"Empowering Indigenous Self-Determination In-Against-and-Beyond Capitalism: A Theory of Dual Dispossession"

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Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 6

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................................. 7

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 8
  Problem ........................................................................................................................................... 8
  Developing the Concept of Dual Dispossession ................................................................................. 9
  Key Arguments .................................................................................................................................. 15
  Methodological Considerations ......................................................................................................... 22
  Main Contributions ............................................................................................................................... 24

Positionality as Method ........................................................................................................................... 28
  Aandisokaman and Dibaajimowinan ................................................................................................. 30
  Anishinaabe-wiinzowinan ..................................................................................................................... 32
  Creation-Destruction-Re-creation ........................................................................................................ 34
  Zhaashkoonh ...................................................................................................................................... 36

“Here’s an Old Indian Trick I learned from a White Man”- Marxian Dialectics and Totality:

Thickening Relationality ........................................................................................................................ 37
  Lowered into the Commodity Form ...................................................................................................... 37
  Determination .................................................................................................................................... 39
  Relations of Production ....................................................................................................................... 39
  Capitalism as an Organic System ......................................................................................................... 44
  System of Social Metabolic Control .................................................................................................... 47
  Organizational Forms of the Land Back Movement: Vantage Point on Totality .................................. 50
  History of Indigenous Grassroots Activism .......................................................................................... 52

Organization of the Dissertation ............................................................................................................ 53

Chapter 1: Dual Dispossession: Opening up the Tendencies within the Contemporary
Indigenous Struggle ............................................................................................................................. 56

Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 56

Historical Context of the Concept of Dual Dispossession .................................................................... 57

The Concept of Dual Dispossession ....................................................................................................... 63
  Defenders of the Land and the Wet’suwet’en Uprising .................................................................... 66
  The Practical Basis of Dual Dispossession ............................................................................................ 71
  Mute Compulsion of Economic Relations ........................................................................................... 72
  The Non-Identity Between Capitalist Separation and Colonial Dispossession .................................... 76
  Indigenous Proletarianization .............................................................................................................. 78
  The Inseparability of Colonial and Capitalist Social Relations ............................................................. 85
  Dual Dispossession is a Concept of Struggle, Not Domination ............................................................. 88
  Identifying Broader Tendencies within the Movement through the Concept of Dual Dispossession ........ 89

Chapter Two: Tendencies within the Red Power Movement ............................................................... 91

Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 91

The Kenora March of 1965 ..................................................................................................................... 95
  Malcom Norris: The Necessity of Direct Action and the Critique of Cooptation ................................. 98
  Self-Transformation through the Practice of Struggle ....................................................................... 102
  Fred Kelly’s Transformation: From Integration to Red Power and National Self-Determination .......... 104
Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) ................................................................. 113
Beothuk Patrol ......................................................................................................... 116
Self-Transformation and Ideological Reassessment .............................................. 120
Marxism and Indigenous Philosophy ..................................................................... 127

The Native People’s Caravan ................................................................................. 132
Learning and Self-transformation .......................................................................... 136
The Politicization of Indigenous Pride ................................................................... 138
A Vehicle for Political Education ......................................................................... 141
The Organization of a Political Mediation ............................................................. 145

Developing Indigenous Self-Determination through Struggle: The Work of Howard Adams ........................................................................... 147
Black Power and Political Consciousness ............................................................. 147
Political Mentors: Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady .............................................. 147
Political Practice .................................................................................................. 150
Radical Nationalism .............................................................................................. 151
Self-Liberation or Protagonism ............................................................................ 154
Class Struggle as the Concrete Development of Indigenous Nationalism ........... 156

Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 159

Chapter Three: The Historical Ground of Indigenous Resurgence ..................... 163

Introduction ........................................................................................................... 163

Radical Reformism ................................................................................................. 166
George Manuel ...................................................................................................... 167
Peoples’ Movement ............................................................................................... 168
‘Fourth World’ Internationalism ............................................................................ 170
The Dene Struggle of the Mid-1970s ................................................................. 171

The Defeat and Decline of the Red Power Movement .......................................... 175
First Major Structural Reform of Colonial Strategy ........................................... 176
Second Major Restructuring of Colonial Strategy ............................................. 178
Resurgence in Radicalism .................................................................................... 179
RCMP and FBI Infiltration .................................................................................. 183

The Chilliwack Decision ...................................................................................... 188
Militant May (1975) .............................................................................................. 190
The Transformative Power of Refusal .................................................................. 191
The Problem of Sustaining Political Mediations based on Rejection .................. 193
The (Re)Turn to Nation-Centric Politics ............................................................. 196

Neocolonialism ..................................................................................................... 198
Cultural Nationalism and the Constitutional Strategy .......................................... 201

The Historical Basis of Indigenous Resurgence .................................................... 205
Fallout from the Stalemate of the 1980s ............................................................... 206
State Mediation .................................................................................................... 209
Warrior Societies .................................................................................................. 211

Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 214

Chapter Four: Indigenous Resurgence: Revitalizing and Enhancing Historic Tendencies ….. 217

Introduction ........................................................................................................... 217

The Origins of the Theory ...................................................................................... 222
Turning Inward ............................................................................. 244
Colonial Shame and Resurgence ..................................................... 246
Resurgence and Activism ................................................................. 248
Everyday Acts of Resurgence .......................................................... 249
Ellen Gabriel and the Rejection of Colonial Heteropatriarchy .......... 251

The Colonial Politics of Recognition ............................................. 254
The Dene Struggle for Recognition .................................................. 256
Theoretical Developments on the Basis of the Dene Struggle ...... 257
Structural Parameters of the Colonial Politics of Recognition ...... 258
Generalization of Dene Experience to the Colonial Politics of Recognition 261
Internalization and Identification: The Colonized Subject ............ 262
The Politics of Recognition as a Practice of Colonial Subject Formation 265
The Subject Formation of Resurgence ............................................. 270
Against the Political Instrumentalization of Indigenous Culture ...... 271
Grounded Normativity ................................................................. 280
Idle No More ............................................................................. 285
Turning Away ............................................................................ 289

Refusal ...................................................................................... 290
Internal Contradictions ................................................................. 291
Beyond the Contradictions of the Band Form of the Nation .......... 295
Generative Refusal ..................................................................... 296
Reconciliation and Radical Resurgence ......................................... 297
Settler Colonialism as Strangulated Grounded Normativity .......... 300
Shifting Back from the Colonial Relation to the Capital Relation .... 302
Coalitional Politics ..................................................................... 305
Place-Based is not Land-Based ..................................................... 306
‘Flight’ ..................................................................................... 309
Collectives ............................................................................... 311

Conclusion .................................................................................. 312

Chapter Five: Indigenous Resurgence, Critical Mediations, and the Land Back Movement ...................... 315

Introduction ............................................................................... 315
The ‘Land Back’ Movement ........................................................ 319
The Land Back Movement: The Historical Ground of the Concept of Dual Dispossession 323

Indigenous Critical Infrastructure and the Blockade .................... 324
Unist’ot’en Healing and Cultural Centre ....................................... 324
The Tiny House Warriors ............................................................. 327
The Standing Rock Movement ...................................................... 328

‘Full Time’ Water Protection and Land Defence? ...................... 331
Returning to the Land .................................................................................................................. 332

Organized Mitigation: The Infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection ............. 335
  Money and Goods ................................................................................................................... 336
  The Redistribution of Labour ............................................................................................. 344
  Sites of Radical Resurgence ............................................................................................... 345
  The Need for Self-Defence ................................................................................................. 349
  Organized Mitigation .......................................................................................................... 351
  Intensifying External Threat and the Effective Enforcement of Indigenous Law .......... 354

Activating the Social Power of the Land Back Movement: The Wet’suwet’en Uprising .... 357
  Defenders of the Land .......................................................................................................... 358
  General Coercive Power ..................................................................................................... 363
  Implications of General Coercive Power .......................................................................... 366

Presupposition of Circuits of Wage-Labour & Capital ...................................................... 368
  Circuit of Capital .................................................................................................................. 368
  Circuit of Wage-labour ........................................................................................................ 372
  Displacing the Circuits ........................................................................................................ 374
  The Infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection is a Non-Organic System ...... 375
  Externalizing Exploitation ................................................................................................... 377
  Dual Dispossession and the Network of Solidarity ............................................................ 381

Mediations as Socially Embedded Autonomy and their Implications ............................ 384

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 394

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 398

Bibliography ......................................................................................................................... 412
Abstract

This dissertation develops a theory of dual dispossession to identify the way in which the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp, sustain the frontlines of Water Protection and Land Defence and to demonstrate the internal relation between Marxist analysis and politics to Indigenous resurgence. By maintaining the practical inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations and thus their co-determination of Indigenous subjectivity, the analysis reveals that the frontlines of anticolonial struggle are sustained by an infrastructure of redistribution, whereby labour, money and goods are secured. As a mediation, this infrastructure functions to mitigate the mute compulsion of economic relations, which compel all those deprived of the means of production to sell their labour power to the owners of those means in order to secure the means of life. By maintaining full-time Water Protection and Land Defence, the infrastructure facilitates a semi-autonomous social practice that is determined by the principles and protocols of Indigenous culture, values, governance, and law to a larger degree and therefore constitutes the objective basis for the rejection of the colonial politics of recognition in practice. For this reason, it is not constrained by the settler state’s terms of colonial reform and allows for the enforcement of Indigenous law in face of colonial capitalist encroachment. However, the application of dual dispossession to the organizational forms of the Land Back movement also reveals that the infrastructure of redistribution is a mediated form of the social relations of capitalist production given that it does not eliminate but minimizes the determination of exploitation upon the activity of those on the frontlines and provides access to the means of struggle, which nonetheless remain the social product of capital. As such, the infrastructure does not transcend but only displaces the circuit of capital and the immediate compulsions of wage-labour as a condition of sustaining the frontlines lines of anticolonial struggle. This implies that class struggle oriented by Marxist analysis is a critical social condition for the concrete development of Indigenous self-determination beyond the colonial politics of recognition and its potential exercise in non-capitalist form. Moreover, the analysis of dual dispossession is further developed by an historical argument that identifies the organizational forms of the Land Back movement as institutionalizing certain tendencies that have evolved throughout the broader Indigenous movement since the 1960s, above all during the Red Power movement and those later theorized as Indigenous resurgence in the post 1990 Siege of Kanhsatà:ke era. Through historical reconstruction, I identify two major tendencies: Indigenous subjective transformation through grassroots self-activity, self-organization, and direct action, and the critique of co-optation and the strategic effort to protect, sustain and develop the autonomy of the movement against the reductive margin of action granted by state dependence. Dual dispossession, I argue, is a theoretical intervention at the intersections of critical Indigenous Studies and political economy scholarship that enables the concrete development and enhancement of these tendencies by foregrounding the way they are practically synthesized and institutionalized in the organizational forms of the Land Back movement.
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Introduction

Problem

This dissertation is an effort to transcend a structural impasse in the relation between Indigenous and settler society with regard to the form and constraints imposed upon Indigenous self-determination. Symptoms of this impasse include the structural violation of the treaties, the subjection of First Nations and political organizations to systematic and perennial austerity, the exclusive realization of constitutionally recognized rights through their unity with capitalist development, the consistent necessity of extra-parliamentary politics and direct action over the last half century, the invasion of Indigenous lands, including the use of unaccountable and militarized police forces, in the era of reconciliation, the political outcry of ‘Every Child Matters,’ and, above all, the phenomenon of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S+), a genocidal reality rendered perversely banal in the daily social practice of settler colonialism. In response, there have been significant political calls by scholars of Indigenous resurgence1 and activists, such as Kanahus Manuel and Freda Huson, to ‘reject’ and ‘turn away’ from the politics of colonial reform (Coulthard 2014), ‘refuse’ state recognition (Simpson 2014), and engage in a project of ‘radical resurgence’ (Simpson 2017). However, while critical Indigenous Studies has been deeply insightful about the structural impasse of colonial reform and the development of Indigenous subjectivity, especially regarding knowledge, law, and governance, it has remained virtually silent on the

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1 Indigenous resurgence can be generally characterized as the theoretical valorization and practical development of the plurality and diversity of Indigenous cultures, knowledge, institutions, governance, laws, values, spirituality, traditional productive activities, etc., as the basis of Indigenous national development and decolonial liberation.
objective conditions of rejection, refusal, and radical resurgence. In other words, it has neglected the question of the objective conditions of self-determination. This is most apparent in the fact that Indigenous scholarship and activist knowledge production have not provided any analysis about the reality and implications of money, commodities, and wage-labour for both Indigenous resurgence and the organization of struggle, despite continuing to depend on them in practice. Although not perplexing given the opacity of these social forms, this lack of attention amounts to the depoliticization of decisive social relations in the exercise of Indigenous self-determination. When applying a Marxist analysis to this aspect of the movement, it turns out these practices presuppose social relations that structurally constrain both Indigenous self-determination in general and the efforts to organize and exercise it on a radically autonomous basis. However, as I will argue, there is already a tendency in practice within the Land Back movement towards this analysis and its political implications. In order to identify and enhance this tendency, I have developed the concept of dual dispossession, which is the core theoretical contribution of this dissertation.

**Developing the Concept of Dual Dispossession**

Within my intellectual and self-development, the concept of dual dispossession emerged from the insights I gathered from three fundamental experiences that are essentially related. The first pertains to my experience of trapping and researching the issues and conflicts associated with it in my community, the Red Rock Indian Band. Through these practices I came to realize that the inherent right of Anishinaabe self-determination is practically subordinated to a stakeholder position from which the nation, fractured in the form of bands, must negotiate the precarity of its treaty rights within a constant barrage of capitalist interests, both internal and
external to the community. I also came to realize that Indigenous land-based practices are market-dependent and thereby also subject to the determinations, imperatives, and volatility of capital. Despite these constraints, I witnessed the significance of Anishinaabe presence on the land as a political practice of governance while also realizing that attempting to halt any significant industrial or infrastructural projects despite their destructive consequences for the continued exercise of this governance is virtually insurmountable and seemingly futile if those affected are not organized from below and in a semi-autonomous manner.

The second experience relates to my great aunt. In the late 1990s, she was working for a federally funded Native non-profit organization in Thunder Bay, ON, which provides Indigenous Peoples in the vast region of northern Ontario with invaluable hospitality and translation services. When the organization began to lay off its employees without any accountability for the funds it was receiving, she and some of the other staff members began organizing as a group to protect their jobs and, as a result, were fired. In response, she continued the long and arduous process of unionization, touring the eastern part of the country and giving speeches in order to secure the jobs of people who performed what they argued was an essential service. They were ultimately successful.

To me, this biographical story demonstrated the intrinsic relationship between Indigenous culture, care work and class struggle. It showed me the relation between Indigenous language and the material and social conditions of its practical currency, particularly insofar as this concerns proper access to healthcare. Most significantly, it showed me that the broader struggle for Indigenous self-determination and land could not be reduced to macro-political concerns, such as sovereignty and jurisdictional authority, but that the politics of decolonization
has to extend to the level of social reproduction more broadly and the depth to which capitalist relations structure the conditions of social life beyond the realm of formal political and legal power.

The third significant experience that motivated me to develop the concept of dual dispossession was my participation in a series of demonstrations in Ottawa supporting the Wet’suwet’en solidarity struggle in early 2020, or what became known as Shut Down Canada. During this period, I felt a jolt of vitality and a real sense of impending victory as the mass solidarity elevated the conflict to one with a possible outcome that favoured the Hereditary Chiefs and the traditional Wet’suwet’en government. It was in this moment of heightened struggle that the relationship between colonialism and capitalism became more apparent to me. It became clear that in a capitalist society, the robust exercise of Indigenous self-determination beyond the determinations of capital is intrinsically related to broader mobilizations of left elements in the population, regardless of their strategic and ideological (in)coherence. The solidarity expressed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people outside the Wet’suwet’en nation in the form of blockades and demonstrations was critical in generating the leverage needed to substantiate the jurisdictional power of the Hereditary Chiefs. Whether or not the results can be chalked up as a defeat does not invalidate this principle.

Furthermore, the widespread cries of “inconvenience” during the Wet’suwet’en solidarity actions were a clear expression of the fact that settler colonial capitalism is based on a dual process: the theft of Indigenous lands and the separation of the vast majority of Canadians from the means of production. While the former is widely understood as the basis for anti-colonial struggle, the function of the latter in reproducing colonial domination remains
undertheorized. Despite the strategic importance of anti-colonial solidarity demonstrated by non-Indigenous climate justice activists and others, we still know far too little about why the majority of the 40% of Canadians\(^2\) who supported so-called ‘illegal’ solidarity actions were not successfully mobilized in opposition to the CGL pipeline. This information, however, suggested that maximizing the size and strategic impact of anti-colonial solidarity by non-Indigenous activists depends on identifying the commonality of interest across seemingly ‘single issue’ movements and building alliances premised on recognition of colonialism and capitalism as intrinsically related.\(^3\) Moreover, the passive and ineffectual nature of the support that was not mobilized in the street also foregrounded the need to account for the structural coercion that defines work and life under capitalism and the effect such dependence has on the broader public vis-à-vis Indigenous rights and liberation.

However, perhaps the most helpful insight in developing the concept of dual dispossession came from Conservative leader Andrew Sheer. At the height of the struggle, Sheer was quoted in the media as saying: "These protesters, these activists, may have the luxury of spending days at a time at a blockade, but they need to check their privilege, they need to check their privilege and let people whose job depends on the railway system – small business, farmers – do their job."\(^4\) Against Sheer’s attempt to alienate the activists from the broader Canadian working-class population by pitting the latter’s needs against them, this


comment suggested to me the need to account for the conditions that allow some to sustain the frontlines given the structural alienation of the working-class that forces them to exchange their labour for the means of life. In other words, instead of ‘checking their privilege’ by going home and looking for work or, presumably, engaging in apolitical activity that would not disrupt settler colonial domination and the circuit of capital, beneath the moralism of Sheer’s colonial-capital apologetics was the insight that the conditions of activism – a form of labour no less – are less mediated by the compulsion to work and therefore open to a different kind of practical determination. Based on this premise, the realm of Sheer’s luxury and privilege is a critical social force in the exercise of Indigenous law and governance. While understanding who was on the frontline and how they got there presented an enormous sociological task that I was neither equipped for nor knowledgeable enough to carry out. This insight presented me with a strategy of linking settler colonialism and capitalism together in an irrefutable and internal way, but one that required a more specific vantage point.

In the aftermath of Shut Down Canada, I received emails from Honor the Earth, an Indigenous organization that provides financial and organizing support to Indigenous environmental groups, updating its supporters on the influx of Water Protectors and Land Defenders into Anishinaabe territory in Minnesota in resistance to Enbridge’s Line 3 pipeline. In their reports, I learned that many protectors had quit their jobs to take up Water Protection full-time and live on the frontlines, which led me to ask how their presence and activity were sustained. With the help of Marxist literature, I began to see the largely depoliticized realm of mutual aid and fundraising campaigns, whereby ‘material conditions’ are secured through redistribution, as an intervention into the ‘mute compulsion of economic relations,’ as Marx
termed it (Marx 1992: 899), which I discuss in more detail in chapter one. The mute compulsion of economic relations signifies a form of impersonal power grounded on socio-historically specific social relations, which force individuals to sell their labour-power to the personifications of capital in exchange for wages by virtue of being separated from the material and means of production and therefore subsistence. If some folks were able to evade this compulsion, then it needed to be explained, which presented to me a key dimension of the struggle in need of theoretical development. After all, I have never met an Indigenous person who did not need money and access to the market in order to live, to say nothing of political organization and struggle. Subsequently, this insight led me to recognize that the sustainability of the frontlines of Water Protection and Land Defence, and especially the long-term viability of organizational forms such as the Unist’ot’en Healing Centre, which constitutes a critical anti-

5 I use this formulation following Marx and István Mészáros in reference to both particular capitalist actors, i.e., firms and corporations, and the structural determinations and systemic imperatives to which they are subordinated and must comply with if they are to reproduce themselves as a part of the total social capital; hence, they act as personifications of those imperatives out of social, i.e., structural, necessity. As Marx argued, the basis of personification is grounded in the alienation of the objective conditions of labour from living labour, which then confront the worker as an alien will” (Mészáros 1995: 607). As a result, Mészáros argues in Beyond Capital (1995) that personification is not identical to the private ownership of the means of production but has multiple modalities, including the Party in the USSR (see the chapter entitled “The Changing Forms of the Rule of Capital”). It is important to insist on this dual character in order to avoid personalizing the logic of capital and the impersonal domination that prevails under its rule, while at the same time holding the representatives of the capitalist class accountable for their actions. Moreover, the impersonal character of domination under capital and its personifying force are conveyed by Mészáros when he writes: “As a mode of social metabolic control the capital system is unique in history also in the sense that it is, properly speaking, a subjectless system of control. For the objective determinations and imperatives of capital must always prevail over against the subjective wishes – not to mention the potential critical reservations – of the controlling personnel which is called upon to translate those imperatives into practical directives. This is why the personnel at the top of capital’s command structure – whether we think of private capitalists or party bureaucrats – can only be considered ‘personifications of capital’, irrespective of how enthusiastically they may or may not wish to carry out capital’s dictates as particular individuals. In this sense, through the strict determination of their margin of action by capital, human agents as ‘controllers’ of the system are in fact themselves being on the whole controlled, and therefore in the last analysis no self-determining human agency can be said to be in control of the system” (1995: 66 [emphasis in original]).

colonial force, is premised on a strategic intervention into the process of proletarianization as a condition of its reproduction and power. This necessity, however, does not in any way marginalize the nature of the colonial relation “as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around the question of land” (Coulthard 2014, 13); instead, it sustains and enhances some of the most important social forces that carry on this struggle. Viewed from the vantage point of the frontlines of Water Protection and Land Defence, i.e., radical Indigenous anticolonial agency premised on rejecting colonial reform, there is no question of pitting the colonial relation against the capital relation or prioritizing one at the expense of the other. In other words, their practical inseparability is dealt with as a matter of sustaining and developing Indigenous agency on the frontlines. Foregrounding this aspect of the struggle is one of the major insights based on the concept of dual dispossession.

Key Arguments
The central claims of my dissertation are based on two complementary forms of argumentation, one analytical and the other historical. The first argument is carried out through the application of the concept of dual dispossession to the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp and the Tiny House Warriors, which function simultaneously as blockades and active forms of reoccupation, through which traditional governance and Indigenous law are exercised and enforced. Dual dispossession refers to the codetermination of Indigenous experience by both colonial dispossession and the separation of living labour from the means of production, which characterizes the proletariat under the rule of capital. As such, the colonial domination of Indigenous Peoples is mediated by
capitalist relations of production, regardless of the extent to which Indigenous Peoples actually participate in the labour market and/or are actively employed.

The Land Back movement is the most recent expression of the broader Indigenous struggle and the most radical insofar as it aims to institutionalize the exercise of Indigenous self-determination beyond the parameters and constraints of settler colonial state recognition. Based on the premise of dual dispossession, which identifies the practical inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations in the struggle for Indigenous self-determination beyond colonial state recognition, I argue the following two major points: 1) the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp, are premised on an infrastructure of redistribution that mitigates the mute compulsion of economic relations, as Marx put it, which compel individuals deprived of the means of production to sell their capacity to work to the owners of those means, and that this constitutes a rejection of the colonial politics of recognition (Coulthard 2014) in practice. The relative repression of the mute compulsion of economic relations by the infrastructure of redistribution sustains the frontlines of anticolonial struggle and substantiates the power of traditional Indigenous authority and governance outside the terms and resources of colonial recognition while facilitating the enforcement of Indigenous law in the face of colonial capitalist encroachment. 2) The infrastructure of

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7 This is how Coulthard generally defines the colonial politics of recognition: “Following the work of Richard J. F. Day, I take ‘politics of recognition’ to refer to the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state. Although these models tend to vary in both theory and practice, most call for the delegation of land, capital, and political power from the state to Indigenous communities through a combination of land claim settlements, economic development initiatives, and self-government agreements... Against this variant of the recognition approach, I argue that instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of reciprocity or mutual recognition, the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples’ demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (2014: 3).
redistribution is a mediated form of the social relations of capitalist production given that it does not eliminate but minimizes the determination of exploitation upon the activity of those on the frontlines and provides access to the means of struggle, which nonetheless remain the social product of capital. In other words, the infrastructure does not transcend but only displaces the circuit of capital and the immediate compulsions of wage-labour as a condition of sustaining the frontlines of anticolonial struggle; this means that the reproduction of the frontlines and the social power this infrastructure facilitates remain structurally constrained by the determinations and imperatives of wealth in the form of capital. Class struggle oriented by Marxist analysis, i.e., the progressive development of a comprehensive challenge to capital’s domination of the social metabolism, is thus a critical moment in the concrete development of Indigenous self-determination beyond the colonial politics of recognition and its potential exercise in non-capitalist form. Land Back in this sense is a mediated form of class struggle, which responds directly to immediate and concrete anticolonial imperatives, above all, Indigenous political and legal control over traditional territory. However, the further development of these goals requires challenging capital’s generalized determination of social production as the un-circumventable and compulsory form of interacting with the land.

This challenge, I argue, is implicit in the radical rejection of cooptation and the steadfast commitment to social development on the basis of Indigenous culture, values, and law, i.e., the politics of Indigenous resurgence, and points beyond redistribution to a confrontation with

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As Colin Barker et al. argue, “Only at a level more immediate than that explored in Marx’s Capital can we locate definite people, speaking in particular tongues and with their own histories and traditions, struggling to understand and achieve control of their material and social conditions. It is at this more immediate level, of more ‘concrete’ socio-cultural formations, that ‘social movements’ emerge, as specific forms of social and political activity. Movements are mediated expressions of class struggle” (2013: 47 [italics in original]).
capital as the socio-historically dominant structure of social creative practice, wherein those Indigenous principles and determinations are structurally subordinated to the imperative of capital accumulation and are contingent factors at best in shaping the course of generalized social development. As such, the domination of the broader working class, which includes all those who sustain workers as well, is an essential condition of the structural constraint imposed upon the exercise of Indigenous self-determination, restricting the degree to which Indigenous culture can determine social practice and thus the relation to the land, given that the exploitative relationship of wage-labour and the expansionary logic it facilitates monopolizes the realm of practically legitimate activity, marginalizing all other forms in the process. Thus, efforts to sustain and develop social activity on the basis of the qualitative determinations that Indigenous resurgence aims to foster through the redistribution of wealth point to a theoretical and practical confrontation with the social relations of production, which ground that redistribution, in order to liberate the objective conditions of self-determination adequate to those subjective developments. After all, Indigenous resurgence is not about reconciling self-determination with the parameters of capital (Alfred 2005, Coulthard 2014, L. Simpson 2017).

I develop this analysis further by arguing that the semi-autonomous character of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement has been critical for activating a mass solidarity network, which the Wet’suwet’en uprising of 2020 represents the largest and most powerful example to date. In doing so, I argue that the organizational forms of the Land Back movement have played a significant role in developing another tendency that has evolved throughout the history of the contemporary Indigenous movement, which is a corollary of the critique and rejection of cooptation and colonial recognition; namely, the need to create a
source of leverage within the population to compel state recognition and the substantive realization of Indigenous rights. The concept of dual dispossession contributes to the further development of this tendency insofar as it reveals the social embeddedness of the infrastructure undergirding the organizational forms of the Land Back movement within the broader circuit of capital and the necessity of identifying and politicizing capitalist social relations of production as a condition of enhancing their social force. Thus, I argue that recognizing this is essential to developing the social power of these organizational forms in two fundamental ways: 1) by mobilizing the latent class struggle inherent in the conditions that sustain the frontlines of anticolonial struggle and 2) by recognizing and politicizing the mass solidarity that we have witnessed not only as a critical source of leverage for particular Indigenous national interests, but as a working class struggle which has the power to function not only as a source of anticolonial leverage by withholding its labour but also signifies the potential of a comprehensive anticolonial politics that challenges capital’s domination of the social metabolism. Integrating these latent tendencies inherent in both the infrastructure and the solidarity network, I argue, represents the possibility of moving beyond the defensive posture of the movement, which only targets capital at the point of circulation, not production, by politicizing capital as a social relation of production that constrains the form of Indigenous self-determination and national liberation.

The second major argumentative strategy is developed through an historical reconstruction by situating the evolution of the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement and their theoretical analysis through the concept of dual dispossession within the broader contemporary Indigenous movement, which emerged in the mid-1960s. The
necessity of historicization is revealed by the analysis referred to above, which identifies the Land Back movement and its organizational forms as the progressive institutionalization of major tendencies within the broader movement, especially those developed during the Red Power era (late 1960s to mid-1970s) and in the post-1990 Siege of Kanehsatâ:ke era, which have since been formalized by Indigenous resurgence theory. Within the Red Power era, I identify two major tendencies: Indigenous subjective transformation through grassroots self-activity, self-organization, and direct action and the critique of co-optation and strategic efforts to protect, sustain and develop the autonomy of the movement against the reductive margin of action granted by state dependence. In the post-1990 era, these early tendencies are developed and ultimately formalized by Indigenous resurgence theory, which values and elevates self-transformative practice through the radicalization of Indigenous culture as the foundation of social practice and its institutionalization, and systematizes the critique of cooptation as the critique and rejection of the colonial politics of recognition. Dual dispossession, I argue, is a theoretical intervention that enables the concrete development and enhancement of these tendencies by foregrounding the way they are practically synthesized and institutionalized in the organizational forms of the Land Back movement. This is most apparent in the way the organized mitigating force of the infrastructure that underpins them creates objective circumstances that permit a practice determined by Indigenous culture to a higher degree than without it, given the semi-autonomous practice it establishes vis-à-vis colonial state dictates and capitalist imperatives.

However, my historical argument does not simply affirm a continuity between these periods of struggle. Rather, the Red Power era, at least in its most radical practice and critical
theoretical expressions, such as the Native Alliance for Red Power and the Native People’s Caravan and the work of Howard Adams (1989; 1995) and Lee Maracle (1990; 1997), was characterized by a socialist anticapitalism whose trademarks included a pronounced internationalism, pan-Indigeneity, and mass coalitional politics as well as an emphasis of the necessity of self-liberatory politics, which centred the direct experience and agency of the colonized. With the decline of the Red Power movement, or more accurately, its defeat, and the consolidation of the colonial politics of recognition, especially from the early 1990s to the present, I argue that the practical basis of these political principles was undermined. It is within this social horizon of generalized demobilization that the radical, nation-centric assertion of sovereignty and cultural development that Indigenous resurgence identifies, valorizes, and promotes has taken place. This is a social context characterized by the repression and fracturing of earlier revolutionary movements and the consolidation of the struggle for Indigenous self-determination as a form of single-issue politics, exclusively oriented towards the state and understood as intrinsically unrelated to other social struggles, above all, socialism. It is a period that also witnessed the instrumentalization of solidarity as allyship, whereby social forces are recognized to the extent they facilitate particular Indigenous national interests. This characterization of the period holds, I maintain, despite the internationalization of the Indigenous movement, which is a significant development in its own right but is best characterized as a politics of radical reformism that does not politicize the comprehensive social conditions of Indigenous self-determination, especially the structural constraints of capital.

Framing these developments in these terms is critical to recognizing that since Idle No More and especially Shut Down Canada, the centrifugal impulse of the Red Power movement towards
a politics that challenged the social totality of settler colonial society and therefore sought to
develop the comprehensive social conditions of Indigenous self-determination has returned,
however underdeveloped it may be at the current moment. This is apparent, above all, in the
mass solidarity and allyship that emerged in 2020 during the Wet’suwet’en uprising mentioned
above, which demonstrated the necessity of directly challenging capital as a critical strategic
front within the anticolonial struggle through organizations premised on the rejection of the
colonial politics of recognition.

Methodological Considerations

The twofold argument I present is based on the concept of dual dispossession, which is
premised on Marxian theoretical insights into the socio-historical nature of society in the form
of capital as well as Marxian methodological principles, which I develop in the following section.
The latter are conceived as a concrete historical development of Anishinaabe cosmological
premises, ethics, and law, especially insofar as they help articulate the dialectical essence of
that cosmology and the socio-historically determinate contradictions in which Anishinaabe
ethics and law are embedded. In other words, Marxist theory and methodology provide further
historical and structural determinacy to the inherent relationality of Anishinaabe cosmology
and the universal obligations of Anishinaabe ethics and law grounded upon it. The primary
analysis based on dual dispossession is performed through an examination of various practices
and discourses as publicized on organizational websites, including those of the Unist’ot’en
Camp, the Tiny House Warriors, and Honor the Earth, among others, as well as X (formerly
known as Twitter) accounts and other platforms, where activists and organizers request money
and goods and recruit labour in order to facilitate the logistics of resistance and carry out
Indigenous governance and law enforcement. I further develop my analysis through accounts of frontline work and activity, which demonstrate how these resources, both material and human, are deployed.

The historical reconstruction, which situates the organizational forms of the Land Back movement within a longer trajectory of Indigenous politics and struggle, is based on relatively marginal written sources, such as Vern Harper’s *Following the Red Path: The Native People’s Caravan* (Harper 1979) and Ray Bobb’s (2012) online publications about the Native Alliance for Red Power,9 as well as recent contemporary historical scholarship, such as Scott Rutherford’s (2020) *Canada’s Other Red Scare: Indigenous Protest and Colonial Encounters during the Global Sixties* and Sarah Nickel’s (2019) *Assembling Unity: Indigenous Politics, Gender, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs*. These sources are read in a critical manner that identifies the practical basis of the ideas and politics that express the tendencies I understand as forerunners to the contemporary politics and practice of the Land Back movement. Analysis is further supplemented by a historical reading that relates the tendencies theorized by Indigenous resurgence theory to objective circumstances that signify novel historical developments in the state’s counterstrategy to the Red Power movement and the general political mobilization of what I call ‘radical reformism.’ Together, these methods enable the analysis of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement to be theorized within the dynamic of an evolving historical development that stretches into the past and the future.

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Main Contributions

This dissertation contributes to critical Indigenous Studies scholarship and Indigenous activism in a variety of ways. For one, it will provide evidence of the possibility of rejecting the colonial politics of recognition (Coulthard 2014, A. Simpson 2014, L. Simpson 2017) in practice, while developing a theory of this practice. As such, it helps identify the significance of this form of Indigenous organization and activism for anticolonial struggle, its limitations, as well as the possibility of its concrete development and empowerment as a social force. This is crucial for a number of reasons, not least because it elevates the discourse around the issue of whether or not Indigenous (dis)engagement with the settler state is ethically and politically tenable beyond the moralistic debate it has become, especially given the characterization of non-engagement as counterproductive, utopian, and denoting a form of dogmatic pessimism (Lightfoot 2020). In contrast to the abstract and reductive moralism of this latter characterization, the identification of the objective conditions of rejection or refusal provides space for a theoretical vantage point that correctly identifies the nature and development of Indigenous self-activity,

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10 Anishinaabe scholar Sheryl Lightfoot argues that “The pessimistic approaches of the resurgence school are ultimately of little use in these efforts [in working toward the implementation of UNDRIP or other Indigenous rights regimes for that matter], other than as a cautionary tale against state power, of which the organizational players are already keenly aware. Further, by dismissing and discouraging all efforts at engagement with states, and especially with blanket accusations that all who engage in such efforts are ‘co-opted’ and not authentically Indigenous, the resurgence school actually creates unnecessary negative feelings and divisions amongst Indigenous movements who should be pooling limited resources and working together towards better futures” (2020: 170). This is without a doubt a caricature of Indigenous resurgence or at the very least a reduction of a serious critique raised by Indigenous resurgence scholars in need of more development to the worse kind of moralism. Moreover, Lightfoot’s ahistorical approach comes back to haunt her given that the internationalization of the Indigenous movement that gave birth to UNDRIP was in fact the result of efforts by organizations, namely, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and the International Indian Treaty Council (in the North American context) that were motivated by the structural impasse of domestic national politics. In the case of the former, the aggressive assimilationism of the 1969 White Paper and the Canadian government’s 1973 Land Claims policy, and, in the latter case, nothing less that the murderous proxy war conducted by the FBI against the American Indian Movement on the Pine Ridge reservation and the failure of the American court system to deal with the contradictions of colonialism raised by the AIM trials in the aftermath of Wounded Knee.
organization and direct action, which has been systemically necessary over the course of at least the last 70 years, as the clear and distinct social force it has been up to now and how it has been further developed and institutionalized in recent years by the Land Back movement.

Moreover, this framing of anticolonialism will also contribute to understanding the dialectical interplay between subjective and objective factors and how these affect Indigenous resurgence and the social power of the movement which rejects the hegemonic terms of colonial reform (Alfred 2005, Alfred & Corntassel 2005, L. Simpson 2011, Coulthard 2014, L. Simpson 2017). As such, I will demonstrate how the unity of Indigenous subjectivity with particular objective circumstances affects the quality of that subjectivity in terms of the degree to which Indigenous culture can determine social practice as well as the effective power these specific objective conditions grant to this subjectivity. In this way, my dissertation will contribute to developing knowledge about the objective conditions of Indigenous resurgence and self-determination more broadly, while also providing an important critique of positions which assume that capitalist production and its concomitant relations of distribution are neutral means that can be instrumentalized toward the ends of a radical Indigenous resurgence project or a form Indigenous self-determination capable of striking a balance between capital accumulation and traditional forms of production (J. Mohawk 2010, Coulthard 2014, A. Manuel 2015, LaDuke 2017, Alfred 2017, A. Manuel 2017).

Moreover, my dissertation also contributes to the field of Political Economy as it relates to Indigenous Peoples. This relatively sparse literature, which provides largely historical analyses of Indigenous participation in the capital system (Littlefield & Knack 1996, Knight 1996, Tough 1997, Lutz 2009, Regular 2009, McCallum 2014), has been insightful insofar as it sheds
light on the market integration of Indigenous Peoples and how this has affected the social reproduction of traditional social relations and Indigenous political power. However, this literature, including the few Marxist proponents within it, has been primarily concerned with positivist reconstructions of either the dynamics of Indigenous communal reproduction in particular contexts or the function this integration has had in the domination of Indigenous Peoples and the erosion/preservation of their sovereignty (Tough 1997, Bourgeault 2006, Laliberte 2006, Lutz 2009, Norrgard 2014). As such, it is premised on the naturalization of capitalist social forms like money, commodity, wage-labour, and capital, as categories of analysis and not the critique of political economy proposed by Marx, which not only challenged classical political economy’s categories of analysis, above all value, but demonstrated that their socially specific constitution and generality are grounded in the dispossession and perpetual separation of living labour from the means of production. In contrast, my work demonstrates that the need to theorize and politicize the categories of political economy in a Marxist vain issues from the tendencies inherent in the Indigenous struggle. Through this analysis, my dissertation will contribute to the development of a critical understanding of Political Economy that accounts for the historical development of the Indigenous struggle and the significance of Indigenous politics that do not merely seek a redistribution of wealth as the basis of decolonial justice but the transformation of generalized social practice, including the core relations of social production and their structural dominance of our social metabolic relation to the land.

My dissertation also demonstrates the practical inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations in the struggle for self-determination as it is organized against the terms and practice of the colonial politics of recognition and the ways in which this inseparability is
already dealt with as a condition of frontline anti-colonial practice in its current forms. As such, the dissertation contributes to developing an internal relation between Marxist analysis and the politics of Indigenous resurgence and Land Back by showing the manner in which the social relations of capitalist society as they are theorized by Marxism arise out of the practical challenges and objective obstacles encountered by the Indigenous movement in its current state of development. This further contributes to a theorization of Indigenous self-determination as a social power and practice of development understood in-against-and-beyond capitalism, and also shows the relevance of Marxism as a theory and politics developed out of the practical imperatives of the Indigenous movement itself and not an external ideological imposition that threatens to distort and repress some of the most important developments and insights of Indigenous Studies and the Indigenous movement more broadly. As such, my work contributes to developing the critical dialogue between Indigenous Studies and Marxism, which, according to Coulthard, has “the potential to shed much insight into the cycles of colonial domination and resistance that characterize the relationship between white settler states and Indigenous peoples” (2014: 8) and provides a theoretical basis for the further elaboration of the relation between Indigenous self-determination and socialism. In doing so, it helps restore a tradition of socialism within the Indigenous movement that dates back to at least the early 20th century (Dobbin 1981, Adams 1989, Maracle 1996, Harper 1979).

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11 This is how John Holloway characterizes the manner in which people exist under capitalism in a way that accounts for domination, resistance, and the possibility of transcendence; it is what he calls an ecstatic relation, that is, “a relation of containment-rebellion-and-overflowing, a relation of in-against-and-beyond” (Holloway 2010: 176). This is also a useful way of conceiving the Indigenous struggle for self-determination as carried out by those spearheading the Land Back movement.
Lastly, the analysis and historical reconstruction presented in this work identifies the significance of the Land Back movement within the broader Indigenous struggle since the 1960s, thereby helping in the construction of a coherent historical narrative that emphasizes certain continuities. This contributes to identifying the evolution of the modern Indigenous movement since middle of the 20th century as a proper unit of analysis in its own right against the atomization of Indigenous history in the form of unrelated case studies and incidences (Belanger & Lackenbauer 2015, Borrow 2016), especially to the extent that this dissertation foregrounds the manner in which the Land Back movement has institutionalized and developed tendencies across this era. In this sense, my dissertation provides a theoretical contribution with clear political implications for the further development of the broader Indigenous movement for self-determination, which is grounded in the objective development of that broader struggle.

Positionality as Method
Boozhoo Niwiijikenyik! Anishinaabe indaaw. Giishkiimanisii indoodem.\textsuperscript{12} Opwaaganisiniing indebendaagoz.\textsuperscript{13} Gaa wiij’aad Anishinaaben miinaawaa Gaa wiij’aad kina wiya miinaawaa Gichi-de indigoo.\textsuperscript{14} My pronouns are he, him and his. I am a mixed-race person: my father is Anishinaabe, and my mother is white, French Canadian. I grew up on Unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation territory (also known as Ottawa), but my Anishinaabe relatives reside at Lake Helen Reserve (53A) and its surroundings in northwestern Ontario, where I try to spend as much time as possible. My relation to my identity has been one of overcoming colonial shame

\textsuperscript{12} I am Kingfisher clan. My ancestors are registered under this clan at time of the 1850 Robinson Superior treaty. 
\textsuperscript{13} I belong to the Red Rock Indian Band/I am a member of the Red Rock Indian Band also known as Red Rock First Nation also known as Opwaaganisiniing (Pipestone).
\textsuperscript{14} I mention the meaning of these names below.
through reconnection, resurgence, and rebuilding family and community relationships. I was told by an Elder during a fasting ceremony in 2015 that I would become a community healer. It is unclear to me what forms this will take, but I believe this dissertation is part of that process.

One way to positively combat colonial shame and the internal colonizer is to centre Indigenous Creation Stories as the ground for interpreting and understanding one’s practice and self-development in the world. While this act establishes broad cosmological premises, as Leanne Simpson makes very clear in *Dancing on our Turtle’s Back*, it is always personal (2011: 39). According to the Anishinaabe Creation Story, Gzhwe Mnidoo created human beings last and lowered them to the earth. As Simpson recounts, “Gzhwe Mnidoo next created the first beings, but it took a very, very long time. S/he (they) wanted to create the most beautiful beings possible” (40). “Reclaiming the context of this story,” according to Simpson, “means that rather than saying or thinking that Gzhwe Mnidoo lowered an abstract ‘first person’ to the earth, if I am a woman, I say or think Gzhwe Mnidoo lowered ‘the first woman to the earth’” (Simpson 2011: 40-41). In doing so, I am able to ground my social location within the general parameters of my cosmological positionally. This is a powerful antidote to colonial shame because “it re-affirms that [Anishinaabe people] are good, and beautiful and perfect the way they are” (Simpson 2011: 40-41) in and against the dehumanization suffered by Indigenous Peoples under settler colonialism both historically and in the present.

Moreover, according to Anishinaabe scholar and community worker Christine Bird, this act also expresses the law of Namgwamazin - *Remember who you are. Remember where it is you come from*. As Bird writes, “I had always thought that this meant my community, my reserve, Peguis First Nation. It took me a long time to learn that where I came from extended
far beyond any colonial boundary. I come from the first Anishinaabe that was lowered upon the earth” (2020: 34). The radical act of grounding oneself within the Creation Story is therefore also an act of honouring one’s legal obligations, which invite us to maintain and develop a positive self-understanding centred in Anishinaabe knowledge. It is thus the Creation Story of one’s identity as Anishinaabe which forms the basis of a positive dynamic of self-understanding and development.

**Aandisokaanan and Dibaajimowinan**

The act of grounding self-development within Anishinaabe cosmology and its fulfillment through law is realized through the dialectic between *Aandisokaanan* (plural form) and *Dibaajimowinan* (plural form). The former are often characterized as “‘traditional’ or ‘sacred’ narratives that embody values, philosophies, and laws important to life” (Doerfler et al. 2013: xvii). These include, among many others, Creation Stories. Moreover, they are *manidoog* (manitous), understood as “living beings who work with Anishinaabeg in the interests of demonstrating principles necessary for mino-bimaadiziwin, that good and beautiful life” (xvii-xviii). On the other hand, *Dibaajimowinan* are commonly understood as “histories” or “news” which “range in time from long ago to today, and often tell of family genealogies, geographies, and historical experiences” (xviii). Leanne Simpson adds that “Dibaajimowinan are personal stories, teachings, ordinary stories, narratives and histories” (2011: 46). They are thus distinct. However, as Simpson writes,

> It is my understanding there is not a uniform boundary between the two, or that different Elders and different regions have specific teachings and protocols around which stories are considered sacred and which are personal stories, teachings, ordinary stories, narratives and histories. There is a relationship between the *Aandisokaanan* and *Dibaajimowinan* that to me is like an echo, not a dichotomy (ibid.).
Thus, while protocols may differ, these different types of stories are only comprehensible in relation to each other and practically inseparable, and they interact in the following way: “the Aandisokaanan and our language encode our theories, and we express those theories in both the Dibaajimowinan and our ways of being in the world...” (2013: 286). In other words, they mediate each other in a way in which the universal forms of Aandisokaanan are concretely developed through the activity and lives of individuals and their stories.

I foster this dialectic in thought and practice in different ways, but especially, through my effort to embody a practice of ethical relationality derived from Anishinaabe knowledge and law. The latter is succinctly captured by Elder Dan Pine from Garden River First Nation, who tells us that Anishinaabe

was closely related to everything that was put here, in the way the Creator wanted him [sic] to live [and that] Everything that was created is what pleased him and he embraced it, and all that is seen and given by the Creator was reflected in his life every day that he walked on this earth. (13)

In my reading of this pithy statement, Pine is referring to an ethic or law\(^\text{15}\) based on a radical consciousness and devotion to a reciprocal practice of deep relationality and mutual self-development, whereby the social conditions that affect the self-development of other beings, whether human or other, are recognized as integral to one’s own.\(^\text{16}\) Although the obligation to be in good relation with all that constitutes one’s life may seem virtually impossible given the sheer complexity and magnitude of interconnection, when understood aspirationally or in terms of obligation, it opens up a practice that is perpetually subject to revelation, correction,

\(^\text{15}\) Christine Bird argues that Bimaadziwin, Namgwaamazin, and Odebwewin, etc., are not ‘teachings’ but laws. (2020: 34).

\(^\text{16}\) This is how I understand Val Napoleon’s (2005) concept of relational autonomy and Marx’s notion of the social individual.
and renewal. Above all, this requires a rigorous practice of self-critique in order to identify relations lost in the opacity of contemporary social life. For this reason, my journey has led me to write this dissertation as a necessary means of further developing this consciousness and practice.

To cultivate the consciousness central to this practice, I also participate in Anishinaabe ceremony. By fasting, going to sweats, using my tobacco, and prioritizing the space of Elders in my life, I have developed a modest sense of this practice, albeit not without difficulty. Along this journey, I have begun to understand that ceremony has the power to cultivate this radically relational sense of self, while also emphasizing the necessity of healing and restoration as fundamental to sustaining its dynamic. Above all, Anishinaabe ceremony and law teach us that reciprocity is fundamentally a practical issue, which is most evident in the current ecological crisis we are facing as a collective.17

Anishinaabe-wiinzowinan

The meaning of my Anishinaabe names has also guided me in this process. I carry three names. They are Gaa wiij’aad Anishinaaben, Gaa wiij’aad kina wiya, and Giche-de, which translate respectively as “one who helps the people,” “one who helps all living beings” and “big heart.”

The first two were given to me by my Elders at Opwaaganisiniing (Lake Helen, Ontario), and the

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17 This is also reflected in the political essence of Anishinaabe spirituality. For instance, Louis Cameron of the Ojibwe Warrior Society, who led the momentous armed occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora, ON, in 1974, insisted on the political value of culture, emphasizing the place of spiritual and medicinal traditions, specifically the Midewiwin, of which he was an initiate, in the long history of anticolonial struggle. Cameron argued at the time that the practice of Midewiwin reflected “a full and material understanding of the ways of the Anicinabe people” (Cameron quoted in “Anicinabe Park Occupation 1974: Interviews with 2 Warriors,” n.d. [1992]). As such, he saw no dichotomy between spirituality and material reality and argued that “The Indian movement, spiritually and in every way... is part of human revolution” and that the Midewiwin is “not something you pray for, you just do it. It’s a search for justice; and practice, not talk about God” (Cameron quoted in “Anicinabe Park Occupation 1974: Interviews with 2 Warriors,” n.d. [1992]). In this sense, there is nothing mystical about relationality and the affirmation of radical interconnectedness.
third one was given to me by my late great uncle Vidian, who taught me the meaning of Ode’min (the heart berry also known as the strawberry). Attempting to live these names responsibly has led me to persistently reflect upon and strive to embody the principle of Indinawemaaganag or “all my relations” in practice in a spirit of empathy, compassion and care. Indinawemaaganag is an evocation that draws one immediately into the sphere of the totality of existing relations, a level of theoretical cognition and practical positioning that situates the individual both cosmologically and socially, while affirming an ethical commitment and responsibility to those who make up that totality.

However, the struggle to elevate the reality of interdependence and the value of mutual self-development in both consciousness and practice and thereby realize the rigorous ethical imperatives of Anishinaabe law, cannot be premised on the knowledge or awareness of interconnection alone. Simply affirming an indeterminate form of relationality, one that entails an undifferentiated notion of totality, does not inform us about the historically developed social structure of relationality, no matter how ethically radical relationality may be conceived. However, because the Anishinaabe are a people who nurtured a consciousness of and devotion to the totality, there is a basis in the dialectical interplay of Aandisokaanan and Dibaajimowinan for a social theory capable of articulating the socio-historically determinate nature of relationality or interdependence as the grounds for ethical fulfillment, political struggle, and ultimately the practical intervention of social forces embodying the principles of Indigenous law.
Creation-Destruction-Re-creation

As mentioned above, the principles and laws of Aandisokaanan are developed concretely through the multitudinous experiences of individuals or Dibaajimowinan. As such, their reciprocal determination is inherently historical. The historicity of their dialectical interplay is explicitly acknowledged at both the cosmological and personal or biographical levels. On the one hand, the Anishinaabe cosmos is understood as essentially historical. This is reflected in Leanne Simpson’s suggestion that the basic logic of many Aandisokaanan, especially the Re-Creation Stories, corresponds to a cycle of creation-destruction-re-creation, which “sets the stage for interpretation and re-creation as new emergence or resurgence (2011: 68). For example, Anishinaabe writer Basil Johnston describes this cycle in a story he calls “The Vision of Kitche Manitou” (the Great Mystery or Spirit) (1990). For the purpose of brevity, I recount only a few moments of the story, which are all subtitled accordingly. Beginning with the “Creation,” Johnston tells us that Kitche Manitou brought forth a vision, which gave birth to Creation in all its vast complexity. This moment is proceeded by the “Destruction” in the form of a flood that inundates the world, destroying virtually everything, a devastation brought on by the original peoples’ failure to live in harmony with all Creation. The last phase of the cycle, according to Johnston, is called “Re-Creation,” and is the longest in his account. It is the moment when Sky-woman who dwells in the heavens is ultimately invited down onto the back of a great Turtle, where all the animals have sought a haven from the great flood (Johnston 1990: 14). In order to re-create the world, she requests some soil from the bottom of the sea. Most of the animals try and fail until Zhaashkoonh or Muskrat dives down and returns successfully. With this handful of soil, Sky-woman breathes into it and re-creates the world, restoring life to all (Johnston 1990:
At this point, the cycle of creation-destruction-re-creation is (temporarily) complete. Although a tremendous oversimplification, this synopsis captures the basic logic identified by Simpson, which characterizes the historicity of Aandisokaanan at the cosmological level. Significantly, in order for this cosmological dynamic to unfold, a level of social and historical determinateness must evolve. We get a better sense of this in Eddie Benton-Benai’s account of the same story, which he refers to as ‘The Great Flood.’

The Great Flood includes a third level of development between the cosmological and biographical, namely, the social. As American Indian Movement (AIM)-founder Benton-Benai recounts in the Mishomis Book,

> Although life was often hard for them, for many years the first people lived together in harmony with all of the Creation. I regret to say that this harmonious way of life on Earth did not last forever... It greatly saddened the Creator, Gitchie Manito, to see the Earth’s people turn to evil ways. It seemed that the entire Creation functioned in harmony except for the people who were the last to be placed there. For a long time Gitchie Manito waited hoping that the evil ways would cease and that brotherhood, sisterhood, and respect for all things would again come to rule over the people. When it seemed that there was no hope left, Gitchie Manito decided to purify the Earth. He would do this with water. The water came like a mush-ko’-be-wun (flood) upon the Earth... Most all living things were drowned immediately, but some of the animals were able to keep swimming... The purification of the Earth with water appeared to be complete. All the evil that had built up in the hearts of the first people had been washed away. (1990: 29)

The flood thus set the stage for the (re)creation of a “new Earth” (31). The point I want to highlight here is that the society of the first people created was not eternal but of a definite character, which, above all, was marked by major contradictions and, therefore, not sustainable. Further, words such as ‘harmony,’ ‘evil,’ ‘flood,’ ‘swimming,’ ‘purification,’ on the basis of this interpretation, all have a socio-historically determinate character which refers to a definite historical form of social practice. The contingency of the structural and historical nature
of collective human development is thus recognized at the interplay between *Aandisokaanan* and *Dibaajimowinan*, and the relation between the two levels of reality is socially mediated. Moreover, the transcendent nature of *Aandisokaanan*, as inexhaustible sources of imagination and meaning over and above any one particular concrete articulation of them through *Dibaajimowin* and the collective *Dibaajimowinan*, suggests that their identification with a particular subject or social order is temporal, inherently dynamic, and radically open-ended and subject to continuous transformation. In this sense, the Recreation Story or *Aandisokaanan* of the Great Flood already accounts for the historically specific interplay between *Aandisokaanan* and *Dibaajimowinan* and therefore contains a clear recognition of the socio-historical determinateness of relationality.

