue, gendered solidarity, and decolonized feminist coalition building.

I theoretically situate this critique and analysis within a broad framework of intersectional thought. I employ this framework as it has been theorized by Rita Dhamoon (2011), who takes into consideration issues of Indigeneity and decolonization into her analysis, and understands intersectionality at a basic level to be a "framework for examining the relationship between

multiple interrelated modalities of difference” (p. 231) of which the “constitutive feature” is a “critique of the work of power –how it operates, its effects, and the possibilities of transformation” (p. 240). This approach has its origins in black feminism (see Crenshaw, 1989) and has existed as a “long-standing feature of various social struggles, including women-centered and feminist fights against racism, colonialism, and slavery” (p. 231). It has been employed in a variety of ways by Indigenous feminists as well –Sherene Razack (1998) has used this idea to form a theory of “interlocking systems” which secure one another to produce a hierarchy among women, Verna Kirkness (1987-88) draws from intersectional thought to theorize the “discrimination within discrimination” experienced by Indigenous women as they face various layers of colonial and racial oppression within the settler state, while Sarah Hunt (2013) has theorized intersectional approaches to decolonizing sex work in Canada. Understanding settler colonialism through an intersectional lens can also be allied with projects of decolonization and Indigenous liberation. As Hunt and Holmes (2015) suggests, “intersectional frameworks... resist the either/or dichotomous thinking of colonial Euro-Western paradigms” (p. 160). Approaches which center interlocking oppression as foundational to settler colonial phenomenon actively resist colonial and Eurocentric ways of conceptualizing power and politics.

An intersectional approach will provide a critique of Audra Simpson’s work, as it requires a “shift away from studying identities and categories to studying processes and systems” and in doing so “avoids reductive forms of analysis and fosters instead more rigorous critique of how and why differences are interpreted in privileging and penalizing ways” (Dhamoon, 2011, p. 240). This provides a means to expand upon androcentric interpretations of men as the sole source of gendered power creating and reproducing the Canadian state, allowing gender to be viewed not only as a system of oppression for white women, but as a site by which white women interact with

the various oppressive forces which uphold the settler state. This thesis pays close attention to Dhamoon's assertion that in order "to operationalize the radical capacity of intersectional-type work it is crucial to foreground it as a form of political critique that examines why the social world is configured the way it is and that confronts the work of power" (p. 240). The following discussion is framed as a political critique of the binary theoretical assumption that the settler colonial state is entirely configured and produced by gendered power via men and systems of masculinity. This thesis is an intersectional attempt to further an understanding of how the settler colonial world of Canada is upheld and reproduced through gendered subjects and systems, and especially white women who are often overlooked as a site of settler colonial domination.

Key Terms

To gender the process of settler colonial statecraft is to go beyond merely acknowledging the actions and presence of women in settler colonial history, but to focus on how understandings of sexual difference and the roles associated with this difference influenced the politics of settler colonial state formation. A gendered analysis provides an understanding of how constructed differences between men and women shaped settler colonial society in Canada. It is not about biologically grounded sex categories, but the social and cultural differences associated and applied to the male and female sexes⁵ (Butler, 2007; Lindsey, 2014; West and Zimmerman, 1987). I understand 'gender' as that which designates fundamental characteristics to, and determines the social, political, and economic roles of, those considered biologically male or female. I refer to those who fall within (or identify with) this category as being 'men' or 'women'. In this work, I use the concept of gender to understand how those who were identified as 'women' took on

⁵ I acknowledge that these gender and sex categories are limited and do not include those among the broad and diverse spectrum of individual and group identities. I limit my analysis to male and female for the purposes of scope and because this was the gender system used/referenced during the historical time period in which this project is situated.

specific social and political roles in relation to this category within settler colonial statecraft. The focus here is not on the sexed subject of “woman,” but rather on the broader system designed to construct and give meaning to this subject. This political system and structure is often referenced in the language of ‘heteropatriarchy’. Heteropatriarchy will be used throughout this thesis because it is the dominant term employed by scholars of gender and settler colonialism and, as will be discussed in the pages that follow, white men in Western history were at times operating against this system while white women were encouraging it. This term also has a relationship to structures of the nuclear family and Eurocentric gender roles which played a large role in settler colonial state formation. I employ an understanding of heteropatriarchy as discussed by Arvin et al. (2013), defined as “the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural” taking the form of “heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements in which the father is both center and leader/boss” (p. 13). Similarly, Audra Simpson’s writes, “I say heteropatriarchal because it serves the interests of what is understood now as “straightness” or heterosexuality and patriarchy, the rule by men” (2016, Para 3). My project is interested in how these constructed categories of sexual difference manifested into gendered political systems tailored to create and uphold the settler colonial state. I use the term ‘androcentrism’ and ‘androcentric’ to broadly describe that which is focused or centered on men. Androcentrism can be understood as the practice of placing men at the center of history, society, theory and so forth, as well as the privileging of male perspective and masculinity over female perspective and femininity.

This thesis seeks to interrogate the subject of the ‘white’ woman specifically, using the racial language of whiteness as a marker for her position within settler colonial history. This thesis understands race as a social construction and not an intrinsic characteristic of groups marked by difference. My focus is not in using the term ‘white’ to only describe those of European descent

and who possess phenotypical characteristics of light skin. Instead, I employ the term ‘white’ as it refers to an identity socially and politically constructed to provide white individuals with “structural advantage” (Frankenberg, 1993) and “normative power” (Frye, 1983) in society. I position ‘white women’ as those who are socially constructed with privilege in a racial system as a result of their whiteness. While contemporary settlers increasingly take the form of diverse people from around the world (Barker, 2009), my focus on white women has important theoretical and methodological implications for this project. Settler women of colour hold a particular position within settler colonial society that remains distinct from the positions of Indigenous women and white women. Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua (2005) have problematized and discussed the roles and responsibilities of settler individuals of colour in Canada, arguing that although both settlers of colour and Indigenous peoples face systems of racial oppression, the ongoing colonization of Indigenous people within settler society makes their experience importantly distinct. They conclude that settlers of colour, who contribute to the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands, are contributors to the enduring and violent project of settler colonialism. Despite this, critical differences remain between the power and positioning of white women in Canada to that held by women of colour. While this thesis will likely have relevance to settler women of colour in Canada, understanding and interrogating the specifics of this history requires a more in-depth analysis of racialized identities and liberal inclusion that is out of the scope of this research.

The term “Indigenous” will be used predominantly throughout this thesis, understood as a collective noun for diverse groups of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples within Canada. The term Indigenous generally designates a political category that enables solidarity among diverse Indigenous peoples and nations, used to “distinguish Native peoples from those who have ethnic

or racial minority status as well as those of the dominant ethnic or racial majority in a given nation” (Smith et al., 2015, p. 109). In using the term Indigenous, I draw from the work of Alfred and Corntassel (2005) who write, “the communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe” (p. 597). While this collective definition is important, one must also recognize the vast differences which exist among Indigenous peoples across Canada (and elsewhere). The category of ‘Indigenous’ does not speak to an essentializing quality of sameness among those whom it identifies, but to an overarching political collective. As Alfred and Corntassel suggest, it is the “oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world (p. 597). It is from this understanding that I employ the label of ‘Indigenous’ in my work. The terms “Aboriginal,” “First Nations,” and “Indian” will only be used when they appear in direct quotations.

Chapter Two – Unpacking “The State is a Man”: Analyzing Men and Masculinity During the Historical Process of Settler Colonial Statecraft in Canada

Audra Simpson has put forth a theory of the Canadian settler colonial state that is gendered in the masculine: “The state that I seek to name has a character, it has a male character” (2016, Para 3). This falls in line with a long history of Western political thought which characterizes the state, and the political process and actors by which the state is made possible, in androcentric terms. For Simpson, this male hegemony is evidenced by the perpetuation of gendered violence against Indigenous women within the state, as well as the broader historical imposition of heteropatriarchy upon Indigenous nations in Canada. The state is male *because* it relies on gendered violence and heteropatriarchy, the male abuse of power, to carry out a politics of settler domination and Indigenous dispossession. This assertion is important because it identifies the pervasive and ongoing effects of colonial patriarchy within the state, diagnosing gender as a force which operates to serve the ongoing objectives of settler colonialism. In light of the 2019 national inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, Simpson’s argument about gender and settler colonial statecraft provides valuable insight into understanding some of the gendered political structures, processes, and ideologies that must be addressed moving forward as Canada begins the process (however limited state mechanisms might be) towards a national solution. For grassroots efforts, addressing the settler colonial regime as a structure and system upheld through heteropatriarchy positions the state as a necessary site for decolonization. This has been essential for gendered resurgence efforts, characterizing movements such as Walking with Our Sisters and Families of Sisters in Spirit. Understanding and theorizing gender as a system upholding Canada’s settler colonial regime is of great importance to ending violence against Indigenous women and is necessary for the creation of a decolonial and anti-oppressive future. Though Simpson’s work is important and relevant, it also faces significant limitations.

A theory of settler statehood and sovereignty characterized by androcentrism incorrectly demarcates gender as an isolated variable of political power apart from the multiplicity of deeply interconnected systems which work together to uphold the settler colonial state. Such an approach too quickly oversimplifies an understanding of how the settler state sustains itself through gendered systems of power and oppression. Simpson's theory fails to acknowledge how male and female settler subjects are not characterized by an oppressor/oppressed binary respectively, but are subjects experiencing varying degrees of power and domination through a host of systems marked by difference. All settlers, both men and women, "are systemically (even if unintentionally) operating within, across, and through a matrix of interrelated forms and degrees of penalty and privilege" (Dhamoon, 2015, p. 30). Even the 'white heteropatriarchal male' subject that Simpson discusses is contingent upon and made possible through other equally important and oppressive variables, gendered and otherwise. Simpson's isolated/binary perspective of men – as they serve to uphold settler state apparatus – results in a limited understanding of how Canada's settler colonial regime was and is constituted by and through complex forces of gender. If the goal is to conceptualize a theory of oppressive gendered power within the settler colonial state, in order to begin dismantling this power, there are intra-gender nuances worth discussing to avoid the blind spots created by essentialist narratives.

This chapter will focus on interrogating men and masculinity during the process of settler colonial statecraft in Canada. The following discussion will interrogate a history which pre-dates the formal existence of the Canadian state to gain a deeper understanding of how white settler men were involved in the actual process of building the settler colonial regime. This offers insight into how gender critically served to create the settler colonial state itself, providing an analysis which does not readily assume the state to be an inherently male entity and in doing so does not foreclose

the possibility for other gendered narratives to emerge. Audra Simpson (2016) argues that “[In] the mid and late nineteenth Century... we see a white, heteropatriarchal, and white settler sovereignty ascend and show us its face” (para 12). To Simpson, this process and “face” is male in character. She furthers that this nineteenth century androcentric state is evidenced by “the work that it does... to dispossess people of land, of territory [and] supplant traditional Indigenous governance, sovereignty and political life” (para 12) and “especially so in relation to gender” (para 20). This chapter will challenge her assertion by arguing that in Canadian history, before the state was established, the white male population of Western Canada was viewed as failing to effectively carry out the establishment of a “heteropatriarchal and white settler sovereignty” in the nineteenth century era of statecraft. The following discussion will illustrate how the white male population of the Canadian West was actually viewed as a hinderance to establishing the dispossessing and domination conditions required for settler colonization, as men failed to establish the necessary physical, practical, and ideological foundations to facilitate settler ascendancy and Indigenous subordination on the ground.

This chapter proceeds with a broad genealogy of settler colonial statecraft in Western Canada through a gendered analysis of male settlers and leadership decisions/commentary throughout the fur trade era (~1670-1800)⁶, the era of permanent settlement (~1800-1860), and the era of early state formation (~1860-1910). The first two sections of this chapter focus on re-conceptualizing previous literature on gender in the fur trade within the political framework of settler colonial state formation, drawing largely from the work of Sylvia Van Kirk (1975) and Jennifer Brown (1980). The final section of this chapter draws mostly from primary material

⁶ These historical eras overlap and are fluid. Although the fur trade ended in 1863, there was a significant increase in settlement building through the early to mid 1800’s. When creating a genealogy of settler colonial statecraft, there is an important distinction to be made between the ‘fur trade’ era and the era of ‘permanent settlement’.

presented in Adele Perry's 1997 work "*Fair One's of a Purer Cast*": *White Women and Colonialism in Nineteenth Century British Columbia*. This work provides a myriad of archival material in the form of quotations and sentiments expressed by British investors and surveyors in the 1860's and 1870's who speak to the role of gender in settler statecraft. Adele Perry does not assess this material in the specific context of settler colonialism, and this chapter offers a new analysis of these sentiments as they relate directly to gender/masculinity and the building of a settler colonial regime. Audra Simpson's idea of the 'male state' is centered throughout this chapter to build a case which challenges her masculine theory of settler colonial statecraft in Canada.

The Fur Trade

To assess the gendered nature of the state, Simpson begins her analysis in the mid-nineteenth century. This would seem a logical starting point, as it was during the 1860's and onwards that the politics of settler colonial sovereignty consolidated on the ground to form the structures which now constitute the Canadian state. As men held positions of settler state leadership, and patriarchal institutions and policy were imposed upon Indigenous communities and women during this time, an androcentric theory of the state is produced by Simpson. It is not incorrect in light of this history to assume that to some degree, the settler colonial state is male in character. However, when analyzing masculinity prior to the formal existence of the state, the *degree* to which this is the case is challenged. To begin the process of unpacking the essentialist male character of the state put forth by Simpson, the relationship between men and Western settler statecraft in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century will first be discussed. The fur trade provides an important historical context that illuminates a tension between the conditions required for settler colonial state formation and the ideologies and practices of the male population

established throughout the fur trade. During this era, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company viewed men as capable of avoiding the burdensome economic pitfalls of settlement building. To ensure this ideology was enacted by men on the ground, they enforced a strict gendered policy upon Company employees to craft a male population that would serve the objectives of fur trade profit and avoid the burdens of settler colonization. Living within these strict boundaries ensured the behaviours and orientations of the male population reflected non-settlement economic objectives, and for almost two centuries, white men in the West were living out a fur trade lifestyle and ideology designed to prevent the conditions of statecraft from materializing on the ground.

The fur trade era was characterized by an overseas Company leadership who actively rejected settler colonization as a political and economic objective. This is most clearly articulated during the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC or 'the Company'), as the North West Company emerged nearly a century later after the non-settlement sojourner conditions of the fur trade had long been established. At the end of the 1660's the original shareholders of the territory that would soon become Rupert's Land felt "discouraged by general economic and political uncertainties... (and) the difficulties facing any colonization scheme in Hudson Bay" (Brown, 1980, p. 9). Control was handed over to the London Committee, who sought to completely abandon projects of settlement and invest entirely in trade and sojourner economic activity. Those who formed the Hudson's Bay Company expressed a willingness to "forego colonization ventures and concentrate their efforts on the building of a profitable trade" (p. 9). To the London Committee, this commitment to profit existed in direct opposition to the commitments required for projects of settler colonization. Engaging in the building of permanent settlement was thought to pose an expensive and unnecessary burden to the objectives of fur trade profit. This, as Jennifer Brown

discusses, “laid the basis of a long persisting company resistance to the planting in its territories of settlements” (p. 9). The goals and policies of HBC leadership developed to reflect a long-standing resistance to the project of permanent settlement and the colonial endeavors of dispossession and domination required to facilitate and maintain it.

