

Vegan-Washing Genocide: Animal advocacy on stolen land and re-imagining animal liberation as anti-colonial praxis*

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Introduction

This chapter examines animal liberation movements in settler colonial contexts, specifically movements primarily composed of and largely led by white settlers, and their potential to both reify and challenge the structure of the settler state. I problematize understandings of animal advocacy that rely on legal rights frameworks that appeal to state sovereignty, and erase indigenous cosmologies of nonhuman relations and obligations, rendering such movements ineffective in settler colonial contexts wherein animal bodies are simultaneously produced as subjects of colonization and deployed as weapons of colonization and dispossession. My hope is to provoke settler animal advocates to critically engage anti-colonial solidarity.

“Intersectional” animal advocacy is *en vogue* but attempts to bridge gaps in theory and practice have been little more than hollow moves to innocence (Tuck and Yang 2012). Adopting slogans such as “one struggle, one fight, human freedom, animal rights!”, this cursory analysis of “intersectionality” erases the differences and experiences that should inform radical animal liberation struggle, solidarity, and strategy. This is especially true on stolen land. Rather than recognizing the strategic centrality (Olson, 2009) of settler colonization to challenging mass animal enterprise, this use of homology flattens incommensurate experiences of dispossession, oppression, and marginalization. Assimilating decolonization struggle into an “intersectional” animal advocacy framework reifies the logics of colonization and white supremacy. This process renders settler animal advocacy movements ineffective in terms of the material lives of animals, while also positioning animal advocacy, and more particularly, vegan advocacy, as an instrument of dispossession and colonization.

Indigenous resurgence is intrinsically committed to returning non-hierarchical interspecies relations (Coulthard, 2014). Borrowing from Andrea Smith (2009), Billy-Ray Belcourt (2014) reveals the operation of anthropocentrism as a pillar of white supremacy, showing how animal advocacy movements that fail to name and challenge settler colonialism uphold colonial relations and the politics of recognition. Similarly, Anderson (2004) traces dispossession and colonization to the invasion of European animal agriculture, epistemologies, and cosmologies onto indigenous land.

This chapter fosters a praxis that figures animals as both colonial subjects and weapons of colonization, while prefiguring an animal liberation movement on stolen land that centers indigenous decolonization, repatriation of land and relations, and anti-colonial solidarity.

Before turning to the critical content of this chapter, I want to attend to my experience and background, both as a settler and as an active participant and organizer in the animal liberation movement. My known ancestry is German, Japanese, and English – all nation-states with brutal and violent legacies of settler colonialism. I do not know much of my ancestor’s history, but what I do know is that they settled across various indigenous lands of Turtle Island, before I was eventually born on the lands of the Tiwa nation, in what is presently known as Albuquerque, New Mexico. My family re-settled in Coast Salish territory, specifically Puyallup lands, before settling more permanently on the lands of Chinookan peoples, near the villages of náíaguguix (Nayaguguwikh) and ʔáqst’aḡ (Tlakstakh) (Zenk, et al. 2016). I still reside on Chinook lands, in what is now called Portland, Oregon near the Chinook village sites of nimáḡw’inix (Nemalquinner), gaḡáwakšín (Gatlawakshin), gaḡaḡála (Watlala), ničáqʷli (Nechakolee), gaḡawašúxʷal (Washougal), and gáḡap’uḡx (Cathlapotle). Portland occupies the ancestral land of the máḡnumax c’ínúk (Multnomah Chinook) (Zenk, et al. 2016).

I arrived at this writing through a decade of experience in the animal advocacy movement in North America. My organizing background was primarily developed through localized, grassroots animal liberation collectives, which worked to develop coalitions with other communities in struggle, particularly through solidarity with the anarchist, prison abolition, environmental justice, and Palestinian liberation communities. I have also been

involved in years of conference and campaign organizing on regional and national scales, both within and beyond the animal advocacy movement.

My observations of and participation in settler animal advocacy movements in North America have left me cynical that meaningful change can be affected for nonhuman animals without situating both animal enterprise and the animal liberation movement in the context of the settler colonial state. There has been a provocative emergence of literature on the relationship of animality and animal enterprise to settler colonization and white supremacy over the last decade (e.g. Deckha 2006, Tallbear 2011, Robinson 2013 and 2014, Powell 2014, Belcourt 2014, Watts-Powless 2014, Todd 2014, 2015, and 2016, Zahara 2015, Kanji 2017, Gossett 2015, Alloun 2017). However, there is still a need for substantive analysis of the animal advocacy movement(s) that operate on stolen land. They hold the potential to either uniquely challenge anthropocentrism as a formation of white supremacy, or to reproduce the very structures that render animal enterprise visible, material, and profitable. That powerful potential requires a great degree of responsibility on the part of settler animal liberation advocates, particularly white settlers.

I am interested in the array of settler animal advocacy movements, whether stylized as “animal welfare”, “animal rights”, “animal liberation”, “intersectional” or “total liberation”. As Belcourt (2014) notes, “total liberation” and “intersectionality” as radical frameworks for animal advocacy movements both fail to attend to the specificity and singularity of settler colonization as a structure on stolen land that is “irreducible” and incommensurable to the aims and analysis of even the most radical social justice-oriented animal advocates (Belcourt 2014). Robinson (2013 and 2014), Belcourt (2014), and Gossett (2015) argue that indigeneity, indigenous cosmology, decolonization, land defense, and anti-colonial struggle are not only compatible with animal liberation, but they also always already resist violent constructions of animality and capitalist animal enterprise. This chapter is intended to address the range and contrast of settler and indigenous animal advocacy as they exist in settler colonial contexts. It is the animal liberation work at these radical margins and intersections that holds the most promise for transformative and accountable struggle for decolonization, indigenous solidarity

and anti-colonial resistance. White settlers engaged on this level of the movement subsequently must be accountable to reimagine animal liberation on stolen land.

If settler colonization engenders the “the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the ‘domestic’ borders of the imperial nation” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 4), then how do animal advocates and organizers attend to settler colonialism, white supremacy, and the building and maintenance of capitalism and empire on this land? How will that change the trajectory of movement work and the allocation of resources? What will base-building look like? What sorts of grassroots campaigns will be generated? How will fundraising efforts be impacted? What is sustained and measurable resistance to animal enterprise as an extension of the larger colonial project? What do solidarity and sovereignty look like as an interspecies affair if we recognize reciprocity and agency among nonhuman actors (e.g. Hribal 2011, Coulter 2016)? How do we measure efficacy and what metrics are appropriate?