**Zhaashkoonh**

It is within this social and historical dynamic, marked by change, crisis and radical transitions, that Anishinaabe Elder Edna Manitowabi “asks us to think of ourselves as *Zhaashkoonh*, the muskrat” (Simpson 2011: 69). As Simpson argues, “[t]his emphasizes the idea that we each have to dive down to the bottom of the vast expanse of water and search for our own handful of earth” (ibid.). However, in this process of self-development and transformation, the unfolding of our *Dibaajimowin*, according to Simpson, is not merely for individualistic purposes but entails a responsibility to others:

> Once we have brought our paw full of dirt to the surface, it is then our responsibility to also ensure that our action is collectivized. We need to ensure that the other members of the community act on our actions and carry the vision forward. Resurgence cannot occur in isolation. (2011: 69)
Like the animals on the Turtle’s back who danced a new world into existence out of the flood, the process of world re-creation is collective. To contribute one’s gifts in a collective process of world-making, for Simpson, is premised on developing a consciousness of these relations through the inward turning practice of Indigenous resurgence. By situating the biographical and social within a radically historical cosmological horizon and vice versa, i.e., a radical sense of multi-scalar relationality, this method and theoretical orientation harbours the potential for comprehensive practical intervention into a socio-historical world marked by complex determinations. It effectively amounts to a theory of a world marked by destabilizing contradiction, and becoming the living persona of Zhaashkoonh is the socio-historically determinate process of transforming one’s subjectivity into an agent of struggle for a new society in a historical stage of crisis.

“Here’s an Old Indian Trick I learned from a White Man”- Marxian Dialectics and Totality: Thickening Relationality

Lowered into the Commodity Form

In order to develop the historically determinate nature of the social order in which this dynamic of struggle takes place, we must recognize that the world I was lowered onto is not some transhistorical and timeless reality. Rather, it is mediated by a specific globalized social form, which, as Marx teaches, is determined by the capitalist mode of production in which wealth is characterized by an “immense collection of commodities” (1976:125). This is a world dominated by the generality of the commodity form or what is referred to as generalized commodity production and exchange, i.e., the capital system. Thus, the totality evoked by the principle of Indinawemaaganag or ‘all my relations,’ which is indispensable to a radical ethics of reciprocity, must be grasped as a ‘thick’ form of relationality, i.e., one that is not confined to
the abstract sphere of immediacy and interpersonal relations alone, but as a totality adequate
to the actual historical and structural form of interdependence. That is, it must be grasped
dialectically, i.e., a comprehensive grasp of internally related and reciprocally determinative
social factors within a totality in which they are relatively autonomous and no single one
decides the evolutionary dynamic and tendencies of generalized social development, but at
various historical stages and structural conditions, different factors may have a stronger
determinative power over the course of this dynamic.\textsuperscript{18} As István Mészáros writes,

A ‘dialectic’ devoid of firm lines of demarcation and ‘overriding’ [über-greifenden] moments’ could amount to no more than tautology, or to the unenlightening truism according to which ‘everything is connected with everything else.’ For it is the determinate character of what is connected as well as the specific mode of prevailing connections that matters, not the mere fact of connectedness. Accordingly, the object of a dialectical inquiry must be grasped as a totality whose parts are not merely interconnected, nor equally important, but constitute a structured whole, with its appropriate internal order and determinate hierarchies, even if the latter must be understood as dynamically shifting and changing, in accordance with the inherent nature of a dialectical complex. (Mészáros 2011: 58-59)

A dialectical approach is thus critical to understanding relationality in a socio-historically
determinate way, i.e., as a socially specific and historically developed structure of
interdependent parts that temporarily (even if epochally) sustains society in a particular
dominant form.\textsuperscript{19} It is the socio-historically determinate capital system that I was lowered onto,
and it is this world in which I have to take the plunge to recover that much-needed soil.

\textsuperscript{18} Mészáros makes a similar point with regard to Marx’s interest in economic relations: “To Marx, in contradistinction to the reformer, economic investigations do not serve as theoretical grounds of an economic action, but of a political one. He is interested in problems of economy only insofar as they reveal the complex hierarchy of the structure that he wants to see positively transcended” (2005: 127).
**Determination**

Significantly, the character of socio-historical determination evoked by Mészáros does not refer to historical inevitability nor totalitarian compulsion but tells us something about the nature of totality when conceived dialectically, which is centred on a particular sense of determination. The concept of determination is given one of its clearest theoretical expressions by Raymond Williams when he writes that

> Determination is a real social process, but never (as in some theological and some Marxist versions) a wholly controlling, wholly predicting set of causes. On the contrary, the reality of determination is the setting of limits and the exertion of pressures, within which variable social practices are profoundly affected but never necessarily controlled. We have to think of determination not as a single force, or a single abstraction of forces, but as a process in which real determining factors – the distribution of power or of capital, social and physical inheritance, relations of scale and size between groups – set limits and exert pressures, but neither wholly control nor wholly predict the outcome of complex activity within or at these limits, and under or against these pressures. ("Effects of the Technology," 133)

Determination thus pertains to the social forces and factors that sustain dominant trends in social development and, therefore, the forms of social practice facilitated through the evolving social totality. The latter, importantly, are conceived in constant tension with other efforts to determine this general course, however marginal they may be. It thus identifies the practical force of generalized trends of social development as fraught with tensions, which embody other forms of social activity that signify alternative trajectories and a potential threat to the dominant form of the social whole. This evidently evokes a notion of totality that cannot be understood in terms of domination alone, a point I return to below.

**Relations of Production**

Moreover, as the expression of a society in a particular form, the notion of totality entails the positivity of a social whole predicated on historically specific relations of production. Marx
argued that ‘The relations of production in their totality constitute what are called the social relations, society, and, specifically, a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with a peculiar distinctive character’ (Marx, 1849: 212 quoted in Lebowitz 2003: 52).

The social relations of production are fundamental within this conception of totality because of the “ontological importance of the sphere of production” (Mészáros 2005: 80) given that, “In Marx’s dialectical conception the key concept is ‘human productive activity which [, however,] never means simply ‘economic production’ (115). The significance of this domain is grounded on the identification of “Productive activity... [as] the [fundamental] mediator in the ‘subject-object relationship’ between man [sic] and nature” (80) and the basis of historical development. Thus, at the core of the relations of production is the historically specific structural unity of society’s subjective creative capacity and the objective conditions of its realization. Under the domination of capital, which is a historically specific social form of this unity, the objectification of productive activity takes the form of alienation. This is not a psychological phenomenon but an objective structural one that issues from the fundamental social relations that underpin the rule of capital. As Marx writes in the *Grundrisse*:

> To the degree that production is shaped in such a way that every producer becomes dependent on the exchange value of his [sic] commodity, i.e. as the product increasingly becomes an exchange value in reality, and exchange value becomes the immediate object of production – to the same degree must money relations develop, together with the contradictions immanent in the money relation, in the relation of the product to itself as money. The need for exchange and for the transformation of the product into a

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20 As Mészáros writes with regard to the ontological significance of human productive activity in Marx, “Man [sic] as the ‘self-mediating being of nature’ must develop – through the objective dialectics of an increasingly higher complexity of human needs and aims – in accordance with the most fundamental objective laws of ontology of which – and this is vitally important – man’s own active role is an essential part” (2005: 118).

21 According to Tony Smith, “In a social world in which units of social production and distribution are separated from each other, and in which those engaged in living labour are separated from the objective pre-conditions of human life (means of subsistence and the means of producing those means of subsistence), capital will reign over social life” (2017: 113).
pure exchange value progresses in step with the division of labour, i.e. with the increasingly social character of production. But as the latter grows, so grows the power of money, i.e. the exchange relation establishes itself as a power external to and independent of the producers (1973: 146).

Thus, while the postulate of a socio-historically determinate social totality is essential to the entire methodology, the decisive issue is the dominant form taken by the mediatory function of human productive activity within a particular historical epoch; that is, when capital seizes the realm of production and dominates the social metabolism or where it becomes the generalized mediation of social interchange with the earth, a historical process of generalization whereby living labour, i.e., the subject of social creative power, becomes progressively dominated by the objective conditions of its realization. It is thus for historical reasons that the material base of society fetishistically determines the overall course of development. While the natural basis of society is un-circumventable and must be socially mediated in some manner, i.e., some form of objectification and mediation is necessary, it is false and ahistorical to suggest that the material base must dominate the social order under any given circumstances. This assumption, which is often ascribed to Marx in order to denounce his theory and its political implications, is in complete contradiction to the Marxian project of radical democratic control over the social metabolism as the premise of mutual self-development and the basis for cultivating the richness of social individuality. Nevertheless, economic determinism does have an empirical basis, but it is grounded in the practical rule of capital, not Marxian theory. It is because of this inverted reality that Mészáros writes,

What is vitally important in this connection is the fact that ‘the basic idea of Marx’s entire system’ – ‘the concept of the social relations of production’ – is precisely his concept of alienation, i.e. the Marxian critical demystification of the system of ‘labour’s self-alienation,’ of ‘human self-alienation,’ of ‘the practically alienated relation of man to his objective essence,’ etc., as Lenin correctly recognized it. (2005: 94)
Thus, whatever the form taken by the relations of production under other socio-historically determinate orders, under the rule of capital the relations of production are essentially alienated relations in which the social subject is determined by the external logic of its product.

Alienated relations do not apply exclusively to living labour but, significantly, also to capitalists, or what Marx called the personifications of capital. David McNally captures this succinctly when he writes with reference to the source of these relations that,

One of the greatest misconceptions about capitalism is the notion that these tendencies flow from the motivations of a class of private owners of the means of production. Yet the reality is quite different: the drive to accumulate by means of exploitation is inherent in the generalization of the commodity form. An economy based on that form, in which economic reproduction occurs by means of exchange according to market criteria (socially necessary labour-time), will inevitably produce all of its basic relations, irrespective of the precise form of ownership. For what is crucial to capitalism is not a specific form of ownership of the means of production, but rather the capital relation, that relation in which the direct producers are dominated by the means of production and the incessant drive to develop and expand them. ‘The rule of the capitalist over the worker’, insists Marx, ‘is nothing but the rule of the independent conditions of labour over the worker.’ It is not the capitalist who creates these conditions; these conditions create the capitalist: ‘The capitalist functions only as personified capital, capital as a person ...’ This is what it means when Marx writes elsewhere that ‘capital is essentially capitalist’, capitalism refers to that specific set of social relations in which workers are subjected to the pressures of exploitative accumulation in order that the producing unit can survive in the world of commodity exchange. (1993: 180 [italics in original])

The positionality of the capitalist, while drastically different from and far more tolerable than that of workers, is equally an alienated one governed by an external necessity that requires conformity if one is to reproduce themselves in their respective social roles. It is in this sense that individuals can only act as personifications of a structural and therefore systemic logic as the basis of their practical survival and social viability.
The relationality of this system, or the form of its socio-historical structure of interdependence, is value. This is what Marx refers to as socially necessary labour time,\textsuperscript{22} which is essentially a standard of exploitation and imperative practically imposed by the separation of living labour from the means of production and its commodification as labour-power and the post-festum sociality of production undertaken privately and mediated by the commodity and money forms. It is a norm that dominates practical activity as the primary and inverted mediator of the social metabolism. As such, it is the force of personification, whereby the general fusion of productive capacity and the means of its realization are activated by the social determinations of capital, whether as wage-labour or capitalist, circumscribing social activity by a margin of action that radically excludes forms of social practice that do not conform to its imperatives.\textsuperscript{23} Under these premises, no one’s productive capacity is social from the outset, not the worker’s labour-power nor the capitalist’s means of production, and must therefore,

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\textsuperscript{22} Socially necessary labour-time, according to Marx, determines the magnitude of value under capitalist social relations of production and exchange, i.e., the standard of what can be socially and sustainably produced and consumed. As Marx defines it, “Socially necessary labour-time is the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent in that society. The introduction of power-looms into England, for example, probably reduced by one-half the labour required to convert a given quantity of yarn into woven fabric” (1976: 129). This refers to the conditions required to produce a product of value or a commodity, that is, one that can be exchanged and therefore realize a price in the form of money as the universal equivalent and abstract form of wealth under the conditions of generalized commodity production, where living labour is separated from the means and materials of production and social production is carried out privately by units of production and socialized through the market.

\textsuperscript{23} As Tony Smith argues, “ends and conceptions of the good adopted by individuals and groups that further the ends and good of capital are systematically privileged; those that do not, tend to be pushed to the margins of social life, or eradicated altogether… In a capitalist market society it is simply impossible to reach a level of pure spontaneous dispositions that have not been profoundly moulded by the valorisation imperative. Both the radical ‘open-endedness’ of capital and capital’s dependence on human agency help explain capital’s invisibility. From the standpoint of social agents pursuing their individual ends in a social world whose organising principle has such extreme indeterminacy, it does not appear that there is an organising principle built into generalised commodity production and exchange as a whole, shaping and restricting their ends. Extending the point to communitarian themes, from the standpoint of members of communities in such a social world, it appears that there are in principle no inherent restrictions on their ability to reproduce and develop their culture and traditions. These appearances are profoundly misleading” (Smith 2018: 118). Indigenous peoples who encounter the RCMP as their principal interlocutor have no illusion about the “radical open-endedness” of capitalist society.
consistently prove its social validity and viability according to the law of value in an effort to stave off ruin. For this reason, Marx’s theory of capital is critical to the issue of Indigenous self-determination because it identifies the social determinations that structurally restrict the form in which that power can be exercised regardless of the degree of political and legal autonomy recognized and granted by the settler state.

Capitalism as an Organic System

According to Marx, “a society is a particular complex of interconnected elements, a whole composed of various aspects which ‘stand to one another in a necessary connection arising out of the nature of the organism’ (Marx, 1843: 11 quoted in Lebowitz 2003: 52); and, those elements are differing limbs of an organic system, a ‘structure of society, in which all relations coexist simultaneously and support one another’ (2003: 52). Building off Marx, Michael Lebowitz writes, “Characteristic of ‘every organic system’ is that the premises of the system are results that the system itself produces; this theme of the reproduction of premises permeates Marx’s discussion in Capital” (2020: 43-44). The treatment of capitalism as an organic system, i.e., a system of reproduction, is thus a critical methodological postulate to identifying the essential premises of the capital system as the product of its own operative dynamic.

The central theoretical insight of this assumption is found in Capital Volume 1:

Capitalist production therefore reproduces in the course of its own process the separation between labour-power and the conditions of labour. It thereby reproduces and perpetuates the conditions under which the worker is exploited. It incessantly forces him [sic] to sell his labour-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order that he may enrich himself. It is no longer a mere accident that capitalist and worker confront each other in the market as buyer and seller. It is the alternating rhythm of the process itself which throws the worker back onto the market again and again as a seller of his labour-power and continually transforms his own product into a means by which another man can purchase him. In reality, the worker belongs to capital before he has sold himself to the capitalist... The
capitalist process of production, therefore, seen as a total connected process, i.e., a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital-relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer. (723-724)

In other words, the results of the process of capital accumulation are its own social premises, namely, the capitalist and the wage-labourer. The process is thus ‘organic’ by virtue of generating the conditions of its own reproduction through its positive development. Michael Lebowitz elaborates further on these organically reproduced premises when he writes the following:

From money-capital to productive-capital to commodity-capital and back to money-capital – there is the circuit of capital as a whole that permits the reproduction of capital as the premise of capitalist production... By understanding this continuing circuit of capital, we recognize that the capital that appears as a premise for capitalist production does not drop from the sky or otherwise from outside the circuit of capital. Even, indeed, if capital were to come initially from another source, Marx insisted that ‘the mere continuity’ of this process of production and circulation converts all capital into ‘capitalized surplus-value.’ That is, it is the result of the exploitation of workers. (2020: 49-50)

The methodological abstraction of an organic system thus demonstrates that capital is identical to alienated labour or the product of exploitation and not derived from sources external to the relations of production. Likewise,

In capitalism as an organic system, wage-laborers are not the result of the disintegration of other, pre-capitalist systems. They are not people formed outside of capitalism.

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The fact that the capital relation is reproduced organically does not preclude the reality that the concrete social totality in which it dominates is reproduced by other means, including theft and direct force. As William Clare Roberts writes, “Most of Marx’s Capital I, however, is devoted to laying bare the mechanisms through which capital is able to expand itself without resorting to theft, fraud and financial chicanery, and the discussion of primitive accumulation is left to the end of the volume. Indeed, at one point, Marx insists that the capitalist doesn’t actually “steal” from waged workers but, rather, exploits them. So, exploitation is by no means synonymous with thievery in Marx’s theory, nor is it meant to be a morally charged concept. Nevertheless, the conditions for “normal” processes of exploitation and capital accumulation could only have been established historically through prior processes of “dispossession”; and even when capitalism is well established, capitalists continue to resort to “predation, fraud and thievery” as supplementary means of accumulating wealth, above all when the normal processes of accumulation are unable to sustain “adequate” levels of profitability” (Smith 2021: 91).
Accordingly, ‘bloody discipline,’ ‘police methods,’ and ‘state compulsion’ are not required in capitalism as an organic system to ensure their submission to capital. On the contrary, with the development of capitalism as an organic system, they have already been subordinated to capital. Rather than abstract wage-laborers, they are already the products of capital. (50-51)

Thus, the dispossession of workers within capitalism is perpetuated by a forced synthesis of their productive capacity with the means of production in a way that reproduces their dispossession and dependence on the alienated conditions of labour; their separation from the means of production is both the premise and result of the process; it is not the outcome of external or direct intervention, despite its historical origins.

However, according to Lebowitz, “Actually existing capitalism… is not an organic system… [because] existing capitalism contains elements that are alien to the organic system of capitalism… [Due to this,] it is obvious that [it] is not the whole” (2020: 124-125). Moreover, these are “elements that represent a potential rupture of that structure, a process of becoming that would negate capitalism” (2020: 125). In other words, within the concrete whole in which capitalism develops as an organic system in an effort to subordinate all social practice to its expanded reproduction, there are social forces that do not reproduce its premises.  

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25 This theoretical framing is the basis for Lebowitz’s concept of ‘contested reproduction,’ which is a critical concept that further research into the issues explored in this dissertation will have to contend with. Lebowitz writes, “Indeed, two diametrically opposed systems, capitalism and community, coexist and interpenetrate in a process of contested reproduction. The central question for revolutionaries, then, is how to create the conditions in which the elements of capitalism can be subordinated by the system of community, a matter that has become urgent as the result of the crisis of the Earth system” (2020: 8). He continues: “characteristic of wholes marked by contested reproduction, there is always the possibility that neither system will prevail over the other for significant periods of time. Accordingly, stability and equilibrium, that is, homeostasis, will appear to characterize the whole. Even when – indeed, especially when – the whole appears stable, it is essential to recognize that the whole contains opposing forces, that it is characterized by contested reproduction” (Lebowitz 2020: 128). While Lebowitz understands the organic system of ‘community,’ however deformed and partial, as the main tendency of the multiple forces contesting capital’s dominance, we can understand Indigenous law, self-determination, governance, etc. as also constituent forces within that larger tendency. However, because the social basis from which the organic system of community emerges has been forged through colonialism, it must contend specifically with the Indigenous struggle within the broader social struggle against capital.
means displaces Marx’s analysis, which had a more circumscribed objective of understanding the essence of capital, given that it identifies the essential social premises of a society dominated by the capital form.

System of Social Metabolic Control

The social whole as noted above is not merely reproduced on the basis of relations of production alone, as the reality of both the socio-historical determinate totality of the capital system and settler colonialism attests. Thus, a proper dialectical understanding of the social totality must take on a broader set of social relations than the relations of production and the organic system of capitalism without abandoning the centrality of capitalist relations of production and their power of determination over that totality. In this sense, Mészáros argues that with reference to Marx’s conception of dialectical interdeterminations,

The social metabolism is the ultimate framework of reference of this conception, since it comprehends the totality of determinations, from the direct material processes to the most mediated intellectual practices. The structural foundation of all social processes is the transhistorical objectivity of social ontological determinations in virtue of the inescapable fact that the social metabolism is rooted — and remains so even at the highest conceivable level of social and technological development — in the metabolism between humankind and nature. (2011: 59)

The social metabolism is understood here as the most comprehensive horizon within which social practice unfolds and therefore, the theoretical vantage point from which to identify the complexity of social factors involved in this development as both functional of the status quo and threatening to its reproduction, without losing sight of this dynamic as one fundamentally
defined by the interchange between society and nature and between the social actors themselves.26

For this reason, capitalism cannot be simply defined as an economic system but as a mode of “social metabolic control.”27 The latter, according to Mészáros, is a more appropriate concept given capital’s domination over the social metabolism and the extent of its social permeation, subjecting the social conditions of virtually all human activities to its determinations and imperatives, however, mediated they may be from the epicentre of capital accumulation and direct exploitation. Hence, he writes that the capital system is the most powerful,

‘totalizing’ framework of control into which everything else, including human beings, must be fitted, and prove thereby their ‘productive viability,’ or perish if they fail to do so. One cannot think of a more inexorably all-engulfing – and in that important sense ‘totalitarian’ – system of control than the globally dominant capital system. For the latter blindly subjects to the same imperatives health care no less than commerce, education no less than agriculture, art no less than manufacturing industry, ruthlessly superimposing its own criteria of viability on everything, from the smallest units of its ‘microcosm’ to the most gigantic transnational enterprises, and from the most intimate personal relations to the most complex decision making processes of industry-wide monopolies, favouring always the strong against the weak. (1995: 41)

26 This was far from a foreign notion to Marx despite accusations of reductionism. As Mészáros writes, “Marx’s assertion about the ontological significance of economics become meaningful only if we are able to grasp the Marxian idea of manifold specific mediations, in the most varied fields of human activity, which are not simply ‘built upon’ an economic basis but also actively structure the latter through the immensely intricate and relatively autonomous structure of their own. Only if we succeed in dialectically grasping this multiplicity of specific mediations can we really understand the Marxian notion of economics. For if economics is the ‘ultimate determinant,’ it is also a ‘determined determinant’: it does not exist outside the always concrete, historically changing complex of concrete mediations, including the most ‘spiritual’ ones” (2005: 115).

27 Mészáros argues that “Capital is not simply a set of economic mechanisms, as its nature is often conceptualized, but a multi-faceted and all-embracing mode of social metabolic reproduction, deeply affecting every single aspect of life, from the directly material and economic to the most mediated cultural relations. Consequently, structural change is feasible only by challenging the capital system in its entirety as a mode of social metabolic control, instead of introducing partial adjustments into its framework” (2008: 186). As he goes on to argue, this is most apparent in light of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc more generally, which as a “post-revolutionary socioeconomic system remained trapped by the alienating structural constraints of capital as such, even though it instituted a post-capitalist mode of extracting surplus-labor by direct political means at an enforced rate,” and the failures of social democracy in the 20th century (Mészáros 2008: 186).
Thus, the capital system is not an ‘economic’ sub-system of society that is favoured and instituted by some states and groups, but the dominant form taken by the general dialectic of productive human activity, which mediates the interchange between society and nature itself and its imperatives command the metabolic relation that defines this relation. Moreover, despite the fact that the capital system is marked by structural uncontrollability given its alienated relations, which subject capital and labour alike to fetishistic imperatives, it remains a system of hierarchical control nonetheless through compulsion and enforcement, both within the units of production and at the most comprehensive level of state decision making.

Introducing these theoretical and methodological postulates into Indigenous Studies and the movement more broadly is critical because the theoretical abstraction of settler colonialism is not a mode of social metabolic control and, contrary to Patrick Wolfe, its logic is wholly inadequate in accounting for the positive development of the society that has attempted to supplant Indigenous nations, i.e., one based first and foremost on generalized commodity production and exchange. Above all, the radical consciousness of and ethical dedication to relationality that has become central to Indigenous theory and politics cannot forego the determinations of capital in understanding the nature of that relationality under its current socio-historical form. My goal in this dissertation, however, is not to provide a

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28 Wolfe, who is frequently cited by Indigenous and settler colonial studies scholars, writes, “settler colonialism has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event. In its positive aspect, elimination is an organizing principal of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off (and superseded) occurrence. The positive outcomes of the logic of elimination can include officially encouraged miscegenation, the breaking-down of native title into alienable individual freeholds, native citizenship, child abduction, religious conversion, resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools, and a whole range of cognate biocultural assimilations” (2006: 388). Although these forms of violence certainly had a social constitutive function and some continue to have a social reproductive function today, they can hardly account for the structural determinations of society as a form of reproduction, certainly not one driven by totalizing imperatives.
comprehensive theory of settler colonial capitalist society but to introduce specific
determinations of the capital system as they have arisen as social constraints and, therefore,
problems within the Indigenous struggle, specifically in the Land Back movement. Thus, rather
than describing the totality, I only address it as it arises in the practice of contesting it from a
specific vantage point. For as Mészáros writes, “a comprehensive and dynamic socio-historical
theory is inconceivable without a force, positively interested in social transformation, as its
practical ground” (Mészáros 2005: 309). This pertains to the nature of dialectics which is, at
least under the current socio-historical parameters of capitalist society, “a process in which a
concrete totality reveals itself to contain its own negation as one of its moments” (Mau 2023:
106) by virtue of the social forces (and their theoretical development) that elevate its
contradictions to the point of qualitative rupture and change or radical regression. This
dissertation is intended as a theoretical contribution to developing those social forces that
induce the former.

Organizational Forms of the Land Back Movement: Vantage Point on Totality

The particular social force from which my analysis is undertaken within this tension-ridden
social totality is the vantage point of the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back
movement, like the Unist’ot’en Camp and the Tiny House Warriors. These have mainly been
described as blockades, but, as many contemporary Indigenous scholars and activists point out,
they are equally sites of Indigenous resurgence and national social reproduction (Coulthard
2014: 169; Spice 2018: 41; L. Simpson 2021: 56).29 Accordingly, these organizations not only

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29 As Leanne Simpson puts it, “Blockades are both a refusal and an affirmation. An affirmation of a different
political economy. A world built upon a different set of relationships and ethics. An affirmation of life” (2021: 56).
function to impede the incursion of the colonial state and capitalist entities but as active sites of reoccupying traditional territory and provide an institutional form for Indigenous governance and law outside the parameters of colonial recognition and reform. The election of these organizations is informed by “a basic methodological principle,” which, as Harry Cleaver argues, “permeates Marx’s work on revolution and communism: to understand the direction in which society seems to be evolving, study the social forces at work forcing changes” (2019: 90). As expressions of some of most radically uncompromising anticolonial practices, especially insofar as they strive to assert in practice a form of Indigenous self-determination that is not subordinated to settler state sovereignty in principle, the organizational form of the Land Back movement embody social forces that elevate the colonial relation to an antagonism by forcing its structural character into the open and contesting it as such as the basis for radical social transformation beyond settler colonialism. From the vantage point of their struggle, the practice of Indigenous law reveals itself as a structurally impeded development within the social totality, but also a social force shaping that totality in decisive ways. Moreover, their principled and strategic assertiveness is not based on ideological dogma but an internalization of previous lessons derived from the history of the broader Indigenous struggle, particularly concerning the practical impasse of the colonial politics of recognition and other forms of state concession regarding Indigenous rights and social power. As such, they represent a vantage point where the essence of my methodological principles, namely, Anishinaabe ethics and law and Marxian dialectics, converge in practice.
History of Indigenous Grassroots Activism

The full significance and analytical power of this vantage point, however, is only realized once the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement are grasped as novel institutional forms of specific tendencies within the broader Indigenous movement since the mid-1960s, when a generalized struggle began to emerge. This broader movement is marked by several shorter movements, which can be roughly captured in the following periodization: the Red Power movement (approximately 1967-1975); the mass mobilization that defeated the White Paper (1969-1971); the international movement pioneered by the Fourth World ideology of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and the politics of the International Indian Treaty Council (1970-ongoing); Indian Rights for Indian Women (1967-1985); the Constitution Express (1978-1980); the Siege at Kanehsatà:ke (1982 to 2000); Indigenous Resurgence and Nationhood (1999-ongoing); Idle No More (2012-2013); Shut Down Canada (2020); MMIWG2S+ (1991-ongoing); and the Land Back movement (2016-ongoing). All of these developments articulate the broader Indigenous movement for Indigenous national self-determination, and all contain internal political tensions and divergent tendencies within them but also across them. The Land Back movement, as the most recent development of this general struggle, aims to take traditional territories back under Indigenous control and protection and thereby reclaim Indigenous jurisdiction while upholding traditional obligations and laws according to Indigenous cultures.  

30 Theorizing the organizational forms of the Land Back Movement within this broader

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30 In their co-authored Globe and Mail opinion piece from November 19th, 2020, Kanahus Manuel and Naomi Klein write: “‘Land Back’ means precisely what it sounds like: taking land back under Indigenous control and protection that was never legally ceded in the first place. Scholars at Ryerson University’s Indigenous-run Yellowhead Institute describe Land Back as a process of “reclaiming Indigenous jurisdiction: breathing life into rights and responsibilities” https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-land-back-is-more-than-a-slogan-for-a-resurgent-indigenous-movement/.
horizon is critical to consolidating and developing the historical tendencies they institutionalize as a dialectical force, that is, as the potential political and social mediations of a movement that can influence the course of general social development, i.e., politicize and transform the social totality. The broader Indigenous movement is the appropriate level of abstraction for my analysis of contemporary developments within it, given that its level of generality is critical to grasping these recent developments as embodiments and further developments of tendencies within the larger movement.

Lastly, this movement is the collective development of that social force capable of bringing about the flood discussed in the Anishinaabe Re-Creation Story above, and this dissertation is a result of the plunge to the bottom I have taken in recent years in the hope of bringing back a little earth that can contribute to further developing it in the hope of bringing about a new world in which Indigenous dignity is substantially recognized and honoured.

Organization of the Dissertation

The argument that follows is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter broadly develops the theory of dual dispossession as a concept based on the contemporary organizational forms, e.g., the Unist’ot’en Cultural Centre and the Tiny House Warriors, in the Land Back movement. Although the latter provide the practical basis for the theory, they are themselves identified as developments within the broader Indigenous movement since the mid-1960s. By situating the analysis in the activity of these organizations, the chapter argues that dual dispossession reveals the inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations through their practice of resistance and the enforcement of Indigenous law and governance. The notion of dual dispossession reveals the presupposition of their social power in the mitigation of the silent
compulsion of economic relations, which is grounded on the separation of living labour from the means of production.

The second chapter situates the contemporary organizations of the Land Back movement and the theory of dual dispossession within the history of the Indigenous struggle from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, specifically in the Red Power movement. As such, it traces two major tendencies within the movement that the concept identifies as converging within the organizational forms of the Land Back movement and aims to further develop: Indigenous subjective transformation through self-activity, especially grassroots organizations and direct action, and the critique of co-optation and strategic efforts to protect, sustain and develop the autonomy of the movement.

The third chapter continues the historical analysis but explicitly identifies the period of the late 70s and 80s up to the Siege at Kanehsatà:ke as the historical ground of Indigenous Resurgence theory. This period is marked by the defeat of the Red Power movement and the rise of the colonial politics of recognition and the emergence of nation-centric politics, which forms the practical basis for many of the theory’s main tenets.

The fourth chapter continues this analysis from the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 to the Idle No More movement in 2012-2013 with an emphasis on the relationship between these developments and critical Indigenous studies literature that emerged between 1999 and 2017 in the works of Taiaiake Alfred, Leanne Simpson, Glen Coulthard, and Audra Simpson. The

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31 Please see the explanation regarding the inclusion of Alfred’s work in this dissertation in chapter 4 on page 225-227, whereby I acknowledge the harm he has done to many Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and provide a justification for my critical assessment and historical contextualization of his theoretical contributions as critical to my methodology and to developing important aspects of the Indigenous struggle.
chapter identifies the practical basis of critical concepts such as resurgence, refusal, relati
relationality, the politics of recognition and grounded normativity as further developments of the tendencies within the Red Power movement, albeit with the socio-historical determination of its defeat and the objective developments that ensued.

The fifth chapter analyzes the semi-autonomous organizational forms that characterize the post-Idle No More era and the Land Back movement through the concept of dual dispossession. The analysis reveals that the redistribution of goods and labour that sustains these formations functions to mitigate the compulsion of capitalist relations of production. The chapter then turns to the mass struggle that erupted during the Wet’suwet’en struggle in 2020, which the analysis identifies as an extension of that infrastructure and the enhancement of its social power. The chapter argues that the theory of dual dispossession is crucial for understanding where the movement is now and where it can and should go.

The dissertation concludes with a section that draws out some of the most significant implications of the application of dual dispossession and the tendencies identified through it. Above all, it identifies the need to challenge capital as a social relation of production as implicit in the semi-autonomous organizations of the Land Back movement and a necessary condition for the movement to move beyond a defensive orientation and for Indigenous self-determination to be exercised in a non-capitalist form.
Chapter 1: Dual Dispossession: Opening up the Tendencies within the Contemporary Indigenous Struggle

“All negotiations over the scope and content of Aboriginal peoples’ rights in the last forty years have piggybacked off the assertive direct actions—including the escalated use of blockades—spearheaded by Indigenous women and other grassroots elements of our communities... [Thus,] if there has been any progress in securing our rights to land and life—including through the largely male-dominated world of formal negotiations—this progress is owed to the courageous activists practicing their obligations to the land and to each other in these diverse networks and communities of struggle.” (Coulthard 2014: 167-68)

Introduction

In the following chapter I develop the concept of dual dispossession for the purpose of my analysis of the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement, which I carry out in detail in chapter five. The chapter begins by highlighting the socio-historical necessity of Indigenous direct action and extra-parliamentary self-activity and organization. I then develop the concept of dual dispossession broadly followed by a description of the practical conditions for the emergence of it in theory. This is followed by clarification of the notions of the ‘mute compulsion of economic relations’ and ‘Indigenous proletarianization,’ which are essential to understanding how the concept of dual dispossession functions in the analysis of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement. After this, the chapter emphasizes that dual dispossession emerges from the Indigenous response to colonial and capitalist social relations in the specific context of these organizations and concludes with a brief point about how these organizational forms institutionalize historical tendencies from the broader Indigenous struggle in novel ways.
Historical Context of the Concept of Dual Dispossession

Indigenous direct action has been a “vital conditioning force”\textsuperscript{32} for the recognition of Indigenous rights and the achievement of reforms within the settler colonial political and legal system. The historical record bears this out very clearly and consistently at least since the mid-to late 1960s when a generalized Indigenous movement began to evolve. Such actions were and continue to be premised on the self-activity and organization of Indigenous Peoples.\textsuperscript{33} In some cases, they were intended to force settler governments to address the dire needs of Indigenous communities, such as the armed occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora in 1974 or the travelling campaign of the Native People’s Caravan that same year; in others, they were carried out to defend Indigenous land by preventing harmful capitalist developments, such as the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 or the mass movement of the Wet’suwet’en uprising in the winter of 2020. However, they are not simply undifferentiated forms of ‘extra-legal’ activity.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32} This phrase is taken from István Mészáros, who uses it in reference to the function of an extra-parliamentary labour movement in the neoliberal era. The full sentence reads: “What is important to bear in mind here is that the renewal of the parliamentary form of political legislation itself is unavoidable if the labour movement is to achieve anything at all under the present circumstances. Such a renewal can only come about through the development of an extra-parliamentary movement as the vital conditioning force of Parliament itself and of the legislative framework of transitional society in general” (1995: 729). By analogy, this same principle, as the historical record draws out, is inherent in the historical necessity of Indigenous direct action pointed out by Coulthard.

\textsuperscript{33} What defines this form of action in contrast to the officially sanctioned political processes of the state is that it is initiated and carried out by the Indigenous grassroots according to their own immediate needs, decision-making processes, knowledge, and tactics, as well as their own self-designated leadership.

\textsuperscript{34} A thorough critique of the category of ‘extra-legal’ as applied to these actions by pundits and politicians is beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to say here that it is hypocritical because it assumes not only a transgression of the settler rule of law but naturalizes a suppression of that same law insofar as the substantiation of Indigenous rights, which have a constitutional basis and which have been recognized by the colonial courts, is denied in political practice by settler colonial governments, both federal and provincial. This is most evident in the granting of injunctions, which have overwhelmingly favoured corporations and governments since the entrenchment of Section 35 in the \textit{Canadian Constitution, 1982}. See Pasternak 2023.
Although this form of political action has been historically necessary, it does not follow that Indigenous direct action merely functions as an external corrective to a political and legal system that is intrinsically disposed to institutionalizing substantive Indigenous rights and a radically open form of Indigenous self-determination. The history of the Indigenous struggle in what is presently known as Canada shows that the results and gains of these actions, especially in the post-White Paper era,\(^\text{35}\) have been equally shaped by an antagonistic counter-struggle from the state and capitalist class, which has sought to undermine the broader movement’s radical anticlonial tendencies and severely restrict the margin of those rights. As a result, the colonial politics of recognition,\(^\text{36}\) as the paradigm of this counter-struggle, which first emerged in the mid-1970s but has only become generalized since the 1990s, has not only continued to create conditions which have consistently necessitated grassroots Indigenous direct action, it has also been sustained by the fragmented, diffuse, and fleeting nature of those actions and of the agents and organizations who have carried them out.

The generalized practice of the colonial politics of recognition has been sustained by several factors, not least because the social base that has underpinned many tactics used by Indigenous Peoples did not undergird institutional forms of power in their aftermath, granting the state by default ultimate discretion over the substance of recognition that was achieved through direct action. Perhaps the clearest example of this is the Constitution Express, which

\(^{35}\) The 1969 White Paper or the “Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969,” which proposed the abolition of Indigenous legal and political distinctions under the ideology of liberal equality, provoked a mass Indigenous movement and was the first colonial policy to be defeated.

\(^{36}\) Glen Coulthard developed this concept in his 2014 book *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, which I discuss in chapter four.
was instrumental in forcing the Trudeau government to entrench Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in the Canadian Constitution in the early 1980s. Despite this success, as Art Manuel writes,

The 1980s were largely a lost decade for Indigenous peoples in Canada. One of the main reasons was that, after the victory of the Constitution Express, we left it to our leaders to take care of things behind closed doors or in the staged federal-provincial conferences. We believed again that somehow we could quietly negotiate our way into new breakthroughs for justice for our people. In fact, we could not even get governments in this country to recognize and affirm the rights they had just included in their own Constitution... The great error on our side was to relax the grassroots mobilization within Canada and internationally. Especially when it quickly became apparent how wildly different our people’s vision of self-government was from what the provincial and federal governments were peddling. (Manuel 2015: 115-16)

Although newly won formal rights of this magnitude would have certainly inspired a degree of faith in the dominant political and legal process, as Manuel points out, the mobilization was shortly thereafter halted as the state began to entice various organizations with funding, thereby fracturing the movement. As a result, UBCIC president George Manuel’s “peoples’ movement,’ which had motivated the Express in the first place, was thoroughly alienated from the process of determining the scope and content of those rights.

37 According to settler activist and long-time policy analyst Murray Angus, “The evidence during the 1970s and early 1980s suggested that with enough determination, persistence and professionalism in political lobbying and legal manoeuvring, their [i.e., Indigenous Peoples’] aspirations might eventually be met by working within the system” (1990: 63).

38 For example, Art Manuel writes, “Our leadership was lost in this maze. After boycotting the signing ceremony for the Constitution Act in 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood accepted $2.5 million from Ottawa to enter the post-constitutional discussions with the federal government and ten provinces. This was obviously a hopeless task and, at the last minute, before the first federal-provincial conference in 1983, dissension on the issue led to a fracturing of the NIB. The Western organizations pulled out to form the Coalition of First Nations, denouncing the NIB for abandoning the battle for First Nations sovereignty” (2015: 115-116).

39 As George Manuel’s biographer Peter MacFarlane writes, “at the age of fifty-five Manuel was heading back to British Columbia to build his peoples’ movement. Ottawa had not absorbed him; it had radicalized him by showing him that reasoned argument and a just cause did not lead to government action. Governments, by their nature, only responded to a show of power, and the only power Indian Nations had at their disposal was that generated by the commitment and drive of their people. So he would build a movement to harness that energy and, if need be, he would lead that movement to the steps of Parliament” (2020, 217). This strategy would be a crucial factor in the mobilization of the Constitution Express.
Another factor that has sustained the dominant practice of colonial reform via recognition is the isolation of many struggles centred on direct action, grounded as they have been in local and immediate concerns out of necessity. Concluding the long decade of disappointment and anger resulting from the Constitutional stalemate referred to by Manuel above was a slew of land-based resistance in the late 1980s. These critical assertions of Indigenous jurisdiction on the ground, which certainly altered the social conditions of struggle, were, as Coulthard rightly points out, symptomatic of the breakdown of liberal recognition, culminating as they did in the conflict at Kanehsatâ:ke in 1990. However, they did not signify nor lead to a generalized crisis of recognition as the paradigm of colonial reform. Even the explosiveness of the so-called “Oka Crisis,” today rightly referred to as the Siege of Kanehsatâ:ke, which reverberated (inter)nationally, was diffused by the protracted process of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which, like the patriation of the Constitution, inspired the hope of impending social transformation among Indigenous Peoples (Coulthard 2014: 120).

Significantly, the dynamic of this flashpoint-inducing pattern of misrecognition, whereby colonial reform is repeatedly undertaken post-crisis after stretching the narrow practical limits of accommodation, initially came into its own with the defeat and decline of the Red Power movement. The latter was accomplished in part by the active role played by the state’s police forces in fragmenting Indigenous grassroots direct action-centred politics. The movement, which saw its apogee in the mid 1970s, was considered by the RCMP to be the greatest threat to national security in 1974 (Rutherford 2020: 125). In response, the RCMP, along with the FBI, which was facing off with the American Indian Movement on the Pine Ridge Reservation at the
time in a vicious and murderous campaign, infiltrated the movement with spies and agent provocateurs, who not only performed surveillance but also attempted to instigate violent tactics in order to justify police intervention.\textsuperscript{40} This kind of atomizing intervention was thus coeval within the rise of the colonial politics of recognition, mitigating as it did the revolutionary impulse of the Red Power movement towards mass coalitional politics and undermining its disposition for popular education and offensive tactics.\textsuperscript{41}

It would take nearly another four decades before this kind of strategy would reappear in some form with the emergence of Idle No More in 2012 to 2013. Despite being diffused by the lack of a coherent strategy, the fragmented deployment of tactics and the state cooptation of Indigenous leadership, Idle No More embodied the universalizing impulse of the Red Power movement toward mass action and solidarity that had been undermined by the colonial politics of recognition in the early to mid-1970s.\textsuperscript{42} However, it was not until the Shut Down Canada


\textsuperscript{41} This is best exemplified by the work of Howard Adams, especially Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View, Fifth House Publishers, 1989, which was originally published in 1975, and draws these elements into a coherent theory.

\textsuperscript{42} In his biography of Mohawk and Red Power activist Richard Oaks, Kent Blansett writes that “Recent Indigenous political coalitions, from the Idle No More movement to the Water Protectors’ rejection of the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Reservation, can trace their historical roots back to the abandoned prison within the heart of San Francisco Bay, an island where Native Nationalism awakened a great vision of Red Power” (2018: 3). This reference is to the famous 19-month occupation of Alcatraz by the Indians of All Tribes starting in November 1969, a pan-Indigenous organization, which commonly marks the generalization of the Red Power movement, even though the slogan dates to Ponca activist Clyde Warrior of the National Indian Youth Council as earlier as 1965 and organizations, such as AIM, already existed at the time. As Blansett argues, the politics of Red Power was grounded on a form of intertribalism that “center[ed] on the power of place and Native Nationalist definitions of shared culture [that] enable[d] Native peoples to retain their Tribal identity, yet create a political, legal, and Intertribal identity and culture as American Indians. Native peoples do not willingly give up their Tribal affiliations… to become American Indian. Rather, they protect these Tribal affiliations and reinforce them within Intertribal coalitions” (2018: 8). This universalism was even more radical in the politics of organizations like the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP). According to David Myer Temin, NARP deployed “the idiom of internal colonization… to desanctify the boundaries of the settler nation-state by knitting together a variety of struggles against colonial-racial capitalism in a web of relations with global revolutionary ambitions” (2023: 160). These two
uprising in the winter of 2020 in solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en Nation’s traditional government that a general practice premised on the clear rejection of the colonial politics of recognition would undergird a mobilization on a scale comparable to Idle No More.  

Although suffering the fate of global dynamics in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic and the state’s relative success in re-localizing the conflict against its anticolonial momentum, i.e., its structural challenge to the colonial relation, the struggle that erupted in the winter of 2020 revealed a tendency not only towards the necessity of direct action. Critically, it also embodied a concerted strategy of and tendency towards developing semi-autonomous organizational forms that demonstrated the capacity of activating, sustaining, and enhancing the coercive power of extra-parliamentary social forces. The latter have progressively become decisive forms of Indigenous political leverage in the struggle for self-determination, especially since the emergence of the Land Back movement, and, as I will later argue, for the potential of exercising self-determination in non-capitalist form.  

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Examples represent the spectrum of Red Power politics but share what I referred in the text as a “universal impulse.”

43 The 2020 movement demonstrated a clear conviction in practice that the colonial politics of recognition represents a structural impasse to the just recognition of Indigenous rights and the transcendence of the colonial relation. As I discuss below, the tactics deployed during the movement embodied the thrust of a broad political strategy that some individuals and organizations were disseminated in a conscious and concerted way in the lead up to the conflict, which recognized the imperative of cultivating a social force capable of coercing the state and capitalist class into substantive practical recognition of Indigenous self-determination.

44 It should be emphasized that the ‘extra’-legal and ‘extra’-parliamentary character of these actions and organizations is relative to colonial law and the settler state, and that this negative external character (‘extra-’) is coeval with the positive development and assertion of Indigenous law and governance beyond the horizon of state legitimacy. This does not mean the exercise of these powers is not simultaneously determined by their relationship to settler state law and authority, it simply means they cannot be defined solely in relation to them, at least from an epistemology of Indigenous resurgence and the historical development of the struggle for self-determination. The question of whether Indigenous extra-legal direct action is reactionary or affirmative of a different form of social practice is a practical issue borne out in the development or repression of the historical and strategic tendencies that I am theorizing and not merely an epistemological question. There is, however, an important sense of ‘extra-legal’ as it pertains to settler solidarity.
The Concept of Dual Dispossession

To properly grasp this historical development of “extra-legal” actions into concrete semi-autonomous organizational forms, specifically those of the Land Back movement, and the possibility of its further political development as a movement, i.e., the generalization of their social power, the social relations of capitalist production, however mediated, must be theorized as intrinsic to the colonial and anticolonial experience of Indigenous Peoples as individuals and nations. To this end, I propose a theory of dual dispossession to capture the co-determination of Indigenous (collective) subjectivity by colonial and capitalist social relations. This presumes that the structural subordination of Indigenous national authority and political power, which facilitates effective control over Indigenous lands and thus functions to dispossess Indigenous nations, is mediated by the separation of the means of production from living labour and their forced reunification under the determinations and imperatives of capital (not capitalists).

Stated differently, contemporary Indigenous social activity, including traditional social practice so critical to Indigenous resurgence, presupposes generalized commodity production and exchange, whereby living labour is dispossessed of the conditions of production and radically divorced from control over that process, and therefore externally determined and constrained by the imperatives of capital. These practical premises constitute the social conditions of settler colonial dispossession and domination as well as Indigenous resurgence.45

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45 According to Mészáros, the fundamental practical premises of the capital system, which are a set of interconnected determinations that entail their own reproductive imperatives, include the radical divorce of the means and material of production from living labour; the assignment of all the important directing and decision-making functions in the established productive and reproductive order to the personifications of capital; the regulation of the social metabolic interchange between human beings and nature and among the individuals themselves on the basis of capital’s second order mediations; and the determination and management of the all-embracing political command structure of society in the form of the capitalist state, under the mystifying primacy of the material base (Mészáros 2010: 419). In their most general formulation, the second-order mediations of capital include capital, wage-labour, and the state. These are the socio-historical forms taken by the first-order or
case even if “the history and experience of dispossession, not proletarianization, has been the
dominant background structure shaping the character of the historical relationship between
Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state” (Coulthard 2014: 13). A socially dominant
condition, of course, is not an exclusive condition. Nevertheless, the primacy generally (and
rightly) attributed to colonial dispossession, not only in Coulthard’s work but also because of
the pervasive influence of Patrick Wolfe’s theory of settler colonialism, leads to a mere
juxtaposition of these social relations as parallel structures or dual systems at best, which,
subsequently, leaves their co-determinative power underdeveloped both theoretically and
politically. This tendency, however, is not the result of theoretical short-sightedness but is
grounded upon the political exigencies and developments inherent in the Indigenous struggle
at a given historical moment.

Coulthard’s theory was developed in the lead-up to Idle No More, and Red Skin, White
Masks (2014) concludes with a set of critical theses responding to the movement’s demise in
2013. In his conclusion, Coulthard insists on the necessity of direct action in light of the
historical pattern of the broader Indigenous movement referred to above, but especially after
the Idle No More movement demonstrated the potential of a generalized strategy of
coordinated direct action targeting the country’s infrastructure (despite being stymied by
factors both internal and external to the movement). During the movement, those who
engaged in direct action showed signs of a conscious need to bypass the state and put capital

primary and un-circumventable mediations that any society must in some way organize in order to sustain itself.
For his discussion of ‘first-order or primary mediations’ in relation to ‘second-order mediations,’ see especially Mészáros’ Social Structure and Forms of Consciousness Volume 1: The Social Determination of Method, 2010: 280-283.
46 See Coulthard’s discussion of the relation between the colonial and capital relations on pages 12 and 13 of Red Skin, White Masks (2014).
squarely within the crosshairs of anticolonial struggle, albeit at the point of circulation exclusively.\textsuperscript{47} Nevertheless, due to this development, Idle No More entailed the (re)emergence,\textsuperscript{48} however inchoate, of an offensive disposition towards the state and the capitalist class. This was clearly illustrated by the fact that the movement was met with a major consolidation of Canadian security agencies, which took place as the movement evolved.\textsuperscript{49} In any case, this experience would have signaled some of the most significant and urgent developments within the broader Indigenous struggle in need of theoretical clarification, which Coulthard’s robust critique and rejection of the colonial politics of recognition and the five

\textsuperscript{47} That is, by targeting the movement of commodities to market before surplus value is realized at the point of sale.

\textsuperscript{48} The Red Power movement and the anti-White Paper mass resistance in the late 1960s and early 1970s also entailed offensive strategies.

\textsuperscript{49} In their study of the policing of Indigenous movements, Crosby and Monaghan demonstrate, using the \textit{Access to Information Act}, that in “Attempting to mitigate economic disruptions.... a multitude of actors and intelligence networks consolidated colonial practices of security governance and integrated into what CSIS coined a ‘central fusion centre for Native problems’... [and] Given the scope of Indigenous mobilizations [during the Idle No More movement] – more than a thousand actions across the country – [they argue that] the response involved potentially unprecedented resources dedicated toward a campaign of mass surveillance” (2018: 99). Moreover, they write that “The surveillance practices targeting Idle No More incorporated a fusion centre approach that involved dozens of policing agencies, from local to national security agencies, with the purpose of integrating intelligence capabilities with numerous other settler colonial entities that monitor Indigenous Peoples” (2018: 104).
theses that conclude *Red Skin, White Masks* respond to directly; Indigenous proletarianization and class struggle not being among them in any immediate and explicit sense.

**Defenders of the Land and the Wet’suwet’en Uprising**

In any case, such theoretical interventions further consolidated the social force of a strategy that was already being developed practically by some organizations, most notably the Defenders of the Land and their allies. Although there was evidence of this strategy during Idle No More, its widespread application was not seen until the Wet’suwet’en struggle nearly a decade later. In an article written shortly after the apex of the struggle, Martin Lukacs argued that the conflict was in large part the result of the Defenders who had engaged with renewed vigor in the immediate aftermath of Idle No More in the long arduous work of grassroots political education and organization predicated on the conviction that

> The real potential power of economic disruption... was not in the cities but back in the home territories of Indigenous land defenders, crisscrossed by highways, rail lines and logging roads and facing proposed pipelines, mines or mega-dams. [And] [i]f the movement could enlist both the growing numbers of Indigenous rights supporters in

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50 Significantly, Coulthard’s analysis of the colonial politics of recognition has helped enhance the exigency to engage in direct action by virtue of a historical contextualization of its recurring necessity and his demonstration of the structural imposition of capitalist imperatives on Indigenous national development and political autonomy at the heart of liberal colonial reform. Whereas the necessity of direct action during earlier phases of struggle, especially during the Red Power era, was due mainly to the radical exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from politics and the general suppression of Indigenous rights, in the era of colonial recognition, the exigency to engage in direct action is increasingly based on a critique and consciousness of the structural incompatibility between the imperatives of capital and the evolving notion of Indigenous self-determination grounded on the principles of resurgence. Thus, while colonial reform delivered concessions and a wider margin of political and legal action for Indigenous Peoples, it is only in recent years with the intensification of oil and gas extraction and a slew of Indigenous legal victories that the structural limits of reform have become more transparent, not least because of theoretical interventions like Coulthard’s and the practical confrontation of Water Protectors and Land Defenders.

51 Coulthard does explicitly reject capitalism in thesis number two, “Capitalism No More!,” but he develops it by arguing for a mixed-economy as the basis of Indigenous nationhood and self-determination premised on resurgence, not a general strategy to suppress or eradicate capital as a social relation of production that internally constitutes and structurally constrains Indigenous social practice. I discuss this more in the conclusion to chapter five.

52 Martin Lukacs (2020) writes that “The founders of this network — called Defenders of the Land — included key leaders of the Unist’ot’en camp from Wet’suwet’en territory, radical intellectuals like Arthur Manuel and Russ Diabo, and a matriarch from Grassy Narrows who had overseen the longest running blockade in Canadian history.”
urban centres [especially in the wake of Idle No More and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission] and the potential for economic disruption wielded by communities in rural areas, its bargaining power with government and industry might be decisive, providing the leverage that Art Manuel believed necessary to enforce Indigenous rights on the ground. (Lukacs 2020)

The realization of this strategy was manifest in the winter of 2020 above all in the solidarity blockades that targeted Canada’s so-called critical infrastructure, which were carried out by Indigenous and settler allies in both urban and rural settings alike, thereby creating the leverage needed by the Hereditary Chiefs and the traditional government of the Wet’suwet’en Nation to enforce the criminalization of the Costal GasLink pipeline and its financial backers as well as the Canadian state that authorized the project. It is reasonable to assume that the widespread reception of works like *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014), *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014) and *As We Have Always Done* (2017), which I discuss in detail in chapter four, among scholars and activists alike over the previous six years helped consolidate the social force behind the uprising, premised as it was on an explicit rejection of the colonial politics of recognition.  

Despite having some measure of precedent in Idle No More, Shut Down Canada was not simply the generalization of a specific tendency within the former but consisted of a new development and organizational form as a key element of its power. This was institutionalized in the Unist’ot’en Healing Centre, which was and remains a semi-autonomous site of active Indigenous reoccupation.  