The London Committee viewed men as an essential part to accomplishing these non-settlement trade-based objectives. This aligned with general perceptions of masculinity at the time, in which men were the gender responsible for generating “productivity and profitability” through their innate characteristics as “physical, responsible, productive, and hardworking” (Levine, 2007, p. 7). It was not just the economic qualities of masculinity the London Committee wished to harness for the benefit of the fur trade. Men were also viewed as those who could live without the structures of permanent settlement –subjects who would adapt to the needs of Company trade commitments and could thrive accordingly on the ground. The characteristics of masculinity were harnessed by leadership to avoid dealing with the arduous project of settler colonization, ensuring the profit-oriented goals of the Company could be achieved. This ideology existed in opposition to Committee perceptions of femininity. Women did not possess the qualities to carry out the economic trade ventures that men could (Haggis, 1998; McClintock, 1993). Further, the presence of women would require building the structures of permanent settlement that the Company wished to avoid. Unlike men, who could thrive on the periphery without the material necessities of the metropole, transporting women (and thus children) would require the establishment of homesteads and institutions of education, religion, and medicine (Brown, 1980). The female gender was seen as an impediment to non-settlement objectives because of their explicit ‘need’ for the formations of settlement on the ground. The fur trade was thus characterized by a Company leadership who viewed men as the gender that was not only capable of carrying out their economic goals, but who

also did not require the creation of a permanent settlement on the land, unlike their female counterparts.

These gendered ideologies were enforced on the ground by the Hudson's Bay Company, and later by the North West Company, through strict policy designed to constrain the possibilities of male behaviour and desire. Near the end of the 1700's, the London Committee ensured their economic objectives would be realized on the ground by preventing white women and married men from travelling overseas. As Company leadership argued, white women were to be entirely prevented from influencing the fur trade because of the "perceived cost and inconvenience of their presence" (Brown, 1980, p. 11). Women were formally banned from travelling overseas with their husbands, as their absence ensured that men would engage solely in non-settlement economic activity. As Brown discusses, "This prohibition became regular policy after 1684 and was consistent with the London committee's increasing emphasis on fur-trading rather than on colonization" (p. 11). To operationalize the ideology that men were capable of ensuring the former (fur-trading) would occur without the latter (settler colonization), the male population had to be completely removed from the settling influence of women. The Company decided to only hire bachelor men to travel overseas, in the hopes to "increase employees' efficiency and commitment and to reduce its costs and responsibilities" (p. 12). In crafting these strict conditions that served to constrain and dictate how men could exist in the fur trade, Company leadership ensured their profit margins would be met. Ideals of masculinity were constructed to benefit the fur trade project and actualized through the employment of rigorous gendered policy. The hiring of single men and the prohibition of white women from traveling overseas remained firm until 1811, resulting in a fur trade population that consisted entirely of bachelor men for 127 years.

The male population that formed on the ground reflected the perceptions of masculinity imposed upon them by Company leadership. Living within the constraints of Company policy, the specific qualities of the male gender harnessed to benefit the fur trade were easily realized on the ground. Most obviously, fur trade men were not concerned with establishing a permanent presence on the land for the political purpose of settlement. Their physical organization on the ground took a mobile and military-style formation and return-trips home to the metropole were frequent (Brown, 1980). Though permanent forts did exist, these were created by men with the intention of increasing fur trade productivity and fur accessibility. This permanence was not rooted in the intentional political objectives of Indigenous domination and dispossession. Similarly, while a more extensive land-based establishment emerged over time, this was rooted in trade priorities. Men recognized the potential for profit in creating a more substantial and settled presence on the land, but as Brown asserts, “establishing a land base did not originate as one unified plan of action; rather it developed in part from the constraints imposed by economic and military problems” (p. 11). It thus remains accurate to assert that the male population was wholly invested in fur trade profit, and not in settler colonization. The objectives of men reflected the objectives of their employers. As Perry (1997) articulates, white men were fueled by “their desire to earn a fast buck in the homosocial... world of the backwoods” (p. 503). Existing within the boundaries of Company policy, a masculinity was successfully enacted by the male population throughout the fur trade which aligned instead with the ‘non-settlement economic sojourner’ ideal desired by HBC leadership.

Though the male population was largely constrained by the policies of the Hudson’s Bay Company (and later the North West Company), they also engaged in practices that were not wholly aligned with the ideologies and desires of Company leadership. For one, the male population

adopted a lifestyle that was considered “immoral” by European standards. White men had forged “common values and ways of coping with fur trade life” (Brown, 1980, p. 17) that were not only antithetical to permanent settlement but also to Company standards of moral behaviour. The absence of women ensured the costly responsibility of building homesteads was avoided and also meant that fur trade men were living without the ‘civilizing’ influence of domesticity. As a result, European ideologies of morality, often tied to proper binary gender roles and domestic arrangements, had little effect upon the male population. Within the context of the environment crafted for them by the Company, men developed “a rough homosocial culture ... revolv(ing) around drinking, gambling, and easy sociability” (Perry, 1997, p. 509). Such expressions of masculinity were cultivated via an absence of women and domestic influence, and through the footloose sojourner lifestyle imposed upon them by Company leadership. The London Committee attempted to rectify this behaviour by encouraging their employees to give up drinking and gambling, and abide by religious practices (Brown, 1980; Van Kirk, 1975). This proved largely unsuccessful as this lifestyle was a result of, and also aligned with, the Company’s commitment to fur trade profit. As Van Kirk (1975) argues, “however sincere the Committee’s moral strictures were, it seems likely that commercial considerations took precedence” (p. 26). Despite HBC criticism of the male population on the basis of morality, the anti-settlement (and thus anti-European) conditions necessary for fur trade success ensured that such behaviour was allowed to continue, as economic profit remained the priority.

As well, the male population proceeded to engage in the practice of marriage despite the Company view that it posed a significant threat to fur trade ventures and profit. The London Committee viewed marriage to be at odds with fur trade productivity and had prevented white women from travelling overseas to avoid the formation of such domestic arrangements. It was of

the utmost importance that men did not allow “their domestic attachments to interfere with the company interest and their loyalty to it” (Brown, 1980, p. 12). In an attempt to assert control, the HBC “imposed celibacy to control its employees and forbade sexual partnerships between European men and Indigenous women” (Fitzgerald and Muszynski, 2007, p. 662). Despite Company resistance to marriage, the male population was not prevented from integrating with the Indigenous population, as Company leaders on the ground understood the benefits of such arrangements. High levels of intermarriage between white men and Indigenous women became commonplace throughout fur trade life, and this integrated system of relationships, marriages, and family units became known as “the customs of the country”⁷. As Van Kirk (see 1975, 1983, 1987) has argued, mixed marriage became the foundation of fur trade society. The Committee initially resisted such practices, but the marrying of white men into the Indigenous population proved economically advantageous to the fur trade. As well, men were content with the mixed-marriage relationships they had established and did not want to return back to the metropole, which was also of economic benefit to the Company. When the North West Company formed in 1779, they did not pose the same resistance to mixed-marriage as the London Committee for this reason, and actually encouraged their employees to integrate with Indigenous women. As Fitzgerald and Muszynski (2007) write, “the NWC encouraged these liaisons as part of its economic strategy for better relations with the First Nations in the region... viewing First Nations women as a vital link to profitable trading and access to traditional hunting grounds” (p. 662). In response to the constraints and possibilities of their environment, men formed long-lasting relationships with the Indigenous population which ultimately served the economic objectives of their employers.

⁷ The original French term being *A la facon du payes*.

The fur trade was an era in which fur trade leadership relied on the male gender to create a non-settlement sojourner environment that would benefit Company profit and productivity. From the perspective of settler colonial statecraft, both the male leadership of the Hudson Bay and North West Company, as well as their male population of employees, were operating at odds to the objectives of settler colonization throughout the fur trade. As Company employees living within the strict constraints of their employer, white men in the fur trade were not engaging in the practical project of settlement building because it was not their job. As well, though not an intentional objective of Company leadership, these men were working against the ideological project of settler colonization. The footloose lifestyle of fur trade men failed to naturalize European dominance and hierarchy on the basis of morality and civility, while their engagement in mixed-marriage and Indigenous modes of gender relations generated “relatively peaceful patterns of Indigenous-European relations” (Foster & Eccles, 2013) on the ground. Without white women, settlement, and the influence of British ideology, a male population was forming in Western Canada that served the fur trade and was, to the benefit of Company leadership, antithetical to the project of settler colonization.

Permanent Settlement

The slow shift toward settler colonial statecraft in the Canadian West began in the early nineteenth century as projects of settlement building were undertaken by colonial investors. Despite strong resistance from the Hudson’s Bay Company, who maintained their position that permanent settlement posed a serious encumbrance to the efficiency and profitability of the fur trade, its establishment on the ground could no longer be prevented entirely. As the British Empire was increasingly motivated by colonial projects of ‘civilization’ and ‘progress’, alongside European notions of statehood and governance transpiring on a global scale (Ford, 2011), the

building of white settlements in the West aligned with the broader project of maintaining British authority and influence abroad in the nineteenth century. Swayed by ideologies of white superiority and entitlement, even the most dedicated leaders of the fur trade could not resist conforming, at least in part, to the spread of civilization throughout Rupert's Land. There were also certain benefits to settlement building that could aid in achieving Company profit margins, such as the establishing of agriculture that would reduce costly shipments from Britain (Ross, 1956). As the Company permitted the building of the Red River colony in 1811, under the condition that it would not interfere with the fur trade (Carter, 1968), an era of permanent settlement emerged in the West. The Red River colony was the first of many settlements to be founded throughout Rupert's Land over the next half-century, covering a "territory [which] corresponded to two-thirds of what, in 1867, would become the Dominion of Canada" (Fitzgerald and Muszynski, 2007, p. 662). The requirements for settler colonization began to transpire on the ground –the physical presence of white settlers increased, settler governments and townships were built, new industry was established, and the influence of civilization/colonial ideology gained traction. This period of history witnessed a transition from the previous era, characterized by complete Company control dedicated to economic sojourner activity, towards an era of tension between fur trade commitments and the increasing influence of settler colonization in the West.

This tension between male leadership ensured that permanent settlement in the West, especially in terms of its practical and physical construction, remained at bay so long as the fur trade continued. Company men did not engage in the practical project of permanent settlement building because it was not their job –they were fur trade employees who remained dedicated to their employer. George Simpson, who was a highly influential Governor of the HBC from 1820 to 1860, possessed a strong commitment to the success of the fur trade with a governing style that

strictly policed the male population to ensure their utmost dedication and loyalty to the Company. One clerk observed in 1924, “In short, the North West is now beginning to be ruled by a rod of iron” (Brown, 1989, p. 114). This strict policy was a response to the economic threat of permanent settlement emerging in the West. In contrast to the needs of colonial leaders⁸, who required a large white population of settlers doing the work of settlement building, George Simpson was sure to remove any influence that could impact a man’s “performance of duty” or “cause expense” to the Company (p. 127). This demand by HBC leadership that loyalty and devotion to the Company was to remain the fundamental objective of the male population allowed for the fur trade to reach the height of its power in the first half of the nineteenth century. Practical limitations were also placed on settlement building through restrictions on settler emigration. While colonial leadership “felt strongly the importance of colonizing the territory with British settlers” (Healy, 1923, p.8), white settlement remained limited in territories controlled by the HBC. With no overseas emigration for generations at a time, the settlements of Western Canada consisted largely of retired Company officers and employees who married Indigenous wives. As Healy writes, “as late as 1870 Red River was the only settlement which was more than a few hunters’ families gathered about a trading post in the wilderness of the West” (p. 5). Despite the efforts of colonial officials, the physical and practical construction of white settlement had not taken place on a substantial scale. George Simpson successfully “fended off political attacks...as the agricultural potential of the West became increasingly attractive to Company critics, missionaries, and settlement advocates” (Pannekoek, 1987, p. 6). Though the Company rescinded their long-standing policy of non-settlement activity, they continued to regulate the process of settlement building to ensure it would

⁸ Leadership tasked with settlement will now be referenced as ‘colonial’ leaders, officials, governors and so forth, as permanent settlement was a precursor to settler statecraft and laid the foundations for settler colonization in Canada. As well, scholars have identified the rise of permanent settlement in the early nineteenth century West as the introduction of ‘colonial projects’ (Baker, 1999; Perry, 1997; Van Kirk, 1975).

not interfere with fur trade business, maintaining strict control over settler emigration and Company men.

The settlement building efforts of colonial officers, whose political objectives required the practical creation of homesteads and domestic structure, was further impeded by the anti-domestic commitments of the HBC. In 1825 George Simpson expressed that “domesticity frequently interfered with business” and asserted that “business itself” must not interfere nor “give way to domestic considerations” (Brown, 1980, p. 128). To ensure men remained committed to the fur trade and not to permanent settlement, the HBC continued to assert a gendered policy rooted in non-settlement objectives, permitting mixed marriage and preventing the mass emigration of white women overseas⁹. In 1824 George Simpson expressed a clear opposition to the settling of white women in Red River, writing:

“it not only frustrates the intentions of the Company and executors... but is a clog on the gentlemen who take them, who cannot do their duty or be disposable, with European women in their train ... with women from the civilized world, it is quite impossible the gentlemen can do their duty” (p. 341).

Echoing the ideologies about women put forth by the London Committee in the late seventeenth century, Simpson remained steadfast in the belief that white women were a serious impediment to the productivity of Company employees. A year later he recalled Governor William Williams from his position at Moose Factory for his taking of a white wife, “whose presence he felt contributed to her husband’s mismanagement of his post” (Van Kirk, 1975, p. 344). He described Williams as “the most stupid useless inactive Commissioned Gentleman I have seen; the Woman and Family

⁹ Though the building of the Red River settlement led to the arrival of eighteen white women in 1811, which ended their century-long ban from travelling to Rupert’s Land, the female population of settlers remained very small and their influence limited amidst Company control.

occupy his whole attention and the Company's interests [have] become quite a secondary consideration with him" (Brown, 1980, p. 127). To ensure fur trade productivity and prevent the pitfalls of European domesticity exemplified by those such as Governor Williams, the HBC continued to prevent any substantial emigration of white women overseas. In opposition to the settlement objectives of colonial leadership, Company policy ensured that men were unable to reproduce a white population and craft white homesteads in the West.

As working-class men¹⁰ were unable to marry and establish homesteads with white women, they continued engaging in mixed-marriage because of its benefit to the Company and because of a longstanding fur trade culture that would not be easily transformed. Characterized by an absence of European gender organization and racial boundaries, men were viewed by colonial leadership as working against the ideological requirements of permanent settlement building. Miles McDonell, the first governor of the Red River colony in charge of transporting settlers overseas and organizing them on the ground, expressed dissatisfaction with the racial integration he witnessed throughout the fur trade, fearing the influence mixed marriage would have upon newly emigrating white men. Upon his arrival to Red River in 1812 he expressed the view that bringing white women to Rupert's Land could end "the iniquitous and scandalous connection formed with Indian women" (Van Kirk, 1975, p. 338). McDonell was "highly critical of the domestic arrangements of Hudson's Bay officers" and criticized Company men for "attend(ing) to the demands of their Indian squaws" (p. 338). However, this racialized and gendered ideology was not shared by Company leadership on the ground or by Company men. Although the London Committee had always been critical of mixed marriage, elite officers on the ground understood that it was of great benefit to the Company, despite their increasing racial prejudice in the mid-

¹⁰ This working-class distinction is important as a handful of upper-class white women entered the fur trade to become wives of the Company elite starting in the 1830's.

nineteenth century. George Simpson at times encouraged Company men to engage in mixed marriage because it served as “the best security we can have of the goodwill of the Natives” (1819, Simpson). As Brown (1980) suggests, he greatly “appreciated their practical value... recogniz[ing] the business utility of ‘connubial alliances’ with newly contacted Indian groups” (p. 126). These relationships were required for the success of the fur trade, and so the integration between Indigenous and white society remained consistent amidst the rising pressure to conform to European ideologies of ‘civilized’ race and gender organization.

