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"We pay you for your land and stay amongst you folks": settler colonialism and indigenous power in Southwest Washington Territory

Kaden M. (Kaden Mark) Jelsing
Western Washington University

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**“We pay you for your land and stay amongst you folks”: Settler Colonialism and
Indigenous Power in Southwest Washington Territory**

By

Kaden Mark Jelsing

Accepted in Partial Completion
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Kathleen L. Kitto, Dean of the Graduate School

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair, Dr. Christopher C. Friday

Dr. Kevin A. Leonard

Dr. Jennifer Seltz

Master's Thesis

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Kaden Mark Jelsing

December 1, 2014

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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

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Of the Requirements for the Degree
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Abstract

Against a teleological narrative of inevitable U.S. hegemony in what is now the southwest corner of Washington State, this work argues that settler colonialism has been a co-creation of local indigenous peoples and settlers that has emerged from the mid-nineteenth century onward through continuous negotiations of power and influence. The uneasy co-existence between metanarratives of U.S. westward expansion and local narratives produced through the colonial encounter give rise to productive contradictions that provide materials to reframe the dominant narratives that continue to naturalize settler colonial power today.

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Introduction: The Contradictory Lives of Stories

Near the end of the winter ceremonial season—a time marked by visiting and sacred rituals among local villages of coast Salish peoples—a handful of canoes carrying Lower Chehalis and Chinook Indians skillfully negotiated the braided tidal channels of Grays Harbor and entered the Chehalis River at its mouth. When the evening fell, in the great houses, the people sang to spirit helpers. During the days they raced their canoes under the low-hanging sun with the aid of other spirit helpers who enhanced those vessels and their crews. At a bend in the river less than a mile from their destination, men and women bathed and donned their finest clothes—the men decorating themselves with ostrich feathers imported from Africa, the women in calico, originating, perhaps, from Alabama cotton fields and the humming textile mills of England. All applied red ochre pigment to their faces before disembarking towards the ceremonial grounds.¹ Elsewhere along the coast and throughout the Cowlitz and Chehalis river drainages, hundreds more from dozens of villages poled their canoes towards the same destination. These travelers spoke many different languages and dialects, often finding a common tongue in what came to be known as *Chinuk wawa*, which the *King George* and *Boston* men² referred to as Chinook jargon—a language developed through trade circuits in aboriginal times but expanded globally with the opening of the maritime fur trade in the late eighteenth century. In that lingua franca, their gathering was known as a "potlatch," a term meaning "to give," but employed to describe

¹ James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast: Or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory* (New York: Harper, 1857), 334, 154.

² Nineteenth-century indigenous peoples on the Northwest Coast referred to Englishmen and Americans, respectively as King George men and Bostons, Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 80.

ceremonial practices of gift giving in which a host bestows wealth to visitors from neighboring villages to affirm individual or family status within networks of extending kinship groups, to confirm rights to resource sites as well as to affirm marriages or access certain spirit powers.³ Potlatches were for the established elite and for those newly seeking a higher rank or status, a feature increasingly common following nearly a half century of contact with Europeans and Americans in which periodic disease episodes necessitated frequent recalibrations of power. This particular "potlatch" would be held by a newcomer who, following local conventions, offered valuable gifts and a feast of meats, breads, and potatoes as he attempted to consolidate his own power over rights to camas fields, fisheries, pastures, and game trails.⁴

This newcomer was Isaac Stevens, the recently appointed governor of Washington Territory and ex officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the territory. As American settlement—most often in the form of squatting—began to intensify in Indian country, the federal government of the United States scrambled to engage Native inhabitants by treaty to, in the discourse of U.S. land policy, "legally" cede their lands. So far, Stevens had successfully induced many aboriginal bands along Puget Sound, the Cascade foothills, and the Olympic Peninsula into ceding most of what would become western Washington State. However, at the council on the banks of the Chehalis, events unraveled as the days wore on and Stevens lost the

³ For an ethnographic overview of the potlatch see Wayne Suttles, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 7, Northwest Coast* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), esp. 84-85, 513. For a discussion on the slippery nature of the Chinook Wawa term for "potlatch," and a detailed account of the development of this language see, *George Lang, Making Wawa: The Genesis of Chinook Jargon* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009). The view that Chinook Wawa was an unreliable system of communication has been counteracted in recent years by more nuanced attention to its linguistic innovations and communicative efficiency in an extraordinarily polyglot milieu—in fact, it was Euro-American settlers who often found themselves in life or death situations due to their inability to speak the "jargon."

⁴ For a discussion on how the treaty commissions followed potlatch protocol see Harmon, *Indians in the Making*, 80.

ability to command authority as a legitimate representative of U.S. power, or, as the federal government preferred to present themselves to Indians, the "Great Father".⁵

Despite its unusual status as the only “treaty council that failed,” or, the only Stevens treaty not signed on the spot, conventional treatments of regional history continue to characterize the “treaty era” of the mid-nineteenth century as a one-sided mechanization of colonial power, and read the Euro-American-produced treaty minutes at face value, perpetuating myths of a natural Euro-American superiority and the inevitability of settler domination. As the opening passage illustrates, with its description of the use of decorative trade items culled from far-flung regions of the globe, performance of individual spirit songs, the fulfillment of local protocol and political maneuvering in light of a newcomer’s arrival, indigenous delegates’ decisions and actions were shaped by priorities that extended far beyond a mere response to the imposition of settler-colonial domination and instead reflect continuing articulations of indigenous power and influence.⁶

The naive Indians populating many conventional accounts of the “Stevens Treaties”—tragically exploited at the hands of cunning American pioneers and then promptly disappearing, transforming into wageworkers, or sidelined as passive victims who suddenly reappear with late-twentieth century casinos and fishing rights activism⁷—begin to look like Frontierland

⁵ Ultimately, this symbol of paternalism has been seen to be manifested, finally, in the President of the United States himself. For an overview of the ongoing relationship of paternalism and American Indian Policy, see Frances Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.)

⁶ For a review of the foundational scholarship that imported frameworks of modern empire and colonialism to the study of the American West and U.S. westward expansion, and an argument for a regional case study approach, see Gray H. Whaley, “Oregon, Illahee, and the Empire Republic: A Case Study of American Colonialism, 1843-1858,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol 36, No. 2 (Summer, 2005).

⁷ For work that perpetuates this view, much of it utilized in survey courses in Pacific Northwest History, see Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 125; William G. Robbins and Katrine Barber, *Nature’s Northwest: The North Pacific Slope in the Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon*,

caricatures when placed alongside the account of the “treaty council that failed” that opened this introduction. But there is more at stake than writing “colorful characters” into historical narratives just to “liven things up.” The characterization of colonized peoples within the discipline of anthropology and throughout the social sciences as a primitive “people without history”⁸ has long been a political matter and a colonial tactic. As historian Ned Blackhawk has pointed out, this primitivism has authorized the dispossession and economic marginalization of indigenous peoples by positioning them as static premodern peoples whose place at the bottom of a scale of savagery-to-civilization renders them unable to assume the position of rational political subject and exposes them to colonial violence.⁹

What Blackhawk makes clear is that *how* stories are told matters. Historian Gray H. Whaley’s recent work is exemplary of an increasing inclination by scholars to understand the colonization of the Pacific Northwest alongside other settler colonial societies: to examine the process of violent dispossession and to dispel myths of an innocent, or even benevolent settlement of the North American continent by the U.S. and Canada. Ultimately though, Whaley follows interpreters of Pacific Northwest history who, though troping their narratives as tragic instead of triumphant, continue to be committed to the goal of accurately situating in time *when*

Rev. ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 2002). University of Washington Professor John M. Findlay has an online course through the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest which positions local indigenous peoples as episodic actors within the grand sweep of regional, state, or national history, John M. Findlay, “History of Washington State and the Pacific Northwest,” <http://www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/Classroom%20Materials/Pacific%20Northwest%20History/PNW%20History%20Home.html> (accessed 11/24/2014)

⁸ Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁹ Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Native power *ended*.¹⁰ Following the intensifying call to explain the survival and persistence of indigenous peoples,¹¹ I push further on three related fronts. First, I trace how indigenous influence and power has been articulated in waves throughout time, shaped by both institutional constraints and opportunities, but also shaped by priorities beyond those shaped by the colonial encounter. Second, I analyze how settler colonial narratives have been employed to make political claims and how these narrative framings continue to linger, often within the very work that seeks to critique the colonial power these narratives frame as inevitable. Third, I argue alongside Paige Raibmon, that settler colonialism is a co-construction, an entanglement, or a dense weave that is locally manifested through a long term accretion of ordinary actions perpetuated by ordinary people, Native and non-Native alike. An analysis of these “microtechniques of dispossession,” should not be limited to the contradictory play between official policy and local practice in regards to land use, as Raibmon asserts, but also between and within narratives of the past that authorize and render natural these more physical manifestations of settler colonial power.¹²

Ethnohistory, Historical Time, and Agency

¹⁰ One needn't look farther than the title of his book, Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Despite his rich account of the co-construction of settler colonial society in mid-nineteenth century Oregon, Mathias Bergmann abruptly situates U.S. hegemony upon the placement of geopolitical borders that “all but sealed American control and Euro-American social, cultural, and economic dominance.” I argue that even these borders were a co-constructed geography and did not foreclose settler dominance once and for all. Mathias D. Bergmann, “‘We Should Lose Much by Their Absence’: The Centrality of Chinookans and Kalapuyans to Life in Frontier Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 109, no. 1 (Spring, 2008), 54.

¹¹ For a sample of literature emphasizing survival and renewal see Michael V. Wilcox, *The Pueblo Revolt and the Mythology of Conquest: An Indigenous Archaeology of Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Zoltán Grossman and Alan Parker, eds., *Asserting Native Resilience: Pacific Rim Indigenous Nations Face the Climate Crisis* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012); Charles Wilkinson, *The People Are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

¹² Paige Raibmon, “Unmaking Native Space: A Genealogy of Indian Policy, Settler Practice, and the Microtechniques of Dispossession,” in Alexandra Harmon, ed., *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 79.

Ethnohistory grew out of a response to the residual primitivist assumptions of salvage ethnography—an anthropological practice intending to capture the last traces of what was perceived to be a static but dying way of life—and, as historian Lisa Blee has recently observed, challenged previous anthropological assumptions in three ways: it reframed indigenous peoples as active historical agents, showed that they possess and are able to articulate their own historical consciousness, and that they interpret events within their own cultural contexts and cosmologies.¹³ Keith Thor Carlson has done some of the most finely tuned work in this regard, addressing each one of these priorities in his work on the Stó:lō, which has provided a useful model for my work. Carlson takes indigenous reckonings of time and historical change seriously, demonstrating how tribal identities and political priorities are forged through historical memories shaped by, but extending far beyond, a mere response to the colonialism. Not only does he show how the colonial encounter “on the ground” frustrated prescriptions emanating from the metropole—a theme taken up by postcolonial scholars in the 1980s and 1990s who sought to show how imperialist conquest and colonialist hegemony was neither natural, inevitable, or complete¹⁴—but he also shows how static notions of indigenous culture promoted by structural anthropology miss the contradictions and the “fluid, though anchored” identities that are elaborated within the “cauldron of colonialism” that is also the stuff of everyday life.¹⁵

¹³ Lisa Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi: Narrative and the Politics of Historical Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 18.

¹⁴ Bruce Braun discusses what is at stake in ignoring the messy, incomplete nature of colonialism, arguing that instead of a monolithic force, “postcoloniality is always a multiplicity,” and that colonialism “worked over” places and peoples in complex, multi-tiered ways. Seeing colonialism this way resists reifying it into a metanarrative of European/Euro-American power as the sole historical agent and the center of historical change. Bruce Braun, *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture and Power on Canada’s West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 23.

¹⁵ Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 154.

Contradiction as a Methodology, Microhistory, and “Hidden Transcripts”

But stories themselves also lead these kinds of contradictory lives, and close readings of geographically situated narratives alongside universalized master narratives that express civilizational progress, “manifest destiny,” and rugged individualism, expose endless contradictions. These stories, like the “treaty council that failed,” found embedded within treaty minutes, personal and institutional correspondences, settler reminiscences, recordings of oral histories, court transcripts, farmer diaries, and contemporary newspapers, not only expose the messiness of settler-colonial impositions in the region, but also contain—albeit in a largely mediated way—indigenous voices articulating priorities arising from different historical contexts and cosmologies that confound a linear unidirectional idea of historical consciousness.¹⁶

Utilizing a microhistorical approach, Ruth Sandwell has shown in her meticulous study of nineteenth century Saltspring Island, British Columbia how a panoply of other voices emerge when sources—even those produced by distant colonial interests—are read “against the grain.” Here, the contradiction between discourse and practice—between farmer ledgers expressing dependence on indigenous peoples and assumptions of rural self-sufficiency expressed by urban journalists, to give one example—illuminates the entangled lives of Natives and non-Natives as they were brought together through systems of global capitalism and colonialist violence, and also as they cobbled together new ways to live alongside one another, confounding racial

¹⁶ Here, I am referring to a Bakhtinian dialogical understanding of history as being irreducible to a single origin or meaning, and rather a series of clashes between words, their interpretations, and their temporary resolutions. In this context, I see history as a “pause,” at any point in this flow of multiple times and memories, to “reveal,” as Elizabeth Freeman, in a discussion of Walter Benjamin puts it, “the ligaments binding the past and the present,” Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 155. A good overview of Bakhtin’s use in the English-speaking world may be found in Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), esp. ch 2.

binaries and discursive categories.¹⁷ Neither a microcosmic example of a predictable systematic process, nor a colorful instance of insubordination by a colonial periphery, this microhistorical approach provides a much more useful picture of the specific mechanics of colonialism as it unfolded in the Pacific Northwest and in southwest Washington Territory, the location of my study. After all, as Julie Cruikshank puts it, “the consequences of colonialism are always local,” and these consequences continue to frame questions of social justice, political sovereignty, resource management, and the production of history in the region today.¹⁸

The “reading against the grain” that I employ through my analysis of such documents as the treaty transcript is a necessary approach to a body of archival materials that has been largely produced by colonialist interests and accreted through institutional processes of legitimization and negotiations of political power.¹⁹ James C. Scott refers to this body of texts as a “public transcript,” or, “to put it crudely, the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen.”²⁰ But lying beneath these policed, conventional performances of power exists the strata of “a partly sanitized, ambiguous, and coded version of [a] hidden transcript [that is] always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups.”²¹ Although indigenous peoples residing in what is now southwest Washington State were not “subordinated,” by colonial power in the mid-nineteenth century, textual production from this time framed indigenous peoples and

¹⁷ Ruth Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and the Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859-1891* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 5-6.

¹⁸ Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 25, 61.

¹⁹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1995).

²⁰ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

actions through assumptions of cultural inferiority and apolitical primitivism so that a reading of these texts for indigenous voices requires an eye for instances of divergence, in which the hidden transcript appears as a rupture, a contradiction.²²

But beyond a sensitivity to places in which indigenous peoples resisted incursions of non-Natives, textually or otherwise, I seek openings in which indigenous performances may also be read, with an ethnographic lens and within an ethnohistorical context, as emanating from other priorities and shaped by historical memories of contact and conflict beyond recent interactions with Euro-Americans. The men and women who pulled their canoes towards the treaty grounds on that icy day were articulating simultaneously kinship obligations to human and non-human entities—including spirit helpers, political power on a global stage of trade relations drawn from years of interaction with the Hudson’s Bay Company, and the anticipation of a newcomer’s claims to power and prestige in light of recent upheavals caused by smallpox epidemics. None of these priorities shaping the outcome of the Chehalis Treaty Council can be completely untangled, and this entanglement continues to shape treaty *stories*, which the descendants of the far-from-intimidated Coast Salish and Chinook delegates continue to find politically useful and socially cohesive.

Unlike many contemporary indigenous polities that had signed treaties and therefore have been able to glean some political and legal leverage from them, the Chehalis, Chinook, and Cowlitz never signed a treaty. Though they continued to interact with the U.S. government as tribal entities throughout the late nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, these groups

²² One drawback of this method of reading for “hidden transcripts” is the reliance on the assumption that colonial texts are themselves discursively monolithic, in order for them to act as a static baseline to make visible moments of resistance and rupture. Scott himself sees this as a danger, Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 21; see also, Laura Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 46-50.

struggled against vacillating Indian policies that denied them acknowledgement as sovereign polities, refused them coverage under the 1974 Boldt decision (which upheld fishing rights for signers of the “successful” Stevens treaties and simultaneously did not for non-signatory parties, in some cases “disappearing” specific groups, deemed “vanished” since treaty times such as the Samish, Duwamish, and many other “tribes” or bands), and perpetuated an ambiguity regarding the conditions of enrollment at other tribal agencies. This turbulent history of the struggle between tribal nations and the state, alongside struggles between indigenous polities, has acted as a motor of ethnogenesis for the contemporary Cowlitz, Chehalis, and Chinook people. By re-telling the story of the treaty (and the “Indian War” that followed) to themselves and others, emphasizing the theme of resistance in the form of refusal to “sign away” their lands, non-treaty Indians in present-day southwest Washington State affirm tribal identities and historical continuity as distinct peoples while also appealing to broader, shared anti-colonial struggles.²³

Narratives and Counter-Narratives

Drawing attention to alternative stories through contradictions between local narratives and master narratives does not discount the power of the latter to naturalize a settler-colonial

²³ Mícheál D. Roe, “Cowlitz Indian Ethnic Identity: Social Memories and 150 Years of Conflict with the United States Government,” in Ed Cairns and Mícheál D. Roe, eds., *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Christine Joy Dupres, “Learning What it Means to Be Indian: The Role of Performance and Genre in Cultural Renewal within the Cowlitz Indian Tribe,” (PhD diss, University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 81, 172-183. The ways in which native peoples have forged tribal identities since sustained interaction with the U.S. federal government has been a complex and fraught process. Indeed, indigenous accommodation to and appropriation of Western categories such as “nations,” and “tribes,” often to suit explicitly anti-colonial purposes is a phenomenon that extends beyond north America; see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983). Throughout the past two decades, there has been much scholarship on how the reservation system has shaped the creation of tribal identity but less on how Indian identity has been forged in other ways such as through common histories of resistance to reservations or through relationships with other indigenous groups. Andrew Fisher helps to fill this void with his detailed study of Columbia River Indians in *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

world and underwrite a sort of “settler common sense.”²⁴ Although on the mid-nineteenth century Northwest Coast, neither would-be colonizer nor colonized truly “possessed” one another,²⁵ stories coming out of this encounter shaped and were shaped by colonial power. As much as multiple narratives coming out of the “treaty era” provide alternatives to those that foreclose U.S. hegemony, this may also be seen as the time in which the production of U.S. History in the region was inaugurated. In other words, this was a time in which the expansion of the U.S. into indigenous lands required the master narratives, often underpinned by the concept of “manifest destiny,” that would naturalize this expansion and legitimize its violence and dispossessions.

Although other treaties in the region were signed expediently as Stevens conducted his whirlwind “treaty tour,” dissatisfaction in their wake—delay in ratification made it impossible for Stevens to make good on his promises: provisions, services, and the protection of certain lands from squatting settlers (often virulently and aggressively anti-Indian), for example—erupted into armed conflict by the mid-1850s. The way this conflict was deemed an “Indian War”—how it was narrated in newspapers, the language used to describe settler-Indian violence—demonstrates the attempt to subsume the memory of events into the master narrative of U.S. civilizational progress: a story of bringing law and justice to the wilderness. As southwest Washington Territory came into shape within a settler-colonial imagination as “domestic space,” the production of popular accounts illustrate the dual project of annexing memory and annexing land that resemble countless others from around North America and the

²⁴ Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

²⁵ Greg Denning, “Possessing Tahiti,” in *Performances* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), esp. 166-167. Also see the discussion on the politics of colonial possession in the context of the historiography of human geography in Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, Mass., Blackwell: 1994) 31-32.

broader colonial world and remind us that memory and landscape are mutually constitutive. Illustrative of this project was the contested construction of blockhouses in the region as threats of Indian war loomed and settler-colonials expressed anxiety over racial proximities and the reality of their dependence on local Native peoples.

It should not be a surprise then, that the dense meanings embedded in local places and the complex relationships humans have with them may be seen to extend beyond basic economic necessity. Many indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest continue, like anthropologist Keith Basso's Western Apache informants, to "maintain a complex array of symbolic relationships with their physical surroundings and these relationships, which may have little to do with the business of making a living, play a fundamental role in shaping other forms of social activity."²⁶ As Christine Joy Dupres notes in her study of Cowlitz identity, a continued sense of presence on the land has been crucial to preserving continuity of culture and identity: "Actual life upon the land, subsistence upon it, and interaction with it serve as indicators of Cowlitz identity that is vibrant and exists independent of narratives of resistance to state and historical relationships to aboriginal territory that rely upon the strict demarcations of usual and accustomed territory, as defined by and negotiated with outsiders."²⁷ In other words, articulations of sovereignty by indigenous peoples of southwest Washington Territory—though shaped by appeals for economic reparations and framed within the discourse of gridded space—cannot be reduced to a conception of land and resources as commodities.

Landscape is a text, and as such, can be read like a book, an archive, a letter. If both historical memory and landscape are co-productions, then settler-colonial attempts to overwrite

²⁶ Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 66.

²⁷ Dupres, "Learning What it Means to Be Indian, 140-150.

the landscape through naming, and through techniques of capitalist homogenization—by positing “land” as a commodity with a universal exchange value—may be seen as a direct instance of the colonialist violence Americanist and popular historical treatments have tended to avoid confronting. Serenella Iovino’s conceptualization of place as a “fluid compound of agencies in mutual determination in which every part emerges as a crossroad of ongoing stories,”²⁸ and Catriona Sandilands’ observation that “both the written page and the storied landscape are warehouses of memory that are external to the individual body...always already social, technological, and physical,”²⁹ bring us towards an understanding of bodies and places as woven together at a confluence of broader ecologies. This speaks to why “place”-based studies are important and what is at stake for indigenous peoples within a globalized world in which they are disproportionately effected by the related violences of ecological crisis, institutionalized racism, and economic inequality.³⁰

Historical memory is located at the nexus of landscapes, texts, and bodies, in overlapping timescales, producing contradictions and atemporalities that frustrate the linear chronology so foundational to colonialist metanarratives. This bodes well with North American indigenous cosmologies of place and time in general. Keith Basso, referring to the work of Vine Deloria, Jr., points out that indigenous peoples in North America tend to “embrace ‘spatial conceptions of history’ in which places and their names—and all that these may symbolize—are accorded central importance.” Familiarity and interaction with the physical landscape play multiple and

²⁸ Serenella Iovino, “Bodies of Naples: Stories, Matter, and the Landscapes of Porosity,” in Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, eds., *Material Ecocriticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 98.

²⁹ Catriona Sandilands, “Landscape, Memory, and Forgetting,” in Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, eds., *Material Feminisms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 274.

³⁰ Joni Adamson and Scott Slovic, “The Shoulders We Stand on: An Introduction to Ethnicity and Ecocriticism,” *MELU.S.*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer, 2009), 5-24.

overlapping roles in the constitution of individual identity and membership in a community or kin group as indigenous peoples’ “sense of place, their sense of their tribal past, and their vibrant sense of themselves are inseparably intertwined.”³¹ Easy demarcations of past, present and future are frustrated here by constant entanglement and interaction at the intersection of storied landscapes and storied bodies.

With this in mind, I structured my thesis as a series of three essays, each of which looks for sites within multiple tellings of the same story where what had been a familiar narrative landscape becomes slightly uncanny. As such, each chapter is itself a nexus of multiple spatio-temporal scales (jumping between global, local, watershed, region; between nineteenth-century Indian wars and the contemporary “war on terror”³²) in my attempt to model my thesis as a sort of landscape itself. Though I swing between multiple temporalities, each chapter follows a rough sequence of more conventional historical treatments of the region: the “Stevens treaties,” “Indian war,” and the “reservation era,” respectively. Each chapter is anchored in these themes but traces how historical actors have elaborated on narratives in a multiplicity of ways for a variety of purposes.

Chapter One, “*The Treaty Council that Failed*”? : *The Chehalis Treaty at the Interface of Colonial Encounter*, provides a basic background by positioning the locality of southwest Washington Territory, and more broadly, the Pacific Northwest, as a node of global exchange long before U.S. settler colonialist expansion. This long history of trade, movement, and engagement with diverse peoples shaped the priorities and actions of local indigenous peoples as

³¹ Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 34-35.

³² Lisa Blee makes these connections through her investigation into the nineteenth-century trial and hanging of Leschi and a “historical court,” set up as a symbolic tribunal to reexamine the case within the contemporary context of the “War on Terror” and the contested definitions arising from it regarding the laws of war and human rights, Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, 70-79.

newcomers from the United States began to impose themselves midway through the nineteenth century. The southwestern portion of Washington Territory—north of the Columbia river to the southern reaches of the Olympic Mountains and Puget sound and east of the Pacific Ocean to the Cascade Mountains—is an especially rich area of inquiry as it had been a dense nexus of trade long before U.S. incursions, not only as a major hub for the Hudson’s Bay Company, but also a center of indigenous trade centuries prior.

Isaac Stevens, Washington Territory’s first governor, was charged by the Indian superintendency to cede by treaty all indigenous land, leaving pockets of reservations whose placements were to be negotiated among the treaty delegates.³³ Of all the “Stevens Treaties,” one remained unsigned: the Chehalis “treaty council that failed.” Rather than understanding the treaty in terms of “failure,” I explore how the site of this treaty may be utilized as an entry point to glimpse a shifting and negotiated field of power as indigenous peoples used the treaty as an opportunity to make their own needs met in the wake of population loss, trade disruptions, and generational strife—many of these concerns having little to do with the U.S. and its pretensions of control over the land and its peoples.

Chapter Two, *Blockhouses as Sites of Imperial Domesticity: Racial Proximities and Biopolitics in Nineteenth Century Washington Territory* explores the politics of fear that has naturalized settler colonial power, in this case through the construction of the nineteenth century “Indian War.”³⁴ The administering of this war depended on policing of the boundaries between domestic and foreign space—in this case, through the actual physical space of forts and

³³ Kent D. Richards, *Isaac I. Stevens: Young Man in a Hurry* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1979), 190-192.

³⁴ Throughout, I capitalize “War” when referring to the specific Northwest Indian War and “Indian war” when speaking of warfare in general.

blockhouses and the discursive space of narratives that continue to circulate to this day. I argue that what is often understood to be characteristic of a purely contemporary biopolitics and “state of exception” that legitimizes state violence, had been deployed throughout the nineteenth century expansion of the U.S. in ways that have eerie resonance with not only the contemporary War on Terror, but the exposure of racialized and otherwise nonnormative populations to the violence of the state.

Divergences in narratives belie clear demarcations of domestic/foreign, internal/external, so crucial to the maintenance of settler-colonial space. I trace contradictions in War Stories in order to show how messy and incomplete this biopolitical maintenance of space was, and that local inhabitants often struggled to fit contradictory events into the master narrative of innocent “pioneers” triumphing over savage natives. Sometimes these contradictions exist within the very text that simultaneously expresses conventional tropes of Indian warfare and frontier violence.

Chapter Three, *Evocative Objects, Landscapes of Memory, and the Production of Knowledge in Southwest Washington Territory*, looks specifically at matters of locality. I trace how local knowledges of landscape, geography, and mobility, as well as the localized lives of introduced objects, have frustrated totalizing narratives of “Manifest Destiny” that make colonialism seem inevitable and a self-fulfilling prophecy, and how the imposition of technologies of power—maps, surveys, the grid—have also been frustrated, not only by complex social relations and the perpetuation of local knowledges on the ground, but also on a landscape that resisted these technologies of control. I show how the repurposing of canoe culture in the region has provided new opportunities to articulate indigenous sovereignty in ways that do not depend on nation-state imaginaries or state power, forging ties with neighboring indigenous sovereignties as well as throughout the Pacific Ocean, and beyond.

Taken together, these chapters demonstrate how historical narratives, even in their most conventional forms, may open up to multiple readings that may be used oppositionally, in this case to defy metanarratives of Indian extinction that continues to underwrite indigenous dispossessions to this day. In an age of globalization and climate crisis in which strong critiques of localism are pervasive, especially in ecocriticism,³⁵ I hope that this work may offer an addendum: that the persistence of colonialism in the Pacific Northwest can only be tackled through attention to the ways in which places still matter, albeit as nodes in an ongoing global flow of knowledges, peoples, and objects. Though they are sites of struggle, places are also the forges of new imaginaries, new stories—accumulations of the “undetonated energy from past revolutions,” to be released again into the world.³⁶

³⁵ See, for example, Ursula K. Heise’s call for an ecocosmopolitanism, Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 57-67. For discussions over the tension between conceptions of a bounded place and porous ecological flux, see Dan Wylie, “Douglas Livingstone’s Poetry and the (Im)possibility of the Bioregion” in Tom Lynch, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Karla Armbruster, eds., *The Bioregional Imagination: Literature, Ecology, and Place* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

³⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, xvi.

1. “The Treaty Council that Failed”? The Chehalis River Treaty at the Interface of Colonial Encounter

By the winter that bridged 1854 and 1855, the well-traveled trails and waterways in what is now southwestern Washington State were buzzing with excited speculation as local peoples both Native and newcomer anticipated the arrival of Washington’s first territorial governor, Isaac Stevens, and his treaty entourage to the Chehalis River. Some feared that Stevens and the U.S. power that he represented intended to exert control over their lands and remove them to “a place without sun,” while others saw in the council an opportunity to make their own land claims. Many local peoples saw in the treaty council the possibility to resolve to tensions that continued to rankle: settlers began to arrive in larger quantities and disregard local customs and protocol, the annexation of Oregon Territory by the U.S. put trade with the British Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) into question, and many (for often vastly different reasons) were eager to establish clear reservation boundaries and define the ambiguous legal status of indigenous peoples in the region.¹ Most of those in this latter category were Euro-American settlers who, while expressing sympathy for the “plight” of indigenous peoples, placed their faith in liberal traditions and the rule of law underwriting the colonialism of the U.S. “empire republic,”²

¹ Kent D. Richards, *Isaac I. Stevens: Young Man in a Hurry* (Provo, Brigham Young University Press, 1979), 207-208; James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast: Or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory* (New York: Harper, 1857), 327-334, 170.

² For a regionally specific look at the rise of the U.S. Imperial power through the colonization of Oregon and a concise sketch of where U.S. colonialism and imperial practices have dovetailed or departed from other modern empires see Gray Whaley, “Oregon, Illahee, and the Empire Republic: A Case Study of American Colonialism, 1843-1858,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer, 2005), 157-178; for recent work that similarly operates from a regional case study but looks at the broader scope of modern liberalism, law, and colonialism see Lisa Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi: Narratives and the Politics of Historical Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 23-24. Jean O’Brian reminds us that invoking the supposed legality of Native-newcomer land transactions often legitimized indigenous dispossession as benevolent and/or just. Jean M.

At the crux of these settler anxieties was that the resettlement of the Pacific Northwest in the mid-nineteenth century hinged on the contradictory coexistence of two legal structures: the 1834 Trade and Intercourse Act (which, as a reaffirmation of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, was a continuation of British colonial policy)—establishing all annexed territory as “Indian Country,” recognizing indigenous title, and thus requiring treaties to legally cede land to private property owners—and the 1850 Donation Land Claims Act, which provided free land grants to anyone willing to commit to four years occupation on what was then land yet to be ceded by its indigenous inhabitants.³ This awkward legal status also coincided with a major shift in Indian policy deemphasizing wholesale removal of indigenous peoples from settlement lands and instead towards the negotiation of reservation sites either close to or within indigenous homelands.⁴

In practice however, both long established and emerging Indian policy were elaborated in a messy negotiation between federal bureaucracy and the demands of settlers and indigenous peoples in the context of local practices and historical memory.⁵ Removal was stressed, for

O’Brian, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

³ It was presumed by most settler-squatters that U.S. hegemony and the regime of private property ownership was inevitable and that Native peoples were “fast passing away,” *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1858*, 251 (hereafter cited as *ARCIA*); Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 182-186; Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 242; Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 132-133.

⁴ Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, 56.

⁵ Elaborating on Ruth Sandwell’s close study of Saltspring Island, BC, which traces the gulf between settler practice and colonial prescriptions, Paige Raibmon sees in Sandwell’s settler creativity the “microtechniques of dispossession,” similarly defined in the U.S. context by Whaley as “folk imperialism,” or “squatter sovereignty,” in which settlers appropriated institutional discourses of the colonial state but often “violated official American policy in the Far West to approximate their vision.” However, while Raibmon situates indigenous dispossession in mundane everyday practices, Whaley finds a great deal more intentionality in the establishment by settlers of a society based on republican ideals that drew on a reserve of memories and histories of past U.S. colonial endeavors, Whaley, *Illahaee*, 168, 232; Paige Raibmon, “Unmaking Native Space: A Genealogy of Indian Policy, Settler

instance, by the commission who sent Superintendent Anson Dart to extinguish title with lower Columbia River Indians in 1851. But upon negotiating with local peoples, Dart agreed to establish numerous small reservations on specific village sites requested by treaty delegates, not the single large one on the distant Columbia Plateau originally envisioned by the treaty commission and preferred by some local Euro-American settlers.⁶ Unsurprisingly, these treaties were not ratified. Ironically, when Stevens embarked on his treaty “tour” just a few years later, he was advised by local “experts,”⁷ (against federal recommendations by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to place tribes “on a limited number of districts in country apart from the settlement of whites”) to heed local demands and negotiate the small kinds of reservations that had prompted the rejection of the 1851 Dart treaties.⁸ Stevens followed this advice in some capacities⁹ but by the time he got to the southwest corner of the Territory, his insistence in placing all southwest Washington tribes onto one reservation at far remove from white settlement was unacceptable to all treaty delegates but the Quinault, and those closely affiliated with them, whose land the proposed reservation would include.

Treaty scholar Carole Seeman has argued that Stevens approached the Chehalis River, or Grays Harbor treaty council with a particular sense of trepidation as he knew that many if not

Practice, and the Microtechniques of Dispossession,” in Alexandra Harmon, ed., *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 65-66.

⁶ Many settlers, as I will explain in further detail below, depended on indigenous knowledge, labor, and care, or were integrated into indigenous kinship communities and thus advocated multiple, small reservations close to settler communities, Whaley, *Illahee*, 182-186.