This relative autonomy is premised on a redistribution of money, goods, knowledge, skills, and labour not by way of the state but politicized segments of the broader Indigenous and settler working class, which constitutes a quasi-circuit and

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53 One might think of Coulthard’s *Red Skin, White Masks* as the most systematic and comprehensive formulation of this critique, which Indigenous resurgence scholarship more broadly has been advocating for the last 20 years or so.

54 It will become clearer below why autonomous is qualified here.
infrastructure of social reproduction. This is best conceived as the infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection. The latter is deliberately secured by means of a strategy that bypasses the state from the outset and facilitates a practical rejection of the colonial politics of recognition insofar as the infrastructure it generates objectively enables those on the frontlines to evade its parameters in the determination of their action. This strategy is also essential to the Tiny House Warriors and has helped sustain the ongoing occupation at 1492 Land Back Lane on Six Nations territory and the 20-year blockade at Grassy Narrows. However, it saw its most elaborate expression in the camps that constituted the resistance at Standing Rock in 2016 to 2017, as their internal infrastructure expanded, becoming more complex and developed as the external threat intensified, thereby creating a more robust counterforce that enhanced the effective power of resistance on the frontlines.

However, in contrast to the latter, the Unist’ot’en camp, whose founding predates Standing Rock, is not primarily a defensive response but forms the social basis for a pre-emptive and positive institutionalization and practice of Indigenous governance and law. This is further reinforced by the fact that it was strategically built in the pathway of multiple pipelines, which institutes a principle of Indigenous resurgence based on a conviction of the structural incompatibility of mutual Indigenous national and colonial capitalist development. This implies that the exercise and development of Indigenous law, governance, and social practice more broadly is conceived in and against a specific form of society, namely, one dominated by capital, however undertheorized the latter may be. Further, when one considers the strategic

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55 This characterization will become more significant when I analyze the limitations of this strategy in chapter four.
56 This is best captured by camp founder Freda Huson’s appropriation of the state’s concept of critical infrastructure, which I elaborate on in chapter five of this dissertation. See Spice (2018).
value of these pipeline projects (one of which has already been defeated)\textsuperscript{57} within the state’s response to the crisis of Canadian capitalism,\textsuperscript{58} the Unist’ot’en camp harbours radical implications that extend far beyond Wet’suwet’en national interests. This general strategy entails a novel development within the broader historical development of the Indigenous movement.

Moreover, like Standing Rock, the Unist’ot’en camp is premised on an infrastructure of social reproductive labour that was qualitatively enhanced in a moment of crisis, especially in the establishment of the Gidimt’en checkpoint and the influx of Land Defenders that joined the camp in the aftermath of the enforcement of the first injunction. Unlike Standing Rock though, the coercive power of the Unist’ot’en camp and the Wet’suwet’en traditional government it helps substantiate was not primarily grounded upon the development of the camps’ immediate infrastructure (although this remained critical), but was constituted by the mass solidarity movement that erupted in response to the encroachment. It was this social force, which transcended the camp and the Wet’suwet’en Nation, that undergirded the power of the Hereditary Chiefs’ authority and jurisdiction in 2020 and created the leverage for the enforcement of Wet’suwet’en law regardless of how effective this turned out to be. Not only was this social force a necessary condition for the exercise of Wet’suwet’en law and governance, but it also demonstrated that conditions external to Indigenous nations are critical to the effective power of those who defy the colonial politics of recognition in practice.

\textsuperscript{57} Enbridge’s Northern Gateway Project was defeated in 2016.

\textsuperscript{58} See Gordon and McCormack (2020) in which the authors point out how the expansion of oil and gas exports to Asia is a key pillar in the state and capitalist class response to the crisis of Canadian capitalism, which is understood as a crisis in profitability.
However, there is yet another important difference between the Wet’suwet’en struggle and Standing Rock that points to a novel development in the Indigenous movement. As an *active* reoccupation, the semi-autonomy of the Unist’ot’en camp, premised as it was on the organized rejection of the politics of recognition in practice, was a critical condition for activating an offensive mass struggle or the coercive power of an extra-parliamentary social force as leverage for Indigenous nationhood and self-determination beyond state recognition, providing as it did a social basis for the authority of the Hereditary Chiefs, which was not marginalized by the *Indian Act* Chief and Council system. As a result of this semi-autonomous base, the social force unleashed in solidarity with it had a clear political entity to support and leadership to follow and was thus able to undermine to some extent the so-called monopoly on violence held by the state by redistributing extra-legal coercive power to it. Although the uprising appeared predominantly defensive in nature given the immediate goal of stopping the Coastal GasLink Pipeline, the social force of solidarity embodied the social reproductive labour of Indigenous national liberation however embedded, fragmented, and incoherent this may have been. This, of course, was a not a fully-fledged self-understanding nor a transparent politics but a latent tendency within the movement. Nevertheless, it represents a novel development within the broader Indigenous struggle, yet one which remains caught in a tension between the instrumental rationality of a strategy designed to force colonial state recognition of Indigenous rights and title within the social parameters of the capital system.  

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59 Art Manuel’s strategy, which guides the political organizing of the Defenders of the Land, is caught within this ambiguity, especially his call to politicize the illegal subsidies to Canada’s industries by virtue of their violation of Aboriginal rights and title in order to commercialize those very rights (2017: 189), or when he writes, “We need to develop our own mixed economy where income generating activity is married to a self-sufficient farming, hunting, fishing and gathering plan, with a place for very carefully planned and managed developments” (2017: 262).
and the potential of a positive institutionalization of Indigenous governance and law through a socialist mass movement. This problem is not simply an epistemological question but, above all, a practical one, and its resolution depends upon the development of its social conditions in one direction or the other.

The Practical Basis of Dual Dispossession

The theory of dual dispossession clarifies and develops both of these issues by properly identifying this novel development represented by the semi-autonomous organizational forms of the Land Back movement and some of their most important implications or tendencies. Critically, the concept allows one to see that, given the way the movement has evolved, especially insofar as it has progressively identified the politics of recognition as a colonial impasse, it has been strategically forced to contend with both social relations simultaneously as a condition of practicing Indigenous governance and enforcing Indigenous law outside the parameters of settler state recognition. Thus, like other concepts, such as the colonial politics of recognition, refusal or radical resurgence, the development of the movement has constituted the practical basis and the necessary conditions for the development of the concept of dual dispossession. In this sense, the concept was rendered visible by further developments within the struggle over the last ten years, particularly since Idle No More and the appearance of theoretical works such as Red Skin, White Masks. The practical conditions for the theory of dual dispossession are most apparent in the widespread efforts to sustain the organizational forms and the frontlines across the Land Back movement, e.g., Tiny House Warriors, 1492 Land Back

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Elsewhere Manuel writes, “Like all nations, we need to find a place for ourselves in the international marketplace” (2017: 189).

60 In chapter five, I develop the basis for the latter.
Lane, and Unist’ot’en, especially in the form of crowdfunding and volunteering, which constitute an infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection.

**Mute Compulsion of Economic Relations**

The analysis carried out through the concept of dual dispossession is thus based on a Marxist theory of the separation of labour from the material and means of production as the condition of the commodification of labour-power and its exploitation in the process of capitalist production. This premise is critical for explaining an important dimension of Water Protection and Land Defence largely neglected in the literature; namely, how are Water Protectors and Land Defenders sustained on the frontlines of anticolonial resistance in a capitalist society branded by this fundamental separation?

The “mute compulsion of economic relations” is a force referred to by Marx in *Capital Volume 1*:

> [T]he mute compulsion of economic relations seals the domination of the capitalist over the worker. Extra-economic, immediate violence is still of course used, but only in exceptional cases. In the ordinary run of things, the worker can be left to the ‘natural laws of production,’ i.e., it is possible to rely on his dependence on capital, which springs from the conditions of production themselves, and is guaranteed in perpetuity by them. (Marx 1992: 899)

As Søren Mau argues, this is a form of power required for the reproduction of capital that is “impersonal, abstract, and anonymous... embedded in the economic processes themselves” (Mau 2023: 3-4). Thus, because one is deprived of the means to produce the goods one needs to live, one is forced to sell their capacity to labour to those who possess them, which is a compulsion that is not enforced by any agent but issues from the organization of the social
structure itself. Because one remains a wagemaker at the end of the circuit of capital, one is forced to repeat the process. There is no general use of direct force or physical violence to compel this dynamic of reproduction; rather, the compulsion stems from the way that the structure of these general relations determines the course of social practice or, as Mau puts it, it “addresses the subject only indirectly by remoulding its social and material environment in a manner that forces it to act in accordance with the logic of valorisation, i.e., capital accumulation (Mau 2021: 8). The key premise of this compulsion is that the worker’s labour-power subsists without any utility to them because they lack the conditions of actualizing it, giving rise to a social condition and result which Marx termed “labour as absolute poverty.”

Moreover, this process of separation is simultaneously a forced reunification, a splitting of the subject and object of social production in a way that compels the actualization of labour-power to realize itself according to ends that are external and foreign to it, i.e., the imperatives of capital accumulation. However, this external determination is not experienced as such. In a powerful formulation of this forced unity that recurs because of the worker’s character as ‘absolute poverty,’ Søren Mau writes that,

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61 Chris Arthur writes that “the prevalence and persistence of labour markets is explained by the dominance of capitalist exploitation which ensures the reproduction of the workers’ propertylessness. Such a circle characterises a self-grounded totality” (2022: 41).

62 As Marx argued, where capital constitutes the real foundation of society, the worker’s ability to work or labour-power is not useful to them precisely because they have been separated (as a class) from the objective conditions, e.g., tools, raw materials, land, etc., through which this ability can be realized in practice. As a result of this social condition, the direct producer is structurally determined within the capital system in a manner that Marx conceptualized as “absolute poverty,” which he defined as “labour separated from all means and objects of labour, from its entire objectivity... existing as an abstraction from these moments of its actual reality... [a] complete denudation, purely subjective existence of labour, stripped of all objectivity. Labour as absolute poverty: poverty not as shortage but as total exclusion of objective wealth” (1973: 295-296). In other words, because they have been and continue to be deprived of the conditions for the actualization of their capacity, that capacity exists socially as a mere potentiality – those who command it are structurally held in a state of possibility which can only be actualized under specific conditions of social production. As such, this process of separation entails a real transformation and distortion of property.
the radical separation between life and its conditions... allows capital to insert itself as the mediator between them. The proletarian is a ‘mere possibility’ or a ‘bare living labour capability,’ and by isolating capacities from the conditions of their realisation, capital becomes the logic which governs the translation of possibility into actuality. This is the most fundamental level of the economic power of capital: ‘the free worker,’ as Marx explains, ‘only satisfy his vital needs to the extent that he sells his labour [power]; hence is forced into this by his own interest, not by external compulsion.’ The valorisation of value injects itself into the human metabolism, making the reproduction of capital the condition of the reproduction of life. This is why workers ‘are compelled to sell themselves voluntarily,’ as Marx puts it in a formula which nicely captures the paradoxical and deceptive nature of capitalist power. (Mau 2023: 132)

Further, this forced reunification is implied by the fact that the wage-labourer is a producer of surplus-value by definition (if they have the fortune of being successfully exploited) and that one can only engage in necessary labour, i.e., the labour of reproduction and subsistence, through the extraction of surplus labour, i.e., exploitation. Additionally, as I noted in the introduction regarding the organic system of capitalism, this process of production is equally one of reproduction, whereby its realization is simultaneously the generation of its own social premises.

Moreover, the mute compulsion issues from the social relations of production and their reproduction within an order where capital dominates the social metabolism; that is, where capital is the generalized mediation of social interchange with the earth. It is because the social form of capital dominates at the level of social reproduction that its relations are perpetuated by practical compulsion, not voluntary association. This historical situation entails,

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63 Further down, Mau writes, quoting Marx from the Grundrisse, “This conjunction of potentiality and actuality allows capital to insert itself as ‘the social mediation as such, through which the individual gains access to the means of his reproduction’” (2023, 134).

64 For instance, Bonefeld writes, “Labouring for the sake of exchange value, for value in the form of money, is innate to the concept of the wage-labourer” (2023: 29).

65 Lebowitz writes: “Insofar as the wage-labourer has relinquished the right of disposition over her labour-power to a capitalist whose goal is surplus value, she must perform surplus labour in order to engage in necessary labour” (2003: 34).

66 Mau also includes other systemic determinations from which these compulsions issue.
above all, that social productive activity, i.e., the form of labour that facilitates the integration and reproduction of society as a whole, can only be undertaken to the extent that the capacity to labour is reunited with the means of production in the form of capital, i.e., that it is systematically exploited in order to sustain the continuous expansion of the productive forces, itself a condition of transforming money into more money. This does not mean, of course, that everyone’s capacity to produce is realized through direct exploitation by capitalists and thus does not suggest that everyone’s life is sustained directly by the capitalist production process. Neither does it mean that some people and groups cannot engage in non-capitalist productive activity. However, it does mean that all three of these dimensions of social practice are mediated by capitalist production in some manner regardless of the social distance one may experience from it. In other words, one cannot reproduce oneself outside of capitalist relations of production even if one does not exchange one’s labour for the means of subsistence. Those who do not may acquire the money and goods they need to live but they acquire a redistributed product of social wealth in the form of capital. As for autonomous developments, such as the blockades mentioned above, they may be sustained by a measure of non-capitalist productive activity, but they are hardly self-sufficient insofar they rely on inputs that issue from the circuit of capital and remain subject to its determinations and impulses no matter how stable their instrumentalization of it may be at any given moment, which is always temporary and volatile. Moreover, they may enjoy a degree of non-interference, but they are not generalizable in any feasible sense (not least by virtue of the fact that they presuppose capitalist wealth) and remain subject to the broader social vicissitudes of capitalist society, which circumscribe them both externally and internally. However, these theoretical
assumptions by no means undermine autonomous developments or prescribe their dismissal. Rather, these parameters simply imply that the conditions and relations of their emergence must be conceived as internal to them. Above all, however, this means that social activity that is less determined by this compulsion and its realization in capitalist production must be explained. As I will show in chapter five with regards to the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, it is precisely a form of organized redistribution of money, goods, and labour that functions to mitigate the mute compulsion of economic relations that Water Protectors and Land Defenders can sustain the frontlines and confront the social forces of settler colonial capital.

The Non-Identity Between Capitalist Separation and Colonial Dispossession

The dispossession of the worker is therefore transubstantiated into a separation perpetuated through the successful operation of the system, which is compelled by the mute compulsion of economic relations.

For this reason, Bonefeld argues that, through primitive accumulation and the dynamic of organic reproduction, the separation of the labourer from the means of production “appears in the civilized form of free and equal exchange relations...Force appears...”

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67 The original separation of the workers is reproduced through exploitation generationally. Bonefeld writes that ‘suspension’ (the German Aufhebung) “means that the historic form of primitive accumulation is raised to a new level where its original form and independent existence is eliminated (or cancelled) at the same time as its substance or essence (Wesenshaftigkeit) is maintained in the new form” (2014: 86-87). Debates about the relation between extra-economic force and mute compulsion do not interest me here, only the fact that dispossession takes on a new form in economic reproduction as a process of maintaining separation. This is also why Bonefeld argues that primitive accumulation is ‘suspended’ in capitalist accumulation: “primitive accumulation is the historical presupposition and basis of capital and that its systematic content is the constitutive premise of the capitalist social relations. Its content is suspended in capitalist economic forms... The notion that primitive accumulation is ‘suspended’ in capitalist accumulation does not collapse two distinct concepts, as if there were no difference between accumulation by expropriation (dispossession) and accumulation by means of exploiting the ‘free’ labourer... In other words, the notion that the essence of primitive accumulation is aufgehoben in accumulation proper means that the essential character of primitive accumulation, this divorce of the direct producers from the means of subsistence, is raised to a new level, eliminating the history of primitive accumulation as a specific epoch” (2014: 86-87).
in the civilized form of freedom as economic compulsion, which is the freedom of ‘economic bondage’” (Bonefeld 2014: 83). The type of dispossession at the heart of the capital relation is thus of a completely different logical order than colonial dispossession and domination in the constitution and reproduction of society. They are not identical. In contrast to the direct and particular nature of colonial dispossession, regardless of its generality in settler colonial society, the social subject of production, i.e., living labour, is universally dispossessed under the rule of capital, not only the labour of particular individuals and groups, but human creative capacity writ large,68 which is tied to a class of people and therefore cannot be comprehensively reunited with its conditions of realization outside of the structural determinations and imperatives of capital. This is conditioned by the radical fragmentation of what Mészáros calls ‘the totality of labour’ or the ‘plurality of social labour.’69 Moreover, as my reference to Bonefeld above indicates, this form of dispossession does not directly appear as such but only in a form that conceals its violence in the ‘freedom to exchange,’ that is one that completely obscures it. Thus, within the atomized experience of the individual wage-labourer or the ‘collective atomism’ of self-interested organized groups,70 the actuality of this dispossession

68 The active human agency that forms one of the foundational poles of the historical dialectic of humanity and nature is the object of dispossession here. In this sense, it is a form of radical dispossession.
69 Mészáros writes, “The fundamental problem is that the sectional plurality of labor is closely linked to the hierarchically structured conflictual plurality of capitals, both within every particular country and on a global scale (2008: 142). Elsewhere he writes, “the internal stratification and hierarchization of the totality of labour (as a global class, in confrontation with its antagonist: the totality of capital, on a global scale) is further affected by a number of other powerful factors and circumstances. [Among these are:] The territorial division of labour, creating zones of relative privilege coupled with crying ‘underdevelopment;’ the impact of the law of uneven development and its concomitant differential rates of exploitation, prevailing both internally, in every single country, and internationally in the relations of the dominant capitalist powers to the rest of the world capitalist system; the growing centralization and concentration of capital, as linked to its rising technical composition and worsening organic composition, with far-reaching consequences for the structure of employment in the capitalist socioeconomic framework as a whole” (1988: 444-45).
70 This is what Lebowitz calls the process whereby “a process in which differences within [a group] are reduced while differences outside the group are increased” (2020: 155).
cannot be addressed as such, even if one is well aware of it, because it is grounded in the indirect and anonymous social relations of production, i.e., a pre-constituted and abstract order of social synthesis, not the immediate actions of individuals, and one is perpetually compelled into the conditions of realization set by capital through the paradox of conceding to one’s dispossession by necessity and choice as a personification of its logic. Lastly, the dispossession of the worker differs markedly from settler colonial dispossession insofar as its only sense or practical purpose is within a process of social synthesis, namely, exploitation, where social creative capacity is reunited with the conditions of its actualization, hence its character of separation. This is a stark contrast to the purely negative logic of settler colonial dispossession, which is well captured by Patrick Wolfe’s notion of the logic of elimination (2006: 387). Despite these differences, Indigenous subjectivity and social practice is determined by the force of both forms of dispossession.

Indigenous Proletarianization

Thus, proletarianization, as the process and reproduction of this capitalist separation, equally marks the experience of Indigenous Peoples. However, if it is to be a relevant concept for Indigenous domination and liberation, it cannot be equated with the process that results only in the subject position of the wage-labourer at the point of capitalist production.71 This is Coulthard’s main critique of Marxism and its concern with dispossession, which, according to

71 Floyd et al. provide a broader context for the problematic nature of this reduction, when they write: “what contemporary critics now call ‘identity politics’ originated in order to set itself apart from an earlier form of identity politics, one that centred on white male industrial workers to the exclusion of all other oppressed people. Point-of-production politics was itself a form of disavowed identity politics that has been slow to recognize its own material specificity and the limits of its emancipatory vision based on the universalization of the position of the industrial worker” (2022: 6). This also seems to be the object of Coulthard’s critique in Red Skin, White Masks, but he does not specify. Rather, he develops his critique strictly on the basis of what he sees as reductionism and Eurocentrism in Marx (2014: 11).
him, has utterly failed to account for Indigenous struggles, especially those in the settler colonial state. By virtue of this neglect, whether through active dismissal and repression or tacit indifference, a class-reductionism is consolidated based on the assumption of what he calls ‘normative developmentalism’ (Coulthard 2014: 9), which ascribes a progressive historical function to the destruction of Indigenous society by naturalizing the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples from their lands, the attrition of Indigenous nations, and the epistemological and ontological destruction of Indigenous cultures, by universalizing capitalist production and exchange and thereby consolidating the socialist project exclusively on the basis of a struggle between capital and labour within those parameters. This, according to Coulthard, is a false universal that internalizes the constitutional violence of settler colonialism as a presupposition of the universal liberation of humanity.

However, Coulthard’s position does not necessarily lead to a universal development either. Rather, because he conceives of proletarianization narrowly, as the process that gives rise to the subject position of the (male) wage-worker at the point of production, whose formulation he borrows from Silvia Federici (2014: 11), his critique is simultaneously an affirmation of this reduction, which identifies the category of the proletariat exclusively with this specific subject position. As a result, he cannot fully develop the internal relation between anticolonialism and anticapitalism required for an adequate confrontation with the social conditions and constraints of Indigenous self-determination. Admittedly, Coulthard argues that the need to shift from the capital to the colonial relation is one of emphasis, not dichotomy, which recognizes the relevance of proletarianization to Indigenous Peoples and “in no way displaces questions of distributive justice or class struggle” (Coulthard 2014: 15), but he bases
his conception of proletarianization, ironically, on the standpoint of capital, which, as Lebowitz points out following Marx, “treats the proletarian ‘only as a worker’ and ‘does not consider him [sic] when he is not working, as a human being’ (Lebowitz 2002: 142). According to Lebowitz, “A Marxist who believes that the struggle against capital and for community really is only to be found in the capitalist workplace reflects the one-sided perspective of capital, for which only the direct challenges initiated by workers to the expanded reproduction of capital matter” (Lebowitz 2020: 195). Although Coulthard clearly does not believe that the struggle against capital is only to be found in the capitalist workplace, he fails to recognize that other sites of struggle against it, including Indigenous struggles for land, are mediated by the social relations of capitalist production even if they are not directly subject to its determinations and imperatives at that point. His reduction of proletarianization leaves this aspect completely underdeveloped in his work.

In contrast, dual dispossession identifies the co-constitutive relation of colonial dispossession and proletarianization. However, to understand this, the absolute identification of proletarianization with the point of production must be rejected, as Coulthard rightly points out, but for different reasons. For not only does this definition fail to capture the experience of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples more broadly, but it does also not even hold for the

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72 Elsewhere Lebowitz writes: “A Marxist who believes that the struggle against capital and for community really is only to be found in the capitalist workplace reflects the one-sided perspective of capital, for which only the direct challenges initiated by workers to the expanded reproduction of capital matter” (Lebowitz 2020: 195/footnote 10).

73 Evidently, Indigenous people are also proletarianized in the classic sense.

74 Coulthard rejects this identification in order to foreground the subject position of colonized and deal with primitive accumulation strictly in terms of colonial dispossession, not proletarianization (2014: 10-11). Although Coulthard was trying to theorize contemporary colonialism “on its own terms and in its own right” (2014: 11) at the time against any justification of its progressive historical function, as I argue throughout this dissertation, colonial dispossession and proletarianization are not mutually exclusive but co-constitutive of Indigenous experiences of domination and resistance.
vast majority of employed and unemployed people within capitalist society, especially when considered globally.\textsuperscript{75} In fact, proletarianization is expanding while its active segment vis-à-vis capitalist production is diminishing. As Nasioka writes: “Today, proletarianisation is universalised but relates to labour in a negative way. Proletarianisation-without-labour means that the proletariat is increasing in number, but as a cursed and unwanted surplus that stands with one foot in the mire of poverty” (Nasioka 2019: 128, citing Marx 1990). The proletariat thus includes not only the employed and unemployed (Marx’s reserve army of labour) but also the structurally unemployed, i.e., those unable to sell their labour-power to capital.\textsuperscript{76} It is in this sense that Snelgrove argues with regard to Indigenous Peoples in Canada that “the phenomenon of market dependence and unemployment that [settler colonial] dispossession produces is an effect of capitalism not an exclusion from it” (Snelgrove, personal communication, October 11, 2022).

Moreover, “If one considers production and social reproduction as a totality, as Marx did, it becomes apparent that the struggles around social reproduction address the ‘conditions of possibility of labour-power’ and the ‘manner in which labour power is biologically, socially

\textsuperscript{75} Mike Davis (2020) puts this into perspective when he writes that “Neoliberal globalization over the last generation has recharged the meaning of the ‘wretched of the earth.’ Hobsbawm’s ‘gray area of the informal economy’ has expanded by almost 1 billion people since his interview, and we should probably subsume the ‘informal proletariat’ within a broader category that includes all of those who eke out survival by day labor, ‘micro-entrepreneurship,’ and subsistence crime; who toil unprotected by laws, unions, or job contracts; who work outside of socialized complexes such as factories, hospitals, schools, ports, and the like; or simply wander lost in the desert of structural unemployment.”

\textsuperscript{76} Michael Lebowitz puts this into relief when he writes emphatically: “Who is ‘not-capital’ today? Who is separated from the means of production and must approach capital as a supplicant in order to survive? Surely, it is not only those who sell their labor power to capital but also those unable to sell their labor power to capital. Not only the exploited but also the excluded. And surely, it includes those who, in the context of a massive reserve army of the unemployed, work within the sphere of circulation of capital but are compelled to bear the risks themselves, that is, those who struggle to survive in the informal sector. They may not correspond to the stereotype of the working class as male factory worker, but that stereotype was always wrong. Certainly, we need to begin with the recognition of the heterogeneous nature of the working class” (2015: 145).
and generationally reproduced,” without which capitalist work would not exist (Ferguson and McNally 2015). Thus, social reproduction labour and struggles – such as those around food, land, care, education, water, housing, etc. – are instances of class struggle and make up the general experience of the ‘non-waged proletariat,’ without which the employed sector of it is incomprehensible.  

Further, the “fact that many people around the world have generally lost their ability to reproduce themselves outside commodity relations and markets without necessarily having been dispossessed entirely of their land (Bernstein 2010: 34), suggests that subsistence remains commodified even when the practices that sustain it are less subsumed under the compulsions of capital, bypass the labour-market, or are less dependent on wages in general. According to Henry Bernstein, the ‘commodification of subsistence’ is a concept that provides

a more generic basis of the subsumption of labour by capital than the outright dispossession usually suggested by notions of ‘proletarianization.’ In effect, the condition of ‘free’ wage labour would thus represent only one form, albeit the most ‘advanced’, of the commodification of subsistence. (Bernstein 2010: 34)

The commodification of subsistence, which situates proletarianization within a broader spectrum of the capitalist subsumption of human productive activity, is especially applicable in the context of settler colonialism in Canada when considering Shiri Pasternak’s concept of ‘land alienation’ or “colonialism without dispossession.” According to Pasternak, this latter concept helps,

... to understand the perpetuation of a set of exhaustive administrative regimes that undermine, erase, and choke out the exercise of Indigenous jurisdiction, rendering the

77 This is how Pitts characterizes members of the proletariat who are not productive workers in Marx’s sense of surplus-value generating: “the particular relation of capitalist work is not limited to wage-labourers in the commodity-producing sector of society, but includes also the non-waged proletariat’ whose work, whilst unremunerated, still plays a part in reproducing the social basis and rule of value as a form assumed by human activity under capitalism” (Pitts 2021: 139).
people immaterial to any effective participation in land management, even as they continue to reside upon and assert responsibility for their lands. In response, I define dispossession in two related ways. The first way links dispossession to social reproduction and the diminishing capacity of communities to reproduce their social, economic, and legal orders. This ‘slow violence’ is then contrasted to the specifically sited dynamics of accumulation on Barriere Lake lands [the basis of Pasternak’s research]. (2017: 25-26)

Although Pasternak does not discuss the issue of Indigenous proletarianization or provide a robust account of the embeddedness of Algonquin social reproduction within broader capitalist social relations, the ongoing assertion of responsibility evidently implies a form of social reproduction that can provide for at least a measure social and legal power. In that sense, it is not subsumed to the extent of wage-labour or the social reproductive labour that sustains that class. Nor does it suggest that Indigenous law and governance is directly facilitated by commodity production for the market. However, despite the ongoing access to land implicit in the concept and process of land alienation, the concept also implies a constrained and dependent form of social reproduction that requires conditions and inputs external to traditional productive activity as a condition of its sustainability, which Pasternak does not explore. In any case, this situation suggests that Indigenous people are proletarianized however mediated that relation may be, even while they uphold their obligations and engage in traditional forms of land-based production.

When considering all these phenomena together as dimensions of proletarianization, the decisive issue turns out to be the social control of capital, i.e., the inability of the vast (global) majority to substantially sustain and determine one’s life activity outside the imperatives of capital with all the difference in life chances and “group-differentiated
vulnerability to premature death” this entails, seventy-eight and not the privileged experience of specific subject positions within the logic of its continuum. Seventy-nine Søren Mau makes this argument clearly in the following passage:

Capital needs workers. A steady supply of labour-power presupposes that the people needed as wage labourers are deprived of the possibility of reproducing themselves outside of the market. This in turn presupposes the dispossession of everyone who could potentially support those needed by capitalists as wage-labourers. The set of people dependent on the market is, in other words, not necessarily identical with the set of people capital needs as wage-labourers; the latter is a subset of the former. If we want to grasp the fundamental class domination underlying the capitalist mode of production, we therefore have to avoid defining class in terms of exploitation. (Mau 2023: 128)

Nevertheless, according to Mau, “Proletarianisation is the necessary condition of the capital relation, which is the central nexus through which the proletariat gains access to the means of subsistence” (Mau 2019: 149). Thus, the notion of the proletariat cannot merely identify those who are most subsumed under capital at the point of production, even though the latter is the essential basis of social reproduction; rather, like a shadow can only be understood in relation to the sun, the proletariat, and its different subject positions, marked by varying degrees of

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78 This is part of Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s famous definition of racism. The full sentence reads: “Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (2007: 28).
79 Mészáros writes: “Marx in his time was talking about the irresistibly unfolding proletarianization (not manual-laborization) taking place in capitalist society. Such proletarianization affects all categories of the labor force, resulting in the loss of control even over the most limited aspects of life which individuals once may have had in some ‘white collar’ and ‘service’ branches of activity. This loss of control is unmistakably evidenced in twentieth century developments, as demonstrated by the total insecurity dominating all kinds of working people in our own time. Marx contrasted such alienating proletarianization with the powers arising from labor’s self-emancipatory logic, extended to all members of society in their capacity as substantively equal and genuine decision-makers over all vital issues of life” (Mészáros 2010b: 184).
80 Elsewhere Mau writes: “it is important to broaden the notion of class and define it as the relation of a group of people to the means of social reproduction. Such a notion of class allows us to avoid the common tendency to think of class antagonism in capitalism as a relation between capitalists and wage-labourers at the point of production and see that this particular aspect of class antagonism is the result of a much more encompassing form of class domination in which the subordinate part includes everyone who is dependent upon the circulation of capital for their survival, regardless of whether they are wage labourers or not” (2017: 31).
subsumption as they are, can only be understood within the yoke of capital’s social control.81

The fact that no one in a practically sufficient sense can reproduce themselves outside the

circuits of capital suggest that working with an expansive concept of proletarianization and the

proletariat is politically necessary,82 including within the Indigenous struggle for self-

determination.

Lastly, whatever the contribution of Indigenous proletarianization to the general social

reproduction of settler colonial capitalism as a whole, in the context of active Indigenous

resistance, on the frontlines of Land Defence and Water Protection, and thus during the active

enforcement of Indigenous law, the unity of the logics of proletarianization and colonial

dispossession is forcibly manifest. That is, their practical inseparability must be strategically

countered in order to constitute a positive coercive social power capable of confronting the

immense forces of the settler state and the personifications of capital.

The Inseparability of Colonial and Capitalist Social Relations

While theories and debates that attempt to explain the intersection of capitalist social relations

with other forms of oppression such as race, gender, or colonialism are ongoing, inconclusive,

and largely premised on an epistemology of domination (Harvey 2014, Coulthard 2014, Chen

2018, Floyd et al. 2022, *Historical Materialism* Volume 31 August 2023), an examination of

active anticolonial struggles as manifest in the more complex organizational forms, such as the

81 For this reason McNally argues that because “working classes have always been composed of people engaged in
different sectors and a wide variety of forms of employment – industrial, agricultural, domestic, commercial, retail,
part-time, full-time, casual – as well as semi-employment and unemployment... rather than rigidly defining workers
as those who work for a wage, we need to retain the notion of the working class as a distinctive social relation, in
this case a relation to capital (itself a class relation to workers)” (McNally 2013 in Barker et al.: 407).

82 Kathi Weeks foregrounds the political significance of the category, when she writes: “Who might be included in
this category of the working class remains an open question. It is not a sociological category but a political one, and
its boundaries depend on its particular composition at specific times and places” (2011: 94).
Unist’ot’en camp, reveals that they respond simultaneously to both social relations in practice as a necessary condition of their reproduction and social power. In other words, the vantage point of these organizational forms reveals the inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations in the practice of anticolonial struggle, which a theory of dual dispossession identifies theoretically and can thereby develop practically.

A theory of dual dispossession does not merely juxtapose these social relations. The colonial politics of recognition can be bypassed to a significant extent through forms of redistribution in order to engage in radical resurgence because the reproduction and contestation of the colonial relation does not by necessity take on a structurally specific form. However, the determination of practical activity by capitalist social relations of production cannot be bypassed but only mitigated or relatively suppressed so long as capital dominates the social metabolism; that is, where capital is the generalized mediation of social interchange with the earth.

The concept of dual dispossession maintains the co-determinative tension of colonial and capitalist social relations. By virtue of this, it reveals that the semi-autonomous developments of the contemporary Indigenous movement are premised on the mitigation of the coercive force grounded in capitalist relations of production. It also reveals that mitigation is not an act of willpower on behalf of an individual, even though individuals can certainly provide a key impetus for it. Rather, dual dispossession highlights the fact that the social reproductive labour that constitutes the relative autonomy of these organizational forms is the

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81 Leanne Simpson writes that, “In reality, behind the barricades, whether the blockades are enacted on Anishinaabeg land at Grassy Narrows, Dakota land at Standing Rock at the port of Vancouver, or at Unist’ot’en, blockades are rich sites of Indigenous life, of a radical resurgence” (2021: 10-11).
structure of that mitigating power. It is through the organized suppression of the silent compulsion of economic relations that (relatively) self-mediated anticolonial activity emerges.\(^{84}\)

In this sense, the emergence of autonomous power is mediated by suppression. As a result, bypassing the colonial politics of recognition or ‘turning away’ from settler state recognition is explicitly understood as a process of mitigating the social relations of capitalist production,\(^{85}\) especially to the extent that it allows one to escape the funding trap or the labour market.\(^{86}\)

With this in mind, there can be no question of opposing extra-legal force, especially in the form of colonial domination, to the mute compulsion of economic relations. They are co-determinative.

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\(^{84}\) Self-mediation or determination is, of course, a question of degree considering that it emerges within the domination of capital. However, its character as self-mediation is a positive expression of the mitigation of external-mediation or external-determination by the imperatives of capital. Marx captures the nature of this external determination when he writes in the *Grundrisse* that “When the product becomes subordinated to labour and labour to exchange, then a moment enters in which both are separated from their owner. Whether, after this separation, they return to him again in another shape becomes a matter of chance. When money enters into exchange, I am forced to exchange my product for exchange value in general or for the general capacity to exchange, hence my product becomes dependent on the state of general commerce and is torn out of its local, natural and individual boundaries. For exactly that reason it can cease to be a product” (1973: 150).

\(^{85}\) ‘Turning away’ is Coulthard’s way of describing the act of refraining from engaging the discourses and structures of settler-colonial power (2014: 45). He writes in *Red Skin, White Masks*, drawing on the work of Frantz Fanon, “In that all important footnote in *Black Skin, White Masks* where Fanon claimed to show how the condition of the slave in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* differed from those in the colonies, he suggested that Hegel provided a partial answer: that those struggling against colonialism must ‘turn away’ from the colonial state and society and instead find in their own decolonial praxis the source of their liberation. Today this process will and must continue to involve some form of critical individual and collective self-recognition on the part of Indigenous societies, not only in an instrumental sense like Fanon seemed to have envisioned it, but with the understanding that our cultural practices have much to offer regarding the establishment of relationships within and between peoples and the natural world built on principles of reciprocity and respectful coexistence” (Coulthard 2014: 48).

\(^{86}\) As Russ Diabo puts it, “Among the post-1969 tactics the Indian Affairs bureaucracy adopted to control and manage Indians, in order to continue the federal off-loading and assimilation goals, was to increase program funding for housing, education, infrastructure, social and economic development, health, and so on to band councils. This funding was delivered through federal funding agreements with strict terms and conditions for band councils and band staff to deliver essential programs and services primarily to on-reserve band members, [with] goals and results designated by Ottawa. In other words, social engineering” (2017: 25-26).
Dual Dispossession is a Concept of Struggle, Not Domination

Further, by holding these social relations in tension, the theory of dual dispossession provides an important corrective insofar as it falsifies the misleading characterization of particular practices, initiatives or movements as purely autonomous developments that are undetermined by the compulsions of capital or constitute a mode of production in and of themselves or separate “economies,” without denying that they institute a degree of autonomy and embody the principle of other forms of wealth. While dual dispossession does not deny autonomy, it recognizes its emergence in and against the constraints of capitalist compulsion. As such, it also identifies the conditions of their possible development and the enhancement of their power. In this sense, maintaining the tension of these social relations in theory is essential to combatting them in practice.

To be clear, however, dual dispossession is not primarily a theory of Indigenous domination that aims to theorize the manner in which settler colonialism and capitalism are integrated. That project is far beyond the goal of this dissertation and is not the primary interest of this work, although it would certainly enhance it. Rather, dual dispossession, the way I conceive it, emerges at the point of resistance to these forms of domination. Without this ‘third’ term of Indigenous agency and the solidarity that elevates it, the concept would not

\[87\] Camfield provides a strong critique of Hall and Lutz who hold a version of this position when he writes: “Hall is right to highlight the importance of the fact that Indigenous people have long practised different kinds of labour, including subsistence labour. What I find unpersuasive, as with Lutz’s notion of a “moditional economy,” is the belief that in Canada today this fact demonstrates the presence of a “mixed economy” rather than the practice of a variety of forms of labour under the overarching dominance of the capitalist mode of production. In my view, once people are no longer able to reproduce themselves without engaging in some wage labour and/or commodity production for capitalist markets, they are at least formally subsumed under capital even if they continue to support themselves in part through subsistence activities” (2019: 167).

\[88\] For instance, we get a strong sense of this when Leanne Simpson writes, “My Ancestors didn’t accumulate capital, they accumulated networks of meaningful, deep, fluid, intimate collective and individual relationships of trust” (2017: 77).
function according to the results of my analysis, which I present in detail in chapter five. The point of practical intervention is indispensable to grasping the inseparability of these social relations, not simply for the sake of identifying the force of their constraints or how they undermine the possibility of alternative social orders, but, above all, to foreground the material conditions of struggle and the conditions through which Indigenous subjectivity is united with the objective means for developing itself as a social force. The concept permits the recognition of a dialectic between Indigenous productive activity, understood in the broadest sense, and the objective circumstances through which it develops, such as the infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection, including the qualitative changes this entails. In this sense, the concept only really acquires its significance within the tension of confrontation or, echoing Cleaver above, within the resistance from above to “the social forces at work forcing changes,” at least on the colonial front.

**Identifying Broader Tendencies within the Movement through the Concept of Dual Dispossession**

Finally, the concept of dual dispossession allows one to see how the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement (its practical basis) integrate and develop some of the major tendencies, both in terms of subjective development and objective interventions, especially those associated with radical Indigenous grassroots actions and organizations, of the broader Indigenous movement since the 1960s. These include the necessity of direct action, which is a consistent reality that runs through the last seven decades; the trend of self-development and transformation through struggle across the Red Power era, later developed as Indigenous resurgence under specific socio-historical circumstances; the politics of self-liberation and self-activity or protagonism, especially the practice of radical
nationalism as formulated in the work of Howard Adams; coalitional politics, originally with other revolutionary movements in the 1960s and 1970s, but today witnessing a revival, especially in Indigenous and Black solidarity, such as the work of Leanne Simpson and Robyn Maynard (2022); the need for mass solidarity and disruptive tactics for leverage as a condition of recognition, first developed in and against the radical reformism of George Manuel; and, especially, the resistance to co-optation and the necessity of securing the autonomy of the movement, which, subsequently, would be most comprehensively theorized as the rejection of the colonial politics of recognition and the need to turn away towards self-activity in the work of Coulthard. The concept of dual dispossession facilitates the recognition and development of all of these tendencies to the extent they are institutionalized in the organizational forms of the Land Back movement and the mass movements that have accompanied them. It thus allows one to activate the radical significance of the past as a political project for the future.
Chapter Two: Tendencies within the Red Power Movement

Introduction

On the 50th anniversary of the Kenora march of 1965 in 2015, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations Perry Bellegarde situated the march as a key moment in the “First Nations Civil Rights movement” and an important opportunity “to continue the momentum for reconciliation and the shared work of closing the gap in the quality of life between First Nations people and Canadians” (Assembly of First Nations 2015). In contrast, march organizer Fred Kelly stated,

The Indian March of 1965 was the turning point for our people. It was the beginning of a new assertiveness. The message resonated locally and nationally as a call to action. Our demands were clear and achievable and our demands were met. The collective direction was a message in itself. More profoundly, this was a move toward self-determination. (Assembly of First Nations 2015)

Thus, while both valorized the march as a form of direct action, they situate it within vastly different theoretical terms and political trajectories.

Although my goal in this chapter is not to reconstruct a comprehensive history of Bellegarde and Kelly’s divergence, a development on which the following chapter will shed more light, contemporary historiography, premised on the critique of the politics of recognition, especially its form under the slogan of reconciliation, has created the

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89 The contrast with Bellegarde’s interpretation is further substantiated by the fact that in a 2015 interview on APTN, Kelly corrected interviewer Dennis Ward, who referred to the 50th anniversary as a ‘celebration,’ preferring to call it a ‘memorialization’ (see minute 11:15): https://www.aptnnews.ca/facetoface/elder-fred-kelly-on-the-anishinaabe-worldview-and-what-it-means-to-be-an-indigenous-leader/.

90 Although the discourse of ‘reconciliation’ first emerged in the 1990s and only became a hegemonic political project in 2015 through the efforts of the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau (Snelgrove 2021), the social function of Bellegarde’s interpretation was already being criticized in the late 1960s. For instance, in 1969, Vine Deloria Jr. levelled substantial criticisms at this interpretation of events, specifically as it related to Indigenous
epistemological conditions to properly identify, differentiate, and valorize Fred Kelly’s interpretation of the march. The significance of this work lies in the reconstruction and recovery of the historical ground of the ideas that frame Kelly’s understanding. By reintegrating relations and developments that were repressed first practically and then theoretically in the history of the Indigenous movement, this work allows Kelly’s self-understanding to be grasped in relation to a practical basis with an alternative social and political horizon, against the closure of Bellegarde’s interpretation within the destiny of state and capital. Understanding the difference between Bellegarde and Kelly’s versions of the event cannot be reduced to an epistemological issue concerned with semantics or rhetoric for that matter. Rather, what distinguishes the substance of Kelly’s interpretation of the march from Bellegarde’s is the fact that they are based on radically different political practices. Recovering the social and historical ground of the contemporary ideological battle undermines the attempt at collapsing the

Peoples. Writing in *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Deloria argued that “Civil Rights is a function of man’s desire for self-respect, not his desire for equality. The dilemma is not one of tolerance or intolerance but one of respect or contempt. The tragedy of the early days of the Civil Rights movement is that many people, black, white, red, and yellow, were sold a bill of goods which said that equality was the eventual goal of the movement. But no one had considered the implications of so simple a slogan. Equality became sameness. Nobody noticed it, but everyone was trained to expect it. When equality did not come, black power did come and everybody began to climb the walls in despair” (1969: 179). However, Deloria saw Black Power as a legitimizing moment for Indigenous political sovereignty: “Black power, as a communications phenomenon, was a godsend to other groups. It clarified the intellectual concepts which had kept Indians and Mexicans confused and allowed the concept of self-determination suddenly to become valid” (1969: 180). Thus, Black Power, according to Deloria, helped reinforce Indigenous political consciousness in terms of self-determination, much like Kelly’s experience with the Black Power movement in the ensuing years after the march in Kenora.

91 With the publication of works such as Scott Rutherford’s *Canada’s Other Red Scare* in 2020; Glen Coulthard’s recent work on the Native Alliance for Red Power and other organizations, especially in his article “Once Were Maoists: Third World Currents in Fourth World Anti-Colonialism, Vancouver, 1967–1975” (2021); the reissue of George Manuel’s biography *Brotherhood to Nationhood* by Peter McFarlane in 2020; Sarah Nickel’s work on the history of UBCIC *Assembling Unity* (2019); the reissue of *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* by Lee Maracle in 2017; and the recent publication of Louis Karoniatkajeh Hall’s writings in *The Mohawk Warrior Society* in 2023, we can identify a tendency within the Indigenous movement since the mid- to late 1960s towards national liberation, grounded on a specific practice of internationalism and guided by a theoretical conviction and practice of confrontation vis-à-vis the colonial relation as a structural antagonism.
alternative trajectories they entail into a discursive exchange of people and groups who are engaged in debate under the common horizon of a shared social project and its political reproduction. However, with the suppression of the concrete historical development that sustains the trajectory of Kelly’s self-understanding as its practical basis, the notion of self-determination and its radical nationalist project have been subsumed within narratives that reduced these politics to developments that helped consolidate the colonial politics of recognition, even if their integration has been anything but easy or complete. After all, the socio-political project of ‘reconciliation’ has thrived off perpetuating an ambiguity around the practical substance of Indigenous self-determination. Reconstituting the historical ground of Kelly’s account, and by extension the broader Red Power movement that developed in the wake of the Kenora march, is thus critical to revitalizing and developing the political trajectory and social force inherent in these developments. Above all, it reveals important tendencies that emerged at the inception of the contemporary Indigenous movement (roughly mid-1960s to present), which the concept of dual dispossession helps identify and develop within the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement. The latter continue to develop these initial tendencies in their own socio-historically determinate and qualitatively enhanced way; namely, by instituting and facilitating the self-transformative practice of direct action or grassroots struggle (and cultural revitalization) on the basis of objective conditions that strategically organize the evasion of settler state co-optation and subordinate recognition.

The following chapter examines three significant grassroots Indigenous actions from the late 1960s and early 1970s and the ideas generated on their basis, in order to identify tendencies that are synthesized in the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back
movement. The tendencies may be summarized as follows: the necessity of direct action, the
development of Indigenous subjectivity through struggle, and the critique and resistance of
cooptation as the basis of this form of action. In the first section, I discuss the Kenora march of
1965, its significance as a form of Indigenous direct action and the political transformation of
Fred Kelly in its aftermath. This is followed by a look at the Native Alliance for Red Power
(NARP), which was founded in 1967 and was one of the first grassroots Indigenous
organizations to operate under the banner of ‘Red Power’ in Canada. I discuss one of their main
campaigns, the Beothuk Patrol, and Lee Maracle’s reflections on her experience with the
organization, especially the significance of participating in and learning through struggle and
the dynamic of ideological development on the basis of this practice. The third section looks at
the 1974 Native People’s Caravan, which facilitated the conditions for political education and
self-transformation despite its temporary character and hostile reception. The section ends
with a brief discussion of the self-organization and coordinated labour that made the Caravan
possible. The chapter then shifts to an analysis of Howard Adams’ theory of radical nationalism
as the most comprehensive theoretical and political expression of the Red Power movement.
The concept of radical nationalism, I argue, is a precedent of dual dispossession and identifies a
dynamic of struggle that the latter concept develops within our contemporary historical
moment. There I argue that Adams draws the tendencies mentioned above into a coherent
political theory and strategy by virtue of the centrality of self-activity or what may be more
programmatically called protagonism.92 The purpose of this historical reconstruction is to

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92 Protagonism is a concept developed by Marta Harnecker and centres the agency of the exploited, oppressed and
colonized as agents in their own self and collective development, especially in building capacities of self-
determination over all aspects of social life, including production. As she writes, “I believe state paternalism tends
identify the practical basis of these trends and their theoretical reflection in order to clarify in later chapters how they are instituted in the present and can be further developed going forward.

The Kenora March of 1965

According to historian Brian Warren, “1965 was a pivotal year for public expressions of First Nations protest and organizing in Canada, during which community members and their leaders organized public demonstrations to bring their grievances directly to Canadian authorities” (2020: 31). This mounting activism culminated on November 22, 1965, when over 400 Indigenous women and men, along with some white supporters, walked in locked arms through the centre of Kenora, ON, from the Native friendship centre to the local legion, where the town council meeting was being held that night. Popularly referred to as the “Indian Rights March” or “Canada’s First Civil Rights March” (Rutherford 2020: 24), the action set out to challenge the racism that affected Indigenous people in and around the city, including labour market to turn people into beggars. We must move from a culture where citizens beg the state to solve their problems to a culture where citizens make decisions, and through struggle get results; where citizens implement, control, and manage things themselves, where citizens govern themselves... participatory and protagonistic democracy... is a democracy for the great majority of people. Within it, the common citizen can participate in a variety of matters, not only in formulating demands and supervision, but more fundamentally in making decisions and ensuring they are carried out... it is about constructing democratic processes in which the great popular majorities are incorporated into the political arena, both within institutions as well as in practice... Participation and protagonism in all spaces, is what will allow human beings to grow and increase their self-confidence, that is, facilitate human development... [However,] As Michael Lebowitz writes, ‘Only a revolutionary democracy can create the conditions in which we can invent ourselves daily’ as fully developed human beings. He adds that the ‘concept... of democracy in practice, democracy as practice, democracy as protagonism: protagonistic democracy in the workplace, protagonistic democracy in neighborhoods, communities, communes – is the democracy of people who are transforming themselves into revolutionary subjects’” (2015: 70-71).

The role of the Civil Rights movement in the US in the development of the Indigenous struggle for self-determination in Canada is far more decisive than has been theorized to date. We get a sense of this when Lee Maracle writes about the Red Power movement of the late 1960s: “Youth everywhere were holding conferences, chiefs were meeting, everyone was talking about our rights; rights we didn’t dare to believe existed in the 1950s. By some sort of miracle, we recalled the response of Native people to the early civil rights movement” (Maracle 1990: 209).
discrimination, especially in the pulp and paper mill industry and service sector, and the rampant alcoholism among Indigenous people. The latter was especially critical because of its effective criminalization, which the organizers explicitly argued was a social issue connected to poverty and colonialism, not an inherent tendency as the racist stereotype would have it. The march thus took place in a period when colonial domination and Indigenous rights were (actively) depoliticized to such an extent that they manifested first and foremost in criminological phenomena and de facto social segregation.

Notwithstanding this unrelenting violence and overwhelming social inertia, the march was undertaken only after alternative attempts to address these fundamental issues has been tried. Over a year before reports in the media began to appear relating the situation in Kenora to the issues of the Civil Rights movement south of the border, especially in Alabama, a group called the Indian-White Committee (IWC) had been formed by Indigenous people from the

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94 According to a survey by the Canadian Corrections Association, entitled Indians and the Law, which was released in 1967, two years after the march, a large part of crime committed by Indigenous Peoples at the time had to do with Liquor Law violations, which had been encoded in the Indian Act since the 19th century and prohibited individuals legally identified as “Indians” from possessing alcohol. This meant that many Indigenous Peoples were being arrested for crimes that were not offences under provincial jurisdiction (1968: 39). See also CBC Newsmagazine’s report on the Kenora march from December 7, 1965, where they point out the high number of criminal charges related to alcohol: https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/790312515689. In an interview in 2015 with APTN, Fred Kelly, one of the march’s main organizers, recalled how white residents allowed their dogs to enter bus shelters during the harsh Kenora winter, but Indigenous people had to remain outside (minute 11:40): https://www.aptnnews.ca/facetoface/elder-fred-kelly-on-the-anishinaabe-worldview-and-what-it-means-to-be-an-indigenous-leader/.

95 This would become even clearer with the issuance of a community-generated report in 1973 entitled “They were Young,” known colloquially as the “Violent Death Report.” This report tried to analyze and understand the alarming number of Indigenous deaths in just a few years due to such things as “overdose,” “exposure to the elements,” “suicide,” “car accident,” “hit by a train,” “drowning,” and “beatings” among other causes. These were consistently claimed to be caused by Indigenous alcoholism by officials and townspeople alike. According to Rutherford, “Indigenous representatives challenged this by insisting that the cause was often political and arose from settler attitudes including, but not limited to, the way police treated Indigenous men and women and the material and psychological impacts of displacement” (2020: 89-90). In doing so, they pointed to structural inequalities as the root cause of these “violent deaths” whether they involved alcohol or not. In any case, the racist discourse on alcoholism functioned to eclipse the social relations of settler colonialism and their effects.
surrounding First Nations and a handful of white residents to address the discrimination faced by Indigenous Peoples in the area. The IWC insisted on the necessity of understanding and cooperation across the colonial divide and deployed a number of means to challenge the general situation in Kenora, including locally organizing people, public education, the publication of articles in the local press, and the organization of a conference as “an opportunity for local Indigenous people to collectively express their views about how to effect change by challenging the racist stereotypes they encountered daily (Rutherford 2020: 25). In spite of these efforts, the conference was poorly attended by white residents. In response, Anishinaabe activists Peter Seymour and Fred Kelly, along with then officer of Ontario’s Labour Committee for Human Rights Alan Borovoy, began visiting local reserves, churches, and community centres in anticipation of a different form of intervention, one that the town of Kenora could not dismiss so easily. “Sometimes,” Borovoy claimed, “injustices are too well entrenched and the facts too well known for surveys to work” (Rutherford 2020: 26). Some form of direct action was thus perceived as necessary under these social and political circumstances. The march, as the chosen form of this action, was influenced by the Black struggle south of the border, and addressed the issues directly by confronting Kenora city

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96 According to historian Scott Rutherford, “Throughout 1964 and 1965, the IWC began organizing to challenge the racist thinking and practices that underlay social and economic inequalities experienced by Indigenous communities” (Rutherford 2020: 23).
council with a series of demands\textsuperscript{97} by virtue of the sheer number of the protestors.\textsuperscript{98} These demands all represented immediate measures to mitigate some of the most urgent effects of these colonial-induced crises but were conceived within a wider horizon of social transformation, albeit with no clear political program.\textsuperscript{99} Ultimately, the marchers succeeded in having their demands met, a significant achievement no doubt, but this hardly led to a situation that was sustainable let alone irreversible.\textsuperscript{100}

**Malcom Norris: The Necessity of Direct Action and the Critique of Cooptation**

Despite this local fate, the march was hailed at the time as an “unprecedented display of unity”\textsuperscript{101} and some identified the significance of its impact on the basis of a different criterion. For instance, shortly after the march, Métis Communist Malcom Norris published an article in the *Moose Call*, a Saskatchewan friendship centre newsletter where he had been employed at the time, entitled “Militant Action.” In it he wrote the following:

> What is the role of militant action in human progress? What relevance has it to the Indian? Can progress be gained without action by those seeking it?... One thing is certain – the Kenora march has done more to dramatize... the Indians’ plight than all the

\textsuperscript{97} These included the establishment of a special mayor’s committee on Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations to investigate grievances and issues between the two groups and to promote cooperation between them over the long-run; the lengthening of the trapping season, a treaty right no less, which would help many avoid an extra month of welfare dependency if they could continue to sell their furs; the assistance and involvement of the Alcoholism Research Foundation to address the egregious issue it had become in the region; and for the federal government to install a radio telephone communication system on the local reserves, especially to ensure effective emergency response, which had also become a major problem (Rutherford 2020: 27).