Permanent settlement in the West did have an ideological influence (albeit minimal) upon men in leadership positions. As the wider discourse of civilization emerged throughout the nineteenth century, HBC leaders increasingly conformed to notions of proper race and gender behaviour. The fur trade witnessed a clear “shift in European middle-class notions of respectability and prescribed gender roles combined with [an] increased concern among European powers about the perceived ill effects of miscegenation on the White ‘race’” (Fitzgerald and Muszynski, 2007, p. 662). Elite Company officials, led by George Simpson, adopted an increasing racial prejudice towards Indigenous peoples and started the practice of marrying white women to assert their civilized and superior status on racialized and gendered terms. As Stoler (1997) argues, it was at this point in history that “race bec[ame] the organizing grammar of an imperial order in which modernity, the civilizing mission and the ‘measure of man’ were framed” (p. 27). The HBC also allowed reformers to enter Rupert’s Land to address the shortcomings of the male population. British Parliamentary investigations increased in the 1830’s and reports and policies emphasized the need for regulating men in the fur trade.

If permanent settlement was seen as the process by which civilization was to be advanced (Whitlock, 2000), and civilization was upheld by “the norms of British society”, it was not

surprising that “many of the practices of fur trade society [were deemed] reprehensible” (Van Kirk, 1975, p. 244). A male population whose behaviour was more reflective of the Indigenous population than it was of a white European society threatened prominent ideologies of racial supremacy at the time. Even amidst their commitment to the fur trade lifestyle, the London Committee desired to put an end to the “excessive hard drinking ... and detestable Sin of Whoring” (Brown, 1980, p. 13) that characterized male behaviour. A broad movement emerged in the West to encourage the promotion of moral standards and codes. In 1823, there was an introduction of regulations designed to achieve “the more effectual civilization and moral improvement” of Company families (Van Kirk, 1975, p. 244). The character of the male population would need to be reformed to embody the characteristics and practices of ‘civilization’ required for the building of a proper white settlement. The male population faced pressure from colonial officials to conform to new metropolitan gender practices and were encouraged to adopt European marriage customs, attend church regularly, live in sobriety, and practice celibacy outside of marriage. These efforts were also racialized, as men were strongly discouraged from marrying “pure” Indigenous women, and instead were directed to only form relationships with those of mixed-blood descent (Friesen, 1987; Van Kirk, 1983). In order to direct the male population towards the civilized practices and associated with permanent settlement and white supremacy, new standards of behaviour and relationship models for men were seen as necessary.

Despite these attempts, the ideological project of permanent settlement was not promoted by the male population of the West nor did it effectively reform them. For one, the civilizing ideology promoted by colonial officials and reforming HBC leadership was not permitted to fully influence working-class men, as Company policy constrained the level of reform that was allowed. The integration of the Indigenous and white population remained of benefit to the fur trade, and in

opposition to the construction of a racialized political hierarchy necessary for settler colonization, the HBC promoted trader-Indigenous interactions to maintain good relationships with Indigenous groups and reduce other social and economic costs (Brown, 1980). The absence of white women and benefits of mixed marriage prevented the race-gender ideology of settler colonization from consolidating on the ground. Moreover, the economic sojourner lifestyle men had adopted, albeit its acknowledged moral shortcomings by Company leaders, remained of benefit to fur trade productivity. Men had fostered an environment conducive for profit and this was made possible by preventing European standards of living from materializing on the ground. As well, both fur trade and settler men rejected European ideology and enjoyed the lifestyle and freedom associated with the customs of the fur trade. As Perry (1997) discusses, many white men “celebrated their distance from what they saw as the restricted world of family and “society” in general” (p. 516). As a result, attempts to reform male behaviour were met with limited success, and “the sustained efforts of social reformers to regulate and reform the drinking, gambling, undisciplined workers in the gold mines and the fur trade... had little effect” (Hall, 2007, p. 71). Despite efforts put forth by colonial investors and reformers to impart values of responsibility, self-control, and respectable behaviour upon the male population, they failed to substantially transform their collective practices. Harnessing the male population towards the ideological project of permanent settlement building faced significant limitations as the longstanding practices of the fur trade remained steadfast.

This era of history begins to reveal the limitations of using binary and essentialist theory to explain the gendered nature of settler statecraft in Canada. The place of the male gender in this transitional era of statecraft was not straightforward. There were multiple intra-gender distinctions between men holding different positions which illuminates the complexity and diversity of gender

and settler colonization as it emerged in the West. For one, there were political, cultural, and geographic nuances between men in positions of leadership power during this time. In particular, there were critical differences between the priorities, objectives and policy desires of men in positions of HBC leadership and those in positions dedicated to settlement building. Despite the impact of colonial leaders in establishing some of the groundwork for eventual statecraft, the structures, practices, and ideologies required for permanent settler colonization remained significantly tempered by the ongoing control and influence of the Company. Further, political and cultural differences existed between Company leadership on the ground and the overseas London Committee. The culture of the fur trade was often promoted by leadership on the ground, who not only conformed to the culture themselves, but who better understood its importance in facilitating fur trade productivity. The London Committee was far more concerned with the moral and uncivilized tone of the fur trade, as they were immersed in the civilizing discourse of progress and modernity transpiring throughout Britain in the nineteenth century. It was thus common for Company leadership on the ground to overlook the critical commentary of those abroad. Finally, there was a clear geographic distinction among male leadership, as settlement policy in the East did not have to contend with the fur trade and conformed to the emerging project of settler colonization much earlier than leadership in the West. In contrast to the domain of the HBC, the East wholly pursued permanent settlement in the early nineteenth century, encouraging emigration on a much larger scale and allowing white women to enter their settlements.

As a result of this leadership tension, a significant polarity emerged between the objectives of settler colonization pursued by colonial officials and the characteristics of the male population. The milieu of the fur trade, defined by a male economic sojourner lifestyle and an entirely homosocial population, was necessary to ensure the financial success of the Company. Living

within the strict constraints of their employer, men from the fur trade reflected the commitments of the HBC and did not engage in the physical, practical or ideological work of permanent settlement building to the dismay of colonial leadership. It was not their job to engage in settlement building, nor did they have the means to do so without a population of white women. It was also the case that many of these men desired the fur trade culture that had been established and were resistant to many of the changes encouraged by colonial officials. Though elite Company officials on the ground began to reprehend parts of this lifestyle on the basis of morality and civilization, fur trade profit took precedence and such practices continued. New white settler men arriving to Rupert's land were living in the midst of this tension between Company and colonial leadership. These men did not entirely commit to one or the other but were criticized for their quick conforming to the lifestyle and behaviour of the fur trade. The environment of the West constrained the extent to which these new settler men could engage in the colonial project of permanent settlement, and it would seem that even though these men were arriving from the context of Europe, they too found the social milieu of the fur trade desirable and happily took to many of the practices Company men had long established, including mixed marriage and a footloose lifestyle of gambling and drinking (see Perry, 1997).

This section has revealed why a more nuanced and complex view of gender and men in relation to settler statecraft is warranted. The position of men in this period of history varied greatly—there is not one narrative that can wholly summarize the role and influence of men and masculinity in advancing the colonial project of permanent settlement in the nineteenth century. It is most interesting to note how the majority of working-class white men living in the West, in other words the 'settler population' of Western Canada, was operating in opposition to the emerging agenda of settler colonization in the first half of the nineteenth century. Amidst a specific political,

cultural, and geographical context, the male population was not engaging in the preliminary steps necessary for establishing sustainable permanent settlement, let alone a settler colonial state. This diversity in male experience points to the importance of intersectional understanding to ensure that settler colonial theory is accountable to history and illuminates why the essentialist and binary nature of Audra Simpson's male state requires further interrogation. To suggest at this point that the process (albeit preliminary) of settler statecraft was entirely male would be inaccurate. For Audra Simpson's theory to hold, the period of history following this era would need to witness a stark shift in the physical, practical, and ideological work of the male population in the West. As the era that follows was characterized by a complete re-orienting towards the political and economic project of settler statecraft, a wholly male state would need to witness a male population transforming themselves in order to do the 'masculine work' of settler colonization. The following section will now engage in a critical analysis of this assumption that Audra Simpson's theory puts forth.

Statecraft

Investigating men and gender during the era of settler colonial state formation in the Canadian West illustrates why Audra Simpson's exclusively male conception of the state does not accurately portray how white male settlers were historically involved in the creation of Canada's colonial state apparatus. In 1863 the Hudson's Bay Company was sold to a British investment group, and as the power of the fur trade declined and was no longer the focus of Company interest, the influence of Company leadership significantly decreased. Statecraft and settler colonization emerged as the sole priority of overseas investors and local government officials, who no longer had to contend with Company authority. The years between 1860 and 1915 marked a critical shift in prioritizing the political and economic development of the Canadian *state* (Coulthard, 2014).

This era witnessed a nationwide project dedicated to forming the specific political conditions required for settler colonial statecraft on the ground –namely a white settler permanence characterized by dispossession and domination. According to Simpson the male character of the state emerges most clearly during this period of history. She writes:

“(In) the mid and late 19th Century... we see a white, heteropatriarchal and white settler sovereignty ascend and show us its face. It does so through the work that it does with this legal move to dispossess people of land, of territory, to... supplant traditional Indigenous governance, sovereignty and political life” (2016, Para 12).

Simpson speaks here to the foundations of settler colonial statecraft –the establishment of a permanent white settler sovereignty over Indigenous territory made possible through the dispossession of and jurisdiction over Indigenous land, and a hierarchical domination over Indigenous peoples and their self-determining authority. The ‘heteropatriarchal’ face of the state means this process also took on gendered dynamics targeting Indigenous women. It is clear there is an obvious male character to the process of settler statecraft in Canada –white men held positions of leadership which advanced this process in the arena of high-level politics, and the heteropatriarchal nature of settler colonization ultimately served to position white men with the most power. For Simpson, this is enough evidence to label the state as a man, but such an assumption too quickly paints a binary picture of the male gender and settler statecraft. To accurately assess gender in this era of history the state itself and its wholly male character must not be assumed as a foregone conclusion. The gendered conditions forming the state must be interrogated alongside the diversity of male experience involved in this gendered political process.

This section will analyze men in the West during the mid- to late-nineteenth century to illustrate why the ‘white hetero face’ of the state that Simpson describes was not uniform nor

consistently male during the creation of Canada's settler colonial regime. There are a few assertions that can be made upfront given the history that has already been discussed. For one, geographic difference played an important role in characterizing men toward and away from the project of settler state formation in the nineteenth century. The project of statecraft was widespread across Canada but lagged behind in the West because of the fur trade. In the East, settlement had been encouraged and white women had long been present, creating an environment far more conducive for building up a white settler state. It was the predominantly male population in the West, living for centuries without the civilizing influence of settlement and women, that now posed a difficulty to leadership invested in state formation. Men in the East were already acting as 'settlers' while men from the West, especially those who had been Company men, had only started to make this transition. As well, there were cultural and class differences among men contributing to variation within the 'white hetero face' of the state. The majority of men in the West were characterized by a fur trade culture that was not shared by men in the East and especially by male statecraft leadership, who held elite class positions and were heavily influenced by the norms and ideologies of Britain. Even men who had settled more recently were heavily influenced by the fur trade culture that had been cultivated for centuries, adapting quickly to the lifestyle and demonstrating, yet again, the limitations of characterizing settler men as actors innately committed to the practices and ideologies of settler colonization. Finally, white male leadership alone does not account for the entire political project of settler colonial statecraft. This process fundamentally requires a population of settlers who exist on the ground in physical, practical, and ideological ways that facilitate the ongoing assertion of white settler sovereignty. A theory of the settler state which does not account for the role of male settlers in statecraft remains limited in its ability to

understand how white settler sovereignty was established by and through systems and forces of gender.

Despite the introduction of settlements in the early nineteenth century, the norms of fur trade life continued to characterize the male population living in the West. The shortcomings of such an environment, which had been cultivated by Company policy throughout the fur trade to actively avoid settler colonization, were now perceived as a result of men's inability to behave as proper settlers. The male population was criticized for behaving like "footloose sojourners," as had been encouraged throughout the fur trade, and not "permanent colonists," as was now required for the project of settler statecraft. A letter written by a British surveyor to the London Times newspaper in 1862, which expressed concern for the future of Western settlement in explicitly gendered terms, wrote "the male population will never settle in this country" (Perry, 1997, p. 512)¹¹. The incompatibility between men and settler statecraft is presented here in absolute terms – the male population *will never settle*. Their male subjectivity rendered them as fundamentally incapable of cultivating a settler permanence on the land. In 1862 the prominent Bishop of Oxford Samuel Wilberforce spoke of the settlements in British Columbia as being "a mere transitory dwelling place for the most lawless of the home population" (p. 512). A "transitory dwelling place" does not provide a necessary anchor to the land by which a settler colonial state can be built and sustained. A settler collective must permanently occupy and establish sovereignty over Indigenous territory. As Elliott (2018) writes, settler appropriation of Indigenous land "provides the basic territorial foundation of the colonizing society itself" (p. 65). The "transitory" and "lawless" population of male settlers in the West was threatening the ability for settler leadership to secure

¹¹ It should be noted that many of these quotations (though not all) came from authorities in British Columbia. I justify using them here because Adele Perry argues that their narratives remained true for the entire Canadian West, and because other scholars have argued similar sentiments (see Burton, 1994; Carter, 2008; Hall, 2007; Whitlock, 2000).

juridical settler authority over land and resources. As Adele Perry (1997) argues of the mid-nineteenth century, “political control... [was] compromised by the absence of a stable and widely dispersed white settlement” (p. 512). In contrast to the male character of the state Audra Simpson puts forth, the process of creating a settler state in Canada was actually being undermined by white men in the West. White men were not carrying out the practical work required of settler colonizers nor establishing themselves as permanent settlers on the ground. The transitory ‘male character’ of the West was not the foundation of settler colonization as Simpson would assume, but a practical problem in need of reform to secure the future of the emerging state.

The practice of seasonal migration that was common throughout the Canadian West, and necessary for the fur trade, was also a significant economic imposition to the process of settler statecraft. The establishment of state control was being compromised by the lack of permanent structure, industry, and land development. British investors and colonial officials realized they were “encouraging agricultural settlement that was essentially antithetical to the wide-open nomadic life of the fur trade” (Pannekoek, 1987, p. 22). Influential ‘racial theorist’ and social commentator Mathew Macfie wrote in 1865 that the roaming nature of male geography meant “their industry as producers and expenditures as consumers” was “being lost to the colonies” (Perry, 1997, p. 497). White men needed to settle permanently and engage in productive settler activity to stabilize and facilitate the political and economic project of settler colonial state building. The establishing of agriculture, as Wolfe (2006) argues, was necessary for statecraft because it “enabled large settler populations to expand by continuing immigration at the expense of Indigenous land and livelihood” (p. 394). The cultivation and development of territory was a central economic component to the creation of a formal and sovereign state political structure and also served as a symbol of settler productivity and legitimacy, justifying Indigenous dispossession.

The male population was not engaging in this land-oriented colonial project, and the primary challenge for statecraft leadership in the West became a question of “how to transform a rough, gold-mining and fur-trading colony into an ordered agricultural and industrial society” (Perry, 1997, p. 504). In an attempt to remedy the absence of permanent structures and territorial development, *The Colonist* wrote an article in 1862 titled “Cheap Lands for Actual Settlements” which advocated for “the creation of a homesteading law that would provide cheap land and thus encourage transients to become settlers” (p. 504). Such a policy was designed to facilitate land development and agriculture, ensure the formation of European domestic structures, and lead men to engage in the necessary practical work of cultivating permanence on Indigenous territory. The future of the Canadian state in the mid-nineteenth century relied on settler access to and control over territory, and men in the West were not engaging in the necessary work required to establish a sustainable settler presence on the land.