⁷ On the reliance of federal officials on local settler “experts,” especially “amateur” ethnologists see Blee, *Leschi*, 38.

⁸ Richards, *Isaac I. Stevens*, 202.

⁹ Although treaty commissioners sought to “concentrate the tribes as much as practicable,” treaty commissioners Michael Simmons and George Gibbs argued that local socio-political practices demanded numerous small reservations, *Ibid.*, 195, 198, 202.

most of the Native and non-Native inhabitants of the southwest corner of the newly established Washington Territory were savvy negotiators, experienced in years of trade with the HBC. As a result of this trade, local peoples lived in diverse and polyglot communities from across the Pacific and beyond that could only be described as cosmopolitan and enjoyed quick access to communication networks providing up-to-date information about Stevens's previous treaties and other American activities.¹⁰ Stevens would have to appeal to local knowledges and political complexities in order to be trusted as an authority or as a man of power, to stake claims to land and to fulfill the obligations these claims required. Instead, intent on undermining not only Indian land claims but also British imperial claims, Stevens, in the words of Seeman, "grasped the Grays Harbor Council as his chance to become an American hero."¹¹ This posturing contributed to the disintegration of negotiations and the treaty's supposed "failure." The aboriginal inhabitants of the Cowlitz, Chehalis, and Lower Columbia watersheds used the treaty council to voice their own specific demands for land and resource access and to jockey for political position among the milieu of groups then staking claim to the region. That the results of these demands are still felt in the region today challenges the characterization of the treaty as a "failure," and illustrates how eventual colonial domination cannot be reduced to the unidirectional power of one man, one document, or one institution.

If the era of the Stevens treaties can be conceived of as part of an early phase of the colonial encounter between the aboriginal inhabitants of what became southwest Washington Territory, U.S. bureaucrats and Euro-American settlers had only a fictive possession of the land

¹⁰Carole Seeman, "The Treaty and Non-Treaty Coastal Indians," in Clifford E. Trafzer, ed., *Indians, Superintendents, and Councils: Northwestern Indian Policy, 1850-1855* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), 49.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

and its peoples. What Greg Dening argues in the context of Tahiti is appropriate here: Natives and newcomers alike drew on long histories of contact and encounter and applied their own distinct systems of meaning to these interactions. At the time of the Chehalis treaty council, indigenous peoples had no reason to believe that power relations would become asymmetrical in favor of American settlers and in many ways, aboriginal peoples had the power to dictate the terms of the treaty negotiations, despite many Americans' faith that they would soon control their new "possession" of Oregon Territory, just recently annexed from Britain. Put simply, native and newcomer each believed that they possessed the other.¹² Though U.S. hegemony was yet to be established at the time of the treaty, a new geography was beginning to take shape in the region. Forged by indigenous peoples, American settlers, and the American state in tandem, this new geography would contribute to the realigning of power relations as well as the reshaping of local Indian identities, albeit in incomplete and historically determined ways. Furthermore, close attention to the treaty transcript and related documents may hold clues to understanding shifting power dynamics as the settler-colonial society of the nineteenth century U.S. began to aggressively impose itself in the region.¹³ In a historical present in which Native communities continue to experience everyday manifestations of this colonialism, it is crucial for scholars to

¹² Greg Dening, *Performances* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 166-167. For an approach to colonial possession/dispossession from the discipline of cultural geography see Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 31-32.

¹³ There has been much recent work challenging the exceptionalist notion that the United States somehow avoided the trappings of European imperialism as they began aggressively expanding during the nineteenth century. For a variety of approaches to this critique see Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Kerwin Lee Klein, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

explain not only the effectiveness and tenacity of colonial power but also to account for the survival and flourishing of indigenous communities into the present.¹⁴

The text of the Stevens treaties was created by federal officials who represented Native voices through their own experiences with nineteenth century Euro-American discourses on Indians. However, the treaty transcript also contains specific demands of indigenous treaty delegates that may be read into the historical context of the mid-nineteenth century Northwest Coast. In this case, the treaty minutes may be seen to contain a series of performances, what James C. Scott has termed a “public transcript,” or, a “way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate.”¹⁵ Though indigenous peoples in this region were not yet “dominated” by Euro-Americans, the sources Euro-Americans produced express pretensions of domination that situated indigenous peoples as obstacles to the progress of modern civilization. For the U.S. to legitimize the dispossession of Native peoples, they had to position them lower on the scale of civilization, as unfit to govern themselves—in the language of U.S. paternalism, as children in need of a father.¹⁶ The Chehalis Treaty transcript is unremarkable in the way it reproduces these discourses, yet open resistance to the terms of the treaty frustrated colonialist attempts to control the representation of indigenous performances as

¹⁴This imperative has been addressed across the humanities. The ongoing violence of colonialism has been recently illustrated in its most spectacular form in the recent shooting death of an unarmed Native woodcarver by a police officer in Seattle. However, this institutionalized violence is also deployed through discourses that naturalize poverty, political corruption, or interpersonal violence in indigenous communities—not to mention their narrative disappearance altogether—that work to justify the denial of sovereignty, resources, and legal recourse by the settler state. See for example, John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁵ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 2.

¹⁶ Although paternalism in the progressive tradition did not dominate federal Indian policy until the turn of the century, it nevertheless held powerful sway over Indian policy throughout the entire nineteenth century. Prucha, *The Great Father*, 198-199.

those of the deferential Indian, instead reflecting the skepticism of local indigenous peoples of the power of the U.S. state. This rupture in in the public, or official, transcript, where the “hidden transcript,” or the “offstage,” subjugated discourse shows through, interrupts the “official” performance attempted by Americans that sought to convince others vying for claims to the region of their mastery and control as the legitimate possessors of Washington Territory.¹⁷

Indians could only be intimidated and cajoled if they were in a desperate position, which despite recent and devastating measles and smallpox epidemics, they had no reason to believe they were in 1855. Though much was lost in translation as diverse Native peoples negotiated with non-Indians, it was Stevens who was either unwilling to engage, or inexperienced with, the coordinates of local power and thus unable to accomplish the task assigned to him by the U.S. federal government. American treaty negotiations failed at the Chehalis River because Stevens refused to consider local conditions, discounting not only the demands of indigenous peoples, but also the demands of settlers, the advice of local elites, *and* a federal Indian policy whose success at this time was located in its flexibility with regards to diverse social, economic, and political conditions across a shifting American “frontier”.¹⁸

The interpretation of the “treaty era” as a sort of stepping stone on the way to complete colonial domination illustrates the long shadow cast by the teleology of manifest destiny—a narrative that, regardless of whether it is cast as tragic or triumphant, forecloses U.S. expansion into Indian country as an inevitable or preordained; the natural outcome of history. Reinforcing an exceptionalist narrative that removes American expansion from global histories of

¹⁷ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 202-203.

¹⁸ While I am skeptical of the way Cole Harris tends to depict colonial power as immediate and complete, his assertion that colonialism’s success is in its flexibility and disaggregation is crucial here, Cole Harris, “How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 1 (March 2004), 165-182; Stephen Rockwell, *Indian Affairs and the Administrative State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2; Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 305, 349-350.

imperialism, this view reestablishes American innocence at a time of ongoing aggression legitimized by this very claim of innocence. For indigenous peoples today, these narratives act to deny claims to land and resources because, according to their logic, “real” Indians are extinct. Attending to the dynamics at work surrounding the “treaty council that failed” can help challenge these myths and show that it was only through particular historical conditions that the United States was capable of establishing hegemony over indigenous space, something far from assured in the 1850s. Additionally, the Chehalis River treaty council can illustrate how global struggles of empire were manifested in unique ways in specific localities, positioning indigenous peoples as central actors co-constituting the colonial encounter and the particular forms it would take as more Euro-Americans entered the region.¹⁹

Close attention to Indian demands in the treaty minutes show that while indigenous representatives were beginning to understand novel forms of settler land use and exchange, and appealed to these notions for maximum leverage during the negotiations, they were making demands that made sense through indigenous cosmologies of land use and practice in response to

¹⁹ Kerwin Lee Klein traces how a Turnerian metanarrative of westward expansion continues to shape the historiography of the nineteenth century U.S. in *Frontiers of the Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). In recent years, there has been a proliferation of studies historicizing American expansion and state-making, rejecting the teleology of manifest destiny, especially in the context of the U.S. war with Mexico in the Southwest borderlands, and the late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth century expansion into the Ohio Valley, respectively. See, for example, Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute, eds., *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Daniel P. Barr, ed., *The Boundaries Between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750-1850* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2006). For an attempt to place the colonization of the Pacific Northwest into transnational histories of empire, see Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire, and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010). For the Native-non-Native co-creation of settler society in Oregon see Mathias D. Bergmann, “‘We Should Lose Much by their Absence’: The Centrality of Chinookans and Kalapuyans to Life in Frontier Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 109, no. 1 (Spring 2008), 34-59.

the contingencies of historical change.²⁰ At the time of the treaty, a Euro-American land regime was far from hegemonic in practice. Some recent immigrants had been disturbing Indian communities, especially inland where Oregon settlers extended north from the Willamette Valley, but most continued to comply with indigenous practices because after all, they were dependent on local Indians for transportation, navigation, and simply feeding themselves. Though it was a priority of many indigenous leaders to protect their villages and resource sites from these settlers (some of whom did act coercively and with disregard towards Native protocol), they were equally concerned about the crisis caused by diminished trade with the Hudson's Bay Company, recent population losses due to epidemics, and the arrival of industrial capitalism, concerns made clear through a close reading of the treaty minutes.

One way to understand indigenous actions and demands at the treaty is to reach beyond the conceptual blinders of an official state history that seeks only to explain U.S. hegemony, considering instead the historical experience of the Pacific Northwest as a component part of broader processes of imperialism that had, for at least a hundred years prior, brought disparate peoples, materials, and ideas into global circulation, shaping and being shaped by the localities in which they touched down. In the case of the nineteenth century Pacific Coast, the fur trade was the site at which these global contests were waged. Responding to growing calls to historicize globalization and the construction of the modern nation-state, fur trade scholarship has found itself uniquely positioned to provide insight into how the making of modern nation-states and U.S. expansion was not inevitable or foreclosed.²¹ The process of American settlement impacted

²⁰ Robert David Sack defines territoriality as historically contextual and "... best understood as a spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area; and, as a strategy, territoriality can be turned on and off," Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality its Theory and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2-3.

²¹ Nowhere has this been more of an imperative than in recent work by Latin Americanists, who have launched important challenges to the notion that globalization is novel to our neoliberal present, and that nations are natural

and reconfigured the world made by the fur trade and this settlement process was, in turn, shaped by the fur trade. As fur trade scholars Bethel Saler and Carolyn Podruchny have shown, the heterogeneous milieu of the fur trade encouraged multiple conceptions of geographic and social borders that coexisted with or ignored those imposed by the state. Because boundaries imposed by the nation-state were not preordained or natural, they took work to be accepted as “common sense” in the lives of ordinary people.²² Attention to how this process was worked out at the local level historicizes U.S. expansion and eventual hegemony, framing it as one of many possible outcomes, not as an inevitable fulfillment of a teleological narrative of American civilizational progress.

A consideration of fur trade history also helps historically situate the actions of Northwest indigenous peoples in their early encounters with Americans—settlers and representatives of the U.S. government alike. A recent anthology commemorating the work of Arthur Ray reminds scholars of the importance of the fur trade in shaping indigenous responses to the subsequent resettlement of their lands. Too often, driven by the priorities of national narratives, scholarship has drawn an artificial and misleading boundary between the “fur trade era” and the “settlement era”.²³ This is an especially common tendency within historical

constructions that produce coherent and well-bounded citizens/subjects. Central to these challenges is attention to how categories such as race, class, and gender are tied up in constructions of citizenship, national identities, and state-making projects. Heidi Tinsman and Sandhya Shukla, eds., *Imagining Our Americas: Towards a Transnational Frame* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 1-33; Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

²² That state-making projects were (or are ever) completely successful at all is debatable. Bethel Saler and Carolyn Podruchny, “Glass Curtains and Storied Landscapes: The Fur Trade, National Boundaries, and Historians,” in Benjamin H. Johnson and Andrew R. Graybill, eds., *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 275-302.

²³ Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, eds., *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Pasts* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007). This problem can be seen in the tendency to artificially graft the U.S.-Canadian border onto pre-national histories of the region, see John M. Findlay and Ken Coates, eds., *Parallel Destinies: Canadians, Americans, and the Western Border* (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific

treatments of mid-nineteenth century southwest Washington Territory. Indians had been interacting with employees of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) for decades prior to U.S. settlement, and this had profound implications on how they negotiated treaties and the intrusions of American settlers. The Cowlitz Corridor, now part of Interstate 5, connected south Puget Sound to Fort Vancouver and the Columbia River. Furs, salmon, and agricultural products of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company flowed into this main channel of commerce, to be then injected into the global economy. This trade route, which had existed long before European contact, did not vanish when a handful of Americans claimed this region as U.S. territory, nor did the priorities and life-ways of indigenous peoples—who had already been adapting to social change wrought by the fur trade—disintegrate when village representatives, settler locals, and federal officials convened on the Chehalis River in 1855. Isaac Stevens and his associates representing the U.S. state encountered Indians who had, as had the generation before them, worked as mail runners, bateaux captains, agricultural workers, traders, carpenters, and commercial salmon fishers. By the time of the Stevens treaty, Indians in the region were longtime agents in the global economy, accustomed to interacting with peoples from all over the world, traveling, working, and sharing intimacies with Hawaiians, French Canadians, Métis, Iroquois, Afro-Americans, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Scotsmen.²⁴

After some forty years of intense trading activity, the 1830s and 1840s saw a decline in the fur trade and a shift in priorities for the HBC in the Columbia Department. The company faced two major challenges: the specter of American claims to the region and a global decline in

Northwest and University of Washington Press, 2002) and Johnson and Graybill, *Bridging National Borders in North America*.

²⁴ For a broad treatment of the British fur trade in the western North American Continent, see Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade in the Pacific, 1793-1843* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

demand for furs. The HBC presence on the Pacific coast, from the lower Columbia to Russian claims in the north, had already developed a diversified trade beyond peltries. Sir George Simpson, administrator for the Department, perceived increasing American attention towards their lower Columbia claims and proposed a gradual phasing out of Ft. Vancouver (across the river from present day Portland). Anticipating American aggression, in the fall of 1844, the HBC ship *Vancouver* sailing from London docked instead at Ft. Victoria (now present day Victoria, BC), strategically placed in a sheltered harbor, unlikely to be challenged by Americans, enjoying immediate access to Pacific trade routes without the dangerous crossing of the Columbia River bar, and abounding with eager trade partners indigenous and otherwise, enthusiastic to welcome the influx of new prestige goods.²⁵

The HBC's abandonment of the lower Columbia brought profound changes to the lives of local Native peoples whose economy and social structure had adapted to the fur trade for multiple generations. Chinook people had the most direct relationship to the HBC at Ft. George (Astoria) and Ft. Vancouver, where they situated their winter villages, established kinship ties with company employees, and acted as middlemen between the HBC and other Indian traders outside each respective Fort's immediate circumference.²⁶ Prior to the phasing out of the lower Columbia trade, an epidemic, probably an influenza strain, hit Ft. Vancouver and Ft. George especially hard. The Chinook in particular faced population losses that threatened their

²⁵ Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 235-238.

²⁶ This is not to say that other local indigenous peoples were not also expert middlemen in trade; many villages or kinship groups were in prime positions for intertribal trade. For example, the Nisqually were at a lucrative crossroads between east-west trade with Columbia Plateau peoples on one hand, and the north-south trade with other Coast Salish and Chinook groups on the other. The Makah controlled the Nootkan trade northward, in canoes, potatoes and other goods, Herbert Taylor, "Deposition for William Frank Jr. v. George Kinnear," Aug. 28, 1980, 24-26, Center For Pacific Northwest Studies: Ethnohistory Collection: Series IV, Box 4, Folder 27, Western Washington University Archives, (Hereafter, CPNWS). There was also a significant jockeying for control of trade between Chinook-speaking bands, Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Chinook Indians: Traders of the Lower Columbia River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 194-195.

dominance in trade. Depopulated villages at the far northwest of Chinook country were resettled by Lower Chehalis kin groups. New kinds of HBC establishments on the route from the Columbia River to Puget Sound further rearranged trade relationships.²⁷

Part of the HBC diversification strategy, The Puget Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC), was formed in 1840. Two farms were established, one at Nisqually, just east of the southern terminus of Puget Sound, and the other at Cowlitz Landing, the portage point on the Cowlitz Corridor—the trail running from Ft. Vancouver northward to Puget Sound. The farms would provide produce to sustain employees within the Columbia Department and beyond, raise sheep and cattle for the lucrative tallow and wool trades, fortify British claim to lands north of the Columbia, and provide agricultural products to fulfill treaty obligations with Russia. According to HBC scholar Richard Mackie, the PSAC placed an “unprecedented emphasis” on hiring Indian labor. Indians were becoming a cheaper and more reliable source of labor than French Canadian and Métis workers who had been abandoning the company to settle in the Willamette Valley and, to a lesser extent, near Cowlitz landing.²⁸ Chehalis, Cowlitz, and Chinook Indians were among the employees at both Ft. George and Ft. Vancouver. Through their employment, they were able to augment their prestige economies with blankets, cookware, and other items. Because the farms also acted as trade hubs for pelts, salmon, and timber, Indians had additional access to buyers of their goods. This was especially important for the Cowlitz and Upper (inland-oriented rather than coast-oriented) Chehalis, who previously had only limited access to the Chinook-controlled Ft. Vancouver, but could now directly position themselves in

²⁷ Daniel L. Boxberger, “An Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Chehalis and Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribes” (1989), 6-7, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS. For an article historicizing indigenous migrations see, “Towards an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of 'Post-Contact' Coast Salish Collective Identities,” in Bruce Granville Miller, ed., *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 138-181.

²⁸ Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 296.

global trade networks. The 1847-1851 journal kept by officer-in-charge George B. Roberts at Cowlitz Farm mentions instances of having to negotiate with multiple parties of Indians until a cheap price for salmon could be obtained. Salmon was becoming a valuable commodity that was barrel cured and sent to Oahu.²⁹

Far from being the disciplinary sites of proto-colonial occupation detailed by geographer Cole Harris, fur trade forts and Company posts were used by indigenous peoples to augment their power, not diminish it.³⁰ As R. Douglas Hurt argues, instead of being rendered dependent on European goods and by extension becoming more submissive to European colonial schemes, Chinook speakers of the lower Columbia—as well as the Lushootseed-speaking peoples of the Puget Sound region—had traded with diverse and far-flung populations for hundreds of years before and after European contact and thus were well-suited to take advantage of new trade opportunities, well-adapted to negotiating historical change, and accustomed to incorporating new ideas and materials into their life practices.³¹ Though Indians integrated new European trade items and practices into their daily lives, fostered new contacts, and became integrated into circuits of global trade, indigenous social and political structures did not fall apart—in fact, many practices, such as the potlatch economy, were strengthened, redefined, and became more

²⁹ Thomas Vaughan, ed., “The Cowlitz Farm Journal,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 2 and 3 (June-September 1962), 127.

³⁰ Cole Harris claims “the ground had been prepared,” for state-backed colonial expansion into British Columbia through the disciplinary power emanating from fur trade forts. Harris argues that Native peoples legitimized this power by becoming dependent on goods and services offered by these institutions, but Harris overstates the power these institutions had. Fur trade forts were tiny beachheads in an immense aboriginal world, and complying with Native etiquette and social norms was the rule, not the exception. Furthermore, that the fur trade elite carried with them “the assumption of social control” does not mean that Natives were convinced of this, reflecting a face-value reading of sources as well as projecting a narrative of inevitable colonial progress, Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 64.

³¹ The earliest development of the Chinook “jargon” or *wawa*, prior to “Euro-American contact,” is a great example of this. Many words can be traced northward into Nootkan lands during eighteenth century trade, Lang, *Making Wawa*; Ray, “Lower Chinook Ethnographic Notes”.

ritualized. The first major challenge to Chinook dominance would be experienced instead through demographic collapse in the wake of pathogens and the waning of the fur trade.³²

Hurt's example of the Chinook should not be applied wholesale to the histories of other indigenous peoples of the region, however. While Hurt, like many other historians, places the decline of Chinook hegemony in the waning years of the fur trade, and especially in the immediate aftermath of American settlement beginning in the 1840s, there is evidence to suggest that other Native peoples were benefiting from the weakening power of the Chinooks. Just as Chinook hegemony on the lower Columbia was itself historical, as they had pushed into Chehalis territory from further east possibly centuries earlier, their decline in influence did not signify Euro-American or HBC control, but a reconfiguration of Native power.³³ The Cowlitz, for example, were latecomers to HBC posts on the Columbia as the Chinook had controlled the entire north bank of the river, land-locking the Cowlitz, and rendering them dependent on Chinook middlemen.³⁴ When HBC employee Simon Plamondon³⁵ was sent up the Cowlitz River to find beaver, Cowlitz leader Scanewa recognized that an important opportunity had arrived.

³² R. Douglas Hurt, *The Indian Frontier: 1763-1846* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), esp. ch. 4, 101-102. Also see Gray H. Whaley, *Illahee*.

³³ Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Chinook Indians: Traders of the Lower Columbia River*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 4-5; Verne Ray, *Lower Chinook Ethnographic Notes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1938), 36. "Historical occupation" of land by aboriginal peoples is a loaded discursive terrain as it has worked decisively in court battles both for and against Native sovereignty claims. I call attention to the historical movement of peoples not to dispute Chinook claim to certain geographical areas, but to show that as populations throughout the world, indigenous communities have also experienced flux and are historically constituted. To position the beginning of indigenous history upon their entrance into the historical narrative of colonizers suggests compliance in the supremacy of the dominant power. This view characterizes indigenous peoples as being removed from historical change, or as Eric Wolf puts it, "a people without history," itself a constitutive violence of imperialism, Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

³⁴ Taylor, "Deposition for William Frank Jr. v. George Kinnear," 24-26, Box 4, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS; Roy Wilson, *The History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe* (Napavine, 2000), 58-59.

³⁵ In several sources, the surname Plamondon is spelled "Plomondon," (among other various spellings). Twentieth and twenty-first century descendants of Simon Plamondon have followed the former spelling, and archival aids catalog his name this way as well. For the sake of consistency, it has been spelled Plamondon throughout this thesis.

Scanewa ordered Plamondon seized and directed two warriors to escort him to Astoria where he procured for the Cowlitz blankets and other gifts. Later on, Plamondon married Scanewa's daughter Thas-e-multh, a significant diplomatic move that would secure for the Cowlitz direct access to wealth that they had previously had to go through Chinook leaders to secure.³⁶

Through the 1840s, an increased emphasis began to be placed on circuits of trade and travel north from the Columbia to Puget Sound along the Cowlitz Corridor, placing Cowlitz Indians in an advantageous position. First, they could capitalize on their knowledge of inland canoe routes and portages, continuing an activity at the center of their participation in the fur trade. HBC exploratory parties and prospective settlers depended on this knowledge lest they find themselves wandering off the trail, “not as plain as a cow path...20 times a day, having frequently to brush the moss off the pines to hunt for the old blaze.”³⁷ Second, as more French Canadian settlers ended their employment with the Company, they tended to settle north of the Columbia in Cowlitz country with their Native wives and mixed offspring, creating new trade configurations and social relationships. Despite increasing American colonization during this time, including mounting pressure from virulently anti-Catholic Protestant missionaries in the Willamette Valley, francophone settlements sprung up through a combination of HBC encouragement and self-generation. This was also increasingly true north of the Columbia, where HBC officials anticipated a future British border, and welcomed both the surplus produce from the farms of retired employees (which were often located near HBC establishments they had previously worked for), and their claim to the region through the principle of settlement.³⁸ For

³⁶ Wilson, *The History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, 37-38.

³⁷ John M. McClelland and Albert Gustav Kletsch, *The Cowlitz Corridor* (Longview: Longview Publishing Co, 1955), 13.

³⁸ Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 254-256.

Canadian *engages*, many of them Métis from the upper Great Lakes region, settling down meant continued adherence to the “customs of the country,” by both integrating themselves into Native society through marriage, and reproducing French Catholic practices, the latter encouraged by the arrival of Fathers Modeste Demers and Norbert Blanchet to the locality. The PSAC farm at Cowlitz was one of these hubs, forging around it a polyglot society adept at negotiating complex economic transactions and social protocol, not only between indigenous peoples and francophones, but also between Hawaiians, anglophone “mixed breeds,” Americans, and Scotsmen.³⁹

Opportunities to trade with men like George Roberts at Cowlitz Farm were grafted onto the customary seasonal economy of local indigenous peoples.⁴⁰ At Cowlitz Falls during the spring of 1848, Roberts “found...a number of Indians who told us it was the assembling place of a great many others thro [sic] the summer months for the purpose of taking salmon. They expressed willingness to trade as much as we might require, which I told them we would be glad to do if they would transport them either fresh or salted to this place.”⁴¹ As Indians from disparate winter villages congregated at spring and summer fishing grounds, often chosen in part for their proximity to trading centers, they engaged in customary activities such as gambling and potlatching. Many indigenous leaders sought to bolster their inter-village status by having a new

³⁹ John C. Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade: Forgotten Métis of the Pacific Northwest* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1995), 64, 92-93.

⁴⁰This has been well-documented by Canadian historians John Sutton Lutz and Paige Raibmon. Lutz persuasively argues that instead of being pushed aside by a supposedly superior capitalist economy, Northwest Coast Natives incorporated the economy of newcomers into existing socioeconomic practices, creating a novel form he terms *moditional*: a combination of prestige/potlatch, subsistence, and capitalist economies, John Sutton Lutz, *Makuk*. Raibmon, whose study is situated more firmly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, shows how northwest Indians employed as hop-pickers, for example, grafted their seasonal economy and social practices onto their participation as wage laborers, Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

trade center nearby. Other Native peoples, who had in the past only remote access to direct trade relationships, benefited from these new arrangements. Taidnapam people—living in the foothills further up the Cowlitz River who, despite speaking a non-Salishan language and sharing cultural similarities with Indians east of the Cascade Crest, frequently intermarried with Cowlitz Indians—often journeyed down-river to exact “considerable depredation” on company stores of potatoes and other produce.⁴²

These social, economic, and political configurations were being challenged by the end of the 1840s, as American settlers, spilling north out of the Willamette Valley, began squatting on HBC and Indian lands. Additionally, Indians residing around Shoalwater Bay (now Willapa Bay), south of Grays Harbor and north of the mouth of the Columbia, were in the midst of changes wrought by the California Gold Rush. Oddly overlooked in contemporary surveys of Washington territorial history, the oyster industry on Shoalwater Bay exploded in 1851 like a mineral rush in its own right, becoming the area most densely populated by settlers in what would become Washington Territory. Introduced in San Francisco during the Gold Rush's peak, providing a fresh alternative to frequently fetid East Coast oysters, Shoalwater Bay shellfish became a status symbol for the 49ers. To indulge in them was a way to demonstrate that one was a “made man,” as a plate of oysters often cost upwards of twenty dollars. One contemporary observer even compared Shoalwater Bay to Cancale, the major oyster fishery of nineteenth

⁴² Ibid., 119-120. This could also be explained through indigenous terms of land-use through kin-based terms of resource site access. Taidnapams who were intermarried with Cowlitz speakers probably saw access to Cowlitz Farm land and foodstuffs—land worked on by their Cowlitz Indian kin—as rightfully theirs through the marital ties binding together disparate villages. It is also possible that intermarriage between the Cowlitz and Taidnapams increased during this time because the Taidnapams desired to access the more lucrative trade between Cowlitz and the PSAC that was occurring, Herbert Taylor, “Cowlitz Historical Data” (1980) Series IV, Box 4, File 51, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS.

century Paris.⁴³ By the time of the Stevens treaty, there were sixty-three boats, scows and canoes harvesting the mollusks, and most of this labor was accomplished by indigenous peoples. In 1853 an estimated 250 Indians, most from near Shoalwater Bay but also from other areas, especially Puget Sound, collected oysters in exchange for tobacco, whiskey, flour, coffee, and sugar. Women wove baskets “used to measure the oysters on loading day,” and also worked as prostitutes. Evidence also suggests that Indians marketed oysters independently from non-Indian employers.⁴⁴

It was within the context of this expansion of market capitalism that federal Indian superintendent Anson Dart was sent to negotiate treaties with the indigenous peoples residing near the mouth of the Columbia River. In 1851, Dart arrived at Tansy Point on the lower Columbia, to negotiate treaties with Chinook, Wahkiakum, Tillamook, Clatsop, and other bands. Dart was to “extinguish” Indian title to land and ideally move all indigenous inhabitants to one reservation east of the Cascade Mountains. As historian Gray Whaley has pointed out, local Indians made demands in exact opposition to those prescribed by the federal government, demands Dart had to meet if he were to arrive in Washington DC with a paper full of signatures. For example, Chinooks at the council used the negotiations as an opportunity to remove an

⁴³ Herbert C. Taylor, Jr. and Catherine Zentelis, “San Francisco Gourmets and Shoal Water Acculturation” (1984), 121, 123, 126, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS.

⁴⁴ Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 59, 63; Robert Bennett, *A Small World of Our Own* (Walla Walla: Pioneer Press Books, 1985), 107. That diverse groups of Indians from around the region gathered as wage laborers at Shoalwater Bay during the summer months predates the recently examined practice of Native hop-picking as a novel variation on the intertwined nature of social and economic practices. As other historians have pointed out, Indian wage laborers were able to simultaneously become modern workers in a global economy while they carried on the seasonal practice of subsistence-gathering as a mode of strengthening kinship ties, social status, and group affiliation; John Sutton Lutz, “Work, Sex, and Death on the Great Thoroughfare: Annual Migrations of ‘Canadian Indians’ to the American Pacific Northwest,” in John M. Findlay and Kenneth Coates, eds., *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 80-96; Paige Raibmon, “Meanings of Mobility on the Northwest Coast,” in Binnema and Neylan, eds., *New Histories for Old*, 175-195; outside the context of the northwest coast see Jackie Thompson Rand, “Primary Sources: Indian Goods and the History of American Colonialism and the 19th-Century Reservation,” in Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137-157.

unwelcome American settler from their village who had degraded himself by marrying a slave. Most importantly, various indigenous groups on the lower Columbia demanded of the federal government recompense for the land then being utilized by American newcomers, and to remove *them* from the vicinity—a demand Dart conceded to.⁴⁵ The reason that Indians at Tansy Point refused the ten-year annuities proposed to them was not because they admitted that they were “fast dying out” as official reports asserted, but because they held that “unless they were paid soon...the whites would have the lands for nothing.”⁴⁶ Following indigenous protocol, leaders came to these “potlatches” or treaties to fulfill their paternal obligations to their respective villages and likely interpreted Dart, and later Stevens, through this lens, rather than through an American language of paternalism that positioned Indians as inferior “children” to be raised by civilized, rational—in other words, white—“fathers.” To indigenous delegates, treaty negotiations would define appropriate land use by newcomers, but in return for this use, Indians expected the gift-giving required by powerful men. Neither the federal government nor settlers were fulfilling their customary obligations that would justify their use of indigenous land, and allowing Americans to live on the lower Columbia was not beneficial to the local indigenous peoples there.⁴⁷

Dart agreed to Native demands on that day but could not keep his promises. The senate would fail to ratify the treaties because the scattered reservations proposed by them threatened to

⁴⁵ Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee*, 182-185.

⁴⁶ Charles F. Coan, “The First Stage of the Federal Indian Policy in the Pacific Northwest,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 22 (March 1921), 63.

⁴⁷ “American negotiators used the language of kinship,” and Indians would not recognize the authority of Stevens (or Dart) “until the governor satisfied them that he offered an advantageous bargain,” Harmon, *Indians in the Making*, 79-80, 83.

become bureaucratic inconveniences: small, dispersed, and too close to white settlements.⁴⁸ Importantly though, the memory of the Dart treaty council actively shaped indigenous responses and attitudes towards American Indian policy and practice before and after the arrival of Stevens in the following decade. As I will address more thoroughly in Chapter Three, the actual enforcement of colonialist imperatives to circumscribe Native space, mobility, and access to resources would only increase after the end of the Civil War and exert more complete disciplinary control in the first decades of the twentieth century. These later developments compelled indigenous peoples in what is now southwest Washington State to amass knowledge of a historically variable U.S. Indian policy and the discursive terrain of the U.S. justice system, articulating sovereignty through evocations of experience with the federal treaty process.⁴⁹

The deposition transcripts of the 1902 Chinook claim against the United States include testimony from many individuals who had been alive during or in attendance at Tansy Point. While this testimony was shaped by demands for compensation for land never ceded by treaty, thus emphasizing continual occupation, it also suggests that Chinooks continued to view treaty promises, into the twentieth century, in the context of indigenous land use systems while navigating institutions of Euro-American law.⁵⁰ When informant Samuel Mallett/Tloloth was 18

⁴⁸ Francis Paul Prucha characterizes the swing of U.S. Indian policy in the mid nineteenth century as one away from military-led removal towards a humanitarian-identified reservation policy committed to promoting civilization. These reservations would ideally be, according to Commissioner Luke Lea, “a permanent home, a country adapted to agriculture, of limited extent, and well-defined boundaries.” The small reservations proposed by Dart and demanded by the Indians in the lower Columbia region however were too numerous, their extent *too* limited, not suited for agriculture, and were too close to the bad influence of settlers to promote “civilization.” Prucha, *The Great Father*, 113-114, 132-133.

⁴⁹ Bruce Stadfeld makes this point in his essay on the settlement of British Columbia, “Manifestations of Power: Native Resistance to the Resettlement of British Columbia,” in Ruth Sandwell, ed., *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999). For an example of how non-Native law has been wielded by the very people it attempted to oppress, see Tina Loo, “Dan Cranmer’s Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951,” *Canadian Historical Review*, IXXIII, 2, (1992).