THE SETTLER COLONIAL STRUCTURE OF ANIMALITY

“The question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism. Land is life—or, at least, land is necessary for life. Thus, contests for land can be—indeed, often are—contests for life.” (Wolfe 2006, 387)

Settler colonialism is conceptually and materially distinct from other colonial formations through the regular operation of structural violence on appropriated land and the deployment of the “logic of elimination” (Wolfe 2006). As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, while colonial relationships are often understood to be either *external* or *internal*, *vis-à-vis* the metropole, settler colonialism is both. Situated in this context, the sovereignty of the nation-state is necessarily derived from the daily violent occupation of indigenous land, the perpetual elimination of the indigenous population, and the production and projection of settler life and imagination:

“[...] the most important concern is the land/water/air/subterranean earth [...]. Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because settlers make Indigenous land their

new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence.” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 5)

Settler colonization is more than an antecedent to the modern nation-state and prerequisite for capital accumulation— “invasion is a structure, not an event” (Wolfe 2006, 388). Dispossession, colonization, and settlement are recurring relational themes that must be produced and reproduced in order to register white supremacy material across indigenous land. In this way, settler colonialism is both dispossessing and generative (Wolfe 2006). It works simultaneously to empty indigenous land of the original inhabitants while deploying and weaponizing settlers onto these lands, configuring and imagining them as native. Settler colonialism as a structure requires settlers to secure native identity and connection to the land through culture, economy, agriculture, food, and mythology. Meanwhile, indigenous populations are evacuated of these identities and relationships to place and eliminated through war, murder, and assimilation into the body of the occupying settler state. In the words of Patrick Wolfe, “Settler colonialism destroys to replace” (Wolfe 2006, 388). As Andrea Smith argues:

“This logic holds that indigenous peoples must disappear. In fact, they must *always* be disappearing in order to allow non-indigenous peoples rightful claim over this land. Through this logic of genocide, non-Native peoples then become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous—land, resources, indigenous spirituality, or culture.” (Smith 2006, 68)

As a field of geopolitical arrangements, settler colonialism is critical to nation-state formation and neoliberal political economy on a global scale. Morgensen elaborates that the biopolitics and necropolitics of settler state power are organizing principles of governmentality, global capital, and empire building – “the colonial era never ended because settler colonialism remains the naturalised activity projecting Western law and its exception along global scales today. Theories of the biopolitical state, regimes of global governance, and the war on terror will be insufficient unless they critically theorise settler colonialism as a historical and *present* condition and method of all such power” (Morgensen 2011, 54).

Settler colonialism is a modality of global capital and state power. The generation of wealth and capital needed for state building and governance is not possible without the processes of colonial dispossession and the disciplining of colonized bodies, including not only indigenous peoples, but African slaves, migrants, women, queer and trans people, and, as I will argue later, nonhumans. In his critique of Marx's concept of primitive accumulation, Glen Coulthard notes that dispossession "never ceases to structure capitalist and colonial social relations in the present" and that colonial-capitalist production is "territorially acquisitive in perpetuity" (Coulthard 2014, 151). Sylvia Federici similarly expands upon the original Marxist formulation of primitive accumulation to center the disciplining of the animalized and feminized body in the process of capital accumulation and state formation (Federici 2014). Thus, in context of settler colonialism, the hegemony of capital and the sovereignty of the state generates the proletarianization of labor *alongside* the co-constituted processes of dispossession, racialization, feminization and animalization.

It is for the reasons outlined above that anarchist activist and scholar Adam Lewis has argued that white supremacy and settler colonialism are "strategically central" to anarchist, anti-authoritarian and anti-state organizing, and that anti-colonial solidarity form the foundation for radical social movements on stolen land (Lewis 2015 and 2017). However, as I will argue below, despite the empirical centrality of white supremacy and settler colonialism to global animal enterprise, settler animal advocacy and animal liberation movements have largely failed to attend to indigenous resurgence and anti-colonialism as advancing the struggle for animal liberation, or to strategize meaningful engagements in anti-colonial solidarity. The work of animal advocates of color is often marginalized, while the work of indigenous solidarity is often ostracized.

Settler colonialism is a field of material relations through which white supremacy operates its logics. Animality is the background logic against which settlers project both their humanity and their whiteness:

"The settler, if known by his actions and how he justifies them, sees himself as holding dominion over the earth and its flora and fauna, as the anthropocentric normal, and as more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species." (Tuck and Yang 2012, 6).

For Tuck and Yang, the normalization of anthropocentrism anchors whiteness and settler identity. This process of animalization is related to Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. For Mbembe, the power to inscribe death on the bodies of the subaltern is the ultimate source of political sovereignty in modernity. The power to confront and control death is the ontology of humanity and whiteness: "In other words, the human being truly *becomes a subject*—that is, separated from the animal—in the struggle and the work through which he or she confronts death" (Mbembe 2003, 14). Inversely, to be marked for death is the ontology of race and animality. Mbembe elaborates that "the function of racism is to regulate the distribution of death and to make possible the murderous functions of the state" (2003, 17). Interrogating the normalization of genocidal death in settler colonial contexts, Mbembe asserts that "*savage life* is just another form of *animal life*, a horrifying experience, something alien beyond imagination or comprehension" (2003, 24) and is thus rendered dead, disappeared, and dispossessed. In the logic of necropolitical power, "the figure of the animal is always already wrapped up in colonial and racial discourse" (Gossett 2015). Put more bluntly, "our particular co-constitutions of human and nonhuman matter *for who lives and dies* in this world, and *how*" (Tallbear 2011). It is this necropolitical logic of racialized and animalized cleansing and regulation of the social body that functions to produce and maintain state power. These operations are "primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die" (Foucault 1975-6, 254). The sovereignty of the modern state is derived from the perpetual production and elimination of aberrations – savageness, animality, blackness, indigeneity, queerness – the "others" from which society must be defended and made secure (Foucault 1975-6, Agamben 1998).

In *Dangerous Crossings*, her pivotal analysis of modernity, race and species, Claire Jean Kim argues that animality is produced through the anxieties of whiteness, at the same time that race, as the correlative of animality, is produced through the anxieties of humanity— "race is forged in the crucible of ideas about animality and nature" (Kim 2015, 25). Through the construction of what Kim calls "taxonomies of power"—biopolitical ontologies and epistemologies—it is *animality* that becomes an organizing principle of white supremacist society:

“As a taxonomy of power, race has been elaborated in the United States in intimate connection with species and nature. From the 1600s to the 1800s, [racialized groups] were imaginatively located in a human-animal borderlands where they were at once lumped together and painstakingly differentiated, depending on the exigencies of the situation. Remarkably, the racial stories crafted during these centuries [...] continue to structure the American cultural imaginary today.” (Kim 2015, 60).

The processes of racialization that order the colonial-capitalist state are not only metaphorically and discursively linked to the production of animality and operations of animal enterprise. According to Anderson (2000, 4), “animality has informed rhetorics of race, class, and gender, and other identity constructs” critical to the functioning of state sovereignty and governmentality. Animality played a crucial role in the persecution of female sexuality, providing pretext for the witch trials, the subjugation and disciplining of the body, and the accumulation of capital through the system of wage-labor and perpetual dispossession (Federici 2014).

Animality is critical to the material operations of white supremacy and is a central logic of settler state sovereignty. As Belcourt (2014) posits, anthropocentrism is a “racialized and speciesist site of settler coloniality.” Expanding upon Andrea Smith’s “Three Pillars of White Supremacy” model, he suggests that “anthropocentrism is the fourth logic of white supremacy” and that “decolonization is only possible through an animal ethic that disrupts anthropocentrism as a settler-colonial logic” (2014, 4). Belcourt echoes Kim in his analysis of animality as the organizing principle of white supremacy:

“The logic of anthropocentrism is also militarized through racial hierarchies that further distance the white settler from blackness and indigeneity as animalized sites of tragedy, marginality, poverty, and primitivism. That is, black and Indigenous bodies are dehumanized and inscribed (and continually re-inscribed) with animal status—which is always a speciesist rendering of animality as injuring—to refuse humanness to people of color and colonized subjects. This not only commits a violence that re-locates racialized bodies to the margins of settler society as non-humans, but also performs an epistemic violence that denies animality its own subjectivity and re-makes it into a mode of being that can be re-made as blackness and indigeneity.” (Belcourt 2014, 5)

The necropolitical nature of settler state sovereignty is produced against a cast of the unsovereign that includes the other-than-human, nonhuman animals, indigenous people, people of color, women, migrants, and queer and trans people. Animality is a metric by which other groups are rendered into various states of death and dying, or to borrow Dean Spade's terminology, are exposed to vectors of harm and an uneven distribution of life chances (Spade 2013).