\textsuperscript{98} There was a lot of hype in the media of impending violence given what had taken place in the US that year, especially the Watts riots in August 1965 (Rutherford 2020: 26). In retrospect, Fred Kelly, one of the march’s main organizers, agreed that “The structure of the tactics played off against the mood of fear and intolerance — and they were big reasons there were no riots that day in Kenora” (quoted in Paul 2015).

\textsuperscript{99} It was clear to the marchers that anti-Indigenous racism and colonialism had to end, but there was no explicit political program to achieve this end.

\textsuperscript{100} This is most apparent when Brian Warren writes that, “Unfortunately, pacifist activism was no match for racial tensions in Kenora, which would only continue to rise—Kelly and his brother Peter were themselves beaten by white attackers while walking through the city at night two years later, leading them to predict race riots akin to those that exploded through American cities throughout that year” (2020: 43). See also Rutherford on the march’s immediate outcome and political aftermath (2020: 38).

\textsuperscript{101} “Unprecedented Display of Unity,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, 23 November 1965, 1.
conferences held... in the past 3 years... not a major paper in the country ignored the incident. Generally they have been sympathetic to the Indians’ cause... it is hoped that many do hear of it and that they see in it the value of direct action, by Indians... as the old Indian chief said, “you will get nothing from the white man until you already have it firmly grasped in your hand”.... To be ignored is more vicious perhaps than to be oppressed. And this is apparently the form discrimination takes here against the Indian- “we don’t give a damn”. This kind of discrimination is hard to fight; but perhaps the Kenora affair shows that it can, and must, be fought in the same way. Let us hope the Indians learn this lesson. (Dobbin 1981: 230-31)

This was an unequivocal statement that direct action, premised on the self-activity and grassroots organization on the part of Indigenous people themselves, was critical if not necessary in advancing the struggle for Indigenous rights. Norris defended the march as a politically expedient form of action for Indigenous Peoples under conditions of radical political domination and social indifference.102 He thus praised it specifically as a tactic that bypassed the political inertia and stalemate103 imposed by the Department of Indian Affairs and disrupted the general racist indifference that permeated Canadian society, which Harold Cardinal would aptly conceive as a “Buckskin Curtain” a few years later in The Unjust Society.104 This was no surprise given that Norris had been directly involved in grassroots political organizing and education in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan since the 1930s and a ruthless critic of state-

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102 His interpretation was also shared by march organizer Fred Kelly in the months following the march, who claimed that “because of protests such as the march in Kenora... ‘the non-Indian is beginning to listen to the Indian talk’” (Rutherford 2020: 40).

103 Harold Cardinal characterized this relation as “a dictatorial bureaucracy [that] has eroded our rights, atrophied our culture and robbed us of simple human dignity (2) and unequivocally pointed out the totalitarian nature of colonial policy in the 1960s, when he wrote: “If you are a treaty Indian, you’ve never made a move without these guys, these bureaucrats, these civil servants at their desks in their new office tower in Ottawa saying “yes”... or “no” (Cardinal 1969: 9). Moreover, this was reinforced by Walter Rudnicki, a rogue Department of Indian Affairs employee in the early 1960s, who recalled that “there was a certain bureaucratic terrorism against the Indian peoples with the department controlling every minute of their lives” (McFarlane 2020: 56).

104 According to historian Bryan Palmer, “Cardinal coined the term ‘buckskin curtain’ to convey a sense of the racist indifference that had been lowered over Canadian society with respect to the accumulated wrongs done to the country’s Indigenous population. Carefully chosen to make Western ‘democracies,’ which prided themselves on their superiority over communist societies that needed ‘iron curtains’ to contain their populations, Cardinal’s ‘buckskin curtain’ was an ironic reminder of the arrogance of countries like Canada” (2009: 403).
Norris’ analysis of the Kenora march came at a time when he was primarily concerned with the effects of state intervention within the Métis movement in Saskatchewan, specifically in the form of grants and funding, as the single most threatening counter-strategy to the Indigenous movement. According to his biographer Murray Dobbin, Norris “tried desperately to persuade his fellow leaders of the dangers [associated with government dependence]: not only would government money be an invitation to opportunists [he argued] and a corrupting influence on inexperienced leaders, it would control the direction of the organization [and by extension the movement] by providing funds for some objectives and denying them for others” (Dobbin 1981: 239-40). Norris’ endorsement of the Kenora march, specifically its tactics of direct action, thus came out of a trenchant critique of government efforts to co-opt the Indigenous movement and thereby channel it into processes it could manage by undermining any self-initiative. Direct action was thus perceived as a means of not only forcing the hand of government but for the self-development of a relatively autonomous political base unhampered by the stalemate of colonial politics.

Moreover, in his commentary, Norris was picking up on an aspect of the march whose significance transcended the specific circumstances in Kenora and was potentially significant for the broader Indigenous struggle, harbouring as it did an alternative political strategy based on

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105 As historian Bryan Palmer writes, “Métis organizers Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady present an insightful example of decades of political commitment and engagement, traversing a twentieth-century rebirth of Métis nationalism in Alberta in the 1930s; the formation of various movements and organizations, among them L’Association des Métis d’Alberta et des Territoires du Nord Ouest and the Indian Association of Alberta; links to white-dominated parties of dissidence, such as the Communist Party and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the latter being particularly significant given its governing authority in Saskatchewan in the late 1940s, when a provincial Métis Society in which Norris and Brady involved themselves experienced a brief rejuvenation; and complicated efforts to recharge the politics of Aboriginal people in the 1960s” (2009: 377). For Norris’ critique of state-led Indigenous politics see Norris and Brady’s 1981 biography by Murray Dobbin entitled *The One-And-A-Half Men*, especially chapter 14 “The Threat of State Intervention.”
expanding the use of confrontational tactics like the march. This was effectively the recognition and affirmation of a development Coulthard would later formalize as ‘the necessity of direct action’ as a general strategic precept for the Indigenous movement a half century later in light of the mass mobilization of the Idle No More movement in 2012 to 2013. The general implications of this endorsement were not lost on governments of the day. According to Dobbin, “In Liberal circles reaction to Norris’ article was close to hysterical” (1981: 231-32). Subsequently, as historian Bryan Palmer notes, “Norris’s relatively understated remarks made him a marked man in government circles and among moderate Aboriginal leaders and organizations” (2009: 399), which subsequently saw efforts to drive him out of politics altogether. Despite Norris’ resilience in the face of such hostile forces, his political prescription was far from being generalized in practice and would only achieve any real currency with the onset of the Red Power era. In the meantime, the jostling between pundits and journalists in the media around whether Kenora was Canada’s version of Alabama and its popular branding as Canada’s first Civil Rights march suggested that the action certainly pierced the Buckskin Curtain but

106 Dobbin writes that, at the time, “The Liberals knew that terminating his government employment had not stopped Norris’ activities and they remained extremely wary of him. They were well aware that Norris’ administration of the friendship centre was colored by his politics and that the MAS [Métis Association of Saskatchewan] office was located there. For the better part of 1965 Norris had done nothing alarming, yet the Liberals believed there was cause for concern. It had been widely reported in the press that the native population, if unified, could reverse the results in sixteen of the province’s 59 constituencies. Thatcher and the Liberals evidently feared that Norris might have the power to organize native people into a coherent electoral influence” (1981: 230).

107 Brian Warren captures this episode in Norris’ life, when he writes that, “Importantly, Norris’ support for the Kenora march elicited a high-handed response from Ross Thatcher’s Liberal government in Saskatchewan: its Indian-Métis Branch, which provided community development funding, was directed to avoid considering grants sought by anyone connected to Norris, and to portray him as someone not representing Native interests. Thatcher’s assimilationist preference for indigenous integration led his administration to actively undermine indigenous protest activity” (2020: 41).

108 Although he did not live long enough to see the rise of the Red Power Movement, dying as he did in December 1967, according to Bryan Palmer Norris clearly thought that Red Power was long overdue (2009: 399).

109 Moreover, the practical deployment of this strategy in a general way would only first come to fruition with the Wet’suwet’en uprising in the winter of 2020, 55 years after Norris’ remarks.
hardly succeeded in pulling it down. Although the overwhelming inertia and violence of settler colonial society in the mid- to late 1960s continued to assert themselves, the Kenora march of 1965 initiated a trend in Indigenous activism that would be further developed in the ensuing years. In terms of today’s radical anticolonial struggle as exemplified by the institutionalized blockades of the Land Back movement, the necessity of direct action and the evasion of cooptation are not only accepted as a basic premises of the struggle, they are practically organized and sustained within their organizational forms, which, as I will argue in chapter five, dual dispossession articulates theoretically by foregrounding the objective circumstances of frontline Land Defence and Water Protection.

Self-Transformation through the Practice of Struggle

The march and Norris’ validation of it are significant for another critical reason when situated within the broader Indigenous movement that was beginning to evolve at the time. This pertains to the transformative dimension of struggle as a dynamic practice of self-development and its impact on Indigenous subjectivity, which is essentially the dynamic later theorized by Indigenous resurgence under different socio-historical circumstances and their concomitant impact on how this tendency would be understood and practiced. Reflecting on the Red Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which was still in an embryonic state at the time

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110 Scott Rutherford highlights the way in which these comparisons both illuminated and eclipsed important dimensions of the struggle in Kenora when he writes the following: “These headlines were meant to grab attention, but we cannot ignore the way that such analogies shaped how the issues were understood. They both produced discourse about some experiences with racism and silenced others. The marchers had their experiences translated through analogies that encouraged the identification of racism not as a common experience amongst Indigenous peoples (or other racialized peoples) in Canada but instead as a uniquely local issue that was easily understood as a problem essentially unfamiliar to most of the rest of Canada... Rather than universalizing a critique of racism, these global comparisons profoundly localized the experience in a way that sanitized it for the rest of Canada. Instead of becoming an example of how certain types of racial logic shape settler colonialism, and thus the foundations of a nation, Kenora became a problematic place seemingly disconnected from a broader national history” (2020: 29).
of the Kenora march in 1965, Howard Adams argued that through active participation, the state lost its ability to enforce passivity among Indigenous Peoples. He writes:

> Although some Aboriginals in the early struggle were hesitant to protest, even ashamed and frightened to be seen on picket lines or at demonstrations, these attitudes gradually changed. We became confident. By its very nature, activism rejects feelings of inferiority and fears of being too weak and ignorant to confront the oppressor. Holding mass demonstrations decolonized us and developed a counter-consciousness. We questioned and developed the skills and power to discard our sense of helplessness. We saw and understood more clearly than ever before how wretched we were living and why this was so. (1995: 92)

The Kenora march, which, as we saw in the introduction, was characterized by lead organizer Fred Kelly on its 50th anniversary as “the turning point” for Indigenous Peoples and “the beginning of a new assertiveness,” initiated the transformative dimension of struggle identified by Adams, not least because the marchers’ immediate demands were met, giving them a sense of accomplishment and possibility. The collective and self-initiated nature of the mass action, moreover, generated a sense of social agency while also providing a vehicle to transcend the atomized and dehumanizing experience perpetuated by the abysmal social conditions that had reached a breaking point in the region. As Kelly stated to the Winnipeg Free Press in 2015, “These people, some of them had no jobs, they were impoverished, and here they had a chance to take part in something of their own making. There would have been nothing that day if the people hadn’t shown up” (Paul 2015). The action inspired many, including individuals who were too afraid to leave their own reserves (Ward 2015). As a result of their participation, Kelly recalled, “I saw my people walk down the street with a new gait, a bounce in their step, and I noticed it immediately” (quoted in Paul 2015). This was no minor

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111 In a December 1965 CBC Newsmagazine broadcast we can see the marchers celebrating their victory and heralding the beginning of a new era of politics: [https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/790312515689](https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/790312515689).
accomplishment considering the extent to which colonial domination and Indigenous suffering and dysfunction had not only been normalized but also trivialized. Despite the fact that the omnipresent comparisons between Indigenous protests in North-western Ontario and Black protest in the American South meant that those marching down Main Street in Kenora were not being understood completely on their own terms, [Scott Rutherford writes that] In the 1960s, the possibility of a ‘politicized Indian’ seemed as unthinkable to white Canada as [David] Sealy says the ‘politicized black’ has been. (Rutherford 2020: 37)

Under these circumstances, the significance of this shift in self-esteem, confidence, and ability were major breakthroughs regardless of the political stalemate that ultimately ensued in the march’s aftermath. In this regard, the march stands as a watershed moment insofar as it forcefully inaugurates the dynamic relationship between the restoration and cultivation of Indigenous pride and direct action. Admittedly, the basic affirmation of dignity is a long way from the uncompromising assertion of sovereignty and the enforcement of Indigenous law on the frontlines of struggle that we witness today, but the Kenora march of 1965 helped initiate this logic of development in a significant historical sense.

Fred Kelly’s Transformation: From Integration to Red Power and National Self-Determination

The Kenora march of 1965 not only facilitated to a significant extent a process of dignified empowerment, but it also initiated a process of further development in Indigenous activists such as lead-organizer Fred Kelly, especially in terms of self-understanding and political practice, which coincided with changes emerging within the Indigenous movement more broadly at the time.

In an interview on CBC television shortly after the march (CBC Archives 1965), Kelly argued that the integration of Indigenous Peoples was inevitable, but that Indigenous people would not accept integration in the form of a complete assimilatory process, which he claimed
many perceived as synonymous with extermination; rather, Kelly argued that Indigenous people would accept integration but only if they would retain their culture and heritage. Although this judgment was undoubtedly shaped by the framing of the question, which assumed the inevitability of assimilation, Kelly’s response represented a position that maintained traction among Indigenous Peoples, especially in the coming years, and would be given its most lucid theoretical and political expression in Harold Cardinal’s *The Unjust Society,* \(^{112}\) which appeared in 1969. Kelly’s position in 1965 to 1966, however, was fraught with ambiguities and no clear social theory or political program, although he maintained a conception of Indigenous culture that harboured significant political tensions and possibilities, which were far from justifying the destiny of assimilation or settler colonial domination. \(^{113}\) As Scott Rutherford writes,

> The march in Kenora sparked discussion about the role of culture in addressing inequities in “modern Canada.” The IWC used tactics such as the march to challenge the popular notion that Indigenous culture was the root cause of socio-economic disparities. These tactics were also challenging dominant settler-colonial notions of what counted as a productive life… [During a talk, Fred Kelly] remarked that the ‘gap between the Indian and white socio-economic standards is not the Indian’s problem. To insist that it is so is to put the onus of fitting into the main-stream of society upon the Indian alone.’ (2020: 40)

The practical breakthrough of the march thus had the effect of challenging the two fundamental premises underpinning the myth of the ‘Indian Problem.’ On the one hand, it gave Indigenous culture a different significance insofar as it challenged the general ideological reification, which perceived it as an impediment to assimilation. On the other hand, it

\(^{112}\) Cardinal argued that Indigenous people could become the ‘red tile in the Canadian mosaic,’ but only on the basis of a robust recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights (1969: 15).

\(^{113}\) Kelly understood the fundamental conflict between Indigenous Peoples and settler society as one based on differing worldviews. See Rutherford (2020: 40-41).
confronted the naturalization of capitalist or ‘industrialized’ society as it was often
euphemistically referred to during the period.\textsuperscript{114} Thus, it was the social rupture and politically
charged climate, however transient, thanks to the march that opened up the ideological and
political space for a renewed dialogue about these issues.\textsuperscript{115} However, it would take a different
kind of development to liberate the significance of Indigenous culture from the integument of
liberalism and its instrumental function in the late 1960s. That is, developing Indigenous culture
beyond its truncated appropriation would require a transformation in the practice of politics
itself. In the years following the march, Kelly’s frustration was growing with the increasing
political stalemate to address the desperation behind Indigenous mobilizations. As a result, he
began to believe more and more that for Indigenous Peoples to achieve political power they
needed to act in coalition with other persecuted communities (Rutherford 2020: 80). The
impasse represented by the dominant political process thus led Kelly in a new political direction
and, therefore, a new practice of struggle, which would ultimately lead him to adopt the politics
of Red Power that was beginning to emerge at the time.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114} See the mayor’s comments on CBC Newsmagazine’s report on the march in December 1965 around minute
14:20: \url{https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/790312515689}.

\textsuperscript{115} This dialogue took the form of a series of public lectures facilitated by the Indian-White Committee, which took
place in the spring of 1967, in the hope of transforming the systemic dehumanization suffered by Indigenous Peoples in the area. As Rutherford writes, “the seminar series complicated such narratives [of the backward nature of Indigenous traditional productive practices and the failure of Indigenous peoples to integrate into the capitalist social order], but not completely break free from the logic of cultural integration. What was made clear during the seminars though, as from the talks Kelly gave earlier, was that Indigenous participants were not keen on neatly fitting into a liberal capitalist framework if it meant total assimilation” (2020: 42). And while “The challenged dominant thinking about the relationship of Indigenous peoples to modernity by reframing the Indian problem as a problem of settlement... the problem of settlement was also somewhat narrowly conceived as a problem of cultural recognition which created barriers to full participation of Indigenous peoples in the town’s economic life. Little to nothing was said about the problem of settlement related to land, dispossession, and broken treaty promises” (Rutherford 2020: 42).

\textsuperscript{116} “Red Power” first appeared as a slogan in November 1966 when Ponca activist Clyde Warrior and a few other
National Indian Youth Council members drove a car, against National Congress of American Indians wishes,
adorned with “Red Power, National Indian Youth Council” on one side and “Custer Died for Your Sins” on the
other, in the NCAI annual convention parade in Oklahoma City. According to Warrior’s biography the incident

According to settler historian Scott Rutherford, Red Power “was a framework that interrogated the specificity of settler-colonialism locally and Canadian government policy using globally circulating ideas about decolonization and anti-racism” (2020: 65). At the heart of this development was a “turn towards the Third World, to other Indigenous peoples globally, and to Black Power politics as a way to read discussions around land, education, culture, and economic rights... [which was] crucial to understanding how the language of decolonization would come to shape ‘Red Power’” (Rutherford 2020: 65). As a result of these exchanges, Rutherford writes, “Indigenous actors began to reimagine the British empire’s former colonies such as Canada as states practicing colonialism at the same moment that old empires crumbled” (2020: 65). As Howard Adams would later write:

Leaders spoke of our struggle [at the time] in the context of world imperialism in the Third World. It helped to feel that we were part of a global revolution against oppression. In the 1960s colonized people throughout the world were reclaiming their culture. In speaking out, we were not telling the colonizer to give us a share of their powers – we were demanding the right to govern ourselves. (1995: 79)

The cultural self-understanding at the heart of the Red Power movement and the politics generated through the practice of global dialogue that guided it was thus qualitatively different from a political theory and strategy that simply sought to mitigate the more aggressive aspects of colonial assimilation with a largely truncated and depoliticized notion of culture. In Fred

marked a dramatic shift in relations between the NIYC and NCAI (McKenzie-Jones 2015). This took place prior to the generalization of the movement under the same slogan a few years later by virtue of high-profile actions, such as the occupation of Alcatraz (1969), and the emergence of the American Indian movement (1968) or, within Canada, the founding of the Native Alliance for Red Power in Vancouver in 1967.

To Ponca activist Clyde Warrior, who first used the slogan of Red Power in November 1966, the latter was conceived as “the strength of a Native community to preserve its culture, traditions, and integrity while also striving to succeed in the contemporary world. Red Power was the right to speak one’s own language, to practice traditions unique to one’s own community, and to celebrate one’s own culture without fear of reprisal or censure. Self-determination was the political, economic, and social means by which Indian nations could uphold the principles of Red Power as sovereign peoples” (McKenzie-Jones 2015: xxviii).
Kelly’s case, the shift between these politics was achieved through the crucial dynamic and mediation of a practice based on a perceived impasse vis-à-vis the settler state yet one that understood the invigorating power and effects of direct action. Both of these practical lessons, in turn, would form the basis of a self-transformative politics by entering into a lateral relationship and direct dialogue with alternative sources of struggle from below as a means to chart the way forward for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.118

Kelly developed this practice in the ensuing years through his encounters with many radical organizations. Critical among these were those at the heart of the Black liberation struggle in Canada, which had strong ties to the US struggle. In contrast to the more passive associations forged by the Canadian media between issues faced by Indigenous Peoples in Kenora and the Civil Rights movement in the US, not least Kelly’s identification as a “Canadian Martin Luther King,” 119 in the years following the march Kelly began to actively engage with people and organizations representing the more radical Black Power wing of the movement.120 This relationship allowed him to shed the anti-Black racism he had internalized growing up,

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118 Barker et al. write that “Social movements from below can be defined as collective projects developed and pursued by subaltern groups, organising a range of locally-generated skilled activities around a rationality that seeks to either challenge the constraints that a dominant structure of needs and capacities imposes upon the development of new needs and capacities, or to defend aspects of an existing, negotiated structure which accommodate their specific needs and capacities” (2013: 73).

119 CBC Newsmagazine, 7 December 1965.

which he was completely ignorant about until then, while also recognizing a new dimension of colonialism insofar as the latter also affected Black people (Rutherford 2020: 79-80).\footnote{As Rutherford writes in \textit{Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in American Carmichael and Hamilton argue that “‘Black people in the United States have a colonial relationship to the larger society... [which is] a relationship characterized by institutional racism. That colonial status operates in three areas – political, economic, social.’ In making this claim, Carmichael, Hamilton, and other radical thinkers of the time were reimagining ‘urban conditions and race relations’ within a global context, according to Bridgette Baldwin” (2020: 73).}}

Moreover, Black organizations, such as the Afro-American Progressive Association (AAPA), were strong advocates for Indigenous and Black solidarity in Canada and provided analyses that attempted to connect various struggles across the globe (Rutherford 2020: 78); and Black publications reinforced commonalities between Indigenous and Black struggles and encouraged alliances through calls for cooperation. For instance, Uhuru and Contrast, two Black community papers based in Montreal and Toronto respectively applauded the efforts of the AAPA to this end, the former even devoting sections of its publication to Red Power in Canada (Rutherford 2020: 169 note 85); after Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP)\footnote{I will discuss this organization in the following section.} spokesperson Henry Jacks spoke at a rally in Montreal, Uhuru conceptualized both Indigenous Peoples and Black people as the “Wretched of the Earth” in their publications (Rutherford 2011: 114; Rutherford 2020: 79), drawing an explicit connection to the work of Frantz Fanon and Third World liberation struggles and forging ties with other Indigenous organizations in the process.

Bryan Palmer writes,

Indeed, the Black Power movement in the United States, its banners emblazoned with Malcolm X’s phrase ‘By any means necessary,’ was increasingly influential in young Native activist circles. This emerging layer of radical leadership took to heart African-American critiques of internal colonialism, such as those of Stokely Carmichael, which alluded to the subordination of Aboriginal nations. All of this prompted Native militants to take increasingly aggressive stands of opposition to white power that were theoretically informed by the growing anti-imperialism of the epoch. Anti-colonialist, pan-African movements led by figures such as Kwame Nkrumah and theorized by Frantz...
Fanon and others permeated the thought of young Canadian Aboriginal militants. Black Panther spokesmen received a warm welcome among Native activists in the Canadian west, where they were embraced as fellow revolutionaries. (2009: 400)

When I discuss NARP in the following section, the direct and unmediated influence of the Black liberation struggle becomes even more evident. However, whether direct or indirectly influential, the Black struggle, especially in its radical expressions, helped transform the terms of the Indigenous movement and identify the broader significance of local forms of activism, i.e., their universal meaning as particular moments within the development of the movement as a whole, much like Norris’ comments had tried to develop regarding the march in Kenora.

Furthermore, this period also saw the Indian Pavilion at Expo 67, which provided a scathing critique of Canadian society and history in full view of the world, and the high-profile blockade of the international bridge at Akwesasne by Haudenosaunee activists in 1968. The latter, which NARP supported (Warren 2020: 61), also gave birth to Akwesasne Notes that same year, one of the most significant Indigenous publications to come out the period. According to Scott Rutherford, Akwesasne Notes, like Uhuru and Contrast, began to regularly publish articles supporting claims that Black people and Indigenous Peoples shared a common history of exploitation in North America, and “consistently link[ed] Aboriginal politics, culture and history in North America to a global narrative of colonialism and imperialism” (2011: 113) as well as published investigative reports on events in other parts of the world, e.g., the genocide occurring in Guatemala against the Mayans. Around this time, there were always Indigenous
Peoples from around the world at the Akwesasne Notes offices, and over time it became a powerful forum for debate about Indigenous identity and Red Power (Rutherford 2011: 113). In the midst of this political ferment, Fred Kelly gathered in Toronto with Black Power advocates from the organizations Black Liberation Front and Afro-American Progressive Association on the 6th annual Malcom X Memorial Day. These activists advocated direct action to enact structural change and declared a need for partnership between Indigenous activists and Black Power, which Kelly also claimed by affirming their commonalities in suffering at the hands of colonialism. As historian Brian Warren writes,

By May [of 1969], Kelly was speaking alongside Black Panther communications secretary, Kathleen Cleaver, in the same month that a photo of Crazy Horse, the legendary nineteenth century Oglala Lakota chief, filled the front page of the Panthers’ eponymous weekly newspaper. Within that issue, an article titled, “Rebirth,” cited social problems in indigenous communities and called on indigenous peoples across the continent to be reborn as nations. It was a passionate appeal for indigenous self-determination, positioning the Panthers in a common struggle with indigenous peoples, as opponents of integration. (2020: 56)

Through this political practice, oriented, above all, by internationalism, coalitional praxis, and dialogue, the language and politics of integration once invoked by Kelly as the seemingly only answer to the predicament of Indigenous Peoples was utterly supplanted. Rutherford writes,

In September 1969, [just four years later after the march,] Fred Kelly gave a clear sense of the new direction of Indigenous protest: ‘This is Red Power’ [he argued] ... [and] Red Power, Kelly claimed was driven by the ‘quest for self-determination.’ It did not advocate violence, nor, however, ‘did it fear it,’ because it already exists against Aboriginal peoples... [Moreover, it was also] characterized by an indignant disregard for the establishment, the System, and to the colonialism which keeps native people

123 The years between 1965 and 1969, when Fred Kelly’s politics were transforming, also saw the important formation of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in Minneapolis in 1968. In his autobiography, Clyde Bellecourt, one of the founders of AIM, discusses the origins of the organization in relation to coalition work with Black activists in Minneapolis (2016: 49-51).

subjugated. It has a heated impatience for negotiation. Its ideology and terminology is derived from the third-world movement. (2020: 80)

The Kenora March of 1965 thus not only created a sense of dignity and political agency among the Indigenous people of the Kenora region, but it also created the conditions for further relationship building, dialogue, and politicization, i.e., a different form of practice, one that politicized Indigenous pride and turned away from the state towards other politicized segments of society as a critical condition of Indigenous self-development beyond dehumanization and domination. Above all, they located the Indigenous struggle within a global horizon which, in turn, gave a whole new sense of self to Indigenous Peoples, one in which nationhood was no longer questionable and liberation had a national character. Like the knowledge produced in the practice of dealing with government, the practice of coalition building, as an integral part of the struggle as it was developing at the time, and the process of learning associated with it, had a profound effect on Kelly’s sense of self, his place in the world, and his sense of possibility. This form of self-activity and the dynamic of self-development grounded upon it completely changed the self-understanding of individuals like Fred Kelly and his conceptualization of the Indigenous movement from one centered on integration to a program of national self-determination within a global horizon of shared struggle with other oppressed peoples. As I will show in chapters three and four, the principle of self-transformation through struggle finds its continuity in the revitalization of cultural practices valorized by Indigenous resurgence theory, but the latter is developed in an era when the radical internationalism that was evolving in the late 1960s and early 1970s had been generally undermined and suppressed.
Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP)

The interchange between the politics of Black Power and Indigenous people takes on its most
direct and programmatic form with the Vancouver-based Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP),
who had already fully adopted the political slogan of ‘Red Power’ at least a few years before
Kelly was proclaiming it. Founded in 1967, the origin of NARP is significant for two fundamental
reasons. On the one hand, it was formed by Indigenous women in direct response to an issue
that would today be understood under the rubric of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women,
when four white settler male perpetrators brutally raped and murdered an Indigenous women
named Rose Marie Roper in Williams Lake, B.C., with virtual impunity. As Rick Littlechild
reports, “two of the men were released without any punishment (not even a warning from the
judge), and the third accused was fined two hundred dollars. [At the time], neither the CBC nor
any major newspaper such as the Globe and Mail ever mentioned Rose Roper or her unjust
trial” (Littlechild 2015). On the other hand, as Glen Coulthard writes, NARP was “formed
explicitly as a ‘direct action’ or ‘protest group’ that sought to represent grassroots issues in
ways that its members thought that the emerging state-subsidised First Nation organisations of
the day had failed or were failing to do in an urgent enough manner (Bobb 2012)” (2021:
461).¹²⁵ The correlation between social indifference, direct action, and the imperative of

¹²⁵ The fact that an organization centred on Indigenous self-activity, a politics of direct action, and a critique of
coopetion was galvanized by the vicious systemic racism and social indifference towards the murder of an
Indigenous woman should not come as a surprise given that, contrary to former prime minister Stephen Harper’s
statements on the subject, this sociological phenomenon represents the epitome of social indifference and
political inertia grounded on colonial domination. While it would take more than four decades and tremendous
grief and trauma before the issue would even become politicized as a generalized social problem under the
political banner of MMIW (today MMIWG2S+), despite the knowledge of cases like that of Helen Betty Osborne,
this politicization was and continues to be predominantly the result of (women-led) Indigenous grassroots
organizations and direct action as a means to meet the urgent needs left unmet in the void of social abandonment,
like the annual Women’s Memorial March in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Drag the Red, Walking with our
Sisters, and the REDress Project, among many others.
meeting Indigenous needs without institutional support was at the heart of the Red Power movement, which NARP was critical in propagating across Canada. Self-activity and direct action, based on a critique of cooptation, were thus the basic premises of NARP’s intervention into the world of Indigenous politics, and Red Power was the ideology that unapologetically expressed and legitimized this form of practice. Like Fred Kelly, this experience changed those involved in profound ways, but the fact that NARP’s practice was not only heavily informed by the radical left ideologies circulating at the time, but also by a clear and conscious dialectic between theory and practice, is a critical methodological precedent of the theory of dual dispossession. For the latter also evolved in relation to the contemporary struggle as a means to expose and resolve some of the impasses faced by it and NARP’s historical example helps consolidate this methodology in the present.

According to NARP co-founder Henry Jack, “to us Red Power meant the gathering together of Indian people to solve their problems whether political, social, or economical” (Jack 1970: 164) because “WE HAVE NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO DEAL WITH OUR OWN AFFAIRS!” (Jack 1970: 172 capitalized in original). The organization was thus consciously organized to

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126 Glen Coulthard provides critical insight into this relationship when he writes: “Gender also figured into NARP’s analysis of colonial violence and decolonial resistance, as evidenced by the circumstances under which the organisation was formed: as a response to the rape and murder of 17-year-old Rose Marie Roper of the Esketemc First Nation at Alkali Lake. From its inception, women not only held foundational leadership positions in the organisation, but they also shaped how issues addressed by the group were theoretically understood and how to go about politically organising to confront them. For Gerry Ambers, Roper’s death was inseparable from the colonial violence that they sought to mitigate as organisers. She understood the violent transgression of Roper’s bodily sovereignty as inextricably linked with the violation of Indigenous people’s lands and sovereign authority. For her, there was no hierarchy of importance between the two, and the men, generally speaking, respected her lead: ‘I felt that they accepted our leadership very, very well. We were always recognized as equals,’ recalled Ambers of her time with NARP (2019: personal communication)” (2021: 467).

127 Jack told one interviewer that “We were a green bunch with only one idea in mind: to do something about our appalling conditions instead of just sitting on our asses doing nothing” (Jack 1970: 172). Elsewhere Jack writes, “I choose the term Red Power because it wakes up both the passive Indian and the white man” (1970: 167).
bypass the bureaucracy of Indian Affairs and the leadership seated within official Indigenous political organizations, such as the National Indian Council, in order to address dire needs and facilitate a practice of self-liberation.\textsuperscript{128} Moreover, like Fred Kelly, NARP’s relationship with radical Black politics was critical to NARP’s development. According to NARP member Ray Bobb, by the time NARP was founded, “A black militancy had developed typified by Black Power, Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam, Black revolutionary unions and the Black Panther Party (BPP). [As a result,] In 1967, ... when NARP was founded... the black movement in the US became the main role model for the group” (Bobb 2012). With BPP approval, NARP adopted the BPP ten-point program, which became an 8-point program with NARP.\textsuperscript{129} By the time NARP adopted the Panthers’ program, the latter understood “its people as an internal colony of imperialism... And through this influence NARP’s concept of its people changed from them being victims of racism to them being an internal colony of the Canadian imperialist settler-state” (Bobb 2012).

Further, as Glen Coulthard writes,

[\textit{NARP}] drew profound inspiration from the decolonisation struggles of the Third World and, like many radicalised communities of colour during this this period, molded and adapted the insights they gleaned from these struggles abroad into their own critiques of capitalism, patriarchy, and internal colonialism at home. This influence allowed both organizations to realize that they shared a mutual struggle for national liberation in the context of North America. (Coulthard 2021: 462)

\textsuperscript{128} So strong was this conviction that Jack argued at the time that “Because our thinking has changed and if we try to work within the political-socio-economic structure it will destroy us as a people” (Jack 1970: 172).

\textsuperscript{129} The 8-point program, which places clear emphasis on Indigenous self-determination, contains the following goals: the need to abolish the \textit{Indian Act} and the DIA; a refusal to pay taxes that support colonial domination; the demand to dispel colonial mythology about Canada and teach the truth about colonial reality; the need to fight police brutality and racism against Indigenous Peoples; the need to fight the racial prejudice of the criminal justice system; a call to honour the treaties; the denunciation of corporate incursion into Indigenous lands and environmental destruction; and the need to resist the colonial strategy of divide and conquer that pits Indigenous Peoples against each other (see Henry Jack’s discussion of the 8-point program in Jack 1970: 168-172).
It was on the basis of this self-understanding, mediated as it was by a coalitional practice with the Black Panther Party, that NARP put forth a program as the basis of its activity, which it implemented through a number of campaigns and direct actions.

**Beothuk Patrol**

NARP undertook a number of initiatives, which recent scholarship is slowly bringing to light. However, for the purpose of my general argument, I simply want to illustrate the kind of activity undertaken by NARP by focusing on one of their campaigns. Under the 8-point program, the police were explicitly targeted because they had been brutalizing Indigenous people, especially in the urban centres. In response to this situation, NARP launched what they called the Beothuk Patrol,¹³⁰ which was influenced by the BPP’s ‘copwatching’ initiatives. Like the latter, the Beothuk Patrol was essentially a grassroots Indigenous police force that patrolled the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver on foot. The objective of the patrol, as stated in a January 1970 newsletter, “is to meet the many needs of our brothers and sisters who attempt to immigrate to white society and find themselves pushed to its outskirts.”¹³¹ As Jack put it, “What we do is police the police to see that no police brutality occurs in the street and alleyways” (1970: 174).¹³² The ultimate goal, according to NARP’s newsletter, was to supplant the police

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¹³⁰ The name “Beothuk” comes from the Indigenous people of the Newfoundland region, who no longer exist because they were genocidally murdered in the early stages of contact with British settlers.  
¹³² The patrols were made up of squads of four men who reported to a captain headquartered in the Downtown Eastside, and they documented what the police were doing in logbooks, which gave the action a coordinated and systematic character. The act of witnessing functioned to deter police brutality, which infuriated the latter given that they could no longer act arbitrarily and with impunity. It was also publicized in NARP’s newsletter, which had a significant readership, as a way to enhance the scrutiny. Unlike the Panthers, however, patrol units did not carry guns, which would have undermined their efforts immediately (Jack 1970: 174-175).
entirely and place control of the issue with Indigenous Peoples. There was, therefore, a clear vision of community control and self-determination driving NARP’s direct intervention.

In the late 1960s, when Canada was celebrating its centennial with the world, the Beothuk Patrol was a crucial mediation that mitigated the unrestrained direct physical violence of structural racism against individual Indigenous people. The significance of this self-mediated practice cannot be overstated if we consider that, at the time, much like the circumstances in Kenora that prompted the march, the policing of Canada’s inner cities was a sphere of social practice where political relationships collapsed into criminological phenomena. In this realm, the free play of police violence against anonymous individuals, anonymous only because of the racist reduction of their dignity as individuals to an anonymous and dehumanized mass, was premised on and actively contributed to the depoliticization of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. This was a practice where the social symptoms of colonialism were primarily dealt with by the police as one of the most immediate forms taken by the nation-to-nation relation once envisioned in the treaties. In this sense, the name ‘Beothuk Patrol’ was highly apt because, through its defence of Indigenous individuals, it was simultaneously an anti-colonial and anti-genocidal campaign, given that these same individuals could only be personifications

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133 This is akin to what BPP co-founder Huey Newton claimed about the political relationship between Black people and the state in the 1960s in the American context, which, he argued, was essentially with the police and thus justified the initial focus of the Panthers program. In a 1989 interview, the year he was murdered, Newton argued that “the police throughout the Black communities in the country were really the government. We had more contact with the police than we did with the city council” https://youtu.be/aTLo65d29RU (around minute 4:20). As the Kenora context demonstrates, the depoliticization of the colonial relation and its manifestation in criminological phenomena as a result, was not confined to large urban centres like Vancouver but also rural Canada. This was due in large part because of the lack of any serious recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights. As Harold Cardinal would write in 1969: “Government after government has, in some way or another, vaguely committed itself to native rights but no government, including and particularly the one in power today, has yet committed itself to the simple honesty of fulfilling its obligations to our people as outlined in the treaties... as far as the Indians are concerned, there is not one treaty that has not been broken by the white man, not one treaty fulfilled” (17).
of their colonized nations within a heavily depoliticized yet violently enforced settler colonialism. In this sense, the negative logic of preventing police violence was the positive expression of Indigenous self-determination, however inchoate, under such asymmetrical conditions.

Despite these efforts, “NARP was never the intimidating force that the Black Panthers represented south of the border; [and] their many efforts were frustrated by a police force and city council that did not take them seriously” (Warren 2020: 59). This frustrated assessment corresponded to former NARP member Lee Maracle’s commentary on the success of the organization’s actions at the time. In her 1975 autobiography Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel, Maracle writes,

NARP politics at that time were pretty much patterned after the programs of the Panther Party. But in fact, conditions among Indians were quite different than among Blacks and it was really hard to mobilize Indians around political issues. We had a bit more success with work on skid row — but it was much like social work without much politics. We had a hall downtown and we’d do things like sober up drunk Indians and send them home. There was always a lot of singing and stuff going on — kind of like missionary work. We had some political discussions with Indians who’d just come in off the reserves, but this was difficult with down-and-outers and drunks. Jerry Jones was a craftsman and got a group going doing leatherwork... it was all stuff like that. Ray was getting more and more demoralized about NARP politics and I was losing interest. Both of us started thinking that what we were into wasn’t going anywhere — it was more like welfare work than radical politics, but at the time I didn’t have any great interest in radical politics either. (158 emphasis added)\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{134} This was clear by the words of Captain Antoine, an active participant in the Beothuk Patrol, who stated at the time that “we don’t have very much power to move around downtown. What can we do when City Council won’t hear us out, the police department won’t hear us out and when they give us a hassle on the street?” (Warren 2020: 59).

\textsuperscript{135} Elsewhere Maracle writes: “At this time we had a hall down on Carroll St. and carried out some activities such as maintaining a street patrol around skid row to protect Indians against police harassment. It was pretty missionary-oriented, however, with most of our time being spent taking drunks off the street, caring for the down-and-outers, trying to prevent people from being arrested and so forth. We also had what were called ‘educational,’ as well as social gatherings with singing and that sort of thing. But it wasn’t very political and wasn’t paying for itself. The money was coming out of our own pockets and the whole thing wasn’t really productive. The PWM [Progressive...
This reduction of Indigenous political issues to social ones belongs to a process of depoliticization integral to the reproduction of settler colonialism, which takes place in practice insofar as communities, both urban and reserve, are structurally abandoned or neglected by the institutions designed to secure the conditions of justice and social development. However, as NARP’s example shows, it also simultaneously occurs by virtue of the fact that campaigns or grassroots initiatives are not supported by a generalized political movement,\textsuperscript{136} which had not evolved sufficiently at the time. As the Beothuk Patrol demonstrates, despite Panther endorsement, its effective power to alter the generalized conditions of Indigenous experience remained isolated and atomized,\textsuperscript{137} which reduced NARP’s impact to the function of social therapy, a program that was hardly sustainable either as politics or social work.\textsuperscript{138} As I will show with regards to the UBCIC’s refusal in 1975 of government funding in the next chapter, the dichotomy between political and social spheres of practice becomes a major impasse when trying to challenge the colonial politics of recognition in practice; that is, when rejecting the source of dependency, especially in the form of money, and attempting to assert an alternative

\textsuperscript{Workers Movement} asked if they could put their press in the back and we said it was okay. They agreed to pay part of the rent” (1975: 167-68).

\textsuperscript{136} Ray Bobb (2012) writes that, at the time NARP was founded, “there was a vacuum of political movement and leadership in the native community even though the government was oppressive.”

\textsuperscript{137} As Maracle points to this lack of a broad movement to support their actions, when she writes in Bobbi Lee, “Every time we started an action program we were stopped by the apathy of the people” (1975: 166); this was also signalled by the fact that NARP was becoming predominantly defensive in its actions by that time: “We were mainly waiting, then reacting to things as they happened” (1975:141).

\textsuperscript{138} Regardless of the ability of such grassroots efforts to eradicate the social problems they were trying to deal with at the time, their activity laid the groundwork and built relationships that still prove significant to this day. Although scholarship has yet to demonstrate this in the specific case of NARP, an important case in point is the legacy of AIM’s patrols, which worked alongside the Black-led Soul Patrol in Minneapolis in the 1960s. In the late spring of 2020, as George Floyd was murdered by a police officer, the organizing that had been taking place since the 1960s around police racism and violence in the Indigenous community, dating back to AIM’s efforts, was activated in solidarity with the Black community and other activists who took to the streets that summer, in what turned out to be one of the biggest grassroots mobilizations in the history of the US. See the Washington Post article by Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe member Katrina Phillips from June 6, 2020.
principle of social development in the face of settler colonial capitalism. In this sense, Maracle’s honest assessment foregrounds both the nature of domination through fragmentation and, more importantly, the social conditions of effective struggle, which necessitate a comprehensive challenge if Indigenous autonomous action, including the political power of self-determination, is not to simply perform a social reproductive function within the colonial order. This will become clearer when I discuss the work of Audra Simpson in chapter four, who demonstrates the limits of action undertaken through the atomized political form of the band or First Nation, even when that action is exceptionally defiant. However, due their semi-autonomous nature, which the concept of dual dispossession identifies and can help develop, the organized blockades of the Land Back movement have demonstrated the potential of activating mass solidarity, which marks a turning point in a long period of relative isolation and fragmentation amongst the social forces capable of mounting such a comprehensive challenge.

**Self-Transformation and Ideological Reassessment**

Lee Maracle’s *Bobbi Lee* (1975) does not merely recount NARP’s failures and limits but puts into stark relief, through the brute honesty of Maracle’s self-criticism, the fact that the organization provided a vehicle for Indigenous people, especially alienated Indigenous urban youth,\(^{139}\) to cut their teeth in the world of radical anti-colonial politics. That is, above all, *Bobbi Lee* highlights the self-development and change of those involved in this form of direct action-centred politics.

\(^{139}\) According to NARP founding member, Henry Jack, “We started out as a relatively young group made up of ex-convicts, young Indian run-aways from the schools, young drop-outs from school, some academics (those who suck-holed their way through school) and unemployed as well as young workers who lived in the city” (1970: 164). Thus, unlike the Kenora March, these members of the organization stemmed mainly from the urban centres, people who had experienced the brutality of the city vis-à-vis Indigenous peoples and who had been marginalized within it. The NARP newsletter often commemorated urban Indigenous folks who were doing the hard work of political struggle to challenge these issues.
It is precisely because and not in spite of the fact that this form of practice was undertaken in the face of overbearing social constraints that NARP, and the self-reflection of their efforts in Maracle’s autobiography, forcefully demonstrate the subjective dynamic of struggle, especially in the realm of ideology.

Maracle’s assessments of NARP and the ideas it propagated are based on her own self-development as an Indigenous woman in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was precisely this specific experience that drove Maracle into politics, especially her relation to the police. As she puts it in *Bobbi Lee*, “My interest in politics was mainly because of all the hassles and racist crap we had to take from the cops. They'd always address you by using some racist label. Black people they called [racist term] and Indians were always ‘squaws’ or ‘redskins’” (1975: 93). This also had internal dimensions: “when I was sixteen I used to pluck my eyebrows to look more attractive by white standards. So I related to what Stokely [Carmichael] had to say pretty well” (Maracle 1975: 134). It was this proximity to social violence that not only drove Maracle into the emerging Indigenous movement of the period but anchored a very obstinate practice of assessing the people, ideas, and politics she encountered. As she writes,

> I still tried to relate everything to my own personal experience, and if it didn't relate to me, or make sense in terms of my own experience, then I found it hard to grasp and rejected it. My logic was really crude — if I couldn't see or feel something, then it didn't exist or had no real importance. This was the kind of confusion, subjectivism, and scepticism with which I approached NARP and Indian politics in general as well as my new-found interest in reading and learning. (Maracle 1975: 197)

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140 Maracle reports listening to recordings of Stokely Carmichael discussing how Black people internalized racism by idealizing whiteness and attempting in practice to make themselves appear whiter (1975: 134).
Although perhaps crude in some respects, this disposition helped demystify a lot of the ideological grandstanding and dogmatism of the period, especially among the radical left, where NARPers found themselves trying to make a difference. As such, Maracle could adopt and discard ideas and theories with impressive lucidity along the way as their practical validity was either affirmed or denied, despite her self-confessed lack of theoretical sophistication. This was perhaps no clearer than in her comments about the proclaimed vanguard of the (white) settler proletariat in the imminent social revolution, which many white and Indigenous radicals alike were fond of claiming at the time:

I didn’t agree with Ray that the Canadian working class was going to lead the struggle — especially the Indian struggle. And it really got to me emotionally when he said North American workers weren’t racist, or that working class solidarity against capitalism somehow prevented white workers from being affected by racism. This ran counter to all my experience and I got pretty wrought up... My experience just wouldn’t let me accept these wooden arguments about proletarian unity and revolution (Maracle 1990: 145-146).

On the other hand, in spite of the racist pomp of many leftists and the social impasse represented by the general racism of the white settler working class, Maracle was hardly persuaded by the turn to what she referred to as ‘cultural nationalism,’ a form of depoliticized cultural self-assertiveness, criticizing its internal presence among NARP. It was Maracle’s

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141 Maracle writes, “like much of the Left at that time, they never bothered about relating questions of theory and strategy to their practice” (1975: 161). Elsewhere, she recalls that “We said we didn’t think Indians could seriously discuss things around white leftists, who always seemed to have the ‘correct’ answers and explanations” (1975: 193).

142 Elsewhere in Bobbi Lee Maracle writes, “I met Trotskyists, old CPers, Internationalists, PWM members and they all seemed the same, just with varying degrees of enthusiasm. At first I felt I was being bombarded by all their talk; that I was going to get sucked into this great wave of whatever it was they were doing. I resisted this for a long time, always arguing with Ray who would categorically defend the Canadian working class” (1990: 158).

143 “There were some other NARP actions in early 1969, but they weren’t usually well thought out or very effective. The Indian people just weren’t that politically conscious. They wanted to do something, to be active in some way, but most of their energies went into strictly cultural-nationalist things — like wearing headbands and beads or refusing to speak English” (1990: 165-66).
insistence on the practical relevance of these positions that determined the matter in the final analysis. According to her, efforts to change the material conditions that circumscribed the life opportunities of Indigenous Peoples could hardly be effective if culture was self-referential and based on a practice of illusory escapism:

I also had difficulty with the arch-traditionalism that was very strong among politically minded Indians — and still is. A lot of Indians were simply against technology. They wanted to go back to the woods, back to nature. And they actually planned to go back into the forests and live in the old way. Being an urban Metis, I guess, made this kind of thinking seem way out. I used to ask traditionalists if they were actually going to go naked, like in the past, because all that technology they were wearing might spoil them... ‘How is knowing an Indian language going to put clothes on your back or food in your mouth? [Lee would ask them] Provide you with a decent living?’ ‘It doesn't matter,’ [fellow activist Gerri] would say. ‘All that matters is being a true Indian, faithful to the old ways.’ (Maracle 1990: 196-97)

Although Maracle’s attitude to the value of Indigenous culture would certainly change, the social constraints confronted by the political activity and experience of NARP clearly signalled to her the insufficiency of cultural nationalism as a coherent politics of self-determination. Only ideology grounded on the radical development of the Indigenous movement could identify the limits of nationalism in practice.144

Nor did any of this theoretical and ideological reductionism dissuade Maracle of the need for a comprehensive social theory, which situated the Indigenous struggle within a broader social horizon, albeit not without caution. As she writes about the internal dynamics of NARP:

Gerri was getting caught up in one aspect of Indian oppression and losing sight of the overall struggle. She was real concerned about the social aspects of racism — how it affected Indians in education, for example, or in the job market. Ray, on the other hand,

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144 However, years later she would grasp the one-sidedness of cultural nationalism as critical to the historical development of an adequate politics of self-determination, writing in I am Woman that an anti-white position that rejects solidarity on the basis of race is "absurd, since independence is a question of social relations, not race. However, it was important as the first step toward relying on our own people" (1996: 106).
was doing a lot of thinking about what was necessary in a revolutionary struggle. He was really confused about the whole question of armed struggle in relation to other forms of revolutionary struggle (1990: 162).

Gordie [on the other hand,] kept saying that systematic study wasn't necessary, that we had a program and should just get busy on it. (Maracle 1990: 164)

In any case, refusing to capitulate to the immediacy of experience, whether the hostility of working-class racism or the impasse of culture as an end in itself, Maracle and her fellow NARPers were constantly driven back to the theoretical drawing board.145

NARP’s political commitment and intellectual tenacity ultimately led to the evolution of a study group. Coulthard writes, “As with many radicals during the period, NARP members familiarised themselves with the works of Mao and other Third World theorists (Fanon, Nkrumah, Memmi, etc.) through the formation of a socialist study group in 1971, which they called the Native Study Group” (Coulthard 2021: 465). The motivation of this development, as with all theoretical engagement for Maracle and the others at the time, was practical. As she writes near the end of Bobbi Lee, it was “the new Red Power movement [that] revived my love of books and learning in a new way. Reading had a function” (Maracle 1975: 205). This was, above all, a process of learning through practice. Theory, according to Maracle’s assessment, was clearly grasped as a form of behaviour, a practice of understanding one’s social environment in order to act more effectively within it and achieve political goals. As she writes in I am Woman,

The words of the intellectuals came alive for us, breathed new life into our bent and tired bodies, and gave us the power to think thoughts and dream dreams. We loved

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145 This was especially necessary in the aftermath of the 1969 Liberal government White Paper. As Ray Bobb (2012) writes, “In 1969, the Trudeau government intervened in Indian political and social affairs by ushering in unprecedented social reforms to the native communities and began funding a native political leadership. These momentous reforms had the effect of changing the character of native politics from grassroots activism and protest to bureaucratic reformism and negotiation. Narpers disbanded in 1970 for almost one year.”
them. We followed the direction that they alluded to – right down one blind alley after another. But we learned. (Maracle 1998: 96)

Thus, there is no doubt that the movement remained for Maracle and NARP the premise for thought and theory was consistently tested and developed through struggle. As a continuation of this practice, the Native Study Group would reveal further practical problems inherent in formerly held self-conceptions, especially those directly appropriated from the Panthers, albeit on a higher level of comprehension. As Ray Bobb (2012) writes,

Theoretical misconception was compounded by theoretical errors as NSG maintained an incorrect definition of the internal colony. Like some other non-white groups of the time (the BPP, other groups from the internal colonies and groups of third world immigrant origin), NSG identified as being completely a part of the third world. This, in spite of the obvious fact that the members of all the internal colonies (African Americans, Mexican Americans, Canadian Indians, Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maoris) were also members of the working classes of imperialist settler-states. NSG, then, could not recognize that its members had to come to grips with petty-bourgeois faults – such as liberalism and political vacillation – before it could actively associate with revolutionaries in the third world.

While the currency of these specific ideas may have been undermined long ago, they retain important insights for our contemporary situation insofar as they sought to correct damaging mischaracterizations of Indigenous Peoples under settler colonialism, especially misleading theorizations that placed them outside of the working class. As such, a critical reinterpretation of NARP’s methodology implies nothing less than the relevance and legitimacy of Marxism within the Indigenous struggle today. However, recovering this insight does not imply (re)developing it by externally imposing Marxist theory on the Indigenous movement or returning to NARP’s theoretical assessments of the situation they found themselves up against.

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the in early 1970s. Rather, it can and should take its cue from the rigour of their conscious commitment to a dialectic of theory and practice or the form of the relationship between their intellectual and political labour.\(^{147}\) However, while the content of their thinking may have been displaced, its significance within the formative development of their subjectivity, i.e., the fact that it once defined the substance of the fusion between thought and action as a moment within a process of self-development, continued to mark it in critical ways, especially in Maracle’s later work. When situated within the broader historical dynamic and social evolution of Indigenous subjectivity in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it reveals much more than a simple form of a methodology or a bygone commitment to Marxism. As I argue in the conclusion of this section, Lee Maracle’s theoretical synthesis of Indigenous philosophy and socialism implies that Marxism was a critical development and condition in the turn to Indigenous philosophy and practice or what many referred to as ‘the Red Path’ at the time. In the position she ultimately came to hold, Indigenous philosophy and practice does not negate Marxism but subsumes and retains important determinations from its experience as an evolution within and out of the latter.