The absence of domestic homesteads also posed a serious issue to the project of settler statecraft. As Carter (2008) discusses, “family farm households were to be the main unit of social order” for the emerging Canadian state, as European gender roles and white domestic structures were key to “social stability” and “critical to economic development” (p. 59). The strategic use of gendered policy by Company leadership throughout the fur trade, which rejected domestic formations and settlement development, had crafted a male population in the West whose social organization was now a serious incumbrance to establishing the gendered structures required for settler state formation. Again, this was portrayed by authority as a downfall of the male gender – men were criticized for embodying the characteristics of sojourners and for actively rejecting the ideals and behaviours of domestic modernity and progress, which were emblematic of European superiority. George M. Grant, the leader of a British surveying expedition of the Canadian West

in 1872, wrote of white men as "not ... sober, steady house-holders, whose aim was to establish homes, and live by their own industry, but of fever-hearted adventurers... men without a country and without a home" (p. 308). Here, men are depicted not as settlers, committed and dedicated to building up the domestic structures and industry conducive for a white state, but as subjects uninterested and uninvested in such a project. Without white women, the domestic (and reproductive) building blocks for creating a permanent and 'civilized society' had not materialized on the ground amidst Company policy, and "diverse strategies were required to fundamentally reshape the marital terrain of the west and to ensure that the gender order encoded in [the monogamous] model prevailed (Carter, 2008, p. 60). A reforming of men's domestic behaviour was necessary for settler colonial state formation in order to physically construct a settlement of households, agriculture and infrastructure, symbolic of European modernity and progress, and to position white settlers as superior to the Indigenous population by virtue of their 'moral' domesticity and 'civilized' work ethic.

The settler population of men in Western Canada was critiqued for their practical shortcoming alongside a failure to embody and carry out the ideological project of settler colonial statecraft. Unlike men in positions of leadership, who understood that settlers must enact 'civilized' characteristics to facilitate and legitimize land dispossession and settler domination, the working-class population of men had adopted norms and behaviours throughout the fur trade that now challenged the establishment of white settler legitimacy. To statecraft leadership, a "crucial component of respectability was permanent settlement" (Perry, 1997, p. 511). Permanent settlement and economic development not only ensured prosperity but also importantly confirmed and naturalized racial separation and hierarchy. It was a common nineteenth-century European ideology that domesticity was emblematic of morality and civilization, while mobility was

emblematic of immorality and the uncivilized (Brownlie, 2005). The geographic and domestic behaviour of men was criticized for too closely embodying Indigenous modes of being, failing to justify dispossession and domination on the basis of a natural settler superiority. This was of benefit to the Company during the fur trade but now posed an ideological threat to the legitimizing narratives of statecraft. In 1869, *The Colonist* critiqued the male gender for embracing “nomadic and improvident habits” (Perry, 1997, p. 512). It was a common assertion in the nineteenth century that Indigenous ‘savagery’ was evidenced by their ‘nomadism’¹². This idea was used to justify the dispossessing and eliminatory project of settler colonization, as Wolfe (2006) argues, “the reproach of nomadism renders the native removable” (p. 396). A male population which reflected nomadic behaviour was a threat to the ideological foundations of settler colonial statecraft. Their mobile organization did not reflect the civilized order ‘naturally’ characteristic of white settlers, threatening the establishment of settler superiority and ascendancy required to legitimize hierarchical power relations and ongoing land dispossession.

The norms of male life cultivated during the fur trade were no longer acceptable nor practical to the creation of a settler colonial state. White settlers were to be reflective of modernity and progress so as to position themselves as superior to the Indigenous population by virtue of their “moral” behaviour and civilized practices –justifying statecraft endeavors of land theft and political domination. In opposition to this ideological project, men continued to operate according to the norms of fur trade life, characterized by a footloose and ‘immoral’ behaviour according to European standards. Men were not behaving in a way that would demonstrate a ‘natural’ white settler ascendancy within the settlements of the West. They were critiqued on various occasions

¹² The labelling of all Indigenous people as nomadic is essentializing and does not reflect their diverse history and experiences. As Wolfe (2006) reminds us, “Settler colonial discourse is resolutely impervious to glaring inconsistencies such as sedentary natives or the fact that the settlers themselves have come from somewhere else” (p. 396).

by a multitude of observers for their “dissipation” (Perry, 1997, p. 509), the prevalence of their “gambling and drinking” (p. 510), their “inveterate habits of intemperance” (p. 510), and their influence of “abominable and infamous demoralization” upon the West (p. 509). This behaviour was not ‘productive’ according to European standards of work and modernity and also threatened ideologies of European superiority and civility. The male population did not embody the civilized traits and behaviours required of a settler population, as British investor Kinahan Cornwallis wrote in 1858 of white men as having “shunned the haunts of civilization” (p. 507). White men were not facilitating the necessary ideological project of statecraft. As Johnstone (2018) reminds us, “The confiscation of indigenous lands and rights was justified on the grounds of indigenous failure to qualify as “civilized” communities... deemed unfit to govern the land” (p. 4). Men were failing to qualify as a ‘civilized’ population by white European standards. The character of the male population did not reflect the permanence, practices, or ideals of a ‘civilized community’, and with the absence of proper economic development and homesteads, critically threatened the ideological justification of land theft and settler domination required to create and sustain a settler state.

Finally, the social integration of the Indigenous and settler populations in the West that had formed to accommodate the fur trade, as well as the ongoing practice of mixed marriage between white men and Indigenous women, was viewed as a critical hinderance the creation of a political system grounded in hierarchical power relations. Settler statecraft requires the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples who pose a threat to assertions of settler sovereignty, and as Wolfe (2006) articulates, the creation of a settler state “require(s) the practical elimination of the natives in order to establish itself on their territory” (p. 389). This is the defining process of settler colonization. It is a process which “strives for the dissolution of native societies” and seeks to “erect a new colonial society on the expropriated land base” (p. 388). To be maintained throughout

time, the settler colonial regime must generate both material formations and an ideological apparatus which serve these projects. The settler colonial state must be structurally committed to removing and replacing Indigenous peoples in order to sustain and legitimize itself upon the land. Audra Simpson centers her theory on this idea and argues that the character of this eliminatory state apparatus is male. However, this political hierarchy was not being established successfully by the white men in the West according to male leadership. The male population was criticized for failing to establish the necessary physical and ideological divisions of settler superiority and Indigenous inferiority that would facilitate settler domination over Indigenous territory and self-determining authority.

If a hierarchy of domination must be secured and established in order to fuel the settler colonial regime and its ongoing access to Indigenous land, the integrated social boundaries white men had cultivated during the fur trade now posed a serious threat to the formation of the settler state. This was expressed by Samuel Wilberforce, who raised his concern for the “perilous state of (the) distant imperial possession” which he voiced as being a direct result of the male population who had chosen to live alongside those belonging to “all the evils of heathendom” (Perry, 1997, p. 501). This statement connects the impending failure of the settler state to white men’s close relationship to the Indigenous population. If settler colonization “requires the establishment of a distinct and organized settler community of citizens” (Elkins, 2005, p. 207), the failure of white men to foster these social and political parameters was compromising the possibility of building and securing a settler colonial state. Further, as Bonds and Inwood (2016) articulate, “settler colonialism (is)... foundational in establishing processes that separate humanity into distinct groups and in placing those groups into a larger hierarchy” (p. 721). This political hierarchy was being compromised by the male population of the West, as white men were failing to establish the

necessary legitimizing narratives and ideologies of superiority that would fuel the creation and reproduction of the settler colonial state. Those in leadership knew this lack of hierarchical separation between the white and Indigenous population would require reform for settler statecraft to be successful. One colonial official wrote in 1862 that white men ought to “assert [their] own superiority by ceasing to associate with [Indigenous peoples] on equal terms, and let them feel themselves to be what they really are –less than civilized and far worse than savage” (Perry, 1997, p. 506). Though working-class white men had their own racist views of Indigenous people and likely understood themselves to be superior to some degree, leadership perceived the integrated organization resulting from the fur trade as emblematic of an undesirable ‘equality’ that white men had cultivated between themselves and Indigenous peoples. There was concern as to how “unruly lots of ...working-class men could be transformed into suitable representatives of their race, fit to rule over their racial inferiors” (p. 504). White men were compromising the necessary power relations of settler colonial domination. Their social integration was antithetical to the oppressive and exploitative ‘settler colonial relationship’ required for state dispossession and domination.

The widespread practice of mixed marriage throughout the West also posed a serious threat to generating the political conditions of the settler colonial state. In the era of permanent settlement, voices of dissent regarding mixed marriage were met with limited success, as the Company benefitted from such practices. It was not until settler statecraft became the sole economic and political priority of leadership that miscegenation was heavily discouraged and voiced as a threat to the formation of an orderly white settler state. In 1865 Mathew Macfie spoke of the settlement as characterized by “hundreds of dissolute white men... [who] live in open concubinage with these wretched creatures” (Perry, 1997, p. 505). In 1866 a British surveyor wrote of the failed life of a white farmer, who had “become half savage with his Indian woman” (p. 507). Similar to

characterizing the male subject as ‘nomadic’, this equation with ‘savagery’ held significant political weight in the context of settler colonial statecraft. The practice of mixed marriage was compromising the ideological project of settler colonial domination as men were not establishing themselves as separate and superior. Instead, they were seen as “dangerously flirting with relinquishing their place among the civilized” (p. 507). The Calgary Herald wrote in 1904 that if the alternative marriage practices of the West were to continue, “civilization itself hangs in the balance” (Carter, 2008, p. 59). European standards of white gender relations, which colonial leadership had tried to establish on the ground throughout the fur trade, were deemed as naturally superior and emblematic of the drive towards civilization, while Indigenous gender orders were seen as uncivilized and symbolic of their inferior and thus exploitable status (Stoler, 1989; McClintock, 1993). The fact that white men were being equated with the latter and rejecting the former was a subversion to the settler colonial regime. This subversion also illuminates the limitations of assuming settler men to be the sole source of white heteropatriarchal structure as it was implemented to create and sustain the settler colonial state. Though primarily a result of Company limitations, white men in various status positions enjoyed and chose to continue engaging in diverse modes of gender relations and mixed marriage that worked against the establishing of European heteropatriarchy in the West.

The integrated relationships of white men were a primary threat to establishing the political conditions of the settler state. While traditional colonialism exercises “state control over an area of land and the Indigenous populations and resources within it” the process of settler colonization “recognizes that control then produces and sustains a set of colonial social relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples” (Veracini, 2013, p. 318). The male population was not producing this set of colonial social relations and was threatening the establishment of such control. Samuel

Wilberforce argued that mixed marriage would “make any true relation between the aboriginal people and the settlers an impossibility” (Perry, 1997, p. 505). Men had not cultivated a socio-political environment that reflected this ‘true relation’, premised on settler dominion and authority over Indigenous land and life –a hierarchical system of power which sustains the state. This sentiment speaks to the instability the male gender posed to the emerging settler state because of their social and sexual relationships with Indigenous women. To push this idea further, the male population was in some ways also threatening the fundamental settler colonial mechanism of elimination. As Wolfe (2006) argues, state formation is grounded in a “logic of elimination” which becomes the “organizing principle of settler-colonial society” (p. 388). This requires a specific political relationship of domination between settler society and Indigenous society, in which the actions of the former are oriented around the elimination of the latter. The establishment of mixed marriages for over two centuries threatened this objective by crafting relationships between the white and Indigenous populations reflective of continuance and permanence. White men were not crafting a political environment predicated around Indigenous elimination, as is required by the settler colonial state. If, as Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, “everything within a settler colonial society strains to destroy or assimilate the Native in order to disappear them from the land” (p. 9), the male population was failing to contribute to the eliminatory conditions that would give rise to this state. The male character of the West, to some extent, was premised on a level of co-existence that now threatened the political stability of the settler colonial regime. While Audra Simpson positions settler men as the source of eliminatory state structure, history poses a challenge to this assumption. A significant population of male settlers in Canada were actually inhibiting the process of elimination required by settler colonization in the nineteenth century.

In light of this history, it is clear the era of Canadian statecraft was not uniformly carried out or facilitated by settler men. In contrast to Audra Simpson's assertion that 'the state is a man', this evidence illuminates why the settler colonial state should not be reduced to a male character in its entirety. A wholly androcentric interpretation of the state is inaccurate and incomplete, as the male 'face' and 'work' of the state put forth by Simpson does not align with the actual gendered process of settler colonial statecraft presented in Western Canadian history. The differences between men holding various historical positions, and especially the male settler population in the West, draws attention to the limitations of a theory which over-simplifies the role of gender in settler state creation (and ongoing reproduction). While those in positions of statecraft leadership may have been men, this was not enough to secure and sustain the emerging state, as the work of settler colonization was not being carried out by the male population of settlers on the ground. To leadership, it was 'the male character' of the West causing the instability of the emerging state in the latter nineteenth century. This directly challenges Simpson's masculine state –the characteristics of the male settler population were at variance with the characteristics required for settler statecraft. As evidenced by the lack of women in the West and their presence in the East, and the critical limitations the former posed to the project of statecraft in the nineteenth century, it is clear the presence of white men alone would not facilitate the creation and sustaining of the settler colonial regime.

Conclusion

In taking seriously Audra Simpson's claim of the state being a gendered enterprise, this discussion has offered a more nuanced and critical interrogation of men in relation to the historical process of settler statecraft, allowing a different narrative to emerge which accounts for the intra-gender variations between men in the nineteenth century. It provides a foundation from which

chapter three emerges to present a significant challenge to *The State is a Man*. Though Simpson's analysis offers clarity to the ways gender oppression and heteropatriarchy are perpetuated within the state to serve the ongoing structure of settler sovereignty, it is clear her gendered understanding of the settler state must be pushed beyond the boundaries of androcentrism. This chapter illuminates why a more intersectional interpretation of gendered state domination and dispossession than what Audra Simpson has put forth is required. As Rita Dhamoon (2015) emphasizes, "In foregrounding the multiplicity and interconnectedness of varying degrees and forms of difference, a more complex conception of settler colonialism emerges" (p. 33). Accounting for differences within gender (as this chapter has done) and between gender (as the next chapter will do) replaces androcentric narratives of the state with a more complex understanding of gender as it functions in a multiplicity of diverse ways to uphold and reproduce settler state apparatus. Chapter three will build upon and further refine this conclusion by exploring how white women were critically involved in the historical process of settler colonial statecraft in Canada.

Chapter Three – Re-Conceptualizing the State as a Woman: The Critical Role of White Women and Femininity in Creating and Sustaining the Sovereign Settler State of Canada

“Canada [is] waiting for the presence of women to make it possible for men to anchor themselves on the land”

The Imperial Colonist, published in 1902¹³

In her article *The State is a Man*, Audra Simpson advances two arguments. The first is that “Canada requires the death and so called “disappearance” of Indigenous women in order to secure its sovereignty” (2016, Para 1). From this assertion her second argument emerges, in that “this sovereign death drive then requires that we think about the ways in which we imagine not only nations and states but what counts as governance itself.” Simpson argues an androcentric theory of the settler colonial state based on this first claim, answering the suggestion in her second claim by conceptualizing the state as a male entity. It is not this first argument that requires critique, but rather the masculine assumptions characterizing her second claim. There is no denying the heteropatriarchal violence reproduced within and through the settler colonial state. As Indigenous feminists and women activists have long argued, and confirmed most recently through the comprehensive 2019 national inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, the settler state is characterized by a “sovereign death drive” which has led to the extreme marginalization and genocide of Indigenous women. Audra Simpson suggests that in light of this violent gender oppression in Canada, it is clear that (along with whiteness) the state “serves the interests of... heterosexuality and patriarchy, the rule by men” (Para 3). This is not untrue, but the theoretical conclusion Simpson draws from this oppressive reality is essentialist and based too heavily on narrow assumptions of how gender and power operate within the state. Chapter two has provided historical evidence of the ways in which the process of settler colonial statecraft in Canada was not uniformly male in character. In response to the conclusions of this chapter, it is

¹³ Cited in Bush (1994, p. 400)

possible that Simpson would justify her male state as a theory about *who the structures of the white hetero male state ultimately serve*, rather than the gendered actors who actually engaged in the physical, practical, and ideological work of securing settler sovereignty on the ground. Even so, this approach is still based on the assumption that white heteropatriarchy only serves the interests of men. A multi-dimensional and intersectional approach to state power challenges such an assumption—it is incorrect to assume that such structures do not also serve certain groups of women in a system where power is relational and relative.