ANIMAL ENTERPRISE ON STOLEN LAND: INDIGENOUS DISPOSSESSION AND THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

"May your lordship realize that if cattle are allowed, the Indians will be destroyed." - Antonio de Mendoza, first Viceroy of New Spain, in a letter to King Charles I of Spain (Nibert 2013, 52)

Settler colonial states and populations consume animals at the highest rates in the world (OECD/FAO 2017). Settler colonization is co-constituted by capital-driven nonhuman animal production, accumulation, use, and consumption. Extending Euro-settler agriculture onto indigenous lands is central to mobilizing expansion and settler invasion, and to disrupt indigenous land-based relations and cosmologies (Anderson 2004, Lavallie 2016). In the context of Turtle Island, Dene scholar-activist Glen Coulthard describes the land as "a relationship based on the obligations we have to other people and the other-than-human relations that constitute the land itself" (Coulthard 2015). European livestock animals were rendered visible and perceptible across native land as evidence of *terra nullius*, and the ostensible failure of indigenous populations to properly cultivate the crops and domesticate animals to the full impulse of settler capital, absent "an economy predicated on the perpetual exploitation of the human and non-human world" (Coulthard 2013). Decolonization scholars have identified "the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the 'domestic' borders of the imperial nation" as essential to the maintenance and advancement of the settler state (Tuck and Yang 2012, 4). Extending this analysis further, Belcourt argues that in settler formations, nonhuman animal bodies are reproduced simultaneously as subjects and weapons

of colonization (Belcourt 2014). Colonization is always already anthropocentric. In these contexts, any concern for animal advocacy must attend to the centrality of settler formations and violence, and support indigenous self-determination, resurgence and decolonization, rather than erase it.

While white supremacy has rendered animal life in lump-sum terms of animality and racialization, prior to colonization nonhumans likely enjoyed more dynamic conceptions in indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies. Historian Virginia Anderson has noted that in native languages such as Powhatan, Narragansett, and Massachusett, there exists no direct translation for the word *animal*. Early settlers collected words for distinct animal types or species, but no word for animal itself (Anderson 2004). This is suggestive of an ontology that recognized the nonhuman world in diverse relational terms beyond the reductive subjectivities of necropower, biopower, and the rendering of life against scales of humanity and whiteness. Indeed, Anderson suggests that animals played far more significant social and cosmological roles in indigenous life. Like Kim, Anderson sees the binary of animality deployed through settler conquest as a specific construction of Western ontology and political economy (Anderson 2004).

Many indigenous ways of knowing nonhumans explicitly required recognition of their agency. While Mi'kmaq scholar Margaret Robinson asserts that there is “no view on animals that is shared by all Aboriginal people,” she suggests that in Mi'kmaq tradition, the “view of the world is rooted in our relationship with the other-than-human animals that share our territories” (Robinson 2014, 672-673). She further extends the concept of personhood to nonhuman animals and argues that Mi'kmaq cosmology presents human and nonhuman life existing on a continuum, rather than in dichotomous relation in the logics of white supremacy and anthropocentrism. Reciprocity is articulated as an operational factor determining the relations between human and nonhumans, Robinson argues, and underpins traditional hunting practices in Mi'kmaq society. Notably, she elaborates this same principle in specific contexts in settler states to articulate a defense of indigenous veganism and opposition to commercial fishing, sport hunting, the fur industry, and farmed animal industries (Robinson 2013 and 2014).

Thus, for Robinson, there is a clear continuity between the work of animal liberation and indigenous sovereignty.

Using the optic of colonial subjectivity to understand animal relations in settler colonial contexts, as advanced by Belcourt, nonhuman agency becomes perceptible across colonial histories. Zoe Todd uses the human-fish relationships of northern Indigenous peoples to explore the dynamics of reciprocity and accountability in human and other-than-human relations in indigenous life (Todd 2014, 2015, 2016). Drawing from the legal orders of northern Indigenous societies, she illustrates how, through relationships of mutual duty that extend throughout the human and other-than-human world, “resistance to colonial dispossession is articulated and mobilized not only through human means, but also through the bones, bodies, and movement of fish” and other nonhumans (Todd 2016). Zahara and Hird, directly drawing from Belcourt’s analysis of animals as colonial subjects, show how both the Inuit peoples and the so-called “trash animals” (ravens and sled dogs) of Nunavut are assimilated and biopolitically managed populations (Zahara & Hird 2015).

The common thread in these understandings is that, however differentiated and complex, indigenous cosmologies of the nonhuman, other-than-human, or inhuman are not structured through patterns of dominance or subjugation, necropower or biopower, or hierarchies of ontological value. Rather, they constitute a field of human and nonhuman relations that collectively constitute the land. Reciprocity is a recurring theme in what Vanessa Watts refers to “Place-Thought”, which is “based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts” (Watts 2013, 21). Consequently, she identifies colonization as an attack on these indigenous cosmologies, relations, and societies in which “non-human beings are active members”, adding that “colonialism is operationalized through dismantling the essential categories of other societies” (Watts 2013, 23 & 31). Thus, settler colonialism operates to disrupt indigenous land-based relations, including non-hierarchical relationships with other-than-human life and respect for nonhuman agency.

In many ways, the story of settler colonization on Turtle Island is the story of animal agriculture and accumulation by dispossession. Karl Marx, in *Capital Volume I*, presents primitive accumulation as a historical impetus for the capital-relation: “nothing other than the process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of his own labour” (Marx 1990. 874-875). For Marx, this event was the dispossession of peasants from their land and the enclosures of the commons that occurred in England, beginning in the late 15th century, which simultaneously served to generate a proletarian class and privatized land base for production. Since the publication of *Capital*, Marxist theorists have refined and updated the concept of primitive accumulation to account for the unfolding economic and material realities of the times. Lenin, Luxemburg, and Harvey have argued that the accumulative impulse of capital is the driver of imperialism, colonialism, and the emergence of neoliberal policy in the last half-century (Lenin 2011, Luxemburg 2003, Harvey 2004). Thus, it does not suffice to relegate the dispossessing register of accumulation to a particular, historical, and static antecedent. The process of dispossession is as ongoing and central to capitalism as accumulation itself. Harvey suggests the terminology of “accumulation by dispossession” as a more contemporary and accurate descriptor of capitalist violence. Importantly, Harvey notes that the state acts as an interlocutor and arbiter in the development of capitalist accumulation and dispossession, reifying its biopolitical and disciplinary functions. Kropotkin similarly argued that state intervention and even the process of state formation is constitutive to the cycle dispossession and accumulation (Kropotkin 2014). Drawing on Proudhon’s analysis of property and the theft of the commons, Springer suggests that this logic of dispossession is essential to the production of state sovereignty and the civilizational discourse of colonialism (Proudhon 1876 and Springer 2013a, 2013b). Capitalism is as critical to the reproduction of state power as the state is to the generation and accumulation of capital.

In his book *Red Skin, White Masks*, Glen Coulthard reconfigures Marx’s original formulation of primitive accumulation to center the *ongoing dispossession of land and the destruction of land-based relations* as the principle feature of capitalism (Coulthard 2014). This contrasts with Marx and his interlocutors, who understand proletarianization—the violent divorce of the laborer from the means of production—as the primary feature of capital

accumulation. Explaining the breadth and impact of this reformulation, Coulthard elaborates that “it’s the theft not only of the material of land itself, but also a destruction of the social relationships that existed prior to capitalism violently sedimenting itself on indigenous territories. And those social relations are often not only based on principles of egalitarianism but also deep reciprocity between people and with the other-than-human world” (Epstein 2015).