⁵⁰ This 1902 testimony was produced during the first stirrings of an unprecedented upsurge in indigenous legal claims in the U.S., as Native peoples began to learn how to utilize the American court system, not only to seek

years old, he witnessed Chinook and Wahkiakum leaders refuse to relinquish and vacate their lands. He recollected Dart assuring them that the United States “don’t want to buy your land, we just give you these little things [clay pipes, ropes of tobacco, cotton handkerchiefs, syrup, potatoes]...we pay you for your land and stay amongst you folks.” Significantly, Mallet/Tloloth also pointed out that nearby Willapa and Wahkiakum Indians were similarly compelled during this time to pay to use Chinook land.⁵¹

Stevens was aware that the Dart treaty was fresh on the minds of the indigenous delegates at the 1855 council and attempted to evoke memories of the former council—framed as a failure—in order to persuade the disparate groups of the region to agree to move to a single large reservation on the Quinault River, north of Grays Harbor. There were multiple reasons for the selection of Quinault. Beyond its promise as a bureaucratic convenience, Quinault country was located in a place Stevens believed to be undesirable for white settlement. Quinault was also distant from HBC trading centers, the latter of which Stevens and federal officials perceived as encumbering their control of indigenous mobility and access to alcohol. Most importantly, the refusal of all indigenous treaty representatives—except for (unsurprisingly) the Quinault

reparative justice for colonial dispossessions, but also as a public forum to articulate indigenous knowledge, power, and influence (yet at the same time affirming the legitimacy of these hegemonic institutions). Though constrained by the terms of Euro-American legal discourse, these transcripts betray the “unruly” nature of the testimony. Historian Chris Friday makes this point in a discussion of the 1927 testimony for *Duwamish et al. v. United States*, Chris Friday, “Performing Treaties: The Culture and Politics of Treaty Remembrance and Celebration,” in Harmon, ed., *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 171-172. The the 1903 *Chinook* case is especially interesting in that it also includes voices of local settlers whose attitudes towards land and indigenous peoples were also often divergent from settler colonial ideals. For general historical treatments of Indians utilizing U.S. legal institutions in the twentieth century see, Harmon, *Indians in the Making*; Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*.

⁵¹ Mallett/Tloloth may also be utilizing the deposition hearing as a place to make claims over Willapa/Wahkiakum leaders, “Copy of Testimony taken in 1902, at Astoria, in support of a claim of *Chinook Indian Tribe against the United States* for land in the State of Washington, near the mouth of Columbia River. Containing historical material relating to the Chinook villages and the people, with some reference to the Clatsop Indian Tribe in Oregon,” Deposition of Samuel Mallett/Tloloth, 96,” 144-147, Series IV, Box 2, Folder 9, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS.

people—to move to Quinault country compromised desires to transform the region from British imperial designs into a U.S. national space. This desire, amplified in the 1850s as partisan pressure advocating Washington statehood intensified and disputes escalated over whether new territory admitted to the Union would be slave or free.⁵²

The Dart treaties were not ratified, Stevens told the delegates, because they gave Indians “the same sort of little reserves as they now wanted.”⁵³ Yet the delegates remained unmoved. That the indigenous delegates at the Dart treaty “knowingly or unknowingly, negotiated treaties that were not passable” by the U.S. senate⁵⁴ did not mean nineteenth century Indians saw the treaty council as a failure. While representatives of U.S. power failed *them* by not making good on their promises, the Native-non-Native co-construction of society and space continued to shape the demands of treaty delegates at the 1855 Chehalis Council. Historian Mathias Bergmann has demonstrated the complexities of this Native-newcomer co-construction in his treatment of the mid-nineteenth century lower Columbia, yet performs his own version of settler colonial magic by foreclosing U.S. hegemony, as all it took was the “placement” of geopolitical boundaries that “all but sealed American control and Euro-American social, cultural and economic dominance.”⁵⁵ Yet, as the Chehalis River treaty council shows, this boundary “placement” was a process—a site of contestation and conflict, itself emerging at the interface of settler colonial designs, indigenous worlds, and the exigencies of everyday life on the Pacific Northwest Coast.

⁵² Boxberger, *Ethnohistorical Analysis*, 15. Herbert Taylor, Oral examination, William Frank vs. George Kinnear, Aug 28, 1980, 14-15.

⁵³ That is, Dart recognized the small familial political units that made up permanent winter villages and attempted to model reservations out of these sites. Bruce G. Miller and Daniel L. Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms: The Puget Sound Case,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring 1994), 75-76.

⁵⁴ Whaley, *Illahee*, 185.

⁵⁵ Bergman, “Chinookans and Kalapuyans” 54.

The “sovereignty swamp”⁵⁶ arising from the contradictory relationship between U.S. land policy (the Donation Land Claim Act) and Indian policy (recognition of Native sovereignty and the necessity of treaties to legally “cede” Indian land) was a constant engine of anxiety among local settlers who voiced concerns to the Indian agency expressing faith that legal ownership alone would cement their claims to land and legitimize indigenous dispossession.⁵⁷ Despite these ambiguities of federal law and settler common sense⁵⁸, many newcomers to Southwest Washington Territory followed Native protocol, even if it necessitated getting past an initial learning curve. At the end of the 1840s when Peter Crawford settled in Cowlitz country, he was confronted by Umtux, a high-status man who possessed usufructuary rights to the surrounding area. When Crawford “explained in as much [Chinook] jargon as he was capable of using,” that the land was his “by the law of the United States,” Umtux rebuked him, threatening to burn down his house. The situation was finally resolved when Crawford began paying Umtux in clothes and food for occupying a portion of his land.⁵⁹ Like the practices of land use and occupation described by Mallett/Tloloth in 1903, Umtux’s standoff with Crawford illustrates that local indigenous peoples had no reason to assume newcomers did not share their understanding

⁵⁶ Whaley, *Illahée*, 225.

⁵⁷ The following plea for quick treaty making was typical, “These Indians have told time and time again for the last 10 or 12 years that a treaty would be made with them; year after year has passed and still no treaty. The sooner the treaties are made the better for the Indians and the settlers, the settlers are all anxious for the treaty to be made...there is much dissatisfaction among the Indians on the account of the great delay in treating with them. They accuse the whites of falsehoods and deceptions for these delays,” Citizen S.A. Pomeroy to Isaac Stevens, January 31, 1857, Records of the Washington Territory Superintendency of Indian Affairs; NARA microfilm publication M5, roll 23, record group 75; National Archives and Records Administration-Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle, WA), (hereafter NARA). Influential settler James Swan blamed the hostile response to the Stevens treaties, especially on the Chehalis River on the “dilatatory policy” of the U.S. and said that treaties should “take effect at the time of the agreement,” Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 349-350.

⁵⁸ Mark Rifkin defines settler common sense as “the ways the legal and political structures that enable non-native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history and personhood,” Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), xvi.

⁵⁹ Wilson, *The History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, 42-44.

of land use and that newcomers were required to express the generosity expected from those who claimed power as high-status men through frequent gift-giving and visiting—weaving newcomers into the fabric of local society.⁶⁰ Importantly, the exchange between Crawford and Umtux suggests the continuation of legal plurality in southwest Washington Territory as practiced by settlers themselves, not only a tactic employed by federal officials who appealed to Native law to smooth over the instabilities caused by the belligerent actions of these newcomers.⁶¹

Tension between newcomers, indigenous peoples, and other locals was beginning to mount however, as more settlers began to arrive, demanding land and resources, and more time elapsed from Dart's treaty promises which had assured payments for use of resource sites. Squatters on indigenous and HBC land provoked more violent encounters and, in the eyes of U.S. officials, threatened to disrupt an orderly settlement process. As Stuart Banner argues, this tension influenced a swing of American Indian policy from "terra nullius" (literally "empty land" with no recognition of Indian land ownership) in California, back to a formal acknowledgement of Indian title. Banner's conceptualization is an example of recent scholarship that frustrates the simple metropole-periphery binary in early postcolonial studies, instead drawing attention to how colonial encounters rely on a co-constitutive relationship between both metropole and periphery that is sometimes contradictory, off-balanced, and fraught. As in California, settlers arriving in Oregon and Washington developed de facto policies in relations with Indians preceding the establishment of bureaucratic control. Similarly, settlers in Washington and Oregon Territories tended to regard Indians as naturally lacking title to land for a variety of reasons, chiefly the

⁶⁰ Bergmann, "Chinookans and Kalapuyans," 49-50.

⁶¹ For the practice of legal plurality in mid-nineteenth century Washington Territory as, ultimately, a tactic to impose U.S. legal authority over indigenous peoples and settlers alike see, Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, 166-168.

perception that they did not practice normative forms of agriculture or permanent settlement. Settlers in Oregon and Washington—more so than those in California—expressed marked ambivalence in their attitudes towards the legitimacy of Native land claims. Many could not help but acknowledge indigenous cultivation of potatoes, for example, or their permanent winter residences in wooden structures that were not so different from settler homes.⁶² At the same time, Indian land use patterns seemed irrational and wasteful, and indigenous presence thwarted access to land and the development of capital in the form of resource extraction, as in the case of Shoalwater Bay oysters. Thus, attitudes towards Indian property rights rested on an unstable equilibrium between terra nullius and acknowledgement.⁶³ There is evidence that, at least in sparsely (re)settled southwest Washington Territory, the experience of settlers like Crawford were the most common. Increasingly though, new settlers from the eastern U.S. were not, as HBC men had done, marrying into Native communities or paying heed to Native land use protocol. Many would only consider U.S. ownership legitimate and, fearing war and reprisals for their intrusions, became anxious to "firm up their titles" by petitioning the federal government for treaties with local Indians.⁶⁴

Although Banner attempts to tease out the local conditions that have shaped settler colonialism in the Pacific Northwest, his analysis gives scant attention to indigenous co-constitution of these new power arrangements. Banner also rightfully emphasizes the importance

⁶² This is little wonder, since settlers usually depended on indigenous produce and many of their homes were built by indigenous people, and in some cases, settlers lived in houses previously inhabited by local Native people, structures that were probably misperceived to be "abandoned" as Chinookans and Coast Salish peoples made seasonal migrations. On Shoalwater Bay, in 1853, according to a settler reminiscence, 150 "whites" "lived in tents, rickety cabins, or lodges vacated by wandering Indians," Willard R. Espy, *Oysterville: Roads to Grandpa's Village* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1977), 73.

⁶³ Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, 242.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 236-239.

of treaty status for twentieth and twenty-first century Indians. Yet, depicting all Northwest treaties as “compulsory” and “accomplished by force” overlooks the importance of indigenous priorities and decisions at these councils—priorities and decisions that were shaped by specific histories and that have shaped subsequent Indian policy, the legal and political status of contemporary Indian nations, and day-to-day realities that may or may not explicitly express settler colonial power.⁶⁵ Ignoring indigenous agency here risks generalizing the diverse experiences of disparate indigenous groups as they negotiated historical change, and, following this logic, contributes to the figure of the vanishing Indian that haunts contemporary anti-sovereignty arguments and continuing dispossessions. Euro-American newcomers relied on Native labor and goods to survive as much as they demanded the legitimacy of a federally-backed title to their land. There is little indication that most settlers wanted Indians removed from their area, or perceived them to be an imminent threat, at least in southwest Washington Territory during this time.⁶⁶

As in the British Columbia Cole Harris documents, indigenous peoples in nineteenth century southwest Washington Territory did face the direct physical power of military installments, if not the strong presence of disciplinary state institutions.⁶⁷ Since Fort Vancouver’s establishment in 1824, and the U.S. military installments that would follow, local Native peoples had grown accustomed to the kinds of spectacular performances of corporeal punishment

⁶⁵ Ibid., 258-259.

⁶⁶ The ledgers and diaries of southwest Washington Territory farmers attest to early settler dependence on Indians for food and labor. See for example, John R. Jackson diaries, 1836-1853, 1865, John R. Jackson Papers, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle; Diary, Chehalis Point, Washington Territory, 1851-1854, Henry Coonse Papers, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle. For a discussion on the use of the phrase “imminent threat” in the construction of settler colonialism, see the following chapter.

⁶⁷ Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia*.

customary to nineteenth century Westerners.⁶⁸ Yet Harris tends to overdetermine the power these military sites exerted, too often taking his perspective from within the fort, privileging it as a center to indigenous peripheries, ignoring local geography, and taking for granted a statically omnipotent British and U.S. institutional power.⁶⁹ Yet the demands and complaints of indigenous delegates at the Chehalis treaty council express little regard for these sites of corporeal punishment. What treaty delegates were facing instead were communities in recovery from devastating epidemics and uncertain economic futures as access to fur trade centers declined, necessitating reconfigurations of social power and spatial claims.⁷⁰

Indigenous representatives used the treaty council as an opportunity to explicitly define their land and resources claims against those of Indians and non-Indians alike. While Stevens, as an official of the federal government, sought to acquire a block of amorphous land to develop in the name of capitalist and nationalist expansion, indigenous treaty representatives demarcated specific geographic spaces (sometimes excluding Euro-American settlers, or, *Bostons*—sometimes naming particular persons they would allow to live nearby), describing in detail precisely what they were willing to sell and “which they must retain in order to sustain political cohesion and economic affluence.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ For an example of this sort of “gunboat diplomacy,” see James P. Ronda, “Coboway’s Tale: A Story of Power and Places Along the Columbia,” in Richard White and John M. Findlay, eds., *Power and Place in the North American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 12-13.

⁶⁹ This critique may also be found in a symposium on Cole Harris’s *Making Native Space*, Evelyn J. Peters, ed., “Focus: Making Native Space: A Review Symposium,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 47, no. 1 (2003), 75-87.

⁷⁰ Boxberger, *Ethnohistorical Analysis*, 4-7. Keith Thor Carlson documents how smallpox epidemics, class tensions, and regional migrations necessitated new claims to land and new political formations in his treatment of the Stó:lō. Keith Thor Carlson, “Towards an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of ‘Post-Contact’ Coast Salish Collective Identities,” in Bruce Granville Miller, ed., *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 140-141.

⁷¹ Carole Seeman, “The Treaty and Non-Treaty Coastal Indians,” 43.

While their expressed priorities at the council were articulations of Salish and Chinook cosmologies relating to geographic space, indigenous representatives simultaneously appealed to Euro-American notions of spatial boundaries. Congruent with the conception that Salish political units consisted of extended families and wider communities of villages bound together by obligations and ties of kinship,⁷² Native treaty-goers demanded a variety of locations that illustrated an indigenous geography of the region that is now southwest Washington State: seasonal resource-gathering sites such as salmon streams and cranberry marshes, winter villages, burial sites, and ocean beaches. In addition to their performance of Native geography, which demonstrated kin-based claims to land, indigenous leaders also utilized Euro-American discourses of fee-simple land ownership for maximum leverage. Council representatives each demanded U.S. recognition to specific sites, often framing these demands in terms of survey and title. Undoubtedly shaped by his lifelong exchange with Cowlitz Farms, Kish-Kok identified his land as “first rate” and if he indeed moved to an agreed-upon reservation he would want “a white man to stake it out and put down corner stakes.”⁷³

Kish-kok was one of those concerned about the challenges he and his people faced during this time of socioeconomic change, was well-connected, and politically astute. He had been a courier for the HBC on the route between Ft. Vancouver and Cowlitz Farms and had often traveled to Vancouver to do his own business with the board of management.⁷⁴ When interpreter and special agent Frank Shaw was tasked to bring delegations from the Cowlitz and Columbia

⁷² Bruce G. Miller and Daniel L. Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms: The Puget Sound Case,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring, 1994).

⁷³ George Gibbs, “Text of the Proceedings of the Commission to Hold Treaties with the Indian Tribes of Washington Territory: February 20 to March 2, 1855: Council with the Upper and Lower Chehalis,” in Robert Brockstead Lane, *The Treaty Council That Failed: A Commentary and the Proceedings to the Chehalis River Treaty Council* (Vienna: Institute for the Development of Indian Law, 1972), 21 (hereafter, “Treaty Minutes”).

⁷⁴ Vaughan, ed., “The Cowlitz Farm Journal,” 150.

River north to the Treaty grounds the previous week, he sought out Kish-kok to discuss the objectives of the Office of Indian Affairs. Kish-kok was enthused at the prospect of having a doctor in his country. In the decade previous, an outbreak of smallpox had devastated the population and had ground commerce to a halt on the lower Columbia.⁷⁵ More recently, measles and then influenza swept through the Cowlitz and Columbia trade corridors.⁷⁶ With the pullout of the HBC and its attached medical personnel from the vicinity, the availability of medicines and vaccines, as well as the ability to care for the children of sick parents, could no longer help reduce population loss. Perhaps most important to Kish-kok though, was the opportunity the treaty council presented to re-secure control over important camas and potato grounds ploughed over by Cowlitz Farm personnel.⁷⁷ As they observed former French HBC employees selling land to Boston newcomers, Kish-kok and O-hye “[found] out what the land was worth,” even though it was “not their land, but the Indians after all.” Accustomed to the King George men’s practice of commercial agriculture and wage labor and harboring complaints about their lack of generosity (“they only paid...a shirt to go from Cowlitz to Vancouver. The Indians were very much ashamed at their treatment”⁷⁸), observing Euro-Americans squatting on company land and then being legitimized for it through survey and title may have looked like an opportunity to protect and reclaim some of their own lands and resources that had been usurped by the

⁷⁵ Ruby and Brown, *The Chinook Indians*, 185-201.

⁷⁶ Thomas Vaughan, ed., “The Cowlitz Farm Journal,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 2 and 3 (June-September 1962), 141. Robert Boyd’s work continues to be the most thorough and detailed documentation of the relationship between disease, human populations, and the broader environment on the eighteenth and nineteenth century Pacific Northwest Coast, Robert Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999).

⁷⁷ Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, 290; Vaughan, ed., “The Cowlitz Farm Journal,” 138, 140-141; “Treaty Minutes,” 53.

⁷⁸ “Treaty Minutes,” 11-12.

PSAC/HBC, former PSAC/HBC employees, and Euro-American settlers. These demands suggest the political shrewdness of Kish-kok and others, who were adept at exploiting various interests to defend or expand their own power and access to land and resources.⁷⁹

Local indigenous peoples were not unified in their tactics at the treaty council. Men like Kish-kok and Yowannus attempted to capitalize on their alignment with settler elites and in the case of Kish-kok, against other influential men in their kin group who had not attended the council and who were suspicious of American negotiators.⁸⁰ Kish-kok, who had gained power locally as an intermediary between the HBC and local Natives, would hold little sway over Stevens who was vehemently anti-HBC. Instead, men like Upper Chehalis Yowannus would convince U.S. officials to select his land for a reservation, capitalizing on his ties to American Sidney Ford, recently appointed Indian agent, whose settlement on the upper Chehalis River had recently become an important hub for travelers, indigenous and otherwise. Through this arrangement, Yowannus would advance the interests of his village, appease settlers who counted on the proximity of Native peoples to clear land, build houses, and bring in crops, *and* satisfy Federal Indian agents who were increasingly inclined to promote the belief that local agents needed to act as exemplary paternalistic protectors and virtuous yeomen farmers.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Former HBC employees, mainly francophone and Métis were employing similar tactics, taking advantage of American presence and legal institutions to become naturalized citizens so they could claim their own land for their own purposes. This situation is similar to the one Andrés Reséndez describes in Mexican War-era Texas and New Mexico. Although the U.S. had formal possession of this geographic space, incorporating this space into part of the “nation” took work and many, often contradictory, forces—especially the economy and state—pulled people in opposite directions, created complex identities, and shaped the actions of historical actors in ways that cannot be explained by national loyalties alone, Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 149.

⁸⁰ Yach-kanam, “(an old chief) was mad at him for coming to make the trade,” “Treaty Minutes,” 21.

⁸¹ It was widely believed during the mid-nineteenth century that indigenous peoples could be lifted out of a state of savagery through example. A scale progressing from savagery to civilization was completed—especially within American thought—with the ideal of the independent yeoman farmer. This trajectory also necessitated virtuous bourgeois men to “protect” Indians from the bad influences, including that of other white men, especially the landless poor. Coll Thrush situates the classed threat of “bad whites” as a colonialist alibi in his history of

That a new geography was being shaped by settler elites, indigenous agents and federal officials together recalls an exemplary form of American settler colonialism Whaley has identified as “folk colonialism.” In this framing, American colonizers, geographically distant from the direct presence and oversight of the imperial center, practiced novel, localized variations of Anglo-American property and law, repurposing institutional discourses beyond the official dictates emanating from Washington DC. Deeply layered within settler historical consciousness were memories of settling the bloody Ohio frontier, popular narratives of Indian war, tropes of the “vanishing Indian,” and ideals of white male republican citizenship hinging on free enterprise and agrarianism, coloring the perceptions and expectations of newcomers to the Pacific Northwest.⁸² Though settlers were undoubtedly motivated by these powerful discourses, Whaley places too much reliance on face-value reading of his sources, over-determining the agency of the ideologies they express while overlooking both the complex motivations and interests of settlers in the region and blatantly ignoring the centrality of Native agents in shaping this settler-colonial project. Sidney Ford, whom a neighbor described in retrospect as a “staunch old republican,” should serve as a model example of Whaley’s settler elite.⁸³ But evidence depicting the Fords’ day-to-day existence with Upper Chehalis leader Yowannus and his family frustrates Whaley’s totalizing framework. Although it is unlikely that Ford would extend the full benefits of republican citizenship upon local indigenous peoples (if he was ever seen to have the authority to do so), he expressed no intentions to forcefully dispossess Upper Chehalis families

indigenous Seattle, Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 143-144. For a discussion of poor whites as frustrating the civilizing mission in general, see Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁸² Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee*, 168-171, 189.

⁸³ Herndon Smith, *Centralia: The First Fifty Years, 1845-1900* (Centralia: The Daily Chronicle and F.H. Cole Printing Co., 1942), 97.

from their land. Coexisting in a relationship of relative reciprocity, each family helped the other erect buildings and clear land.⁸⁴ It was through this relationship that Yowannus secured a recommendation to be named a “chief” and appeal, with ultimate success, for a reserve near his village site.⁸⁵

Other local indigenous peoples forged strategies and public identities that excluded both settler elites and HBC men. Tleyuk of the Lower Chehalis was of a new generation of ambitious regional leaders who scrambled to fill voids left in political structures by epidemics, and like Kish-Kok and Yowannus, was knowledgeable of Euro-American land use practice and discourse. He identified the entire Wynootchie River as his own fishery and demanded the cranberry marsh, the beach and everything that washed up on it, as well as a reserve nearby that would provide grass for his horses. “I want a paper,” he added, “showing the bounds of the reserve, so that when a white man took it, I could show him, I want a place where whites could not settle.”⁸⁶ Using the language of land ownership introduced by U.S. settler colonialism, Tleyuk sought to increase his own status and family control of resource sites.

A closer look at Tleyuk’s speeches at the council—shaped as they were by the colonialist-produced transcript—suggests that indigenous leaders were already adept at cross-cultural communication, nimbly adjusting the content of their performances as power arrangements realigned, anticipating the expectations of the other negotiators. Tleyuk appears throughout the treaty minutes and the diary of a Euro-American observer expressing contradictory attitudes. Contextualized, these seemingly contradictory performances hint at a

⁸⁴ This is not to suggest, however, that unequal power relations, actual or perceived, did not exist between Ford and Yowannus. J. Ross Browne, *Indian Affairs in the Territories of Oregon and Washington, 1821-1875* (Fairfield: Ye Galleon Press, 1977), 20.

⁸⁵ “Treaty Minutes,” 21; “Secretary of interior report 1858,” Box 3, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS.

⁸⁶ “Treaty Minutes,” 11.

“hidden transcript” of resistance to American pretensions of power in the region. They can help us peel back the “official transcript” produced by settler-colonial institutions to reveal Indians as full agents with their own historical contexts, priorities, and dynamics of political power.

As the last forty-eight hours of the treaty council unraveled into a situation unacceptable to Governor Stevens and his entourage, Tleyuk stood at the center of a rift in which the intrusion of the hidden transcript into the public transcript would “represent a small insurgency.” This “insurgency” reflects the fragility of American hegemony in the region and captures the resistance of Native leaders to the reconfiguration of their geography on terms other than their own. At the same time, by utilizing the discourse of Euro-American land use, other leaders at the treaty council acted as intermediaries, their power contingent on a delicate balance between acknowledgement by indigenous constituents on one hand and the state on the other, simultaneously bolstering (by accepting the terms of state power) and subverting (by protecting sovereignty, space, and resource rights) the colonial order.⁸⁷

Although Stevens had at his disposal the powerful technologies of surveys, maps, and statistics—tools fundamental to colonialist land dispossession and control⁸⁸—the “experts” he relied on provided information that was at best incomplete and at worse fragmentary and misleading.⁸⁹ The large reservation Stevens proposed for all southwest Washington Territory Indians on the Quinault River north of Grays Harbor was enthusiastically received by village

⁸⁷ Yanna Yannakakis describes a similar process of mediation during the colonization of Oaxaca. It is difficult if not impossible to know how representative treaty delegates were of the attitudes and perspectives of regional indigenous peoples as their attendance was highly contingent on localized power arrangements, Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-between*; Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 105-106. For the rise of mid-nineteenth century indigenous leaders as innovators see Miller and Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms,” 283-284; Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); Andrew Fisher, *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

⁸⁸ See, for example, Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

⁸⁹ Carole Seeman, “The Treaty and Non-Treaty Coastal Indians,” 43.

leaders from this area who were among those most eager to sign the treaty. Unsurprisingly, indigenous peoples whose village sites were far from Quinault found this unacceptable. Many families had ongoing feuds with those from the Quinault locality, were linguistically distinct, and many, including Tleyuk, found the terrain undesirable for growing potatoes or grazing horses. Tleyuk, unlike Stevens, “had been all the way up the Coast to Cape Flattery. There is no good land. It was all stones.”⁹⁰

Tleyuk may have been articulating the misgivings and skepticism of others at the council. Although many popular surveys of Pacific Northwest history that describe the Stevens treaties portray Native peoples as disorganized, gullible, and naïve to the devious plots of American colonizers,⁹¹ Tleyuk’s performance, among other council attendees, hint at the swift and effective webs of indigenous communication throughout the Cowlitz and Puget Sound corridors and beyond, informing each other of previous treaties and their outcomes, including speculations on American intentions. Long-time resident James Swan observed that “what newspapers are to us, these traveling Indians are with each other, and it is astonishing with what dispatch and correctness information is transmitted from one part of the country to another. I have frequently, by this means, obtained correct intelligence of matters transpiring in other portions of the territory weeks before the regular mail communication.”⁹² Regional Indians, far from atomized,

⁹⁰ “Treaty Minutes,” 20.

⁹¹ Exemplative of this treatment is Carlos Schwantes’s interpretation, still used in Pacific Northwest History courses: “Stevens concluded a series of heavy-handed treaty negotiations with the Indians of Washington...that effectively redefined the land...He intimidat[ed] and cajol[ed] Indian people into signing away most of their land in exchange for a variety of goods and promises,” Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 125.

⁹² That Swan privileged these oral as opposed to printed sources of news, and that in this context he was speaking of an indigenous woman as the particular bearer of news, speaks to the lack of Euro-American control of knowledge production and circulation in the region. While Swan admitted that it was “not customary to place much dependence on information derived from such sources,” he nevertheless placed his own trust in it, an unusual departure from the modern West’s privileging of the written word as rational, masculine, and superior to oral practices, Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 170. For a discussion on importance of print capitalism to colonial projects see David Spurr, *The*

colonized subjects, continued to utilize their own systems of knowledge production and circulation.

With U.S. success predicated on replacing indigenous and/or local knowledges with Euro-American knowledge, Stevens became increasingly frustrated over the persistence of indigenous communication which encouraged a distrust of his motivations. Not only did the memory of the Dart treaties and their unfulfilled promises continue to color perceptions of U.S. intentions, but indigenous leaders had been well-informed of the recently conducted Puget Sound treaties and sought to capitalize on this knowledge at the Chehalis Council. Demanding a reserve for his people, Upper Chehalis Annanata questioned Stevens, “[Puget Sound] Indians had reservations in their own country. Why not they?”⁹³ But perhaps most frustrating to Stevens was the preponderance of rumors that worked against any faith in his purportedly benevolent motivations and the legitimacy of his power.

As Scott has pointed out, rumor acts as an important conduit for the articulation of hidden transcripts. As “an opportunity for anonymous, protected communication,” rumor “also serves as a vehicle for anxieties and aspirations that may not be openly acknowledged by its propagators.” In the process of transit, the telling of rumors is shaped by “the hopes, fears, and worldview of those who hear and retell it.” By contextualizing these rumors, we may get closer to addressing the intentions of those whose voice is heavily mediated in the official transcript, in this case, the treaty minutes and other Euro-American-produced texts.⁹⁴ Weeks before the council convened, Tleyuk had been spreading the rumor “that the U.S. was going to put them all on steamers and

Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

⁹³ “Treaty Minutes,” 21.

⁹⁴ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 144-145.

‘send them away out of the country.’”⁹⁵ Other rumors had been spreading that Indians would be put in a place without sun, or removed East of the Cascades. Reflecting a Northwest Coast in flux, rumors and skepticism expressed by Native peoples suggest that uncertainties abounded in regards to the new people entering the region, but nonetheless attempted to anticipate newcomers’ intentions at the council. They took both a defensive stance against leaving their homes as well as an offensive one in relation to *arrivants*⁹⁶ as well as other indigenous peoples.

Rumors indicate that Stevens’s legitimacy as a leader was viewed with skepticism by indigenous treaty delegates, despite their displays of deference within the text of the treaty transcript. Tleyuk, for example, opened his first speech at the council grounds with obsequious statements: “The Great Father was indeed his, and he was of the same mind as the Governor. All his people felt the same about the Great Father. All of the same mind—no dissent. Our Father has talked to us about our land and we think as he does...”⁹⁷ and paired them with his demands for a good portion of the Wynootchie watershed. His apparent deference to Stevens may be read as a strategic one, deployed for maximum political leverage. The treaty council, when seen in the context of the potlatch as a way for high status people to expand access to resources, exert political authority, and negotiate social ties, was an opportunity for the young leader Tleyuk to demonstrate that he was a man of power and influence. Good behavior, in Coast Salish terms, distinguished high class people from the low class and moral propriety, including the

⁹⁵ Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 348.

⁹⁶ I am using Jodi Byrd’s term *arrivant* as it seems to more accurately express the historical condition of nineteenth century settler-colonialism in the Pacific Northwest as one of many—though more traumatic and with longer lasting effects—movements of people to the region, Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

⁹⁷ “Treaty Minutes,” 11.

graciousness directed at Stevens, may have functioned to show Tleyuk to be a “worthy person.”⁹⁸ When this strategy failed, on the last full day of the proceedings, he answered Stevens’s threat that the Federal Government would follow California’s example and make arbitrary reservations for them with “[We] cannot understand anything about it.” On this note, the “council broke up suddenly.”⁹⁹

That evening, determined to smooth the day’s discord and lack of consensus, Stevens called a meeting in his tent where Tleyuk “made some insolent remarks and peremptorily [sic] refused to sign the treaty, and, with his people, refused to have anything to do with it.”¹⁰⁰ As the sun went down, Tleyuk, his father, and their relations drank rum, shouted, and fired their guns into the night. This performance of insubordination and refusal to respect the Governor’s authority provoked a counter-performance by Stevens. The next day, as Stevens confronted the revelers, he stood in front of all delegates and tore up the paper recognizing Tleyuk as a “chief” by the federal government. This action was unlikely to carry much weight to Tleyuk and others who, according to settler Swan, lauded the “prompt and decided course of the HBC” who always “make good on deals,” in contrast to Stevens and “their Great Father in Washington” whom they “regard[ed] as a sort of a myth.”¹⁰¹ The council minutes make no mention of Tleyuk’s dim view of *boston* newcomers, emphasizing instead Stevens’s reaction to his “disrespectful” and “defiant” actions, accusing him of failure to control “his people” and therefore unfit to be a “chief.” Framed this way, the claims and demands of Tleyuk and other council representatives

⁹⁸ For a discussion of class stratification, ideas of worthy and unworthy people, and social propriety see Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 9, 24, esp. ch. 1 and ch. 2.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 347-348.

¹⁰¹ Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 349-350.

are delegitimized in the official transcript, replaced instead by portrayals of “wild, drunken, violent Indians,” occluding the actual exercise of indigenous political power and the presence of Native peoples as political agents.¹⁰² In her work on the resettlement of what would become western Canada, Leslie A. Robertson has drawn attention to how historical narratives emanating both from small towns and the academy depoliticize indigenous actions, working to naturalize colonial power as just and lawful.¹⁰³ Interpreting Tleyuk and other Native peoples’ actions at the treaty council can help us re-frame indigenous peoples as political agents, working within their own historical consciousness and guided by priorities shaped by historical context. Resisting a narrative that forecloses indigenous decline, this sort of re-framing is one I extend through the next two chapters.

As federal officials made their way back to Olympia in torrential rain on a flood-stage Chehalis River, Governor Stevens appeared unruffled. He remained confident that treaties could be negotiated at a later time, and indeed, treaties with the Quinault and Quileute—originally enthusiastic about Stevens’s terms—were conducted in Olympia by local Indian agent Michael Simmons in July 1855 and January 1856.¹⁰⁴ After nearly a decade of settler petitions and indigenous complaints to federal agents, the U.S. government finally conceded and established, by executive order, the Chehalis and Shoalwater Bay reservations, the former in 1864, the latter in 1866. Both reservations would be located on two of the sites originally agreed upon by leaders

¹⁰² The longtime settler James Swan, on the other hand, had less incentive to maintain colonialist appearances of control and so reflects a much more nonchalant view of indigenous outbursts at the council.

¹⁰³ Robertson looks at contested histories through the life of a local “Indian curse” legend in a rural BC community. Popular settler renditions attribute the Indian curse to what they view as inherent Indian superstition, rather than political resistance to economic exploitation, thus justifying Native dispossession and colonialism through constructions of irrational Indians, Leslie A. Robertson, *Imagining Difference: Legend, Curse, and Spectacle in a Canadian Mining Town*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 26.