From this perspective, Audra Simpson's theory requires further unpacking. Her theory gives rise to blind spots and remains limited in its ability to understand fully how settler colonial state formation occurred through systems of gender, and how settler sovereignty and legitimacy is then maintained by gendered forces overtime. Building upon chapter two which addressed the intra-gender nuances of settler men and statecraft, this chapter will focus on the inter-gender variances of historical Canadian state formation. As the previous discussion revealed, male settlers in the West were an active obstacle to the entrenchment of the settler colonial state, and colonial leadership required a solution to the problems the male population was causing. White men were not crafting the necessary conditions for settler colonization in the nineteenth century, including settler structures of heteropatriarchy—an assumption which Simpson's theory relies on. If the character of the emerging state was not entirely male, as chapter two asserts, then how was the process of settler colonial statecraft in Canada actually gendered? What other gendered characteristics outside of the masculine realm did the settler state fundamentally rely on? As the quote above illuminates, white women were viewed as a necessary component to securing and stabilizing the project of settler colonial statecraft. Their presence was *required* in order to establish settler permanence on the land, a necessary foundation for settler state building that men

had failed to cultivate. In light of the historical evidence that will be presented in the following discussion such as the above quotation, this chapter will argue that white women were a fundamental condition of possibility by which the settler colonial state could form, demonstrating how domination and dispossession in the Canadian west required the presence of not only settler men but also settler women in the nineteenth century era of permanent settlement and statecraft. By taking a woman-centered approach to understanding this history, the following discussion will offer a continuation and critique of Simpson's assertion that we must continue to "think about the ways in which we imagine" the settler state and settler governance in Canada. Doing so will craft a more intersectional theory of gendered settler statecraft than what Simpson has argued, offering a continuation of the intersectional critique that white women have not merely been passive underlayers within state structure and process, demonstrating how this is especially true in the settler colonial state of Canada.

This chapter will carry out two distinct analyses which center white women in the historical process of Canadian settler state formation. Audra Simpson's analysis begins at a point in which the state and its conditions of possibility were already established –interpreting gender as a product of, rather than a producer of, the settler state. This has led Simpson to assume the male character of the state without a full understanding of the way gender was a conditional mechanism of state creation. A complete theory of the settler colonial state as it relates to gender must understand the gendered systems which historically created the state and which the state continues to rely on, albeit in shapeshifting ways. Using a framework of settler colonial statecraft, the first part of this chapter will conduct an analysis of white women's narratives during the era of permanent settlement, drawing from diary material collected from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg. The voices of white women during this era provide evidence of how settler women

engaged with and enacted the ideological project of settler colonial state formation on the ground in ways that settler men did not. Similar to the ‘statecraft’ section of chapter two, the second part of this chapter will draw evidence from the quotations and sentiments of British investors and colonial leadership in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and provide an interrogation of these narratives to analyze the relationship between white women and settler colonial state formation in Canada¹⁴. This evidence builds upon the previous chapter’s conclusion that the settler state is not entirely ‘a man’ by making a case for why the state might, at certain points in history, be more accurately conceptualized as ‘a woman’. The history presented in the chapter illuminates why the gendered nature of the settler state must be understood as an intersectional phenomenon that is reproduced by and through both settler men and women, especially as decolonization efforts increasingly seek to dismantle settler colonial state apparatus in Canada.

Permanent Settlement

Investigating white women during the era of permanent settlement in Western Canada (~1811-1860) will begin to illuminate the ways in which the characteristics of settler colonial statecraft were predominantly gendered in female terms throughout the nineteenth century. For over a century the London Committee upheld their decision to ban women from travelling overseas, as their presence would require a burdensome commitment to settlement building that was disadvantageous to the Hudson’s Bay Company commitment to fur trade profit and productivity. As a new era emerged in the West characterized by an increasing interest in the colonial project of settling, leadership invested in settlement building viewed the complete absence of white women in Rupert’s Land as inauspicious to their objectives. The gendered policy of the

¹⁴ It should be noted that this framing of settler colonial statecraft is largely conceptual rather than practical. This thesis will lay out what women were expected to do, but given the limited sources available on women’s narratives and voices in history, it is difficult to argue or demonstrate that they actually did it. The diary sources draw a link between this conceptual role of white women in statecraft and their actualized role, but the scope of this analysis is limited. This project should be seen as a discussion of the ideational relationship between white women and settler colonial state formation.

fur trade was misaligned with the gendered requirements for permanent settlement, which required the physical, practical and ideological presence of white women to succeed. In 1812 Miles McDonell assessed the state of the newly forming Red River settlement and “advised Lord Selkirk that it would be most advantageous if Company servants were allowed to bring white wives out to Rupert’s Land” (Van Kirk, 1975, p. 338). In part, this would secure the reproduction of a large and sustainable settler population in the West as the physical capacities of white women were required for birthing ongoing generations of white settlers. Such a policy would also ensure the establishment of white homesteads required of a European settlement and end the practice of mixed marriage that McDonell and other colonial officers found immoral and reprehensible. Their presence would importantly spread “metropolitan notions of female moral agency and domesticity” (Fitzgerald and Muszynski, 2007, p. 663) throughout the West. White women were those who could reform fur trade men (and later settler men who adopted similar modes of being) from the practices and behaviours which threatened the creation of a superior and orderly white settler population.

It was this latter ideological role of white women that was most significant in the era of permanent settlement, although this influence was not realized on a significant scale, as evidenced in chapter two by the concern expressed by leadership in the 1860’s and thereafter over the character of the male population. Despite the increasing desire for the presence of white women expressed by colonial leaders of settlement, these requests were strictly tempered by the HBC throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The Company continued to impose constraints upon the male population of Rupert’s Land by limiting the emigration of working-class white women overseas and encouraging (or at least accepting the benefits of) mixed marriage relationships in the West. Amidst these restraints, the reproductive benefits of bringing white

women overseas could not and were not realized on a large scale. For the Company, this ensured that settlement would not interfere with the fur trade. Despite these restrictions this was not the only role, and in fact was not the most important role desired of white women in the early stages of permanent settlement. Colonial governors viewed women in high esteem for the ideological impact they would have upon settlement in the West. Elite company men frequently cited white women as being “from the civilized world” (see Brown, 1980; Van Kirk, 1975). Their presence would assist in reforming the norms and standards of male behaviour to be more reflective of a civilized settler population. As the nineteenth century progressed alongside an increase in European gender and race ideology, an acceptance of this ideological role by both settlement promoters and the Company was widespread. As Perry (1997) asserts, “the concept of “woman” was so intimately connected to and ultimately contingent upon notions of race and civilization that this leap of logic rarely occasioned explication” (p. 509). Even the staunchest anti-settlement fur trade supporters agreed that the presence of white women, however small, served an important ideological purpose in distinguishing the white settler population as a superior and civilized race.

At variance with Audra Simpson’s androcentric theory of settler statecraft, the characteristics of permanent settlement were embodied by white women, not white men. Unlike the population of Company men and new male settlers who quickly conformed to the fur trade culture of the West, white women were subjects who upheld and embodied the ideologies and practices of European civilization (Hall, 2007; Levine, 2007; Whitlock, 2000). To leadership in charge of settling the West, such characteristics were necessary for building up a permanent white settlement that resembled a civilized society and reflected the superiority of European progress and modernity. The male character of the West did not reflect this vision. Settlement investors, who were “concerned with the image of frontier settlements as immoral”, influenced Company

policy to allow white women to enter Rupert's Land "as the very agents who could 'civilize' the settlements" (Fitzgerald & Muszynski, 2007, p. 662). These women were sent overseas not for their reproductive role in settlement building, which could not be realized on a large enough scale amidst Company fur trade policy, but for their ability to have a 'civilizing effect' upon white men. As Kathleen Wilson (2007, p. 20) remarks, "women's superior capacities for civility, refinement, and sensibility" could be "put to work" for the ideological project of permanent settlement. Men were positioned as subjects in need of reform, while women were subjects naturally capable of engaging in the ideological work of settlement building and who could encourage men to do the same. According to Sylvia Van Kirk (1983), the white women who entered Rupert's Land during the early nineteenth century were seen to embody the "civilizing attributes of a Victorian lady" and had the power to "improve standards of morality and gentility within the fur trade" (p. 187). This was of critical importance to those invested in the colonial project of permanent settlement, as men were threatening the legitimizing narratives of 'civilization' required to naturalize and justify settler entitlement to land and resources. White women were understood as a critical source of influence from which this ideology could establish itself on the ground.

To borrow Audra Simpson's formulation, the characteristics of permanent settlement in the nineteenth century were predominantly of a 'female character'. It was white women, not men, who were viewed as the model gender of civilized settlement. As referenced above, scholarship has discussed the important ideological role white women held in Canada's era of permanent settlement. These narratives make reference to the perceptions held about the female gender during this time, discussing the views expressed by male authority and broader nineteenth century gender discourse about the ideological influence white women were seen to have. The rest of this section will build upon this scholarship by providing some archival insight into how white women enacted

this ideational role on the ground. It is not well understood how these women specifically embraced and conformed to their influential positions in the nineteenth century project of permanent settlement in the Canadian West. The rest of this section will offer a close reading of two diaries written by prominent white women who settled in Rupert's Land in the 1830's and 1840's, providing further evidence that the character of permanent settlement in the first half of the nineteenth century was overwhelmingly female, especially when compared to the analysis of the male population provided in chapter two. Particular attention will be paid to analyzing their writing within a framework of settler colonial statecraft, as this has been given no attention in scholarship thus far. These written accounts allow for an understanding of settler statecraft and gender to emerge that moves beyond the idea of "what role women were supposed to play" in permanent settlement as imagined by male leadership, by illuminating "what roles they actually claimed for themselves" (Levine, 2007, p. 1-2) amidst the emerging project of settler colonization in Canada. This will not be a comprehensive analysis but will instead provide written snapshots which illustrate in greater detail the core ideologies white women embodied that positioned them as a critical component to the success of establishing white settlements in the West, offering greater insight into why the later project of settler statecraft critically relied on white women's ideological influence.

This archival data was collected from the diaries of two elite women who entered the fur trade during the era of permanent settlement. One is the diary of Francis Ramsay Simpson, the first white woman to enter the fur trade as the wife of an HBC officer. Written in 1830, the diary depicts her experience travelling to the various settlements of Rupert's Land. As the wife to George Simpson she possessed an elite status and was praised for her proper appearance and character, often depicted to be the ideal nineteenth-century woman. According to Sandra Myres (1982) she

was seen to be “modest, submissive... supportive of her husband’s efforts, uncomplaining, a perfect wife and mother, and an example to all” (p. 6). Not only an example of her gender, Simpson was also an example of her race and her position as a settler. As Amber Bakker (2012) writes:

“while Simpson may have not identified herself as a colonizer or a civilizer, she purposefully upheld the class and racial expectations that had been placed upon her, introducing, by example, the customs and values of English middle-class society into the fur trade” (p. 27).

Simpson conformed to the civilizing project desired of her by settlement leadership. Her written narratives confirm the perception of white women as ‘civilizing agents’ during this time, while also illustrating in greater detail how white women enacted the ideological project of colonial settlement on the ground. As a prominent and influential figure, her diary is exemplary of white women’s role and position in the early process of settlement building. The second diary belongs to Simpson’s younger sister, Isobel Finlayson. Written in 1840, it provides an account of her experience living in the Red River settlement. She was the wife of esteemed chief trader and governor of Assiniboia Duncan Finlayson, positioning her with an elite status similar to that of her sister. Conforming well to the European gender norms of her time, Finlayson was also praised as a settler woman who exemplified proper feminine virtue (Bakker, 2012; Buss, 1989). Together, these sisters were two of the most prominent female figures to enter Rupert’s Land in the first half of the nineteenth century. Exemplary of their gender and race, the diaries were used as guidebooks for working-class white women who would later travel overseas to settle. Their writing is thus ideal for capturing insight into what ideologies white women personally embraced and understood to be appropriate as gendered settlers in early nineteenth century Rupert’s Land.

In comparison to the male employees of the HBC, white women wholly aligned with the settlement policy and ideology advanced by colonial leadership. Most obviously, these women expressed strong support for settlement building, viewing it as the natural progression of civilization in the West. Unlike men, whose focus was on short-term fur trade profit under the strict constraints of the Company, these women supported the larger picture of settler statecraft emerging in the nineteenth century. Upon arriving at Fort Gary, Francis Simpson remarked of her support for settlement and its future expansion, writing:

“Indeed, the whole colony appears in a flourishing condition in every point of view, and will have no doubt in the course of time, when the civilized part of the population shall have increased, form a settlement... influenc[ing] others to follow so bright an example, and settle different portions of this vast continent, the interior of which presents so fair a field to work upon” (p. 120).

Here, Simpson envisions a future carried out through settler colonization, evidenced by her support for increasing a white population, establishing the superiority of “civilized” white settlers, alluding to the assimilation/conversion of Indigenous “others”, and supporting extensive land development. On a different occasion, Simpson spoke of the need for creating a “civilized habitation” amidst “nature in her grand but savage and uncultivated state” (p. 67-68). These sentiments support a colonial vision of the West and reflect the expected ideologies of a white settler. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, “The settler... sees himself as holding dominion over the earth and its flora and fauna... and as more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species.” (p. 6)¹⁵. Travelling overseas from England, these white women brought with them the ideologies of the metropole, characterized by notions of European/white superiority, progress, and modernity.

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that this description by Tuck and Yang assumes the settler/colonizer subject to be a “he,” reinforcing androcentric narratives of settler colonial politics and power that scholars such as Audra Simpson put forth.

Settlement building was the project by which these ‘civilizing’ ideologies could be advanced. The anti-settlement influence cultivated by Company policy, which characterized working-class men in the West, did not apply to newly emigrating women. In line with the objectives of colonial leadership, they encouraged the creation of a large white population characterized by civilized structures and land development, just as the London Committee predicted they would over a century ago.

Entrenched in the nineteenth century civilization discourse of Europe, white women were an asset to colonial officials because they wholly believed in and supported a future of Western settlement. Unlike men of the fur trade who remained within the strict confines of Company priority, white women served an important purpose in effecting an ideology of civilization that supported the creation of colonial settlements. This support for expanding the project of permanent settlement in Rupert’s Land was not a foregone conclusion for a woman like Francis Simpson. Her husband George Simpson held a starkly opposing view to her position, arguing against the establishment of settlements throughout the fur trade. In contrast to the commitments of her own husband and the HBC, Francis Simpson shared and embodied the commitments of colonial leadership. For white women emigrating overseas, this civilizing influence was not understood as a role that they had to fill. This influence was a ‘natural’ effect of their own personal subjectivity as white women, reflecting a deep self-understanding held about themselves, their race and gender, their position as settlers, and their broader worldview. They were not sculpted by settlement leadership into actors that would serve their political and economic interests. They were the obvious choice to carry out the job because as white women from nineteenth century England, they naturally enacted the settler ideologies of civilization on the ground of Rupert’s Land through their deep commitment to colonial settlement and progress.