This understanding is in sync with the material reality of colonization on Turtle Island. As suggested by Marx, the pretext for primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession was need for more land for the growing industry of animal agriculture: “The rapid expansion of wool manufacturing in Flanders and the corresponding rise in the price of wool in England provided the direct impulse for these evictions” (Marx 1990, 878-879). It is no surprise then that animal agriculture immediately tracked English settlers onto indigenous lands.

In her essential work, *Creatures of Empire*, Virginia Anderson provides an accounting of early English settlers’ use of animals and English animal agriculture to dispossess indigenous inhabitants of their land and to further colonial encroachment. Invoking the concept of *terra nullius*, settlers argued that indigenous peoples had not adequately conquered or “improved” the land through their own practices and *animal* agricultural systems, so the land itself remained a commons, a wilderness unclaimed but vulnerable to enclosure and settlement through dispossession. In order to elaborate *terra nullius* in English legal and economic terms, nonhuman animals, particularly cattle and pigs, were deployed throughout New England and the Chesapeake regions, effectively enclosing whatever land onto which the animals roamed. Nonhuman animals then, were enlisted as the initial colonizers to establish an economic relationship between the English and the land. They also acted as ambassadors in the civilizing project of early English settler colonialism—the domesticated animals symbolically representing civilization, capitalism, and labor. Dispossession and white settlement would follow. When these domesticated animals came into inevitable conflict with indigenous inhabitants on their ancestral lands, the English would invoke the animals’ legal status as chattel. Animals as capital served as material extensions of settler sovereignty. Any harm done to these animals by native

populations would constitute property destruction and could be a pretext for more violence and further conquest (2004).

In *Animal Oppression & Human Violence*, David Nibert similarly suggests that “the oppression of pigs and other animals was deeply entangled with the oppression of Native Americans” (Nibert 2013, 53). In addition to the virtually perpetual theft of land that accompanied European animal agriculture, Spanish and English nonhuman animals were vectors of new diseases and utilized in warfare in mass numbers against restive indigenous populations. The fecundity European domesticated animal populations allowed for rapid proliferation following initial colonization and dispossession, and subsequently, the eradication of indigenous crop supplies and subsistence base, leading to massive starvation. Through dispossession, starvation, disease, and military incursion, the invasion of European nonhuman animals furnished indigenous lands and peoples as more vulnerable to colonization, extraction, and capital accumulation, from the tip of what is now Patagonia to the Canadian Arctic (Nibert 2013).

Thus, in settler colonial formations, animals are both subjects and weapons, colonizers and colonized. As of 2015, over half all land (1.3 billion acres) in what is now the contiguous United States is used for livestock or feed production (Glaser et al 2015). For perspective, all indigenous reservation land in the United States only totals 56.2 million acres (BIA 2018). Animal enterprise on stolen land is operationalized towards dispossession and is a propellant of territorial expansion (Anderson 2004).

A SETTLER COLONIAL GAZE: ANIMAL ENTERPRISE ON A GLOBAL SCALE

As noted above, Morgensen argues that settler colonialism structures society on a global scale, beyond the physical borders of the settler state: “We must theorise settler colonialism as historical grounds for the globalisation of biopower” (Morgensen 2011, 73). If the production of animality as an ontological figure is central to the cast of settler colonization and white supremacy and the political economy of animal enterprise is central to the material dispossession and liquidation of land and accumulation of capital, then it should follow that

settler colonialism as a structure would reproduce animal enterprise on a mass global scale. This is precisely the case.

The *Agricultural Outlook*, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), assesses agricultural practices on a global scale. It uses commodity production and consumption patterns as metrics for agricultural production. One of those metrics is meat consumption per capita. The *Agricultural Outlook* notes that over the next ten years, both meat production and meat consumption rate are expected to increase on the global scale (OECD 2017). At the nation-specific scale, this effect is amplified in western capitalist, white supremacist and settler colonial nation-states. Included in the top ten consumers of meat in the world are the United States, Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, Israel, Brazil, Chile, Canada, European Union, New Zealand (OECD 2017). The consumptive patterns of the top ten constitute over 44% of all global meat consumption per capita. Notably, the only offender that is not a settler colonial state is the European Union, the member states of which clearly have violent legacies of colonization.

Similarly, the Lush Prize published *A Global View of Animal Experiments 2014* to assess the global status of animals in biomedical and scientific research. Much like the *Agricultural Outlook*, this paper indicates that the eight countries with the largest populations of animals used in research are all either European colonial powers or settler states like the United States, Australia, and Canada (LUSH 2014)

Thus, there seems a correlative link between the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, European empire building, global capitalism, and expansion of animal enterprise and animal consumption.

BETWEEN VEGANISM CAPITALISM AND FARM SANCTUARIES: ANIMAL ADVOCACY ON STOLEN LAND

Animal Rights, Recognition, Citizenship and Assimilation

Animal advocates take for granted a rights-based approach that seeks to assimilate nonhuman animals into the moral and political spheres of human relationships and social systems.

Donaldson and Kymlicka's *Zoopolis* (2011) perhaps represents the most sophisticated argument for political recognition of animals within state and legal structures. They draw from neoliberal citizenship theory to elaborate animals as full subjects of settler state sovereignty and present this possibility as the logical extension of animal activism (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011 and 2012). In Belcourt's words, "*Zoopolis* militarizes recognition as the hegemonic mode of animal activism" (2015, 6). Deploying Coulthard's critique of the colonial politics of recognition, Belcourt rejects this trend in animal advocacy "because it operates within—and consequently upholds—colonial infrastructures of settler citizenship and neoliberal subjecthood that re-orient animal bodies as the mundane surfaces on which settler colonialism is discursively reified" (2015, 6). In *Society Must be Defended*, Foucault argues that state power is contingent upon on a dynamic of continuously producing and exterminating alterity— the racialized and animalized "other" – the "ongoing and always incomplete cleansing of the social body... [that] structures social fields of action, guides political practices, and is realized through state apparatuses" (Lemke 2011, 43-44). The state itself produces external and internal threats as sites of heteropatriarchal, colonial, racialized, and anthropocentric violence as a function of sovereign biopower and necropower. Zahara and Hird argue that the state mobilizes this "colonial rhetoric of safety and security" against nonhumans using the same neoliberal governance and population management *dispositifs* exercised against indigenous peoples (2015, 183). Yet, for mainstream animal advocacy and scholarship, the state is understood to be a neutral actor and arbiter, so that in the case of animals, "the main source of injustice is exclusion from the political structure, not the coloniality of the structure itself; and so, recognition, not decolonization, is seen as being the remedy" (Kanji 2017, 73). Like Belcourt, Kanji argues that the assimilation of the animal into political and legal discourse will only reify the settler colonial biopolitics and necropolitics that render the animal the subject of death and erasure (2017). Jewish Arab scholar Esther Alloun cautions that in these contexts, "animal advocacy thereby follows the patterns set up by the settler colonial regime, with the type of advocacy on behalf of animals being shaped by the sides taken within the settler state (2017,

4). The work of critical trans scholar Dean Spade suggests that these multicultural and neoliberal politics of inclusion maintain power relations and population management through the operation of what he calls “administrative violence” (Spade 2015). Similarly, Kim has illustrated the limitations of neoliberalism and multiculturalism in the United States for addressing the intersections of structural racism and violence against animals. She argues that adherence to neoliberalism positions white settler animal advocates to profess colorblindness when engaging with race and indigeneity (2015).