¹⁰⁴ Richards, *Isaac I. Stevens*, 209.

at the Chehalis Treaty council. The Chehalis Reservation, located at the mouth of the Black River, was the site that Upper Chehalis leaders Yowannus and Annannata, in a compromise with Cowlitz delegate Kwonesappa, agreed upon during the treaty council and a site endorsed by local agent Ford. An endorsement would also come by Commissioner William P. Dole who reported the Indians in the vicinity to be “in a very hopeful condition. They wish to abandon a roving life; to establish themselves in houses, and cultivate their lands; to educate their children, and live peaceably with all.”¹⁰⁵

Although their substantial involvement in farming—an activity so central to nineteenth century Indian policy’s civilizing mission—undoubtedly contributed to the success of the Upper Chehalis’ appeal for their specific reservation site, the lack of agricultural promise at the Shoalwater Bay location did not appear to concern settler elites or government officials, committed as they were to the development of the oyster industry and its reliance on Native labor, not to mention the fact that the site was a poor one for agriculture.¹⁰⁶ Although Chinook and Lower Chehalis persons around the Bay were “unwilling to abandon their former habits of life and [the] tract which they [had] selected...[was] of little value for cultivation,” the creation of the reservation on the important fishing stream “would work no injury to white men, but would have a tendency to promote peace between them and the Indians and would secure the contentment and wellbeing of the latter.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ “Treaty Minutes,” 18; William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian affairs, May 17, 1864 in Brockstead Lane, “Papers Related to the Establishment of the Chehalis Reservation and the Shoalwater Bay Reservation,” 5.

¹⁰⁶ Historian Chris Friday pointed out to me that ironically, the interests of white oystering in Yaquina Bay, Oregon resulted in the dispossession of Indian land that had previously been made into a reservation because of its undesirability for settler agricultural interests, personal e-mail correspondence, October 23, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Waterman to Superintendent, June 1st, 1866 in Brockstead Lane, “Papers,” 5. Of course, not all Indians in the vicinity were united in a commitment to “abandon a roving life,” to follow the assimilationist prescriptions of federal agents, nor did they all share ties to the two reservation sites. The Cowlitz, for example, occupied land highly

Though lack of treaty status works against clearly defined resource rights and has complicated the conditions of tribal enrollment, the “treaty council that failed” continues to be a useful and politically charged narrative. As Chris Friday argues, treaties are not “stale documents locked in museum cases,” but sites upon which anticolonial struggles are waged by actors negotiating the performative possibilities present in a certain historical moment.¹⁰⁸ Though often portrayed as unequivocal instruments of colonialism, treaties and the stories attached to them have served as powerful tools in the hands of indigenous peoples who have utilized them to protect their access to resources and have been conjured to bolster a sense of community cohesion and tribal identity. Though their predecessors did not sign the Chehalis Treaty, contemporary indigenous peoples within the borders of what is now southwest Washington State nevertheless find the *narrative* of the treaty council useful and have employed it a variety of circumstances. Christine Joy Dupres has documented how members of the Cowlitz Tribe have emphasized different elements of the treaty story for a variety of audiences and towards different objectives. In a personal exchange between Dupres (a Cowlitz Tribal member) and Tribal Chairman Barnett, sovereignty, agency, and defiance was emphasized in the treaty story. By contrast, in a 1997 public newsletter telling, when Cowlitz federal recognition was being

coveted by American settlers, who viewed the former’s loyalties with suspicion due to their affiliations with the HBC, and were thus in a weaker position to argue for federal support.

¹⁰⁸ Friday, “Performing Treaties,” 159. Robert Brockstead Lane has made a case for treaty rights for the descendants of Chehalis Treaty delegates. Brockstead Lane faults Stevens for the failure of the council as he “act[ed] without authority, broke off the negotiations and never returned to make a treaty,” despite the fact that the U.S. ultimately agreed to the demands made by various indigenous leaders who had been willing to cede land and make compromises with federal officials and other Native peoples, Brockstead Lane, *The Treaty Council that Failed*, 2.

challenged by the Quinault Nation, Barnett played down Cowlitz defiance and stressed cooperation between the federal government, American settlers, and the Cowlitz.¹⁰⁹

A settler-colonial present has been shaped by the actions of nineteenth century treaty council delegates. This is especially clear in terms of the co-creation—between American settler elites and local indigenous peoples—of a new reservation geography. Indigenous leaders at the treaty council acted in the interests of their own communities as they confronted rapid economic and social change. With decades of experience negotiating with diverse groups, they sought to consolidate their power through both long-standing indigenous practices and by appealing to American notions of land policy. Through demanding and receiving reservations at Shoalwater Bay and on the Upper Chehalis River, indigenous leaders legitimized the institutions of power brought by an expansionist United States but also reinforced, protected, and carved out their own geographical space.

Understanding the treaty council as a political forum in which indigenous peoples acted on their own priorities critiques normative understandings of the settlement of the Pacific Northwest in at least three ways. First, it historicizes U.S. expansion, not as part of a pre-ordained meta-narrative of Western progress, but a process depending on historical circumstances and indigenous agency. Second, relating the history of Native involvement at the treaty council explains indigenous survival, as it resists acting as a narrative closure to indigenous presence in the region. Finally, the Treaty Council as a dynamic narrative that continues to be utilized today, can be seen to shape and affirm tribal identity, political

¹⁰⁹ Dupres, *Learning What it Means to Be Indian*, 172-183. The Cowlitz were recently able to purchase land through a federal settlement on their homeland; unsurprisingly, the treaty narrative was often conjured to show tribal cohesion and historical occupation.

sovereignty, and claims to resources, drawing attention to the settler-colonial realities of the present day Pacific Northwest.

American expansion depended on indigenous agents at the Chehalis River whose own actions had been shaped by the contingencies of the fur trade world continuing to structure political power and cultural practices in the region. This frustrated efforts by U.S. officials like Stevens to reconfigure this world into U.S. national space as the social practices of this world worked against bourgeois norms of respectability necessary to define this space as American, white, and modern. As the following chapter will show, these gendered and racialized norms were put to use in narratives of Indian war, employed in the mid-nineteenth century Pacific Northwest to re-imagine this locality as a legitimate extension of growing national space. This rhetoric was indeed powerful, shaping the way ordinary people and political leaders alike thought of themselves in relation to Indians and the land they claimed as bearers of an advanced “civilization,”—rhetoric continuing to shape local notions of history and regional identity into the present. Despite the power of these discourses, however, they have never been totalizing. Through the second part of the nineteenth century, indigenous peoples continued to find spaces to challenge colonialism even as increased U.S. settlement brought powerful new institutions to Washington Territory. But even as they challenged colonial impositions, local indigenous peoples also co-constructed this world, helping to explain how, after over one hundred and fifty years, indigenous peoples *and* the pervasiveness of colonialism endure, shaping life in the Pacific Northwest for all, despite the power of everyday narratives to occlude these realities.

2. Blockhouses as Sites of Imperial Domesticity: Racial Proximities and Biopolitics in Nineteenth Century Washington Territory

Traveling across the Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific Ocean, Margaret Stevens followed a typical route for a bourgeois traveler of the mid-nineteenth century imperial world. Upon her arrival at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, Stevens made her way north via the Cowlitz Corridor in the care of local indigenous guides to her final destination: Washington Territory's capital city, Olympia, where she was to join her husband Isaac Stevens, the recently appointed governor. In her travel narrative—recalling many others from locations as diverse as Central America, India, and the Congo—Stevens relates: “At first the novelty, motion and watching our Indians paddle so deftly, they seize their poles and push along over shallow places, keeping up a low, sweet singing as they glided along, was amusing. As we were sitting flat on the bottom of the canoe, the position became irksome and painful. We were all day long on the Cowlitz River. At night I could not stand on my feet for some time after landing. We walked ankle deep in mud to a small log house, where we had a good meal. Here we found a number of rough, dirty looking men, with pantaloons tucked inside their boots, and so much hair upon their heads and faces they all looked alike.”¹

For Margaret Stevens, the discomfort and difficulty of travel, the spectacle of “rough, dirty looking men” who had “so much hair” that they “all looked alike,” speaks to a perception of the far of northwest corner as a land yet to be civilized by Euro-Americans, many of whom,

¹ Margaret Stevens's diary quoted in John M. McClelland Jr. and Albert Gustav Kletsch, *Cowlitz Corridor* (Longview: Longview Publishing Co. 1955), 14; Lauren Berlant provides a useful definition of a bourgeois as “someone who instrumentalizes his social relations in terms of the rules of the market, and who is zoned by the people who assign value to property as having value in proximity to his property and his being self-possessed,” Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 33.

including the Stevens family, intended to take the lead in making “Washington what its great name signifies it should be, the ‘Star of Empire’ that westward came.”² Adele Perry’s work on the resettlement of nineteenth century British Columbia locates the context of this specific colonial project at a shifting point in which Britain, France, the U.S., and other imperial powers began to prioritize the importation of bourgeois domesticity to its colonial peripheries. In this locality, faced with the residue of a diverse fur trade milieu that was seen to compromise colonial progress, Britain sought to regulate interracial proximities and police moral behavior. While these projects often ended in failure, illustrating the fragility inherent to settler-colonial hegemony, they were also productive of new racial knowledges that continue to structure unequal power differentials in a settler-colonial contemporary.³ The resettlement of what is now known as the Northwest United States can be conceptualized in similar ways, especially in southwest Washington Territory, where the Hudson’s Bay Company’s influence continued to structure socioeconomic and political relations in an era of increased U.S. settlement.⁴

To those invested in the expansion of the U.S. nation-state, the attendant production of legible subjects depended on a dual processes of individualizing *and* massifying those who

² Isaac Stevens quoted in Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2002), 24. Stevens, a Jacksonian expansionist, had recently led a railroad survey across the Cascade Mountains, and had fought in the war with Mexico.

³ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). Following Canadian geographer Cole Harris, I find the modified “resettlement” to be a more accurate description of the process of settler-colonialism, as this locality had already been settled many times by many different peoples prior to Euro-American arrivals, Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

⁴ Increasing attention is being paid to how the process of settler-colonial dispossession—and its violences—has been played out across time at a regional level. See for example, the themed issue of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, “Death and the Settling and Unsettling of Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 115, no. 3 (Fall 2014).

suddenly found themselves within the new geopolitical borders.⁵ Stevens knew that in order to be governed, the bearded, undifferentiated throng of Hudson's Bay Company men would require the civilizational skills necessary to emerge as individual, rational citizen-subjects. At the same time, the indigenous canoe navigators are depicted in the text not as master navigators, adept with their own geographical knowledge, but instead as "our Indians"—objectified, massified, as part and parcel of a landscape to be possessed by those who would rationally develop it. Importantly, rather than depicted as threats, indigenous peoples are utilized by Stevens to express faith in the providential narrative of inevitable American expansion across the continent, reducing Cowlitz people to local color—as a necessary accoutrement to regional identity—though doomed to fade with the receding edge of wilderness. Stevens thus locates herself, via Indians and fur traders, as a bourgeois modern subject within colonialist imposed boundaries of both space (territorial, legal, and political boundaries) and time (through narratives of modernity, progress, and development).

This spatiotemporal nature of the process of colonizing southwest Washington Territory is what I explore in this chapter. I argue that not only did the process of U.S. expansion—the establishment and maintenance of U.S. settler colonial hegemony—rely on negotiating the boundaries between the foreign and domestic, but also on disciplining the "times of life" of local inhabitants. I maintain that progressive narratives of savagery-to-civilization that position Indian subjects as adolescents to rational, white, adult male subjects has been inherent to a modern biopolitical regime that seeks to legitimize its power to take or give life through the policing and

⁵ I am referring here to Foucault's concept of population racism as working on two fronts: "...after a first seizure of power over the body in an individualizing mode, we have a second seizure of power that is not individualizing, but, if you like, massifying, that is directed not at 'man-as-body but at man-as-species.'" In other words, upon the creation of modern subjects, it becomes necessary to manage these new subjects as populations who must be regulated and policed in accordance to their life capacities, or productive potential, Michel Foucault, "*Society must be defended*": *lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 243.

enforcement of proper performances of heteronormative temporality. This chapter explores how this may be seen at work in mid-nineteenth century Washington Territory, specifically in the southwest corner, where ambivalences and ambiguities of race and national belonging seemed particularly jarring to many settler colonials, provoking violence but also moments of cooperation and cohabitation.

This is also a history of the present. Through twenty-first century articulations of sovereignty and self-determination, Native polities and individuals commonly find themselves restricted to the terms laid out by the settler colonial state and thus, directed towards an appeal to heteronormative discourses of national belonging and relationship to space—to landscapes and localities.⁶ For some however, the unavailability of these racialized and temporally sensitive performances have exposed them to violence. The recent shooting death of unarmed Nuu-chah-nulth woodcarver John T. Williams by a police officer in Seattle is in many ways irreducible to settler colonialism, but in the Pacific Northwest, twentieth and twenty-first century processes of racializing urban bodies, the increasing privatization of public space and its surveillance, and the militarization of police forces is tied up in the fact that these urban spaces have always been indigenous spaces. Not only have indigenous peoples always been present as co-creators of cities like Seattle, but these cities also depend on the cultural production of Natives in order to be imagined as places, even as settler colonials attempt to eradicate or strategically manage actual indigenous presence.⁷

⁶ For an incisive and succinct work that draws explicit connections between settler colonialism, heteronormativity, patriarchy, and the nation-state, promoting the usefulness of queer theory to the work of decolonization, see Andrea Smith, “Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity,” in Qwo-Li Driskill and Chris Finley, eds., *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011).

⁷ Coll Thrush brings attention to the uneasy relationship Seattle has with Native people. The city’s identity depends on Northwest Coast Native aesthetics, commonly tied into an ahistorical natural purity (modernity’s balm for what is identified at any given time as the pernicious effects of progress). But it is also haunted by the reality of the actual

This project of biopolitical management—defining those to be included and protected from illegitimate violence from those who remain foreign and exposed to legitimate state violence—has always been, and continues to be, a fraught and contested struggle, and one that has been played out through the stories ordinary people tell themselves about who they are and where they live. But this struggle produces its own inherent contradictions. This chapter looks to stories produced in the locality of southwest Washington for these contradictions, and how they have shifted, throughout times and tellings, to attend to the particular power dynamics at work in their respective historical contexts. These contradictions frustrate the normative frames required for teleological state history, and open up to other possible ways of relating to the past that may be more amenable to living in a shared world that continues to be wrought by the violences of settler colonialism.

The Indians and fur trappers populating Margaret Stevens’s account were a far cry from the exemplary modern subjects desired for the successful administration of new U.S. settler-colonial space. Those who placed their faith in the progress of domesticating the northwest coast were frustrated by the realities of life on the ground. Decades of global movements of peoples, materials and knowledges through the region had produced a “contact zone”, a space characterized by a heterogeneous population that betrayed the Euro-American ideal of a racially

presence of Indians, who, in many cases are perceived to be “barely people,” and “instead shades of the past, linked almost mystically to a lost nature.” This perception, he continues, masks how indigenous peoples have carved out their own urban spaces, creatively constructed new Indian identities, and contributed to the life of the city itself, Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007). For a look at the intersection of indigenous mobility and the contemporary biopolitical management of racialized bodies in Australian urban centers that may have useful applications to North American contexts, see Tess Lea, Martin Young, Francis Markham, Catherine Holmes, and Bruce Doran, “Being Moved (On): The Biopolitics of Walking in Australia’s Frontier Towns,” *Radical History Review* 114, (Fall 2012): 139-163.

managed and class-ordered society.⁸ For colonial officials, the creation of a legible and thus, manageable population, depended on sorting out the diverse peoples in their midst, identifying perceived levels of civilization and separating out those who were deemed unfit to exercise political autonomy. In other words, colonialist interests understood that populations of lower class whites, indigenous peoples, “mixed bloods,” francophone HBC men, and Sandwich Islanders (Hawai’ians) occupied various stages of civilization, though none of them adequately enough to assume a place within the national body as ideal liberal subjects. Still, colonial officials strived to determine—often struggling amongst themselves over the terms of inclusion—who was a threat to the state, who could be enfranchised, and who could or could not be uplifted to meet the standards of national belonging in an emerging white settler regime.⁹

As the Euro-American settlement of a newly created Washington Territory accelerated, friction between the intentions of settler elites—seeking to implement their colonial projects—and the practices and interests of local inhabitants increased dramatically. These tensions were negotiated at the spatial and temporal site of what has been and continues to be referred to as the “Indian War” or the “Indian hostilities” of the mid-1850s. Lacking a significant body count or well-defined battlefields, this conflict was instead a largely rhetorical and performative one, drawing on a corpus of older narratives of American expansion and encounter with the indigenous peoples of North America. These new, localized narratives of Indian war became powerful and useful new tools to justify Indian dispossession, naturalize American settler

⁸ Mary Louise Pratt describes a “contact zone” as a “space of colonial encounters” characterized by the “copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect,” Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6-7.

⁹ For a discussion on how intersecting social categories such as race and gender undergirded who could be included or excluded from the modern liberal nation state in a similar locality and historical situation, see Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), esp. 136-138.

colonialism, and, in the process, create new racial taxonomies and logics that delineated who belonged inside and outside newly drawn American borders. Importantly though, while officials sought to simplify diverse populations, regulate the encounters between them, and erase others from the official national narrative, complete control remained elusive and war narratives—especially in their localized, often ambivalent articulations—became tools for indigenous peoples themselves to negotiate U.S. settler colonialism as power dynamics began to shift in favor of Euro-Americans by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Largely ignored in recent postcolonial studies-inflected treatments of nineteenth century U.S. expansion, the Northwest Indian War has been characterized in various local histories as less a conventional “hot” conflict, than as a contested site of power, noting its rhetorical importance as a site of social, political, or economic struggle not only between Natives and newcomers, but between rival party factions, between military brass and volunteers, and between the HBC and American interests. For example, Robert E. Ficken argues that Governor Stevens seized on the war as a tool to consolidate his power, exaggerating aspects of it to bolster American claims over the English, legitimize Indian removal to reservations (and away from the white population), and strengthen the influence of the Democratic party in local politics.¹¹ From an ethnohistorical perspective, Alexandra Harmon has argued that the upsurge of Indian-settler violence may not have been—as most popular accounts maintain—caused by a Native population struggling against an inevitable “tide” of American emigration, but rather provoked

¹⁰ For the multiple uses of war narratives in a Coast Salish context see Lisa Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi: Narratives and the Politics of Historical Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), esp. ch. 2 and ch. 3. For a look at how the co-constitution of colonialist dispossession by settlers and the state was effective despite tensions between them see Gray H. Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 182-186.

¹¹ Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2002), ch. 3.

by Indians who had “white” agricultural pursuits in their interests and thus recognized how much they had to lose if settlers from the U.S. continued to encroach on their farms, pastures, and resource sites. Perhaps most important, Harmon characterizes the war as a site to resolve, albeit unsuccessfully, the tensions between ambiguous racial categories.¹²

Among Harmon’s innovations is her attention to the war’s failure to clarify the relationship between the diverse mix of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples residing in the region. However, she gives less attention to ways in which the war continued to act as a site of contested power long after its apparent “resolution.” The war offered new narrative materials and possibilities for all to make politically important claims in subsequent historical contexts.¹³ As I will argue later in this chapter, the war became (and continues to be) a representational battleground—one that sought to define colonial relationships and produce racial knowledges. Dominant narratives emerging from this struggle would provide the rhetorical tools necessary for modern citizen-subjects to imagine themselves as regional components of a national collectivity and part of the fabric of the “big story” of America.¹⁴

This national imagining may be seen at work in the contemporary “War On Terror,” in which, as Judith Butler maintains, journalism, photography, and other media work to produce and manage normative frames, determining differentials in the life-value of individuals—who has access to resources, who is protected from violence (as opposed to being vulnerable to this

¹² Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 90.

¹³ Blee makes a similar point through her attention to the situational use of Leschi stories, especially how they have been told variously to non-Indian “outsiders,” within legal contexts, and intertribally, but also being sensitive to the ways that stories have served as a mechanism to enforce difference in the face of colonial pressures, Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, 91-98.

¹⁴ As Blee puts it, “The power of counter narrative lies in its ability to deconstruct the master narrative and reveal its limits,” *ibid.*, 83.

violence), and who possess a life that may be considered grievable—depending upon their positioning inside or outside of these frames.¹⁵ In a similar vein, other scholars have been tracing connections between the politics of fear, linkages between the rhetoric of national security and personal security, and the process of constructing the imminent threat of the “other” necessary to justify the “state of exception” that works to legitimize the constriction of civil liberties and relegates the distribution of violence to the Homeland Security State. Many recent scholars, cognizant of the ways in which American frontier mythologies continue to discursively structure this state of exception in the present—especially through the tropes of American innocence and victimization—tend to situate their inquiries post-9/11 in the context of the global War on Terror. However, the idea of “imperial conquest as a form of domestic defense” has fundamentally structured and structures the settler colonialism persisting on indigenous homelands within the “domestic” borders of the U.S., and has antecedents in the nineteenth century settlement of the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶ By exploring the lives of settler-colonial narratives in this particular locality, this chapter seeks to challenge the notion that the production and contestation of particular frames of normative state violence are novel occurrences of a post-911 contemporary. Rather, this violence, its legitimization, and its inherent contradictions can be located within the ongoing reproduction and circulation of narratives throughout the Pacific Northwest’s colonial past and present.¹⁷

¹⁵ Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2008), esp. 74-82.

¹⁶ For the hegemonic struggle between systems of indigenous violence and the imposition of settler-colonialist violence, especially how Euro-American power depended on controlling the economy of violence on the Northwest Coast see David Peterson Del Mar, *Beaten Down: A History of Interpersonal Violence in the West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Donald E. Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), esp. ch. 5; Patricia Ticineto Clough and Craig Willse, “Gendered Security/National Security: Political Branding and Population Racism,” *Social Text* 105, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 46-47. Agamben, *State of Exception*.

The constitutive Others necessary for this framing are positioned in these narratives as irrational savages who pose an imminent threat to the national (and the national subject's) body from within and without. Nowhere has this threat seemed more present than during times in which the legitimacy of state sovereignty is in question. In the case of the U.S., this has depended not only upon racial constructions of "the Indian", but also upon the intersection of other categories of power such as gender, sexuality, and class that underpin the biopolitical management of populations.¹⁸ Drone strikes and targeted assassinations by the Department of Homeland Security, the 2010 killing of Nuu-chah-nulth man John T. Williams, by Seattle Police Department Officer Ian Birk, and the Northwest Indian War of the mid-nineteenth century were all similarly justified in their use of preemptive violence through the process of identifying a nonnormative subject or population perceived to embody an "imminent threat."¹⁹ Thus, any critique of this state violence demands attention to the ways in which U.S. settler-colonialism,

¹⁸ In the Spring of 2012, for example, Attorney General Eric Holder justified the legality of drone strikes by stating, "...there are people currently plotting to murder Americans, who reside in distant countries as well as within our own borders...for the reasons I have given, the U.S. government's use of lethal force in self-defense against a...force who presents an imminent threat of violent attack would not be unlawful... The evaluation of whether an individual presents an "imminent threat" incorporates considerations of the relevant window of opportunity to act, the possible harm that missing the window would cause to civilians, and the likelihood of heading off future disastrous attacks against the United States." Ian Birk similarly justified his killing of Williams, explaining at his inquest hearing that "There are pre-attack indicators and pre-attack postures—meaning attack is imminent," U.S. Department of Justice, "Attorney General Eric Holder Speaks at Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago, Monday, March 5, 2012," U.S. Department of Justice Website, <http://www.justice.gov/iso/opa/ag/speeches/2012/ag-speech-1203051.html> (accessed February 27, 2012); *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, "Audio Clip of Ian Birk Inquest Hearing, January 10, 2011," Seattle Post Intelligencer blog, <http://blog.seattlepi.com/seattle911/2011/01/11/audio-hear-birk-describe-shooting-john-t-williams/> (accessed February 27, 2012).

¹⁹ It took Ian Birk little more than five seconds to decide to shoot Nuu-chah-nulth man John T. Williams. Williams had been carrying a legal knife and was concentrating on carving a wooden board when he crossed in front of Birk's patrol car on the afternoon of August 30, 2010. Birk got out of his cruiser to confront Williams as his dashboard camera recorded him shouting, "Hey, Hey,..Hey! Put the knife down! Put the knife down! Put the knife DOWN!" Shortly after, Birk fired five shots in rapid succession into the partially turned Williams who died at the scene. His knife was later found by another SPD officer in a closed position. At his inquest hearing, Birk describes an intoxicated Williams as having a "very confrontational look on his face...if he had *had* the opportunity to take a step in my direction, I don't think there was much I *could* have done, ah, to stop him at that point," *Seattle PI*, "Audio Clip of Inquest Hearing."

biopolitics, and the composition of the modern nation-state have worked throughout time in mutually constitutive ways.

Though these normative frames perpetuate differentials of violence, their very constitution depends upon the relation to what falls outside of them. As Butler also makes clear, the circulation and repurposing of narratives beyond the temporal context in which they were first constructed “provide the conditions for breaking out of the quotidian acceptance of war and for a more generalized horror and outrage that will support and impel calls for justice and an end to violence.”²⁰ The contradictions located within local historical narratives illustrate this process at work. The simultaneous potency but ultimate fragility of the normative frames that give meaning to these narratives can help explain why, for example, locals can tell a story of the Indian war through dime-store novel tropes of Frontier mythology—with their rigid binaries of Indian-white, savage-civilized, good-evil—while simultaneously including details of racial proximities, hybridity, and expressions of horror and outrage in the wake of injustices perpetuated by settler-colonialism that may hold the promise to disrupt these binaries. If the process of embedding Indian war mythologies in narratives of Northwest settlement naturalize racial categories and produce the threatening Others required to “regulate the distribution of death” into “those who must live and who must die” in the settler colonial society taking shape in what would become Washington State, these same narratives contain materials for their very undoing.²¹ As local accounts of hostility strained to fit into conventional narratives of Indian war,

²⁰ Butler is following the insight provided by Walter Benjamin in his essay “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” which argues that though the media has extensive power to reproduce normative frames through the production and dissemination of images, this process of image circulation creates the conditions of possibility that open the image up to meanings unintended by the original producer. The reproduction of narratives, especially after the rise of print capitalism, function in similar ways; Butler, *Frames of War*, 9,11.

²¹ I am referring here to Foucault’s conceptualization of modern sovereign power as being situated in the right to kill or let live; what he has termed, biopower. Here, human groups are positioned within an economy of race in order to “regulate the distribution of death and to make possible the murderous functions of the state,” or, as Achille

indigenous peoples continued to persist as familiar neighbors instead of savage others, generating a discord that defied Euro-American tropes of Indian extinction.²² Likewise, despite the prompt disappearance of the John T. Williams killing from the news cycle, diverse coalitions helmed by local indigenous peoples (and also advocates of the “mentally ill,” houseless persons, etc.), have resisted such forgetting, commissioning a memorial totem pole and raising it in a public ceremony. On the other hand, by positioning the Williams incident as aberrant, as an isolated case of authority “acting out of line,” the forgiveness extended to the Seattle Police Department by the Williams family, for example, does not challenge the ultimate decisive power of the SPD to determine whose life they may take.²³

Indian war narratives of nineteenth century Washington Territory were often enacted around blockhouses—hastily built fortified structures that attempted to demarcate both spatially and temporally the racial boundaries of citizenship seen to be under constant threat.²⁴ According to mid-twentieth century historian Roy Lokken, Stevens believed that defending the white population from Indian attack with limited resources would be best accomplished by concentrating settlers into these blockhouses which were arrayed in a line north, along Puget Sound and south, along the Chehalis/Cowlitz valley, at strategic locations along major

Mbembe explains, creates an Other whose “biophysical elimination would strengthen my potential to life and security,” Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” trans. Libby Mientjes, *Public Culture* 15: 16-18.

²² For an excellent analysis on how Indian presence persists even through the vary narratives that attempt to “disappear” them, see Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), esp. ch. 4.

²³ KPLU, “Update: John T. Williams Totem Pole Raised,” kplu.org, <http://kplu.org/post/update-john-t-williams-totem-pole-raised> (accessed February 27, 2012).

²⁴ Ironically, these blockhouses were built using Indian labor and paid for with blankets, shawls, flannel shirts, and bolts of cotton presumably supplied by the federal government, Sidney Ford to John Cain, March 15, 1856, Records of the Washington Territory Superintendency of Indian Affairs; NARA microfilm publication M5, roll 16, record group 75; National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle, WA), (hereafter NARA). For the spatial policing of social categories see Perry, *At the Edge of Empire*, 110-11, 158.

watersheds.²⁵ In the southwest corner of the territory, local Indian agent Sidney Ford reported construction underway soon after the Chehalis River treaty council in March of 1856.²⁶

As symbolic and physical sites in which the production of U.S. national space was both demarcated and contested, blockhouses may be seen as domestic national spaces, defending citizens from an alien Other menacing just outside the walls. From this perspective, blockhouses may be seen as gendered spaces in which the twin discourses of Manifest Destiny (masculine) and the “cult of domesticity” (feminine), in their contributions to American empire-building, may be seen at work. The model of “separate spheres”—women occupying a private, home space, as men hold sway over the public and political sphere—has acted to tuck women out of sight as imperial agents, often positioning them as a counterforce to an admittedly violent, territorial conquest.²⁷ Challenging this binary, political theorist Amy Kaplan sites the civilizing mission inherent to nineteenth century discourses of domesticity as an essential counterpart to masculine conquest of the foreign, assisting the production of a commonsense view of settler-colonialism as just, inevitable, and as supposedly natural as the elaboration of gender binaries.²⁸

In the context of the Northwest Indian War, blockhouses were simultaneously military

²⁵ Roy N. Lokken, “The Martial Law Controversy in Washington Territory, 1856,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 2 (April, 1952), 92.

²⁶ Ford to Cain, March 15, 1856, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

²⁷ This may be seen at work, for example, in popular sentimental depictions of Narcissa Whitman as a martyr, as an innocent and tender representative of American civilization rather than as an agent of a violent settler colonialism. The supposed “ultimate demise,” of the Natives responsible for her murder, points out Matthew Dennis, could be interpreted “not as a violent colonial conquest but as just retribution for their savagery,” Matthew Dennis, “Natives and Pioneers: Death and the Settling and Unsettling of Oregon,” *The Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 115, no. 3 (Fall, 2014), 290.

²⁸ Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (September 1998); for the particular place of white women in the colonial project as well as their centrality in the construction of whiteness and masculinity in the context of British Columbia that is contemporaneous to Kaplan’s study see Adele Perry, “‘Fair Ones of a Purer Caste’: White Women and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3 (Fall, 1997), 501-524.

impositions, portrayed popularly as strongholds of intrepid frontiersmen, and also home-places where supposedly virtuous pioneer women held sway, regulating the potentially savage violence men were feared to lapse into, becoming the very Indians they were fighting against and differentiating themselves from.²⁹

Drawing on multiple, temporally diverse narratives produced by local historians, federal agents, and indigenous peoples in the locality of what is now southwest Washington State, specifically, the vicinity of Fort Henness near present-day Centralia, I argue that although these war/blockhouse stories continue to justify and naturalize settler-colonialism and its systemic violence against indigenous peoples, they also hold within them contradictions, revealing a history that belies the simple dichotomies of race, gender, and class that agents of an expansionist U.S. often appeared so confident in. Always shifting and unstable, notions of the foreign and the domestic were worked out at sites like Fort Henness, producing a multiplicity of narratives that often contradict themselves as they tumble through time and tellings.³⁰

In a local history of Centralia, Washington, a photograph, likely from the 1870s, depicts four men, outside the walls of Fort Borst to commemorate the Indian war that had ended at least fifteen years prior. Standing guard with vigilance, rifles ready for action, the blockhouse appears

²⁹ Although, as Phillip Deloria has pointed out, self-indigenization of non-Natives has been employed positively to patriate settlers as exceptionally American and belonging to the soil, too much indigenization ran the risk of regression into savagery and a backsliding of civilization, Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Richard Slotkin traces Euro-American fears of indigenization in the production of the mythology underpinning a violent American exceptionalism, Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). Philip Terrie emphasizes ambivalence in a close reading of Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* in Philip G Terrie, "The Other Within: Indianization on *The Oregon Trail*," *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 3 (September, 1991), 376-392.

³⁰ Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, 80-82.

here as a domestic space guarded by its protective patriarchs.³¹ Though photographs are often trusted to be direct and “true” representations of the world as it is, it is worth remembering that photographs (and their predecessors, mass-produced print illustrations) are both undeniably intentional—mediated by a photographer’s subject position—and a product of the historical present in which it was taken—saturated with ideology.³² As a sense of a regionally embedded national identity took shape through the tenuous relationship with local indigenous peoples, this performance of white Euro-Americans guarding sacred national space may be read as a gesture of protecting settler territory (the domestic) from savage incursions from without (the foreign). But as Kaplan points out, a contradiction lay at the heart of this arrangement. As the U.S. expanded its boundaries, it found itself facing the reality of having to incorporate foreign (nonwhite) subjects into newly drawn geographic boundaries.³³ Carol Smith-Rosenberg has proposed that it was the tension within this problematic that has been and continues to be productive of the violence, instability and fragility of U.S. national identity. Euro-American settlers of southwest Washington have, to this day, strained to fit local indigenous-settler conflict into the greater American mythology of Indian wars and to thus position their regional sense of history within the common trajectory of the grand U.S. origin story.

³¹ The caption of this photo reads, “‘This is a posed picture, Fort Borst was never attacked,’ Unknown, ‘Fort Borst, Borst residence and old Coats store building,’ (ca 1870), Centralia, WA,” Herndon Smith, *Centralia: The First Fifty Years, 1845-1900*.

³² Carol Williams shows how a multiplicity of public and private colonial interests were intertwined through the use and production of photographs in the Pacific Northwest and also how photography was used by indigenous peoples for purposes unintended by settler colonials, Carol J. Williams, *Framing the West: Race, Gender and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003). For other work exploring the centrality of visual representations to settler colonial projects, especially to the work of imagining a new national community see Gillian Poulter, *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sports, Visual Culture and Identity in Montreal, 1840-85* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009); Lyle Dick, “Nationalism and Visual Media in Canada: The Case of Thomas Scott’s Execution,” *Manitoba History* 48 (Autumn/Winter 2004-2005).

³³ Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” 584-585.