This support for settlement building was rooted in a racialized logic which served to naturalize and justify the process of settler colonization. As discussed in chapter two, the ‘male character’ of settlements in the West was undesirable to leadership because it posed an intellectual threat to crafting a white permanence, especially along lines of race. White men’s physical integration threatened the establishment of a distinct hierarchy and their behaviour threatened the naturalizing of white superiority. Emerging from the context of nineteenth century Britain and outside of fur trade culture, white women better understood and wholly embodied Western notions of racial development and civilized progress. As white settlers they understood themselves as naturally superior and were “quick to assume the complete savagery and inferiority” (Bakker, 2012, p. 71) of the Indigenous people they encountered. When arriving at Fort Gary, Francis Simpson described Indigenous peoples as the “Wilds” (p.116) followed by a description of settlers as “an enlightened people” (p.117), while Finlayson described Indigenous society as “barbarous” (p. 183). These women characterized the white population as rational, modern, and developed, while relegating Indigenous peoples to less advanced, primitive, and morally inferior in comparison. This served an important purpose, as the “settler positions himself as both superior and normal” (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 6) in order to legitimize the settler occupation of Indigenous land. These women were drawing racialized lines of difference that white settlers were not to cross. As Catherine Hall (2007) writes of gender and colonialism in the nineteenth-century, “white women became increasingly important as boundary markers” (p. 70). Unlike the ideologies *reflected by the behaviour* of men in the West, these white women embodied the belief that “racial types” were representative of the “stages of development on a continuum which began with savagery and peaked with modernity or civilization” (Johnstone, 2018, p. 2), positioning Indigenous peoples as the former and themselves as the latter. In the process of settler colonial

statecraft, it is this notion which naturalizes the process of settler domination and legitimizes the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous land. White women were an asset to colonial leadership because their presence would counter the ‘uncivilized’ behaviours and practices of the male population which blurred the ‘natural’ racial distinctions required for establishing settler superiority and ascendancy on the ground.

The process of settler colonization “necessitates the establishment of legitimizing narratives” (Johnstone & Lawson, 2000, p. 365) which white women such as Simpson and Finlayson advanced on the ground of the settlements in the early nineteenth century. Unlike the population of male settlers who were dedicated to the economic sojourner lifestyle of the fur trade, these women understood the ideological importance of crafting a separate and civilized white permanent settlement. When first arriving at Fort Gary, Francis Simpson wrote: “On advancing in the settlement, signs of civilization began to appear in the form of houses... surrounded by patches of ground which bore the marks of the plough and the spade” (p. 112-3). In contrast, she then wrote of Indigenous people as those “without the smallest trace... of a civilized habitation” (p. 116). Finlayson similarly observed that “settled habits, and a degree of civilization” were “not to be found among the wild and savage” (p. 173). Here, Indigenous peoples are perceived to lack the characteristics necessary for civilization, naturalizing the ascendancy of white settlers through their productive capacity to build settlements. Simpson and Finlayson used the geographical and domestic orientations of Indigenous people as evidence of their inferiority and underdevelopment, while the structures of white settler society were seen as emblematic of their modernity and progress. In commenting on the state of the Red River colony, Finlayson described “the Indians” as a “wild and wandering people” who would “never toil for their daily subsistence or submit to forms of civilized life” (p. 176). These women understood permanent settlement and land

cultivation as the defining symbol of white settler superiority. This was (and is) a key ideological component of settler colonization. As Tuck and Yang (2012) write, “He can only make his identity as a settler by making the land produce, and produce excessively, because “civilization” is defined as production in excess of the “natural” world” (p. 6). Reform efforts directed at men during this time were in large part an attempt to ensure they conformed to the characteristics of the ‘fully civilized’ human, naturalizing the ‘uncivilized’ nature of Indigenous peoples and justifying settler domination. Unlike the male population, white women appeared to understand and/or embody the notion that specific behaviours and practices associated with settlement and civilization were necessary to establish settler ascendancy and control on the ground.

In line with the process of crafting a permanent settlement through the process of settler colonization, the writing of Simpson and Finlayson embodied a vision of settler permanence naturally operating alongside the conditions of dispossession and domination. The presence of Company men in Rupert’s Land marked a type of permanence on the ground that did not simultaneously fuel these latter projects, while these women spoke to the necessity of their concurrent operation. Upon witnessing the formation of a small settlement near Lake Superior, Simpson described the “enterprise of Europeans” as having successfully “tam[ed] the ferocious lives of the Indians” leading them “towards civilization before which the wild and savage habits of the Aborigines must give way” (p. 69). Here, Simpson views white settler society as the only future for the West and naturalizes Indigenous erasure as the inevitable course of progression destined to characterize Rupert’s Land. Employing the rhetoric of savagery served to legitimize this process, as Evelyn Glenn (2015) writes, “conceiving of indigenous peoples as less than fully human justified dispossessing them and rendered them expendable and/or invisible” (p. 60). When observing the Indigenous men living in the Red River settlement, Finlayson was happy to report

of them as having “a subdued and melancholy look, as if they felt the power of the white man and that they were no longer the lords of the soil to which they have a right” (p. 182-183). Here, Finlayson speaks to the hierarchical and eliminatory power dynamics of settler colonization. These women believed that the building of a permanent white settlement was not meant to coexist with Indigenous society but should replace it entirely. This reflects what Patrick Wolfe (2006) has argued, in that the process of settler colonization requires settlers to not only “erect a new colonial society on the expropriated land base” but also strive for “the dissolution of native societies” (p. 388). The integrative practices of men were directly preventing this process of dissolution – company leadership and the male population had crafted a permanence characterized by co-existence and not colonialism. Contrastively, these women encouraged an ideology rooted in “hierarchical social relations” that would serve to “facilitate the dispossession of [Indigenous] lands and self-determining capacities” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 15). In doing so, white women such as Simpson and Finlayson enacted the intellectual commitments required of settler colonization on the ground, embracing a narrative which would facilitate the co-existing conditions of permanence, dispossession, and domination throughout Rupert’s Land.

These women also understood that a degree of domination over the Indigenous population was required to advance the colonial project of permanent settlement. Settler colonization, as Verancini (2015) argues, “is inevitably premised on the possibility of controlling and dominating indigenous peoples” (p. 314). Upon observing the Red River settlement, Finlayson wrote: “the erratic and unsettled life of the Red Man is one of the greatest evils... to contend with in this country” (p. 173). Here, Finlayson speaks to a broader racialized anxiety spreading throughout nineteenth century Britain. As McWhorter (2005) explains, ideologies emerged in the 1830’s which viewed Indigenous peoples as “less well developed or evolved” and in need of “careful

monitoring and management lest they endanger the productive white population” (p. 544). These white women viewed the Indigenous population as an impediment to the creation of a civilized white settlement. In perceiving this threat, and alluding to the need for settler control, both Finlayson and Simpson expressed a desire to assimilate/eliminate the Indigenous population. Finlayson followed her concerned assertion with an expression of support for projects dedicated to “converting and civilizing the Indians” (p. 173). Simpson similarly wrote of the need for “reforming the loose and savage lives of the Indians” (p. 119) in the West. Speaking to the requirements of settler colonial statecraft, these women were committed to the idea that settlement building required Indigenous erasure. These women embraced an eliminatory logic that envisioned a future characterized by settler colonization, premised on a natural hierarchical relationship of settler supremacy and Indigenous subordination. This ideology of domination and elimination, which Audra Simpson has argued to be fundamental to the project of settler statecraft, was embodied in the nineteenth century not by male settlers in the West but by newly emigrating white women such as Francis Simpson and Isobel Finlayson.

As discussed, white women were expected to bring the reforming traits of civility, refinement, morality, and gentility to the settlements of the West¹⁶. This would counter the practices and behaviours of men that misaligned with the characteristics a white settler population was expected to embody and *required* to embody for the purpose of settler colonization. Moving beyond a description of female characteristics, it is the influence white women had upon this latter point which is illuminated in the personal writing of Simpson and Finlayson. These women were not just female subjects reflecting proper European behaviour, but female subjects whose

¹⁶ This also happened to some degree in the East (see Morgan, 2003; Prentice et al., 1996; Strong-Boag et al., 2002), though the idea of ‘reform’ was less required without the pervasive influence of Company policy and because white women had been present much longer in Eastern settlements.

understanding of themselves and the world around them closely aligned with the ideological project of settler colonization. Illuminated by the sentiments expressed in their diaries, the presence of these elite women in the West would cultivate an environment, characterized by the racialized discourse of civilization/progress, that would both aid colonial officials in reforming the male population and also establish the necessary ideological conditions for crafting a sustainable permanent white settlement on Indigenous land. Presenting a challenge to Audra Simpson's male theory of settler state formation, the writing of Francis Simpson and Isobel Finlayson provides enough evidence for two broad assertions to be made about the ideological commitments white women enacted on the ground that fueled the project of settler colonial statecraft during the era of permanent settlement in early nineteenth century Canada. Unlike their male counterparts involved in Company business, these women were pro-settlement expansionists who, in opposition to the HBC but in line with colonial leadership, viewed settlement building in the West as entirely desirable and inevitable. Aligned with the civilization discourse of Britain at the time, these women viewed the land and Indigenous peoples in the language of 'savagery' to justify bringing the progressive and modern influences of settlement to the region. As well, these women expressed a commitment to a permanence characterized by dispossession and domination, employing an 'eliminary logic' towards Indigenous peoples at times. In contrast to the highly integrated and footloose character the Company and their male employees had cultivated in Rupert's Land, these women embodied notions of race and civilization to naturalize a hierarchy of white superiority and Indigenous subordination in their writing, upholding ideologies that would reform the integrated 'equality' cultivated by men into a project of permanent settler colonization.

Although this discussion has been brief, these diary snapshots illustrate in greater detail the ideological commitments that two influential white settler women held in the nineteenth century

that would later become a critical asset to the creation of a permanent colonial state. These women were entrenched in the nineteenth century civilization discourse of white progress/modernity in ways that the male population of Rupert's land was not, and as the male ideologies and practices established during the fur trade posed an obstacle to the emerging agenda of settler colonization, the practices and ideological commitments of white women would generate colonial formations of settler permanence. As evidenced by their perception of the world around them and their own self-understanding, white women embraced a white settler ideology characterized by "a particular set of ethics, motivations, fears, and desires, reinforced by a pervasive colonial mentality" (Barker, 2009, p. 326). This was seen by leadership as a critical influence for civilizing and building proper colonial settlements in Rupert's Land. Their writing conformed to and wholly embraced the ideological foundations necessary for eventual settler statecraft, while reflecting a dedication to carrying out the civilizing mandate assigned to them as white women in the fur trade during this era. Despite their small presence, the building of permanent colonial settlement in Canada reflected the characteristics of white women, and not men, in the first half of the nineteenth century. This is important to consider when theorizing the gendered nature of settler colonial statecraft. The history presented above challenges the wholly male character of the settler state that Simpson puts forth, illuminating why the gendered characteristics of women, and not men, were employed to civilize the settlement and ensure its success and future reproduction during an era of colonial transition. The following section will investigate the position of white women during the era of settler colonial state formation (~1860-1910) in the Canadian West to further illustrate the critical inter-gender complexities of statecraft that Audra Simpson's theory overlooks.

Statecraft

This section offers an account of how the settler colonial state was created through forces of gender by examining the historical relationship between white women and the process of settler statecraft in Canada, arguing that white women were a fundamental condition of possibility by which the settler colonial state itself could form. The physical, practical, and ideological influence of white women that could not be realized throughout the previous era of permanent settlement amidst strict Company control was now harnessed by leadership to facilitate this process. The settler colonial regime critically depended on white women because of their ability to effect permanence within the settlement, promote civilization and domesticity, reform men into proper settlers, exercise moral authority, encourage agricultural production, reproduce a white population, establish proper behaviour and morality, end the practice of mixed marriage, and facilitate the creation of hierarchical social relations required for settler colonization. This history elucidates why the isolated/singular interpretation of men and the settler regime that Audra Simpson puts forth fails to interrogate the multiple dimensions of gender that were operationalized to sustain and reproduce colonial phenomenon over time. In taking seriously Simpson's argument, and thinking differently and critically about gender and the sovereign settler state from a more intersectional perspective, a new understanding and theory of statecraft emerges which accounts for the actual and complex ways the settler colonial regime was made possible through systems of gender, and specifically through the white woman subject.

Feminizing the project of settler state formation in the latter nineteenth century was a response to the male gender's inadequacy to craft the conditions necessary for building a settler colonial state structure. In 1867, *The Colonist* newspaper wrote: "only white women [would] win by their influence, and example the settler and miner from nomadic and improvident habits and

convert them into steady-going and prudent members of society" (Perry 1997, p. 512). White women were *the only actors* capable of encouraging men to abandon the qualities that characterized them as fur traders and adopt the qualities of white settler colonists. The 'nomadic' and 'improvident' habits men had developed living in the strict confines of the fur trade were antithetical to the practical work of building up a permanent settlement upon the land. As mentioned in Chapter two, Mathew Macfie argued that without the presence of white women, men would continue to roam, "their industry as producers and expenditures as consumers being lost to the colonies" (p. 512). The female gender, characterized by the progressive and modern practices of the 'civilized' world, would set an example for men to follow. Supporting a bid for female emigration in 1861, *The Colonist* wrote: "the society here and throughout these colonies will prove shiftless for a long time, except Government or someone else provides wives for our young men" (p. 512). The presence of white women would influence the male population to engage in 'steady-going' and 'prudent' labour characteristic of the industrial and civilized progress achieved overseas by European society. As Alessio (1997) argues, the female gender was "responsible" for ensuring "a stable male workforce" (p. 249) would form in the Canadian West. Just as the HBC created a male workforce that would fulfill the objectives of the fur trade, white women were in charge of re-crafting this male workforce to fulfill the objectives of settler colonial state building.

A white female population would also provide tangible economic benefits to creating a settler colonial state. In 1872, Surveyor George M. Grant wrote: "little agricultural progress or advance... can be expected until immigration brings in women, accustomed to dairy and regular farm-work, to be wives for white men" (1873, p. 290). White women would provide the state with important agricultural labour and encourage men to do the same. In doing so, they would assist in advancing the economic and political conditions required for settler statecraft. As Wolfe (2006)

discusses, the formation of a settler state is facilitated through agriculture (as well as other primary sectors) which motivates the project of land dispossession. Though the sojourner lifestyle of men in the fur trade served to generate economic profit, it did not serve the economic projects of land development and agriculture that would form the basis for permanent settler structure and ongoing territorial dispossession. As Owram (2007) writes of British investors in the 1860's, "The West was no longer seen through the eyes of the fur trader... but through those of the potential farmer... [agriculture] became the first priority" (p. 11). White women would themselves participate in this project of domestic agriculture while reforming the economic orientations that still lingered from the fur trade. A female population would effect a permanence simultaneously fueling economic projects of land development. This would also facilitate ideologies naturalizing Indigenous dispossession and settler domination. The male gender was losing their 'civilized' legitimacy via their failure to engage in projects of agricultural and resource development and the building of infrastructure. As Wolfe (2006) also argues, the "economic projects of agriculture and land ownership (are) symbols of settler identity and entitlement" (p. 396). A male population that failed to engage in such projects threatened the legitimacy of state sovereignty. White women could help facilitate the ideological project of statecraft by ensuring men would demonstrate that as civilized settlers they could make 'better' use of the land than Indigenous people.

The mass settlement of white women would also transform men into adopting a more 'civilized' lifestyle that would fulfill the ideological requirements of statecraft. After returning back to Europe in 1861, Bishop Wilberforce proposed the "absence of women's company" to be the reason for the 'uncivilized' state of British Columbia (Perry, 1997, p. 501). Furthering that "without woman's restraining influence", the state would "become the scene of the most abominable and infamous demoralization, a disgrace to England". The nineteenth century white

woman was inherently representative of civilization and was the natural solution to addressing a male population perceived by governing officials as “uncivilized” in character. There was a common perception that white women, as subjects of the domestic realm, possessed the ability to convert men into proper examples of their sex who were capable of building a civilized white settler state. White women emerged as prominent actors under the ideology that the domestic realm was where moral behaviour could be cultivated. This is illustrated by Mathew Macfie, who wrote of “the beneficial change effected by marriage, in arresting the process of dissipation” (Perry, 1997, p. 511). Men in the West had been deprived of the ideologies of the metropole for centuries, and “there were hopes that the presence of more white women could transform and redeem the society” (Hall, 2007, p. 71). The legitimizing narratives necessary for establishing white settler ascendancy were not consolidating on the ground because the male population was not embodying the superior ‘moral qualities’ of settler society. Women would bring with them the influence of the civilized domestic realm that would encourage the practical and ideological building of a settler colonial state.