Animal advocacy - vegan advocacy specifically – is increasingly presented as a mainstreaming social phenomenon. More and more food processing and agricultural conglomerates are acquiring vegan and plant-based food products and manufacturers. Plant-based protein has significantly increased its market share over the last several years and is projected to account for as much as 30% of the meat market by 2050 (LuxResearch 2014 and Cision 2017). Vegan food businesses are increasingly blurring with Silicon Valley technology firms and leveraging investment, finance, and venture capital from across the globe. Even those with highest influence in the system of global capital (e.g. Bill Gates) have generated economic support for growing vegan capitalism (Giammona 2017). In markets like Israel, Europe, and the United States, household names such as Domino’s, Pizza Hut, and McDonald’s are deploying vegan options on their menus (Zipkin 2017).

Superficially, these are cause for celebration among many animal advocates. They are interpreted as metrics for the efficacy of decades of fighting for animal rights and vegan education. Growth in vegan capitalism is not a metric for the lived experience and material reality of nonhuman animals, regardless of how heavily the movement leans on the trend to generate funds and deflect critical analysis. This is additionally challenging as animal advocacy organizations increasingly adopt the route of incorporation and assimilation into the nonprofit industrial complex (INCITE 2003 and Glasser 2015). Glasser notes the recent proliferation of the “corporate incorporation” model of animal advocacy in the United States—strategies of social change that rely on assimilation into corporate formations (professionalization) while working with capitalist animal enterprises and the state. Rather than challenging the material

underpinnings of animal exploitation, “moderate animal rights organization are neglecting, and even supporting the economic basis of nonhuman animal exploitation” (Glasser 2015, 369). Despite the cases made by large animal advocacy organizations that this type of animal and vegan advocacy has impacted meat consumption, Glasser establishes that prior fluctuations have more to do with market and environmental factors than any substantive impact from animal advocacy campaigns (2015). She concludes that the route of assimilation and professionalization is likely to support the structures of animal exploitation, rather than challenge them (2015).

In the North American context, Gelderloos argues that veganism has largely become a commodity fetish and is by nature ineffective at challenging the material conditions that generate animal enterprise (Gelderloos 2009). Given that a recent Faunalytics study concluded that there are five times as many former vegetarians and vegans as current ones (2014), it may be useful to extend Gelderloos’ analysis further. Clulely and Dunne (2012) argue that Marx’s analysis of commodity fetishism is insufficient to explain contemporary consumption patterns in global capitalism today. Commodity fetishism necessarily involves in the cognitive and spatial separation of the commodity and material relations of production (i.e. land theft, exploitation of labor, environmental degradation, animal harm), so that the commodity-form becomes the interlocutor of all social relations. Consumers are *ignorant* of the material relations of commodity production. Clulely and Dunne assert that ignorance of production is no longer what determines consumptive patterns. Instead, it is the recognition of the violence and exploitation involved, and the subsequent *performance of ignorance* to fulfill destructive desires. This is what they call *commodity narcissism*. They are clear that advocacy of ethical consumption and exposure of abhorrent practices involved in production are prerequisites for commodity narcissism to operationalize (Clulely and Dunne 2012). In the age of mainstream animal advocacy and vegan capitalism, commodity narcissism is a useful heuristic device to understand how and why *former vegans/vegetarians* are a more significant consumer population. Either way, it is apparent that vegan advocacy in this siloed formation can be mobilized to drive the accumulation of capital through destructive consumption patterns rather than challenging the material and economic dimensions of animal enterprise.

Such vegan advocacy work has been severed from the liberation of animals by the mechanisms of capital and colonization. Despite the professionalization of animal organizations and expanding market capitalization of plant-based foods, existing empirical data suggests the lot of nonhuman animals and other-than-human relations are likely to worsen as the apparatus of capital and empire continues its advance. In practice, the settler animal “rights” movement either implicitly or explicitly supports the sovereignty of the settler state, the hegemony of white supremacy and their *dispositifs* of power and knowledge, replicating the very technologies and structures that give rise to the domination of nonhuman animals (Robinson 2013 and 2014, Belcourt 2014, Wadiwel 2015).

Settler Animal Advocacy and the Maintenance of Empire

“It was the fervent hope of the friends of humanity that whenever the flag of the United States was planted, the dumb animals might share in the benefits of an advancing civilization.” - Alfred Wagstaff, President of the ASPCA, 1907 (Davis 2013, 565)

By primarily operating through an “optic of cruelty” (Kim 2015) or a neoliberal politics of state recognition, settler animal advocates run the risk of re-inscribing the state sovereignty on the body of nonhuman animals and indigenous peoples. A deeper interrogation into the history of animal advocacy shows that beyond shoring up support for vegan capitalism, animal activists have long been engaged in other harmful organizing and campaigns that reify colonial power. Erasing indigenous cosmologies, relations, and obligations concerning nonhuman beings, settler animal advocates have cast indigenous hunters “backwards” or “savage” and reproduce the logic of settler colonialism two-fold. First, by erasing indigenous ontology, epistemology, and cosmology, they are participating in the logic of elimination. Second, by characterizing the behavior of indigenous people as uncivilized, they are utilizing the logics of animalization and racialization that harm both people of color and nonhuman animals. Despite these concerns, these patterns of advocacy persist. My goal here is to reveal that pattern and its historical roots in empire building and the settler colonial project.

Western animal advocacy can be traced to the legislation of the first anti-cruelty laws in the United Kingdom and the United States and their respective colonial territories in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Deckha 2013 and Davis 2013). Maneesha Deckha's historical and legal analysis of anti-cruelty legislation reveals the imperial underpinnings of the legal framework in the context of the larger civilizational discourse. She argues that anti-cruelty statutes and common law interpretations have never been effective at preventing violence towards animals, yet they are effective at criminalizing marginalized and racialized populations within the scheme of empire building (Deckha 2013). Davis likewise implicates the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and other anti-cruelty societies for their role in the colonial expansion and nation building. Animal advocacy organizations were eager to legislate against cockfighting in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, a practice long-understood to be an expression of popular identity in contrast to Spanish bullfighting. This endeavor was swiftly taken up by occupying military forces, who believed cockfighting to be an aberrant and idle activity, the abolition of which would increase the productive labor of the colonized populations (Davis 2013). This may be one the earliest examples of the animal advocacy movement operating in the service of colonial subjugation and capital accumulation.

As both Deckha and Davis illustrate, the hegemony of state sovereignty and capitalism are excluded from questions of violence towards animals. The actual impact of legislation and its enforcement against colonized populations "indicate that the focus on animal cruelty was primarily about legitimating colonialism rather than addressing animal suffering in its multitude of forms" (Deckha 2013, 524). The legalizing framework of early animal advocacy provided pretext for a violent civilizational discourse, imperial ambitions, dispossession, and eliminating logic of state racism. Contrasted with the occupying settler state's massive structural and institutional violence against animals *and* its ability to enact, interpret, and transgress animal cruelty laws, this dynamic constitutes a *state of exception* that reifies the sovereign power of the settler state. In this scheme of ostensible civilizing progress, nonhuman animals, racialized populations, and indigenous populations are rendered as *bare life* (Agamben 1998) and the relationships of the land as *bare habitance* (Rifkin 2009), setting the stage for continued

accumulation by dispossession. This theoretical framework is repeated throughout the history of settler animal advocacy.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Exxon manufactured a conflict between animal advocates and the Chippewa of northern Wisconsin. The Chippewa had been organizing their community to defend against Exxon's mining interest since the 1970s, asserting that their treaty rights to hunt and fish preserved the land from industrial encroachment. However, Exxon diverted attention towards the Chippewa's traditional practice of spearfishing and was successful in getting animal rights activists to target the Chippewa while they desperately tried to defend their land. Unfortunately, attempts by the Chippewa to redirect animal and environmental activists' concern back towards industrial mining failed (Smith 1999).