American emigrants to the Pacific Northwest brought both popular narratives and actual memories of Indian-settler violence with them, especially in the form of captivity narratives: of (usually, but not always) white females taken by Native men as hostages, wives, or slaves. Historian June Namias has shown how the genre of the captivity narrative, beginning in the seventeenth century, can be used as a way to perceive shifting anxieties over race and gender on the colonial frontier at the time of their authorship. Looking at how female victims are portrayed, Namias identifies three distinct periods: that of the survivor, the Amazon, and the “frail flower,” the latter of which most heavily influenced popular accounts of the Northwest Indian War as one of embattled innocents.³⁴ As Smith-Rosenberg points out, this story did the work of uniting diverse milieus of Euro-Americans (including poor whites and European immigrants) against dehumanized “redskins,” justifying their removal and exclusion from the New Republic while they were excluded from claims to a shared humanity promised by liberal discourses of democratic citizenship.³⁵ This process of othering did the work of constructing a new national identity and, as a consequence, legitimizing the power of the state to determine who should live and who should die as a racially ordered settler colonial society necessitated “the regulation of the productive economic and biological capacities of human life at a mass scale.”³⁶ Localized narratives of Indian war in nineteenth century Washington Territory have worked to naturalize the governance of differentials of life value—who counts as fully human—the echoes of which can be seen in the biopolitical maintenance of settler-colonialism in the region today, as the

³⁴ June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

³⁵ Smith-Rosenberg also pays close attention to the ways in which these categories of power were simultaneously constructed *and* subverted within these popular narratives, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 226-229.

³⁶ Clough and Willse, paraphrasing Michel Foucault, “Gendered Security,” 49.

shooting death of John T. Williams underscores, but also contain contradictions that resist smooth and seamless containment within the metanarratives of U.S. expansion.

Centralia resident Donna Tisdale's 1942 telling in an anthology of local history exemplifies the imperative of framing the Northwest Indian War as harmonious with national frontier mythologies.³⁷ Produced at the height of World War II, Tisdale was writing in a context in which special emphasis was placed on coherent national narratives, seeking to assuage the uncertainty of economic upheavals caused by the Depression, the disturbances caused by rapid technological developments, and global warfare.³⁸ Tisdale's narrative, shot through with nationalist mythologies of sacrifice in the face of unspeakable frontier savagery, seem to vibrate with fear of the indigenous other, the plucky wherewithal of the women to endure it, and, for Euro-American men, the skill and strength to overcome it without crossing the threateningly unstable line of self-indigenization.³⁹ The protagonists of the story, settlers Mary Adeline Borst and Joseph Borst, provide the gendered coordinates necessary to structure and naturalize a hegemonic social order in a colonizing space. Tisdale recites a genealogy of participation in frontier Indian combat from Revolutionary upstate New York to the battlefields of the Black Hawk War, characterizing her father and husband as coming "from fighting stock."⁴⁰ But the martial activities of men are secondary in her story to the activities of settler women and the

³⁷ Donna Tisdale, "Mary Adeline and Joseph Borst (The Story of the Borst Family)," in Smith, *Centralia*.

³⁸ The anthology in which Tisdale's narrative is a part was sponsored by the University of Washington, in line with other contemporary projects in which state agencies collected folklore in order to sustain a shared sense of national community at a time when notions of citizenship and national identity were especially strained. Marco Duranti, "Utopia, Nostalgia, and World War at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 4 (October 2006); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

³⁹ For the centrality of self-indigenization to the construction of American masculine identities throughout time see, Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

⁴⁰ Tisdale, "Mary Adeline and Joseph Borst," 106.

interior space of the blockhouse. Although Tisdale's Adeline complains about fort life limiting the fulfillment of domestic duties (an important example of the sacrifice endured by frontier families that would help justify their claims to indigenous lands), the blockhouse was also a site in which female domesticity was performed as an essential component of the civilizing process of Euro-American expansion. While the "savage *Siwash*," including the "friendly Chehalis," were kept outside the boundaries of Fort Henness, military men were admitted, their civilized status maintained through the "immaculate order" of the interior where they participated in Victorian parlor activities such as spelling bees, granted their beards were clipped short!⁴¹

Tisdale's microcosm of civilization, Fort Henness, was directly tied to the central event of southwest Washington's nineteenth century Indian War stories, an episode of interpersonal violence between two Chehalis Indians. In the same volume as Tisdale's narrative, Evelyn Walking describes this event as the only "bloodshed during the war" in this locality (despite her own attempts to fit Northwest events into tropes of bloody frontier mythology), and other accounts by her contemporaries attest to this.⁴² On the night of June 13, 1856, a Lower Chehalis woman rode up to Fort Henness, "one of her eyes [was]...closed and the blood was running down her cheek." Pursued by her husband, the prominent leader Stamelo, who had supposedly just beaten her, the woman (who is never named in any of the accounts) sought admittance to the fort. Sometime during the night, Stamelo was shot and killed by an unknown assailant affiliated with the fort. Just one among multiple tellings, this is where narrative similarities end. Inconsistencies between tellings should not be seen as limitations, however. Instead, different versions of the same story may open up windows into how social hierarchies were and continue

⁴¹ Ibid., 105.

⁴² Evelyn Walking, "The Indian Wars of 1855-1856," in Smith, *Centralia*, 48-49.

to be contested—specifically, how this local manifestation of a Euro-American frontier war narrative has been used throughout time to naturalize the ongoing presence of colonialism in this region.⁴³ Attention to where these narratives diverge can reveal much about the dynamics of power, in this case, the struggle for hegemony of a weak settler-colonial society imposing itself onto a locality with its own distinct and historically contingent power arrangements.

The settler-colonial project in the northwest depended on ending Indian control and ways of practicing violence. In southwest Washington Territory, a sociopolitical world that had developed across generations through the global fur trade was destabilizing as increased American settlement brought newcomers to the region who tended to be less inclined to follow local norms. At the same time, as HBC and British claims weakened, a series of epidemics swept up and down the coast.⁴⁴ Scarcely a year prior, Governor Isaac Stevens conducted a series of Indian treaties intending to “legally” cede all indigenous land in the new territory to the United States. Though many of the “Stevens treaties” were successfully negotiated with many Coast Salish bands, Stevens often failed to orchestrate a consensus over treaty terms. His tendency to disregard local cultural and sociopolitical diversity and the delayed fulfillment of treaty stipulations by the Indian department made it impossible to command authority and convince the delegates that his promises would be fulfilled.⁴⁵ In this unstable environment, violent incidents proliferated. In 1855, Gold was found in Yakama country, east of the Cascades, sparking a rush of prospectors whose anti-Indian violence provoked constant cycles of retributions—the news of

⁴³ Julie Cruikshank, “Images of Society in Klondike Gold Rush Narratives: Skookum Jim and the Discovery of Gold,” *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1992), 22, 32, 35.

⁴⁴ David Peterson Del Mar, *Beaten Down*, ch. 1.

⁴⁵ See ch. 1 of this thesis.

which undoubtedly found its way to the southwest of Washington Territory in short order.⁴⁶ Additionally, sporadic raids were carried out by many Puget Sound area Salish outraged by the framing and incarceration of popular leader Leschi, and who expressed concern about increasing anti-Indian violence. Settlers (mostly recently-arrived and naïve about local practices of violence) were worried that a general Indian uprising or conspiracy was in the works, facilitated by rapid channels of indigenous kinship and communication across mountain passes. Still, the “War” remained limited to a few skirmishes between volunteer militias and a couple hundred Indians. Despite this, incidences of aggression were increasingly depicted, not as part of a local economy of indigenous violence, but through the framework of Euro-American warfare that necessitated counter-reaction, couched in the discourse of law. This practice of legal violence, in turn, relied on a racial construction of “the Indian” as an imminent foreign threat.⁴⁷

Inconsistencies in the Stamelo narrative hinge on the question of who should be allowed inside Fort Hennes. In Tisdale’s telling, civilizing mission discourses are employed to characterize the blockhouse as a desirable asylum for Indian women who seek the refuge of virtuous female domesticity in order to save them from the savagery of Indian men who stalk the

⁴⁶ Carlos A. Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 116-119.

⁴⁷ That the Northwest Indian War may be thought of as less of a conventional war than a contested site of power is not a new idea within regional historiography. Many recent treatments of the Indian War note its rhetorical importance as a site for political or social struggle, not only between Indians and newcomers, but between rival political factions, military brass and volunteers, the HBC and Americans. For example, Robert E. Ficken argues that Governor Stevens seized on the war, and even exaggerated aspects of it, to bolster American claims over the English, legitimize Indian removal to reservations (and away from the white population), and strengthen the influence of the Democratic party in local politics, Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2002), 47-51. Alexandra Harmon has argued that the upsurge in Indian on settler violence may not have been, as many popular accounts maintain, caused by an Indian population struggling against an inevitable “tide” of American emigration, but rather carried out by Indians who were in fact more tied to “white” agricultural pursuits and interests and thus saw that they had much to lose if settlers continued to increasingly trod on their land and resource sites, Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

wilderness outside fort walls.⁴⁸ As the Chehalis woman narrowly escapes her husband's pursuit, Adeline rushes to the rescue, her "sympathetic eyes" surveying, and then cleaning the "poor *klootchman's*" wounds, as Tisdale imagines her muttering, "Mercy, mercy...that *siwash* [Indian] ought to be shot."⁴⁹ Deviating from Tisdale's account, in a report to Governor Stevens by his secretary James Doty written the day following the incident, *both* Stamelo and the Chehalis woman were initially refused but reluctantly granted admittance to the fort, even after the woman "begged to come in saying that she was afraid of her husband who had threatened to kill her." In Doty's telling, the woman was sent away first and "Half an hour after the man was turned out." To federal agents like Doty, the maintenance of racial boundaries was important, but even more so was the concern that the death of Stamelo would destabilize indigenous-settler relations, as the incident threatened to provoke a retaliation from local Chehalis who regarded Stamelo as "a chief of considerable importance."⁵⁰ Silas Heck, relating a story told by his Upper Chehalis father Koolah, also positions Stamelo and his wife in the fort together but characterizes them as active agents who used the Fort on their own initiative, as the woman "took refuge in the fort, [Stamelo] followed her in,"⁵¹ without any deliberation on the part of the settlers inside.

Importantly, the Heck/Koolah story disrupts notions of the racial distance blockhouses were supposed to enforce. While the racial proximities of the women hiding Stamelo's wife "so he couldn't find her," do not unsettle tropes of a feminine civilizing mission, Stamelo's position

⁴⁸ This familiar trope of gendered humanitarianism has been used to justify American imperialist interventions from the U.S. War with Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and beyond, see Clough and Willse, "Gendered Security/National Security," 46-47.

⁴⁹ The use of Chinook is interesting here as it suggests both a proximity to indigenous peoples that colonialists sought to eradicate and at the same time an indigenization of the familiar cliché of anti-Indian violence: "the only good Indian's a dead Indian," Tisdale, "Mary Adeline and Joseph Borst," 110-111.

⁵⁰ James Doty to Isaac Stevens, June 15, 1856, M5, roll 23, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

⁵¹ Tove Hodge, "The Family of Sidney S. Ford, Senior," in Smith, *Centralia*, 94.

“kneeling by the fire in the center of the stockade,” contradict all other tellings in which he is “turned out,” or never admitted to the Fort in the first place. Indeed, the actual killing of Stamelo in the Heck/Koolah version is *within* the boundaries of the fort, across the fire as he was “reaching for a coal to take it up and light his pipe.” While all other narratives describe Stamelo as being shot as he rode out of the immediate sight of the Fort, in the Heck/Koolah version, Stamelo is “shot in the breast by someone from across the fire.”⁵²

The vacillation, sometimes within the same narrative, of the phrases “act of murder” and “act of war” to describe the killing of Stamelo, suggest that local residents struggled to define the event in terms of a national narrative—a narrative that relied on legal/military discourses to legitimize indigenous dispossession. When locals defined the incident as “cold blooded murder,”⁵³ or as a “brutal” shooting “by some white man with a black heart,”⁵⁴ they frustrated a picture of regional life as one embroiled in an Indian war. In fact, in his response to the incident, Indian agent Sidney Ford seemed more concerned with his ability to control the actions of lower class whites, whom he perceived as representing a continuous threat to the exacerbation of already unstable Indian-non-Indian relations.⁵⁵ The reality of local racial proximities are further affirmed by accounts contemporary to the aftermath of Stamelo’s death. Many indigenous leaders, local agents, and settler elites had cultivated close, reciprocal relationships that continued during, and despite of, the war scare.⁵⁶ American settler Patterson Luark had in fact

⁵² Ibid., 95.

⁵³ Walking, “The Indian Wars,” 50.

⁵⁴ Leona Helgerson, ed., “The Journal of Patterson F. Luark” in Smith, *Centralia*, 168.

⁵⁵ Sidney S. Ford to the Superintendency of Indian Affairs, May 13, 1856, M5, roll 16, RG 75; NARA, Seattle; Walking, “The Indian Wars,” 50.

⁵⁶ For a groundbreaking study of how mixed-blood marriages shaped fur trade society see Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983); Focusing

refused to help build or go to a blockhouse, believing them to be “not only unnecessary but injurious to our friendship with our neighboring Chehalis Indians.”⁵⁷ While Tisdale, writing in the 1940s, imagines Adeline praying to God to “please make the Indians go away,” as their proximity threatened the imagined racial distance needed for the production of national space,⁵⁸ Luark made his way to the home of Agent Ford and the Chehalis village there, where Stamelos’ body had been conveyed. Luark “helped make a coffin and saw the body put therein, wrapped up in four shirts, two pairs of pants, 1 vest, three coats and twelve blankets and quilts. With a number of beautiful beadwork pouches, comb, brush, and pistol, with numerous articles all in the coffin,”⁵⁹ illustrating an intimacy that speaks to the convergence of indigenous and settler lives as they were lived on the ground.

The declaration of martial law on April 3, 1856 by Governor Isaac Stevens underscores how racial proximities threatened the colonial management of Washington Territory, necessitating the production of a state of exception that would give governing powers extraordinary control over the mobility of local populations as well as the capacity to preemptively relegate a people to a criminal class. These threats did not emerge from one side of

primarily on the post-Civil War U.S., Peggy Pascoe traces the development of miscegenation law, including how the colonization and incorporation of Oregon Territory into the U.S. necessitated turning the existent polyglot population created through the fur trade society documented by Van Kirk into a “white body politic,” Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 78.

⁵⁷ Luark did, however, supply produce to the blockhouses during the “hostilities,” Helgerson, ed., “The Journal of Patterson F. Luark,” in Smith, *Centralia*, 165.

⁵⁸ For a discussion on how racial proximities frustrated colonialist attempts at managing clear racial categories, see Adele Perry, “Reproducing Colonialism in British Columbia, 1849-1871,” in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009); Tisdale, “Mary Adeline and Joseph Borst,” in Smith, *Centralia*, 114.

⁵⁹ Helgerson, ed., “The Journal of Patterson F. Luark,” in Smith, *Centralia*, 168-169.

a racial binary but from the indefinite space between. The existence of “half-breeds” and mixed race couples that continued to proliferate in the region frustrated Steven’s attempts at framing the Indian War as one between two races. Half-breeds whose “cliques, combinations and sinister influences,” served as “all[ies] of the enemy,”⁶⁰ were threats, in the words of Stevens’s supporters, to “the preservation of the lives of our people and the safety and security of their property from the torch of the savage.”⁶¹ Unwilling to enclose themselves within the purified domestic borders of the blockhouse, these duplicitous half-breeds had indigenized themselves beyond limits acceptable for citizenship in the new U.S. settler colony.⁶²

At once internal and external enemies, “half-breeds” found themselves, like those racialized as Indians, marked for deletion under the “state of exception” of martial law. In a similar fashion to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder’s recent justification of the executive power to kill U.S. citizens without charges, a trial, or advance judicial approval, nineteenth-century “half-breeds” occupied what Giorgio Agamben has described as *homo sacer*, or “living dead”—existing outside the law, possessing the capacity to be killed without being murdered.⁶³ In the context of the contemporary Pacific Northwest, the 2010 death of First Nations

⁶⁰ Isaac Stevens quoted in Harmon, *Indians in the Making*, 90.

⁶¹ Delegates in Congress from the territories of Oregon and Washington, “Representation to the Honorables J. Patton Anderson and Joseph Lane,” *Pioneer and Democrat*, June 20, 1856.

⁶² In a petition by “The undersigned citizens and volunteers in the service of the United States, operating in the territory of Washington for the safety of the heretofore unprotected inhabitants from the merciless outrages of a savage foe,” explicitly accuse those who chose not to go to blockhouses as treasonous and in opposition to “American born citizens,” who had been “driven to forts...or inhumanly massacred,” *Pioneer and Democrat*, June 20, 1856. However, after public outcry and legal challenges, martial law was revoked, confirming Adele Perry’s argument that successful colonial administration depended on complying, or at least tolerating local constellations of power, Perry, “Reproducing Colonialism,” 150, 160; Ficken, *Washington Territory*, 49-50.

⁶³ Drawing on the works of theorists Giorgio Agamben and Slavoj Žižek, Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd makes a powerful connection between the concept of *homo sacer*, and its foundations in the colonization of indigenous peoples in North American and beyond, Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 225-228.

woodcarver John T. Williams in Seattle has been widely represented in the media as a murder, yet outrage over the incident faded quickly and Officer Ian Birk quietly resigned from the Seattle Police Department without the filing of criminal charges.⁶⁴ Important here is the possibility that Williams could simultaneously be “unmurderable,” and “murdered in cold blood”. That the same biopolitics justifying Williams’s death also provides the framework to define this death as a homicide is a foundational paradox of colonialist discourse that may also be found within narratives of nineteenth century Indian war. These stories have been used throughout time and space as “politically managed form[s] of information that enforce particular categories of human differences,” and through their telling construct “commonsense” understandings of race and colonized space.⁶⁵ Divergences, inconsistencies, and vacillations within these narratives, however, open up windows of possibility that may help us disturb frontier mythologies and challenge the colonialist thought that reinscribes the inevitability of American progress, imperialism, and indigenous extinction. These windows of possibility may provide opportunities to forge new narratives with greater potential to confront the challenges of ongoing settler colonialism.

Success of a settler colonial project in the newly imagined Washington Territory depended not only on the biopolitical management of space, as the blockhouse narratives emphasized, but also on the management of time, usefully conceptualized by Dana Luciano as a

⁶⁴ “Birk resigns from Seattle Police Department,” *Seattle Times*, February 16, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2014247418_birk17m.html (accessed February 11, 2012).

⁶⁵ I am quoting Leslie Robertson, who investigates the life of an “Indian legend” that has structured power relations in a small Canadian mining town throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Leslie A. Robertson, *Imagining Difference: Legend, Curse, and Spectacle in a Canadian Mining Town* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 5-6.

chronobiopolitics, or, the “sexual arrangement of the time of life.”⁶⁶ While blockhouses and the stories generated around them have acted as sites of the attempted management of bodies—specifically the physical and discursive separation of bodies into the categories Indian and white—the Northwest Indian War also acted as a site in which the U.S. state attempted to regulate time. Chronobiopolitics, understood as the naturalization of the kinds of “lifeworlds of the body” that plot the subject along a biological timeline, paralleled the stadial timeline of civilization progress and defined the rational liberal subject through their successful performance of bourgeois family ideology and property ownership, or, what Luciano has termed *chrononormativity*, that served the interests of capitalism and the expanding state.⁶⁷ By this logic, because colonized or racialized peoples have not prioritized, or have historically enjoyed less access to these accoutrements of liberal citizenship, their status as a rational subject enjoying full humanity has been viewed as suspect. Reading narratives of nineteenth-century Indian war for their chrononormative coordinates may further illuminate the ongoing complexities of settler colonialism in the region, as well as provide some of their possible un-moorings.

Governor Stevens, like other representatives of an expansionist U.S., invoked the chronicle of manifest destiny, while attempting to stitch the life narratives of newcomers into this grand history of civilizational progress. This project necessitated defining the limits of national belonging, excluding those considered “out of step” with this orderly progression of normative, linear time. For many decades scholars have explored ways in which narratives emphasizing triumph over savagery, and the resultant transformation of individuals into the rational,

⁶⁶ Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-12. For an application of Luciano to queer theory critiques of normativity, see Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3-5.

bourgeois subjects necessary to compose a national body, have legitimized the dispossession of North American indigenous peoples.⁶⁸ Less attention has been paid to how this construction of linear historical time, as it produced subjects and their constitutive Others—those outside of the pale of citizenship—would continue to determine who would benefit from state protection from violence and who would remain vulnerable to the systemic violence of the state.⁶⁹

The *necropolitical* practices of the state, embedded in juridical discourse that made the killing of John T. Williams possible without being murder had to do with the racialization of bodies in urban space, as well as the increased privatization of this space since the end of the twentieth century,⁷⁰ but it also hinged on his perceived “Indianness” and the temporal positioning of the indigenous peoples of North America, in theorist Jodi Byrd’s words, as “always already past perfect,” their lives ungrievable, their demise already foreclosed by the inevitable march of the U.S. across the continent.⁷¹ Settler colonial faith in this teleology that underwrites actual violence against indigenous peoples was also evoked by Governor Stevens in the historical context of the nineteenth century in his speeches to drum up support for his war policies. In an address delivered at the Methodist Church at Steilacoom (south of present day Tacoma), Stevens proclaimed that because local indigenous peoples were determined to “resist [their] destiny by

⁶⁸ The best recent work that addresses narratives of extinction specifically is Jean O’Brian, *Firsting and Lasting*. For an indigenous challenge to these narratives see Michael Vincent Wilcox, *The Pueblo Revolt and the Mythology of Conquest: An Indigenous Archaeology of Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

⁶⁹ Chandan Reddy has recently brought a queer of color critique to the work of Agamben, Foucault, Wendy Brown, and others to explore the ways in which liberal conceptions of freedom necessarily rely on the deployment of state violence against those deemed non-normative, Chandan Reddy, *Freedom With Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the U.S. State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁷⁰ I thank Kevin Leonard, in a personal communication, for reminding me that the death of Williams is irreducible to settler colonialism.

⁷¹ Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 37. Byrd is drawing on Judith Butler’s concept of the ethics of grievability, Judith Butler, *Frames of War*.

force of arms...wantonly violat[ing] their plighted fait [sic]" by enacting an "inhuman war" "without cause," the "citizens [of Washington Territory], and the citizens of our sister territory, Oregon, will sweep this formidable combination of the hostile Indian tribes of the two territories, I might say, from the face of the earth."⁷² In other words, because Indians refused to accept a narrative that projected their future demise as a necessary result of the benevolent civilizing process at the heart of modern progress and its attendant historical telos, Stevens believed he had the authority as state agent to hasten this extinction in order to remove the main obstacle hindering the territorial expansion and capitalist development driving U.S. settler colonialism.

Although colonial officials sought to edify the boundaries of a racial binary, the biopolitical management of settler colonial space depended on eradicating threats irreducible to these binaries. Although Governor Stevens directed his rhetorical vitriol in his 1856 Steilacoom address towards a well-defined enemy "Indian," most of the traces Stevens left in the historical record suggest a preoccupation with a more complex panoply of threats to bourgeois citizenship that echo those expressed throughout the Williams case over a hundred and fifty years later. From the heterogeneous population south of Puget Sound, Stevens culled a virtual laundry list of these threats: the Catholicism of francophones, the persistence of mixed-race intimacies, consumption of liquor beyond perceived levels of propriety, and widespread transiency. These threats to the imposition of a normative bourgeois domesticity in the nineteenth century Pacific Northwest were met with state violence, legitimized as preemptively defensive.

⁷² "Address of Gov Isaac I. Stevens" *Pioneer and Democrat* February 29, 1856. Of course, Stevens was appealing to local settlers and political figures, many of whom were becoming suspicious of his actions, and had no intention of carrying out a this sort of military campaign. What is important is that this sort of rhetoric could be considered legitimate, it could "make sense" to readers of the *Pioneer and Democrat*, whether supportive of Stevens and his policies, or not.

Within a twenty-first century context, the status of John T. Williams as *homo sacer* hinged on monolithic categories such as “Indian,” but was also dependent on the perception that he lacked the required abilities to exercise rational citizenship due to his mental illness, alcoholism, and transiency. As a result of this social death, Williams was exposed to state violence as an outlier to a protected national community.⁷³ The complex way that race, indigeneity, transiency, and heteronormativity figure into the biopolitics of American society become more clear when juxtaposing the Williams death with a similar contemporaneous incident, the shooting death of teenager Trayvon Martin at the hands of George Zimmerman on February 26, 2012. Zimmerman—like Birk—justified the shooting in terms of the perception of an imminent threat, drawn from a complex array of racial constructions and representations (including the politics of fashion—Martin’s hoodie became a central object in the rallying cry of injustice around the case), and especially through Florida’s “Stand Your Ground” law, a manifestation of institutionalized racial violence. But unlike Williams, Martin possessed privileges of middle class status, a stable residence, and a normative “nuclear” family. His mother and father were able to exploit their legibility as normative, middle class citizens to leverage more successfully for public support and legal recourse.⁷⁴

⁷³ Mbembe, “Necropolitics”.

⁷⁴ In a press conference, President Obama, speaking of Trayvon Martin stated, “If I had a son he would look like Trayvon and I think they [his parents] are right to expect that all of us as Americans are going to take this with the seriousness it deserves.” The centrality of the notion of “it could have been your son,” in mainstream media representations of the Martin case, assumes much about who constitutes the “American Public”. Would Martin’s life have been any less “wasted” had he not possessed a private, middle class family and home? If he could not be seen to hold the potential to follow normative trajectories of “going to college” in order to become a “productive” (or consuming) member of society? Though the Martins had access to these normative frames that deemed Trayvon’s life grievable to most Americans, it was not enough to counter the racialized fear embedded in Florida’s “stand your ground laws.” Despite second-degree murder and manslaughter charges, a jury acquitted Zimmerman in July, 2013, “President Obama Speaks on Trayvon Martin,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/19/remarks-president-trayvon-martin>, (accessed 11/23/2013).

In their own respective ways, social theorists Leerom Medovoi and Susan Buck-Morss have provided useful conceptualizations of how processes of racialization has been central to the administration of biopolitics and state violence in ways irreducible to static racial binaries. Medovoi has traced genealogies of racial formation that move beyond the phenotypically determined *color-line racism* to include the ways in which other social categories overlap and intersect to form another “axis” of race he terms, *dogma-line racism*—an essence marked on the “soul” or “mind” rather than on the “body”. This dogma-line racism works to delineate the boundaries of national belonging as it positions in the racially illegible subject a “threatening *countergovernmentality*,” all the more dangerous because it makes visible the crack in the hegemonic ideology that makes social hierarchies seem obvious and natural as the raced subject’s treachery cannot be linked to a visible phenotype but hides within the subject. The anxiety produced by encountering a racially unmarked body that “can successfully disguise the disloyalty that it contains,” has been exploited both by the architects of the contemporary War on Terror and by nineteenth century Indian agents to justify exceptional state violence—in the case of the latter, by regarding themselves as protectors of subject-citizens within a U.S. settler community from the “perfidy and treachery” of Indians and the “evil-disposed persons,” residing on the “outskirts of the settlements.”⁷⁵ “Animate[ing] a flexible racialization” the administration of the nineteenth century Indian War sought to identify conspiratorial threats *within* a racialized and classed community of phenotypically ambiguous subjects, bringing into relief the complexity of the biopolitical mechanisms underwriting U.S. settler colonialism as well as its

⁷⁵ “Address of Gov Isaac I. Stevens” *Pioneer and Democrat*, February 29, 1856; B.F. Shaw, et al., “Head Quarters, Camp Montgomery” *Pioneer and Democrat*, June 20, 1856. The latter article supposedly represented “the undersigned citizens and volunteers in the service of the United States operating in the territory of Washington, for the safety of the heretofore unprotected inhabitants from the merciless outrages of a savage foe...” It’s worth remembering that the *Pioneer and Democrat* served as Governor Stevens’s and the Democratic party’s mouthpiece in the Territory, Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, 54-55.

contemporary ties to the state of exception that legitimizes state terror that manages economies of life and death.⁷⁶

In an approach more attendant to the management of threats themselves, Susan Buck-Morss makes a distinction between the “normal, safe enemies,” required to mark the boundaries of a collectivity, and the “absolute enemies” who are perceived to pose actual threats to this collective. Various elements within a heterogeneous population in the Pacific Northwest for example, became “absolute enemies” because they “challeng[ed] the very notion by which the identity of the collective ha[d] been formed.”⁷⁷ Rather than behaving as “normal” or “safe” enemies—the phenotypically raced “vanishing Indians” required by settler colonialists to position themselves as rightful inheritors of the land—local mixed-race inhabitants obstructed the chrononormative trajectory of modern progressive time that would make “Washington, what its great name signifies it should be, the ‘Star of Empire’ that westward came.”⁷⁸

Chandan Reddy depicts this sort of American originary narrative as a coming-of-age story that at first requires the presence of “Indians” as co-adolescents to white American settlers on the “frontier,” whom must eventually leave them behind, the former stalled in perpetual adolescence, the latter achieving complete, rational, white male adulthood.⁷⁹ Indeed, U.S. Indian policy has juvenilized indigenous peoples throughout time as “wards” of a paternalist state and as a result, indigenous peoples have been denied sovereignty and self-governance. Yet in the context of nineteenth century Washington Territory, as the opening passage of this chapter

⁷⁷ Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002) 33-34.

⁷⁸ Isaac Stevens quoted in Robert E. Ficken, *Washington Territory* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2002), 24.

⁷⁹ Reddy, *Freedom With Violence*, 65-67.

indicates, this normative temporal schematic was frustrated by the heterogeneous communities who threatened the orderly progression of savagery-to-civilization that would ensure the passage of adolescence to the mature rationality necessary to exercise universal citizenship. By refusing to “give up” Indian wives, seemingly uncommitted to “scientific” farming practices, and embedded within local indigenous kinship networks whose sociopolitical practices were at odds with the vertical administration of state power, “half-breeds,” and the indigenous and arrivant individuals associated with them jammed up a normative narrative flow, threatening the inevitability of a successful civilizing mission perceived as they were to remain in a sort of suspended adolescence on this “outpost of empire.”⁸⁰

When the two American settlers William Norcraft and William White were killed by Indian “hostiles” in Nisqually country, any tolerance Stevens possessed for the persistent fraternization between the “half-breeds” and “Indians” in the south Puget Sound region was extinguished. For months the Charles Wren claim on Muck Prairie had been monitored by federal officials as a stopping-off place for ex-HBC employees and indigenous peoples, including Leschi, who had recently caused a stir after an uncommonly raucous Christmas Party⁸¹ Convinced that Muck Creek “half-breeds” were “aiding and abetting...the enemy,” in regards to the Norcraft and White killings, but lacking evidence against them and hence the ability to charge them in civil court, Stevens revoked habeas corpus and declared martial law on April 3, 1856, a gesture that may be understood as an example of Agamben’s state of exception, or the suspension of juridical law, authorized by a perceived state of emergency, legitimized in a

⁸⁰ For the perseverance of fur trade society in the Pacific Northwest through the second half of the nineteenth century see Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade*.

⁸¹ Richards, *Isaac Stevens*, 274.

democracy through the posing of an imminent threat to the national body and to the bodies of individual citizens.⁸²

Ironically, to carry out this war against perceived threats to the settler-colonial state, Stevens relied on agents on the ground, agents who were inextricably knotted into the social fabric that aroused his suspicions in the first place. Adele Perry, in her work on British Columbia, has also drawn attention to divergences between the imperial prescriptions emanating from the metropole and local practices on the ground. In southwest Washington Territory, as in Perry's B.C., the hybridity of local society worked against attempts to secure the perimeters of bourgeois masculinity and racial purity. However, colonial administration often found its greatest success through flexible and selective tolerance of hybrid communities and their localized power structures. Following the work of Ann Laura Stoler, Perry demonstrates how social tensions on the fraught borderlands of colonial peripheries were productive of the bourgeoisie as the new modern, global ruling class, agents behind the imperial expansion of the nineteenth century.⁸³ Emerging also from these contested sites of power are narratives, including localized narratives of the Pacific Northwest Indian War, from which settler-colonial power may be both challenged and reinscribed.

The imposition of settler hegemony in the region was accompanied by a national mythos that acted to naturalize and render its power inevitable. The perpetuation of this mythos relied on performances of bourgeois propriety, maintained through the recognition and management of

⁸² Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Though able to convince some that mixed-raced peoples were inherently "evil disposed persons," the "worst enemies of American citizens and the progress of the war," many were unconvinced of the legality of this exercise of executive power and the state of exception that legitimized it. Stevens argued until the end that "absolute necessity demanded the actions," and a bitter political battle followed that cut divisions along party lines, alienated many longtime Stevens supporters, and was understood contemporarily as part of the heated debate over state versus federal power in the lead-up to the Civil War, Stevens, quoted in Richards, *Isaac Stevens*, 279, 285.

⁸³ Adele Perry, "Reproducing Colonialism in British Columbia, 1849-1871," in *Bodies in Contact*, 148-150.

populations and individuals who were seen to challenge this ideology. These projects took shape not only through the management of normative sexuality, mobility, or access to alcohol, but also through the production of historical narratives themselves. Many scholars have identified within these narratives the persistence of an exceptionalist faith in the inevitability of (re)settling the American West that continues to naturalize power differentials in a settler-colonial contemporary. Here, indigenous peoples are “ghosted” from the present, as once again, the teleological narrative of manifest destiny becomes *the* national story; from small-town “pioneer days,” to mainstream movies, to the very institutional practice of “American History” itself.⁸⁴ According to this logic, as the national frontier expands, regional histories are retroactively subsumed into the master-narrative of the U.S., but only on the condition that they may be legibly emplotted onto the progressive timeline of “official” state history.⁸⁵ Identifying local dissonances in the process of narrative incorporation—instances in which historical actors lacked the necessary tools to perform a classed and racialized heteronormativity “on time”—has potential to expose the Northwest Indian War as a site where the production of state space was not foreclosed.

When Stevens placed his trust in local agents to manage “Indian affairs” in Southwest Washington Territory, he set in motion a contest between two men whose names appear side-by-side on a plaque commemorating the signers, officers, and participants of the first two Territorial

⁸⁴ This includes the nationalist multiculturalist project to include “Native American History” as part of the story of the U.S., an anti-sovereignty submerging, which Jodi Byrd among others see as yet another way to deny the presence of indigenous peoples today and perpetuate settler-colonialism, Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, xxiii, 10, 170.