Contrary to Audra Simpson’s conception of the state as being a “male character”, this history of settler colonial statecraft in Western Canada suggests that much of the important work required for building a state was seen to be made possible by the influence of white women. A settler population of ‘female character’ was crucial to the process of settler colonial statecraft in Canada. If the masculine character of the forming state was failing to produce the necessary conditions for settler colonial success, the solution was to re-characterize the state in the feminine. As Roberts (1979) writes, “Immigration policies and aggressive recruiting schemes of British women ... were developed whose priority it would be to build a nation that was to be British in outlook and *character*” (p. 185-6, emphasis added). This character was female –it was white

women, not men, who held the values, ideals, and behaviours necessary for creating and sustaining a settler state. The settler colonial state stood to benefit from the civilizing powers of white women who would create a respectable settler society. Unlike the norms of male life cultivated throughout the fur trade, the norms of British female life were viewed as acceptable and practical to the creation of a settler colonial state. To leadership, “family farm households were to be the main unit of social order” (Carter, 2008, p. 60), and white women would facilitate their establishment. The settler colonial state would not form through the characteristics of the male settler population, but through that of the female settler population. If “the vision for the future of the West rested firmly upon a British dominated agricultural and domestic society” (Owram, 2007, p. 4), white women upheld the gendered characteristics to facilitate this process. As Janiewski (1998) asserts of the Canadian West, “the arrival of white women was one of the chief indications of the transition from the initial phases of exploration and commercial exploitation to *settler colonization*” (p. 58, emphasis added). The male gender would need to be reformed accordingly for settler colonial statecraft to move forward, and white women were those who could facilitate this reconstruction of character.

The bringing of white women to Canada would also facilitate permanent statecraft by allowing the male population to engage in the gender arrangements required for settler colonization that had not been permitted throughout the fur trade, characterized by structures of the white nuclear family and proper domestic roles. As Carter (2008) describes, the settlements that had emerged in the Canadian West “posed particular challenges to the monogamous model in the late nineteenth century, with its diverse Aboriginal population, lengthy tradition of “fur trade” marriages, (and) preponderance of single white males” (p. 59). British investors and government officials needed a solution to the incompatible systems of domesticity and gender that had formed

to serve the fur trade for two centuries. In the 1850s, there was “an insistent demand for white settler areas to look more like Britain, and in particular more like a domesticated Britain of both natural and familial order” (Levine, 2007, p. 8). White women had immense influence in shaping the race and gender organization of the emerging Canadian state. A female population could overhaul the settlements of the West by properly gendering the emerging state, bringing with them “metropolitan notions of female moral agency and domesticity” (Fitzgerald and Muszynski, 2007, p. 663). As subjects conforming to the order and customs of European heteropatriarchy, white women would introduce the central gender institutions necessary for white settler state formation, establishing and naturalizing “heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements” (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 13) in the West. The introduction of white women had the physical effect of reproducing a white population and ending the practice of mixed marriage, the practical effect of building homesteads on the land thereby inducing permanence and increasing economic productivity, and the ideological effect of ensuring the settler population was engaging in behaviour emblematic of civilization/modernity that would distinguish them from modes of Indigenous being, naturalizing settler superiority and legitimizing settler state practices of domination and dispossession.

The most common assertion about women and gender during this period of history is that white women emigrated for reproductive purposes. Feminist and imperial gender scholars have rightly argued that white women played a critical role in the process of state building through their reproductive capacity to create a large white population and establish white nuclear families on the ground of settlements abroad (Alessio, 1997; Hall, 2007; Wilson, 2007). The reproductive capacities of the female gender served an important purpose for settler colonial statecraft in Canada—only white women possessed the ability to physically reproduce a substantial and ongoing white settler population on the land. This was important to British investors and politicians for

establishing a strong and permanent settler base in the West. White women also played an important practical role in statecraft through their domestic roles as wives. As one journalist wrote in 1860, “All colonies... needed the influences that radiated from the domestic hearth-stone ... (lending) an air of permanence to the country” (Perry, 1997, p. 512). White women would effect permanence through their reproductive capacities and domestic influence, just as the HBC had predicted in the 1700’s. In contrast to men who continued to engage in the gendered systems of the fur trade, white women would “establish appropriate White domestic spaces” (Fitzgerald and Muszynski, 2007, p. 663). Their presence would encourage and require the building of proper European homesteads and agriculture development –key structures of settler state formation. In contrast to Audra Simpson’s theory of the gendered settler state, white women were seen to play the critical role of establishing the institutions of heteropatriarchy on the ground which served as the “foundation and building block of Western Canada” and “the key to future stability and prosperity” (Carter, 2008, p. 59). Their presence and domestic influence in the West “heralded the end of an undomesticated, masculine era” (p. 59). Colonial leadership knew that the process of statecraft would only move forward by “importing sedentary peoples” or by “fixing migratory ones” (Perry, 2005, p. 113), and white women emerged to do both. The female subject itself was characterized by permanence –her femininity was emblematic of civilized structure and behaviour and her presence required the creation of permanent homesteads, farming, and various social institutions. She was also an influence of conversion, destined to transform the “nomadic” and “transient” male subject into a proper permanent settler through proper gender roles and structures of domesticity.

There was also a perceived ideological component to white women’s domestic presence. As subjects upholding proper European gender organization, white women possessed a “moral

authority” (Myres, 1982; Wilson, 2007) by which the ideological conditions of settler statecraft could solidify on the ground, assisting leadership in their attempts to gain control over the male population. A domestic ideology was emerging which posited the domestic realm as the place where moral behaviour could be cultivated (Davin, 1978; Wilson, 2007), giving women positions of relative social superiority to settler men in the West. These gendered ideologies of domesticity in Canada served the project of settler colonial statecraft. As O’Connell (2009) writes, “The state was portrayed as vulnerable and in need of strategies to punish or enlist subjects into making appropriate choices... the domestic realm...was the site where one could discern truly moral behaviour” (p. 182). Men, characterized by an absence of the ‘domestic realm’, were seen as engaging in improper white male behaviour. Surveyor Byron Johnson observed in 1872 that white men had “left behind them the customary checks of their family circle, and from the sparseness of the female population, they meet with little of the restraining influence of women’s society” (Perry, 1997, p. 509). Living within the confines of Company policy, the male population of the West had been living in absence of the physical and ideological influence of white women and British domesticity for centuries. They were now seen as lacking the characteristics of civilization and modernity required for building a settler state and securing ideologies of settler superiority. In 1865, Mathew Macfie wrote of white women as capable of encouraging men to “cultivate domestic virtues and lead sober lives” (Perry, 1997, p. 511). To leadership, they would convert men into “settlers with white families and households” providing “a base for processes of cultural reproduction” (Hall, 2007, p. 67). As wives and mother, women could effectively create a masculinity characterized by civilized white settler behaviour, conducive for establishing settler ascendancy on the ground. The female gender was seen to embody both a behaviour and geographic organization that would cultivate a domestic permanence characteristic of a superior

white society on the ground, naturalizing and legitimizing the ideological apparatus of state dispossession/domination.

The systems of gender that white women were expected to produce also functioned in both material and symbolic ways to facilitate the eliminatory mechanisms of settler colonial statecraft in Canada. White women were employed to end the legacy of integration and miscegenation between white men and Indigenous women that had been encouraged and tolerated by the NWC and HBC throughout the fur trade. In 1862, an anonymous statement was published in the *British Columbian* that wrote: "The evil" of mixed-race relationships "can only be remedied by the introduction of fair ones of a purer caste into the Colony" (Perry, 1997, p. 508). This was a moral evil by standards of European gender-race organization but also a 'political evil' in terms of settler statecraft. White women were a mechanism of racial separation that could remove white men from their close involvement with Indigenous society, generating the hierarchical settler-Indigenous relationship required to facilitate the dispossessing/dominating project of settler state sovereignty. Unlike the male population who threatened this project, white women helped to stabilize the eliminatory mechanisms of settler statecraft. As Janiewski (1997) argues, white women who settled in the West "contributed their productive and reproductive capacities to the construction of a settler society that displaced the indigenous inhabitants" (p. 57)¹⁷. Their presence would serve to create a new white settler society characterized by civilization and permanence *alongside* the simultaneous dissolution and erasure of Indigenous society. White women were viewed as the only

¹⁷Employing white women for the purpose of settler colonial state formation in Canada was not exclusively an endeavour of white male leadership. White feminist organizing was an influential force that assisted these leaders in the building a settler colonial state. It is out of the scope of this thesis to go into detail about efforts of white liberal feminism in Canada that emerged in line with the oppressive and eliminatory goals of the settler state (for example, the famous five supported the sterilization of Indigenous women), but it should be noted that white women feminists and organizations in early Canada reflected these same commitments on their own accord (see Henderson, 2003; Johnstone, 2018; Melman, 1996; Pickles, 1998).

actors who could end the practice of male integration and create a separate and superior white population positioned to dominate over Indigenous land and livelihood.

This deeper interrogation of settler colonial statecraft in Western Canada has revealed why Audra Simpson's androcentric theory is incomplete. The process of state building was actually hindered by the homosocial settler population of men, as the long absence of white women had allowed the 'non-settlement', 'economic sojourner', and highly integrated male character of the West to form and flourish. As this 'male character' threatened the stability of the settler colonial regime, white women were employed to address the critical setbacks that a longstanding legacy of gendered HBC policy now posed to British investors and politicians investing in settler colonization. As "agents of civilization, stability and procreation" (Alessio, 1997, p. 259) white women were employed to ensure the settler regime of Canada could form and be sustained¹⁸. This history counters binary narratives that tend to separate women from the political work of settler statecraft, as Audra Simpson does in *The State is a Man*. Scholars of gender and colonialism also routinely put forth this narrative, as Kathleen Wilson (2007) writes, "If men's imperial work was to 'discover', to explore, to conquer, and dispossess others, women's was to reproduce the race, to bear children, maintain their men, and make families and households" (p. 47). As this chapter has demonstrated, it is conceptually incorrect to suggest that this latter work of women did not critically serve and engage in this former work associated with men. The gendered work of women was harnessed to build up and secure the settler colonial state and served to facilitate the so-called 'male' work of dispossession and domination. The physical, practical and ideological presence of white women during the nineteenth century era of settler colonial regime building ensured that a

¹⁸ I say all of Canada here because the historical ideational framing of white women suggests that without them, settler colonial statecraft would not be possible anywhere. The settler population in the East did not pose the same instability to the settler colonial regime as the longstanding presence of white women had allowed for the creation of a large white population, nuclear families, homesteads, and a 'civilized' European culture. Regardless of geographic location, white women were a necessary component to settler state formation and reproduction.

settler population in the West would conform to the conditions required of settler colonization and do the actual settler work of creating and sustaining a colonial state.

Conclusion

The history presented in this chapter and thesis expands the conceptual and practical foundations of settler colonialism as a structure and process and makes an intervention into how gender is theorized in relation to the settler colonial state. Simpson's assertion that the settler state 'is a man' does not account for the historical ways that gender and white women actually served to make possible the formation of the settler colonial state itself and ensure its ongoing reproduction. Her androcentric theory limits a complete and fully accurate understanding of how gender served to create and uphold settler colonial phenomenon from being realized. This discussion also illuminates why the state cannot only be theorized in the masculine on the basis of heteropatriarchy, as white women critically contributed to the "European establishment of Western heteropatriarchal and binary sex/gender systems" (Morgenson, 2012, p. 13) in Canada. White women were fundamental to the creation of European gender roles, sexuality, and the nuclear family in the West which secured the building and maintaining of the settler state. Their substantial emigration overseas ensured that the "long-lasting traits of settler colonial political traditions" were established on the ground, which Verancini (2015) defines as "a gendered order, a focus on mononuclear familial relations and reproduction" (p. 315). These Eurocentric systems of gender were not just a site of oppression for white women, as Audra Simpson's binary theory of the male state would assume, but a site by which these women asserted authority and influence to critically facilitate the building and sustaining of the settler colonial regime in the nineteenth century. This poses a challenge to the basis of Audra Simpson's masculine theory and demonstrates "the importance of embracing a 'both/and' conceptual and political stance for understanding multiple

forms of interlocking oppressions and violence” (Hunt and Holmes, 2015, p. 160) within the gendered settler colonial state.

Viewing the settler colonial state as an intersectional and gendered phenomenon upheld by white women creates a space to further interpret and diagnose how gendered domination takes form and is reproduced in Canada, which in turn opens up new possibilities for how decolonization might take shape accordingly. Such an approach increases the capacity to identify sites of oppressive and exploitative power within and through gendered subjects and systems, while then allowing for the articulation of new and important gendered sites of decolonial intervention to emerge. As well, this history should prompt future endeavors involving an analysis of settler colonial heteropatriarchy to include an interrogation and unpacking of white women’s critical influence and power within this structure and process, both historically and as this position has endured throughout time. In lieu of a more formal conclusion, chapter four will now provide a discussion of the possible implications this thesis may have for efforts of mainstream feminism in Canada. This will allow for the significance of this research to be illuminated and applied in greater detail, while serving the practical purpose of theorizing why/how white woman feminists invested in decolonization and solidarity building in Canada should/could productively respond to this history.

Chapter Four – The Settler Colonial State is a White Woman: Implications for White Settler Feminist Solidarity in Canada

“Feminists should not *only* look to inclusion in the models of governance and community that settler nations are founded on; they should also look toward disrupting Eurocentric systems of creating and managing binary-based gender roles, modern sexuality, and the nuclear family”

— Rita Dhamoon, *A Feminist Approach to Decolonizing Anti-Racism*
(2015, p. 32, emphasis original)

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the significance of this thesis in the broader context of mainstream feminist¹⁹ activism in Canada. The following discussion will draw from Canada’s gendered history of statecraft to theorize why it is important for white feminists²⁰ to productively respond to this colonial legacy moving forward. This is illuminated in the above statement, where Rita Dhamoon argues that a decolonized feminism ought to expand its movement outside of the settler colonial state and dedicate itself to deconstructing “binary-based gender roles, modern sexuality, and the nuclear family,” as the state and these systems are mechanisms of gendered settler colonial oppression which serve to naturalize, legitimize, and reproduce the dispossession and erasure of Indigenous women. The historical relationship between white women and settler colonial statecraft in Canada articulates with greater precision exactly why such projects must be undertaken by mainstream feminists. White women are historically connected to the creation of the permanent and stable sovereign settler state in Canada and the various gendered systems which ensure its continued existence. They hold a specific historical position that directly implicates them

¹⁹ I use the terms “mainstream feminism” to describe a liberal theory/movement that was created by white women, centers the state as the primary site of women’s liberation, and of which the central objective has been to achieve a status of ‘equality’ with men. It is often called “white feminism” or “whitestream feminism” (see Grande, 2003) as it has historically served the interests of white women and ignored intersections of class, race, sexuality etc. in its theory and movement. It is the most prominent feminist platform by which white women have and continue to advance their concerns of gender justice. Although mainstream feminism has a legacy of white settler privilege, it remains relevant as it has not been unresponsive to critique as evidenced by the intersectional transformation that has characterized and redefined the third wave. This chapter aims to further this intersectional critique.