Only a few years later, a similar struggle occurred off the shores of Neah Bay. Several well-known animal advocacy organizations, including Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS), mobilized to protest the resurgence of Makah whaling in the late 1990s. Critical here is the evidence that the Makah Nation were not united around the tribal government's position on whaling, or their political motivations, with many Makah elders opposing the whale hunt (Kim 2015). Instead of organizing a coalition political to support these elders and center indigenous perspectives and self-determination, activists allied with right-wing political figures (2015). Asserting that the issue had nothing to do with race, SSCS openly organized with Jack Metcalf, a conservative politician opposed to Makah whaling on specifically the grounds of dissolving treaty rights (2015). Other organizations simply leaned on colorblindness to ignore legacies of colonialism and questions of food access and sovereignty for indigenous populations.

More recent conflicts have emerged in Canada. The Harper administration attempted to leverage sympathy for Inuit communities in the north, conflating their sovereignty with the commercial seal hunt to shore support to lift the 2010 EU Commercial Seal Hunt Ban, despite this ban already making an exemption for Inuit hunters, which comprises only 3% of the market. Nevertheless, as argued by Powell (2014), animal advocates took the bait and engaged in organizing against the Inuit community while the Conservative administration used them both to further its agenda. When some Inuit activists responded with the "Sealfie" hashtag, posting images of seal fur use, seal hunts, and dead seals in attempt to show the possibility of

respect and reciprocity in traditional hunts, they received death threats from animal rights activists (Zahara and Hird 2015). Inuk activist Tanya Tagaq identified this settler demand for dietary assimilation in the context of poverty as a “mini version of colonialism” that effectively divorces indigenous people from specific means of subsistence adapted to a particular place (Tagaq 2014). As a consequence of this colonial incursion and threat to sovereignty, she suggests that high suicide rates in the Arctic and violence against indigenous women are connected to the history of settler attempts to stop traditional seal hunting (Tagaq 2014).

In 2012, the Haudenosaunee asserted their treaty right to a traditional deer hunt in Short Hills Provincial Park in southern Ontario. The Haudenosaunee deer hunt was legally granted by the Albany Deed of 1701, but made materially necessary through land theft and the loss of traditional agriculture. Hunting was one exercise of food sovereignty left (Powell 2013). Yet settler animal activists quickly took issue and organized a campaign to stop the hunt, which is ongoing as of this writing.

Animal advocacy’s maintenance of settler colonial relations operates through more than animal activist opposition to indigenous hunting. It also discursively erases native populations through settler moves to innocence.

A salient example is the “vegan-washing” of the Israeli colonization of Palestine (Kay 2014 and Alloun 2017). Vegan-washing is one of the more recent manifestations of the larger Brand Israel propaganda campaign. Brand Israel mobilizes the West’s latent colonial, racist, xenophobic, orientalist, and jingoist mentality to rebrand Israel as a politically progressive nation (White 2010). Specifically, it alleges that Israel is making strides in the arenas of feminism and LGBTQI advocacy (pink-washing) or environmental protection and climate policy (green-washing), in an effort to undermine and stifle the momentum of the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign (White 2010, Spade et al 2017). Brand Israel is a correlative expression of what Tuck and Yang identify as “settler moves to innocence”, which are,

“those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all.

[...] Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler.” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 10)

According to Alloun, the trappings of innocence are self-evident in the Zionist context: “Jewish activists foreground animal rights as a politics-free utopia where activists can think and act as if racism, (hetero)sexism and settler colonialism do not exist. The ‘beauty’ of animal rights is being used to obscure the violence of politics and of the Israeli settler state (2017, 11). Brand Israel recasts settlers as deserving and capable and Palestinians as undeserving and unable. By associating Israel with pillars of the western liberal gaze (i.e. LGBTQ advocacy, ecological sustainability, gender equality), the aim is to divorce settlers from notions of colonization and violence, replacing them with notions of progress, development, and virtue - *civilization*. In the process, settlers become married to their own destiny and righteousness while furthering the structural and material violence of settlement, occupation, and eradication. So, rather than securing meaningful justice for marginalized and oppressed populations, including nonhuman animals, rebranding through vegan-washing only secures the future of the settler state.

The Brand Israel campaign is securing that future by leveraging animal advocacy. Co-opting Israel's radical past of anti-colonial animal liberation activism and assimilating it into the body of the nation-state, Israeli institutions and political figures, including the Israeli Defense Forces and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are working to soften their image as brutal occupiers by pointing to purported advances being made for animals in Israel (Shalif 2009, Ravid 2013, and Alloun 2017). These dubious claims include an allegedly high vegan population, vegan accessories in the Israel Defense Forces, vegan options in corporate chains like Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut and cities like Tel Aviv becoming global tourist capitals for vegan cuisine (Strauss 2016, Abunimah 2012c, Cohen 2015, The Vegan Woman 2015, and Kashmin 2015). Nowhere is it mentioned that Israel's occupation is responsible for mass animal death through militarization, massive livestock production, pollution and industrial waste, and destruction of the land and life as a strategy of war and settler colonization (Ali 2015, World Bank 2017a, Sabawi 2011, & Lorber 2012). Israel's annual carbon dioxide emissions are 14.7 times higher than Gaza and the West Bank combined (World Bank 2017b). Israel has by far the highest meat

consumption per capita of any country in the region (Powell 2015). Israel has some of the highest meat consumption per capita in the world (OECD/FAO 2017). Some haven for animals indeed.

The last example I will explore is a form of animal advocacy that functions both discursively as a settler move to innocence and materially as dispossession through the logic of *terra nullius*. Donaldson and Kymlicka suggest farmed animal sanctuaries (FAS) are central to the animal advocacy movement in North America: “The animal sanctuary movement is rapidly expanding and represents an important dimension of activist response to human violence against non-human animals” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015, 50). FASes, they assert, shape the profile of the animal advocacy movement as a whole and *prefigure* alternative modes of human-animal relations.

While still small, FASes have proliferated since the 1980s, when Farm Sanctuary opened in New York (2015). Now there are over 50 similar models operating in North America. While the work they do is important for the rescued animals, Donaldson and Kymlicka believe that that the model is limited by its refugee-advocacy framing and is reduced to paternalizing the animals under care (2015). While not overtly drawing the connection, they suggest that FASes operate as disciplinary institutions, such as psychiatric hospitals or residential care facilities for the elderly (2015).

For these reasons, they argue that the FAS model does not sufficiently respect the animal inhabitants’ agency and range of wants and needs. They propose an alternative model that rests on their conception of animal agency, community, and citizenship. The pillars of this model are: *belonging, absence of fixed hierarchical relationships, self-determination, citizenship, dependent agency, scaffolded choices and reconfigured spaces* (2015). It is this last point that I wish to focus on. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that unfettered space—land—is essential for animals to realize their agency. They suggest that by blurring the boundaries between the domestic animals’ space and the land relations surrounding sanctuaries, the animals can more fully enact their agency and sense of place (2015).