⁸⁵ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 4. I am also engaging with Homi Bhabha’s insight on how performative (cyclical) and pedagogical (linear) time interact to create productive tensions or ambivalent spaces in which the terms are contested over what accumulative “scraps” of the “past-up-until-now” are incorporated into a pre-figured, originary narrative. Homi K. Bhabha, “DissemiNation: Time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation,” in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Conventions held in 1851.⁸⁶ By the end of the War however, Simon Plamondon and Sidney Ford took on very different social identities as a result the differential access each had to the performative tools necessary to enact a legible normalcy, and the concomitant ability to access the privileges of liberal citizenship.

Following Governor Stevens's martial law declarations, it became necessary for the settler-colonial state to "supervise" indigenous peoples by confining them to temporary "reservations," to care for their basic needs and, in what would become the most contentious point of policy in southwest Washington Territory, to confiscate all Indian guns. In the vicinity of Cowlitz landing, the French Canadian settler and ex-HBC employee Simon Plamondon was called on to act as temporary agent, to "exercise a general Supervision over all the Indians who may come into one camp and surrender their arms," and "to furnish them such provisions as may be necessary."⁸⁷ In the Chehalis vicinity, Sidney Ford, Indian agent of the Western District encompassing most of southwest Washington Territory was trusted to supervise the entire local operation.⁸⁸

While Stevens found his threat in the mixed-race inhabitants of Muck Prairie to the north, Ford found his own enemies at the regional trade and transportation hub that was Cowlitz Landing, where Plamondon had helped to build a thriving settlement among arrivants and indigenous peoples. Federal reports expressed suspicions of collusion between this

⁸⁶ Sandra A. Crowell, *The Land Called Lewis: A History of Lewis County, Washington* (Chehalis: Panesko Publishing, 2007), 41.

⁸⁷ J. Cain to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, November 8, 1855, Box 1, Folder One, "Miscellaneous letters and documents of Simon Plamondon, 1854-1857," Edmond Meany Papers, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle.

⁸⁸ Ford would ideally be in charge of administering the entire swath of land south of Puget Sound and east of the Cascade Mountains, he was appointed an official local Indian Agent in April of 1856, Stevens to Ford, April 25, 1856, and Stevens to Ford May 13, 1856, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Washington Agency, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

heterogeneous ex-HBC population and local indigenous families, who shared an interest in staving off Euro-American control. Additionally, the vicinity of Cowlitz landing was the nexus of kinship relations between the Cowlitz people, the Taidnapams of the Cascade foothills, and the Yakamas, Klickitat, and other indigenous peoples residing east of the Cascade Crest. Eastern Washington Indians, perceived broadly to be “hostiles,” were feared to be “enlisting” or pressuring indigenous groups in southwest Washington Territory into “taking their side” in a “general Indian uprising.”⁸⁹

In his federal reports, Ford mirrored Stevens’s rhetoric, characterizing Indians in his federal reports as savage threats who have “murdered our defenseless women and children and afterward mutilated their bodies in the most inhuman manner,”⁹⁰ but also as “doomed men sooner or later,” who would be “hunted like bears,” if insubordinate to the demands of U.S. government officials.⁹¹ Not only do these remarks more closely resemble mass-produced Indian war fiction contemporarily popular than actual occurrences in Washington Territory, the actors perceived most threatening to Ford and the true perpetrators of the War were not Indians, but those who were thought to be suppliers of the ideological and material substance that would incite Indians to violence. According to Ford, these non-Indian threats had “acted as spies for the enemy,” convincing Indian delegates at Stevens’s treaty councils that they had been “swindled...out of their lands,” and who had also “furnished those Indians...with liquor for the

⁸⁹ Ford expressed the widespread fear among settlers that Yakama leader Kamiakin had been forging pan-Indian alliances against “whites” which would extend west of the Cascades via the efficient indigenous channels of information, materials, and kinship relations that had been impossible for colonialists to fully monitor or control, “Annual Report from Ford ‘Agency on the Upper Chehalis,’” October 10, 1856, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Washington Agency, NARA; see also Richard D. Sheuerman, “Territorial Indian Policy and Tribal Relations, 1850-1856,” in Clifford E. Trafzer, ed., *Indians, Superintendents, and Councils: Northwestern Indian Policy, 1850-1855* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), 12-13.

⁹⁰ Ford to Stevens, May 13, 1856, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Washington Agency, NARA.

⁹¹ “Annual Report from Ford ‘Agency on the Upper Chehalis,’” October 10, 1856, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Washington Agency, NARA.

very purpose...of inciting them to hostilities...and [giving] them the strengths to commit these barbarities.” Among these threats was Simon Plamondon.⁹²

Because Ford was able to portray himself to the U.S. federal government as a man of rationality and virtue, he was authorized to act as the arbiter over who should possess weapons and under what circumstances.⁹³ In the vicinity of “Ford’s Prairie” only appointed Indian “scouts” were permitted to carry rifles while at Cowlitz, Col. Warbass and Capt. Cain were directed to confiscate and take the locks off all Cowlitz guns, even those kept by indigenous affiliates who accompanied scouting parties and ferried supplies across the Cowlitz River for the U.S. military and local militiamen. Following the revocation of martial law on May 24, 1856, Plamondon was accused by Ford of perpetuating hostilities by convincing Cowlitz-affiliated Indians that the latter would forbid the return of their guns (despite promises to the contrary), now with locks broken off and in an undisclosed location. For their part, hungry Cowlitz, unable to hunt without their guns, were outraged to learn that other “peaceable” Indians throughout western Washington Territory had had *their* guns returned and so defiantly refused provisions offered by Ford. This rejection of authority was expressed by Abenaki scout and Plamondon associate Pierre Charles to the Indian Department who stated plainly that the Cowlitz do “not wish to have anything whatever to do with Mr. Ford.”⁹⁴ Though favorable reports from federal agents touring through the region proliferated from Cowlitz country, despite Ford’s attempts to

⁹² Ford to Stevens, May 13, 1856, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Western Washington Agency, NARA.

⁹³ Unsurprisingly, Ford’s property holding and paternal status vis-à-vis local Indians was emphasized when J. Ross Browne, special agent for the Indian Department, traveled to the region in 1858 to assess the extent of the “Indian troubles” on the ground, praising Ford as an “owner of a valuable tract of land,” which he farmed with the help of indigenous labor (of course it is implied that Ford *gives* them work as a charity, a lesson in civilization, not that Ford relies on their labor to survive), “pays them the current rate of wages for such labor, and supports the aged and decrepit of their families,” in J. Ross Browne, *Indian Affairs in the Territories of Oregon and Washington* (Fairfield: Ye Galleon Press, 1858), 20.

⁹⁴ Pierre Charles to Isaac Stevens December 31, 1856, M5, roll 23, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

discredit them, Plamondon was released from his duties as agent at the end of the “hostilities,” was directed to return provisions to the Indian department, and “break up” the “reservation” as Ford had desired.⁹⁵

Following negotiations between Cowlitz leader Kish-Kok and Superintendent Cain, a tentative resolution was reached over the seizure of the guns. A list of individuals was drawn up and an approximate cost-value was given to the arms and ammunition belonging to each, which was then to be given directly to Indians in a way “most effective in inducing them to abandon their primitive ways and embrace civilized habits incident to their being established upon permanent reservations.” Although initially reluctant to accept money and provisions in lieu of guns, the Cowlitz and extended kin held a potlatch to distribute the new wealth.⁹⁶ Plamondon, however, never recovered his status. Ford’s ability to discredit him through charges of alcohol distribution and collusion with “hostiles” surely played a part. But Ford also had the capability to perform a class-contingent normativity that included a performance of bourgeois family life that synchronized with the civilizing mission inherent to nineteenth century settler-colonial projects and their concomitant linear chronologies.

Though his federal reports express unease in the face of faltering hegemonic control of the U.S. in a heterogeneous social milieu containing Indian and non-Indian threats alike, complaining that “having to fight one and watch the other requires superhuman effort,”⁹⁷ Ford

⁹⁵ “Ford to Plomondon 1/30/1857,” Box 1, Folder 1, Edmund Meany Papers, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle.

⁹⁶ Cain to Nesmith, November 9, 1857, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle. The potlatch was perceived to be a central threat to the civilizing missions of both Canadian and U.S. expansionists. In British Columbia, for example, it would only be a matter of years before the Potlatch was outlawed (The Parliament of Canada passed legislation in 1884). This, by no means, meant that it ceased to be practiced “on the ground,” despite reports by agents who had it in their interests to report that the practice had ended, Christopher Bracken, *The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁹⁷ Sidney S. Ford to the Superintendency of Indian Affairs, May 13, 1856, M5, roll 16, RG 75; NARA, Seattle.

family stories dwell less upon martial tactics than on marital ones. In contrast to federal reports, locally produced sources emphasize not so much a concern with Indian war during these years, than the ways in which Ford and his progeny had pulled themselves out of the necessary but temporary mire of frontier hardship to take up the mantle as exemplary bearers of Euro-American civilization. Sidney Ford Jr., for example, enjoyed the praise of Governor Stevens himself who characterized him as an “admirable specimen of the American youth.”⁹⁸ Perhaps to maintain his social status in light of hardening racial binaries marking the latter half of the nineteenth century, the younger Ford had “gave up” both of his indigenous wives, Tuweequshun and her cousin Quisah, by the end of the war, trusting their children to a local settler family, and remarrying “a girl of his own people...considered the prettiest girl in the country.”⁹⁹ In an equally suggestive performance, Sidney Sr. “sought to change [their home] from a mere *kokum* house, a place of protection and shelter, to a real *tasunshun* or place of beauty and enjoyment...buil[ding] what was known to the other settlers as the Ford mansion, a big white house with green shutters,” costing thirty-thousand dollars, and furnished and finished by Victorian accoutrements that were boasted to have come “around the ‘Horn’”¹⁰⁰

As Euro-American settlement of southwest Washington Territory intensified, the incentive to perform a racially coded bourgeois domesticity followed. While reports a decade prior by traveler Charles Wilkes described the vicinity of Cowlitz landing as having “an air of civilization,” resembling a town “of several years standing,”¹⁰¹ and characterizing Plamondon’s

⁹⁸ United States Congress, Senate Executive Document No. 5, Serial 875, “Stevens to Manypenny,” May 31, 1856, p. 739.

⁹⁹ Smith, *Centralia*, 83, 95.

¹⁰⁰ Bennett, *A Small World of Our Own*, 94.

¹⁰¹ Wallin, *Pretty Man*, 24.

Métis wife, Emilie Finlay Bercier as a “cheerful and good housewife,” and the “belle of the country,”¹⁰² by the end of the War, the Plamondon family “fell behind” the chrononormative progress exemplified by the Ford family. It was in these years that Euro-American settler E.D. Warbass swindled Plamondon out of his land holding, renamed Cowlitz Landing Warbassport, and joined the pantheon of founding settlers alongside Ford in popular accounts and local histories. By the turn of the century, Plamondon’s descendants would be racialized in federal censuses as “Indian,” and Plamondon himself would disappear from popular narratives of “the first settlers” except as a colorful remnant of the “fur trade era.”¹⁰³

Recent work by literary scholar Elizabeth Freeman elaborates on these biopolitical aspects of time. Through her reading of “rude mechanicals” in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Freeman draws upon the temporal aspects of Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, emphasizing the ways in which social belonging has depended on a performance of normativity “on time.”¹⁰⁴ These artisans, Freeman argues, demonstrate how their liminality as a social group at the cusp of modernity was a result of not just of their relation to production in an industrializing world, but also of temporal dissonances linked to sexuality.¹⁰⁵ Beyond mere holdovers of “pre-modernity,” these mechanicals lacked “the temporal decorum and life-

¹⁰² Ibid., 19.

¹⁰³ BIA, Office of Indian Gaming, Land-into-Trust for Purpose of Gaming Applications, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Longview, WA, Tab 13, “Genealogical Technical Report: Cowlitz Indian Tribe,” <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/OIG/Applications/index.htm> (accessed March 13, 2014).

¹⁰⁴ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Freeman is following a thread of queer theory, which, overlapping with other scholarship, often referred to as “new materialism,” seeks to render the dispute between literary criticism and Marxism null, advocating a flexible, nonteleological reading of Marxist theory that attends both to the material and discursive aspects of social struggle and how they overlap and inform each other, Freeman, *Time Binds*, Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

trajectory that distinguished them from their social superiors.”¹⁰⁶ In a similar fashion to their contemporaries of the servant class, the mechanicals represented the “apprentice problem” of early modern Europe in that their prolonged bachelorhood marked them as a sexual threat. Like Freeman’s Shakespearian mechanicals, those associated with the fur-trade in nineteenth century Washington Territory defied the timeline of marriage and reproduction naturalized by Euro-American colonialists’ rhythms of *habitus*. The temporally sensitive and class contingent “ceremonies of possession” available to Ford but unavailable to Plamondon, shaped the conditions of possibility that allowed Ford’s local family history to be incorporated into the broader historical narrative of “manifest destiny”. These stories have been read back onto nineteenth century texts both within the archive and inside local settler communities, affirming the “truth,” legibility, and meaning of a regional and national origin story and by extension, individual national identities. The desire to conform to this narrative is palpable in the mid-twentieth century recollections of Simon Plamondon’s grandson, George Plamondon. His recollections of the elder Plamondon in a 1945 Washington State newspaper emphasized marriage, insisting that although “Simon had at least three Indian wives...he was never a squaw-man,” and memorialized his first “all-white wife”.¹⁰⁷ Yet efforts to identify Simon Plamondon as a “pioneer” are offset by the much more frequent mention of him as “more Cowlitz than settler at the time of war.”¹⁰⁸ Clearly, the narrative turning point of the “War” has acted as a contested site national identity and indigeneity, shot through by the sexual politics of racial proximities.

¹⁰⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ “Squaw Man” was a popular nineteenth century epithet directed towards men, usually of ill repute, often with backgrounds in the fur trade, who married Indian women, by those who sought to distinguish themselves as bourgeois gentlemen, Letters of Geo Plamondon, Ethnohistory Box 14, “George Plamondon Tells of Pioneer Grandfather,” *The Olympia News*, Thursday, March 29th, 1945.

¹⁰⁸ Darleen Ann Fitzpatrick, *We are Cowlitz: A Native American Ethnicity*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004), 110.

A twentieth century court battle is illustrative of these contingent and shifting dynamics arising from the twin processes of racialization and colonization that Jodi Byrd sees as dependent on each other as they underwrite blood logics, creating the terms of inclusion and exclusion within the liberal multiculturalist state. This process dissolves sovereign indigenous polities into U.S. territoriality while transforming indigenous peoples into ethnic minorities within the state in which they are forced to compete with other minorities for limited resources.¹⁰⁹ These mechanisms can be seen at work in a 1969 Indian Claims Commission case filed by a Cowlitz Indian, himself named Simon Plamondon, who petitioned to secure reparations for land dispossessed from his tribe by the United States with whom the Cowlitz had never signed a treaty. That “Plamondon” became a Cowlitz surname evokes a history of ethnogenesis through histories of racialization. Plamondons were considered variously as Cowlitz, French, Catholics, mixed-bloods, U.S. citizens, dangerous or desirable “others,” authentic or inauthentic Indians¹¹⁰—each social category dependent on its contingent embedding into a particular field of settler-colonial power at a particular time. Compelled to navigate these categories as a strategy of survival through over a hundred years of settler colonialism, indigenous peoples have been compelled to compete inside and outside of courtrooms for meager reparations and redress for the violences enacted upon indigenous bodies and communities.¹¹¹

A challenge by members of the Yakama Nation over the terms of the disbursement funds to be awarded in a Cowlitz land claims case speaks to the complexities and contingencies of this dual process of racialization and colonization which was disputed using the language of blood

¹⁰⁹ Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xxiii-xxiv.

¹¹⁰ For the juridico-political stakes of authenticity for indigenous peoples, see Page Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late Nineteenth Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹¹¹ Again, the BIA/OIG, “Genealogical Technical Report: Cowlitz,” makes evident the shifting categorizations of Cowlitz Indians, especially in light of their Metis and fur trade heritage.

quantum and commonsense constructions of Indian authenticity. This challenge brought by the Yakama Nation in 1974 over both the terms of disbursement of the settlement and a Cowlitz petition for federal recognition, was disputed by Cowlitz Tribal Chairman Roy Wilson who deployed nineteenth century Indian war narratives, including references to the gun confiscation story, to argue his case.¹¹² Through the twentieth-century, Simon Plamondon, along with many Cowlitz people, existed in an ambiguous space between categories of Indian and white and so lacked legibility within the chrononormative historical frameworks that depend on these binaries. Wilson, however, found an opening within the nineteenth century Cowlitz gun/Indian War story, framing it within the progressive savagery-to-civilization narrative foundational to the U.S. nation-state and its origin myths. Engaging with this racialized state mythology, Wilson was able to position the Cowlitz Tribe in an elevated niche above other indigenous groups. Citing Special Indian Agent Charles E. Roblin's 1919 report on unenrolled Indians in which the Cowlitz are described as being the "blue bloods" of Western Washington, Wilson characterizes the Cowlitz in terms of mid-twentieth century popular constructions of Indian authenticity as proud, loyal warriors, expert horsemen, "independent, fearless, and aggressive," (in opposition to coastal Indians, oft depicted in reports by colonialists as occupying a more primitive state).¹¹³ It was because of these perceived qualities of a higher state of "civilization" that the U.S. government

¹¹² Because of their historically close ties of kinship, as well as economic rewards of Yakama enrollment, many Cowlitz Indians claimed dual enrollment in both Cowlitz and Yakama nations. Wilson refutes the dual enrollment challenge by (mostly) Yakama Indians with Cowlitz lineages and reaffirms the original decision to disburse funds only to those Indians without dual enrollment or other Claims Commission settlements. These strategies may be seen, then, as the Cowlitz attempting to keep money within their own tribe, but as a tribe configured in terms of a U.S. recognized polity. This illustrates the ways in which racialization and colonialism interact in complex ways creating situations in which various colonized peoples find themselves pitted against one another for scant resources and reparations.

¹¹³ For a look at how politicized claims of Indian identity hinge on meeting expectations of authenticity see Eva Marie Garroutte, *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For how concepts of "real" versus "false" Indians have been employed situationally see Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 3, 8, 123.

privileged the Cowlitz as especially vital allies in the nineteenth century War against “hostile” Indians. Despite their “service” to the U.S. during the War however, the Cowlitz, unlike many other tribes who had fought “against” the U.S., received no reservations, federal recognition, or treaty status. Appealing to the U.S. state as a bastion of justice, Wilson suggested that the federal government could rectify this injustice by allowing the Cowlitz Tribe to apply the settlement to purchase a parcel of land.¹¹⁴ Although the savagery-to-civilization narrative is generally conjured as an example *par excellence* of denying indigenous peoples space in the present and future, Wilson uses it oppositionally in an inverse project—the strengthening of a Cowlitz geopolitical entity in the present and for the future.

This relatively successful articulation of tribal sovereignty raises some essential questions in regards to our historical present. These questions hinge on the paradoxal relationship indigenous peoples have had with liberal institutions of private property, practices of historical production, and the U.S. judicial system and whether decolonizing tactics must engage with these institutions, resist or reject them, or strategically navigate them.¹¹⁵ Recent scholarship by Mishuana Goeman, Jodi Byrd, and Andrea Smith, among others, propose alternatives. Though varied in approaches and methodologies, this scholarship advocates a move beyond identity-based politics which tend to affirm the power of a nation-state that continues to reproduce settler-colonial relations, and instead addresses how the ongoing legacies of colonialism continue to (differentially) shape the lives of *everyone*. They make connections between the logics of colonialism, heteropatriarchy, state law and sexual violence as well as how both discursive and material practices naturalize these logics. Ultimately, what all these works address is a need to

¹¹⁴ “Statement by Roy Wilson on disbursement of funds from Docket 218 decision” 9/26/1975.

¹¹⁵ Lisa Blee’s recent work addresses these questions in a nuanced, historically sensitive way in Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi*, esp. ch. 5.

develop new ways of speaking of our proximities, to recognize that the co-constitution of lives and landscapes cannot be reduced to logics of capitalist valorization and biopolitical administration.¹¹⁶ This has direct bearing on our readings of the past, which, especially in the case of local histories, are often haunted by the traces that cannot be subsumed within state-sponsored narratives.¹¹⁷

Two stories told in the mid-twentieth century by Chehalis man Silas Heck subvert chrononormative and colonialist narratives. Latent within these tellings are possible new ways of conceptualizing kinship and tribal affiliations that depart from those prescribed by the state. Recounting mid-nineteenth century stories of his father, Koolah, Heck first described how Chehalis Indians living near Sidney Ford navigated the imposition of colonial power during the Indian War. Accounts of Superintendent Cain's order for the seizure of all Indian firearms—legitimized through the threat of “imminent danger”—has been conjured by local indigenous peoples and other non-Euro-American community members throughout the twentieth century as a point of resistance to settler-colonial authority. Heck, however, used the seizure of guns as the locus of a trickster tale in which a Chehalis man, Clilike got the better of this authority when one night while keeping watch near Ford's Prairie. He “...ripped his pant leg and ran towards camp yelling, ‘Hostile Indians! Hostile Indians!’ explaining that the hostiles had got after him and had pursued him so closely he'd ripped his clothing in running away from them.” Agent Ford was apparently troubled enough by the incident that he created “Sitnah's Company of friendly

¹¹⁶ Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*; Smith, “The Heteronormativity of Colonialism”; Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

¹¹⁷ On the ethics of haunting and the specters of history, see Carla Freccero, “Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past,” in *A Companion to Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies*, eds. George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 194-213.

Indians,” providing uniforms and “a shiny new musket with a bayonet,” to each member.¹¹⁸ Instead of appealing to colonialist tropes of Indian authenticity and the noble savage as Wilson did in the 1975 courtroom, Heck’s Clilike navigated power on different terms. As an example *par excellence* of the globally ubiquitous trickster tradition, Clilike is able to get the better of power, using his own ingenuity to make good for the benefit of the collective.

While indigenous epistemologies engage with colonial power in the first Heck story, a second story related by Heck in 1963 addresses and frustrates the pioneer narratives of U.S. settler-colonialism explicitly, working against a chrononormative history that both renders the realities of racial proximities illegible and that positions indigenous extinction as inevitable. Sidney Ford often sent his daughter, Lizzie Ford, and Heck’s father, Koolah, out to round up cattle, sometimes spending several days in the field together. In the words of Heck, “of course they soon got...a little bit funny in their mind, got a-liking one another,” an attraction that resulted in Lizzie’s pregnancy, presumably with Koolah’s child. Rather than live with the disgrace of his daughter raising a mixed-race child, especially at a time in which earlier arrivants were abandoning their indigenous wives, Ford arranged a hasty marriage between Lizzie and “an old man by the name of Pickner.” Even so, Heck claims, “everybody around the country...old timers,” knew about Lizzie and Koolah’s relationship and their child. At a local picnic, relates Heck, “there was a couple boys...nice, well-built young fellas who talked good English...nicely educated...good character, who’d come and slap me all over my body they says, ‘uncle Silas!’...be related to white people...he’s got a drop of white blood in my veins. Well, when they go ask some fella that knows him, they say, ‘their father is your father’s son and they are your

¹¹⁸ Silas Heck in Smith, *Centralia*, 88.

nephews.’...If I know where them boys were...I would have got some land for them in the Quinault reservation.’¹¹⁹

Here Heck can be seen to disrupt a chrononormative narrative in two ways. First, the relationship between Lizzie and Koolah speaks to the persistence of cross-racial intimacies after what is conventionally seen as the end of the fur trade era (where these kinds of relationships proliferated) as well as an unusual example of a reversal of conventional gender configurations in interracial relationships. This counteracts the characterization of the Euro-American settlement process as being one centered upon the arrival of nuclear families (the “pioneers”). Secondly, though mediated by discursive logics of blood and race, Heck extends an offer of kinship across the racialized lines of nation. Although he recognizes the integrity of the Quinault Nation and their geopolitical boundaries (itself a form of ethnogenesis in response to colonialist-imposed categories), he is also positioning himself as a man of power in Coast Salish terms, as a part of an extended kinship group in which he has authority to distribute resources, existing outside, within, and between settler-colonial institutional discourses and geographical renderings.

Taken together, both Heck stories work against chrononormative narratives of manifest destiny that have been read backwards onto traces from the past, “obscuring discontinuity, contingency, and fluid identities,” wielded by the state to make ideological and “cosmological claims” though, as this chapter argues, claims that are “...far greater than [the state’s] practical control...”¹²⁰ Within Heck’s narratives reside potentialities to displace those normative frames

¹¹⁹ Silas Heck, Oral History Tapes, CPNWS. In 1931, Halbert et al v. The United States, drawing on the Treaty of Olympia, decided that Chehalis, Chinook and Cowlitz tribal members as non-treaty “fish-eating Indians” if “not allotted elsewhere, are among those who...are entitled to take allotments on the Quinaielt [sic] Reservation in the State of Washington,” in Daniel L. Boxberger, “An Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Chehalis and Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribes” (1989), 19-20.

¹²⁰ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 35.

that foreclose the resettlement of what is now part of Washington State, frames that work to create differentials in the value of human life, demarcating the boundaries of who can be considered fully human—who deserves to be protected, who deserves care, who belongs to a collective, who gets to lead a grievable life. Perhaps we need to linger over the bodies of John T. Williams, Stamelo, and Trayvon Martin and learn how we might, in the words of Jodi Byrd, “imagine indigenous decolonization as a process that restores life and allows settler, arrivant, and native to apprehend and grieve together the violences of empire.”¹²¹

Blockhouses were intended as spaces of defense and separation. Bastions of white purity punctuating the prairie landscape, it’s hard to imagine a more dramatic imposition of colonial authority, or, alternatively, as overblown a performance of anxiety over its fragility. But as localized stories about the blockhouses suggest, these were contested sites productive of stories that often confounded the metanarratives authorizing colonialist expansion. The ways in which normative bodies have been ideally timed in modernity has followed a linear, teleological chronology that has also defined the way “official,” or state history is told.¹²² Local stories appeal to these normative chronologies, yet attention to local particularities exposes gaps, incongruences, and atemporalities that frustrate official metanarratives and offer new narrative materials. This matters because the way narratives are told has the power to disrupt tidy chronologies that so often celebrate settler triumph and indigenous extinction. But even more powerfully, alternative narratives draw attention to our co-constituted, shared world—and hence, the ethical demand to care for others because they make us who we are.¹²³ Had Officer Birk been

¹²¹ Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 229.

¹²² Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 41.

¹²³ Deane Curtin, “Towards an Ecological Ethic of Care,” *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 1, (Spring, 1991), 97.

aware of the longstanding presence, mobility, political activity, and cultural production of indigenous peoples like John T. Williams and his ancestors in Seattle—those who helped create the place Birk calls home (as well as their economic precarity as a result of settler colonial dispossessions),¹²⁴ perhaps the “imminent threat” of the latter wouldn’t have loomed so large and Birk wouldn’t have been so quick to pull the trigger.

¹²⁴ For an appeal to consider the centrality of indigenous peoples to the creation of urban space see Thrush, *Native Seattle*.

3. Landscapes of Memory, Evocative Objects, and the Production of Knowledge in Southwest Washington Territory

Undulating between magnetic poles as the Earth rotates on its axis, the jet stream bears vaporous air from the tropical Pacific northwest toward the North American continent. On the coast of what is now commonly referred to as Washington State, a sudden range of mountains forces this marine air upwards where, as it cools, it drops rain and snow into the capillaries and major arteries of the Willapa and Chehalis watersheds, flowing back towards the Pacific Ocean. Creeks, rivers, sloughs, and marshes extend inland to meet the alluvial plain of the Puget Sound—Willamette lowlands and north and south, towards the broad mouth of the Columbia River. These watersheds are highways of human and non-human interaction and exchange, productive of a geography in continual transformation. These channels and streams shape the formation of community and individual identities as they accrete dense layers of historical meanings and memories that continue to inform the way we—indigenous and otherwise—imagine ourselves both regionally and beyond, as settler-colonial and indigenous knowledges tumble together through time and interpretation.

It was through this complex of waterways that in the myth age—the time at which the boundary between the spirit realm and the “physical” world were less defined than humans perceive them today¹—that Toolux, the south wind, met the giantess Quoots-hooi on his yearly travels up the coast. After procuring a grampus for hungry Quoots-hooi, Toolux did not heed her

¹ The “myth age,” as a time in which the spirit world and the ordinary world known to humans was the most permeable, was also a time in which powerful beings, or transformers “made the world right.” There are still ways to go between the spirit realm and the ordinary world, but these journeys are highly dangerous and require specific training and expert knowledge, Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 64-65.

instructions to cut the fish down the back. Instead, Toolux cut it down the side, causing the fish to transform into Hahness, or Thunderbird, eclipsing the sun as he flew northward, lighting up the top of Saddleback Mountain (on the present-day Oregon side of the Columbia River). Toolux and Quoots-hooi both followed Hahness to the north until one day, Quoots-hooi, as she was gathering berries on the side of the mountain, came across the nest of Hahness. Overpowered by hunger, Quoots-hooi heedlessly broke the eggs to-and-fro, inadvertently resulting in the creation of mankind. An angry Hahness appealed to Toolux to seek redress from Quoots-hooi for the destruction of its nest, compelling Toolux to travel north every year in search of the giantess.²

Chinook speaking peoples have retraced these seasonally determined routes of Quoots-hooi, Toolux, and Hahness with continuity over time, likely relating the story as they passed by familiar landmarks associated with the narrative—imparting, among other things, essential geographic knowledge, the moral importance of exercising propriety while preparing a salmon to eat, and situating the teller and listener in space and time. In the mid-nineteenth century those associated with the Nahcati kinship group, possibly detecting the return of Toolux from the south, departed their fall dog fishing sites on the Palix River, polling north to one of their seven winter villages on the mouth of the Willapa River.³ Chinook Indians described similar seasonal movements in early twentieth century court testimony, suggesting that they had incorporated wage work, especially in the canneries, fisheries, and oyster industry into their migrations from summer fishing sites near the Columbia to winter village sites near and around Willapa

² James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast: Or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory* (New York: Harper, 1857), 203-204.

³ Local settler Espy recalled that in the mid-1850s, local Indian “departure from the Palix...coincided with a growing surliness in the wind,” Espy, “Hyas Acutty: A Legend of Willapa Harbor,” Willard R. Espy, *Oysterville: Roads to Grandpa's Village* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1977), 55; “As told by Old Chief Cultee to Dan McNeil in 1911,” *Willapa Harbor Pilot*, South Bend, Washington, Friday December 15, 1911.

(Shoalwater) Bay.⁴ Rather than confirming Indians as timeless and unchanging, these movements reveal an indigenous geography in practice and in process: reflecting community upheaval and regrouping in the wake of modern settler colonial impositions but also a geography shaped by indigenous cosmologies and priorities, enfolded into the ongoing production of life stories of local Native people in historical time.⁵

The “storied lives” of people and communities are anchored to the landscape in ways that seem so natural they are often taken for granted. An example from my own memories of place may help illustrate this. The solitary grand fir that stood in my grandpa’s pasture inspired us to dub his small acreage, tongue-in-cheek, as the “Lone Tree Ranch.” This act of naming the landscape conjures an assemblage of stories and meanings. For example, ideologies of private property ownership and the rugged individualism of the American “West” as a region are reenacted, invoking images of stoic perseverance and productive use of land. Although this trope of the romantic American West is parodied (the acreage in question was hardly a ranch in size, use, or aesthetic), “Lone Tree Ranch” also reflects a settler-colonial imaginary, naturalizing a landscape through ideologies of erasure that eclipse Native presence and the trauma of dispossession. But the tree in the pasture also conjures memories of tromping through wet grass, carefully avoiding cow pies as grandpa smoked his pipe and told hobo tales—tales of Anglo-American self-sufficiency and mobility which also condemned social injustice and economic

⁴ “Copy of Testimony taken in 1902, at Astoria, in support of a claim of *Chinook Indian Tribe against the United States* for land in the State of Washington, near the mouth of Columbia River. Containing historical material relating to the Chinook villages and the people, with some reference to the Clatsop Indian Tribe in Oregon,” Deposition of Mary Kelly, 84; Deposition of Samuel Mallett/Tloloth, 96,” Center For Pacific Northwest Studies: Northwest Ethnohistory Collection: Series IV, Box 2, Folder 9, Western Washington University Archives (Hereafter, CPNWS); For the ways in which indigenous peoples incorporated wage work into existing cosmologies and seasonal migrations see, John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁵ Jeff Oliver, *Landscape and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley* (Tempe: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 60-77.

inequality. In other words, stories associated with the Lone Tree Ranch, at once personal and collective, provided coordinates that worked to orient me in the world on multiple scales.

Necessary to the project of colonizing southwest Washington Territory was the act of draping over geographic sites or features of the landscape—what Keith Basso refers to as “mnemonic pegs”⁶— with new stories, signs, and symbols tied to Euro-American cosmologies. The territory claimed by the United States had to be remade and re-ordered as state space—space that was legible from afar—through the employment of “technologies of territoriality”: mapmaking, surveying, and property ownership, which would transform existing geographic knowledges into what Thongchai Winichakul describes as the “geo-body” of the nation. The production of the geo-body erases local affiliations and spatial knowledges, producing instead, institutions and practices that structure national belonging.⁷ This quest for a legible landscape and population was also inextricably tied to importing particular forms of industrial capitalism to the region, and to this end, colonial projects were oriented towards encouraging practices of sedentary bourgeois family life that were ascendant throughout the nineteenth century imperial world. In other words, colonial projects were oriented towards “solv[ing] the problem of worker mobility” once and for all.⁸ In fact, authorities felt so threatened by indigenous knowledge of the

⁶ Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

⁷ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 4-7, 47-49; Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 16.