\(^{147}\) Incidentally, this did not lead them to abandon Marxism despite the real social impasses encountered on the basis of certain interpretations of it. As Maracle writes near the end of *Bobbi Lee*, "You see, it took me a very long time to learn that the racism and national chauvinism of white leftists I knew gave them a very distorted view of Marx — actually prevented them from understanding Marx and Lenin, from seeing that capitalism was an international system, that revolutions against capitalism were going on in the Third World, that Marxism was a way of making class analysis and not a bunch of worn-out slogans about the working class. That the revolutionary proletariat of today is mainly in the super-exploited Third World and not in Canada and other rich capitalist countries. Well, obviously I didn’t think about it like that then — only that my experience made it impossible for me to think about Canadian or American workers liberating Indians and humanizing the system" (Maracle 1975: 196). Whether or not this is an accurate assessment of the political situation then or now is beside the point, as is the fate of NARP. The commitment to a general theory such as Marxism is itself measured against practice.
Marxism and Indigenous Philosophy

As I argued above, the self-activity of NARP provided a form of unmitigated feedback as a means for testing theories of social change, which Lee Maracle’s autobiographical reflections, especially in *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel*, reveal with such honesty and clarity. The latter demonstrates quite clearly that NARP, and later the Native Study Group, was incessantly working through theories and ideas, especially various iterations of Marxism, which they discovered via other revolutionary groups, as a means of enhancing their ability to act in the world; and testing these theories against the yardstick of their struggle was integral to the process of their self-development and the validity of those ideas. It is precisely because of this radical commitment to a dialectic of theory and practice that ideology is not abstractly supplanted as its limits are exposed in practice, but the practical knowledge acquired through its application is retained within new and more comprehensive theoretical developments, even if that implies a paradigm shift. In other words, the historical development of the subject is a critical determinant of theory but must be self-consciously identified and integrated as such.

While this is implicit in the narrative of *Bobbi Lee*, it is clearest in Maracle’s synthesis of Marxism and Indigenous knowledge, which is found in her 1988 book *I Am Woman*.

In a chapter entitled “The Rebel,” where she develops her reflections on the Red Power Movement, Maracle revisits the radical dialectic of theory and practice grounded on the struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s that NARP and others learned to practice. She writes,

> Those who would re-write history from the closets of settler institutions instead of with their feet firmly rooted in resistance are not rebels. Rebels don’t generally go to school... Rebels don’t play at re-writing history; they make history by taking to the streets, peacefully at times, violently at times, but always in paramilitary style – conscious that it is a fight to the finish. (Maracle 1988: 94)
This should not be understood as a dichotomy between thought and practice. Rather, the
dialectic between theory and practice is clearly situated within the general dynamic of
antagonistic social forces. For Maracle, ideas can only be material determinants in the balance
of these latter, whether they reinforce, enhance, or undermine the vitality of one pole or
another within the living contradictions of social development. As such, the practical
transformation of the objective state of affairs is the ultimate yardstick of the ideological battle,
and those who consciously proceed on the basis of this understanding are poised to
deliberately affect the course of history. Conversely, the pretense of an objective vantage point
beyond the determination of this conflict is premised on a suppression of its ground in struggle
while simultaneously shoring up a position within that play of forces.

It is also within the obfuscation of this relation that ideological caricatures are fostered.

In a scathing review of AIM leader Russell Means’ excoriation of Marxism, Maracle writes,

AIM did not challenge the basic character or the legitimacy of the institutions or even
the political and economic organization of America; rather, it addressed the long-
standing injustice of expropriation. Russell Means attempted, by a series of incorrect
historical acrobatics, to ‘prove’ that Europeans were hopeless. The result was a biased
treatise against the only European rebels in history – the Marxists. It is one thing to
defend the rights of Native people to relate to white people as equals. It is quite another
to attack the rebels as enemies. (1996: 101)

Instead of revisiting the theory of society upon which their central strategy was grounded as
the possible explanation for the real impasses they encountered in practice, Indigenous radicals
like Means doubled down in a self-referential direction, choosing instead to cement their
positions by engaging in baseless speculation about the metaphysical nature of socially
constituted actors as a last-ditch effort. The problem, as Maracle points out, is that, as a result,
not only is an entire theoretical tradition and ideology dismissed in principle on the basis of an
absurd caricature, but the social relations and forces identified by Marxism are permanently excluded from the anticolonial struggle as a result.

However, the defence of Marxism did not lead Maracle to simply maintain its theoretical supremacy in the course of her development in the post-NARP years. Rather, like all ideology, it was measured against the margin of action it facilitated in the face of real social constraints. As she writes in *I Am Woman*:

> Our thirst for knowledge partially slaked, we drove forward always active, always looking again, until a seemingly insurmountable mountain pass was reached and only a fresh new perspective would get us over it, a perspective rooted in our own people’s knowledge. The law of the people and the code of conduct that was so important to our ancestors was what we needed. (Maracle 1988: 96)

Here we see a turn toward Indigenous knowledge, ethics, governance, and law as a result of a long process of appropriating, applying, and discarding ‘externally’ developed theories on the basis of practical struggle in the face of actual political and social problems. However, just over a dozen pages later we read:

> I firmly believe that the philosophy of my ancestors lines up quite tidily with the philosophy of communism. I make no apologies for my principles. What I hold myself to account for is not having fought hard and long for the principles that I hold dear to my heart. I should have thrashed the opponents of anti-communist treachery long ago and didn’t. Not because I was afraid of the consequences, but rather because I loved some of the people influenced by anti-communist bogeymen. These are some of the ‘terrible’ principles of communism to which I ascribe:
  * End the unequal and oppressive relations between European and Third World Nations.
  * End the violent competition between nations of exploiters. Work for peace.
  * End the rape and plunder of the earth and its treasures in the interest of profit

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148 Maracle writes: “That the European labour movement was built on our backs, that the workers of this land have always had us as a cushion to soften the blow of recession is undeniable. That white Marxists, communists and would-be leftists are tainted with racism is equally undeniable. But to renounce the principles of communism because its adherents are flawed is absurd” (1988: 109). Elsewhere she writes: “Critics of communism cling to the delusion that the cities we now inhabit do not exist on land” (1988: 110).
Are these principles frighteningly close to the words of our leaders? Are they terrifying close to the laws of our ancients? (Maracle 1996: 112)

Contrary to the simplistic view that Marxism was and is merely a harmful distraction for the colonized who remain naïve and vulnerable, these traditions are not perceived as inherently contradictory but compatible and mutually sustaining.

However, to grasp Maracle’s claim not merely as an eclectic one but a theoretical synthesis, we need to recall that her methodological grasp of the historical dialectic of theory and practice was grounded on her experience with NARP and the evolution of the Indigenous movement. Like many Indigenous grassroots activists during the Red Power movement, Maracle came to adopt Indigenous knowledge and law through a practice of struggle that was guided by Marxist theory, whether in its classical, sectarian or Third World formulation, as a critical historical development of her subjectivity. While this may not have been a necessary historical development, when considering who many of these individuals were, i.e., the urban, alienated, and downtrodden youth, — ‘defeathered’ as Vern Harper would characterize them — such theory, by virtue of its currency among radical movements at the time, not least the Black liberation struggle, offered a language and program that facilitated their self-

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149 See Howard Adams’ review of Marxism and Native Americans (1983) for a sense of how many Indigenous scholars and activists of the period saw a fundamental incompatibility between these traditions. Vern Harper’s son, Clay Shirt, recently claimed this in a commemoration of his father: “Honouring Elder Vern Harper and the Native People’s Caravan” (2023).

150 For a discussion of this compatibility and her answer to the apparent contradiction between Marxism and spirituality, see chapter 14 “Another Side of Me” in I Am Woman, especially where Maracle writes, “Being an atheist does not mean that we ignore the very phenomenon which defines all things — spirit, essence. To possess a spirit is to be alive. It does mean that we strip spirit of its mystical cloak and look at it in the cold light of reality” (1988: 113).

151 Coulthard writes: “According to NARP founding members, Henry Jack and Geraldine Larkin (hereafter Gerry Ambers), the rank and file of NARP was originally drawn from a cross-section of the growing urban Indigenous population, including men and women, ex-convicts, high school drop-outs, a few academics and university students, as well as Native working class folks who either lived in or had recently migrated to the city from more rural communities (Jack 1974; Ambers 2019: personal communication)” (2021: 380).
development in an overwhelmingly hostile society. In other words, it resonated with the socio-historically determinate situation of displaced and alienated Indigenous people as a means of concretely activating their social agency. The recognition of Indigenous revitalization as a practical outcome of struggle is premised on Maracle’s dialectical grasp of this development, i.e., a socio-historically determinate process of subjective transformation, not an abstract metaphysical one. As a socially situated self-transformation in and against colonial dehumanization and social abandonment, Marxism was a significant mediation in this process as it related to the urban Indigenous youth of the period. Thus, the appropriation of such ideologies and strategies should not be ahistorically dismissed as erroneous external appropriations, which are superseded and supplanted once misguided individuals come to their senses, but understood as critical historical mediations that helped develop Indigenous subjectivity through struggle. This, however, has more significant consequences if we consider what is retained in this development at a theoretical level.

The crux of the synthesis is not merely based on the concrete historical development of subjectivity, but the degree to which this latter process, if it is self-consciously grasped, permits Indigenous knowledge, culture, and philosophy to subsume the complexity of relations and multiple determinations inherent in the abstractions of Marxist social theory having developed out of it. In other words, the extent to which this process permits a self-reflexive grasp of Indigenous resurgence as a form struggle in and against the relationality and objective constraints of capital’s determinations as well as the emancipatory possibilities inherent in the

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152 Vern Harper’s son recently made this claim about his father’s and other Indigenous activists’ of period of the 1970s turn to Marxism at “Honouring Elder Vern Harper and the Native People’s Caravan” (2023).
social contradictions of the latter. It is the concrete development of Indigenous subjectivity and its dialectical grasp that leads Maracle to retain the following imperative as essential to the challenge of Indigenous self-determination:

The means to produce life does not exist solely within the borders of this society. Much of our clothing, electronic equipment, food, etc., comes from former colonies which are financially dependent on North America. That is the simple premise which Native teachers mis-educated by Europeans cannot deal with, without a gentle nudge from below [i.e., liberal minded colonized individuals]. But deal with it we must. Once we understand what kind of world they have created, then we can figure out what kind of world we can re-create. We need not worry how much or how little that new world is culturally Native. It is next to impossible to destroy culture without annihilating the people (1996: 90).

While Marxism evidently cannot account for the development of radical Indigenous subjectivity in its entirety, it was the significant role it played in Maracle’s practical experience and her dialectical grasp of it, especially in situating Indigenous liberation within the broader social dynamics of struggle, that produced her lasting commitment to socialism. For this reason, she could still unequivocally claim long after the demise of Red Power and the revolutionary movements of the late 1960s and earlier 1970s that “For me, the struggle for self-determination will end with the dissolution of this elite and the levelling of the CanAmerican class structure or it will continue – for a thousand years if need be” (1998: 103). The viability of such an understanding, however, would require other concrete vehicles, such as the Native People’s Caravan, to ground the social dynamics necessary for its internalization.

The Native People’s Caravan

Inspired by the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties led by AIM, which travelled across the US demanding a renewal of the treaty relation between Indigenous nations and the federal government, the Caravan began in Vancouver and headed to Ottawa for the opening day of
Parliament on September 30th, 1974. According to Louis Cameron of the Ojibwe Warrior Society, one of the main organizers of the Caravan, the goal was to have a demonstration on Parliament Hill to illustrate the oppression and dictatorship against native people to the rest of the world; what Canada was doing to native people; what Canada was doing to the native communities. I think our objective was to illustrate the serious contradictions in the democratic system of Canada, to show that, in reality, it commits death on the native people. This was our purpose: to show it to other people, to show it to the United Nations and the rest of North America. So what we wanted to do was have a large number of people on Parliament Hill at the opening of the House of Commons, the opening of parliament, to demonstrate the oppression. (Burke 1976: 390)

The plan for the Caravan was hatched during the armed occupation of Anicinabe Park by the Ojibwe Warrior Society in Kenora earlier that summer and followed on the heels of another armed occupation in Cache Creek, B.C., where Indigenous Peoples were protesting the conditions of housing on their reserve, which “escalated only after all reasonable avenues were explored” (Nickel 2019: 126). The former signaled a flashpoint in the ongoing saga of Indigenous frustration vis-à-vis the systemic racism and social indifference in the Kenora region, less than a decade after the march of 1965. The situation had now deteriorated to the point of

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153 By 1974, the RCMP described Red Power as the greatest threat to Canadian national security (Rutherford 2020: 219). At the time, “the state was increasingly concerned about the potential of non-Indigenous activists becoming allies of Red Power movements and Indigenous activists forming multi-racial coalitions, especially with Black activists. State security used surveillance and agents provocateurs as ways to” disrupt “both Indigenous solidarity and the attempt to generate support from non-Indigenous activists” (Rutherford 2020: 220). To this end, “state security worked to actively manufacture dissent and tension within the movement” (Rutherford 2020: 219). It was in this climate that the Native People’s Caravan was launched in the early fall of 1974.

154 This refers to a 40-day armed occupation of a park in Kenora in the summer of 1974 led by the Ojibwe Warriors Society headed by Louis Cameron from the Whitedog Reserve. Their intent was to bring attention to a number of grievances, including greater economic autonomy for First Nations; compensation for the mercury contamination of a river near the Grassy Narrows reserve; and an end to the overtly racist actions and physical brutality against First Nations in Kenora, especially from the police. The armed occupation was a direct result of a lack of response on these issues from the various levels of government, especially the ‘violent death report.’ The action was inspired by AIM’s armed occupation of Wounded Knee the year before, which was the highest-profile action undertaken by any Indigenous activists at the time and was attended by members of the Ojibwe Warrior Society that ultimately occupied the park in Kenora.
giving rise to a community-initiated “violent death report,”\textsuperscript{155} which documented the extent of Indigenous despair in the region, and was compounded by mercury poisoning thanks to capitalist callousness, whose cost-cutting imperative had led to the, by now, generational contamination of Anishinaabe waterways.\textsuperscript{156} However, as Scott Rutherford writes, “As with the Indian Rights march nine years early, and the gestures towards other racially oppressed people, the six-week occupation of Anicinabe Park was fundamentally altering the terms by which Canadian history was to be understood. Indigenous protesters had centered the discussion of colonization so that going forward it could not be ignored” (2020: 123). The occupations of Anicinabe Park and Cache Creek thus contributed to a renewed self-assertiveness and offensive disposition that was unequivocally grounded in the dispossession of Indigenous nations.

The Caravan challenged the racist indifference of colonial society; however, its critique also explicitly targeted the official Indigenous organizations of the time, who were perceived as having been coopted and merely consolidating the colonial status quo. As Caravan organizer and former employee of the Ontario Métis and Non-Status Indian Association between 1972 and 1974, Vern Harper put it,

One reason we had organized the Caravan was because we were very disillusioned with official Native organizations like the National Indian Brotherhood. We knew that they were ineffective, and that they were not really helping to change things for Native people. In fact, their main role seemed to be to keep the lid on Native protest and Native demands. The government had created and funded these organizations in the first place, and it was able to use them to protect itself from any kind of confrontation or direct criticism. When Native people tried to go around the organizations, the government’s line was always, ‘We can only talk to your official representatives.’ Even this was false, because the government wasn’t talking to the official Native leaders. But

\textsuperscript{155} See footnote above.
\textsuperscript{156} The latter, incidentally, was originally protested by the Ojibwe Warrior Society through an occupation of the local INAC building in 1973 and is still unresolved to this day, giving a whole new quality to the notion of racist indifference akin the MMIWG2S+ crisis.
in 1974, the reality of Native organizations was well established. Many of the people on the Caravan had been in government-funded organizations and gone through that whole, frustrating experience. (V. Harper 1979: 77)

The unmediated attempt of the Caravan to approach the federal government, however, was met with the mediation of direct force, culminating as it did in a riot on Parliament Hill, where Indigenous activists were beaten by the RCMP riot squad, which had been deployed in anticipation of their arrival, after politicians refused to address them.

Although suffering a brutal fate, the Caravan achieved some important results. As Vern Harper writes, “It didn’t look like a victory but in a way it was, because the riot squad exposed the role of the RCMP towards Native people once and for all, right in front of thousands of people across Canada” (1979: 67). As a result of having witnessed the attack on television, Indigenous support increased and people were no longer indifferent to the issues (V. Harper 1979: 67). As Harper argues, the raw indifference of government expressed through the open attack against unarmed people forced individuals to take a stand one way or another, leading many to join the movement and reinforcing the commitment of others, as the incident, paradoxically, helped defeat a sense of hopelessness that had set in in many parts of the Indigenous community by the mid-1970s (1979: 69). More tangibly, the fallout of the Caravan restored the National Indian Brotherhood’s access to the federal cabinet which had deteriorated since the euphoric days of the Red Paper victory only a few years earlier (V. Harper 1979: 79).157 While the legacy of the Caravan’s effect on the objective conditions of

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157 As George Manuel’s biographer Peter McFarlane writes, “The NIB leader was also able to use the park occupation, the caravan and the fistfights on Parliament Hill to a political advantage. With the spectre of Indian political violence hanging over their heads, government ministers were suddenly receptive to Manuel when he walked into their offices and told them it was time to deal with him or face the deluge of the young radicals on the streets. The result was a relaunch [from Red Paper victory in 1970] of the Joint NIB-Cabinet Committee where he could once again escape the suffocating bureaucracy of the Indian Affairs department and face the various
colonial rule is difficult to assess with any accuracy, Vern Harper’s 1979 account of the events that took place in the fall of 1974, like the Kenora March of 1965 and the political practice of NARP before them, reveals the value of another development facilitated by the Caravan, namely, the self-transformation of individuals. That is, the story of the Caravan before its arrival in Ottawa, its process and the impact this had on Indigenous subjectivity, is just as critical to the objective development of the Indigenous movement as any results it may have generated in terms of policy or reform.

**Learning and Self-transformation**

The Native People’s Caravan was, above all, a process of learning and functioned as a means for transformative self-development for the individuals who participated in it by creating conditions that facilitated new social relations. It did so in a number of ways: by being radically open and accepting; by providing a means and practice to combat colonial shame, which had been internalized over the generations, and thereby empower individuals; and by functioning as a vehicle for political education. These dynamics were enabled by the semi-autonomous organization of the Caravan, which, despite its ephemeral nature, was sustained by the self-organized labour of the Caravanners.

From the very beginning, the Caravan was to be a pan-Indigenous mobilization open to all Indigenous people and included individuals from many different Indigenous nations (V. Harper 1979: 10). This pan-Indigenous character was critical because, as Harper writes in *Following the Red Path*, “So many of us at that time would rather believe the Indian Act than government ministers on a more equal basis. At the first meeting on October 9, 1974, he reminded the cabinet that the First Nations were in a very critical time in their history... [and that] ‘we are determined to maintain our special place, our special rights and our special status as Indian people’” (2020: 176-77).
our own mirrors, but people were starting to think ‘I’m a Native person’ and feel good about it” (1974: 19). Against colonial atomization, the Caravan consciously sought to break down national differences and racist distinctions between Indigenous Peoples, while cultivating the more unifying category of Native, which addressed feelings of displacement and the sense of non-belonging common among Indigenous people at the time. As a result, Harper recalls, “We started to understand how the Indian Act is used to divide us, but we were moving to overcome that. Living together and working together on the Caravan we began to see that we do have the same problems, the same things to overcome, and it helped to unify us” (1979: 19). As such, we “began to reject the colonial distinctions between Metis/Status/[and] Non-Status” (V. Harper 1979: 19) and especially the imposition of Canadian and American identities (V. Harper 1979: 9-10). Moreover, on the question of non-Indigenous people, Harper writes that, “it was agreed that we should try to build a broad front. A call for support went out to all progressive people who would accept Native leadership and take direction from us” (V. Harper 1979: 10). Although this openness towards radical segments of the settler population marginalized the Caravan to some extent and led to controversy over its fate, it was based on a broader theoretical and strategic assumption held by many Red Power activists at the time. In any case, the Caravan was constituted by a high degree of solidarity both amongst Indigenous Peoples and across the

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158 This is a far cry from acknowledging and centering the law of Namgwaamazin or “remember who you are. Remember who it is you come from” that is, “from the first Anishinaabe that was lowered upon the earth” as the guiding principle of one’s self-understanding and practice (Bird 2020: 34).

159 Scott Rutherford writes, “The presence of Maoists and their Marxist-Leninist ideas within the caravan was controversial because some feared they were becoming the dominant voices of Indigenous organizing” (2020: 129). See pages 129-130 for the full range of intra-leftist criticism of Maoist presence as well as the critique from Indigenous organizations at the time. The association of Maoism with the Caravan is one of the reason why official Indigenous organizations distanced themselves from it, especially because of who was supporting and funding it. As McFarlane writes, “The group was being funded in part by the pariah of the Canadian left, the pro-Albanian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)” (McFarlane 2020: 176).

160 See discussion of Howard Adams below.
colonial divide, which created conditions to cultivate Indigenous pride without inhibiting colonial and racist pressures.

The Politicization of Indigenous Pride

The need to facilitate the positive expression of Indigenous self-development grounded on cultural pride was desperately urgent given the general repression of the social conditions and practices through which individuals and communities could work through internalized inferiority and a structurally inhibited practice of self-development. As Louis Cameron of the Ojibwe Warrior Society argued during the occupation of Anicinabe park in Kenora a few months prior to the Caravan,

> everybody knows, that people have to be free to express human freedom. They have to laugh, they have to yell and they have to be free to move around. But when you push people into a group like that [i.e., through colonial domination and repression] a lot of that expression turns inside. It’s what you call internal aggression ... And as a result of that Indians live a dangerous style of life. They fight each other, they drink a lot. And the tendency of suicide is higher... [This, according to Cameron, was] the crime, the injustice that [was] being committed by the government and by the businesses around the country. They [were] taking one segment of society and pushing it violently inwards. (Rutherford 2020: 119)

In contrast to this structurally enforced and generationally sustained social attrition, marked as it is by alienation and lateral violence, the practical mediation of the Caravan created a social basis to express and develop that human freedom, however temporary and limited. As a result of these nurturing conditions, Harper writes that, “People who joined the Caravan felt Native and proud [which] it accomplished... right away” (V. Harper 1979: 13) and that “on the Caravan, people were beginning to feel comfortable with themselves and their Native identity” (V. Harper 1979: 32). This was indispensable because, as he argued,

> All of us had been brainwashed and conditioned into accepting certain attitudes... We had been brainwashed into believing that Native people were irresponsible and had no
discipline; we were not used to seeing very positive things in ourselves. But now we began to change ... what we were doing on the Caravan was un-conditioning ourselves. (V. Harper 1979: 19)

In this way, the Caravan created the practical conditions for individuals to positively express and develop their identity in a community of reciprocal and respectful recognition.

Many at the time were only starting to respect themselves as Indigenous people given the experience of internalized shame instilled through the Indian Residential School system and the colonial racism of Canadian society more broadly. The former, which systematically targeted Indigenous languages and cultures for destruction or as, Harper often referred to it, sought to ‘defeather’ Indigenous Peoples, found a counter-practice in the Caravan and the Red Power movement more broadly. Thus, by participating in the Caravan “Reserve people who had language began to understand the value of what they had” (V. Harper 1979: 40). This was equally the case regarding Elders. Harper writes that the residential school system “had taught us that our elders were a bunch of old fools. But as the trip went on and we worked

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162 The movement was faced with the tremendous task of socially validating Indigenous dignity, which was far from being generally accepted across society. The extent to which this was internalized by Indigenous Peoples is conveyed by Lee Maracle, when she writes the following in Bobbi Lee: “We had minds; we could think. All that sounds a bit pathetic now, but then, coming from the survival world of having to constantly work to stay alive, thinking, our recognition of our genius was all so new” (1975: 209).

Moreover, this struggle is perhaps best represented by the slogan “Better Red Than Dead,” which was an obvious play on the earlier communist slogan but used by Indigenous people to denote cultural and ethnic pride against anti-Indigenous racism and colonial violence. For instance, the 1970 cover of Native Movement, the name of NARP’s newsletter in the early 1970s, shows an Indigenous women wearing a medallion standing in front of a wall on which is graffitied “Better Red Than Dead.” The importance of this slogan is also emphasized in Jeannette Armstrong’s novel Slash, originally published in 1985, which narrates the fictional story of a young Indigenous man’s coming of age during the Red Power era. Slash tells us, through Armstrong’s words, the following: “At that Indian demonstration where young people talked about Red Power, lots of people acted the same. Everybody looked important, and I guess I felt that way, too. It’s a strange feeling to be walking down a street carrying a sign. You’re just a face in a bigger body that somehow is stronger than any one person in it. Everybody walked along chanting the slogan and it was like one huge voice saying, ‘We’d rather be ‘Red’ than dead.’ I hadn’t been sure what that meant but it sure sounded good when everybody said it at once” (1985: 54).
things out living together, we began to see that the older people had something to offer” (V. Harper 1979: 19). This is a far cry from the cultural and social respect extended to Elders today; however, it is thanks to the self-organization of Indigenous people and the creation of forums, such as the Caravan, where Indigenous people could share and develop a sense of self-worth and confidence in ways that were less mediated by colonial ideology and power, that social conditions were able to shift. In fact, because of this safe and accepting space, people could talk about what the Indian residential school system and churches had done to them, and “The demands for Native [control over] education came out of discussions of schools” (V. Harper 1979: 40) on route to Ottawa, which would form a critical part of the Caravan’s manifesto and 10-point list of demands.

Moreover, the Caravan also allowed individuals to confront other dehumanizing forms of social relations internalized through colonial violence. For instance, the activists, according to Harper, began to deal with sexual and gender differences among Indigenous Peoples on the Caravan. As he recalled,

We were looking at the women’s question, trying to understand it and support our sisters better ... [and] We were looking at gay people too and seeing that they were human beings like the rest of us. We had a couple of gay sisters on the Caravan and they weren’t put down; they were treated with respect. I think a lot of us were just opening our eyes and ears for the first time. (V. Harper 1979: 27)

Whether or not this was a process of revitalizing Indigenous cultural values or a completely new consciousness does not negate the fact that the Caravan was critical to the practice of challenging and supplanting internalized perceptions.
A Vehicle for Political Education

Significantly, the Caravan functioned as a vehicle for political education. According to Harper’s account, “Most people who were not politically minded at the beginning... were when they left” (V. Harper 1979: 40). As he puts it, “The Caravan was a learning experience for everybody on it. [Caravaners were] learning from each other all the time and sharing ideas. They also learned about the local conditions of many of the places they passed through, as well as historical lessons from Elders who had joined the Caravan” (V. Harper 1979: 40). As a result of the exchanges facilitated by this practice, Harper writes that “we began to see ourselves as an oppressed nation, not a national minority” (V. Harper 1979: 41). Thus, we see that broader theoretical ideas that had been circulating among radical movements since the late 1960s were internalized by Indigenous people through the social dynamics of processes like the Caravan.

Lastly, as a critical aspect of this political education, the Caravan facilitated a resurgence of Indigenous knowledge and practice, or what Harper and many others at the time called the “Red Path.”

As Harper recalls,

Spiritualism [, as he also referred to it at the time,] had always been a very important part of my life, but like many other Native people I had been conditioned to neglect this legacy. On the Caravan I began to develop a deeper understanding of what spiritualism really means. I was just getting myself together, and the Caravan helped me do that. And I started to understand that Native people practice more socialism than many people in the left. We were treating each other like brothers and sisters. (V. Harper 1979: 89)

However, as this last sentence suggests, this process took on a unique form for Harper because of the Caravan. The latter did so not least because it generated an historical consciousness

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about the role of socialism within Indigenous politics. As he recalls, everyone on the Caravan
learned a lot from Maria Campbell, who spoke at a fundraising rally in Toronto about the
socialist tradition within Indigenous culture. Harper writes that,

I was amazed to learn that quite a few of the older people had at one time been in the
Communist Party\textsuperscript{164} and had a history of knowing about socialism – our Canadian type
of socialism. I’d had the feeling that our people were anti-communist, but I realized that
this was wrong, that it was just a misinterpretation on my part. Many of our people
were open to socialism, but a lot of anti-communist work had been done by the
churches, Indian Affairs, and regional community workers. In Toronto, many people in
the Native community did not distinguish between the different communist parties and
the different radical groups. Because they were angry at the CPC(ML), they condemned
everyone on the left. (V. Harper 1979: 44)\textsuperscript{165}

Thus, much like the colonial effort to separate Indigenous Peoples from their land, culture and
nations, there had equally been a concerted effort to purge socialist tendencies from within the
Indigenous movement, which had once developed. Understanding the alleged incompatibility
between Indigenous culture and socialism could therefore be conceived as an historical process

\textsuperscript{164} Campbell was certainly referring to her personal relationship with Malcom Norris and Jim Brady, “the two
men,” she would later write in the preface to their 1981 biography by Murray Dobbin, “who have been my heroes
since childhood. Men whose philosophy helped me understand the world I live in and whose encouragement gave
me the strength to seek my own visions” (Dobbin 1981: 13) and “remained true to the socialist path they chose”
(Dobbin 1981: 14). Norris and Brady were members of the Communist Party of Canada.

\textsuperscript{165} The Cold War ideological battles that Harper is referring to, which, in North America, tended to attack all forms
of socialist or anti-capitalist thinking and practice as a threat to civilization and freedom, and often demonstrated
the inability to make essential distinctions between different ideologies and politics within the left, certainly in a
critical manner not tainted by hysteria and fear, continues to affect the legacy of this history and present efforts to
reclaim it. For example, a \textit{Globe and Mail} article commemorating Vern Harper’s death in 2018 argues, “At the time,
much was made of Mr. Harper and some colleagues calling themselves Marxist-Leninists and internal fights with
the Maoists, but the Cold War name-calling seems meaningless today... The main theme of the caravan was to
speak to the Parliamentarians, get them to listen to native people on everything from funding to social issues”
(Langan 2018). This is misleading because those Marxist and socialist ideologies, however problematic, were
essential factors in motivating the kind of political action that was perceived as necessary by many at the time
precisely because parliamentarians had repeatedly ignored their demands in the deliberate and ruthless way and
helped push the Indigenous struggle in decisive ways. These ideologies were not at all about appeals first and
foremost to parliamentarians but demanded radical change to Canadian society as a whole.
of alienating a once vibrant and vital exchange in contrast to a foreign and arbitrary imposition.\textsuperscript{166}

As result, this historical self-understanding helped consolidate a conception and practice of cultural revitalization that synthesized socialism and Indigenous culture, law, and philosophy. As with Lee Maracle, this synthesis was the product of an understanding developed out of a process of trial and error that tested theory and political ideology against the experience of struggle. The dialectic of theory and practice remained the source of Harper’s reconnection with the tradition of his ancestors, giving it a distinct shape in the process. As he would write in 1979, “I felt, and I still believe, that socialism is the tool. But now I understand that it must be a type of socialism developed by Native people. Self-determination will not come under the CPC(ML) or any other political party like it (Harper 1979: 89).”\textsuperscript{167} It was the limitations of the latter and its associated politics that initiated a conscious turn to Indigenous traditions without, however, abandoning the practical insights afforded my Marxist theory and politics. For this reason, it remained clear to Harper that

\begin{quote}
The return to our spiritual way of life leads only one way, and that is towards self-determination for Native people. I strongly believe that Native spiritualism and hard work will eventually lead to an independent Red Nation in North America. Of course, I don’t believe that it will come under the capitalist system... Our spiritual way of life cannot exist within the capitalist system, which is built upon materialism and injustice. Under capitalism the land is not shared by the community, but owned by a few people who will sell our fathers’ and mothers’ bones to accumulate even more wealth. The leaders are not the servants of the people, but the servants of those who own big businesses... Capitalism always has been and always will be an enemy of Native people. (V. Harper 1979: 90)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{166} In discussing his father’s legacy, the latter is how Harper’s son recently characterized his father’s experience with Marxism at “Honouring Elder Vern Harper and the Native People’s Caravan” (2023).
\textsuperscript{167} At the time of the Caravan, Harper was a Maoist and member of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist).
Harper was thus led to embrace a form of socialism that grew out of a critique of capitalism based on Indigenous values and traditions, which he described as follows:

Spiritualism is not capitalism; it is not communism either. It is a way of life that has been with Native people for thousands of years. But I don’t see white people’s socialism as a contradiction to Native spiritualism. Spiritualism means that no one owns the land; no industry exploits the people. Our elders and medicine people are servants in every shape and form. (V. Harper 1979: 89)

Most significantly, the exploration of this ideology through the practice of the Caravan allowed for the development, or at least the beginnings of such a development, of a critical form of Indigenous and non-Indigenous anticolonial solidarity, given that it is premised on the non-identity of the settler working class with capital. As he writes,

I think that Native people on the Caravan started to realize that working people aren’t their enemies, that working people are in some cases taken for just as much of a ride as Native people. Up until ’74, Natives and workers were pretty isolated from each other – Natives believing that working people are just a bunch of honkies and rednecks out to get Native people, and working people believing that Native people are just a bunch of shiftless, lazy bums. This was the image that the government and the church and all its vehicles had successfully promoted. And ’74 started to crack the foundation of those lies. (V. Harper 1979: 83)

As we saw with Maracle, this relationship remained indispensable to a politics of Indigenous self-determination despite the racism of the white settler working class. In response to social impasses like the latter, the Native People’s Caravan created a concrete medium for a practice able in principle to breakdown this social impasse by drawing different people into a process of learning together through struggle.

Although the Caravaners attempted to set up a longer-term operation with the Native People’s Embassy through the occupation of an abandoned mill in Ottawa, it could not
institutionalize the movement that erupted in 1974. However, the critical developments in Indigenous subjectivity described above were evidently not facilitated by ordinary circumstances but a self-organized political medium. As we saw, this self-organization, which constituted the objective conditions of the Caravan, permitted a new practice of sociality to evolve, despite its ephemeral character. The proximity between individuals living and learning together, as well as the relative safety of the Caravan, enabled the people on it to overcome socially produced inhibitions and perceive each other in a manner beyond colonial ideology, giving them a sense of belonging and purpose, i.e., it helped produce new people. Like the Native Alliance for Red Power that preceded it, the Native People’s Caravan was also premised on a strong critique of the official Indigenous leadership’s perceived cooptation. However, in the end, it was the redistribution of money, goods, and voluntary services as well as the coordinated labour of many people on it that sustained the Caravan while it lasted.

The Organization of a Political Mediation

To this end, the Caravaners were confronted by a number of organizational issues and needed to develop certain knowledge and skills through ad hoc mechanisms as a response to these issues. As Harper makes clear, the Caravaners faced many logistical issues and continuously required efforts to raise money along the way through rallies, fundraisers, and support from other organizations in order to pay for the buses and food among other necessities. They slept at Native friendship centres and churches along the way. In order to pull it off, they had to form

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168 For the story of the demise of the Native People’s Embassy, which was infiltrated by the FBI and allegedly burnt down by the RCMP, see chapter six “The Native People’s Caravan: Surveillance, Agents Provocateurs, and Multi-racial Coalitions” in Scott Rutherford’s Canada’s Other Red Scare, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2020.
a number of committees for the required tasks, including public relations, security, a treasury, cooking, and sanitation, which gave individuals a sense of purpose and allowed them to develop certain skills and knowledge along the way, not least solidarity and collaboration. They also had to develop a democratic decision-making process, which had to adjust to changing circumstances as the Caravan progressively moved across the country.

It was the sum total of this labour that created a semi-autonomous social space, which facilitated the important subjective changes described above, as well as the direct and indirect consequences the clash with RCMP ultimately had going forward. Regardless of the latter’s indeterminacy, Following the Red Path concludes with an unequivocal assessment of the transformative impact of 1974, which, according to Harper,

was a historical year: the Caravan, Cache Creek, Kenora, the RCMP riot, the Embassy. Ever since the white man landed here we’ve had resistance, but 1974 was a turning point because then we had a massive resistance of Native people all across the country. And it was the foundation of an even stronger resistance to come. At that time some people were still thinking about assimilation, but ‘74 turned that around. A lot of Native people decided that from there on it would be genocide or nationhood. Simple as that. They would do everything – their lives included – to achieve nationhood. And there are people from the Caravan who have now become strong resistance fighters, and will play a very strong part in building a nation. (V. Harper 1979: 84)

Notwithstanding the objective accuracy of this assessment, the subjective changes forged through the mediation of the Caravan were critical to the concrete historical development of Indigenous subjectivity. While these transformations were not necessarily accompanied by radical changes in the objective circumstances of colonial domination, they remain historically and politically significant, a point which the theory of Howard Adams centres prominently in its assessment of the possibilities for moving beyond the structural impasses of a society grounded on colonialism.
Developing Indigenous Self-Determination through Struggle: The Work of Howard Adams

Métis activist and scholar Howard Adams is well known as one of the most combative and uncompromisingly anticolonial voices of the era in question. In 1975, Adams released the most comprehensive theoretical expression of the Red Power movement: *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*.

Black Power and Political Consciousness

Like Fred Kelly and NARP, Adams’ self-understanding and political consciousness developed through his participation in the Black liberation struggle, which he encountered while completing his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley. As he writes,

> Through my participation in the black people’s civil rights struggle I could see myself struggling beside my people at home for the same freedom...The more I became involved, the clearer colonialism became. I was very moved when I heard Malcolm X speak to the students about black nationalism...Like black people, I began to reject my feelings of inferiority and shame, and to become proud of my Indian heritage and native nation. (Adams 1989: 152-53)

The political practice of fostering Indigenous self-development through relations between different oppressed social groups in struggle was thus critical to Adams’ own political consciousness and development, and belongs to his creation story as a radical activist.

Political Mentors: Malcom Norris and Jim Brady

Another critical source of Adams’ political formation took place in northern Saskatchewan, where he had been sent as part of a community development initiative. There he encountered the criminalization of Métis livelihoods and the unrelenting antagonism that communities had

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169 Adams was also in direct contact with NARP in the late 1960s, writing in their Jan-Feb 1969 newsletter, “I would like to say how much I enjoyed my trip to Vancouver and meeting several NARP members. I think that we have a great deal in common and that our objectives are pretty well the same... I would like to see your movement grow. I have just returned from a trip to the Maritimes where I met some Indians; they are thinking along the same lines we are” (Adams 1969).
experienced vis-à-vis provincial game wardens, non-Indigenous outfitters, and the RCMP. At the
time, the Department of Natural Resources and local outfitters were constantly harassing the
Métis and confiscating their catches. Moreover, this conflict over resources was exacerbated by
the lack of government recognition and protection of Métis rights and a form of deeply
entrenched social segregation, which Adams referred to as a “White quasi-apartheid rule of the
Aboriginal population” (2005: 172). This situation forced the Metis to engage in such desperate
measures as fisticuffs with non-Indigenous people, including the police, and even led fishers in
the community of Buffalo Narrows to blow up a DNR patrol boat as well as a failed attempt on
an RCMP float plane.170

However, these were not senseless acts of violence or mere survival tactics, but forms
of direct action grounded on a consciousness developed through the grassroots political
education and organizing work of Malcom Norris and his life-long comrade and collaborator Jim
Brady, who would soon become Adams’ political mentors. By the time Adams went north in
1966, he found a number of Metis communities that were highly organized and demonstrated a
high degree of political consciousness about the issues they were facing. As Adams told Norris
and Brady’s biographer Murry Dobbin in 1976,

I was really travelling in Malcolm Norris country... Now the thing is that I had no trouble
at all in just simply talking to the Metis people even though I look white and by all, you
know, my lifestyle, I am white and a bureaucrat from the University. And there is no
reason why the Metis people should have trusted me or spoke to me at all but they did.
And I did not have any hesitation from them whatsoever about discussing the issues
that really were important to them such as fishing problems they were having at Buffalo
Narrows with Waite's fishing outfit, and they really had some real serious confrontations
and struggles there. Others talked about Mounted Police brutality. Others talked about
the housing conditions and how they were going to organize in terms of getting more

170 Interview with Murry Dobbin August 20th, 1976. SASK. SOUND ARCHIVES PROGRAMME; tape number: IH-419;
Disk: TRANSCRIPT DISC 68; number of pages: 20; Restrictions: NONE.
political muscle. And these kinds of things. Now they had what I would consider really a fairly high level of political awareness which rather alarmed me because I didn't really expect that. I thought I would drive up there and those people are really quite remote and that they had not come to understand any of these kind of issues. But because of their involvement, they had really been involved in hand-to-hand combat with Waite's fishing outfit and his men who, with their planes, had tried to go out and meet the native fisherman coming in with their boats and tip them over because they weren't selling their fish to Waite's, they were selling to the co-op. And so that these fellows, the natives, already had real firsthand encounters and they knew what it was all about. And so they had men like Norris who was sort of the organizer, kind of the brains behind the whole thing that kept the people united. And in a sense you could draw upon one community or another although I don't think they ever did. And they were fully aware of racism. You know, they had no hesitation to talk to you openly about racism. It wasn't as if they were trying to hide and sneak and, you know, sort of... So that, I would contribute a lot of that to the work of Malcolm Norris.\textsuperscript{171}

Key to this form of political practice was a strategy premised on the necessity of active political struggle and direct action on the part of the colonized, which was reflected in Norris' attempt to publicly elevate the tactics of the Kenora march in 1965 to a general principle of Indigenous politics. To recall, this had been motivated by a strong insistence on the dangers of state intervention, specifically in the form of funding, as the single most threatening counter-strategy to the Indigenous movement given that “The liberal overtures to potential native leaders [at the time] implicitly advanced the view that co-operation with the state was the natural and proper solution to the ‘native problem’” and, as Dobbin writes, “A generation of native leaders was being schooled to view the state as a welcome partner rather than a threat to native political autonomy” (Dobbin 1981: 207). Norris and Brady thus saw nothing less than the autonomy of the Indigenous movement at stake in the face of efforts to coopt Indigenous activists and, in the face of this peril, “Norris was heartened by Adams' willingness to take a major role in Métis affairs. In part because Adams was a socialist, radicalized by the direct

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
action politics of the Berkeley students, and also because he was educated, Norris saw in Adams the future president of the Metis association” (Dobbin 1981: 237). These political principles, namely, the critique of cooptation, the emphasis on active political struggle and the offensive disposition of direct action, and broad-based coalitional politics would form the backbone of Adams’ political practice.

Political Practice

In April 1968, Adams co-founded the radical pan-Indigenous Saskatchewan Native Action Committee (SNAC) against government advances to bring him into the fold. Founded in the wake of the Metis Association of Saskatchewan’s demise, an organization spear-headed by Malcom Norris that was undermined in 1967 by the provincial government’s support for the more compliant Metis Society of Saskatchewan, SNAC evolved out of a strong critique of what it perceived as the latter’s coopted leadership, which had been supported by government funding from its very beginnings. In its manifesto, entitled ‘Up the Revolution,’ SNAC proclaimed, “Integration is not a solution, especially not forced integration. We oppose Whitey’s attempts

172 See, for instance, Adams’ submission “The Native Elite” on page 9 in NARP’s newsletter of 01-02-1970, which by that time was called the Native Movement.

173 An example of this practice is referred to by Adams, when he writes, “In the 1960s, our people arose with confidence and a counter consciousness—ideas against the ruling class—and we were prepared for aggressive confrontation. We began picketing and holding sit-ins and street demonstrations. Naturally, our actions were directed against brutal colonizers for their discriminatory behaviour. Our goal was to expose and then discredit racist policies, such as those practiced by the Baldwin Hotel in Saskatoon” (1995: 75).

174 Adams declined an offer to serve as premier Thatcher’s deputy minister for Indian and Métis Affairs (Pitsula 1997: 226). For his comprehensive analysis of cooptation, see chapter 14 “The Failure of Native Leadership” in Prison of Grass (1975). However, in a strategic effort to move the trend of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan in a radical direction, Adams ran and won the presidency in 1969. When this happened, the provincial government’s strategy of funding the organization to marginalize SNAC backfired (Pitsula 1997: 227).

175 As Adams writes in A Tortured People, “SNAC’s chairman explained that: the new organization had been formed because existing Native organizations did not really represent the desires and needs of either the Indian or Metis people. The leaders of these official organizations have been brainwashed into accepting a second-class colonial status and have become Uncle Tomahawks. We know that we will never be accepted fully by the white man, so we want to build our own culture in our communities and reserves. We want our own schools, our own industries, and our own local governments with autonomy” (1995: 68).
to assimilate our people, our culture, traditions and philosophies into his supreme society”

(Pitsula 1997: 223). According to David Myer Temin, SNAC

aimed to work outside the electoral system,\textsuperscript{176} and advanced direct-action strategies aimed at fostering the basic redistribution of power toward Indigenous peoples. The overarching goals in these actions was to create forms of participatory self-government and community control across urban and rural/reserve Indigenous communities that rejected the constraints of the colonial system. (Temin 2023: 147)

Radical Nationalism

This politics ultimately found its most complete theoretical formulation in Adams’ 1975 work

\textit{Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View}.\textsuperscript{178} The latter is the most comprehensive theorization of the Red Power movement’s core tendencies and demonstrates a synthesis of these elements in the form of a coherent politics grounded on a clear notion of totality. As Deb Simmons writes,

Adams emphasized the particularity of Aboriginal experience and struggles, but at the same time was a confirmed internationalist. Originally inspired by the American Black Power movement and the anti-colonial struggles of the Third World, Adams consistently stressed the linkages between local struggles and global capitalism. (2002: 11)

\textsuperscript{176} Despite this, SNAC “tested the political waters by running a candidate in the Meadow Lake constituency in the 1968 federal election. The candidate was Carole Lavallee, a twenty-five-year-old treaty Indian from Cowessess reserve who enrolled in social sciences courses at the Regina campus of the University of Saskatchewan [where Adams taught]” (Pitsula 1997: 226). Lavallee received only 600 votes but was the first person of Native ancestry to run in a federal election (Dyke 2011: 56). Adams reflected on this decision as follows: “Although it was true that electoral politics never seemed to have had any relevance to our people’s day-to-day struggle to survive, it was the opportune time to take advantage of national publicity and draw attention to the crucial issues affecting Canada’s Natives. The decision to run a candidate did not represent a commitment to parliamentary politics as part of our liberation struggle, but it was seen as a timely way of expressing our concerns to white society. The lengthy campaign period and national publicity would help spread our message, and, of course, a revolutionary voice in the House of Commons would be helpful” (1995: 69). Adams explained, “Our candidate’s election platform broke with this tradition [i.e., the accomplishments of Liberal and Conservative Indigenous MPs]. Her campaign for Aboriginal people was based on two central issues: self-determination and autonomous control of our local industries and Native communities” (Adams 1995: 70).

\textsuperscript{177} For an account of SNAC and other political actions that Adams participated in during the late 1960s and early 1970s see Adams’ reflections in his 1995 book \textit{A Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization}, especially chapter six “Speaking Out to White Oppressors and chapter seven “Metis/Indian Struggles of the 1960s.”

\textsuperscript{178} Adams would advocate the necessity of self-liberation and this type of direct action-centred politics until the very end of his life, even mentioning the bombing of the DNR boat in the late 1960s in a keynote address he gave in 2000 at the “Rebuilding the Left” conference in Toronto, a year before he died.
As such, Adams continually “highlighted the similarities between Third World decolonization and the attempts of Indigenous peoples in North America to challenge and undo the legacies of the colonial project here” (Rutherford 2020: 30). However, Adams differentiated between “the revolutionary nationalism” of Third World struggles, where a majority Indigenous population were able to overthrow an imperial state controlled from afar, and what he conceived as the “radical nationalism” appropriate to Indigenous populations reduced to a minority in settler colonial states (Adams 1989: 167). The latter, which formed the linchpin of his political theory of Indigenous liberation, was conceived by Adams as a form of political self-understanding and practice that thrives for economic, social and cultural autonomy, and control over all political affairs concerning the natives as a nation, beginning with complete local control of Indian reserves, Métis communities, and native urban ghettos... [and that this] nationalism is based on the unique historical development of a particular nation. (Adams 1989: 167)

This struggle for autonomy necessitated, according to Adams, a conscious politics of separatism, and it did so for two primary reasons. On the one hand, separatism was a strategy that could ground an active form of self-mediating development premised on the rejection of capitalist society and its institutionalized values. As he writes,

We need to define our native ethic according to those principles inherent in our culture that are strongly opposed to the capitalistic profit ethic. This will inevitably mean native separatism for a temporary transitional period. (Adams 1989: 168).

On the other hand, the conditions for a strategy of separatism was already more or less imposed by virtue of the extreme racism of colonial policy and Canadian society in the mid-1960s, which, through a combination of hostility, indifference, and organized isolation had created a social situation of legal and de facto segregation. In this sense, advocating separatism
as a condition for autonomous development simply corresponded to the actual structural separation and isolation imposed by the racism and colonial domination of Canadian society.179

However, engaging in a strategy of separatism180 as means to cultivate a consciously anticapitalist Indigenous culture was also critical to the process of exorcising the internalization of colonial shame and the inferiority complexes instituted by generations of dehumanizing social practice. In fact, the latter had to remain a premise of the former if it was to have any positive and effective meaning. As such, the process of self-development had to be based on the practice of a culture unencumbered by the incessant repression and violence of racism. As Adams argued, “Red nationalism revives those native cultural traditions that give stability and security to the nation and discards those that oppress the people” (Adams 1989: 169). Like Maracle before him, Adams was well aware of the pitfalls of cultural nationalism, which he understood as a form of demobilization.181 As he writes,

The danger in this is that it might begin to sever any links with a progressive liberation ideology... Cultural nationalism is more than behaving and believing as traditional Indians; it is a return to extreme separatism in the hope that colonial oppression will automatically go away. The emphasis is upon worship and the performance of ritual

179 In this sense, Adams writes, “separatism means nothing more than allowing the present segregation of reserves, colonies, and ghettos to continue as they are today, with the exception that autonomy and local control must be given to them” (1989: 168). However, as I mention below, Adams did not believe that these would be given to Indigenous Peoples without a certain kind of struggle.

180 The development of local national autonomy, Adams argued, required two fundamental conditions: “constitutional authority and economic independence, since the integration into a white-supremacist society for native people causes disintegration of their nation” (1989: 168). As I will show with Coulthard’s critique of the colonial politics of recognition nearly 40 years after Adams published Prison of Grass, these conditions are precisely what are structurally subordinated insofar as the practice attempts to draw Indigenous national development within the parameters of settler state sovereignty and capital accumulation (Coulthard 2014: 166). Long before this, however, Adams had rejected the hope that these conditions would be gifted from above and was quite prescient given that his conception of nationalism was first and foremost a practical postulate that could facilitate Indigenous liberation according to a form of self-development premised on the dignity of Indigenous Peoples in the face of settler colonial violence. Separatism within struggle should not be confused with autonomism, which presumes the possibility of developing a society unhampered by the determinants and the constraints of the capital system in the present.

181 Lee Maracle also shares this understanding: “For those who no longer wished to be identified with mass civil disobedience, cultural nationalism became the convenient flag to hide behind” (1998: 97).
behavior, not upon politics and liberation... and does not allow [Indigenous people] to develop a radical consciousness or a reorganized culture that would be in harmony with liberation. (Adams 1989: 170)

In other words, cultural nationalism signalled a form of self-development no longer conscious of or concerned about the full range and depth of the actual structural constraints that had prompted its development in the first place. Separatism for Adams in contrast signified a moment within a process of development, not a permanent condition or horizon of social practice.

**Self-Liberation or Protagonism**

Furthermore, what facilitated the transcendence of cultural nationalism for Adams was first and foremost the mediation of protagonism,\(^{182}\) i.e., the participation and agency of the colonized as indispensable to the process of their own liberation. The centrality of self-activity to this development for Adams was self-evident given the political education he himself had received in the preceding decade from Norris and Brady and what his own practical experience had revealed to him. For this reason, he could state that

Radical nationalism is activated through a deepening of social and political consciousness. Such nationalism is linked to, or contains within itself, a progressive political ideology that serves to advance the social awareness of oppressed native people regarding their colonized circumstances, as well as directing the cultural revolution. Beginning at the neighbourhood level nationalism helps unite the social

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\(^{182}\) The concept of protagonism is not Adams’, but is taken from Marta Harnecker who developed it decades after Adams’ developed his theory in a completely different context. However, I believe it is apt for grasping the essence of Adams’ theory and politics. Adams’ most concise description of this principle is found in *A Tortured People*: “If the ruling power gave us freedom, they could take it back whenever they wanted. To truly obtain freedom one has to own it, and our people could only own their freedom if they fought and seized it. Local people must be involved if they wanted local changes; they must become part of the solution. Local people should participate at all levels from strategy planning to mass demonstrations. Also, it is important to begin the battle where there was considerable home support. By concentrating on local issues, we engaged in confrontations we felt we were sure to win. Neighbourhood activists acted as leaders and got a taste of victory. Regardless of the prize’s small size, success buoyed and motivated our people to continue. We embraced the concepts of Aboriginal nationalism and the necessity for confrontation. We knew that liberation would require a struggle against the government and if necessary, certain force might have to be used” (1995: 79).
actions of native people through mass participation, and therefore grows naturally from the struggles of the people, not from indoctrination through a ruling-class ideology. Radical nationalism is created by the people, who, by participating in the struggle, make the nation a reality to everyone, and, in turn, make the nation part of their personal experience. (Adams 1989: 167-68)

Critical to this dynamic then was a participatory politics that addressed the most immediate needs of the people. “One of the greatest tasks,” according to Adams, “is to organize around local grievances and educate them politically at the same time” (1989: 182); and as this practice develops, “People soon learn that political maturity comes from direct and immediate acts of liberation” (Adams 1989: 183). This was the indispensable premise of anticolonial politics for Adams if the latter was to have any social substance at all. Radical nationalism therefore signified a practical development that proceeds to confront the most immediate forms of domination towards a progressive confrontation with more mediated ones, which the former presuppose and reinforce; that is, as the colonized develop their capacities and succeed in exercising more self-determination and autonomous control within the immediate spheres of social practice, e.g., local government, the more immediate the social parameters and constraints of the latter are revealed in practice. In this sense, Adams writes,

[The Indigenous] struggle is therefore a double one: the first and most immediate struggle is against the colonialism of the federal and provincial governments, the second is against the imperialism of the United States. The struggle against the government

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183 Because of this political principle, Deb Simmons situates Adams in a particular tradition of Marxism: “In Prison of Grass, Adams concludes that the concrete and democratic practice of organizing for change at a local level is the greatest task of Aboriginal activists, for only this immediate experience will lead to understanding broader contradictions in the capitalist system: [quoting Adams] ‘We have to learn for ourselves through experience, rather than being dependent on the teaching and information of so-called specialists and experts ... It is from locally based struggles that true revolutionary theory evolves, a revolutionary theory functional for those people who must liberate themselves.’ This perspective places Adams squarely in the socialism from below tradition theorized by Hal Draper, who was himself influenced by his involvement in the student movement at Berkeley in the 1960s” (Simmons 2002: 10).