²⁰ I use the term “feminist” and “white feminist” in this chapter to identify women involved in feminism but acknowledge that all genders can identify with this term and engage in its theory and praxis. This discussion is not only reserved for white or women feminists, however the particular relationship between white women and the settler colonial state presents an underlying accountability to addressing and redressing white settler structure and process that differs from the positions held by feminists of colour (see Lawrence & Dua, 2005) and feminists of other genders. The phrase “mainstream feminists” will refer specifically to white women in this chapter.

in this decolonizing feminist project that Dhamoon advances. As political actors dedicated to gender justice, addressing white women's historical role in settler colonial statecraft, a process identified by scholars such as Audra Simpson as the source of violent oppression which targets the ongoing elimination of Indigenous women in Canada, prompts white feminist actors to be responsive to this history. This chapter will argue that conceptualizing the state as a white women is significant because it provides the historical groundwork from which an informed and decolonized mainstream feminist movement can mobilize, prompting white feminists to begin the process of redressing their colonial legacy to productively align their movement in solidarity with the anti-violence objectives of Indigenous feminists, and providing a foundation to theorize what a specific decolonial trajectory of action for mainstream feminism in Canada might look like moving forward.

Laying the Groundwork for an Informed Feminist Decolonization Movement

Acknowledging the historical relationship between white women and Canada's settler colonial state holds important significance for the creation of a mainstream feminist decolonization movement. If this colonial legacy is not addressed, white feminists will not be equipped to actively redress this history moving forward. A central tenant to projects of settler decolonization is engaging directly with the historical and enduring legacies of Canada's settler colonial regime. As Coulthard (2014) asserts, decolonization requires settlers to draw "critically on the past with an eye to radically transform the colonial power relations that have come to dominate our present" (p. 157). History must be considered when theorizing how the social justice strategies, and in particular decolonization strategies, of various groups living in a settler colonial context should take shape. For example, Lawrence and Dua (2005) discuss how settlers of colour can mitigate their complicity with ongoing land dispossession and are careful to situate this endeavour as

distinct from those that must be undertaken by white settlers, whose historical position ties them more directly to colonial politics of land acquisition, domination and so forth. Robinder Sehdev (2011) also addresses how settlers of colour are historically situated within the state in order to promote decolonial solidarities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of colour in Canada. This thesis contributes to these efforts which seek to nuance historical difference within settler colonial politics for the purpose of generating informed decolonization movements that can act in productive solidarity with Indigenous nations. If white women feminists address their historical role in settler colonial statecraft, they will be equipped to transform and reconstruct mainstream feminism in Canada so that it might productively support the decolonizing and self-determining goals of Indigenous resurgence.

The path to creating a decolonized mainstream feminist movement will require white women to do the work of understanding, reflecting, transforming, and being accountable to their historical relationship with settler state oppression. A feminist movement which overlooks the historical relationship between white women and settler colonial statecraft will remain limited in its potential to engage in efforts of decolonization. Generating solidarity with Indigenous nations and women in Canada will not be realized if mainstream feminism does not take the necessary steps to address the ways in which white women are historically tied to the creation and sustaining of Canada's stable sovereign settler state. I argue that this thesis holds significance for mainstream feminists because it provides historical and theoretical groundwork from which a decolonized feminist movement can mobilize. The gendered process of settler colonial statecraft in Canada provides a foundation from which a specific agenda of decolonization for white women feminists moving forward can be conceptualized, one that is directly attuned to their historical position as actors who were called upon to help secure the domination and dispossession of Indigenous

peoples in Canada. A mainstream feminism which is responsive to this colonial legacy will avoid reproducing a movement with colonial outcomes and strategies and allow for the decolonial potential of the white woman subject and her feminist efforts to be realized.

Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women

Conceptualizing the settler state as ‘a white woman’ also illuminates why mainstream feminists are implicated in dismantling the “gendered and murderous” (Simpson, 2016, para 1) project of the settler colonial state that Audra Simpson puts forth. Simpson identifies and interrogates the heteropatriarchal (and thus assumedly male) politics of settler colonialism in order to address and make sense of the ongoing violence experienced by Indigenous women in Canada. She holds the historically gendered and violent process of settler colonial statecraft responsible when considering questions about the MMIWG crisis such as “why are these women being targeted?” and “who is the perpetrator, what do we do?” (para 24). She argues that *history* is the fundamental perpetrator of violence against Indigenous women in Canada, writing “when history... is “the perp” a lot has to get done” (para 25), and characterizes this history as the white, masculine, and heteropatriarchal process of settler statecraft. Simpson ends her discussion by emphasizing the important and difficult task of addressing this history and changing the dialogue around the settler colonial state in order to confront the “meta-claims of the state” (para 26) which legitimize and naturalize the ongoing erasure of Indigenous people and especially women. She suggests that providing individuals with the historical “data of dispossession” and the “conceptual and analytical toolkit” to confront the settler colonial state will pave the way for more transformative decolonial efforts to emerge that can productively tackle the MMIW crisis.

I argue that conceptualizing the settler state ‘as a white woman’ furthers this project of gendered anti-violence that Audra Simpson is concerned with by directly implicating mainstream

feminists in the dismantling of the colonial state apparatus which perpetuates the ongoing oppression of Indigenous women in Canada. Simpson's androcentric theory overlooks the relationship between white women and settler colonial statecraft, rendering the 'gendered perpetrator' of the settler state, and the violence that it reproduces which targets Indigenous women, as a man. Simpson's gendered theory of statecraft provides a narrow 'data of dispossession' and 'conceptual toolkit' that forecloses the role of white women within Canada's history of establishing settler sovereignty. If history is 'the perp' that must be addressed, as Simpson suggests, framing the settler colonial state as a woman (and not *just* a man) holds significance for addressing gendered Indigenous violence as it occurs within and through the settler state. Namely, it brings attention to the reality that white women are historically implicated in Canada's gendered and violent project of settler colonial statecraft. Acknowledging this history, and the relationship it has to the ongoing MMIWG crisis, positions white woman feminists to approach this concern from a place that decolonizes their historical attachment to the settler state. Mainstream feminists must not only be concerned with how men are implicated in gendered Indigenous violence, but how they, as subjects which are attached to the creation and sustaining of the stable settler colonial state, are implicated in sustaining this violent phenomenon. The gendered nature of settler colonial statecraft prompts mainstream feminists to engage in a dismantling of the way settler colonial power (to which they are historically tied) continues to manifest within and through the state to target Indigenous women, taking seriously the position of white women within this structure and process.

If mainstream feminists address how their upholding of the settler colonial state contributes to the ongoing dispossession and elimination of Indigenous people and women, a project of gender justice will emerge that is aligned with the underlying objectives of Audra Simpson's work. As

political actors working towards gender justice, conceptualizing the state ‘as a white woman’ reveals the ideational imperative attached to white women feminists in stopping the gendered Indigenous violence that Simpson is concerned with. It prompts mainstream feminists to acknowledge a history which implicates them in legitimizing and naturalizing the violent ‘meta-claims of the state’, and to then align with Simpson’s goal of confronting and dismantling this colonial legacy. When white women feminists are able to acknowledge their historical positions as ‘the perpetrator’ alongside white men, they are able to theorize how they can then divest from the practices and ideologies which tie them to this position and reorient their movement efforts in a way that actively redresses this legacy. This thesis provides historical data that must be considered if mainstream feminism is to create a movement of gender justice that is accountable and responsive to the settler colonial state and the gendered Indigenous violence it reproduces. It opens up a space for mainstream feminism to decolonize and redress its historical legacy, and to align and engage in productive solidarity with the efforts of Indigenous feminists dedicated to ending violence against Indigenous women in Canada.

Using History to Create a Trajectory of Decolonial Feminist Action

The rest of this chapter will now theorize how mainstream feminist politics in Canada could produce a responsive and decolonized project of feminist justice attuned to the history presented in this thesis. It is beyond the scope of this project to present a course of direct action for mainstream feminism moving forward, as such an endeavour would require additional research about the specific relationship white women currently have to the settler colonial state, a deeper understanding of how this power manifests in various ways on the ground in everyday life and politics, and a more direct engagement with Indigenous communities and scholars to theorize a concrete trajectory of feminist political action moving forward. Instead, this section will begin to

imagine what a potential response by mainstream feminists could look like in practice. The specificity of this research presents an opportunity for white feminists to theorize how they might productively respond to this (ongoing) history to forward an agenda of gendered settler decolonization and offer an effective means of support and coalition-building alongside gendered Indigenous resurgence movements. The most predominant historical insight from this research is the relationship between white women and the stable sovereign settler state. The position of white women as a condition of possibility by which the settler state of Canada could form and sustain itself in the nineteenth century emerges as a necessary site of decolonizing and reversal in order for the transformative dismantling of white women's colonial power to be realized. A space is opened here for white feminists to engage, address, and productively rectify the historical legacy to which their current position within the Canadian state is tied. White women were critical actors who aided in transforming permanent settlement into permanent settler colonization, and for a radical decolonial feminist response to emerge, dismantling this colonial legacy is a productive place to start.

History demonstrates that it was and is possible to have permanence without dispossession. Treaty relationships, when viewed in their original spirit and intent, provide a clear vision of this idea. There are (and were) possibilities for permanent settlement to co-exist on the land with Indigenous nations, a concept often presented now in terms of a "nation-to-nation" arrangement or the idea of a "treaty order" of government. The potential for crafting a permanent settlement without violent settler domination and Indigenous dispossession was somewhat recognizable during the fur trade. Under Company policy the male population of the West was crafting a political vision for Canada that was not necessarily settler colonial in nature. White women were introduced by colonial leadership as a gendered mechanism of statecraft by which the foundation

for a “structure of domination predicated on dispossession” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 15) could form and be sustained. This is not an explicit causal link, as this process was facilitated in multiple ways by multiple forces, but there is enough evidence to suggest that white women possess a historical relationship to the project of territorial dispossession and the establishing of settler ascendancy/power during the nineteenth century. In light of this, efforts of mainstream feminist decolonization can be advanced with greater precision, targeting settler colonial phenomena that is directly attached to white women’s ongoing presence within the Canadian state. In the context of current decolonization and resurgence efforts, which seek to overturn colonial state structure and envision new alternatives of co-existence, I suggest that in light of the historical place white women held in settler colonial statecraft, a political question mainstream feminism might now take up is, *how might we craft a permanent settlement in Canada that is not dispossessive?*

Addressing the above question serves to re-orient mainstream feminism towards an accountable and productive decolonized project of gender justice that generates a future of non-domination and actively tackles state violence against Indigenous women. To redress/reverse/resurge from their gendered colonial legacy, mainstream feminists must work to dismantle the hierarchical political system of settler domination and Indigenous dispossession which was in significant part made possible by the role of white women in settler statecraft. A direct reversal and decolonization of this history is perhaps most obviously realized through a mainstream feminist movement that is dedicated to revitalizing a ‘treaty order’ of government in Canada. In stark opposition to the dominating hierarchical relations of settler statecraft that white women helped to establish, a treaty approach to politics values notions of “respectful coexistence” (Walia, 2012), “accountable ways of being in relation to one another and the lands we live on” (Hunt and Holmes, 2015, p. 168), “reciprocal relations” (Irlbacher-Fox, 2014, p. 153), and “mutual

recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships” (TRC, 2015, p. 5). White feminist actors can begin to dismantle settler colonial hierarchy by conceptualizing how they might exist and act differently as treaty persons living within the Canadian state. A mainstream feminist project which invests life into renewing a treaty order based on these values will counter the legacy white women hold in preventing this political vision from being realized in Canadian history. By acknowledging this colonial history and re-orienting their present towards a future characterized by non-domination, white women feminists can engage in the decolonizing and resurgence-facilitating work of building a political order premised on co-existence with and alongside Indigenous nations.

To accomplish this, white feminists must invest in the revitalizing, renewing, and resurging of treaty relationships with Indigenous nations and engage in a mobilization of solidary and active support for political efforts of Indigenous land repatriation and self-determination. Though Sehdev is speaking to settlers of colour in her work, she makes a point that is also pertinent for white feminists, in that “[Canada] is made possible by treaty, and it is therefore incumbent on us to reconsider our strategies for social justice with treaty in mind” (Sehdev, 2011 p. 265). Mainstream feminists can move toward this goal by finding productive ways to address treaty renewal and implementation from their gendered settler positionalities. A deeper understanding and conceptualizing of how white women feminists are connected to treaties and the treaty relationship will be necessary to form a movement which counters their historical relationship to colonial statecraft. This is a critical time for such action to emerge from mainstream feminist organizing, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated in 2017, “It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and

partnership.”²¹ White women feminists must consider what role they have and should play in negotiating and rebuilding a treaty political order on the ‘settler side’ of treaty negotiations in Canada. Mainstream feminism has a history of constitutional activism and elite level organizing that demonstrates its potential for bolstering the treaty efforts of Indigenous nations and for situating settler women as influential political actors in carrying out the collective rebuilding of a nation to nation relationship. Moving forward as elite level or grassroots actors, mainstream feminists might do so by prioritizing treaty renewal within their movement or creating their own organization to facilitate the resurgence of a treaty political order in Canada and to engage in coalition-building alongside Indigenous organizations.

A mainstream feminist project which invests significant energy into renewing and revitalizing treaty relationships in Canada not only counters white women’s historical connection to state domination and Indigenous dispossession, but also addresses the issue of violence against Indigenous women that is perpetuated by settler colonial state structure and process. As Audra Simpson (2016) argues, the settler colonial state “is killing Native women” in order to secure the political project of “settling” and “dispossession” (para 1). A dismantling of settler colonial domination/dispossession is directly connected to ending the violence Indigenous women face. This idea is outlined in the 2019 National Inquiry on MMIWG in Canada, which states that “if properly interpreted, Treaties can also support the obligations of governments to implement measures to address violence against Indigenous women” (p. 246). Investing in the resurgence of a treaty order of government should thus be viewed as a mainstream feminist imperative. Crafting a permanent settlement characterized by non-domination in the form of a nation-to-nation

²¹ Such statements must be received with critical skepticism, as colonial state mechanisms continue to thwart Indigenous efforts of self-determination. However, assertions such as this from the Canadian state hold significance (however limited) in signaling to settlers that this is a conversation moving to the forefront of the political agenda.

relationship will simultaneously address the gendered violence that settler colonial domination is reliant on. As the ‘Calls for Justice’ report states, “Indigenous self-determination and self-governance in all areas of Indigenous society are required to properly serve and protect Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people” (2019, p. 175). Neither gender liberation for Indigenous women nor the creation of a nation-to-nation treaty relationship can be realized if the settler colonial state remains intact. To forward both of these projects, mainstream feminism must “realign its end goals toward dismantling not just heteropatriarchy, but also the settler colonial nation-states that heteropatriarchy upholds” (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 28). A mainstream feminism dedicated to renewing a treaty order will redress white women’s connection to the ongoing governing forces of Indigenous oppression and facilitate the gendered anti-violence project Audra Simpson puts forth in her work.

Conclusion

When the state is conceptualized as a ‘white woman’, mainstream feminism is positioned not only as a necessary site for transformative decolonization but also as a site of significant potential for supporting and activating Indigenous resurgence/feminist movements, so long as it radically dismantles and rebuilds the theoretical and practical grounds on which it operates. Acknowledging the gendered legacy of settler statecraft in Canada, which situates white women amidst the aggregation of settler colonial forces that merge to facilitate the ongoing dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples and women in Canada, prompts mainstream feminists to prioritize a dismantling of the ways the settler state is created and reproduced via white gendered systems and subjects. This allows for a historically grounded and decolonized feminist trajectory of action to be conceptualized that actively redresses the colonial history of white women in its theory and praxis. A mainstream feminism which does not attune itself to Canada’s gendered

colonial history and actively work to reverse this legacy will be improperly equipped to engage in political projects of decolonization and work in solidarity with Indigenous feminist resurgence movements. In contrast, a mainstream feminism which critically engages with the settler colonial state and prioritizes a reversal of white women's colonial legacy will open up significant possibilities for actualizing new futures of settler existence not characterized by domination, dispossession, heteropatriarchy, and gendered Indigenous violence.

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