⁸ David Graeber is paraphrasing Yann Moulier Boutang in David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009), 61. On the rise of the bourgeoisie and family ideology as essential components to modern imperialism and settler-colonialism, see Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). State control has always depended on the regulation and legibility of mobile populations whose very mobility is determined, ironically, by the very same mechanisms of global capitalism and imperialism that their mobility seems to threaten in the first place. The paradox on the one hand of a continued faith in the sanctity of national borders and on the other, the neoliberal economic policies that collapse them (and the anxieties that this paradox provokes) is often framed as a novel phenomenon though it was integral to, and continues to be a legacy of, the colonization of

landscape and the mobility it permitted that the fabrication of an “Indian War” threat was necessary to justify the forcible confinement of indigenous peoples on temporary “reservations” and to confiscate their firearms shortly after the Stevens Treaties.⁹

Theorists of globalization have offered important insight into the ways in which modern power has depended on technologies of spatiotemporal legibility, the “defeat of distance,” and the particular ways in which “distance-demolishing technology,” has been implicated in colonial projects and imperialist interventions from the nineteenth century to the present. Paul Virilio, whose work has been heavily influenced by his experience of the Nazi occupation of France and thus is sensitive to how time and space is wielded by power, goes so far as to claim that the contemporary world is “experiencing the last of the globalizations: the finitude of geography in the face of temporal compression.” In other words, the “end of geography.”¹⁰ Though Virilio’s work has provided valuable insight into the neoliberal contemporary and how modern power is articulated in general, this narrative of spatio-temporal collapse ignores the lived reality of indigenous peoples, not only by repeating the well-worn colonialist narrative of the vanishing Indian, but ignoring the ongoing production of local indigenous knowledges that, while rooted in the land, continue to interact, shape, and be shaped by global flows of peoples, ideas, and materials.¹¹

the North American continent. For a discussion of this at work contemporaneously see Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone, 2010).

⁹ See ch. 2 of this thesis.

¹⁰ Paul Virilio, *The Administration of Fear* (Cambridge, MIT Press: 2012), 8. Virilio, however, doesn’t advocate conventional neoliberal views that we are within what Fukuyama has claimed as “the end of history,” and that historical narratives, remembrances, and forgettings still productively charge social and political realities. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

¹¹ For a discussion of this theme from the vantage point of Latin American studies, see Sandra Shukla and Heidi Tinsman, eds., *Imagining Our Americas: Toward a Transnational Frame* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

Because, as Julie Cruikshank so succinctly put it, “the consequences of colonialism are always local,” and globalization and colonialism are fundamentally interconnected, the presence and persistence of indigenous communities today demands new narratives to explain their survival—narratives that necessarily frustrate the linearity that globalization and postcolonial theory continue to impose or assume.¹² As an alternative to an “end of geography” foretold by theorists like Virilio, perhaps we need to imagine geographies beyond those reduced to the mappings of modern nation-states and instead cultivate a sensitivity to sites in which the (re)emergence of alternate articulations of spaces and places—with their densely tangled ties to both colonial *and* pre-contact pasts—can be perceived. As an alternative to conceptualizing the practice of indigenous geographic knowledge as overcoded by or an overcoding of colonialist designs—or a melding into a smooth hybrid of the two—it may be more useful to regard local knowledges as emerging from what Achille Mbembe characterizes as “time[s] of entanglement,” that every moment registered in time is “in reality a combination of several temporalities,” contingent on shifting and messy relationships between local and global forces, the past and the political struggles of the present, modernity and its historiographical boundaries—historical accretions that resist linear narratives.¹³

Through the local revitalization of canoe ways and the organization of annual Canoe Journeys beginning in the wake of the American Indian Movement, contemporary indigenous sovereignties in the Pacific Northwest have enjoyed renewed and enhanced visibility as modern, globally engaged survivors of colonialism. Beyond mere performances of timeless tradition or

¹² Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005). From the perspective of archaeology, Ken Wilcox argues for new narratives that seek to explain indigenous survival instead of decline, Ken Wilcox, *The Pueblo Revolt and the Mythology of Conquest: An Indigenous Archaeology of Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

¹³ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 7-9.

appealing to the demands of colonialist nation-states, participating canoe families articulate a sort of “border thinking”¹⁴ at the interface of settler-colonial and subjugated knowledges that affirm indigenous sovereignty and survival. Beginning in the year 1989 (ironically, to celebrate the Washington State Centennial¹⁵), the journey brings canoe families—usually composed of representatives from specific indigenous polities—from up and down the Pacific Coast as well as across the ocean and the North American continent to a host site in which ceremonies and local knowledges are shared, sovereignties are recognized, and indigenous presence and resilience is affirmed in the wake of the violent nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The revitalization of canoe practices as well as the array of activities associated with them act as common linkages not only between local communities, but also between peoples across the geopolitical borders of indigenous nations, the United States, and beyond, who share common histories as colonized peoples, but whose shared ties through canoe knowledges are also not only determined by them. The means by which the Squaxin Island Tribe of South Puget Sound began this revitalization provides a clear illustration of the entangled spatio-temporal interplay between settler colonial and indigenous epistemologies, between global and local forces.

This interplay is apparent in the procurement and production of the canoes themselves during the Squaxin revitalization of the “canoe way” in the 1990s. Beginning with the selection

¹⁴ Border thinking is a point of view that attempts to “speak from the subaltern side of the colonial difference,” one “critical of hegemonic perspectives,” and a strategy critical of narratives structured by the “coloniality of power,” the residual webs of power remaining in the wake of direct colonial occupation, Ramon Grosfoguel paraphrasing Walter Mignolo, Ramon Grosfoguel, “World-System Analysis and Postcolonial Studies: A Call for a Dialogue from the ‘Coloniality of Power’ Approach,” in Revathi Krishnaswamy and John C. Hawley, eds., *The Postcolonial and the Global* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) 96-97; Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ This is one of numerous examples of how colonized peoples have used public commemorations—often celebrations of settler colonial accomplishments—to advance their own political agendas, to render themselves visible, or to protest injustice, especially when access to legal recourse or self-governance is limited, see Lisa Blee, *Framing Chief Leschi: Narratives and the Politics of Historical Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 112-114.

of a 500 year old cedar tree, the tribe first had to get permission from the National Forest Service (a federal agency). Before the tree was hauled by machinery donated by Simpson Lumber Company (a local corporation with multinational ties), it was blessed and prayed over (by local indigenous authorities), and a new tree was planted and blessed (through a combination of indigenous and global/scientific ecological knowledges). In the spring of 1996, the trees finally arrived and David “George” Krise was designated head carver. Drawing on a past of imparting canoe knowledge to Native youth, but with no direct carving experience himself, Krise and his canoe family made an intertribal connection with Tulalip carver and boat builder Jerry Jones (who had designed ferries for the State of Washington).¹⁶ As illustrated, this process was a multifaceted act that involved drawing upon the resources of the state, the local tribal community, and other indigenous polities. It was a densely layered process that served to articulate historical ties to ancestors and land, narrate a story of survival, and affirm the political integrity of the Squaxin people—themselves belonging to multiple watershed-affiliated kinship groups at the south terminus of Puget Sound.¹⁷ Although this process was conditioned by Euro-American domination, “for the first time in more than a century,” tribal members made the two hundred-plus mile journey through the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Quinault Nation on the Pacific Coast, a performance of sovereignty that had little to do with fulfilling prerequisites for recognition laid out by the U.S. Federal Government.

As the resurgence and contemporary repurposing of the Canoe Way attests, the state has never exercised definitive authority over the lives of indigenous peoples, nor have the forces of

¹⁶ “Canoe Family,” *Squaxin Island Tribe Museum Library and Research Center*, <http://squaxinlandmuseum.org/culture/canoe-family> (accessed January 27, 2014).

¹⁷ These groups include the Noo-She-Chatl, Steh Chass, Squi-Aitl, T’Peeksin, Sa-Heh-Wa-Mish, Squawksin, and the S’Hotle-Ma-Mish, as well as other tribal nations.

globalization eclipsed local knowledge and practice. The documentary record of the nineteenth century colonization of the imagined southwest Washington Territory illustrates both the difficulties inherent in the implementation of colonial projects as well as their messy results, revealing a past that far from anticipated indigenous decline. Tensions arose as desires, expectations, and interests diverged between locals and various groups of arrivants, compromising any edifice of colonial authority. If ever there was a time and place in which state hegemony was not foreclosed, it was at this locality. And yet, as I hope the previous two chapters have underscored, the history of this region continues to be subsumed into the grand narrative of American expansion and “manifest destiny” that forecloses other possibilities, occluding alternative narratives that speak to persistent geographies of rhizomatic watersheds, grid-resistant space, fur trade sociality, and a settler population with their own diverse imaginaries in respect to their place within the broader scope of the modern world. At this messy interface of the global and local, a process of colonization unfolded and a settler society began to embed itself and take shape, albeit in radically contingent ways.

This process had been underway when two Chehalis men conveyed nineteenth century newcomers Henry Eld Jr. and George M. Colvorcoresses towards their intended destinations of Grays Harbor and Shoalwater Bay. Envisioned as promising hubs of commerce for the U.S., Eld and Colvorcoresses were directed by Captain Charles Wilkes in July of 1841 to survey the two bodies of water, to gather as much information possible about the characteristics of the landscape, and acquaint themselves with the logistics of Native trade.¹⁸ However, as the two men moved through the landscape and their dependence on local knowledge and local materials soon became clearly tied to their survival, their performance of empiricist knowledge extraction took

¹⁸ Cary Cole Collins, *Red Chehalis in a White Northwest: The Americanization of the Chehalis Indians: Prehistory to 1924*, MA Thesis, Central Washington University, 1992, 97.

secondary priority. Some lower Chehalis men were unimpressed by these representatives from the U.S. and hesitated to convey them down the stormy coast as they “did not desire leaving their wives behind,” and were unenthused by what they saw as the stingy offers of HBC blankets, gunpowder, and tobacco for their troubles. The patience of the Chehalis guides reached a breaking point when Eld and Colvorcoresses, in an absurdly impotent performance of power and paranoia, ordered their muskets seized. Knives were flashed, and Eld and Colvocoresses were abandoned on the beach where they sustained themselves on dead fish that washed up on the tide, having accomplished scant work with regards to their initial directive to survey the coast for the U.S. government.¹⁹

Over ten years later, despite their confident claims to territory north of the Columbia River over the British, representatives of the United States continued to express failure in their attempts to render the landscape and its population legible. In 1853, local indigenous peoples transported assessor Urban E. Hicks and a small detachment of men down the Chehalis River and then by trail south towards Shoalwater Bay, in order to take a census for the newly declared Washington Territory. They soon found themselves stranded on a sand spit where, despite hoisting a white blanket on a long pole and producing a smoky fire, they could not attract the attention of nearby oystermen, who, although abundant and close by, seemed oblivious to their “plight”. Already offending the Indians whom they relied upon on to convey them down the coast, they were finally “rescued” by two “white” residents, only to be deposited again onto Oyster Beach, into the thick of the local milieu which consisted of “a roaring, rollicking crowd of drunken men and squaws, everything apparently being held in common among [them].” Before engaging a “big Chinook chief” with a “very large Chinook canoe...generously loaded with a

¹⁹ Ibid., 102-105.

crowd of drunken braves as escort and guard,” Hicks and company feasted on oysters washed down with whiskey as they “took an enumeration of the inhabitants, but found no assessable property not exempt by law or courtesy.”²⁰

Despite these failed attempts to impose a grid or enumerate a legible population, U.S. agents remained committed to promote the region as a desirable place for settler development, as long as these developments were harnessed to, or congruent with, U.S. nation-building projects. In a circular letter endorsing his successor Governor Fayette McMullen’s 1858 emigrant guide to Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens emphasizes on the first page the “advantages...of the country on, and adjacent to, Grays Harbor and the Chehalis River.”²¹ Because of its immediate access to “navigable waters,” Stevens praised the region as an especially promising locality to realize commercial fishery and lumber interests, but also one agreeable to agrarian settlement, depicting the “vicinity of Gray’s [sic] harbor and Shoalwater bay” as “an extensive country having most abundant and nutritious grasses summer and winter.”²² A supplement to the *Emigrant Guide*, a “memorial of citizens of Washington Territory to Congress, Relative to Gray’s [sic] Harbor,” praises the Chehalis River as “draining one of the most fertile portions of the country on the western declivity of the Rocky mountains...covered with fine timber...interspersed with rich prairies, and drained by numerous streams affording abundance

²⁰ Robert Bennett, *A Small World of Our Own* (Walla Walla: Pioneer Press Books, 1985), 107.

²¹ Isaac I. Stevens, *A Circular Letter To Emigrants Desirous of Locating in Washington Territory* (Washington: Gideon, 1858), 1.

²² Herbert Taylor, an ethnographer employed to give expert testimony in numerous southwest Washington claims commission cases through the latter half of the twentieth century, implies that Stevens’s emphasis on the coastal region—and also his Indian policy in regards to this area—was shaped by his interest in developing the oyster industry there, Herbert C. Taylor, Jr. and Catherine Zentelis, “San Francisco Gourmets and Shoal Water Acculturation” (1984), 120, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS; see also ch. 1 of this thesis.

of water-power for manufacturing purposes,”²³ continuing to describe the profusion of flourishing settlements in the vicinity, despite an overwhelmingly aboriginal population and a tenuous settler occupancy which relied on learning local customs and practices to survive.²⁴

Isaac Stevens and the officially endorsed citizens “memorial” tacked onto the end of the pamphlet hailed Shoalwater Bay and Grays Harbor both as sites already in a process of transformation from rustic frontier enclaves into bustling centers of civilizational progress, described by Penelope Edmonds as an “anticipatory geography.” Expressing a faith in the ultimate progress of U.S. expansion, men like Stevens sought to possess the new landscape first, by imaginatively producing a space—sketching the contours of a new state geography that could then be appropriated—and second, bargaining on the future material reward to be reaped by the opening of “new” lands via surveying, mapping, and land speculation. The overcoding of indigenous spatial knowledge with European cultural fantasies prepared the way for, and was vital to, the imposition of settler colonialism²⁵—a process in which the United States was not exempt as it sought to expand its spatial borders. Stevens positioned the United States as the latest in a glorious parade of empires “ancient and modern,” which was destined to inherit the “great commercial prize”: a monopoly on trade with Asia. As soon as China, Japan, and the

²³ Stevens, *A Circular Letter*, 20.

²⁴ The diaries of settlers accessible to me constantly referenced utilizing Native labor, food, and supplies and expressed a sort of symbiotic relationship of barter and negotiation that both exceeded and existed within a capitalist framework. For a microhistorical exploration of this sort of configuration in a similar spatio-temporal context see Ruth Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859-1891* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005).

²⁵ Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 73-74.

“Asiatic Archipelago,” would be made “tributary to our commerce,” the U.S. could finally eclipse Britain as “the disposer of eastern luxuries to the western world.”²⁶

Global trade supremacy seemed far from the minds of local settlers who continued to express anxieties about their peripheral condition, cut off as they were from the main north-to-south transportation corridor connecting the Columbia River to Puget Sound, even as these landscapes were confidently traced, recorded, and reproduced in cartographic abstractions and official rhetoric. In his reminiscences, Shoalwater Bay resident Willard R. Espy emphasized the feeling of isolation felt by settlers and the hardship of travel between Shoalwater Bay and the interior. His neighbor, Jehu Scudder took it upon himself to map an “Indian trail” running northeast to Olympia, but died en route, his body conveyed back from where he had departed by the indigenous people who found him.²⁷ Maps produced for the surveyor general from the 1853 establishment of Washington Territory, through the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad at the end of the 1870s, show little change in the creep of the grid into the area between the coast and the interior of southwest Washington.²⁸ The marshy, densely forested topography characterizing the landscape of this locality frustrated state control and commercial interests (the two of which existed in an uneasy but tolerant relationship), whose agents (though often opposed to each other’s designs) sought to graft the ideology of rational property ownership, enumeration, and Anglo legal tradition onto a resistant landscape, in place of an already existing assemblage of human geographic knowledge and spatial practice.

²⁶ Stevens, *A Circular Letter*, 14.

²⁷ Espy, *Oysterville*, 73.

²⁸ Northern Pacific Railroad. *Washington Territory* [map]. 1888. Scale not given. “How To Get To Washington Territory.” University of Washington Digital Collections. <http://content.libraries.wsu.edu/index.php/cdm/landingpage/collection/maps> (accessed January 1, 2012).

Despite conventional understandings of reservations and Euro-American settlements as centers of disciplinary power over indigenous peoples, as Cole Harris and others have portrayed them to be,²⁹ I argue that even as the land of Washington Territory became surveyed, Euro-American population increased, and new institutions of surveillance were installed on Indian reservations, Euro-American hegemony was far being as secured as many of these scholars claim, and certainly did not progress along the orderly temporal trajectory desired by colonialist agents. As the hapless projects of Calvocoresses, Eld, Hicks, and Scudder attest, the geographic knowledge sought by those with colonialist pretensions depended on engaging with indigenous knowledge. In their Federal Reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, local Indian agents expressed dismay at the ease of mobility their Indian “wards” enjoyed as the latter moved on and off the reservation, escaping from surveillance into the liminal space “off the grid.” Even in surveyed areas, indigenous spatial practice persisted, commonly incorporating elements of Euro-American property discourse and practice, in what Denis Byrne has termed a “counter-cadastral.” Instead of a physical barrier, the grid (paraphrasing De Certeau), “was comparable to a text inscribed on the landscape,” where indigenous peoples acted as “readers... ‘nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth... to enjoy it themselves.’”³⁰

²⁹ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002). Adele Perry tends to take for granted the existence of hegemonic social categories even while she shows how they were subverted in Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). Though contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the transnational scope of modern colonialism and the particularities of disparate imperial practices both Stewart Banner and John C. Weaver have each made these claims implicitly through the use of “big history,” Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003).

³⁰ Denis R. Byrne, “Nervous Landscapes: Race and Space in Australia,” *Journal of Social Archaeology*, vol. 3 (2), 182.

This existence of “off the grid space” complicates commonly held conceptualizations of colonial encounters as unfolding within metropolitan designs grafted onto peripheral spaces, and challenges conventional frameworks that have naturalized settler-colonial hegemony through mapping, law, and progressive narratives.³¹ To indigenous peoples, the “un-gridded” area between the coast and the Cowlitz Corridor, federally established reservations, Euro-American and fur trade towns and settlements, resources sites, and winter villages were all important locations embedded in indigenous cosmologies and practices that have persisted in various constellations throughout time. Daniel Richter’s insistence almost two decades ago that we “face east from Indian country,”³² provided a useful corrective to a Eurocentric point of view of the process of U.S. expansion. Yet this reversal does little to address the geographic perspective of indigenous peoples themselves: national expansion grinds on relentlessly, manifest destiny, a prophesy fulfilled. It made little sense for Cowlitz people to “face east” in the mid-nineteenth century, as it was from the south that disruptive American settlers spilled out of the Willamette Valley. Additionally, it was often west they turned when considering important kinship

³¹ By attempting to shed light on the ways in which indigenous practices of geographic knowledge and practice persisted despite institutional attempts to constrict it, I am not arguing that many indigenous individuals and communities were subject to expressly violent impositions by settler colonials that continue to reverberate through indigenous communities today. I agree with Gray Whaley’s conception of “folk colonialism” as an effective tool forwarding the aggressive settler colonial expansion into the Pacific Northwest often outside of the preview of imperial authority. In fact, his recent commentary on the Rogue River War, and the massacre of southwest Oregon Indians at the hands of citizen militias that sometimes but not always enjoyed the backing of the U.S. Military may be a good example of how local history can be employed alternatively to shed light on the genocidal nature of settler-colonial expansion rather than on the fragility of its power as I have argued. Importantly, Whaley reminds readers that while U.S.-American Indian relations have been genocidal, Native peoples cannot be reduced to victims and have always found ways both within and without colonialist institutions to resist, Gray H. Whaley, “A Reflection on Genocide in Southwest Oregon in Honor of George Bundy Wasson, Jr.,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 115, no. 3 (Fall, 2014), 438-440.

³² Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). Keith Thor Carlson describes Coast Salish geography of the Salish Sea, for example, as a “four-pointed star, with each of the four major open water systems - the Strait of Georgia, Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Fraser River - constituting one of its points,” Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 55-56.

obligations in the Willapa Hills, including obligations they shared with their Euro-American settler neighbors.³³

Andrew Fisher has made important contributions to the study of social change and indigenous ethnogenesis under colonialism, especially as it relates to historicizing the relationship between geography and this social change. In his focus on indigenous communities along the Columbia River, Fisher depicts reservations with porous boundaries, spaces incompletely surveyed by federal agents, and productive of novel social affiliations. He traces the formation of “River Indians” who, despite goals of federal agents to organize kinship groups into “confederated tribes and bands,” variably accepted or rejected reservation sites for a variety of purposes and reasons. Forming identities in opposition to “Reservation Indians,” River Indians continued to consider themselves to be members of extended families and autonomous villages either on or off the reservation.³⁴

This porosity of reservation borders and the cadastral survey, as well as ways in which indigenous peoples purposed these new geographic renderings in ways unintended by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is amply demonstrated in the records produced by Indian Agents and settlers, and is expressed through historical recollections of local indigenous peoples, even in an era of intensified surveillance and institutional control (including the establishment of residential schools and presence of department of fish and game personnel, the latter discussed below). In the case of the Chehalis Reservation, not only did local residents come and go with relative ease, but Indians from other reservations as far north as Nisqually, as well as bands unaffiliated with

³³ The geographic world of Coast Salish/Chinook did not/do not always utilize “Western” cardinal directions. See William W. Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives: Native Historical Accounts of a Coast Salish Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

³⁴ Andrew Fisher, *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 59-61, ch. 3.

reservations, zig-zagged across borders in order to fulfill kinship obligations and take advantage of federal resources—the later predicated on the belief that the U.S. government remained obligated to fulfill kinship obligations through treaty agreements. In 1874, for example, Nisqually Charley came to Chehalis to secure some “beef and some breads” for a “4th of July barbecue” that “reservation” Chehalis were to attend at the Nisqually Reservation that year as head chief of the former, James (Jim) Walker, had expressed concern about not having enough wealth to hold it at his village. It was the Indian agent himself who wrote to Superintendent Milroy asking for the provisions.³⁵ Could it be that in an era of increased pressure on reservation communities to discontinue spiritual practices such as “momicking tananamos,” that instead of referring to this gift-giving and feasting event as a “potlatch,” Nisqually Charley and local agent Brewer cleverly referred to it in terms of the ultimate state-sanctioned public celebration, Independence Day?³⁶

The Independence Day potlatch reflects Fisher’s work on Columbia River Indians and counteracts a tendency to overemphasize the effectiveness of state designs in the historical production of modern indigenous identities and social change. However, Fisher’s reliance on on-reservation/off-reservation or accommodation/resistance binaries may be too reductionist. Though reservations were and continue to be important loci of identity formation, Fisher’s emphasis on situating indigenous agency at the site of colonial administration may occlude a more complex process in which the state’s role often faded into the background. The production of identities outside and between reservation boundaries and the novel, often ambivalent

³⁵ Local Agent Brewer to Superintendent Milroy, April 30, 1874, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

³⁶ On the importance of Independence Day celebrations in the nineteenth century U.S., see Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).

articulations of modernity arising from these “margins of empire,” are well illustrated in the historical narratives of local peoples who, throughout the twentieth century, have constellated in various ways, reservations, family-controlled resource sites, urban centers, and zones of industrial capitalism within the same geographic imaginaries.³⁷

Prefiguring indigenous adaptations to the arrival of industrial agriculture, fishing, timber and mineral extraction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that has been well documented by Canadian scholars John Lutz, Paige Raibmon, and Renisa Mawani,³⁸ and discussed in chapter one of this thesis, Shoalwater Bay, as early as the 1840s, became a hub of large-scale seasonal migrations of peoples who had incorporated oyster gathering for global markets into their customary social practices. That the lure was the oyster-rich Shoalwater Bay frustrates a neat on-reservation/off-reservation binary, a binary that is tempting to see as interchangeable with the binary of resistance/accommodation. Whether or not they identified themselves in terms of reservation locality, kinship group, or federally recognized “tribe,” indigenous peoples came to Shoalwater Bay from Puget Sound, Vancouver Island, the Columbia Basin, and Tillamook Head to gather oysters, hold important ceremonies, gamble, and socialize.

The continued mobility enjoyed by indigenous peoples—increasingly facilitated by new wage labor opportunities—troubled local Indian agents who saw these migrations and articulations of geographic knowledge as threats to state control, illustrating the simultaneous codependence and discordance between the colonial projects of capitalism and the imposition of

³⁷ Many of the Chinook claimants in a 1902 transcript arguing for federal recognition articulate these sorts of movements and migrations, not only on and off reservations but also through and across circuits of industrial capitalism and wage labor, following the trail of seasonal work in fisheries and canneries up and down the coast, and west and east along the Columbia River and also into the continental U.S. For example, Mary Kelly, “was born in Salt Lake, and traveled and traveled until I lost my mother in Sacramento,” *Chinook v. United States*, Deposition of Mary Kelly, 62-63, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, CPNWS.

³⁸ John Sutton Lutz, *Makik*; Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*; Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

settler-colonial space.³⁹ But this paradox also illustrates that colonial projects were multiple and diverse, engendering social transformations both directly and indirectly, and instigating the reconstitution of geographic imaginaries by indigenous peoples in complex ways. An on/off reservation binary does not adequately reflect this complexity as reservations, settler towns, agricultural sites and centers of industrial capitalism were various components of lived geography wrought by the imposition of U.S. settler-colonialism, sometimes indirectly. Following the early nineteenth century depopulation of Chinook-speaking villages by smallpox, for example, a large number of Chehalis people re-populated the Shoalwater/Willapa area, and extended kinship affiliations southward from Grays Harbor and as far north as Quinault. These new geographic reorderings, in turn, opened up new possibilities for those unaffected by epidemics or wage labor directly. For example, Klikitats came from east of the Cascades to Shoalwater Bay not to gather oysters, but most likely to raid villages there.⁴⁰

To describe “non-state spaces” as enclaves in the sense that they may be seen as “territorial or culturally distinct unit[s] enclosed within foreign territory,”⁴¹ is also misleading, as indigenous peoples in mid-nineteenth century Washington Territory did not necessarily make a tidy distinction between “foreign territory” and indigenous space, nor did they necessarily share the same conceptions of space as quantifiable units of private property as many of their Euro-American neighbors did. Various locations, such as the Upper Chehalis village at Oakville, the Nisqually and Skokomish Reservations, Carstairs Prairie (which appears to have remained outside of the survey until at least the 1870s as one of the only river bottom spaces not

³⁹ For an exploration of the tensions between the market, state, and the regulation of populations along lines of race and sexuality see Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

⁴⁰ Swan, *The Northwest Coast*, 323-324.

⁴¹ *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “enclave.”

gridded⁴²), and longhouses along the Satsop watershed were each embedded in different geographic constellations, depending on kinship affiliations, trade obligations, seasonally-determined resource gathering sites, and both native and non-Native incursions. In the twentieth century Fred Allen, a Twana man from Hood Canal, related to ethnographer William Elmendorf a story of an historic horse race and gambling event that took place on the prairie between Upper Chehalis, Skokomish, and Nisqually in 1860, before the Chehalis Reservation was federally recognized, but well into the “reservation era” of the Twana (Skokomish) and Nisqually tribes. In this story, Secena, an important Upper Chehalis man successfully sings his spirit helper, robin, or *spiya’l* that lives on the prairie where he had previously discovered his *tamánamis*, showing his successful relationship with this power through his winning at horseracing and a gambling game (*swa’k’xac’*). The most significant elements of the narrative—that Secena displays his robin power and that this prairie was the location of the “biggest *swa’k’xac’* that was ever known” in the region⁴³—have nothing to do explicitly with avoiding reservation surveillance or

⁴² Compare, for example, the following maps in which the upper reaches of the Satsop watershed remain “blank”, Surveyor General’s Office. *Washington Territory* [map]. 1857, “Map of that part of Washington Territory Lying West of the Cascade Mountains to accompany Report of Surveyor General, 1857”; Surveyor General’s Office. *Washington Territory* [map]. 1862, “Map of Public Surveys in the Territory of Washington for the Report of Surv. Gen., 1862,” Washington Secretary of the State, Washington History: Historical Maps, <http://www.sos.wa.gov/history/maps.aspx> (accessed January 1, 2012)

⁴³ The twentieth-century informants recorded by Jay Miller describe Salish cosmologies as expressing an ontology of “intermesh[ment] within a web” in which “everything [is] alive, [has] access to power, and [is] within the sphere of responsibility of a local spirit”. In other words, to many Coast Salish, a successful human life depends on acknowledging and being able to ascertain the imminent powers flowing through humans and non-humans alike, and to cultivate proper relationships in order to meet social obligations *and* to survive the catastrophes and power imbalances inherent to the cosmos. Power possessed by individuals in Coast Salish society was often affirmed through displays of these strong relationships with spirit helpers (for example, through displays of wealth, winning at gambling), which had to be maintained through singing and visiting the sites where these powers reside, Jay Miller, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

21. According to Frank Allen, *spiya’l* power was especially good for gambling, William W. Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives: Native Historical Accounts of a Coast Salish Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 22-26. For the importance of gambling—specifically the disk game and horse racing—to negotiations of Coast Salish socio-political power from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on, see Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 106-107.

state power in general. Instead, by relating this story of an important event, Allen's recollection suggests that not all indigenous identity formation has been constructed in opposition to or in compliance with settler-colonial institutions such as reservations or schools, but also through relationships with other indigenous peoples, animal peoples, and inhabitants of the spirit world.

Despite the persistence of indigenous knowledge, mobility, and social practice, settlers who refused to follow indigenous protocol became more prevalent in the region during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the ability of the state to enforce its own vision of property ownership was weak and certain assumptions were shared between natives and non-natives in regards to property ownership and use, settlers had greater access to the mechanisms of state violence and could wield this power in their own interests, though often in activities diametrically opposed to state designs. To see this at work in nineteenth century Washington Territory, geographer Denis Wood's conceptualization of a locality as a process, or as a *transformer* is useful. As peoples, materials, and ideas arrive in a given locality, they feed into a continual process of this locality's becoming—the production of distinctiveness as it also embeds this site into global flows. In turn, the peoples, materials, or ideas that had been introduced are themselves transformed.⁴⁴ This process may be seen at work through the life and times of a particular object—in the case of nineteenth century Washington Territory, a cannon of “pre-Civil War vintage...about four feet long with a four- or five-inch bore.”⁴⁵ Attention to the circumstances in which this piece of field artillery made its way from its original birthplace in a foundry across the continent to the northwest coast illustrates not only the particular complexities of the relationship between state and local practices in this place and time, but also envisions this

⁴⁴ Denis Wood, *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas* (Los Angeles: Siglio Press, 2010), 18.

⁴⁵ Edwin Van Syckle, *River Pioneers: Early Days on Grays Harbor* (Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1982), 152.

locality as one node in a complex web of global flows. As an “evocative object,” the cannon’s multiple uses (and multiple uses of the narrative regarding the cannon) illuminate the contours of a social conflict in which a Euro-American settler society attempted to impose a spatiotemporal and epistemological hegemony on an indigenous world, affirming Wood’s claim that “objects and their positions are inseparable.” Additionally, Wood’s insight that “what neighborhoods do is make the city real,”⁴⁶ could be appropriated here to the contingent and messy colonial project that was Washington Territory, a constituent component of the broader nineteenth century imperial world, as one of many local articulations of colliding persons, ideas, and objects. In other words, the production of southwest Washington Territory helped to make the U.S. settler-colonial state real, as evinced by the multiple lives of an object, in this case, a cannon.

Conflicts surrounding Grays Harbor first appear in the archives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the late winter of 1857 when, “A.G. Henry & Citizens of Grays Harbor,” sent a petition to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, E.R. Geary, complaining about the “large number of Indians...over whom the Government exercises no control or influence.” Instead, these Indians were driven ever further from civilizing influences of lawful society by a class of Euro-American bachelors, who, through their liquor trading, had become “one continuous source of rioting and drunkenness.” Like many settler petitions of its time, it implored the government to install roads, establish a more forceful presence, and police trade, as it was deemed “absolutely necessary for [settler] security as well as the protection of the Indians.”⁴⁷ These kinds of petitions expressed unease over the ambivalent legal status of land-as-commodity in this locality. Though pocked

⁴⁶ Wood, *Everything Sings*, 18; Sherry Turkle, ed., *Evocative Objects: Things we Think With* (Cambridge: MIT, 2007).

⁴⁷ “A.G. Henry & Citizens of Grays Harbor” to E.R. Geary, March 27, 1857, microfilm publication M5, roll 23, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

with settler titles, it had not been ceded by treaty—a condition that settlers who placed faith in discourses of U.S. land law feared would exacerbate tensions between them and Natives in perpetuity. “This is an Indian country and it is not,” fretted agent Michael T. Simmons, who advocated for the demands of these “highly respectable” citizens in his report to Superintendent Nesmith the next summer.⁴⁸

The situation at Grays Harbor had further deteriorated by the end of 1860. Complaining of “constant harassment,” local resident Absalom Armstrong accused Indians of taking his boat, breaking into his house, “maiming cattle...digging potatoes,” and threatening his life.⁴⁹ Another local settler, Matthew McGee, claimed that Indians prevented him from fishing on the Quinault River by encircling him with canoes and beating the water with their paddles.⁵⁰ Intertribal reprisals between groups of Quinault, Queets, and Lower Chehalis, described by local settlers as “petty hostilities,” were feared to be exacerbated by “whites” with spurious motives and connections to the booming liquor trade, frustrating bourgeois ambitions to build an orderly society on the northwest coast.⁵¹

The persistent Grays Harbor petitioners were finally answered by way of a detachment of Federal Regulars of the 4th Infantry led by Captain Maurice Maloney of Ft. Steilacoom, deployed to the location expressly “for their protection” from Indians.⁵² However, despite petitioners claiming the moral high ground, pleading for government protection as besieged innocents, there

⁴⁸ M.T. Simmons to Superintendent Nesmith, June 30, 1858, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1858, 586-587 (hereafter, *ARCIA*).

⁴⁹ Armstrong to Geary, September 24, 1860, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

⁵⁰ McGee to Geary, September 24, 1860, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

⁵¹ Local Agent Sidney Ford to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1857, *ARCIA 1857*, 342.