184 A more consistent application of Adams’ own principle would be a confrontation with Canadian capitalism as a condition for challenging US imperialism as opposed to the unmediated from Canadian colonialism to the latter.
of Canada is the most immediate because its agents occupy our native communities and dominate our daily lives. (Adams 1989: 177-78).

The struggle thus proceeds from the immediate forces of oppression confronting the colonized, not the legal status of macro-political concepts like sovereignty, as the only real basis for developing Indigenous protagonism.

**Class Struggle as the Concrete Development of Indigenous Nationalism**

However, this development of Indigenous nationalism is not automatic but requires the intervention of emancipatory ideology, the appropriate theoretical articulation of these developments, and a commitment to political education. For this reason, as Deb Simmons points out in her tribute to Adams shortly after his death in 2001, “For him, authentic nationalism is a moment in the journey from the colonized to critical consciousness, which he defined ‘in its ultimate sense’ as ‘a perception of the totality of an experience unencumbered by capitalist ideology’” (2002: 11). Thus, contrary to what Adams himself claims, his two-pronged struggle cannot simply move to a confrontation with American imperialism without developing the conditions for a confrontation with Canadian capitalism as a condition of challenging the latter. Given the fact that his analysis of colonialism and Indigenous national oppression was firmly grounded on a notion of a social totality fundamentally determined by capital, Adams could anticipate the course of struggle, which Indigenous grassroots practice in the 1960s and 1970s had borne out in variously underdeveloped ways, without dismissing Indigenous nationalism, cultural resurgence, and the struggle for local autonomy and control as indispensable developments within a praxis of social transformation. By virtue of his

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185 For instance, he writes, “This oppression of the native people is so deeply rooted in the capitalist system that it cannot be completely eliminated without eliminating capitalism itself” (Adams 1989: 176-77).
methodological postulate of totality, radical nationalism implied from the outset the progressive confrontation with the conditions of its development, which inevitably meant a clash with capital as the foundation of generalized social reproduction and the dominant structure and dynamic of practical activity in settler colonial society. Adams thus argued in *Prison of Grass* that,

> segregation under radical nationalism will mean greater class consciousness. It develops the understanding that a native liberation struggle is essentially the same struggle as that of the working class and all oppressed people against a capitalist ruling class. In this way, Indians and Métis can build alliances with workers and other oppressed and colonized groups of white society. (1975: 168)

Thus, Adams writes, “as the struggle widens, social class features will gradually become more prominent and the movement will turn into a class struggle. Indians and Métis will come to see that the different class struggles throughout Canada are not separate and unrelated” (1989: 177). In other words, as the nationalist struggle intensifies, those engaged in it eventually begin to experience in practice the limits imposed on it by the capitalist system, especially the structural constraints upon local autonomy that impose a class relation as a condition of meeting capital’s imperatives, and are thereby forced to develop a class analysis and strategy as a condition for the further development of a committed nationalism. Thus, more than the ideological demystification of the social whole, radical nationalism is, above all, the discovery of and confrontation with capital’s determinations and constraints through a commitment to nationalism in practice, which, in turn, calls forth a strategy that extends the struggle beyond the politics of nationhood as a condition of developing the latter itself. This, of course, demands a theory grounded on practice, but one that in turn informs the range and scope of the latter’s effective capacity for intervention.
Adams’ political theory thus aims to identify and develop the conditions whereby
Indigenous self-determination becomes a determinative force in the broader class struggle and,
concomitantly, whereby the multiplicity of struggles which constitute the latter’s dynamic,
become decisive in the development of Indigenous self-determination. Implied here is the fact
that, in Adams’ words, “Sovereignty or self-determination ... can only be realized by a mass
political movement which includes labour and other natural allies of First Nations” (Simmons
2002: 11). The social power of this broad coalitional base, developed in and against both state
and capital by a self-conscious working class, is understood here as a necessary condition of
Indigenous self-determination, the latter itself conceived as an anti-capitalist exercise of
Indigenous collective decision making over the course of national development and the form of
social practice.

Radical nationalism identifies a developmental dynamic grounded, above all, in struggle,
which the concept of dual dispossession articulates in the present moment. The latter is a
theory revealed and generated on the basis of a practice that continues to push against the
social limits of Indigenous nationalism and self-determination. In this way, it is a concept put
forth to grasp and politicize these conditions in order to enhance the struggle against them.
Similar to Adams’ notion, dual dispossession, as I will argue in the final chapter, also
demonstrates, when developed, that the social conditions of Indigenous nationalism and self-
determination imply the necessity of class struggle as a concrete development of nationalism.

186 Adams was well aware of the racism among the white Canadian working class, like Lee Maracle, and had
witnessed its function in undermining working-class unity across the colonial divide, but he had also seen the
possibilities of solidarity across that same line.
Conclusion

The latent theoretical and political significance of the Kenora March of 1965 and its aftermath, NARP’s rigorous development of the dialectic of theory and political practice as well as Lee Maracle’s organic fusion of Indigenous philosophy and Marxism as the continuity of this practice, and the transformative significance of the Caravan, especially as a vehicle for political education, are all synthesized in Howard Adams’ theory of radical nationalism. As such, radical nationalism draws into a coherent theory and political strategy significant tendencies that emerged within the Red Power movement; namely, the necessity of direct action, the transformative significance of struggle, and the critique of cooptation on the basis of the centrality and dynamic of protagonism and self-activity. Critical to the latter are two fundamental conditions – the grasp of shame and pride as socio-historically determined categories, i.e., their power as material forces in the general course of antagonistic social development, and the critique and rejection of cooptation. Both of these conditions undergirded the radical subjective development of the period by piercing the veil of colonial racism and valorizing Indigenous culture as well as facilitating semi-autonomous spaces, which had significant effects on the structural reproduction of colonialism. Despite Adams’ insistence on the local development of radical nationalism on reserves, Métis settlements, and urban enclaves, the locus of this process today need not be equated with these spaces given changes in the general conditions of struggle over the last five decades. It is also for this reason that Lee Maracle’s later insights and developments, especially around the meaning of gender in the process of Indigenous liberation, cannot be subsumed by Adams’ theory. However, Adam’s theory of radical nationalism can accommodate these developments insofar as it denotes a
radically open practice that is disposed to remaining faithful to the conditions of Indigenous national liberation under the constraints of capital by virtue of integrating a knowledge of and strategy to deal with those constraints as a condition of developing the former concretely. In this sense, its contemporary relevance lies in the radical implications of the revolutionary method it consolidates regardless of its initial content. In fact, dual dispossession should be understood as a concept developed on the basis of the same methodological principle as the one at the core of radical nationalism, only with the practical knowledge of the Land Back movement and the systemic limits presented by its objective refusal of recognition and state dependency. Dual dispossession is a response to these practical insights and therefore a concept that seeks to develop them dialectically by rendering explicit their internal contradictions.

Although the generalization of the subject that embraces both a return to Indigenous culture and Marxism certainly failed to materialize, the dignified subject that emerged during the Red Power movement was nevertheless key to the development in normalizing and expanding (however incompletely) what Indigenous resurgence theory would take for granted 30 years later – namely, that Indigenous knowledge, institutions, politics, law, traditional production, ceremony, etc., are necessary to the struggle against colonialism and a form of social transformation grounded on Indigenous justice. In this sense, the empowered human product of Red Power constitutes an historical premise of Indigenous resurgence, which strives to generate a more radical cultural horizon of self and national development. However, between these movements lies a historical development, i.e., a practical development, that allowed the subjective commitment to Indigenous culture to evolve while suppressing the
radical thrust of theory and practice guided by Marxism, namely, revolutionary coalitional politics and the need to challenge capital as the premise of colonialism. In any case, the developments explored in this chapter signify changes of historical significance to the broader Indigenous movement, inroads that cannot be assessed on the basis of a superficial criterion of total social revolution or total political failure. In her assessment of the UBCIC, which I discuss in the next chapter, Sarah Nickel captures this point with clarity when she writes,

> It would be easy to conclude that the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs ultimately failed to achieve its original goals of settling the British Columbia land claim, achieving Indigenous rights recognition, and reaching true pan-Indigenous unity. But to evaluate success and failure in these limited terms would not only undermine the UBCIC’s broad accomplishments between 1969 and today but would also devalue and dismiss the centuries of political work that came before. To do this would miss the point of Indigenous politics, resistance, and resilience, and would create a false paradigm whereby success can only equal concrete political gains and failure the inability to achieve these. But the history of the UBCIC tells us that the process of political organization was just as important as what was accomplished. (Nickel 2019: 168)

The UBCIC’s 1975 Chilliwack decision, the year Howard Adams went into ‘exile,’ provides important historical lessons for how to bridge the gap separating resurgence and Marxism while developing the tendencies inherent in the Red Power movement identified in this chapter. Above all, it represents an objective lesson of how the rejection or refusal of colonial recognition and dependency must be organized on its own proper material basis if it is to remain viable within the asymmetrical reality of settler colonial capitalism. The following chapter situates the Chilliwack decision within a broader history that saw the decline of the Red Power movement and the generalization of the colonial politics of recognition, which constitutes the historical ground of Indigenous resurgence theory and politics. This latter theoretical and political tradition develops some of the tendencies examined in this chapter while excluding others for historical reasons and therefore must integrate not only the lessons
of the Red Power era but also the Chilliwack decision and the effects of the period of change it signals.
Chapter Three: The Historical Ground of Indigenous Resurgence

Introduction

To claim as I did in chapter one that Indigenous grassroots organization and direct action have historically constituted a necessary vital conditioning force behind the reform and recognition of Indigenous rights presumes that they do not refer to the hegemonic practice of colonial reform. In fact, they remain marginal insofar as resources and state access is concerned. Rather, the general practice of contesting the colonial relation was and remains occupied by a spectrum of politics ranging from utter complicity to principled pragmatism. The latter is a brand of Indigenous politics characterized by an uncompromising commitment to Indigenous self-determination but a willingness to negotiate with the settler state and develop capacity internal to its infrastructure in order to gradually wrestle authority and jurisdiction away from it in critical spheres of social practice. This ideology and political practice also came to fruition in the late 1960s and early 1970s at the time Red Power was developing and was embodied by some of the most important individuals involved in the official Indigenous political organizations of the period, most notably George Manuel. Manuel’s political practice was the most radical form of principled pragmatism and had a decisive impact on the trajectory of the broader Indigenous movement. Thus, the general context in which the Red Power movement developed the tendencies identified in the last chapter also saw the rise of what may be called radical reformism. Recognizing the relation between these two general strains of political

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187 This tendency is a type of reformism because it advocates a radical redistribution of political and jurisdictional power on the basis of capitalism. The flattening of the structural asymmetry of the colonial relation is thus a kind of capitalist reform, although the supreme power of the settler state as the necessary arbitrator of capitalist
practice is critical to combatting and transcending settler colonialism. On the one hand, the need to contest hegemonic policies governing the provision and distribution of social goods on their own terms cannot be abandoned; and, on the other, challenging the systemic parameters of the dominant form of politics and social production cannot either.

After all, my argument is not intended to justify a moralistic dichotomy between colonial reformism and revolutionary Indigenous politics, but to identify and develop the conditions whereby the latter constitutes a vital conditioning force of the former, which has made important inroads into the state, with the potential to rupture and qualitatively transform their division in the process. Ahistorical assumptions that presume an inherent division between these forms of political activity lose sight of the fact that a historically specific balance of forces constitutes the essence of their relation, not an ontologized social difference. Their separation is the practical result of the state’s counter-struggle. The possibility of Indigenous grassroots direct actions transcending its ‘function’ as a vital conditioning force is premised on the institutionalization of the protagonistic politics at its core. The politics of recognition is the institutional negation of protagonism. It sustains colonial reformism by negating the revolutionary subject, i.e., the colonial subject is cultivated through the negation of its opposite: the colonized as protagonist. In other words, it is the active institutionalization of the split between reformism and radicalism. This is equally a question of increasing its power and viability as a social practice by shifting the balance of social forces. By the time we get to the late 1990s and early 2000s, however, the distinction takes on a reified form in a moralistic reproduction is left structurally intact. However, historically, the state of the relationship has never approached conditions that would necessitate a challenge to the latter.
discourse about ‘Aboriginalism’ (Alfred 2005; L. Simpson 2011; Coulthard 2014). This quasi-ontological characterization is a socio-historical determination that presupposes both the practical response of the state in its defeat and suppression of the radical movement and the marginalization of radical reformism within the dominant practice of colonial reform.

The following chapter describes some of the key historical conditions for the development of Indigenous resurgence theory and practice. This theoretical tradition develops the tendencies of the Red Power movement (protagonism, necessity of direct action, critique of cooptation, etc.) in productive directions that have come to shape the Land Back movement, especially its organizations. However, while Indigenous resurgence and politics signify an evolution of these tendencies, this tradition also omits in theory some of the key dimensions of the Red Power era, above all, its politics of revolutionary internationalism, mass coalitional politics, and socialist anticapitalism, which were brought about by the defeat of the movement in the mid-1970s.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the radical reformism of George Manuel as a key development in the evolution of colonial reform in Canada. It then identifies the concomitant rise of the colonial politics of recognition and the decline and defeat of the Red Power movement, a period that also saw the development of Indigenous internationalism. The first wave of the colonial politics of recognition breaks down in the post-Constitution Express era ending with the Siege at Kanehsatâ:ke. The latter marks the second wave of the politics of recognition: the era of reconciliation. It is in this period that Indigenous resurgence initially evolves – under the structural pressure forcing a defensive nation-centric inward turn.
Radical Reformism

The mass mobilization that defeated the immediate threat of the 1969 White Paper is a major development in the broader Indigenous movement not least because it entrenched the uncircumventable parameters of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the settler state and capitalist class. In this sense, it instituted a measure of historical irreversibility. Led by the official leadership of the Indigenous organizations at the time, the mobilization gave material leverage to the theory of ‘citizens plus,’ first hatched in the 1966 state-sanctioned Hawthorn report, while insisting that historic treaties were modern institutions and would shape the future course of generalized social development in Canada. Harold Cardinal’s excoriating of Canadian society’s failure to facilitate the national and self-development of Indigenous Peoples, not least because of the permeation of colonial racism throughout all of its social pores, was a critical voice, along with the Indian Pavilion at Expo 67, in bidding farewell to an age of totalitarian colonial rule. Although Cardinal’s scathing critique revealed the presence of a ‘Buckskin Curtain,’ the Cold War irony of the latter preserved the anti-communism of its namesake. In fact, Cardinal did not support Red Power activism, least alone anti-capitalist or socialist politics. Nevertheless, his politics were critical for safeguarding Indigenous self-

188 As Warren writes, “First Nations’ activism, in the decade leading up to the White Paper, reveals that the subsequent backlash was not the beginning of modern indigenous activism; it was the decisive turning point in a social debate that had long questioned whether First Nations were more likely to thrive if better integrated, as Canadians were inclined to believe, or more independent, as so many First Nations voices had long contended” (2020, 13).

189 For example, in 1969, Cardinal stated to the press: “I don’t agree with Red Power or a violent philosophy ... Strengthening Indian organizations and working closely with non Indians is the only viable alternative” in Drees, The Indian Association of Alberta: A History of Political Action (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 167. As Warren writes, “Provincial First Nations leaders like Cardinal, particularly those from western provinces with numbered treaty rights to defend, were rather more interested in bolstering the NIB as an effective means of representing their interests to the federal government, than they were in sporadic militant demonstrations” (2020: 65).
determination and nationhood, demystifying the abysmal fate of Indigenous Peoples, and forcing out the implications of the Canadian constitution, especially concerning treaty rights.

George Manuel

George Manuel, in contrast, would come to call himself an ‘Indian socialist’¹⁹⁰ and had a far different attitude towards grassroots militants and Red Power activists. While he kept his distance from some of the more militant activists within the Red Power movement,¹⁹¹ he acknowledged the value of their efforts and “knew it was the radicals that allowed him to go to the politicians… [Moreover,] He came to believe that marches, demonstrations, civil disobedience and even the threat of violence were essential in getting government’s attention” (McFarlane 2020: 190). In other words, Manuel understood the vital conditioning force of extra-parliamentary grassroots direct action on the parameters of negotiated rights and institutional power. He also understood the need for official organizations to have a popular social basis in First Nation communities and worked tirelessly to maintain and build this relationship.¹⁹² For these reasons, Manuel is the most important Indigenous ‘politician.’

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¹⁹⁰ According to his biographer, Manuel’s attraction to “African socialism was not a passing fad. [And] In his own journals, he described himself as an “Indian socialist” and saw some form of socialism as the only viable future for his people” (McFarlane 2020: 149).

¹⁹¹ As president of the NIB, Manuel “publicly condemned such tactics, admonished AIM’s activities in Canada, and reiterated his own organization’s commitment to negotiated solutions” (Warren 2020: 74).

¹⁹² This was most clear in the fact that others, including Cardinal, thought he should run as leader of the National Indian Brotherhood. According to Manuel’s biographer Peter McFarlane, “Manuel, they believed, had the tact and toughness, the sharp political instincts and the respect of Indian leaders across the country that would enable him to spearhead the fight against Chrétien. Because of his lifelong involvement with the Indian movement, Cardinal and the others felt that Manuel was familiar with the issues that were important to people with Aboriginal rights. ‘Because of the time he spent with us in Alberta, [Cardinal was quoted as saying,] he had also developed an
As a fierce defender of Indigenous rights and Aboriginal title, Manuel advocated a strategy of building governing capacity through the National Indian Brotherhood in order to capture power away from Indian Affairs and the state more broadly, a politics of building self-determination in and against state bureaucracy towards greater autonomy. However, this strategic disposition, which he developed through a diverse practice that included local grassroots political organizing during the 1950s and early 1960s in an age of near total state abandonment, allowed him to see this struggle, both in terms of tactics and the wider strategy of the movement, as one that could not be carried out in isolation from the grassroots. From his experience watching the James Bay modern treaty, which he unequivocally declared a defeat for the movement, he shifted his thinking toward the idea of building a ‘peoples’ movement.’ [And] He was beginning to believe that only if the mass of people were politicized and energized and put in the forefront of the movement could they take on the powerful government and private-sector interests that were blocking the political, social and cultural rebirth of Canada’s First Nations, (McFarlane 2020: 174).

McFarlane writes: “In quiet defiance of the provincial leaders who wanted to limit the power of the NIB, Manuel assigned his staff various portfolios – housing, economic development, social and cultural development and education – to find out what the real requirements of the Indian people were and then to try to devise strategies for wresting control of each of those dossiers from the DIA bureaucracy” (2020: 117).

Manuel stated at the time: “Extinguishment of Aboriginal rights means to me the extinguishment of Indian identity, totally and completely… and that is why I am against it and that is why the people I represent are against it” (McFarlane 2020: 166). “As he saw it, [writes McFarlane,] the failure to stop the James Bay development pointed out the continued weakness of the movement” (McFarlane 2020: 167).
Thus, the James Bay agreement not only led Manuel to perceive the modern treaty process as a structural impasse to Indigenous self-determination, it also compelled him to see the necessity of developing the social basis of a counterpower that could coerce the settler state and capitalist class into heeding the conditions of autonomous Indigenous national self-development. Critical to this development was thus the nature of the relationship between political leadership and popular power. In his own lifetime, Manuel would come to see the practical effects of this strategy above all in the Constitution Express, a grassroots mass action initiated by his leadership that would force the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau to enshrine Aboriginal and Treaty rights within the Canadian Constitution. Despite the stalemate around these rights that would ensue throughout the 1980s, the Constitution Express established the parameters of colonial reform that continue to be negotiated to this day.

Although the significance of Manuel’s Fourth World-ism is rightly being resurrected today, his notion of a people’s movement remains even more relevant today and is the forerunner of strategies like that of the Defenders of the Land, which was led by his son Art until 2019 and would play a decisive role in the Wet’suwet’en uprising of 2020, which I discuss in chapter five.

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195 When the joint committee met in 1975, thanks to the forces of the Native People’s Caravan, “Manuel opened the April meeting by telling the ministers that Indian Nations would no longer settle for cash in land deals like the James Bay agreement” (McFarlane 2020: 188). Manuel always remained uncompromising in his commitment to Indigenous self-determination and the conviction that a land-base or homeland was an essential condition for it.

196 As Feltes and Coulthard write, “The Constitution Express, a movement led predominantly (though not exclusively) by Indigenous people from British Columbia, was a massive grassroots expression of this mobilization. The train ride itself, from which the movement got its name, was a mammoth operation. Though initiated by then UBCIC President Grand Chief George Manuel, and coordinated by UBCIC, it was powered by community” (2021: 15).

197 See, for instance, Glen Coulthard’s introduction to the new 2019 edition of Manuel and Posluns’ The Fourth World: An Indian Reality.

198 I return to this aspect of the movement in chapter five.
‘Fourth World’ Internationalism

While the James Bay Agreement prompted a turn toward creating the leverage needed for plying Indigenous rights, the aggressive assimilationism of the 1969 White Paper had already signaled to Manuel the need to go beyond state authority and recognition if Indigenous self-determination was to have any practical substance. This led Manuel to organize internationally, which took him from Māori villages to the Highlands of Guatemala in a heroic effort to unify Indigenous Peoples on a global scale. His internationalism was effectively based on the same principle as his people’s movement would come to be, i.e., the need for a critical mass of people to create the leverage needed to overcome the structural impasse of colonial reform as it was evolving at the time, especially in Canada, but as he learned, across the globe as well. As his biographer Peter McFarlane writes:

By the time George Manuel left Australia, he was thinking not about the fight for survival but about the battle to regain the political and literal ground that had been lost over the past centuries. And he began to see that struggle more and more with an international perspective. On the long plane ride back, he counted up the people in the indigenous world. With the Indians of Canada, the United States, Central and South America and the indigenous peoples of Eurasia, the movement would represent not hundreds of thousands of people but tens of millions and could force the issue of indigenous rights onto the world stage in a way never dreamed of before (160).

This strategy was further consolidated by the ideology of the Fourth World, a concept that developed and deepened through Manuel’s extensive international travel and advocacy work. The Fourth World essentially referred to both the geographical location and political situation of colonized Indigenous Peoples within the borders of the settler colonial societies of the so-called First World and a project of decolonization and self-determination on the basis of
Indigenous culture and traditions.\textsuperscript{199} It was this coalitional practice and universalist ideology that would crystallize in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and ultimately the contemporary international Indigenous movement and rights regime.\textsuperscript{200} It is also the historical ground and practical basis of the concept of “Indigenous people(s),” whose use would only become generalized in the early to mid-2000s.\textsuperscript{201}

\textbf{The Dene Struggle of the Mid-1970s}

Locally, the ideology of the Fourth World was put into practice by the Dene Declaration of 1975, which explicitly evoked the notion, calling as it did for independence and self-determination.

\textsuperscript{199} Coulthard writes, “The ‘Fourth World’ thus acts simultaneously as a verb and a noun. As a verb, it refers to a process or movement of decolonization grounded in the purposeful revitalization of those relational, land-informed Indigenous practices and modes of life that settler-colonization sought to destroy in its drive to transform Indigenous peoples’ lands into the settler-state and capital” (Manuel & Posluns 2019: xi). Moreover, he argues that, “As a verb, the ‘Fourth World’ shares similarities with Vijay Prashad’s definition of the ‘Third World’: it describes an oppositional politics, positioned against the violence of colonialism and imperialism that evades cultural essentialism while remaining attentive to and informed by diverse cultural and material contexts” According to Prashad, the ‘Third World’ is not a thing but a project; he writes that “If you fought against colonialism and stood against imperialism, then you were part of the Third World” (Manuel & Posluns 2019: xii).

\textsuperscript{200} In 1974 in the American context, AIM called a weeklong intertribal meeting with other Native organizations and communities from North and South America to hammer out a common strategy. Out of the deliberations, the International Indian Treaty Council was born with a mandate to establish an office at the United Nations and to explore the avenues for linking up with the international human rights agenda that had been activated by the issuance of the International Covenants on Human Rights. See Nick Estes’ podcast for a comprehensive account of this development and what was happening with AIM in the post-Wounded Knee period. In light of all these developments, according to Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, “The key event, then, that marked the beginning of Indigenous peoples’ direct activity in the international context was the International Non-Governmental 1977 Organizations Conference on Indians of the Americas, held at UN offices in Geneva. The more than one hundred indigenous representatives from all over the Western Hemisphere reflected organized forces of inestimable dimensions” (2016).

\textsuperscript{201} At the founding meeting of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1975, “The identifying terms Indian and Aboriginal were both discussed; in the end, an old and respected Indigenous leader from Colombia who had just listened to the debate for days got up and said, ‘Indian and Aboriginal were colonial terms. We are people indigenous to our territories, so Indigenous is the term that should be used’” (A. Manuel 130). The conference agreed, but then participants had to decide who, exactly, were Indigenous Peoples. They settled on this definition: “Indigenous peoples are peoples living in countries which have a population composed of differing ethnic or racial groups who are descendants of the earliest populations living in the area and who do not as a group control the national government of the countries within which they live” (A. Manuel 130). The term ‘Indigenous’ was thus adopted at the world conference. Oren Lyons, a chief and faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation, recalled that it was after it was approved at the World Council meeting that they brought the term Indigenous to Geneva in 1977 and asked that it become the term used at the United Nations. This is the origin of the term that is used today within UNDRIP.
within the boundaries of Canada. While the politics of the Declaration undoubtedly shaped the moratorium against the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Project sanctioned by the Berger Inquiry in 1977, as Coulthard points out in *Red Skin, White Masks*, it encountered an objective impasse in the form of the recently developed land claims policy. As he writes in his analysis of the Dene Nation’s effort to achieve robust institutional recognition:

> for the state, recognizing and accommodating ‘the cultural’ through the negotiation of land claims would not involve the recognition of alternative Indigenous economies and forms of political authority...; instead, the state insisted that any institutionalized accommodation of Indigenous cultural difference be reconcilable with one political formation – namely, colonial sovereignty – and one mode of production – namely, capitalism. (Coulthard 2014: 66; italics in original).

Coulthard is thus quite clear about the structural parameters within which Indigenous self-determination is ultimately permitted to be exercised, namely, as a form of autonomy subordinated to the settler state’s authority and objectively constrained by the determinations and imperatives of capital. This can hardly by equated with the vision of autonomy that Manuel hoped the Fourth World would bring about.

> However, as NARP argued at the time, this impasse was not primarily the result of a lopsided strategy overly focused on state recognition, whether national or international, but was inherent in the very ideology of the Fourth World internationalism. As David Temin writes, against Manuel’s comparative division between Third and Fourth World internationalisms...

> NARP directly argued that the idea of the Fourth World was insufficient. In their telling, Fourth Worldism overemphasized the eventual transformation of settler societies to achieve peaceful coexistence between Indigenous peoples and settlers (‘mutual

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202 Manuel’s argument for co-existence is grounded on the case for Indigenous nation self-determination within the legal, political, and geographical boundaries of the so-called First World: “Remaining Indian means that Indian people gain control of the economic and social development of our own communities, within a framework of legal and constitutional guarantees for our land and our institutions. Recognition of our aboriginal rights can and must be the mainspring of our future economic and social independence” (2019: 222).
dependence’). The idea of populations with different ‘worldviews’ eventually reconciling with one another concealed structural relations of ongoing colonial domination and dependency under the ideological guise that ‘native people and finance capital can co-exist for their ‘mutual benefit.’ Maracle and Bobb, then, interpreted the institutionalization of the Fourth World concept as a capitulatory politics. It avoided the necessity of direct assault on the structural forces of capitalism-imperialism in solidarity with other revolutionary movements of the oppressed. (Temin 163)

The Fourth World was thus based on assumptions that locked the ideology into an impasse it could not overcome on the basis of its own premises; namely, that capitalist society was radically open vis-à-vis cultural difference and that the order of social production based on capital could practically tolerate a multifarious order of Indigenous national development potentially directed by a multiplicity of goals whether or not they conformed to its logic, i.e., that mutual recognition was not structurally hindered from the outset.203 As a result, it did not posit the nature of the problem in structural terms nor could it properly identify the social forces necessary to overcome it, despite Manuel’s consistency on the need for a popular basis. The assumption of capital’s compatibility with Indigenous national self-determination was not explicitly articulated by Manuel; rather, his position simply had no theory of capital or capitalism that rendered it a problem for Indigenous self-determination, often discussing it

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203 This assumption is best represented by the following quote from the Fourth World: An Indian Reality: “Our hopes for the Fourth World are at least as credible as the belief in a Canadian nation with nearly autonomous provinces, a diversity of languages and cultures, and a mutual respect for one another’s view of the world. Indian institutions are as capable of growth and adaptation as any others. We do not doubt that these institutions might serve the purposes for which they were intended. We are saying that our own needs can be fully served only through the development of our own institutions (Manuel & Posluns 2019: 216). Or again, when they write: “Remaining Indian means that Indian people gain control of the economic and social development of our own communities, within a framework of legal and constitutional guarantees for our land and our institutions. Recognition of our aboriginal rights can and must be the mainspring of our future economic and social independence. And therefore that ‘any settlement must necessarily be a long-range process and allow the retention of a strong land base on which we can develop a viable economy for Indian people’” (Manuel & Posluns 2019: 221).
under the depoliticized rubric of ‘economic development.’\textsuperscript{204} His politics are thus best described as a species of ‘radical reformism’ because they advocate for a radical redistribution of political and jurisdictional power on the basis of the practical premises of capital. As such, they do not politicize the fundamental ‘distribution’ upon which the relations of production are based.\textsuperscript{205} Moreover, not only is capital to structure material production, but the levelling of the structural asymmetry of the colonial relation is to be reformed in a way in which the supreme power of the settler state as the necessary arbitrator of capitalist reproduction is also left structurally intact to say nothing of its imperialist tendencies.\textsuperscript{206} For these reasons, NARP understood Fourth World ideology and politics as concessions to colonial domination.

Although NARP’s critique stands insofar as the Fourth World was not a revolutionary ideology, Manuel’s advocacy of it in theory and practice accomplished the important work of organizing Indigenous people internationally, first at the World Council of Indigenous People in 1974 and the UN in 1977, and today under the banner of UNDRIP. Like the Red Paper spearheaded by Harold Cardinal and the coalition of official Indigenous organizations in response to the 1969 White Paper and the Constitution Express initiated by Manuel, the international rights movement would become an important development in circumscribing the margin of elite action regarding colonial reform from above and altering the social necessity of previously unfettered capital accumulation in the process. These actions changed the parameters of colonial reform and the general conditions of social struggle. Although this would

\textsuperscript{204} For instance, “Real community development can never take place without economic development. But economic development without full local control is only another form of imperial conquest” (2019: 151).
\textsuperscript{205} See Marx’s discussion of this in the \textit{Grundrisse} (1973, 832-33).
\textsuperscript{206} This why Manuel’s ‘socialism’ was heavily contradictory at best.
remain highly inadequate and continue to necessitate the extra-parliamentary intervention of Indigenous grassroots organizations, Manuel’s refusal to concede robust Indigenous rights to the terms of colonial reform on offer in his day remains an important part of his legacy. As McFarlane writes, Manuel claimed “that he would rather die without an agreement with the government and pass on to his children ‘the legitimacy of the struggle’ than sign a deal... ‘that they could not live with’” (McFarlane 2020: 167). Along with this refusal of colonial closure, this legacy also includes the strategic necessity of creating leverage through a popular force grounded in community, whether formally recognized or extra-parliamentary in nature, which will play an increasing role in the contemporary struggle, the absolute need to carry out the fight to wrestle power and resources away from hegemonic social institutions and the social practices they safeguard, and, as McFarlane emphasizes in his biography, the knowledge of failure and defeat as belonging to a learning process:

    The idea of using every failure and every success as a learning experience had become a feature of Manuel’s way of looking at things. He knew that the struggle would be a long one and that one of the main enemies would be the sense of defeatism caused by the lost battles. To inoculate himself and others against this reaction, he refused to acknowledge defeat. Everything was ‘a learning experience’ on the road to the ultimate triumph of the Indian struggle. (McFarlane 2020: 81)

The Defeat and Decline of the Red Power Movement

NARP’s critique, however, points to another trajectory. This pertains to the fact that the concepts of the Fourth World and Indigenous People(s) did not only evolve vis-à-vis a critique of the impasses inherent in national politics and its practical answer in global solidarity. Nor did Aboriginal and Treaty rights simply express the culmination of a long struggle started with the Red Paper offensive against the 1969 White Paper. Rather, these notions simultaneously developed at a time when the Red Power movement and its connection to other radical social
movements of the early to mid-1970s was being ruthlessly suppressed. In this sense, the adoption of these notions and their associated discourses as the basis of political struggle, if divorced from their socio-historical genesis in this development, risk internalizing, especially at a theoretical level, the practical suppression of its radical politics and (unconsciously) abandoning its theoretical and political implications as irrelevant to the realization of Indigenous self-determination. The internationalist movement is thus a rejection of the (first wave) of the colonial politics of recognition, but a rejection that simultaneously normalizes the repression of the radical politics of the early 1970s, its revolutionary internationalism and, in its most radical expression, socialist anti-capitalism. For this reason, as NARP pointed out vis-à-vis the Fourth World long ago, (radical) reformism remains at an impasse. This ideological commitment remains strong today and its supersession requires the reclamation of this history as a process of reintegrating key theoretical and practical dimensions of both colonial domination and the historical development of Indigenous subjectivity as the driving social force of its negation. This is especially critical to developing the radical implications of Indigenous resurgence theory and developing the practical institutions of the Land Back movement. To this end, it is significant to recall that the Red Power movement was marginalized by a counter-struggle from above, which took place on a number of fronts, including cooptation, recognition, and infiltration.

First Major Structural Reform of Colonial Strategy

According to Russ Diabo, the White Paper’s logic of termination was not defeated but merely displaced into an alternative strategy.207 However, the insurgency of 1969 to 1970 seriously set

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the government back, creating entirely new rules of engagement and the need for a far more complex, subtle, and long-term process of extinguishment or, at the very least, subordination. The first major post-White Paper restructuring of colonial policy in this regard involved the redistribution of money to Indigenous organizations. Although the Canadian state had already begun to revitalize Indigenous organizations in the pre-White Paper era to the extent required to create the institutions that would legitimize their policies, this had become more urgent than ever given the virtually universal rejection of their primary policy and the mounting resistance from the grassroots. According to James Burke, “Indian associations which had previously encountered difficulty in prying even the most meagre sums out of Ottawa were suddenly deluged with dollars in the aftermath of the white paper” (Burke 1976: 41). The 1970s, accordingly, saw government agencies, including the secretary of state and the Department of Indian Affairs, channelling unprecedented amounts of funding into representative provincial, territorial, and national Indigenous political organizations. Organizational budgets, which could reach up to several hundred thousand dollars per year, appeared to promote Indigenous political independence and support for treaty and Indigenous rights recognition, but really served the Canadian government’s growing (neoliberal) agenda bent on devolving Indian Affairs’ service delivery to Indigenous communities. Thus, while this

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208 These organizations had been around in some form since at least the 1940s but had languished due to neglect and indifference. For instance, writing about Malcom Norris’ attitude towards the National Indian Council in the early 1960s, Murray Dobbin reports that, “Norris wasn’t much more impressed by the NIC. He recognized its positive features— inclusion of Indians and Metis and social and economic reform objectives—but saw in it fundamental weaknesses, the same weaknesses which plagued the so-called ‘national’ organizations of the 1940s. What was needed, eventually, was a federation of mass membership, provincial organizations. The NIC was an organization of leaders. Its subsequent lack of resources reduced it to activities promoting Indian and Metis culture. Even among white liberals it had little credibility—in a 1961 national fundraising drive it attracted only three individual donations and one from an organization” (1981: 204).

effort to offload responsibility may have been high on the capitalist agenda,\textsuperscript{210} it served the political function of drawing Indigenous Peoples bent on anticolonialism into the orbit of colonial reform. Critical to this latter process was the need to undermine the Red Power movement.

As Lee Maracle writes, already

In 1969, a growing division in the movement between Red Power activists and orthodox leaders was hastened by the government’s creation of ‘official’ organizations replete with employed bureaucrats and heavy injections of money. Most of the dollars have gone to consultants and lawyers who happen to be white. In the absence of clear aims and objectives for a viable alternative which could oppose these organizations, the youth power movement defended its legitimacy through its mass action. It was already moribund. More and more people began to see that the organizations could achieve social reform more effectively and much more rapidly through the ‘proper channels.’ (Maracle 1996: 97)

Thus, by the late 1960s, a trend had already set in to marginalize militant Red Power activists from determining the course of the Indigenous struggle.

Second Major Restructuring of Colonial Strategy

The second major restructuring of colonial strategy was the result of the movement of multiple factors, including the defeat of the White Paper and the rise of militant direct action (both in Canada and the US); but, most of all, it was the result of Indigenous legal activism, especially the Calder and James Bay cases. Although I will not explore the details of this history here, which has been comprehensively covered by many scholars, I simply want to mark the state’s response, along with Coulthard, as the initial development of the colonial politics of recognition in Canada.

\textsuperscript{210} See Murray Angus’s \textit{And the Last Shall be the First: Native Policy in an Era of Cutbacks} (1991) for a comprehensive discussion of the colonial function of capitalist austerity politics.
One of the major areas where this became evident was in the fact that the government
began to negotiate modern treaties, or what become known as comprehensive land claim
agreements through their 1973 policy. However, it would be false to suggest that this came
about willingly both before and after major court decisions. Rather, it emerged in a general
political climate that had seen, above all, a powerful Québécois separatist movement, which
culminated in the 1970 October Crisis with Front de libération du Québec (FLQ). It was within
this broader framework that the state considered the claims of the Nisga’a nation and James
Bay Cree and Inuit. The issue of Quebec sovereignty and the very real threat it presented to
national security would have been in the forefront of the minds of Canadians and specifically of
Prime Minister Trudeau as he followed the events of the James Bay Cree/Inuit and the Nisga’a
nation (Tetley 2007). In any case, as Sarah Nickel writes, and Coulthard later echoes,

In the wake of this period of activism, the colonial architecture that frames Indigenous
and state relations began to shift from a structure primarily reinforced by politics,
techniques, and ideologies explicitly oriented around the exclusion and assimilation of
Indigenous peoples to a structure that is now reproduced through a seemingly more
conciliatory set of languages and practices that emphasize recognition and
accommodation.” (2019: 336)

However, this colonial politics of recognition, as Coulthard would later conceive it, was far
hegemonic at the time. It would take another two decades at least before it properly became
the dominant form of political practice of colonial reform.

Resurgence in Radicalism

As such, it would take more to quell the Red Power movement. Even within NARP, of which
Maracle was a member, this had not fulfilled its goal. As Ray Bobb writes,

In this period former Narpers engaged in and then sabotaged a federal government
effort to create a captive organization representing the native youth of BC. After a
summer of organizing potential representatives from BC Indian bands, a conference was
held in Sardis that was to be the founding conference. Much discussion occurred instead about the government co-optation of native leaders. The participants rejected government funding and marched to the Fraser River where they harvested salmon ‘illegally’ under the eyes of fishery officials and the RCMP. (Bobb 2012)

In fact, “In Canada, the first action to occur under the AIM banner was in 1973... [and] AIM in Canada did not solidify until the Cache Creek blockade...” (“The American Indian Movement,” 1992: 18), which preceded both the occupation of Anicinabe Park, in which AIM was also involved, and the Native People’s Caravan. The initial strategy of cooptation was thus hardly the demise of radicalism, and it did not take long for a more generalized dissatisfaction with the official leadership to set in. As Waubageshig, who edited an important collection of Indigenous anger in response to the White Paper in 1970, which included a piece by NARP co-founder Henry Jack, stated at the time:

> The behaviour and the policies of the organizations have been, as noted, exceptionally sedate and are marked by a desire to construct communication lines between themselves and the government. As far as remedial changes are involved, the organizations are content to pick and hack away at invidious sections of the Act intent on having them changed or erased. And until Indians reach agreement on their status in this society it seems that the status quo is not in any imminent danger. (1970: 95)

212 In reference to the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, James Burke argued that “To many Manitoba Indians, the M.I.B. is a tool which the federal government is using to subjugate their people. Such individuals advocate a course for native people which is considerably more militant than soliciting grants for make-work projects” (Burke 1976).
those of lesser status” i.e., the grassroots (Burke 1976: 267). This general situation led to serious disaffection across Indigenous communities and a widening appeal of the American Indian Movement in Canada, which was increasingly becoming a vehicle for many disenchanted Indigenous people, particularly as the organization favoured a more direct approach (Burke 1976: 351). At the time, the American Indian Movement was still growing in Canada but had chapters in most Canada’s major cities. AIM members did not recognize the US-Canadian border, contending that all Indigenous people belong to a single nation.

This resurgence in radicalism after the initial assault by the state instigated two major incidents in 1973. In August of that year, George Manuel’s son, Art Manuel, then president of the National Native Youth Association, led a group of activists from the organization in an occupation of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, where they demanded that the federal government stop the James Bay project and begin serious negotiations on the land question in BC. During the occupation, the activists took confidential government documents, which they mailed to chiefs across the country. According to Peter McFarlane, “For the NIB and its affiliate organizations, the documents supplied a wealth of information on government strategies, in particular those dealing with Indigenous opposition to the James Bay project” (McFarlane 2020: 172-73). Then on October 16th, 1973, hundreds of Mohawks fought police, overturned patrol cars, and smashed the windows of their band council offices in Kahnawà:ke, targeting the local government. The Mohawks considered that reactionary band officials were as great an enemy as the oppressive socio-economic institutions of the dominant society (Burke 1976: 351). AIM’s

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213 This action was influenced by the AIM-led “Trail of Broken Treaties” caravan and the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington the previous year.
challenge to the corrupt dictatorship of Dick Wilson at Wounded Knee in February earlier that year would have been fresh in Mohawk minds. The attack on the band office at Kahnawà:ke is significant because it suggests that many Indigenous people saw all official leadership and institutions as representative of the colonial state’s domination despite Indigenous Peoples actually fulfilling these roles. It was this kind of action that gave practical substance to the critique of cooptation, which, as I discussed in the last chapter, would culminate in the summer and early fall of 1974 with the Native People’s Caravan, which was strongly motivated by a disillusionment concerning Native leadership. Although cooptation arguably played the largest role in defeating the Red Power movement in Canada, there is another factor that should not be ignored, namely, infiltration.

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214 Nick Estes writes: “In particular, the grassroots people opposed the Indian Reorganization Act government and called for the restoration of the treaty councils and customary leadership. At this time, ceremonies such as the sun dance were still criminalized and were practiced underground. People wanted a return of the ‘old ways,’ the return to treaty relations with the United States, and the end to the rampant violence on the reservation. They saw the successful publicity received by AIM as potentially useful for inspiring a political and cultural revitalization of the Oceti Sakowin. More importantly, they wanted the means for their own self-defense against the GOONs and the rest of Dick Wilson’s regime, which was backed by federal marshals” (2019: 192). AIM thus arrived to challenge tribal chairman Richard Wilson who was viewed as a corrupt puppet of the BIA by some tribal members (including those associated with AIM), given that AIM and their supporters opposed colonial administration. During the occupation, AIM, OSCRC, and the Oglala traditional leadership declared the Independent Oglala Nation under the authority of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, and with it the need to end the colonial relationship between the United States and the Lakota/Dakota nation and Indigenous Peoples. For seventy-one days, Wounded Knee was an independent Indigenous territory, attracting worldwide attention and the support of revolutionary movements (2019: 193-194).

215 For instance, here is Lyle Ironstand’s (member of the Ojibwe Warrior Society) response to James Burke’s question about the role of the elected leadership in the conference that preceded the armed occupation: “They were invited. There was a whole bunch of people that were invited but most of them didn’t make it. They only came for the pow-wow, but while the conference was on, none of them came... They didn’t give a shit. They were elected people but they didn’t give a shit about what was happening with the people in Kenora because they never even showed their damn ass in the park except for the pow-wow. Like, they didn’t give a fuck at all because they figured here was only reservation people all getting together and they don’t really have no say with the Department of Indian Affairs and the provincial government of Ontario and the federal government. It’s just one of those big get-togethers or something that’s not going to prove fuck-all. QUESTION: Did the people at the conference feel that the elected officials weren’t really doing a job for the people? Did they feel there was another way of doing it? IRONSTAND: The people figured: ‘Fuck the elected officials. Let’s try and do something. Not only for ourselves but concerning all people, young and old’” (“Occupation of Anicinabe Park” 1974: 360-361).
RCMP and FBI Infiltration

According to Scott Rutherford, the Red Power movement was considered by the RCMP to be the greatest threat to national security in 1974, the year of the occupations and the Native People’s Caravan (Rutherford 2020: 125). At the time, “the state was increasingly concerned about the potential of non-Indigenous activists becoming allies of Red Power movements and Indigenous activists forming multi-racial coalitions, especially with Black activists (Rutherford 220). Brian Warren argues that “Such threats failed to materialize, however, as militants’ influence declined alongside the continued ascent of the NIB” (2020: 75) and that

By 1976, when Manuel was succeeded by FSI chief Noel Starblanket, the NIB had become ‘the largest lobbying organization in Ottawa with institutionalized access to cabinet and a reputation for hard but honest bargaining on behalf of First Nations.’ It was this organization, rather than the more sensational and better publicized activities of AIM and the warrior societies, which came to dominate the mainstream in First Nations activism, emphasizing hard-nosed political lobbying, and litigation, over civil disobedience and militant action. (2020: 75)

However, Warren is silent about the role of the RCMP and FBI in this shift.

In response to this general lacuna in the history of the movement, Rutherford documents with considerable detail the role of these state forces. As he puts it, “state security used surveillance and agents provocateurs as ways to” disrupt “both Indigenous solidarity and the attempt to generate support from non-Indigenous activists” (Rutherford 219). To this end, “state security worked to actively manufacture dissent and tension within the movement” (Rutherford 219). For instance, the Native People’s Caravan attempted to sustain its political momentum by establishing a base in an abandoned mill in the centre of Ottawa. However,

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Moreover, Brian Warren writes that “In 1975, the RCMP reported to the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, that Red Power militants were a “principal threat to national stability” in Canada” (2020: 75).
Rutherford writes, “early enthusiasm for the embassy dissipated as conditions deteriorated and conflicts in the group re-emerged. [A key] source of [this] tension was the constant surveillance by the RCMP” (Rutherford 226-27). “In an attempt to boost morale AIM sent a man named Doug Durham to the embassy” (Rutherford 226-27). A year later it was revealed that Doug Durham was an FBI informant. As Vern Harper recalls, “After he was exposed as an undercover FBI agent people said that they knew all the time, but he had completely fooled all of us... At the time I was a strong supporter of communism – the Chinese kind of communism – so he was interested in talking to me... I never told him anything that I didn’t tell anybody else, but he had fooled everybody completely so I imagine he gave the FBI and the RCMP a lot of information” (1979: 74). Ultimately, the mill that housed the Native People’s Embassy burnt down. Although Vern Harper believed the RCMP set it so no one could return (1979: 75), no one could prove it, but the fire was certainly effective in disbanding the Embassy and its political efforts.

Durham could easily fit in because was not a stranger to some on the Caravan, having already made an appearance at the occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora earlier that summer. While there, Louis Cameron recalled, that he attempted to get Indigenous activists “to ramp up violent confrontations with the state” and “tried to [get the occupiers] to make explosives and bombs ... [and] to break up into small terrorist groups like the FLQ” (Rutherford 2020: 230). The Ojibwe Warrior Society, however, rejected the suggestion but nonetheless had been led to consider it (Rutherford 2020: 230). Durham also advised the Crown attorney at the

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217 Durham was able to enter the embassy because he had moved up the ranks in AIM, which he joined during the Wounded Knee Occupation in 1973. Despite not having been a part of the organization for very long, he was trusted and had already become the group’s director of security and managed AIM’s finances (Rutherford 2020: 228).
time how to wind down the conflict in Kenora. In later testimony, Durham would claim that the Red Power movement was “part of a worldwide communist conspiracy” and that he was “a defender of freedom,” also arguing in front of a committee that communists were “the main inspiration for the caravan” (Rutherford 2020: 133). According to Scott Rutherford, “Durham’s brief period in Canada is an example of how informants were used to disrupt movements by Indigenous people and people of colour in 1970s North America” (Rutherford 2020: 131)

The RCMP was also highly concerned about the growing relationship between Indigenous and Black radical activists. To this end, they employed an individual named Warren Hart to gather intelligence within the Black activist community, especially insofar as the latter influenced the Indigenous movement. As Rutherford writes, Hart was “part of a larger effort to disrupt Indigenous political movements and their sense of common cause with other anti-racist activists” (Rutherford 2020: 142). Like Durham, Hart also tried to influence the course of Black and Indigenous strategy by amplify[ing] the possibility of militant violence. As Rutherford writes, “By doing so, they gave states the license to repress movements advocating multiracial and transnational oppositional politics” (2020: 248). These are some of the tactics authorities used to undermine the Red Power movement, which, along with other methods, belonged to a larger strategy that helped stifle its development and force the broader Indigenous rights movement in a more restrained and reformist direction.

Warren’s claim, moreover, elides an even more significant episode in the decline of the Red Power movement – the US government’s proxy war against the American Indian Movement. The FBI’s role in undermining the momentum of AIM in the American context was essentially a military campaign or what some might call state terrorism, in a continuation of the
US’s COINTELPRO, which had allegedly folded in the early 1970s. After the occupation of the BIA in Washington, many AIM leaders who had been involved returned to where they were from on the Pine Ridge reservation, which had become a sort of bastion of AIM supporters. Prior to the 71-day occupation of Wounded Knee in February 1973, the FBI had begun to train the BIA and tribal police on how to deal with subversives. At the time, Pine Ridge’s Indian Reorganization Act government was under the leadership of Chairman Dick Wilson who had become increasingly authoritarian, terrorizing political opponents with his private militia/paramilitary “GOON” squad, which stood for “Guardians of the Oglala Nation” (Estes 2019: 192), an organization backed by the FBI. By the time the occupation came to an end, this force went into full gear initiating what became known the “Reign of Terror,” a period of approximately four years which made Pine Ridge the murder capital of the US with over 60 AIM members and their supporters killed and over 350 badly assaulted, culminating in a 1975 shootout that ended in the death of two FBI agents and one AIM member and sent Leonard Peltier to prison, where he remains today, on the dubious evidence of one of the most controversial trials ever in US history. The refusal to grant clemency to Leonard Peltier to this very day represents to many the permanent commitment of US government to erase and

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218 According to Stotik et al, “The FBI first targeted AIM in the early 1970s. During this time, the FBI’s secret counter intelligence program (COINTELPRO) turned its attention away from the Black Panthers and towards AIM (Weyler 1982; Matthiessen 1983). In the mid 1970s, AIM leaders discovered that at least three FBI operatives had infiltrated the movement. One of them had managed to gain a national leadership role (Weyler 1982). In 1976, despite the fact that AIM was no longer a viable national organization, the FBI classified it as the number one terrorist organization in the United States (Ortiz 1984)” (1994: 61).

219 For a comprehensive account of this history by Nick Estes see the Red Nation at: https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/the-red-nation-podcast/id1482834485?i=1000537435554. For an extensive chronology of these murders, see: https://mgouldhawke.wordpress.com/2020/08/26/3076/.
delegitimize the implications and politics represented by the American Indian Movement and, by extension, the broader Red Power movement.220

The “Reign of Terror” was essentially a proxy war carried out by the US government via the local tribal government and paramilitary forces against the American Indian Movement. According to former AIM chairman John Trudell, the post-Wounded Knee era on the Pine Ridge reservation was a major turning point that impacted the movement by diffusing its focus, especially because AIM activists became tied up in the courts221 and from then on ‘the hunt’ intensified, i.e., the political repression and criminalization of Indigenous activists.222 The impact of these events across the border is hard to assess, and, as I mentioned above, according to Vern Harper, 1974 represented a high point in the movement. In any case, the repression of AIM was a decisive moment in the general decline of the Red Power movement.

The decline of the Red Power movement thus cannot be explained simply by the rise of the NIB, the promise of the courts, or the hope of recognition. This is a narrative that dismisses the mediation of 1960s and early 1970s radicalism and grassroots organization in the false projection of a self-sufficient liberal dynamic of political change, which is utterly inadequate.

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220 Nick Estes writes, “Since his incarceration, former FBI agents and federal prosecutors (including the head of the prosecution team that convicted him), along with numerous civil rights and human rights organizations, have found faults on the FBI’s handling of Peltier’s case and called for his clemency. Twice Peltier’s case has come close to presidential pardon or clemency. In both instances, the FBI led a smear campaign against AIM and Peltier, showing that the Indian War continues unabated. Most recently, President Obama denied Peltier’s clemency application during the efforts to halt Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, after issuing more executive clemencies than the past thirteen administrations. He could not let go of neither his commitments to the oil and gas industry, nor to the continued imprisonment of an innocent Indigenous freedom fighter” (2019: 195).
221 Stotik et al. write that “within two years of Wounded Knee most AIM leaders were in jail, underground, or dead (Weyler 1982). Over 300 Native Americans were killed by police and federal agents in a period of a year (Ortiz 1984). Numerous trials stemming from Wounded Knee dragged on for months or years, virtually halting AIM’s organizing efforts (Ortiz 1984). The AIM leadership structure was obliterated by the overwhelming effect of the many state and federal charges brought against activists (Dewing 1985)” (1994: 61).
222 See the documentary Incident at Oglala (1992) directed by Michael narrated by Robert Redford around minute 20:20.
and misleading as an historical explanation and imposes detrimental political consequences on
the present. Most significantly for my argument, the repression of the Red Power movement
has theoretical consequences for Indigenous resurgence insofar as the latter does not (initially
at least) critically integrate the revolutionary internationalism and coalitional politics of the
movement or its socialist anticapitalism.

The Chilliwack Decision

Warren’s presumption of a relatively seamless transition to a more reformist politics also
misses a significant political development that troubles the facile dichotomy between militant
and formal organizations; namely, the UIBCIC’s ‘Chilliwack decision.’ This decision represents a
fusion of official Indigenous organization politics and militancy and marks the transition
between 1975 and 1976, implicating both Manuel and Red Power activists. Given the fairly rigid
division that was fostered between Red Power activists and formal political organizations at the
time, it is perhaps no coincidence that the UBCIC shift towards a more militant strategy was
triggered by a misinterpretation. Although it may be one of the last gasps of the Red Power
movement in Canada and caused tremendous hardship, its consequences led to important
reforms that reshaped the Indigenous movement in general, especially in politicizing individuals
who would go on the lead the fight for Constitutional rights in the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{223} Above all, the
Chilliwack decision harbours important lessons for the contemporary Land Back movement,
especially the difficulty of sustaining political mediations premised on the refusal of state
funding and therefore the consequences of rejecting the politics of recognition in practice.

\textsuperscript{223} Sarah Nickel writes, “This grand political gesture was not only unachievable but had gendered and class-based
consequences that deepened existing conflict with the UBCIC. Yet it also motivated collective political responses
that would ultimately reshape the movement” (2019: 91).
However, this political strategy also demonstrates the transformative power of a practice grounded on the principled rejection of cooptation, specifically at the level of the individual and collective subject, despite its limitations.