Substantively, this framework is eerily similar to the rationale of early English settlers who deployed their domestic animals onto indigenous lands to tease out the relationship between animality, wilderness, domestication, indigeneity, and civilization. Domestic animals on the land served a role in the civilizing project and evidence of *terra nullius*. Donaldson and Kymlicka suggest that farmed animal sanctuaries and intentional communities prefigure their *Zoopolis*, and the notions of citizenship in these communities still rely on neoliberal frameworks. Land is also central to the continued proliferation of FASes, but enclosure and privatization seems already assumed. Domestic animals continue to transform and re-empty land through their becoming citizen. For these reasons, it seems that the current FAS movement and the alternative suggested by Donaldson and Kymlicka foreclose the possibility of a decolonized future for human-animal relations and take for granted settler/animal futurity on indigenous lands. We can acknowledge alternative models of refuge for nonhumans that better prefigure decolonization of land and animality, while at the same time rejecting the framework upon which the current trend of FASes rests. It is rendered tangible and operationalized only through the ongoing functions of settler colonial relations.

ANIMAL LIBERATION AND THE “STRATEGIC CENTRALITY” OF SETTLER COLONIALISM

I turn finally to the question of organizing alternative models for animal liberation that situate the movement in a settler colonial context. Often the most visible and powerful manifestations of the animal advocacy movement in North America lack attention to the deeply transformative possibilities of seating animal liberation organizing in the framework of anti-colonial and anti-capitalist praxis. The critical work of animal advocates of color, food justice activists, and vegans of color is overlooked, erased, or appropriated by the settler animal advocacy movement at large (Harper 2013, Robinson & Corman 2016, and Ko & Ko 2017). Organizations such as Black Vegans Rock, Food Empowerment Project, and Coalition of Vegan Activists of Color have long been engaging the relationship between white supremacy, colonization, veganism, and animal advocacy. Yet material resources are accumulated and consolidated into vastly larger organizations unwilling to address critical questions of race, gender, and power (Animal Charity

Evaluators 2017). Radical or anarchist animal liberation groups may purportedly reject capitalism and profess “intersectionality” as their modality of animal advocacy, but they struggled to make progress in appropriately identifying and challenging capitalism, colonialism and white supremacy as an intrinsic praxis of the movement (Harper & Ornelas 2013, Jones 2013, Harper 2015).

First, it is necessary to distinguish decolonization from intersectionality. Patricia Hill Collins suggests that the term intersectionality is confronted with existential anxiety. It is simultaneously operating in discourse and praxis as “as a field of study that is situated within the power relations that it studies; (b) [...] an analytical strategy that provides new angles of vision on social phenomena; and (c) [...] as critical praxis that informs social justice projects” (Collins 2015, 3). So, although intersectionality emerged as an analytical tool for thinking about the production of power, knowledge, and ontological relationships, it is also recognized as a strategy for social movement organizing. While there are challenges in defining the scope of intersectional analysis, broadly “intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities” (Collins 2015, 2).

Harper (2013) and Jones (2013) suggest that the white settler animal advocacy movement as a whole tends to *perform* intersectionality, if acknowledging its existence at all. Harper further argues that as white-led animal activism assimilates intersectional discourse in a reductive manner to further its animal-centric optic, this performance is tantamount to tokenization (Harper and Ornelas 2013). Belcourt points out that this ethic of “total liberation” renders distinct experiences of oppression as commensurable (2015). This dynamic tends to draw analogies across lived experiences, focusing on sameness rather than difference and eliding the social positionality of the players, to express the specific oppression of nonhuman animals in distinctly human, racial, and gendered terms. As Kim argues, the analogy model relies on the passive omission of ongoing specificity, singularity, and lived realities of racialization, colonization, or gendered and sexual violence (2015). It also forecloses the

subjective experience of animality on its own terms, erasing the singular role of animality and animal enterprise in white supremacy and the settler colonial project.

Considering these current “definitional dilemmas” of intersectionality (Collins 2015), it is important to assess decolonization on its own terms. In *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*, Tuck and Yang assert that when they “write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression” (Tuck and Yang 2012, 3). Decolonization is unsettling and challenges the *differences* between settlers and the native population. In practice in white animal advocacy communities, intersectionality then risks becoming a “move to innocence” and “colonial equivocation” that does not attend to singularity of settler colonial relations and or the indigenous repatriation of land and life that is the teleological *raison d'être* of decolonization (2012). Belcourt argues that intersectionality “stabilizes the settler identity” while decolonization “cannot exist within these fleshy and architectural spaces of whiteness through which Indigenous politico-economic structures are anachronized and the totality of decolonization is rendered unimaginable” (2015, 2-3). Thus, an intersectional framework for animal liberation organizing is not only insufficient to address settler colonial power, it has the potential to reify that power and reproduce the violence of animality that constitutes it.

Instead, I adopt the use of “strategic centrality,” as suggested by Olson (2009) and expanded upon by Lewis (2015 and 2017), as a framework for animal liberation organizing that centers anti-colonial solidarity. Olson argues that anarchist and anti-capitalist movements need to develop focus on anti-racist organizing and solidarity. Anarchism in the United States “must overcome an analysis of white supremacy that understands racism as but one ‘hierarchy’ among others. Racial oppression is not simply one of many forms of domination; it has played a central role in the development of capitalism in the United States” (Olson 2009). Consequently, for anarchists, struggle against racial domination is characterized by a “strategic centrality” to the power of the state and capital (2009). Lewis extends Olson’s concept further and argues that all settler movements, especially anarchist movements, in settler colonial contexts need to attend to settler colonialism, indigenous dispossession, white supremacy and its regime of capital in order to sufficiently challenge the structures of domination in those contexts— “there

can be no resistance on stolen land without resistance to settler colonialism” (Lewis 2017, 479). Lewis moves the strategic center for anarchist resistance from white supremacy broadly to settler colonialism specifically. Lewis further argues that the anarchist concept of *prefiguration*, or “infrastructures of resistance,” need to be reconfigured on indigenous terms. Solidarity for anarchist settlers should then defer to indigenous political systems and laws, as indigenous resurgence is inherently prefigurative and a potentially fertile site of meaningful engagement for other social movements (2017).

As argued above, the structure of animality and political economy of animal enterprise are co-constitutive of the structures of settler colonization, white supremacy and capital accumulation. White supremacy, whiteness and racialization were critical to the formation of animality and nonhuman necropolitics. Dispossession, accumulation, land theft, and colonization utilized animal bodies as both subjects and objects of settler colonial power. Settler colonialism has propelled animal enterprise into unprecedented levels of accumulation. While intersectional animal advocacy justifiable and necessarily attends to the complex taxonomies of power, knowledge, structural violence, oppression and domination, it is insufficient to challenge the structures of biopower and necropower in settler colonial contexts. In these contexts, animal liberation organizing must strategically center resistance to settler colonialism and the settler state, indigenous decolonization and repatriation, and solidarity with indigenous resurgence and land defense. There can be no animal liberation on stolen land without resistance to the settler colonial formation. Settler colonialism must be the context for all further engagement and organizing.

While this framing is rarely, if ever, explicitly articulated, it can be elucidated by turning to several recent examples of work in the animal liberation community.

The controversy of the Haudenosaunee traditional deer hunt became an active site of engagements for settlers to reinforce colonial relations through protest against the Haudenosaunee. However, the decision also generated indigenous solidarity organizing to support the hunters and their safety. Some of the settler groups most vocally supportive of indigenous sovereignty were animal activists. Both Niagara Animal Defense League (NADL) and

Hamilton Animal Liberation Team (HALT) issued statements of solidarity and identified that indigenous resurgence presents a critical challenge to global capitalism, resource extraction, and structural harm to animals (Niagara 2013, Powell 2013, Legge and Taha 2017). These animal advocates did physical support for the Haudenosaunee hunters on the ground. Their solidarity originated from an understanding of the centrality of the settler colonial experience to all other forms of advocacy on stolen land. Several organizers in the area have specifically organized around indigenous solidarity and animal liberation – writing articles, organizing panels, and giving presentations in addition to showing up at Short Hills (Powell 2014, Lavallie 2016, Legge and Taha 2017).