⁵² Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 149.

is reason to believe that they were guided by motives other than civilizing the territory. When Matthew McGee cited liquor traffic as the ultimate cause of settler-Indian conflict and urged the government to send a special agent to encumber the convoy of barrels from Shoalwater Bay to Grays Harbor, he had already been implicated by his neighbors as one of the most prolific in the trade. Within weeks of the arrival of federal troops, McGee was cornered by Capt. Maloney for selling whiskey.⁵³ Before being thwarted by Maloney, McGee had probably exploited his access to federal correspondence, recognizing the importance of portraying himself an exemplary citizen in order to advance his position in local politics. Just weeks after his letter of complaint arrived in the office of Agent Geary, a neighbor recommended his appointment as official “trader” of his locality.⁵⁴

In another example of settlers using the threat of indigenous violence to their advantage, Thomas Wright, who captained a sternwheeler on Grays Harbor, was rumored to promote Indian “scares” to induce troops and supplies into the area. In an intriguing and early example of the synergetic nature of industrial capitalism and the U.S. military, it was Wright himself who was contracted by the Army to transport Maloney’s troops to Pt. Granville and Chehalis Point.⁵⁵ These incidents challenge a tendency within postcolonial studies to exaggerate state omnipotence in the processes of colonialism.⁵⁶ Rather than the state acting as center in which the distribution

⁵³ McGee was later acquitted by a local jury for lack of evidence, McGee to Geary, September 24, 1860, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle; Van Syckle, *River Pioneers*, 151.

⁵⁴ A.C. Smith to Geary, October 2, 1860, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle.

⁵⁵ Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 148-149.

⁵⁶ Geographer Bruce Braun highlights this shift in the 1990s from studies of colonialist discourse as totalizing “to an analysis of colonialism as a fractured and contested field in which the operation of power is found to be more ambivalent and uncertain,” and emphasizing the “existence of multiple and overlapping social, political and discursive fields,” that accommodate a multiplicity of ideological positions, Bruce Braun, “Colonialism’s Afterlife: Vision and Visuality on the Northwest Coast,” *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 9, 2002, 213. For an overview of state technologies of legibility and control and a criticism of state omnipotence emphasizing evasion and resistance see Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

of violence radiated outwards towards its peripheries, settler colonialism was instead a “tangled process” through which “many violent episodes... began with a defiance of the state by willful individuals,” and often through the “messy convergence of private impertinence *and* the coercive might of the state,” often “grudgingly tolerated,” especially if settler practice served goals of state expansion.⁵⁷ Yet, as we shall see, neither the imposition of troops, nor settler belligerence truly completed the process of indigenous dispossession.

Cole Harris has shown how artillery pieces in British Columbia functioned not only to inflict “actual” corporeal harm, but also as components of “theater and spectacle,” a performative reminder of colonial power over indigenous spaces and bodies and the consequences of challenging this power.⁵⁸ But as any object, artillery pieces have also been used in ways unintended by those who manufactured or possessed the authority to wield them. As they act as component parts of the material reality that work to anchor people’s lives, objects can also “reveal the social relations that commodities are designed to hide,” naturalizing power, and disciplining bodies.⁵⁹ While the colonization of Washington Territory may be seen through the “evocative object” of the cannon as a struggle over the control of indigenous spaces and bodies, it can also be seen as a struggle within settler society over who would set the terms of access to resources, social status, and political power. Postcolonial scholars have been criticized for reproducing the very social categories they seek to dismantle. Adele Perry, for example, has been criticized for reifying the very categories of race, gender, and class that make possible the

⁵⁷ Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*, 4-6.

⁵⁸ Here, Harris draws on Foucault’s theorization of sovereign power deriving in this instance on the management of fear in the face of the sovereign’s right to property or life, Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 64-65.

⁵⁹ Turkle, *Evocative Objects*, 310-312; Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

subversion she seeks to illuminate in *On the Edge of Empire*.⁶⁰ Harris may fall into a similar trap with the objects or technologies of power he invests with such potency.

Indian agents of southwest Washington Territory constantly expressed doubt regarding the propriety of newly arrived Euro-American settlers, their disdain focused on the traders, laborers, and the soldiers populating the fort at Chehalis Point on Grays Harbor, but also farmers of various class backgrounds, many of whom were experiencing new possibilities of social mobility and political agency.⁶¹ Indian agents—a constituent part of the local settler elite—commonly characterized “Indian troubles” in reports and correspondences as “white” problems. These “whites” were perceived by these elites to be self-interested at the cost of preserving a tenuous detente with local Natives, the latter perceived to be in perpetual danger of corruption by the former. Though they seemed to express unlimited ambitions to control local politics, lower class settlers were seen to have no desire to establish a virtuous national citizenry in the Northwest, perceived as they were by elites to be undisciplined, treacherous, and unfit for citizenship, threatening to undo the hard work of civilizing the territory.

Class boundaries, and their maintenance, were also articulated across national identities. The Englishman George Roberts who remained in charge of Cowlitz Farms (an installment of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson’s Bay Company) after the British and their mercantile empire retreated north, blamed local disputes on Euro-American

⁶⁰ For example, see Christopher Bracken, review of *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*, by Adele Perry, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 108, no. 4 (Oct 2003): 1134-1135.

⁶¹ For an exploration of bourgeois anxieties over white degeneracy on colonial frontiers in the nineteenth century see Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,”; Katharine Hall, “Commentary,” in Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 52,459-460; Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 6, 213-214, 437-438; For a localized study of the ways in which class intersected with the production of racial categories, see Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

settlers in general. Devoted to the then-burgeoning institution of agricultural science, Roberts not only accused lower class “whites” of stirring up conflict for their own gain, he also perceived them to be wasting productive land with their ignorance of “scientific” knowledge, their drunken sloth, and a blind faith that the western North American continent was a Garden of Eden. When Roberts “once asked a poor illiterate Irishman who had been in both the British & American armies Which do you prefer Jimmy the West point [sic] officer or the Volunteer officer? The West point [sic] man *ave coorse* & so it will be with the Indians,” he posited a hierarchy in which Indians and Irishmen—despite being perceived by men like Roberts to co-occupy the lowest rung on a civilizational ladder—shared an ability to distinguish between who would be fit or unfit to govern them.⁶²

The supposed fidelity of Irishmen and Indians to federal military elites was dubious however. Instead of using the cannon to protect innocent Euro-Americans or backsliding Indians, these same Irishmen, stationed at Grays Harbor to “protect” settlers, used it instead to fire off rounds in drunken revelry, despite the awareness that it would cost them a night in the fort’s “pokey”. In fact, the very barracks they were obligated to build to house themselves upon arrival to the Pacific Coast was blown up in their midnight belligerency.⁶³ Why would these men destroy their own shelter with the awareness of the future toil they would undergo to build it again? Historian Sarah Keyes has drawn attention to how sound has been employed as a spatial strategy—how it has been utilized to impose order, to take up space, to vie for power—especially in cases where this power was perceived to be tenuous. Building on work that has

⁶² George B. Roberts to F.F. Victor, November 11, 1878 in George B. Roberts, “Letters to Mrs. F.F. Victor, 1878-83, *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 2/3 (June-Sept., 1962), 187. This conflation of Indians and Irishmen is interesting in itself due to their shared history of racialization and colonial dispossession on both sides of the Atlantic.

⁶³ Van Syckle, *River Pioneers*, 154-155.

investigated the place of auditory sensorium as a necessary component of cultural orientation, Keyes traces the uses of “aural violence,” especially through the use of firearms, by settlers imposing themselves in indigenous space during the violent continental expansion of the U.S. through the nineteenth century. Though Keyes emphasizes the use of “aural violence” by settlers against indigenous peoples, the Pacific Northwest cannon case suggests that this violence was also wielded in disputes over the slippery boundaries of class that, in the context of the colonization of the Northwest Coast (as it was in other imperial encounters across the nineteenth century world), were especially fraught ones.⁶⁴ The soldiers at Fort Chehalis, many only recently immigrated from Ireland and facing widespread anti-Catholic hostility likely saw in the cannon this potential to exact “sonic warfare,” to enjoy access to, albeit briefly, a space-claiming strategy, and with it the acquisition of a modicum of power in a highly disciplined environment.

For their part, federal agents had little patience for maintaining a troop presence on the coast especially as they came to realize that, despite settler insistence, no “league existed between different tribes...for the purpose of exterminating” them and that the Fort’s existence may have instead been working to exacerbate tensions.⁶⁵ Instead, federal agents—including the most influential local agent Sidney Ford—implicated whiskey traders as the greatest threat to social stability and characterized recent “hostilities” as petty localized disputes, including an argument over the rightful possession of beached sea otters.⁶⁶ The official rhetoric of those like agent Ford who publically condemned those perceived to be “whiskey peddlers,” however, occludes a practice of selective tolerance. Though Ford lambasted the “dishonest and

⁶⁴ Sarah Keyes, “‘Like a Roaring Lion’: The Overland Trail as a Sonic Conquest,” *Journal of American History*, 96(1), (June 2009): 19-43; Cooper and Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire*.

⁶⁵ Simmons to Geary, *ARCIA*, 1860 187-188.

⁶⁶ These arguments were likely far from petty, however, as they probably reflected encroachments of settlers on indigenously managed space, and escalating conflicts over the distribution of power, *Ibid.*, 188.

disreputable liquor traders who worked to undo the civilizing work of local farmers⁶⁷ it was Ford's son-in-law Sam Williams who somehow commandeered the abandoned cannon and put it to use in the very unsubtle manner of announcing the arrival of whiskey shipments to his trading post on Chehalis Point.⁶⁸ Though his ties to settler elites like Ford may have contributed to the toleration of his whiskey-selling, Williams may have also been respected for promoting social stability between Natives and arrivants, through a valuable local knowledge of sociopolitical comportment. Coerced out of the same vicinity for selling the same product, Matthew McGee's antagonistic disregard of local custom may have cost him as his attempt to set up a fishery—swiftly thwarted by local indigenous people—garnered little sympathy from nearby settlers who had advised him not to proceed, reminding him that he could have “purchased at a reasonable rate all the salmon he might have required.”⁶⁹

The cannon continued its life as an accoutrement to the liquor trade in the hands of Mose Freeland, a saloon proprietor to the south, in Oysterville on Shoalwater Bay, the riotous center of the Pacific Coast oyster boom. Unlike Williams, who repurposed the cannon in order to advertise his product, Freeland sought to “set about to do what had not been accomplished before,” that is, to blow up the cannon itself (which had by now lost its carriage and wheels), in an ultimate late

⁶⁷ In his official correspondence, Ford advocated against “indiscriminately” mixing “Indians” and “whites” but believed in instilling a work ethic by example: “To civilize an Indian you must first teach him how to work,” Ford to Cain, May 15, 1856; Ford to Stevens, November 30, 1856; M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle; Ford to Nesmith, *ARCIA*, 1858, 344.

⁶⁸ Williams had been close to the Ford family, and was a traveling companion to one of the elder Ford's son, Sidney Jr. when they had been captured and held as slaves by Haida people on the Queen Charlotte Islands, Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 155; Herndon Smith, *Centralia: The First Fifty Years, 1845-1900* (Centralia: The Daily Chronicle and F.H. Cole Printing Co., 1942) 77-80.

⁶⁹ W.B. Gosnell to E.R. Geary, December 4, 1860, M5, roll 16, RG 75, NARA, Seattle. One indigenous informant from the early twentieth century claimed that “all settlers in that day had a saloon,” George Ben testimony, *Duwamish et al.*, Court of Claims of the United States, no. F-275, 549, Evidence for Plaintiff and Defendant, box 46, Northwest Ethnohistory Collection, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington (hereafter *Duwamish et al.*).

night spectacle of pyrotechnics.⁷⁰ Stuffed with gunpowder and wadding “rammed home...with a piece of driftwood” and buried “muzzle-down in the sand,” directly in front of his saloon, Freeland waited until the “good Oysterville citizens had gone to bed,” and let her rip, sending a thundering cloud of shrapnel through the city streets including “Two pieces of iron about the size of [Freeland’s] fist,” which “whacked into Chris Johnson’s house,” narrowly missing the bed on which Johnson and his “good wife” reclined before passing through the opposite wall.⁷¹

The standoff that ensued is framed in a 1980 local history through the popular genre of the Western gunfight, a central structural element in the mythic American historical imagination.⁷² But instead of responding by way of literal firepower, Johnson employed some verbal vitriol. Squaring off in the “middle of main street,” this local articulation of the gunslinger showdown (while also inviting potential readings in the context of the crisis of authority of the state and traditional bourgeois family on the cusp of the Reagan era and on the heel of the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal, when this memoir was written) illustrates the explosive tensions of clashing colonial projects. Not only is Freeland disrupting the attempted imposition of an orderly soundscape by bourgeois settlers, but also the orderly time of normative family production—rousing productive, civic-minded individuals from their sleep-time, thus rupturing the cycle of work and recovery necessary to perpetuate the smooth functioning of capitalism.⁷³ Concurrently, by the second half of the nineteenth century, those who sought to colonize the North American West (as was the case in Australia, the Dutch East Indies, and other localities),

⁷⁰ Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 155-156.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁷² Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).

⁷³ E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism,” in *Customs in Common* (New York: New Press, 1991) 381-382.

became increasingly concerned with policing bourgeois norms of propriety, locating the health and prosperity of the nation in the twinned moral and physical health of its citizens.⁷⁴ Though Freeland got an “ear burning” with more “verbal fire than was ever loosed in the territory,” his challenge against, or resistance to, the imposition of bourgeois time and space resulted only in the “scorched spots” on buildings the “old-timers” still enthusiastically point out, marred by Johnson’s “blue blazes.”⁷⁵ The cannon, finally silenced, marks the melancholic passage of a frontier progressing out of its rambunctious adolescence into proper adulthood, as plucky whiskey peddlers are (sometimes with a sigh of regret) replaced by family men in nightshirts, who, though oft characterized as wet blankets in popular “frontier” literature, stake their claim to the spatio-temporality of a new bourgeois order.

Though these disruptive performances of power undoubtedly effected indigenous lives (and probably also found indigenous co-participants), it was through a combination of settler coercion, ecological change, and increased federal enforcement of game management in the early twentieth century that the impact of colonization was most felt by indigenous peoples. By the end of the 1860s, native oysters had all been exhausted, and settlers had drawn up a resolution to ban the purchasing of oysters from Indians, ending their direct competition in the trade.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ann Laura Stoler’s work draws heavily on Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality Vol. 1* when she discusses the centrality of policing moral behavior and racial proximities in colonial spaces in Stoler, ed., *Hauntings of Empire*, 52, Cooper and Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire*, 213-214. For similar work in this vein see Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); for another exploration of this dynamic at work in the Pacific Northwest see Nyan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

⁷⁵ Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 156.

⁷⁶ Ronald Eugene Minks, “A History of the Native Oyster Industry of Shoalwater Bay (1851-1928)” MA Thesis University of Washington, 1971; this sentiment was echoed in the *Duwamish* hearings: “as long as there were plenty of oysters and fish were plentiful they got along fairly well, but the oysters died out and were not replanted by the white men, and their means of making their living has diminished,” Myrtle Johnson Woodcock, President of the Chinook Tribe testimony, *Duwamish et al.*, 594; “The oysters is all shipped out and taken away by the white people,” Emma Mellett Luccier testimony, *Duwamish et al.*, 567.

Through the 1870s and 1880s, railroads and military roads were built, improved, and extended, diminishing reliance on indigenous transportation and the ability of native peoples to capitalize on a superior geographic knowledge, especially for Cowlitz and Métis traders who had long enjoyed dominance in ferrying and canoe transportation.⁷⁷ Settler belligerence and disregard of indigenous ownership, law, and social practice became more prevalent. The livestock of newcomers destroyed the range of Indian horses and the settler practice of collecting driftwood for structures and fires changed the ecology of tidal prairielands, eroding land, promoting sand drift, and destroying berry patches and animal browse.⁷⁸

But perhaps most disruptive to indigenous modes of life was the rise of conservationism and especially the federal enforcement of conservation policies as the twentieth century began, wrenching land and resource management away from local customary practice, constraining indigenous agency, self-sufficiency and mobility. As the nineteenth century drew to a close a new generation of U.S. national leaders, appalled at what they perceived to be the wasteful and chaotic practices of industrial resource extraction of their forbearers, sought to apply efficient, rational, and bureaucratic management to the forests and prairies of the American West.⁷⁹ Karl Jacoby has shown how as Progressive-era conservationism became more rigidly enforced in the first decades of the twentieth century, it “interlocked on multiple levels” with other acts of conquest and became part of an ongoing effort by the state to render Native peoples into

⁷⁷ William G. Robbins and Katrine Barber, *Nature's Northwest: The North Pacific Slope in the Twentieth Century* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2011), 19-25; Carlos A. Schwantes, *Railroad Signatures across the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993). For the centrality of Métis to nineteenth century Pacific Northwest life, see John C. Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade: Forgotten Métis of the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2007).

⁷⁸ “Residents of Chehalis Pt” to W.H. Waterman, Superintendent, M5, roll 24, RG 75, NARA, Seattle; Van Syckle, *The River Pioneers*, 159.

⁷⁹ Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own': A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 400-415.

dependent wards.⁸⁰ Indeed, the on-the-ground enforcement of conservation policy by game wardens was felt by indigenous peoples in southwest Washington (which became a state in 1889) as a particularly intense site of social and economic control. The upheavals caused by this local intensification of colonial power by the beginning of the twentieth century is palpable within contemporaneous transcripts of court cases, as local Indians began to feel the pressure of surveillance and spatial control—often for the first time—and began to demand the federal government for recompense for land and resources that had been seized without treaty stipulations or payment.

Despite possessing a federally recognized reservation, Chehalis Indians have not enjoyed the same treaty guarantees as other local indigenous peoples in regards to fishing, harvesting plants, and hunting in their “usual and accustomed places,” as the Treaty of Chehalis has remained unsigned.⁸¹ But despite this lack of treaty status, Chehalis men like George Ben had continued to fish and hunt off-reservation, as his grandfather before him, without the interference of reservation agents and with the relative tolerance of local settlers, well into the twentieth century when diminished resources *and* the imposition of Washington State warden patrols made it necessary to travel four or five miles to find game, when in the past, game could be found within a quarter-mile radius. When a longer journey was required, a warden could oft be expected at the end of the game trail wagging a finger reprimanding, “You go right back, right on your same tracks, and go right to your house. You can’t kill no deer to-day out here. I will put

⁸⁰ Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 151.

⁸¹ See ch. 1 of this thesis. A strong case has been made that the Treaty of Olympia, signed by the Quinault and Quileute—the two tribes originally agreeing to the stipulations of the Chehalis River Treaty—on January 25, 1856, also includes the Chehalis tribe within the extension of treaty rights to all “fish-eating Indians” to hunt and fish in all the “usual and accustomed places,” Robert Brockstead Lane, *The Treaty Council That Failed: A Commentary and the Proceedings to the Chehalis River Treaty Council* (Vienna: Institute for the Development of Indian Law, 1972).

you in jail; I will arrest you.”⁸² Many Indians felt this threat of arrest and the surveillance strongly enough to discontinue customary resource gathering practices altogether. Additionally, it became commonsense knowledge in many local communities that strategies of navigating the bureaucratic maze to obtain a hunting or fishing license was essential as “the game wardens is always watching and watching so that they [Indians] don’t do as they used to do in the olden times.”⁸³

Mary Heck, who had been a young woman at the time of the Stevens treaties and had observed and recorded the proceedings on the banks of the Chehalis River,⁸⁴ was in a unique position at the 1927 *Duwamish* hearings, as her life spanned the initial processes of colonial dispossession in the region (she was 92 at the time of the hearing). Through her testimony, she describes the simultaneous practices of settler coercion and official tolerance of this coercion. Heck recalled the extent of settler destruction of important sites for gathering medicinal plants—including those crucial to pregnancy and childbearing—well before the enforcement of conservation policy impeded Native mobility and use of the land.⁸⁵ This violence, which also included “the threatening of [their] lives...and even the mutilating [of] their graves,” was ignored or condoned by federal agents who “used to come here and just visit one another and get a big

⁸² George Ben testimony, *Duwamish et al.*, 547-548.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 586-587.

⁸⁴ Through a translator: “she likes to lay before you every word that Governor Stevens spoke at the council they had.” She was, not surprisingly, declined, Mary Heck testimony, *Duwamish et al.*, 542.

⁸⁵ Heck’s testimony draws attention to the gendered coordinates of colonialist dispossession especially as it relates to geographic knowledge, mobility, and the body, as well as the remapping of gendered divisions of labor onto a capitalist modality. For a foundational anthology on feminist indigenous studies, see Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (London: Routledge, 1995); for a recent exploration of narrative, landscape, and the body from the perspective of feminist geography and literary criticism, see Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

salary from the Government but...never helped the Indians nothing.”⁸⁶ Yet despite this history of violence and dispossession, Heck performs a staunch claim to her land, which to her, was never ceded in the first place, as her people chose not to accept what they saw as a contemptible offer by Stevens during the Chehalis Treaty Council—some second-rate shawls for the use of their land.⁸⁷ Here, Heck can be seen to articulate an alternative geography, a “counter-cadastral,” as she goes on to describe a life of continued mobility between, and use of, over a dozen “permanent residence[s],” whose functions, sizes, and localities are carefully described by Heck for the courtroom.⁸⁸

Heck’s life spans a major era of crisis and rupture for local indigenous peoples, the timespan in which I have situated my thesis. In 1888, when Heck was 53, the Northern Pacific Railroad issued a map entitled “How to Get to Washington Territory.”⁸⁹ Serving primarily as an advertisement for the recently completed rail line linking Puget Sound—and by extension the entire West Coast—to the Great Lakes, this map, even when placed in relation to other contemporary Euro-American-produced maps, is strikingly linear. It is difficult to find here even the ephemeral traces of the indigenous geographic knowledges that Jeff Oliver argues are always at least implicitly reproduced on official maps which, through their informational gaps, proportional imprecision, and erasures subvert attempts at total control over persons and

⁸⁶ Mary Heck testimony, *Duwamish et al.*, 537.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 538; See ch. 1 of this thesis for a discussion on the politics of indigenous refusal of treaty stipulations.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 535; “She traveled all over the country because it was her country,” 530; “She says she goes to them 10 villages or more because it is her territory. She went from one village to another,” 539.

⁸⁹ Rand McNally and Company. *Washington Territory* [map]. 1888. Scale not given. “How To Get To Washington Territory.” Washington State Library Digital Collections. http://www.sos.wa.gov/history/maps_detail.aspx?m=74 (accessed January 1, 2012).

environments.⁹⁰ In contrast to Oliver’s messy, incomplete assemblages that belied the empiricism and total mastery intended by colonialist cartographers, “How to Get to Washington Territory,” confidently dredges one big, bold line from Duluth to Puget Sound before plummeting southward towards Mexico. In keeping with the familiar national narrative of technological development that flattens time and space into linear progression, peripheral towns disappear, fingerlike drainages evaporate, and landforms are swept away under a parade of railroad destinations. Following the logic of this map, one could imagine Paul Virilio proclaiming his “end of geography” thesis from a train station platform in Gilded Age America.⁹¹ Yet, even the circulation of these types of maps, with all their telescoping of space-time, did not foreclose an end to indigenous space, nor its occupation by the peoples who imbue it with meaning, the hauntings of historical violence, and the material inequalities felt into the present—all of which depend on local articulations of geographic knowledges.

Like Mary Heck’s testimony at the *Duwamish* hearings, annual Canoe Journeys testify to the fact that indigenous peoples “won’t just go away,” and have always, will always, exist both as live presences and specters that haunt the stories settler colonialists like to confidently tell themselves.⁹² The innovation performed by the revival of the Canoe Way for Pacific Northwest (and wider Pacific) maritime cultures is that it works to frustrate a linear story of inevitable

⁹⁰ Oliver shows how these cartographic representations, on the wings of a rising print capitalism were set aloft in transit around the globe, shaping the way people imagined this region and its place in the world, thus positioning local colonial encounters as singular, yet globally significant producers of knowledge and power, Jeff Oliver, *Landscape and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

⁹¹ In the context of the North American West, Michael Adas promotes a rather teleological view of the ways in which technology made possible the aggressive expansion of the U.S. into the continent, Michael Adas, *Dominance By Design: Technological Imperatives and America’s Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁹² On the politics of indigenous hauntings, as well as their ethical potentials see Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush, eds., *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

decline, which continues to naturalize an ongoing colonialism. In a recent film documenting the 2008 Paddle to Quinault, representatives of canoe families express an explicit reclamation of “indigenous time.” Through the experience preparing for and participation in the Journey, through the nightly potlatch protocol, the sharing of dances, song, and stories, indigenous people are able to “forget the Western clock,” and to comprehend their embeddedness in a more cyclical time of tides, seasons, and celestial movements—to sense their interconnectedness with other tribal nations, animal nations, and the spirit world, despite the atomizing forces and individualism at the heart of the colonizing cultures of capitalism and imperialism.⁹³ By following ancestral routes, collecting and rearticulating geographic knowledges that had survived tactics of suppression by state institutions and settler practice, canoe families “come to shore” to beaches that have never lost their histories, have never become fully legible to and possessed by colonial power, providing a glimpse at future potentialities of indigenous sovereignty and community integrity beyond the violent mechanisms of state power.

⁹³ *Canoe Way: the Sacred Journey*, directed by Mark Celletti (Cedar Media, 2008), DVD.

Conclusion: Ecology, Place, and the Ethical Possibilities of Stories

How does one care for a place? Over time, it became clear that this question was at the heart of my thesis work. Difficult, and even violent histories shaped the places, stories, and ecologies in which I came into the world and spent most of my life. Moving away from western Washington State, the Pacific Northwest, the Salish Sea, and the Cascadia bioregion afforded me a kind of spatio-temporal distortion that disengaged me with the rhythms of life and the familiar landscapes that I had often taken for granted in the place I continue to call home. Revisiting my thesis from an entirely different place (albeit one with its own histories of settler colonialism, the rise of the modern U.S. military industrial complex, et cetera—Albuquerque, New Mexico), I could trace through the layers of prose, through the arrangement and analysis of my research findings, a concern with what place might mean in an inextricably connected world of humans and non-humans. Where can you locate a place in a mesh of peoples, objects, and knowledges in continual flux?¹ How do people cope with the imposition of violence into this ecological meshwork, how do they negotiate abruptly shifting power arrangements and challenges to their cosmological understandings? How do the results of these encounters accrete into historical memories that are themselves transformed through time and space?

Over time my thesis project led me to a conceptualization of place as a series of nested ecologies that, while irreducible, messy, and contingent are a collection or archive where

¹ I am referring here to ecologist and philosopher Timothy Morton's concept of a mesh as short for "the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things," that can also mean "the holes in a network and the threading between them [absences and silences]. It suggests both hardness and delicacy," or, "a complex situation or series of events in which a person is entangled; a concatenation of constraining or restricting forces or circumstances; a snare...[it] appears in our social, psychic, and scientific domains [without] a definite background and therefore no definite foreground," Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) 28.

accumulated memories and materials converge. I realized that places were neither mere social constructions nor empty backdrops in which human life plays out but rather material-discursive phenomena in which neat binaries of the biological and social, culture and nature break down. These are sites of storytelling and as such, have an ethical dimension. As ecologist Thom Van Dooren suggests, stories are a way to “hold open space in the world,” to “gather up disparate times and places, to ethically inhabit their complexity.”² In other words, stories help place us inside a meshwork, or ecology, in which our complicity, or agency in the world becomes noticeable (for the concept of “meshwork,” see Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought*). Stories thicken the lives of other beings and encourage us towards a mode of caring-for rather than a caring-about, an ethical practice “marked by an understanding of and appreciation for a particular context in which one participates,” and a “caring for particular persons [or beings] in the context of their histories,” a mode so central to what feminist theorist Deane Curtin argues is the kind of ethics required in a time of ecological crisis but also, as I have argued, in the continuing shadow of settler colonialism—both of which are inextricably linked.³ Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest have survived the violences of colonialism, requiring new stories that challenge narratives of disappearance and past-ness that make it possible for many to ignore ongoing struggles within Native communities today.⁴

² Thom Van Dooren, *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 23.

³ For example, an ethics of care, encouraged by listening to (or for?) certain stories might compel me to ask “whose land do I inhabit?” or “what makes it possible for me to inhabit or live ‘well’ here and what sort of ethical imperative does this demand of me?”, Deane Curtin, “Towards an Ecological Ethic of Care,” *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 1, (Spring, 1991), 67; for the linkages between colonialism and ecological crisis see Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, eds., *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁴ For how narratives of past-ness are physically monumentalized see Jean M. O’Brian, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

Chapter One argued for a kind of “thick” understanding of indigenous actions at the Chehalis treaty council, drawing attention to the ways in which decisions made by delegates were shaped by their responsibilities towards their communities in the context of shifting webs of power that were based locally, but also at the nexus of global flows of peoples and knowledges. A central priority of this chapter was to argue against a teleological rendering of history that forecloses U.S. hegemony in the region. Instead of “manifest destiny” fulfilling itself, I set out to show how localized, multi-generational histories, diseases, and the fur trade, as well as obligations towards kin groups and spirit helpers all contributed to the outcome of the treaty—and subsequent historical remembrances of it—that continue to have import to descendants today as a lively document, a storied object. Although I only implicitly gestured towards it through my approach to this chapter, a less anthropocentric methodology may be a more useful way of approaching historical considerations of place. Instead, a *disanthropocentric* methodology attuned to the ways in which human action arises out of a complex entanglement with a multiplicity of other human and non-human agents may be better employed if it is to do justice to the ancestors of the indigenous peoples such as the Coast Salish and Chinook peoples that persist today in a settler colonial society whose inherent violences rely on the concepts of race and mattering that arise from this sort of anthropocentric thought to begin with.⁵

Chapter Two looked specifically at the biopolitical management of this kind of human mattering and challenged the naturalization of racialized biopolitics through a critique of the

⁵ A disanthropocentric approach also holds open the possibility to take seriously indigenous “onto-epistemologies” that are tied to the agency of human, animal, and spirit beings alike and the often tenuous relationships that must be maintained between them; Joni Adamson, “Source of Life: Avatar, Amazonia, and an Ecology of Selves” in Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, eds., *Material Ecocriticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); for local, ethnographic accounts of social networks of humans and non-humans, and the obligations to maintain them see Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999); Jay Miller, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

mythology of U.S. “regeneration through violence”—in this case, through popular national narratives of Indian war and the contemporary “War on Terror”. It argued that contradictions within narratives of Indian war provide necessary tools to resist hegemonic narratives of Indian violence and settler triumph that continue to underwrite the legitimization of violence towards indigenous peoples today. It pointed out that attention to local narratives, placed in contrast to national narratives, illuminate contradictions that may point us towards alternative, more just ways of understanding the confounding complicity of Natives, non-Natives, and institutional power. The questions of human mattering and biopolitics that I raise in this chapter could benefit, however, from a closer consideration to the way that the relationship between humanism and racial construction relate to concepts of animality and dehumanization. I fear that an ethics that privileges “the human” or that seeks to restore the “dignity of the human” to supposedly “dehumanized others” may perpetuate the very sort of hierarchical thought that has authorized colonialist violence to begin with.

From a more geographical angle that explores the convergences of materials, knowledges, and localities, Chapter Three finds me getting closer to articulating the dense “meshwork” of actors at work that coalesce “on-the-ground” in a particular place that may or may not accrete into historical narratives or public memory. I show how objects and landscapes are themselves storied and that their material agency often confounds intended human uses for them just as human lives as they are lived confound social categories and technologies of colonialist power. This exposes colonialism as incomplete and often vulnerable, yet flexible and tenacious, raising the question of accommodation versus resistance and the limits of working within the juridico-political institutions foundational to settler colonialism itself.⁶

⁶ Lisa Blee explores this conundrum in *Framing Chief Leschi: Narratives and the Politics of Historical Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 44-49.

Settler colonialism in the Pacific Northwest is an unfinished project that is both locally contingent and globally situated. Indigenous peoples did not simply disappear upon the imposition of U.S. geopolitical boundaries, and this requires new stories explaining indigenous survival and persistence as well as a commitment to address the complex weave of colonialism in contemporary life. The specific ways in which settler colonialism is imbricated in the lives of persons residing in the Pacific Northwest demands an attention to ways in which Native peoples were simultaneously dispossessed but have persisted into the present. The incessant production of material objects and legitimate knowledges by institutions of capitalism and the modern nation-state (which, though intertwined projects, were often at odds) did not simply spill out of imperial centers into colonizing peripheries. Instead, as these materials and knowledges circulated around the globe, they touched down in specific localities, shaping life on the ground only to produce ever new materials and knowledges to be sent into global circulation once again. This is a multiscalar relationship that works at the levels of global and local and everywhere in between. Though colonial power works through the global formations of legal discourses, the production of popular culture, the workings of biopolitics, and the distribution of resources, it has done so in distinct localities, as it is snagged by local power arrangements and entangled with particular histories. What happens at this interface cannot be plotted on a linear timescale with predictable outcomes as has narratives of Native decline along a receding frontier, so dear to conventional histories of the United States and foundational to the legitimization of colonialist violence. Instead, this “cauldron of colonialism”⁷ has also produced “lineages of opposition,” openings for imagining different stories, for acts of repurposing, as “dominant history teems with

⁷ Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

the remnants of alternative possibilities, and the job of the subversive intellectual is to trace the lines of the worlds they conjured and left behind.”⁸

Writing these chapters took many years and became a way for me to encounter and experiment with theoretical tools that helped me facilitate an engagement with the fraught histories of the place I love and call home. It became clear to me that, included within the “microtechniques of dispossession” of settler colonialism, were the everyday stories people told themselves about where they were from.⁹ I found that local, situated knowledges—Native and non-Native alike—often spilled out of, or contradicted those historical metanarratives of U.S. domination and civilizational progress that had often been employed by the teller to contain them. What I realized as I was confronted with these contradictions was that although these settler colonial narratives continue to have powerful resonance in the lives of ordinary people, local people also already know otherwise. Narrative reframings simply mark new boundaries, place new emphases that draw out those other ways of knowing that were there all along. For me, writing these chapters accomplished this recognition. But rather than arriving, finally, at point of truth, I found myself wrapped up in the ongoing process of re-learning a constantly changed reality: the *re*-cognition necessary to accommodate loss (of certainty, stories, people, objects) in a shared world.¹⁰

⁸ Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 16, 19.

⁹ Paige Raibmon, “Unmaking Native Space: A Genealogy of Indian Policy, Settler Practice, and the Microtechniques of Dispossession,” in Alexandra Harmon, ed., *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Van Dooren, *Flight Ways*, 144-146. I’d like to thank historian Chris Friday for pointing out the etymology of the word “recognition” to me in a personal communication.

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