Less than a year after the Native People’s Caravan, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs undertook a dramatic shift in policy:

Viewing the federal government (particularly government funding and accompanying oversight) as a significant barrier to the goals of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, the attendees of the 1975 UBCIC annual assembly proposed restructuring the UBCIC as a grassroots organization and rejecting federal and provincial funding and programming as an expression of sovereignty... Between April and July 1975, the UBCIC attempted to transition from a state-recognized Indigenous bureaucracy to an independent people’s movement by rejecting all forms of government funding and programs. (Nickel 2019: 91)

Known as the Union of British Columbia Chiefs’ ‘Chilliwack decision’ because of where their annual assembly was held that year, “The resolution was UBCIC’s response to growing frustration concerning the management of government programs for Indigenous populations in British Columbia” (“UBCIC 7th Annual General Assembly,” 1975). Sarah Nickel writes that the decision “was a response to growing concern about political inaction, bureaucracy, elitism, and government dependence that had been building within the organization since 1969” (2019: 92). The decision was ultimately triggered by a telex from National Indian Brotherhood Chief George Manuel calling for the rejection of a specific source of Indian Affairs program funds, which was deemed extremely harmful to communities and Indigenous self-determination but was (mis)interpreted to mean a call for total financial independence and the rejection of all government money from the department, including core funding and social assistance payments (Nickel 2019: 92-93). According to the UBCIC website, “This refusal of funds signified the rejection of Canadian law and government control over Band programs” (“UBCIC 7th Annual
General Assembly,” 1975). The implications of this decision, however, were severe given that the mainstay of First Nation bands and political organizations was (and remains) state transfers.

**Militant May (1975)**

The strategy to reject funding was supported by a slew of direct actions that took the form of “coordinated occupations, blockades, and strategic law-breaking” for an entire month in what was dubbed in the media as ‘Militant May.’ In protest of stalled land claims negotiations, “Indigenous peoples blocked transportation corridors, including rail lines, highways, and logging roads, occupied offices of the Department of Indian Affairs, and protected their territories and resources from outside incursion by government agencies, non-Indigenous individuals, and resource industries” (Nickel 2019: 115). As Nickel writes, “The decision to engage in such direct action was an unprecedented one for an organization that was far from radical and had always sought to change through policy papers and mediated discussions” (2019: 114-15). This was especially novel because, as Nickel continues, “The UBCIC did not identify as a part of the wider Red Power movement… In part,” writes Nickel, “this was because many delegates viewed Red Power as a militant direct-action movement, which was at odds with the UBCIC’s more diplomatic and bureaucratic focus” (Nickel 2019: 118).  

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224 However, Nickel writes, “Yet discussions about the potential role of Red Power in the UBCIC emerged almost from the beginning at the inaugural UBCIC meeting, student delegate and NARP member Henry Jack addressed the delegates, suggesting that the negative definition of Red Power as a militant ideology had overshadowed its true purpose. Jack rejected this mischaracterization and proposed instead that Red Power could be expressed through the gathering of the chiefs and the people. He insisted the two could co-exist because, like the UBCIC, Red Power was about unity. For Jack, like many others involved in the Red Power and AIM movements, direct action was merely one part of a broader political strategy and was no more important than efforts for cultural revival, treaty and rights recognition, and improved employment and education opportunities” (2019: 118).
movement presented an alternative to the official practice of colonial reform, and UBCIC
decided to go on the offensive.

As a result of this strategic front, actively safeguarding the conditions of survival became
imperative. Some communities engaged in traditional forms of production, such as hunting,
gathering, fishing and growing food, which were governed by laws of egalitarian sharing and, in
some cases, were supplemented by the communal redistribution of wages in order to sustain
their communities (Nickel 2019: 99). In the case of Neskonlith, this strategy was reinforced by a
blockade in order to protect critical fish stocks from settler encroachment (Nickel 2019: 99). As
Nickel characterizes it, the “blockade was both an expression of unity and support for land
claims and Indigenous economic independence and a practical method of safeguarding
community welfare” (2019: 100).

The Transformative Power of Refusal

In an important preface to the recently reissued biography of her late father George Manuel,
Doreen Manuel devotes a few pages to qualifying author Peter McFarlane’s claim that “The
rejection of funding had been a serious tactical error because it was premature” (McFarlane
2020: xxv). Such abstractions, while having their own significance, tend to eclipse important
developments that remain invisible within the object of their analysis. As Manuel recalls, the
rejection of funds “was a turning point for Neskonlith. I know that singular experience changed
us forever. It was like our spiritual fast to come back into our power as a warrior people”
(McFarlane 2020: xxv). This transformation was above all thanks to a concerted communal

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225 Doreen Manuel is the daughter of George Manuel, the sister of Art Manuel, and the aunt of Kanahus Manuel. All three of these individuals have been significant contributors to the evolution of the broader Indigenous movement.
effort that contributed to the sustenance of the community in various way, including gardening, hunting, and the commercial sale of crops. Manuel writes,

As if overnight, we shed our colonial blankets and stood up into independence. I was never more proud of my people and of my brother Bob as I was during that time. He led them through a life-changing era that would make each person whole again. I became a warrior woman and shed all fear and doubt. As a result or our resurgence as warriors, it was many of us who became the backbone of the Indian Child Caravan and Concerned Aboriginal Women’s Movement. It was many of the members of those two groups who eventually joined the Constitution Express (McFarlane 2020: xxv).

This account clearly indicates that a drastic transformation took place in the collective subjectivity of the people, which occurred through the practice of rejecting the state’s terms of Indigenous governance and life and the self-activity and organization that filled the practical void left in its wake. By refusing the colonial mediation of money and the fetters it imposes on self-determination, the people of Neskonlith secured a limited and temporary measure of autonomy that nevertheless had a profound impact on their sense of self and the development their capacities. It was this practice that generated a sense of pride in themselves as members of a sovereign people, while self-organization, planning and collaboration in the process of social production gave them confidence and developed their ability to govern and sustain themselves in principle. As Nickel notes, this was a consequence of Militant May more broadly: “The occupations and resulting disruptions to DIA programming also allowed many BC Indigenous communities to envision their politics unfettered by department considerations, and this was a powerful boon for sovereignty” (Nickel 2019: 134).

Critically, as Manuel points out above, this practice created subjects willing and capable of further politicization and mobilization, which would ultimately shape the general situation of

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226 Bob Manuel was the Chief of the Neskonlith band at the time.
Indigenous Peoples in Canada. For instance, those radicalized during this period organized the Indian Child Caravan in 1980, which secured “the Splatsín nation exclusive jurisdiction over its children” in a significant development in the struggle for self-determination over child welfare (Nickel 152), while the Constitution Express, mobilized in the face of Trudeau’s intent to patriate the Constitution in the late 1970s without substantive Indigenous recognition, was the decisive factor for including Section 35 in the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982. Moreover, the transformations on subjectivity and community that took were generational when we consider the influence that Art Manuel, George Manuel’s son and Doreen and Bob’s brother, had on the Indigenous movement over the following four decades,227 and the fact that Kanahus Manuel, Art’s daughter, who was raised at Neskonlith, is currently leading one of the most important anti-colonial struggles today with The Tiny House Warriors.

The Problem of Sustaining Political Mediations based on Rejection

However, the fact that this momentous development was brief suggests that land-based subsistence was hardly an alternative in-itself to the state and market dependence of colonial rule,228 nor was a coordinated localized, i.e., province-wide, disruption of economic infrastructure an adequate form of leverage in the face of settler state domination and capitalist imperatives. This begs the question of how to sustain the conditions that promote these significant changes in subjectivity as well as the vexing issue of how to reject the politics

227 For a full account of Art Manuel’s involvement in the Indigenous movement, see his co-authored book with Grand Chief Ron Derrickson Unsettling Canada: A National Wake Up Call, Between the Lines, 2015.
of recognition and dependency in practice. There is, however, a hint in the multiple criticisms levelled at the UBCIC’s Chilliwack decision, not least those based on gender.

As Chief Dennis Alphonse stated at the time of the decision, with its blanket rejection the UBCIC leaders were “‘playing politics with peoples’ lives’” (Nickel 2019: 97), given that the provision of band services necessitated a stable financial base. For this reason, some communities supported the UBCIC’s rejection “except in the area[s] of health, welfare, education, and public services” (Nickel 2019: 100), i.e., fundamental spheres of social reproduction. Not only did the decision cause some to lose their jobs and set back a number of initiatives that had made progress on reserves, especially around community development, but in some cases even social assistance had been severed where it was desperately needed. The extent to which this endangered families and communities, however, was brought to the fore by the British Columbia Homemakers’ Association (BCIHA), an Indigenous women’s organization that had been politically marginal yet influential within the history of the UBCIC. In attempting to protect their children and communities from the extreme precarity unleashed by the Chilliwack decision, the BCIHA spearheaded the most robust resistance to it by actively organizing to secure the required services on the basis of community rights despite the UBCIC.

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229 As Nickel writes, “Because bands administered welfare and other payments, communities that had refused funding in solidarity with the UBCIC eliminated the sole access point of state support for community members” (2019: 106).

230 The extent of the work performed by the BCIHA is conveyed in a letter by Rosa Charlie to Indian Affairs. Charlie wrote at the time, “in addition to ‘striving to solve the critical and urgent problems of Native Indian women, families, and communities in the areas of health, education, welfare, child care, nutrition, housing, and also employment and training.’ The BCIHA did advocacy work for Indigenous inmates, helped community members seek legal aid, and advised people on their rights of citizenship” (Nickel 2019 105).
This, however, had far greater implications than a mere political disagreement. As Sarah Nickel argues, the mobilization of this internal conflict demonstrated the nature of and forced the gendered delimitation of the political sphere, whose patriarchal essence was premised on the apolitical and ideological representation and practical suppression of women’s organizations as ‘social work,’ to erupt (Nickel 105). Despite the need to strategically navigate this division in order to remain relatively effective in the patriarchal world of Indigenous politics at the time, it was clear to many Indigenous women involved in the BCIHA that social reproductive labour had always been political in essence and its politicization did not represent a fundamental contradiction to the broader goals of the politics put forth by the UBCIC. This was unequivocally conveyed by “Stoney Creek president Sophie Thomas [who] made it clear that the BCIHA’s lack of support for the UBCIC decision did not mean that the women disagreed with the wider aims of the political movement” (Nickel 104). What this ultimately did mean, however, was that the macro-political goals of sovereignty, self-determination, and jurisdictional power over land, i.e., the realm of male-dominated politics, remained abstract in substance insofar as their practical realization, set in motion through a politics of refusal, was premised on the depoliticization of the areas of social practice in which the power structure was most deeply embedded, i.e., where social development is most heavily constrained by the necessity and imperatives of money. As such, abandoning them as

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231 The degree to which this gendered line was guarded is clear by the fact that many women involved with the BCIHA were afraid of being physically harmed as a result of this resistance and efforts to defy the UBCIC decision. As Nickel writes, “Such intimidation overtly challenged women’s political identities and their perceived gendered transgression of community caretakers to an internal pressure group willing to criticize both Indigenous men and the settler state. Fears surrounding gendered violence add another layer to our understanding of women’s reluctance to identify as political actors, justifying women’s tendency to frame their work in the context of motherhood and community protection” (2019: 109).
indispensable sites of political struggle was tantamount to reducing a political movement to social impotence and turned out to be self-defeating. The social violence of depoliticization as a gendered process, politically subordinating entire spheres of social practice as it does through the practical suppression of women, thus remained the hidden premise of a failed politics insofar as the latter structurally abandoned the conditions of its own success and could not develop a strategy of social reproduction in the face of the state’s forced withdrawal.

The (Re)Turn to Nation-Centric Politics

The conditions of sustaining political organizations and mobilizations that reject the politics of recognition must therefore contend with a deeper set of socially constituted compulsions than those directly arbitrated by the colonial policy of the settler state, although the latter remains a formidable gatekeeper. The impasses encountered by the Chilliwack decision suggest the need for a strategy that addresses the fundamental social determinants and material conditions that ground the relation of dependence at the heart of the colonial relation. These considerations are decisive in determining whether the transformative dynamic of refusal, which, in any case, remains historically significant, is to be sustained and potentially augmented as a collective social power capable of contesting the social control of the settler state over Indigenous lives and territories. The fusion of reformism and militancy embodied in the Chilliwack decision did not incorporate the Marxist wing of the Red Power movement, especially insofar as theory was concerned, which, admittedly, was never universally accepted within the broader movement. Although the UBCIC and the communities it represented went on the offensive, the effort only integrated AIM-style tactics of disruption without a broader grasp of capitalist society and its implications for strategy. In this sense, its militancy could only take on a primarily negative
character given that it could not grasp funding as a mediated expression of the relations of production, but only as a naturalized form of wealth to be reallocated politically. Refusing funding and applying pressure with the hope that it will be redirected towards a radically different form of social interchange is thus problematic given the fact that it is already structurally determined in ways that prevent this from happening.

The Indigenous movement would eventually begin to internalize these lessons, but it would see a major setback in the 1980s and 1990s before this would occur in a significant way.

As Nickel highlights, the communities that criticized and rejected the UBCIC’s decision, above all for economic reasons, shifted their attention or “turned inward” to regional and local nation-based politics as a means to solve their local challenges, and “By the late 1970s, this turn to tribalism resulted in the re-emergence of nationally rooted discourses of sovereignty” (Nickel 2109: 142). Nickel continues:

the activities of 1975 fostered local political growth and independence, which enabled many tribal councils to turn back to local initiatives with the realization that, while there was strength in pan-Indigenous unity, negotiating a single political strategy was challenging... Nation-based politics offered a solution by enabling communities to make decisions through tribal councils, which were more attuned to local problems and less weighed down by bureaucratic considerations than the UBCIC. This was an important shift: national politics was not just about the result of rights recognition and the land claim, but also about the process of achieving strong governance and expressions of national sovereignty. (2019: 144-45)

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232 As a form of redistribution, funding presupposes a socio-determinate form of wealth, i.e., the social character of generalized productive activity. The social relations that constitute the latter is a historically specific structural unity, albeit a contradictory one under capital, of human productive capacity with the objective conditions of its realization. Failing to contend with this major aspect of the problem meant the positive task of (re)developing this relation as the basis of Indigenous self-determination was left untouched.

233 Nickel writes, “The fact that these communities justified accepting government funds in terms of economic need rather than political disagreement with the UBCIC is significant” (2019: 144).

234 “The move towards tribal councils generated new articulations of Indigenous politics and unity with a renewed emphasis on local sovereignty and governance as a principal goal of Indigenous communities” (Nickel 2019: 143).
Although this nation-centric and local-oriented politics would erupt once again into a pan-Indigenous movement during the Constitution Express, the phenomenon Nickel points to here cannot be confined to the provincial dynamics of B.C. Nor was this inward turn a mere decision in the face of a misguided organization. Rather, it points to a broader development that was taking shape in the late 1970s and would become generalized by the 1990s; namely, a defensive nation-centric retrenchment in the post-Constitution Express era, an era when pan-Indigeneity was thoroughly supplanted by the state’s mediations of colonial reform. This turn inward towards local governance, with its deep emphasis on nationhood, cultural particularity, and sovereignty, was thus equally based on a structural pressure in the absence of a broad-based movement that could provide an alternative and challenge the state’s processes as the means of contesting the colonial relation. In this sense, the defeat of the Red Power movement should be seen as concomitant to the rise of the colonial politics of recognition, which, by the time the latter becomes hegemonic, it has not only suppressed the revolutionary politics of Red Power but has also marginalized radical reformism in the practice of reproducing the colonial relation. This is the socio-historical context in which the theory of Indigenous resurgence is developed. There is, however, another major factor in this shift that needs to be mentioned, namely, what many referred to in the decades immediately following the radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s as ‘neocolonialism.’ Among Indigenous scholars, this category is most prominent in Adams’ work.

Neocolonialism

Because Adams’ fundamental concept of radical nationalism was a dynamic concept from the outset, one that was situated within the tensions of a socio-historically determinate totality, as
opposed to an ahistorical and apriori construction which attempts to legitimize transhistorical
rights, it could also account for the fate of the Red Power movement, which Adams took stock
of in his 1995 book *A Tortured People: the Politics of Colonization*. There Adams identified the
partial victories of the Red Power movement in the following passage:

Some of the more severe chains of colonization were severed. We made some gains in
welfare management, the schools, and we reduced the Catholic Church’s control over
our people. Although the colonial state machinery was not smashed and Aboriginal
people were still excluded from positions of power, there were some changes toward
political independence and freedom in local administration. There was a change toward
liberal democracy, but our freedom was still far off because neocolonialism ‘reveals a
social-democratic tendency... and a mixed economy development.’ The establishment of
social democracy in the neocolony resulted from our anticolonial struggles. (1995: 161)

In light of the totalitarian nature of colonial domination in the pre-Red Power era,235 these can
only be reasonably assessed as inroads: a redistribution of power that correlated with a wider
margin of action. To deny this is to negate Indigenous historical agency and to eclipse the
change in the social conditions of struggle.236 However, as Adams clearly points out, this change

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235 This is how Harold Cardinal essentially described the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the
Canadian government in the 1960s in his 1969 book *The Unjust Society*. There he writes that the state was “a
dictatorial bureaucracy [that] has eroded our rights, atrophied our culture and robbed us of simple human dignity”
(Cardinal 1969: 2). Moreover, he also pointed out the totalitarian nature of colonial policy at the time: “If you are a
treaty Indian, you’ve never made a move without these guys, these bureaucrats, these civil servants at their desks
in their new office tower in Ottawa saying ‘yes’... or ‘no’” (Cardinal, 9). This was further corroborated by Walter
Rudnicki, a rogue Department of Indian Affairs employee in the early 1960s, who claimed that “there was a certain
bureaucratic terrorism against the Indian peoples with the department controlling every minute of their lives”
(McFarlane 2020: 56).

236 This is also implicit in Russ Diabo’s comments when he writes: “Among the post-1969 tactics the Indian Affairs
bureaucracy adopted to control and manage Indians, in order to continue the federal off-loading and assimilation
goals, was to increase program funding for housing, education, infrastructure, social and economic development,
health, and so on to band councils. This funding was delivered through federal funding agreements with strict
terms and conditions for band councils and band staff to deliver essential programs and services primarily to on-
reserve band members, [with] goals and results designated by Ottawa. In other words, social engineering” (2017:
25-26). Although this process of colonial reform succeeded in safeguarding the structural subordination and
dependency of Indigenous nations, Diabo only identifies it as the continuation of settler colonial domination and
elimination and not, significantly, equally a result of the mass mobilization of Indigenous Peoples in the late 1960s
and early 1970s.
also constituted colonial reform or what he called ‘neocolonialism,’ and that margin of action continued to be exercised within a structural reality of domination.\footnote{Adams writes, “Our victories of the 1960s and ’70s inspired Indians and Metis to a heightened counter-consciousness and motivated them to struggle toward self-determination. Unfortunately, we did not recognize at the time the totalitarian power of the state and how it could manipulate the entire apparatus of the government, which would transform the radical period of the 1960s into a reactionary and increased oppressive society: neocolonialism” (Adams 1995: 92).}

Critical to the sustainability of the latter, according to Adams, was the development and fostering of class relations within Indigenous communities while encouraging and institutionalizing a form of nationalism within the movement that was separated from class struggle both ideologically and practically. The basis of this trend, as Adams points out, was already present within the movement at the time:

During the Native national movement in the 1960s the focus was on ethnicity, race and nationalism. Although the movement was vaguely rooted in class consciousness, it remained very much in the background. However, since the 1970s a class structure has developed within the Aboriginal societies. The major base of Indian, Metis and Inuit society today is the petite bourgeois class which continues to stress race and ethnicity. Its members dominate the tribal councils, Metis village councils, all provincial and national Indian and Metis organizations, and representative positions to mainstream bureaucracy. This class was brought into existence by the state during the period of neocolonialism. Its basic interest lies in preserving the colonial social and economic structures. These people become alienated from tribal and village roots and Aboriginal consciousness. Their goals and future lie in the mainstream of imperial society. They serve the oppressor in positions such as police, soldier, civil servants and the intelligentsia. They are committed to white middle class society because of their background, their western education and the enjoyment of positions of privilege. They are the life of their colonial masters, and are determined to preserve the status and power inherited from them. (1995: 89)

He thus believed the ultimate reason for the failure of the movement to achieve radical social transformation was the lack of a robust challenge to the social domination of capital. As Adams put it, “Although there was also a tendency to be anticapitalist, we failed to challenge the larger framework of capitalist-imperialist relations. As a result, the newly developed system of
neocolonialism remained consistent with capitalist logic” (Adams 1995: 161). Nationalism, as Adams points out above, is quite compatible with the latter’s social relations, especially if the elites driving the project of colonial reform succeed in forging an identity on the basis of race and ethnicity with the grassroots, while obfuscating and suppressing in the process the non-identity of their class interests in the reproduction and sustainability of the capital system.

**Cultural Nationalism and the Constitutional Strategy**

The most decisive factor in the consolidation of neocolonialism, however, and one essential to maintaining a separation between the struggle for Indigenous national autonomy and liberation and revolutionary class struggle was the alienation and repression of grassroots protagonism as the basis of the struggle for Indigenous self-determination. There were two basic forms of political practice that Adams lambasted for demobilizing Indigenous self-activity and organization. The first, which I have already discussed above, is the phenomenon of ‘cultural nationalism.’ It was clear to Adams that the latter failed to deal with the conditions of Indigenous national liberation, helping to reproduce the colonial relation in the process. The second, whose extent and detriment only became evident a few decades later, is what he referred to as the “Constitutional Strategy.” Writing in the aftermath of the second major attempt at constitutional reform in 1992 since the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in the early 1980s, Adams argued that years of engaging in political practice under the aegis of state funding, where Indigenous leadership operated within the yoke of the state’s margin of tolerance for Indigenous self-determination, the leadership had become a deeply ineffectual counterforce to the movement. This was most evident, according to Adams, in the fact that Indigenous communities “held a largely negative attitude toward the constitutional proposals”
(Adams 1995: 150), which had a near total lack of grassroots support.\(^{238}\) Despite this
discrepancy, the leaders still appeared to represent the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. The real
basis for this discrepancy according to Adams was the general purging of protagonism from
Indigenous politics:

> Since there is no politically aware mass movement, ready to take to the streets, the Native
leaders have no effective bargaining power. This has been another consequence of state
intervention and the constitutional strategy: Native organizations have long since ended
the kind of political education and direct action politics that they used back in the late
sixties. The constitutional strategy does not oblige leaders to educate their membership
and it denies the masses of Metis and Indians the opportunity and the responsibility to
genuinely participate in the political process, except to vote approval of the strategy
whenever elections come around. (Adams 1995: 152)

This was, above all, detrimental to the Indigenous movement because it undermined the basis
for solidarity with other segments of the population, which Adams understood as a critical
condition for Indigenous liberation:

> Unless there is broad support for progressive Native policies by whites, no government
will implement such policies. In order for Metis, Indian and Inuit organizations to win
significant reforms, social and economic progress, they must build alliances with other,
non-Native groups fighting for similar goals. In the first place, if the Native organizations
have let political education and mobilization of its membership slide, then there is nothing
with which to build an alliance. Alliances are built between people and political
relationships. If Native organizations are not politically active on a regular basis they
cannot come together with non-Native people – it institutionalizes special status and
gives a message to non-Natives that says ‘Our problems are different from yours and our
solutions are different.’ (Adams 1995: 152-53)

In other words, the constitutional strategy, as a concept that presciently refers to the trend of a
more general kind of Indigenous politics committed to colonial reform,\(^{239}\) is a practice that

\(^{238}\) According to Adams, after a vote on the Constitutional Accord in 1992, a survey showed that less than 1% of
Indigenous Peoples supported the leadership of all Native organizations across Canada (1995: 177).

\(^{239}\) This is a theoretical forerunner to what Glen Coulthard will generalize as ‘the colonial politics of recognition’
nearly 20 years later in 2014 (2014: 3).
undermines the self-activity of the colonized and the subject of radical nationalism.\textsuperscript{240} By undercutting the practice of the latter, which is characterized by the development of consciousness, capacities, and strategy through a progressive confrontation from below, this effectively eliminates the practical basis on which an internal understanding of the intrinsic need for working class solidarity can be developed; that is, a consciousness and politics that is grounded on the self-development of the colonized committed to directly solving the problems of their own national liberation. The constitutional strategy is thus a practice that leaves the subjectivity of the colonized intact and underdeveloped, i.e., without the capacities to exercise self-determination in a way that is not structurally subordinated to the settler state. It is a practice whose mediation tries to sustain a separation between the colonized and direct anticolonial practice by instituting a norm of political passiveness.\textsuperscript{241} This consolidates a vertical and unidirectional relationship between the settler state and a sanctioned Indigenous leadership, which functions to externalize and obscure the intrinsic relationship between working class struggle and Indigenous self-determination, ideologically and practically separating these politics. Subsequently, the struggle for Indigenous self-determination is drawn into the parameters of a single-issue movement as its capitalist form, and constraints are depoliticized and only its immediate problems are considered politically relevant and legitimate. As a result, its radical development is blocked. Although (delegated) representation

\textsuperscript{240} Self-activity refers to the agency of self-initiated and creative practice devoted to solving objective problems and producing material results by the colonized.

\textsuperscript{241} Adams describes the consolidation of this passivity in the following way: “the constitutional strategy was one which fit very well the kind of bureaucratic politics that was already the trend…. It did not involve the hard work of political education, democratic debate over the future, mobilizing people and confronting the governments that gave grants. It involved hiring researchers and lawyers to study the law and history and it involved negotiations between Native leaders and federal politicians. It was not really a political struggle at all” (1995: 153).
is not in principle incompatible with protagonistic politics, the extent to which it alienates and undermines the latter is the decisive factor in the ability of the Indigenous movement to consciously confront the premises of the capitalist system as the ground of national oppression.

The source and direction of political development is therefore for Adams the fulcrum on which everything pivots: either from below, where self-activity and the process of learning through struggle mark the rule, or from above, where an impotent leadership locks decolonization into the structural impasse and dynamics of colonial reformism, politically isolating national liberation from its social conditions in class struggle.

Adams’ notion of the constitutional strategy is a forerunner of Glen Coulthard’s theory of the colonial politics of recognition. The latter however is a more general notion than Adams’, which extends to a series of state strategies, including the practices identified by Adams. However, Adams’ concept is very clear that these kinds of strategies are primarily about the demobilization of Indigenous grassroots protagonism, whereas this remains implicit in Coulthard. The reason is, as I will show, that Coulthard’s notion is developed in an era when the radical grassroots politics of the 1960s and 1970s has already long been defeated and the colonial politics of recognition had become hegemonic. Adams, in contrast, was theorizing from the clear memory of those early movements and could therefore see the politics surrounding the constitutional debates as a further degradation of radical nationalism and revolutionary socialism. In any case, it is the loss of this comprehensive horizon, wherein the social conditions of Indigenous national self-determination are both radically constrained and potentially liberated that defines the socio-historical context in which the theory of Indigenous resurgence is developed.
The Historical Basis of Indigenous Resurgence

The historical ground of Indigenous resurgence is the political development of a defensive nation-centric retrenchment in the post-Constition Express era, starting in the 1980s during the constitutional stalemate and culminating in the post-Kanehsatà:ke era throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. This is a period that witnessed the fragmentation of the broad-based character of the Red Power movement and the proliferation of isolated land-based struggles across the country. It marks a general inward turn to nation-based politics and the intense development of nation-specific histories, knowledge, values, governance, laws, and institutions. The siege and resistance at Kanehsatà:ke is the galvanizing force of this trend, and Indigenous resurgence is the most comprehensive theoretical expression of it.

Contrary to what Alfred argues, Indigenous resurgence is not an unmediated continuity of Red Power, the latter culminating as he claims in the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 (Alfred 2018). Rather, resurgence evolved out of a period when the politics of recognition had already become (precariously) entrenched through the demobilization of the Red Power movement and then entered a crisis with the political stalemate of the 1980s, ultimately exploding in 1990 at Kanehsatà:ke. To requote Art Manuel,

The 1980s were largely a lost decade for Indigenous peoples in Canada.\(^{242}\) One of the main reasons was that, after the victory of the Constitution Express, we left it to our leaders to take care of things behind closed doors or in the staged federal-provincial conferences. We believed again that somehow we could quietly negotiate our way into new breakthroughs for justice for our people. In fact, we could not even get governments in this country to recognize and affirm the rights they had just included in their own Constitution... The great error on our side was to relax the grassroots mobilization within Canada and internationally. Especially when it quickly became

\(^{242}\) Although Manuel’s general point is taken, the 1980s saw an important victory for the Indigenous women’s movement with the passing of Bill C-31 in 1985.
apparent how wildly different our people’s vision of self-government was from what the provincial and federal governments were peddling. (Manuel 2015: 115-16)

There are thus two waves of the colonial politics of recognition: 1969 to 1990, which saw the advent of the modern land claims policy and the constitutional entrenchment of Indigenous rights, and 1990 to the present or what may be called the age of reconciliation. They are divided by the siege at Kanehsatà:ke, which, from the settler state’s vantage point, may be legitimately called a crisis, hence its dominant representation as the “Oka Crisis.” The Siege/Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke is the creation of story of Resurgence, not Red Power, and the defeat of the latter belongs to the pre-history of Oka, which comes on the tail end of the first wave of the colonial politics of recognition. Indigenous resurgence is born during the second wave of recognition politics after the Siege of Kanehsata:ke. In this sense, Indigenous resurgence is not simply the politics of cultural revitalization but a political revitalization in the face of a demobilized movement, albeit one no longer characterized by the pan-Indigenous and mass coalitional politics of the Red Power movement. Nevertheless, it was in this macro-political vacuum that Indigenous nations, primarily as First Nation bands, defended their sovereignty on the ground in direct confrontation with the personifications of capital, whose access to Indigenous lands had been supported by the settler state.

**Fallout from the Stalemate of the 1980s**

While the political sideshow of the Constitutional Conferences came to a devastating close in Ottawa in April of 1987, aptly referred to as “Dancing Around the Table” by filmmaker Maurice Bulbulian, Indigenous Peoples were progressively forced to defend the material basis of their

243 [https://www.nfb.ca/film/dancing_around_the_table_1/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/dancing_around_the_table_1/)
nationhood and political power in relative isolation against the direct force of state-sanctioned
capitalist incursion. The general nature of this situation became evident by the late 1980s and
was symptomatic in the fact that the Assembly of First Nations decided at the time to shift its
strategy and tactics. As former National Chief George Erasmus wrote at the time:

Frustrated by the racist double-standards being applied to our people across Canada,
our assembly decided that the time had come to move to direct action. This was not an
idle threat, but a solemn decision to create the kind of pressures that we hope will bring
Canadian governments back to the negotiating table... Since that time we have had a
series of confrontations between First Nations and the political and law-enforcement
authorities of the dominant society. In these confrontations our people have discovered
that non-violent actions of civil disobedience not only generate enthusiasm and
solidarity among our own people, not only bring more attention to our grievances and
attract considerable public support outside our own communities, but also have the
desired effect of forcing governments, under pressure of public opinion, to take us more
seriously, and even to resume negotiations. (Erasmus 1989: 7)

Therefore, the practical fallout of this generalized political impasse completely contradicted

“The evidence during the 1970s and early 1980s [to some Indigenous people, which] suggested
that with enough determination, persistence and professionalism in political lobbying and legal
manoeuvring, their aspirations might eventually be met by working within the system” (Angus
1991: 63).\(^{244}\) and the historical development of the colonial relation once again necessitated
direct action as the only viable means of upholding Indigenous rights and maintaining
sovereignty. It was this general development that erupted at Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 less than a

\(^{244}\) Erasmus corroborates this when he writes: “We were encouraged again in the early 1980s when we succeeded
in persuading government to entrench aboriginal rights, with specific mention of the Royal Proclamation in the
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and to lay down a formal negotiating process by which these rights
would be defined in agreement with First Nations” (quoted in Richardson 1989: 6). However, as Murray Angus
writes: “By the end of the Conservative’s first term of office, this mood of optimism had all but evaporated. The
failure of the constitutional talks, the new restrictions imposed by the long-awaited land claims policy, the
extremely restrictive scope of the government’s self-government policy, the cynical indifference toward specific
claims, the determination to avoid new costs and reduce existing ones, the willingness of the justice department
and provincial governments to ignore the implications of hard-won court battles – all of these factors were
providing stiff lessons about what the system was willing or able to deliver” (Angus 1991: 63-64).
month after Elijah Harper put the proverbial nail in the coffin of the Meech Lake Accord, it
itself another attempt at large-scale political consolidation on the basis of Indigenous exclusion.

As Coulthard writes,

For many Indigenous people and their supporters... these two national crises were seen
as the inevitable culmination of a near decade-long escalation of Native frustration with
a colonial state that steadfastly refused to uphold the rights that had been recently
‘recognized and affirmed’ in section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. By the late
1980s this frustration was clearly boiling over, resulting in a marked rise in First Nations’
militancy and land-based direct action.

These unmediated assertions of jurisdiction on the ground by relatively isolated First Nations in
direct conflict with capitalist units of production thus represented the state of the Indigenous
movement after the first wave of recognition politics, which signified a period of intensified
local struggle in a state of general demobilization. As Coulthard writes,

the material form that these expressions of Indigenous sovereignty took on the
ground—*the blockade*, explicitly erected to impede the power of state and capital from
entering and leaving Indigenous territories respectively— must have been particularly
troubling to the settler-colonial establishment. All of this activity was an indication that
Indigenous people and communities were no longer willing to wait for Canada (or even
their own leaders) to negotiate a just relationship with them in good faith. (Coulthard 2014: 118)

However, despite the ubiquity of these conflicts, they were hardly coordinated in a general
way. Remarking on the frequency and quantity of blockades in BC between 1984 and 1995,

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245 See Coulthard’s discussion of the multitude of actions that took in the late 1980s, especially after the second
and last Constitutional Conference of 1987 that ended in a political impasse, including the Innu occupation and
blockade of the Canadian Air Force and NATO base in Goose Bay, Labrador in 1988-89; the Lubicon Cree blockade
against exploration, drilling, mining, gas, and oil in 1988; the Wet’suwet’en and Gitxsan blockade against logging in
1988; the struggle of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake against clear-cutting in their territory in the same year; and
the Temagami First Nation blockades of 1988 and 1989 against logging.


247 Blomley writes, “By the mid-1980s, the majority of BC First Nations had submitted their formal statements of
land claim to the federal government. Political frustration grew with the glacial pace of federal negotiations. At the
same time, the provincial government continued to insist that Aboriginal title did not exist. This proved too much
for many First Nations, especially in light of the continued resource extraction that was occurring on traditional
territories. The consequence was a number of blockades, the most significant of which were at Lyell Island on
Nicholas Blomley writes, “with a few exceptions, blockades have been non-coordinated. Although there have been some calls for collective action, most blockades appear to be established either by individual bands or tribes... Individual bands, councils or members, take the decision to blockade. The lack of a clear political ‘center’ makes the blockade potentially unpredictable and, thus, powerful, as a tactical-tool” (Blomley 1996: 5). Although this is undoubtedly true in some respects, it also suggests that Indigenous nations were quite atomized in trying to alter the general conditions of their oppression and the denial of their rights.

State Mediation

This was due to the fact, as I have been arguing, that the broader movement of the 1960s and 1970s, shaped by the practical forces of revolutionary coalitional politics, was supplanted by the 1980s and the social conditions of Indigenous self-determination became primarily determined by the mediations of colonial reform, especially the land claims process and the Canadian constitution, where the representatives of Indigenous nations found themselves caught in the political crossfire of the federal and provincial governments. And despite the crisis of colonialism that exploded in 1990, it did not signal a general decline in the politics of recognition. Rather, as Coulthard argues, the latter found momentum in the protracted process of the RCAP and the hope it stoked throughout its five-year genesis,\(^{248}\) while the courts began

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\(^{248}\) See for instance, the 1996 NFB film by Gregory Coyes ‘No Turning Back’: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/no_turning_back/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/no_turning_back/)
to deal more and more with what the state refused to address politically. Although the latter essentially safeguards a form of arbitration based on the unshakable, though blatantly contradictory, ground of colonial authority, Indigenous legal activism, especially at the SCC, has altered to some extent the social necessity of capitalist accumulation and the degree of Indigenous democratic power. In this way, broad and largely undefined legal concessions have carried the burden of colonial reform where the political arena has been utterly intransigent, especially in terms of generating ideological buy-in to a system believed to be capable of structurally decolonizing itself on the basis of capital’s parameters. Thus, the state managed to control the universal horizon of the Indigenous movement while recognition was imploding at the local level, a strategy for reproducing the colonial relation no less. After all, localized and atomized conflict can be mediated in a manner that leads to no structural concessions. Above all, as I showed in my discussion of Howard Adams, this general approach to colonial reform was premised on demobilized masses, especially the grassroots. With the general social conditions of self-determination ensnared by the state’s mediations and thus no longer supported by a general or mass movement capable of enforcing their social power as nations, Indigenous nations were thus structurally compelled to exercise their sovereignty defensively.

249 The classic form of this development is the Wet’suwet’en and Gitxsan nations’ struggle first on the ground in the face of encroaching industry, then leading to the 1997 Delgamuukw v British Columbia decision, and then on to the 2020 uprising.

250 Coulthard refers to this development when he writes: “the dominance of the legal approach to self-determination has over time helped to produce a class of Aboriginal ‘citizens’ whose rights and identities have become defined more in relation to the colonial state and its legal apparatus than the history and traditions of Indigenous nations themselves” (2014: 42).

251 This is not to say that no solidarity and exchange was taking place between Indigenous nations, which would be absurd. However, the state tried to mediate this solidarity at every turn. For instance, Steward Phillip of the Okanagan Nation stated in an interview: “The government exploited the situation after Oka. We were all energized and mobilized, particularly here in British Columbia, and the federal and provincial governments collaborated and
Warrior Societies

The most symptomatic development behind the state’s capture of the general social conditions of the anticolonial struggle is the rise of Warrior Societies across the country. As Lana Lowe and Taiaiake Alfred argue,

AIM was nowhere to be found during the mid-1980s, when several indigenous communities in the interior and northern part of British Columbia took direct action to defend their territories from ongoing unsanctioned and rapacious resource extraction... [However,] By the mid 1990s, warrior societies had emerged throughout Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Manitoba.252

In the face of a relationship marked by the unmediated clash of direct force between colonizer and the colonized in the form of physical confrontations, i.e., martial situations,253 Warrior Societies filled the vacuum of a broad-based social movement. Although Warrior Societies engaged in solidarity across national territories,254 with their expertise in the strategy and tactics of self-defence, they were predominantly coordinated forms of resistance.

Moreover, while high-profile defensive actions had been on the rise in the 1980s, the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke took on special significance with regard to the spread of Warrior Societies. As Lowe and Alfred note,

sprung out this ‘BC Treaty Process’ overnight. What that did was buy them ten years. It subverted the movement, and it provided them a way out” (Alfred 2005: 185).

253 In the case of the Burnt Church conflict from 1999 to 2002, Mi’kmaw warrior Sakej Ward stated the following: “You know, there was a plea from some of our people that we should just pursue the politics of pity and try to get Canadian society to somehow identify with our issues so much so that they would put a stop to their government’s actions against us. Obviously, it didn’t work. In fact, the reason we made such a huge stand against the non-native fishermen was because on every Sunday, right after Mass, they’d come in to try to destroy our traps. There would be no consequence for them. The idea of appealing to their morality just did not work. We tried civil disobedience and protest and arguing with them, but that didn’t work. They did not stop until the day there was a consequence imposed on their actions, the day we shot back, and the day their boat ended up in flames. From that day on, there were never any non-native boats trying to come in and cut our traps again” (Alfred 2005: 73).
254 For instance, Lowe and Alfred cite the “the West Coast Warrior Society [who] travelled to Esgenoopetitj to assist local indigenous communities in that region in their on-going conflict with local fishers and Canadian authorities over the conduct of traditional fisheries by the Mi’kmaq” in the late 90s (2006: 7).
Many of the people who became involved in the Warrior Society movements on the east and west coasts have cited the 1990 Oka crisis as a turning point in their lives, and the watershed event of this generation’s political life… Indeed, [they continue,] the Mohawk Warrior Society’s actions in 1990 around Kanesatake, Kahnawake and Akwesasne have provided crucial inspiration and motivation for the militant assertion of indigenous nationhood… The Oka crisis led to an awakening and radicalization of indigenous consciousness, as well as a broadening of the spectrum of possible responses to injustice. (Lowe & Alfred 2006: 6.255

Not only did the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke inspire the formation of other Warrior Societies across Canada, it also signalled a turning point in the deepening divide between community activists, traditionalists, and local chief and councils. As Gord Hill writes, “

In the 1980s, the tactics of the earlier militants were adapted by the band/tribal councils... [According to one observer quoted by Hill,] ‘these blockades and the arrests were carefully orchestrated. The RCMP worked very closely with the natives. The natives wanted to get arrested to press their point. In those cases, there was never a threat of violence like there was on the Douglas Lake road [a ranch blockade by the Nlaka’pamux over access to fishing at Douglas Lake as well as ecological damage from cattle ranching, which ended shortly after heavily-armed RCMP Emergency Response Team is deployed] (Zizag, a.k.a. Gord Hill in “B.C. Native Blockades & Direct Action: From the 1980s to 2006”: 3).

The cooperation of the 1980s signaled a faith in the constitutional process and the deployment of direct action as a means of leverage capable of realizing what it promised. By the 1990s, however, this radical reformist presupposition was largely giving way to violent confrontations,

255 See also Zizag, who writes: “In 1990, during the Oka Crisis, BC had more solidarity blockades with the Mohawks than any other region of Canada. Roads, highways and rail-lines were blocked across the province. A railway bridge was set on fire and badly damaged. By this time, police were. more experienced & prepared to forcibly remove Native blockades. After 1990, the state increasingly had to contend with blockades that were not negotiated or orchestrated events with police, but rather acts of resistance inspired by the 77-day armed standoff at Oka” (Zizag 3). As former AFN national chief George Erasmus stated at the time, the resistance at Kanehsatà:ke “was something everyone identified with” (quoted in Sehdev 2010: 106). In the introduction to the commemorative compilation This is an Honour Song: Twenty Years since the Blockades, Kiera Ladner writes, “So why a book on this particular resistance and not one about Small Legs or Listuguj or Ipperwash or Haida Gwaii? These were critical, influential mobilizations. While all of these nations threw stones in the water that generated ripple effects, Kanatasatà:ke was different. Not because of the ripple, but because we saw those powerful images every night on the news for months – images that became a defining moment for many of us. Images that generated unprecedented Indigenous response in the form of solidarity blockades across Turtle Island, The answer is quite simple – the mobilization of Kanien’kehaka that summer was such a powerful image and such a defining moment for so many of us (Indigenous and Canadian alike)” (2010: 3).
most notably the Gustafson Lake Standoff, which was led by traditionalists who condemned local band council complicity, and a widening divide between local governments and militants. As Hill writes, “Oka served as a model & example for Indigenous resistance throughout the '90s (and up to today). Consequently, state repression has also increased in order to counter this” (Hill in “B.C. Native Blockades & Direct Action: From the 1980s to 2006”: 4). One of the main reasons the Mohawk Nation became the epicentre of the explosive conflict in the summer of 1990 was the endurance of the Mohawk Warrior Society and the resistance of the communities that have sustained it over the decades. In spite of the decline of the Red Power movement, it had maintained its activity and ethos, not least because of the ongoing viability of Ganienkeh (which I discuss in the next chapter) and their efforts to assert their sovereignty through the tobacco trade, both of which led to some major conflicts with the state in the 1980s. 256 Thus, by the time 1990 came around, it was only a question of mobilization. 257

However, notwithstanding the heroic resistance of the Mohawks and its far-reaching impact, the general situation would remain one of relative isolation and nation-based self-defence for nearly two decades. The post-Kanehsatà:ke period is thus marked by the defence of sovereignty, the exercise of Indigenous governance, and the enforcement of Indigenous law on a local scale. Some of the major actions that mark the historical development of this struggle are Barriere Lake (1991); Gustafsen Lake (1995); Cheam (1999-2003); Burnt Church (1999-2002); St’at’imc nation Sutikalh camp near Mt. Currie, BC (2000-ongoing); Sun Peaks (2000-2003). 256 I discuss one of these incidents from 1988 below. In March of 1990 a helicopter was shot at over Ganienkeh prompting a major conflict with the FBI. 257 Ellen Gabriel confirms the longevity of this when she writes the following with reference to Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall: “Karoniaktajeh was a visionary. I have realized that his manifesto [the Warrior’s Handbook] was carried out by the true warriors and peoples during the 1990 siege of Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke” (Blouin et. al 2023: 125).
2004); Grassy Narrows (2002-ongoing); Ipperwash (1993-1995); Caledonia (2006); Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (2006); and Tahltan (2006), to name only the most well-known. It is these defensive sovereign assertions that constituted the practical basis for a general and intensified inward turn towards developing nation-specific forms of culture and social practice as the basis for a renewed anti-colonial politics.

Conclusion

The move away from pan-Indigeneity and mass coalitional politics is thus not simply based on an ethical critique of its alleged hollowness regarding the diversity and depth of specific Indigenous traditions. Rather, it was structurally instituted by the counter-struggle from above, which marginalized the mass character of the movement; trapped the struggle for Indigenous rights into a single-issue species of politics, thereby externalizing the struggles of other social groups from the Indigenous movement and shoring up the ideological perception that they are unrelated; and, most significantly, was wrought by alienating protagonism from the practice of decolonization. The loss of a critical concept of capital as the ground of and political vantage point on the social totality within the movement is also based on these developments.

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258 Lowe and Alfred critique AIM for not being rooted enough in local communities and traditions and therefore not being able to sustain their appeal (2006: 6). However, many radicals at the time, such as Louis Cameron of the Ojibwe Warrior Society, who led the momentous armed occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora, ON, in 1974, and was inspired by AIM, insisted on the political value of culture, emphasizing the place of spiritual and medicinal traditions, specifically the Midewiwin, of which he was an initiate and to which he was committed throughout his entire life, in the long history of anticolonial struggle. Cameron told an interviewer at the time “You can’t base a movement or organization on a superficial scale... People have to sacrifice their entire life, to step into it with everything. This is at least the beginnings of the teachings of Midewiwin. This is the first step that you have to make. You have to make a lifetime commitment. I think politically, this is the only way you can start off. You have to be soundly on the ground with the rest of the people and community, you put yourself on the limb and then you have to look for escapes and try to get back to some place, you know” (Burke 1976: 394).
The concept of dual dispossession thus evolves out of a historical context in which this state of affairs is normalized, but in which there is also a push against and beyond it emerging. On the basis of this latter development, the concept attempts to reactivate the tendencies in the current moment that are akin to the centrifugal politics of radical nationalism and its commitment to internationalism and mass coalitional politics as a condition of Indigenous self-determination. However, it does so on the basis of the radical subjective determinations fostered by Indigenous resurgence theory and the practices developed in the age of nation-centric retrenchment. In this way, it should not be forgotten that, although the actions that characterized the period appear largely defensive in character, defence is an active practice of development that transforms people as individuals and collectives. In this sense, they are places of Indigenous protagonism through which the nationhood and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples is developed on the basis of Indigenous language, knowledge, traditional forms of production, institutions of political and legal regulation, etc. As such, this era, which is ongoing, has contributed to a significant radicalization in Indigenous culture despite the lack of a comprehensive social force capable of challenging the generality of settler colonialism and achieving the robust and principled power of self-determination envisioned by Indigenous resurgence. The ensuing chapter changes register in order to reconstruct the development of Indigenous resurgence theory, especially in relation to its socio-historical basis and foreground the concepts that have marked its initial and contemporary development. The purpose of this is to demonstrate how Indigenous resurgence develops and radicalizes the major tendencies of the Red Power movement in ways that are marked by the historical developments identified in this chapter. In doing so, my intention is to foreground both its contribution to the
contemporary Land Back movement as well as some of its limitations, which the movement is
discovering in practice and for which the concept of dual dispossession provides an initial
answer.
Chapter Four: Indigenous Resurgence: Revitalizing and Enhancing Historic Tendencies

Introduction

Indigenous resurgence is a major theoretical and practical development to emerge from the era of nation-centric defensiveness, and the developments it has fostered, especially at the level of Indigenous subjectivity, have become essential premises of the struggle today. These include, but are not limited to, the following: the absolute rejection of dependency, cooptation, and colonial recognition; the recognition of protocols and teachings as laws and principles of governance; a radical relational consciousness and commitment to the land and non-human beings; the revitalization of traditional forms of production and decision-making; and the centrality of Eldership and language to understanding and living in the world. Evidently, the ideology of Indigenous resurgence did not invent any of these practices, drawing as it has on the staunch resistance that has carried Indigenous nations through an era of generalized demobilization; but its theoretical intervention has valorized them and helped to universalize their importance in certain quarters, especially within the more radical wings of the Indigenous struggle, like the Land Back movement. In this sense, it has made a significant contribution to consolidating the dialectic of self-development through cultural revitalization and struggle and their impact on both individuals and Indigenous nations or collectives. As such, Indigenous resurgence is a development of tendencies that already existed within the Red Power movement both in theory and practice. Central among these are the politicization of Indigenous pride and the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge, institutions, and social practices,
especially spirituality; the self-transformative significance of practice, above all cultural
revitalization and defensive resistance; the theorization of decolonization as Indigenous
national liberation; and the principled rejection of cooptation and politically truncated forms of
state recognition.

However, following the argument in the last chapter, as a socio-historically specific
theory and programmatic development of these tendencies, resurgence has evolved under
different historical circumstances than the Red Power movement, and this difference has left its
mark on some of its most important theoretical formulations. The most decisive of these
historical circumstances is the atomization of Indigenous communities through the state’s
general mediation of their relation to each other and other social movements and struggles
within society at large, and the demobilization and alienation of the protagonistic politics so
central to theorists such as Howard Adams and the politics of NARP during the Red Power era.
Though protagonistic politics was not completely eliminated with the rise of the colonial politics
of recognition, it has taken on a predominantly defensive character, relegated as it has been to
the frontlines of resistance, especially in safeguard Indigenous land bases in the face of
capitalist encroachment. The loss of a socialist anticapitalism and radical internationalism are
also among the consequences of the changes delineated in the last chapter. Recognizing the
contributions of Indigenous resurgence and the limitations of its initial formulations and
contemporary expressions are critical to identifying how the organizational forms of the Land
Back movement institutionalize the principles of Indigenous resurgence in specific ways that
enhance their quality as social practices while pointing beyond those limitations.
Moreover, identifying the contributions and limitations of Indigenous resurgence’s initial formulations and assumptions, at least in the work of major contributors, is critical to understanding the concept of dual dispossession as a response to these limitations and a means of developing the logic and principles of resurgence further in practice. The central aim of this reconstruction and critique is first and foremost to identify the methodological essence of radical nationalism, i.e., its rigorous dialectic of theory and practice, at the heart of resurgence’s development in order to lay the ground for dual dispossession as a theoretical construction and intervention that responds to the objective constraints confronted by the Land Back movement as the most uncompromising expression of Indigenous resurgence and the most developed institutionalization of the historic tendencies it has enhanced.

The following chapter discusses the theory of Indigenous resurgence through the context in which some of its major ideas evolved. The chapter begins with an analysis of the work of Taiaiake Alfred, an early theorist of the tradition, and highlights some of the central tenets of resurgence he developed early on, most importantly, the principle of self-conscious traditionalism, which synthesizes the tendency of self-transformation through struggle and radical cultural revitalization. However, despite the historical significance of such theoretical contributions, I must hold Alfred to account in this dissertation for the harmful actions he has perpetrated as an individual if I am to remain accountable in using his work to those individuals and communities he has harmed.

In 2019, Alfred himself admitted that he has harmed a number of Indigenous people, above all, Indigenous women, and many members of the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community, by cultivating a harmful and exclusionary learning and communal environment, which he has
attributed to his “embodiment of toxic masculinity” after criticism, complaints, and painful consequences for these individuals and their respective families and communities, given the range and influence of his reputation. This led to an external review of the Indigenous Governance program at the University of Victoria, which he led for 20 years, and to his resignation from the university in 2019. Alfred’s harmful behaviour has severely undermined his credibility within the Indigenous community. Consequently, many refuse to celebrate or endorse his intellectual legacy based on foundational principles of Indigenous law and legal orders, Mohawk protocols concerning the conduct of men and women, diplomacy, and a communal ethics of accountability which refuses to separate his work from his individual actions in order to uphold a responsibility to those he has harmed and in the spirit of combatting the hierarchical and dehumanizing social relations that he has perpetuated within the Indigenous community. I stand in solidarity with these communities and the struggle against the normalization and violence of his actions and the systemic reality that undergirds them. For this reason, I offer the following justification for including a discussion of his work in my dissertation.

I have chosen to include a critical reconstruction of his work not for a superficial and personal glorification of his contributions to scholarship and activism as an exceptional individual, nor to carry out an analysis through the theoretical framework he developed, but in order to properly situate the development of Indigenous resurgence theory in its historical context, and especially to foreground that Alfred’s theoretical formulations are themselves

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grounded on the practical efforts of individuals and grassroots communities that have preceded him. Moreover, by highlighting the socio-historical conditions under which his theoretical contributions have emerged, the particularity and limitations of his theory of resurgence become clear, given that it is marked by the problems of a specific moment in history. As such, it becomes easier to identify how developments that have proceeded his work, both in practice and theory, including Indigenous resurgence, have built off his contributions while also superseding them. In this sense, I include Alfred’s biography and his work in this chapter as the personification of an historical development that is integral to understanding the evolution of the contemporary Indigenous movement and struggle as I understand it and to developing a critical methodological practice adequate for its advancement. This intellectual practice, I believe, is critical not only to advancing the Indigenous movement at the level of theory but is indispensable to combatting the social violence that Alfred has, on his own admission, embodied, and is therefore crucial to upholding our responsibilities, as Indigenous scholars and activists, to the individuals and communities he has harmed. Nindinawemaaganag (All my Relations).