Nearby, Marineland Animal Defense (MAD), a campaign that emerged out of Niagara Animal Defense League, was organizing a long-term pressure campaign against Marineland, a captive animal park near St. Catherine's, Ontario. Given NADL's political position on settler colonialism and indigenous solidarity, it is not surprising that MAD also engaged in indigenous solidarity work, such as organizing protests in opposition to Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline, specifically to assert solidarity with indigenous land defense and its relation to animality (Bodimeade 2014).

In 2014, Wildlife Defence League (WDL), a Vancouver, BC-based anti-hunting animal liberation group, was extended an invitation by the Klabona Keepers of the Tahltan Nation to help defend their territory from settler trophy hunters (Zig Zag 2014). WDL membership at the time was entirely vegan. Part of the reasoning for blockading trophy hunters was so that the Tahltan could maintain their traditional hunting practices without interference from settlers and the state. Understanding the strategic centrality of settler colonialism to ecological devastation and animal exploitation and suffering, WDL campaigners were able to focus on indigenous solidarity on the terms of the Tahltan and Klabona Keepers (Knowles 2014). WDL continued to devote capacity to indigenous solidarity and resurgence, and in 2015, assisted in the Madii Lii blockade on the unceded territory of the Luutkudziwus People of the Gitksan Nation. The blockade was carried out to resist pipeline development on their territory (Burning Hearts Media 2016).

Food Empowerment Project (FEP) is a vegan food justice organization that centers the experiences of people of color, low-income communities, and farm workers in the struggle to advance healthier and less harmful food choices:

Food Empowerment Project is a vegan organization founded by a woman of color. Our values include a stance against racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, and body shaming. That is not to say we have never made mistakes or we never will, but we do our best to learn and listen to those impacted to make any necessary changes.

These values also include supporting a variety of causes, such as boycotts called by farm workers and other impacted community members, as well as supporting and amplifying the voices of those in communities of color, women impacted by sexism or harassment and bullying in the animal movement, and those who speak out against violence to human or non-human animals.(Food Empowerment Project 2018)

Focusing on food access and the struggle of agricultural workers and migrant laborers, FEP is able to reveal the underlying dynamics of capitalism and colonization that pattern food systems on stolen land. FEP goes beyond merely advocating the adoption of a vegan diet through the racialized rhetoric of civilization, compassion, and moral progress. Rather, the organization's food justice work shares its genealogy with anti-colonial struggle and resistance to white supremacy, challenging industrial animal agriculture, agricultural labor exploitation and precarity, lack of access to healthy foods, and poverty as exhibitions of colonization and state racism (Alvarez n.d.)

In the discursive realm, organizations like Resistance Ecology and No New Animal Lab used their analytic platforms to support indigenous solidarity and identify settler colonialism as the context of animal use on stolen land. The Resistance Ecology Conference was organized for three years from 2013 and 2015 and centered speakers with a thematic focus on indigenous resurgence, land defense, and anti-colonial solidarity:

“Heteropatriarchy, the accumulation of capital, settler colonialism, land theft, anti-black racism, xenophobia, Zionism, border militarization, prison industrialism – these specific oppressions and

structures of power are given pass or even flourish because the underlying framing of animal advocacy that is presented by the dominant nonprofit organizations assumes they are animal-neutral. They are not. The oppression of nonhuman animals – through their displacement from the land, their captivity, exploitation of their bodies and labor, mass slaughter, and commodification – is a constitutive feature of this power. So, what is our response? How do we organize a movement that effectively challenges an exhaustive and totalizing power while simultaneously affecting substantive gains for animals?” (Resistance Ecology 2016).

Amanda Lickers and Victor Puertas, two indigenous organizers with Reclaim Turtle Island, were given central platform at Resistance Ecology in 2015. They reframed the question of animal liberation around politics of decolonization, anti-racism, and the fight for food sovereignty. They highlight specifically the obligations to nonhumans that indigenous cosmologies necessitate (Lickers and Puertas 2015).

No New Animal Lab emerged as campaign in late 2014 to stop the construction of new animal research facility at the University of Washington. While the campaign’s primary activities involved a pressure campaign against Skanska, a Swedish construction firm contracted to build the lab, the organizers also were careful to direct capacity towards solidarity and coalition building, specifically indigenous solidarity and land defense (It’s Going Down 2016). Through coalition work, including with indigenous groups such as Reclaim Turtle Island, Red Warrior Society, and Imperial No More, throughout the length of the campaign, No New Animal Lab organized and participated in solidarity actions against mining and pipeline companies, and their executives, that threatened native land and life (No New Animal Lab Facebook page). No New Animal Lab asserts that campaign was a vehicle for building a new animal liberation movement, “building something real, something that actually challenges animal enterprises as manifestations of a long history of land theft and occupation, settler colonialism, and brutal capitalist exploitation” (No New Animal Lab 2016). That is the spirit of an anti-colonial praxis of animal liberation.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued why radical animal liberation advocates should attend to the specific structure of settler colonialism and its generative context on stolen land. White supremacy and settler colonialism render the nonhuman animal visible and perceptible, and thus exploitable, to settlers and industry through the co-constituting logics of elimination, racialization, and animalization. Instrumentalized in the process of accumulation by dispossession, nonhuman animals are critically engaged as vectors of settler colonization and sites of colonial subjectivity. Animal enterprise is made material on stolen land through conquest and profitable through the rapid capital accumulation of the settler state. As established by Anderson, Belcourt, Kanji, Alloun, Gossett, Powell and others, settler colonialism and white supremacy are always already anthropocentric, animal use industries are vital to the operation of dispossession and colonization, and settler colonialism is the central structure in the maintenance of animal enterprise on stolen land.

I then argued that although animal enterprise figures necessarily into the narratives of colonization, resistance to animal enterprise is not itself anti-colonial or supportive of indigenous sovereignty. Most forms of animal advocacy potentially reify the process of colonization by operating from a single-optic analysis of animal cruelty and rights, while failing to define the settler colonial roots of animal exploitation in the context of stolen lands. Furthermore, I set out to challenge “intersectional” animal advocacy as laudable but insufficient for addressing the irreducible and incommensurate profile of white supremacy and settler colonialism. I followed this critique with examples of solidarity organizing and movement-generated analysis that trace the contours of what an anti-colonial and indigenous resurgence-centered praxis of animal liberation might look like.

Settler animal liberation advocates, activists, and organizers need to identify the settler colonial roots of animal enterprise on stolen land, and the centrality of indigenous dispossession and white supremacy to the operations of animality and animal exploitation and harm. But naming the power is not enough. Alloun asserts that “human–animal relationships constitute one more dimension in which settler colonialism is expressed, engaged with, but also *resisted*” (Alloun 2017, 3, emphasis added). Settler animal activists need to meaningfully engage with indigenous solidarity while deferring the nature and scope to indigenous title,

sovereignty, and political process. Settler animal activists need to reconfigure their understandings of nonhuman life, ontology and cosmology, the political economy of animal enterprise, and the movement dynamics of animal advocacy to *prefigure indigenous resurgence as a site of critical animal liberation praxis*.

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