Furthermore, this engagement with the early formulations of resurgence is accompanied by a discussion of the impact the Red Power struggles of the mid-1970s and the early 1990s, especially the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke, his formulation of resurgence. This is followed by a brief look at two major experiences of Indigenous resistance that demonstrate the self-transformative power of anticolonial defensive actions. I then briefly discuss the work of Leanne Simpson, which I return to later in the chapter, and how both the Mohawk resistance in 1990 and the early work of resurgence had an important influence on it. A significant portion
of the chapter is then devoted to the work of Glen Coulthard and focuses on his notion of the colonial politics of recognition as the most systematic theorization of Indigenous co-optation and colonial reform and its relation to the Dene struggle of the 1970s. I also discuss how Coulthard, following Alfred and Simpson, puts forth a counter-politics centred in Indigenous resurgence and the concept of grounded normativity as a means of developing the terms and goals of decolonization according to Indigenous traditions of governance and law. I then turn to Audra Simpson’s work in order to show that the politics of refusal has not only sustained the viability of Indigenous political sovereignty but, drawing on her own examples from her community of Kahnawà:ke, has also demonstrated how the First Nation or band entity cannot reconcile the contradictions generated by refusal, which points in the direction of mass coalitional politics earlier embodied in the politics of Red Power. I then return to Leanne Simpson’s later work and highlight the more recent contributions she has made to resurgence that also signify a shift towards the universal tendencies inherent in the radical politics of the Red Power era, which, significantly, includes the need to challenge capital as integral to the politics of what Simpson calls radical resurgence. Through these scholars I demonstrate how the major tendencies of the Red Power movement have evolved throughout the age of colonial recognition and reform analyzed in the last chapter.

The Origins of the Theory

Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred was perhaps the first to formulate the social consciousness of and practice of Indigenous resurgence as an explicit theory and a programmatic politics. First issued as a call-to-action, the principle of resurgence initially appeared on the political scene in
the form of a manifesto in *Peace, Power and Righteousness* (1999) and then explicitly articulated as a theory with self-reflexive ideological clarity and commitment in *Wasáse* (2005).

**Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall and the Mohawk Warrior Society**

A Mohawk from Kahnawà:ke, Alfred first came to political consciousness as a young person in the fall of 1973, when a Warrior Society resolution from the longhouse was issued to evict all non-Indigenous Peoples without familial ties from the community because of a housing shortage for Mohawks living off reserve (Blouin et al. 2023: 244). Incensed about the influence of the Warrior Society, the chief and council issued its own evictions and arrested six warriors, including Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall, who had been at the forefront of a radical traditionalist revival in Kahnawà:ke since the 1950s. In response, Hall rejected the jurisdictional authority of Quebec’s provincial court, where his charge was being heard (Blouin et al. 2023: 244). Then in October 1973, as the warriors attempted to force a recalcitrant white family off the reserve, the SQ arrived on the scene and a vicious fight broke out leading to multiple warrior arrests. The incident has been described as follows:

> In response, hundreds of Kahnawà:ke residents surrounded the police station, and a riot erupted, with three police cruisers being overturned. The warriors, armed with rifles, then took refuge in the longhouse, where they were besieged by 150 SQ police for a week, before the police agreed to withdraw, provided that the ‘agitators’ from the

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260 Alfred writes: “Corresponding to the two major sources of discontent in the community, the traditionalist revival of the 1950s had two faces. The ceremonial and ritualistic focus for the spiritually oriented contrasted with the explicitly political agenda for others. Two individuals represented the dual nature of the movement. Key players in the revival, Louis Hall and Joe Phillips, were responsible for rebuilding the Kahnawake Longhouse... Phillips and those he represented concentrated on preserving the culture of the Iroquois by immersing themselves in the rituals and ceremonies of the Longhouse. Hall and his followers developed an increasingly militant strategy for asserting Mohawk political sovereignty vis-à-vis non-Indian society. Despite the different foci, the two were united in a commitment to replace the band council government with a traditional Iroquois-style government” (1995: 66).
American Indian Movement, who had come in numbers to support the Mohawk warriors in Kahnawà:ke, promised to go home. (Alfred 2018)

The political essence of this form of traditionalism promulgated by the Warrior Society at the time and its role not only in challenging colonialism but also in providing a positive orientation for its alternative would come to mark the theory resurgence in decisive ways.

Ganienkeh

The following year in May of 1974, a number of Mohawk traditionalists, including Hall, then secretary of the Kahnawà:ke branch of the Six Nations Confederacy, expropriated and established the (semi-)autonomous community of Ganienkeh or “Land of the Flint” on traditional Mohawk territory in upstate New York. This was to be a place where “the Red man shall exercise his proven government and society, in keeping with his culture, customs and traditions” given that “he has the right to operate his state with no interference from any foreign nation or government” (especially the US) (Hall 2023: 134). The citizens of Ganienkeh, above all, understood themselves as part of a broader movement, with Hall writing in the manifesto at the time that, “Ganienkeh calls all Native American Indians who wish to live according to their culture, customs and tradition” (Hall 2023: 133). This action helped consolidate an explicit self-understanding grounded on three fundamental principles, which had been evolving for at least a few decades; namely, “the achievement of sovereignty through the re-implementation of a traditional form of government; the strengthening of an identity of distinct peoplehood through a focus on ancestry; and the redress of historical injustices surrounding the dispossession of Mohawks from their traditional lands” (Alfred 1995: 76), which was already an explicit political program by the time of the reoccupation was launched:
The gradual refinement of an ideology based on the principles identified above reached its present stage by the mid-1970s. The interplay of land issues, sovereignty, and identity was evident throughout the steadily increasing number of confrontations between Mohawks and the United States and Canadian governments. The set of ideas had crystallized into an action plan by 1974, when Kahnawake Mohawks occupied and attempted to re-settle an area of their traditional territory in the Adirondack Mountains near Utica, NY. In the midst of the ensuing confrontation with New York State authorities, a Federal negotiator observed that 'Sovereignty is a key word to the Mohawks. They insist without wavering that the Mohawk Nation is an independent sovereign government' (Kwartler 1980: 17). Clearly by this time the Mohawks who were in the forefront of political activism had gone through the process described by Mathur and had in fact consolidated a set of principles which underlie contemporary politics in Kahnawake. (1995: 77)

A place of semi-autonomous land-based production, political and legal regulation grounded on the Great Law of Peace, and traditional knowledge dissemination, Ganienkeh was the practical institution of Indigenous nationhood and an uncompromising sense of sovereignty. In Alfred’s estimation, this represented the culmination of a ‘nascent Nativism’ born in the 1950s as a result of the expropriation of Mohawk lands for the St. Lawrence Seaway, which completely shattered faith in the Crown as a reliable protector of Indigenous land rights (1995: 65).

Mediated and developed through the radicalism of the Red Power movement of the 1970s and the rise of Indigenous militantism, Ganienkeh embodied the active principle and offensive tactics of the movement,261 and was ultimately sustained not only by a strong commitment to traditionalism and spirituality but, significantly, through self-defence,262 a point I return to below.

261 See American Indian Movement co-founder Clyde Bellecourt’s 2016 autobiography The Thunder before the Storm: the Autobiography of Clyde Bellecourt, especially chapter 3 entitled “Confrontation Politics” for an account of the nature and importance of offensive or confrontational tactics to AIM and, by extension, the broader Red Power movement.

262 A number of high-profile shootouts with the state preceded the negotiations that established the trust that guarantees the Mohawk autonomous habitation of the area to this day.
Self-Conscious Traditionalism

Although Ganienkeh provided a clear example of the practical possibilities of Indigenous autonomy grounded upon a radical cultural basis within the broader social constraints of a settler colonial society and embodied some of the foundational principles of Indigenous liberation, it was the 1990 Siege of Kanehsatà:ke (a.k.a. the “Oka Crisis) and Alfred’s involvement in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1991 to 1996) that constituted the practical soil that enabled him to formulate a universal principle and the guiding methodology of resurgence. It was in the RCAP era that Alfred undertook a political study of the historical dynamics within his own community of Kahnawà:ke. As he put at the beginning of his 1999 manifesto, *Peace, Power and Righteousness*:

> My previous book, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors* (1995), analyzed Kahnawake's political revitalization and described the process of self conscious reflection and selective re-adoption of traditional values that has been central to the re-establishment of a traditional political culture among the Kanien'kehaka. This self-conscious traditionalism has allowed Kahnawake to begin to make traditional values and principles the foundations for governance. By abstracting core values and principles from the vast store of our traditional teachings, and selectively employing those aspects of their tradition that are appropriate to the present social, political, and economic realities, the community has begun to construct a framework for government that represents a viable alternative to colonialism, and that respects their tradition (Alfred 1999: 81).

Whereas Ganienkeh represented a distinct political tendency within the community of Kahnawà:ke, it was the intensely contradictory development of ideology and politics in Kahnawà:ke itself, of which Ganienkeh was a partial resolution, that permitted him to abstract a concept with universal implications for a politics decolonization grounded on Indigenous culture: self-conscious traditionalism. The vibrant yet polarizing and at times downright antagonistic political landscape of Kahnawà:ke allowed for the identification of a distinct contemporary practice; and the notion that developed from it not only captured a historical
dynamic but also designated an active principle, which could therefore also be refashioned into a political methodology. As such, it was not confined to the Mohawk context but had universal implications for the struggle against settler colonialism more broadly and could thus be formulated as a precept for the development of a certain tendency within the larger Indigenous movement, which the traditionalists at Ganienkeh had put into practice, albeit in a relatively isolated manner. Although grounded on the intrinsic value of each Indigenous culture and nation as the locus of social and political development, self-conscious traditionalism is a general methodological principle and forms the core of what would later be called Indigenous resurgence. As such, it signifies a theoretical development that facilitates the generalization of the tendency within the Red Power movement to prioritize Indigenous culture and spiritual revival as indispensable to developing Indigenous social and political agency, but does so on a more self-reflexive basis, which is critical to extending the practice of cultural revitalization to other social spheres, above all traditional forms of politics.

**Indigenous Resurgence**

By the time self-conscious traditionalism is formally conceptualized as Indigenous resurgence in *Wasáse* (2005), it takes on a programmatic character: “We will self-consciously recreate our cultural practices and reform our political identities by drawing on tradition in a thoughtful

263 This is to be distinguished from what Alfred calls ‘pragmatism’: “For elders rooted in Onkwehonwe philosophies, the lessons of the traditional teachings is that we must be cautious and guard against the error of going beyond being practical to being pragmatic, which happens when we separate the principles by which we govern our lives and our communities from their Onkwehonwe philosophical roots and being to move toward an ethic of efficacy based on calculations of interest and power” (2005: 222).

264 See again AIM co-founder Clyde Bellecourt’s autobiography for a discussion of the origins of AIM in traditional spiritual teachings and practice, specifically chapter two “The Drum within the Walls,” which recounts his meeting with Eddie Benton-Banai and the formation of the “Indian Folklore Group” in 1964 in Stillwater State Prison, which became the original catalyst for the later formation of AIM in 1968. As he writes, “We understood that we couldn’t achieve anything unless we developed a strong traditional spiritual base” (2016: 38).
The process of reconstruction and a committed reorganization of our lives in a personal and collective sense... This book is my contribution to the larger effort to catalyze and galvanize the movements that have already begun among so many out our people” (2005: 34). Critical to the exercise of this principle is thus “honouring and revitalizing the core of our traditional teachings” (Alfred 1999: xii). It is first and foremost a practice of empowerment, a dynamic of (collective) self-development based on specific cultural forms. Like the role of spirituality in the Red Power movement, the transformative power of critical revitalization for the subject is simultaneously a process of exorcism, whereby colonial shame and inferiority are purged through the practice of cultural reconnection. In this regard, Alfred is quite clear about the dialectical relation and reciprocal determination between practice and self-change, stating in Wasáse that the same applies to the politicized subject of struggle: “How you fight determines who you will become when the battle is over, and there is always means-ends consistency at the end of the game” (2005: 23).

Despite arguing for the historical necessity of this process, Alfred is also well aware of the inadequacies of challenging colonialism on the basis of individual cultural self-development alone, a point reminiscent of the pitfalls identified by Adams and Maracle under the notion of cultural nationalism:

The positive effects of this restoration in terms of mental, physical, and emotional health cannot be overstated. But it is not enough. The social ills that persist are proof that cultural revitalization is not complete; nor is it in itself a solution. Politics matters: the imposition of Western governance structures and the denial of indigenous ones continue to have profoundly harmful effects on indigenous people. Land, culture, and government are inseparable in traditional philosophies; each depends on the others, and this means that denial of one aspect precludes recovery for the whole. Without a value system that takes traditional teachings as the basis for government and politics, the recovery will never be complete (Alfred 1999: 2).
In other words, Indigenous cultures, and the values they articulate, including the laws grounded upon them, need to be (re)developed and (further) instituted to the degree they have effective material power in determining the course of generalized social practice and development,\textsuperscript{265} which entails the power of political determination over conditions both internal and external to Indigenous communities. It is thus a question of how cultural revitalization acquires the practical and coercive power of social regulation and the directive power capable of further developing it. Although this degree of social determination attributed to Indigenous culture was implicit in the cultural revitalization of the Red Power era and the experience of Ganienkeh attest, it is given an explicit theorization by Alfred in order to generalize it as an essential condition for decolonization.\textsuperscript{266} The centrality of political resurgence in his theory signifies a radicalization of the early tendency within the Red Power movement and expands the notion and practice of cultural revitalization in politically significant ways.\textsuperscript{267}

\textsuperscript{265} To this end, Alfred writes, “Strengthening traditional institutions means undertaking a conscious revitalization, relearning those systems and rediscovering respect for the values that support them” (1999: 45).

\textsuperscript{266} Perhaps the most lasting impact of this dimension of Alfred’s theory of resurgence is the notion of ‘Indigenous governance,’ which appears throughout Wasáse and is ubiquitous within the discourse of Indigenous politics today. Part of this legacy is the Indigenous Governance Master’s program at the University of Victoria, BC, which Alfred founded and developed between 1999 and 2019 and I attended between 2013 and 2014.

\textsuperscript{267} Leanne Simpson would later propose the notion of ‘radical resurgence’ to foreground the political nature of the project in the face of its depoliticization under neoliberalism and the discourse of reconciliation: “Well, I am using radical to separate the kind of resurgence I’m talking about from other modifiers. In the context of settler colonialism and neo-liberalism, the term \textit{cultural} resurgence, as opposed to \textit{political} resurgence, which refers to a resurgence of story, song, dance, art, language, and culture, is compatible with the reconciliation discourse, the healing industry, or other depoliticized recovery-based narratives. I get worried when I hear the state and its institutions using the term resurgence. Cultural resurgence can take place within the current settler colonial structure of Canada because it is not concerned with dispossession, whereas political resurgence is seen as a direct threat to settler sovereignty. From within Indigenous thought, however, the cultural and the political are joined and inseparable, and they are both generated through place-based practices—practices that require land (2017: 49-50).
Indigenous Nationhood

To foster political resurgence, the concept of nationhood, according to Alfred, is necessary, and is one of the core postulates of his theory of resurgence. This is so not only because it anchors a claim to inherent rights, especially to the land and political authority against settler colonial assimilation and annihilation,\textsuperscript{268} but because it facilitates a practice that safeguards those rights by developing a collective agent who exercises and enforces the power of that authority over social life or in resistance to the forces that seek to prevent it from doing so. As Alfred writes, “Above all, indigenous nationhood is about reconstructing a power base for the assertion of control over Native land and life. This should be the primary objective of Native politics” (1999: 47). However, while nationhood is the political vehicle of cultural revitalization, the foundations of nationhood are to be rebuilt “by recovering a holistic traditional philosophy, reconnecting with our spirituality and culture, and infusing our politics and relationships with traditional values” (Alfred 1999: 35-36). This is not a question of circularity but a dialectic of theory and practice, with each fostering the other in a process of self-development. Significantly, the nation is the political mediation through which the specificity and diversity of Indigenous cultures can be developed as the foundation of institutional development, i.e., the robust or radical notion of culture at the heart of political resurgence.\textsuperscript{269}

\textsuperscript{268} The political function of nationhood is clear when, in an interview with Alfred, Sakej Ward argues that “When you start talking about self-determination and nationhood, you start to create a bigger gap between you and the colonizer. You’re calling that entire colonizing country into question” (2005: 69).

\textsuperscript{269} As Ken Blansett highlights in the American context, Indigenous nationhood and nationalism was a central tenet of the Red Power movement as well: “Native Nationalism inspired the philosophical, ideological, and political origins of the Red Power movement. Native Nationalism is a term that covers a long history of efforts to promote and protect the explicit rights of an Indigenous nation’s governance, lifeway, language, community, land, law, and peoples. It is based firmly on a foundation of Indigenous sovereignty. Native Nationalism is a non-exclusionary term that describes a concept that has always inherently existed in Indigenous nations throughout North America, from ancient times to first contact with European peoples. Tribes have employed Native Nationalism to defend and promote their historic rights to maintain their distinct sovereignty from one another and to uphold their
Co-optation

Moreover, Indigenous resurgence, as formulated by Alfred, is premised on the rejection of co-optation and the practice of colonial reform more broadly.\(^\text{270}\) As he writes in *Peace, Power, and Righteousness*: “The co-optation of our political leadership is a subtle, insidious, undeniable fact, and it has resulted in a collective loss of ability to confront the daily injustices, both petty and profound, of Native life. Politically and economically, all Native people are in a vulnerable position relative to the superior power of the state (Alfred 1999: 73). Admittedly, the degree to which individuals have been co-opted is difficult to assess and no one is unaffected by the social relations of colonialism outside arbitrary self-ascription, to say nothing of the practical contradictions we are embroiled in through the commodity form. However, as far as Alfred is concerned, “cooperation with colonialism is most certainly wrong, especially where leaders are concerned” (Alfred 1999: 73). For this reason, if leaders are to resist promoting the state’s goals at the expense of their nation’s, they need to mitigate the chances of co-optation through a comprehensive understanding of state strategies, which include efforts to influence the composition of community leadership; the practice of divide and conquer; the generation of dependency; and the incorporation of leaders into a state agenda by fostering tension between them and their communities (Alfred 1999: 75-76). As I drew out in chapter two, the threat of

\(^{270}\) According to Raymond Breton, “Co-optation is a process through which the policy orientations of leaders are influenced and their organizational activities channeled. It blends the leader’s interests with those of an external organization. In the process, ethnic leaders and their organizations become active in the state-run interorganizational system; they become participants in the decision-making process as advisors or committee members. By becoming somewhat of an insider the co-opted leader is likely to identify with the organization and its objectives. The leader’s point of view is shaped through the personal ties formed with authorities and functionaries of the external organization” (quoted in Alfred 1999: 74).
co-optation was a major issue to early organizers, such as Malcom Norris and Jim Brady, long before the dawn of Red Power, and continued to be an important topic of analysis and strategy to Red Power activists, such as Howard Adams, well into the 1990s. While these early critics understood this threat as first and foremost a political one that undermines the autonomy of the movement, Alfred identifies the dynamic of co-optation also as a process of subject formation that reinforces the abandonment of Indigenous culture and further negates the social determinative power of Indigenous traditions, especially as the source and guide of institutional development, thereby leaving the social violence of colonialism completely intact. Alfred goes a step further and extends this analysis to the practice of colonial reform more generally. As he writes in Wasáse,

> Large-scale statist solutions like self-government and land claims are not so much lies as they are irrelevant to the root problem. For a long time now, we have been on a quest for governmental power and money; somewhere along the journey from the past to the future, we forgot that our goal was to reconnect with our lands and to preserve our harmonious cultures and respectful ways of life. (Alfred 2005: 31)

However, it is not until the work of Alfred’s student, Glen Coulthard, that these three elements, namely, cooptation, colonial reform, and colonial subject formation, are properly synthesized into a comprehensive theory, which I discuss below.

**Self-Defence**

Further, if Indigenous resurgence is to have any practical substance, it must account for the inevitable confrontation its rejection of co-optation and colonial reform entails. For this reason, the concepts of self-defence and direct action have a prominent place in Alfred’s theory of resurgence. In fact, the viability of nationhood, especially insofar as it mediates the radical cultural development called for by Alfred, has been largely dependent upon a commitment to a
defensive strategy in the post-Constitution Express era, which marked the rise of the colonial politics of recognition. Whereas activists during the Red Power era were mobilizing primarily against their radical exclusion from politics and the generalized suppression of Indigenous rights, Indigenous resurgence and its protagonists have had to contend with the fallout of rejecting colonial reform, which has, above all, forced them to defend their land base as the source of their culture and nationhood from encroaching capitalist forces legitimized through that process. The necessity of developing “a collective capacity for self-defence” (Alfred 2005: 27) as an essential constituent of the theory of resurgence, has thus become imperative in an age defined by a completely different relation to the settler state than the Red Power movement, and was laid bare, first and foremost, by the Siege at Kanehsatâ:ke or the so-called ‘Oka Crisis’ in 1990 and again during the Ts’Peten Standoff (Gustafsen Lake) in 1995. As Alfred puts it in Wasáse, these conflicts “illustrate how immediate the issue of violence and self-defence is to any serious conception of resurgent indigenous power. The logic of contending with state power is inescapable” (2005: 47). As he would later argue, 1990 marked the culmination of the rise of Indigenous nationalism among the Mohawk Nation and

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271 This is illustrated in Alfred’s interview with Sakaj Ward: “TA [Alfred]: So, it’s your belief that indigenous people can train and equip a fighting force to physically confront the state as a means of advancing our cause, which is forcing the colonials to recognize our nationhood and to respect our rights? S [Ward]: Yes it is” (2005: 74). Moreover, since the entrenchment of Aboriginal and Treaty rights in the constitution, injunctions have increasingly and disproportionately granted to settler governments and capitalists. See Pasternak 2023.

272 As Alfred writes in Wasáse, “The so-called ‘Oka Stand-off’ in 1990 saw a surge of indigenous power in the resistance of the Kanien’kehaka communities... The determination and disciplined tactics of the Kahnawake:non—people of Kahnawake... stymied the Canadian army’s efforts to occupy the Kanien’kehaka village, and their ferocious but non-lethal defence of their lands and homes forced the army, trained and equipped only to confront other military forces in conventional armed combat, to withdraw after a prolonged effort... Its lessons were reinforced by the so-called ‘Gustafsen Lake stand-off,’ where a serious paramilitary force was brought to bear by the Canadian state... against a small group of Onkwehonwe who had occupied a sacred ceremonial site and refused to vacate the premises when ordered to do so by the Settler who held legal title to the land” (2005: 46-47).
symbolized the formidable power of resistance to settler state violence and dispossession on the basis an uncompromising sense of sovereignty.

However, whereas Ganienkeh was founded at the apex of the Red Power movement, supported by a political climate of generalized Indigenous assertiveness, the Resistance in 1990 concluded the long stalemate of the 1980s, which had seen the offensive disposition of the Red Power movement supplanted by negotiations between official leaders and the state as the hopeful path of social change. As a result, First Nations were left in a vulnerable and precarious position if they refused certain developments or the terms of state recognition, as the attempt to expand a golf course onto a Mohawk burial ground attests, leaving them no choice but to engage in defensive forms of direct action. To repeat, this was a historical period in which radical Indigenous politics had lost its comprehensive power and momentum to challenge settler colonialism, and communities were forced to defend themselves out of necessity. By the time *Wasáse* was written in 2005, this situation was ubiquitous. For this reason, Alfred feels the need to generalize this strategic imperative: “I believe there is a need for morally grounded defiance and non-violent agitation combined with the development of collective capacity for self-defence, so as to generate within the Settler society a reason and incentive to negotiate constructively in the interest of achieving a respectful coexistence”

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273 For the Mohawk, this had an important effect even if it culminated in the 1990 siege. Alfred writes: “In the mid 1970s the band council initiated a series of pragmatic linkages with other Mohawk communities. For example, the Kahnawake (Caughnawaga), Akwesasne (St Regis) and Kanesatake (Oka) Mohawks submitted a combined land claim to most of the southern part of Quebec in 1974, building on the historic linkages and renewed sense of cooperation between the communities (MCK-BCR 44/74-75). During the 1980s, this spirit was enhanced and transformed into an explicit policy of re-creating institutional linkages according to the Six Nations model — a conscious rejection of the principle enshrined in the Indian Act and Canadian government policy which sought to isolate Indian bands at every level. A prominent band council chief stated in 1981 that the priority issues for the Kahnawake council were unifying the Mohawk nation and resolving Kahnawake’s outstanding land claims (MCK-BCM 04/15/81)” (1995: 136).
(2005: 27). This need for self-defence is incontrovertible, especially if colonial reform is to be rejected outright. However, unlike the mass coalitional politics and internationalism of the Red Power movement, and the explicit socialist politics and working-class solidarity advocated by its most astute proponents, it is unclear how a strategy of self-defence in conjunction with the radicalization of cultural can break or adequately challenge the general atomization of Indigenous nations and communities that sustains settler colonialism as a structural reality, particularly when we account for the fact that even the mass solidarity and mobilization around the Wet’suwet’en struggle of 2020 (a different strategy than Alfred’s) was not able to stop the construction of the CGL pipeline.

For this reason, the imperatives of self-defence, direct action, nationhood, and self-conscious traditionalism, as the essential components of Indigenous resurgence theory and politics as formulated by Alfred, should be recognized as socio-historically determinate responses to the generalized context described above and in the last chapter with its severely restricted social horizon. As mentioned, this period corresponds to the general atomization of the movement and the structural isolation of Indigenous nations, which the forces of neocolonialism and the colonial politics of recognition accomplished to a significant degree. Within this historical period, the relation to the state looms large because a social movement that could displace its centrality is lacking. The compulsion towards a nation-centric politics is thus structurally anchored in the general fragmentation of a broad-based movement and the

\[274\] These assumptions have given rise to a certain form of autonomism in Indigenous politics, especially those associated with resurgence. It is perhaps for this reason that Alfred is drawn to what he calls ‘anarcho-indigenism’ (2005: 45-46). I return to this point below when I discuss Coulthard’s assumptions about alternatives to capitalism.
constraints of colonial social reproduction. However, the failure of large-scale social transformation gave new impetus to the local and nation-based politics of Indigenous Peoples. Thus, Alfred could remark in the early 2000s that, “What is emerging in our communities is a renewed respect for indigenous knowledge and Onkwehonwe ways of thinking” (2005: 24).

In this sense, the severely restricted social horizon that resulted from state mediation and cooptation functioned as the impetus for a radical turn inward, towards the critical reconstruction of and politicization of Indigenous culture, understood in its broadest sense, which has generated significant social conditions for the contemporary struggle, most importantly the uncompromising affirmation of autonomous Indigenous political and legal orders over the diversity of traditional land-bases. Alfred’s brand of resurgence, with its emphasis on cultural particularism and plurality, is therefore determined by a specific socio-historical ground. However, its insistence on agency within the constraints of neocolonialism

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275 Art Manuel provides a clear example of this return to local politics and struggles as a result of this period of generalized demobilization when he writes, “During the period of the drawn-out constitutional negotiations, I returned to Neskonlith to raise my family and work in my own community. At a personal level, a kind of exhaustion had set in. I was in my thirties, I had been involved in the young radical wing of the movement, and now our leadership was telling us, Okay, we’ll talk to the government and take care of things. I think that a similar sense of exhaustion among activists across the country allowed them to cede the terrain to those who believed they could negotiate our way into freedom. I realize that as I tell this story, I have been recounting some of the adventures of my earlier days. And it is easier, as you get older, to romanticize these youthful battles. But it is important to recall that we often lived without places of our own, sleeping with a blanket on the floor of someone’s flat. With not enough to eat. Walking long distances in the cold because there was no money for bus fare. Often facing harassment from the police and in some cases facing arrest for our attempt to protect our land and our rights as members of Indian nations. I know it is the same for the activists today. I have seen this willingness to sacrifice in my children and their friends and in many young people across the country, and I know what it is like. Their commitment is essential to our struggle. As we have found so many times, when the grassroots are demobilized, for whatever reason, our cause does not move forward. It falls back. I understand their commitment, but I also understand their exhaustion and frustration. In my time, I have felt all of these things. And for a period in the 1980s and into the early 1990s, I took my own sabbatical from our movement” (Manuel & Derrickson 2015: 119-120).

276 In fact, he goes so far as to state that, “there certainly exists the moral right and the legal right for governance outside assimilative or co-optive forms, but there is no capacity in our communities and there is no cultural basis on which to generate an effective movement against the further erosion of Onkwehonwe political authority” (Alfred 2005: 29). Although this is certainly an exaggeration that dismisses the practical basis of his own theory, it signals a deep need for the development Indigenous resurgence aims to cultivate.
and the colonial politics of recognition, especially insofar as it rejects the ‘paths of least resistance,’ provides theoretical guidance for the principle of self and national development through struggle, identified below as one of the major tendencies of the Red Power movement, only now on the basis of radicalized notion of Indigenous culture. Thus, while defence is often characterized as merely reactive, Indigenous resurgence identifies it as a radically transformative practice.

The Transformative Power of Defence

Two examples that attest to the transformative power of national defence through direct action are in order. The first is the 1988 Kahnawà:ke resistance to state police incursion, which created important social conditions that would be activated during the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke in 1990. The second refers to Secwepemc resistance to the Sun Peaks ski resort, which also included some who had been involved in the Ts’peten Standoff in 1995, otherwise known as the Gustafsen Lake Standoff. Indigenous resurgence is, of course, not only a practice that takes place under conditions of heightened struggle, but a daily practice undertaken by individuals. Although these social contexts reciprocally determine each other, the explosiveness of major conflicts has a power of generalization and a tendency to reinforce a renewed and intensified practice of resurgence, much like the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke inspired the (re)birth of Warrior Societies.

The 1988 RCMP Raid on Kahnawà:ke

Two years before the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke, on June 1, 1988, more than 200 RCMP officers conducted a massive paramilitary invasion of Kahnawà:ke (Goodleaf 1995: 31). This paramilitary operation was prompted by the accusation that Indigenous people in Kahnawà:ke
were smuggling and selling illegal contraband cigarettes from the US into Canada. During the raid, RCMP kidnapped and held hostage 17 Kahnawakero:non (people of Kahnawà:ke), which they subjected to many hours of harassment and interrogation (Goodleaf 1995: 31). They also confiscated nearly $500,000 in merchandise and documents belonging to the people of Kahnawà:ke (Goodleaf 1995: 31). In response to this incursion, the Rotiskenrahkete immediately blocked the Mercier bridge, one of the major arteries into Montreal, along with other highways in the area. After 29 hours, they dismantled the blockade after promises had been made that Quebec would not prosecute band members. In contrast to the federal and provincial governments who saw this as a law-and-order issue, the Mohawks saw the invasion “as an act of police repression; a violation of [their] jurisdiction and sovereignty... to trade freely within their traditional national territories” (Goodleaf 1995: 35). Despite promises, charges were laid, but the accused refused to attend court, which they perceived as having no jurisdiction over them. “Under the Great Law of Peace, ... ten [band members who were charged] were given political asylum within [Mohawk] territory” (Goodleaf 1995: 35). The rest who had been arrested were released and charges were dropped.

In the aftermath of this invasion tensions remained high. The Mohawks convened at the Longhouse to discuss their general response to the incessant threat from the state: “Functioning within the traditional clan systems, the people assigned themselves to specific tasks according to their skills and expertise” (Goodleaf 1995: 33). These tasks included first aid, cooking, office secretarial work, media and public relations, research, food distribution, security, and many others. Kitchen duty, organized by the women, was especially complex and entailed 24-hour service, with three eight-hour shifts that saw four women working at a time to
ensure three meals a day, including dessert. As Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Donna Goodleaf writes, “I believe that when a nation of people are at war with the state, kitchen duty is a form of political action. It is viewed as an essential support system for the Rotiskennahkete who are putting their lives on the line to defend their people, land, sovereignty, and Nation” (Goodleaf 1995: 34). The Mohawks conducted 24-hour security patrols to ensure no harm fell upon them and to prevent state police from entering the reserve while checking all vehicles passing through (Goodleaf 1995: 36). This mobilized a number of people throughout the community, who carried out the various tasks needed to maintain the patrol. And in defiance of threats from the RCMP to raid again, they continued their business in the cigarette trade, which they understood as a sovereign right and an economic base to sustain that sovereign power (Goodleaf 1995: 36, 41).

Donna Goodleaf highlights the transformative impact this event had on individuals and the community as a whole, especially because the “crisis heightened the political consciousness of the people” (1995: 38). To create a sense of the impact, it is worth quoting at length one of the Warriors involved in the community patrols interviewed by Goodleaf:

One night while out on duty, when we were riding around, the men knew they were putting their lives on the line, they realized the risk they were taking, but they really felt good about themselves... they believed in their sovereignty and they believed that they are true Onkwehonwe... and that people should stick together no matter what. Other people had no right to tell us what to do or to harm other people. Everybody got together. I think it will happen again [less than a few years later in solidarity with Kanesatake]. Whatever harm is coming to Kahnawake, everybody will stick together and they will put their lives rights there on the line because they don’t want anything to happen to their families, their children, their elders, and to the land... there was unity, people united together... people were there to help each other and to comfort each other. (Interviewee quoted in Goodleaf 1995: 38)

Moreover, another interviewee remarked that it was nice “that I heard different guys patrolling and they had Indian music tapes playing loud, like social dances songs. It seemed to have
brought out nationalism in our people like nobody was ashamed to feel Indian” (Interviewee quoted in Goodleaf 1995: 38). The roadblocks were also sites where community members shared stories and became closer, and the security patrols gave many of the youth a sense of purpose and responsibility as Rotiskenhakhete, particularly insofar as they “understood that they were defending the national principles set forth in the Great Law of Peace, their people, their land, and their nation” (Goodleaf 1995: 39), with one observer even remarking that “since they started this patrolling... it’s almost like they have changed their way of life. They have become responsible” (Goodleaf 1995: 39). Others described the freedom, fun, and safety of the reserve while under restricted access, citing the pleasure of seeing only Indigenous people in the community (Goodleaf 1995: 39).

These powerful experiences of self and collective change lead Goodleaf to conclude that “the invasion not only unified the people but also strengthened the solidarity of the people and reinforced the traditional cultural value of collective responsibility which is vital to the existence and survival of the Kanienkehaka” (Goodleaf 1995: 39). In this way, we see a defensive action unleashing a dynamic process of subjective transformation by securing the territorial integrity of the nation, fostering collective national identity and a strong sense of belonging, overthrowing the sense of colonially induced inferiority, and giving a sense of purpose to individuals young and old. Together this development constituted the objective infrastructure of a nationhood under the enforcement of the Great Law of Peace. Significantly, it would create the objective and subjective conditions necessary for one of the most heightened confrontations between Indigenous people and the settler state in history, which would occur less than two years later in the summer of 1990.
The Skwelkwek’welt Protection Centre

With reference to the Grassy Narrows blockade against logging in Anishinaabe territory, first erected in 2002 and ongoing to this day, Lowe and Alfred write that

indications from people involved are that the blockade has served a galvanizing purpose. [Especially insofar as] It is enabling indigenous youth to learn from elders about the importance of land, spirituality, and the sustained connections to their heritage. Though situated within a conflict between the community and outside interests, the blockade has established a fundamentally positive and motivating environment for those involved at the community level (2006: 6).

This is precisely the experience of Secwepemc and Ktunaxa Land Defender Kanahus Manuel. The daughter of Art Manuel and the granddaughter of George Manuel, Kanahus is at the forefront of challenging settler colonialism today. Living on the frontlines of struggle with the Tiny House Warriors, Manuel has devoted her life to Indigenous rights and sovereignty much like her forbears. This commitment was born out of the transformative power of struggle itself. As she writes, “it was the struggle to protect our land, and the people I met in that struggle, that really changed me” (Manuel 2018: 44). In the fight against the construction of the Sun Peaks ski resort on Secwepemc territory from 1999 to 2007, defenders erected several iterations of the Skwelkwek’welt Protection Centre, a reoccupation camp named after the traditional name for “our mountains lands” intended to block development. As Manuel recalls, “I became involved in the Skwelkwek’welt protection group. I joined the camp in the forest to reoccupy our lands and to demand that the destruction of the forest be halted. It was during this period that I had my true education” (Manuel 2017: 44).

The camp was guided by several Elders, including William Jones Ignace a.k.a. Wolverine, who had just gotten out of jail on charges associated with the Gustafsen Lake Standoff in 1995 (Manuel 2017: 44). An advocate of the need to fight “the system with two-hands,” i.e., against pleading for government help while trying to defend your territory and sovereign independence, Wolverine developed a solidaristic strategy of self-provisioning and economic autonomy for Indigenous Peoples engaged in struggle (K. Manuel 2015). Warning others of the dangers of being controlled by the belly, Indigenous Peoples needed to safeguard their own food sources. In 1995 he was at the centre of the Ts’peten Standoff, which is considered by many one of the defining confrontations in the history of Indigenous Peoples and settlers in Canada. As Manuel stated shortly after his death in 2016, “Wolverine’s name is known from the Pine Ridge Oglala Lakota reservation down to Mapuche territory in Chile” and “People everywhere knew him and even if they never met him in person, he touched their hearts and felt something in his determination and fearlessness” (Barrera 2016). Moreover, Manuel claimed that Wolverine was her hero and that “He never talked about anything else other than the revolutionary mind. He had a real, radical way of thinking... That’s his dedication and he was committed to the movement” (Barrera 2016). It was Wolverine’s subjectivity, forged in previous struggle, that characterized the spirit and experience that permeated the Skwelkwek’welt protection camp, where Manuel cut her teeth as a Land Defender.

Moreover, this was a process of cultural reconnection and traditional knowledge transmission. Manuel writes,

The Elders at the camp showed us a land rich in plant foods—roots, berries, plant stalks, mushrooms and lichens—as well as a home to deer, moose, bear, beaver, lynx, cougar and wolverine. Skwelkwek’welt was important to them because it was one of the last places in our territory where we could still hunt for food, gather medicines, and
continue our Secwepemc cultural traditions. This education from the Elders, I came to understand, is an essential part of decolonization: seeking out the knowledge of your people, those who have the knowledge and can pass it on to you. Because the traditions and values of our people still beat in the hearts of our Elders and they are ready to pass them on to any who seek them out. (2018: 44)

The camp, as an institution of struggle, thus functioned as a basis to facilitate a practice of Eldership unmediated by colonial hindrances, whereby Indigenous youth such Manuel could participate in the dynamic social relations of their nation.

Manuel also relates how her interaction at the camp with members of the Native Youth Movement taught her that there was no middle ground in the structurally antagonistic colonial struggle (Manuel 2018: 46). The Native Youth Movement (NYM) is a Warrior Society that was first formed in Winnipeg in 1990 during the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke and later developed a chapter in Vancouver in light of the Ts’Peten Standoff in 1995. Inspired by the Ts’Peten Standoff and the year-long trial that ensued, the Native Youth Movement Vancouver organized against the BC treaty process in the late 1990s in a clear rejection of what Glen Coulthard would later call the politics of recognition. As Lowe and Alfred argue, “the Native Youth Movement (NYM) is an urban-based youth organization of second-generation AIM activists grounded in Red Power traditions, philosophies and tactics” (2006: 6). From information pickets to road blockades to the occupation of government offices, Manuel learned with NYM to reject passivity and to fight back against the forces of dispossession (2017: 45). “But more important than all of this,” writes Manuel, “was the fact that I was able to get in touch with the spiritual life of our people”

278 She writes, “I urge all those who are fighting to decolonize Canada: Fall in and carry out your duties. The sides have already been chosen for you. You will not play mediators on our soil. We are the rivers, both sides of the rivers and all bridges connecting both sides. There is no middle ground. I urge all of our people: Fall in and we will struggle together for our future!” (2018: 46).
(Manuel 2017: 45), an insight whose full significance was conveyed to Manuel through the act of giving birth: “I had my child on the land surrounded by the Elder women who knew the rituals surrounding birth and the songs that were to be sung. I had my child in the forest looking up at the mountains, and bringing new life in the way my people had since time immemorial” (Manuel 2017: 45).

The Skwelkwek’welt protection camp thus constituted a space that synthesized in practice Red Power tactics with the imperatives of resurgence. Internalizing the knowledge of struggle carried by the nation’s Elders, it was, like many defensive actions that make up the history of the Indigenous movement in the 1990s and early 2000s, a transformative space that facilitated the turn inward theorized and valorized as Indigenous resurgence, which would have a decisive impact on the radicalized sense of culture that would come to be at the heart of the contemporary struggle.

Turning Inward

Leanne Simpson’s work is one the most profound expressions of this inward turn. In Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back (2011), Simpson applies the principles of Indigenous resurgence by bringing a systematic analysis to bare on Anishinaabe thought. She credits Alfred for helping her shift away from centering the negativity of resistance in her work and ground it in the positive development of reconstructing Indigenous culture in the radical sense called for by his project. She writes:

Although I have been thinking about resistance for my entire adult life, it was not until I read Taiaiake Alfred's Peace, Power and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto and then Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom, that I began to think about resurgence. Alfred's seminal works immediately spoke to my (o)debwewin literally the sound my heart makes, or "truth," because at the core of his work, he challenges us to reclaim the Indigenous contexts (knowledge, interpretations, values, ethics, processes)
for our political cultures. In doing so, he refocuses our work from trying to transform the
colonial outside into a flourishment of the *Indigenous* inside. We need to rebuild our
culturally inherent philosophical contexts for governance, education, healthcare, and
economy. We need to be able to articulate in a clear manner our visions for the future,
for living as *Indigenous Peoples* in contemporary times. To do so, we need to engage in
*Indigenous* processes, since according to our traditions, the processes of engagement
highly influence the outcome of the engagement itself. We need to do this on our own
terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or
the opinions of Canadians. In essence, we need to not just figure out who we are; we
need to re-establish the processes by which we live who we are within the current
context we find ourselves. (Simpson 2011: 16-17, italics in original)

*Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back* is, first and foremost, an epistemological contribution to this
project of recovery and recreation; but it is also a demonstration of this shift in practice, i.e.,
the book itself is an act and product of resurgence. On the one hand, it is the development of
ideas through Anishinaabe story or theory, drawing the reader into the fundamental premises
of Nishnaabewin or Anishinaabe intelligence\(^2\) as the ground for more concrete analysis\(^3\);
and, on the other, it is the outcome of a practice of knowledge generation anchored in political
and ethical Anishinaabe protocols. By articulating Anishinaabe concepts as the basis of the
struggle for Indigenous self-determination, the very form of Simpson’s work is an expression of
resurgence. What this aspect of Simpson’s work clearly demonstrates is that Indigenous
resurgence is a universal political project grounded on the affirmation and prioritization of the
particularity of Indigenous cultures by making each in their diversity the foundation of that
universal project and critical to the development of its concreteness. In this sense, the universal
significance of cultural particularity is understood as the adequate decolonial response to the

\(^2\) This is how Simpson conceives of the essence of *Dancing On Our Turtle’s Back* in her 2017 book *As We Have

\(^3\) I have discussed this with reference to Simpson’s work in the section of the introduction entitled “Positionality
as Method.”
violence of colonialism which sought to obliterate this epistemological and ontological pluralism as a condition of settler colonial domination.

**Colonial Shame and Resurgence**

Moreover, like Alfred before her, the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke was a practical forerunner to Simpson’s approach to resurgence and the inward turn that characterizes it. As an epistemological and political project grounded on Indigenous thought and practice, Simpson unsurprisingly begins *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back* with a discussion of the colonial function of shame and its necessary rejection as a premise of resurgence. As she writes:

I was recently in the community of Kahnesata:ke for the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the "Oka Crisis." The day was intensely emotional as community members shared their memories and trauma of the crisis and its aftermath. At one point during the clay, Ellen Gabriel, who had been the spokesperson for the People of the Pines during the summer of 1990, stood up and simply said; ‘We have nothing to be ashamed of. We have done nothing wrong.’ Her statement echoed through the crowd of mostly community members; there was not a dry eye in the room. I echo Ellen’s words. We have nothing to be ashamed of, and we have done nothing wrong. (Simpson 2011: 14)

The fact that this statement, spoken by an individual who was at the forefront of the resistance, featured prominently at the commemoration of one of the most important colonial confrontations to date is significant because it not only denounces colonial shame but endorses the affirmation of Indigenous being. The Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke was, above all, a total rebuttal in practice of all that legitimized Indigenous erasure, and the fact that this act inevitably entailed a major disruption to settler society, signified by the fact that it is commonly referred to as the “Oka Crisis,” according to Gabriel, is not to be discredited with shame. As I

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281 In a talk given at Congress at York University in Toronto in June 2023 attended by the author, Ellen Gabriel called for the total rejection of this label in favour of the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke, which centres the fact that it was first and foremost a colonial incursion into Mohawk territory intent on suppressing and eliminated their resistance.
argued in chapter two, colonial shame and inferiority, especially at the personal level, have been combatted and exorcized through struggle as a practice of empowerment and self-transformation. Historical consciousness is also a critical aspect of this development insofar as Indigenous collective identity is central to this process of self-development. For this reason, Simpson writes, "I began to realize that shame can only take hold when we are disconnected from the stories of resistance without our own families and communities. I placed that shame as an insidious and infectious part of the cognitive imperialism that was aimed at convincing us that we were a weak and defeated people, and that there was no point in resisting and resurging" (Simpson 2011: 14). Thus, by the time Simpson writes As We Have Always Done in 2017, she is unequivocal that colonial shame structures the colonized subject in such a way that they are not only repress their Indigenous identity but become actively committed to abandoning Indigenous culture and social practice or what Glen Coulthard calls grounded normativity, a concept that I discuss below, which refers to a radical social practice based on and regulated by Indigenous cosmology, values, ethics, law, knowledge and institutions. Against colonial shame, the Resistance at Kanehsatâ:ke signified a comprehensive refusal of

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282 Colonial shame is essentially the self-reflection of the colonial ideological construction that Indigenous Peoples have absolutely nothing to contribute to the general course of social development and, worse, that their subjectivity intrinsically has no legitimate status to participate in that process.

283 As Simpson writes: "We are made to feel ashamed for being Indigenous. This shame leads to disconnection from the practices that give us meaning. It elicits pain. To cope with that pain, either we turn inward, amplifying and cycling messages of shame leading to self-harm, drugs, alcohol abuse, or depression and anxiety; or we turn our shame outward into aggression and violence. We are then made to feel ashamed – dysfunctional, wrong, ‘damaged goods’ – because of how we cope with the pain of shame and violence, which in turn amplifies and perpetuates shame. We also shame ourselves over not knowing our languages, not protecting our lands well enough, not organizing effectively enough, for always being on the losing end of colonial violence. Shame cages resurgence in a very basic way because it prevents us from acting. Radical resurgent organizing, then, must generate the escape routes out of shame and into grounded normativity" (2017: 187-188).
Indigenous inferiorization that rejuvenated many in their personal struggles with it. As such, it was also an historical reaffirmation of the Red Power movement’s activation of Indigenous pride as a material force within the struggle against settler colonial society. Simpson’s theoretical intervention, premised as it is on and influenced by the historically momentous events of 1990, conceives the struggle against colonial shame in dialectical relation to resurgence, with the latter progressively developing through the negation of the former. In doing so, she radicalizes the turn inward of Indigenous resurgence and helps consolidate it as the appropriate path to decolonization given that it directly challenges the subject formation of colonial dehumanization and colonial reform, which I analysis more thoroughly in my discussion of Coulthard below. As a result, her work further validates and empowers the movements and organizations that support the project of resurgence most consistently, above all, as I have been arguing, those premised on a rejection of settler state recognition and colonial reform in practice, which institute social relations based on the qualitative determinations of resurgence most directly and immediately.

Resurgence and Activism

Furthermore, Simpson is well aware that this dialectic concretely unfolds under settler colonial conditions primarily through struggle. As she points out in a 2016 CBC Unreserved interview, “many young people first connect to culture through activism because they recognize their responsibility as protectors of the environment” (CBC Radio 2016). As I showed above with the examples of the 1988 Mohawk response the RCMP invasion and the Secwepemc

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284 The transformative impact on both social and person levels in well documented in the edited collection by L. Simpson and K. Ladner entitled This is an Honour Song: Twenty Years since the Blockades. ARP: Winnipeg, 2010.
Skwelkwek’welt protection camp, activism, especially in its land-based form, is often facilitated by mediations, such as camps, that constitute a practical basis for the social relations that allow Indigenous Peoples to encounter and develop themselves through their traditional knowledge, traditions, and laws. They are sites of struggle where political and cultural education negate colonial shame in the process of developing subjects that can and do uphold Indigenous law by exercising their sovereignty in the face of colonial capitalist incursion. As social mediations, they facilitate the turn inward in practice by negating or mitigating the forces that would otherwise undermine the social intimacy engendered by them and the general determination of that practice by Indigenous culture.

Everyday Acts of Resurgence

Although social contexts of heightened struggle where the antagonism between colonizer and colonized is elevated are critical in the process of resurgence, especially in helping to generalize its validity as a politics of decolonization, the responses of Indigenous Peoples to these moments remain premised on the daily activity and efforts of multitudes of individuals in different spheres of social practice, both inside dominant institutions and semi-autonomous spaces. Although Simpson will later insist more adamantly on the development of radically autonomous practices of resurgence in light of the impasse of colonial reform, a point I return to below, through her work, she has helped radicalize the sense of culture at the heart of Indigenous resurgence theory and politics in a more general way. In this sense, the significance of everyday acts of resurgence, as Corntassel puts it,\(^{285}\) is foundational to the project of

\(^{285}\) Drawing on Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel’s notion of “everyday practices of renewal and responsibilities within native communities” (Simpson 2017: 192) or “everyday acts of resurgence” (Corntassel and Scow 2017),
resurgence as Simpson understands it. After all, it was the daily practice of the Elders of Long Lake #58 First Nation that gave Simpson her “first glimpse of Nishnaabeg brilliance – theory, methodology, story, ethics, values all enmeshed in Nishnaabeg politics and encircled by the profound influence of the world” (2017: 16). The call to restore and develop Indigenous culture as the basis of Indigenous social life is thus always a general one across Simpson’s work:

we [Indigenous peoples] need to engage in Indigenous processes, since according to our traditions, the processes of engagement highly influence the outcome of the engagement itself. We need to do this on our own terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians... If this approach does nothing else to shift the current state of affairs... it will ground our peoples in their own cultures and teachings that provide the ultimate antidote to colonialism, which I believe is what Indigenous intellectuals and theorists have been encouraging us to do all along... Transforming ourselves, our communities and our nations is ultimately the first step in transforming our relationship with the state. (2011: 17)

There are two final points here worth noting. On the one hand, the protagonistic politics of Indigenous resurgence, which emphasizes the cultural transformation of Indigenous individuals through practice and a politics of grassroots struggle, is understood as essential to transcending the structural issue of colonialism (its ultimate antidote). On the other hand, it implies some degree of autonomy vis-à-vis state in terms of mediation (on our terms) and temporality (the first step). These issues will become more explicit in Simpson’s later work, which I discuss later in the chapter, and the work of Audra Simpson and Glen Coulthard.

Simpson highlights the importance of “grounding ourselves and our nations in everyday place-based practices of resurgence” (2017: 192).
Ellen Gabriel and the Rejection of Colonial Heteropatriarchy

Finally, there is another way in which the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke has decisively shaped Simpson’s contributions to resurgence worth noting here. In 2016, she stated on CBC’s Unreserved the following:

I remember very clearly seeing Ellen Gabriel on TV at the Oka Crisis in the summer of 1990 and that to me was sort of my political education and a reawakening... To see a young woman so articulate and so embodying Mohawk ethics and governance and being so strong, I think I woke up. (CBC Radio 2016)

The practical struggle of the Mohawks, which affirmed Mohawk sovereignty and enforced Mohawk law, allowed Simpson to break through the ideological and internal barriers of colonial inhibition and created important conditions for her self-affirmation and sense of purpose as an Indigenous person, inspiring her to undertake a life devoted to (re)developing the traditions of her people; and Alfred’s theoretical inspiration, itself premised on the struggles both internal and external to the Mohawk nation, helped consolidate Simpson’s self-understand into a self-conscious political project. However, the fact that Indigenous resistance was expressed first and foremost through the leadership of Mohawk women like Gabriel not only resonated with Simpson as an Anishinaabekwe but demonstrated in practice that anticolonialism was not merely the negation of colonial supremacy but equally the suppression of patriarchal domination within Indigenous nations. As she would later argue, heteropatriarchy is “a foundational dispossession force because it is a direct attack on Indigenous bodies as political orders, thought, agency, self-determination, and freedom” (Simpson 2017: 52, italics in original). Gabriel’s example thus provided Simpson with an important practical foundation for an active principle of Indigenous resurgence: “I think the first time I saw kwe as method in action was during the summer of 1990, when I watched Mohawk activist from Kanehsatà:ke
Ellen Gabriel on the nightly news act as spokesperson for her people during the ‘Oka Crisis’” (Simpson 2017: 33). For Simpson, kwe, which literally translates as woman in English, is not merely a gender identity but the practice of rupturing colonial gender violence through the positive affirmation of Anishinaabe gender identity, which entails a radically egalitarian spectrum of difference irreducible to hierarchical dichotomies. More broadly, kwe is the practice (hence method) of affirmation through refusal: “At its core, kwe as method is about refusal. It is about refusing colonial domination, refusing heteropatriarchy, and refusing to be tamed by whiteness or the academy... Within Nishnaabewin [or Anishinaabe intelligence] refusal is an appropriate response to oppression, and within this context it is always generative; that is, it is always the living alternative” (Simpson 2017: 33). Thus, because resurgence is only a concrete project, the dynamic of cultural revitalization must be premised on a critique of the concreteness of settler colonial violence, in order not to reproduce the social relations that sustain it within Indigenous national development. For this reason, heteropatriarchy must be understood as an explicit colonial target in the development of resurgence and a condition of its universal validity as a political project. Like Alfred’s work, this critical principle of resurgence, which Simpson conceives more broadly as ‘generative refusal’ (more on this below), drew its inspiration from struggles like the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke and was generalized by her as the theory and practice of Indigenous resurgence. Whereas Alfred generalized other aspects of the Mohawk struggle, such self-conscious traditionalism and self-defence, as an Indigenous woman, Simpson elevates the embodied critique and affirmation of Gabriel and the other women leaders of the Mohawk nation during the resistance to a foundational premise of Indigenous
resurgence, thereby contributing to the development of its concrete universality as a critical project of reconstruction.

The turn “inward” towards the critical reconstruction of Indigenous forms of knowledge signaled by Simpson’s body of work has contributed to identifying, valorizing, and developing the epistemological, ontological, and ethical presuppositions that undergird many of the political and social practices that are institutionalized and consciously fostered on the frontlines of anticolonial struggle, above all, in the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp. In this way, it has been an important factor in critical subjective developments which the analysis conducted on the basis of dual dispossession further elaborates in relation to the objective material conditions of their institutionalization under specific circumstances.

Moreover, the radical subjectivity developed through Indigenous resurgence, with Simpson among its most important contributors, is a significant objective historical development in itself, one that, as many of its proponents argue is necessary in challenging and overcoming settler colonialism. However, its emergence did not organically evolve from the Red Power movement, as Alfred suggests. Rather, as I argued in the last chapter, it is a major development based on a social and political impasse exacerbated in the post-Kanehsatà:ke era. The social ground of the turn to the “Indigenous inside” is thus a particular development that has largely resulted from the colonial counter-struggle from above. This social impasse created the structural pressure that prompted a radicalization and resurgence of Indigenous culture, which would eventually determine future developments in the broader Indigenous movement in a more self-conscious and programmatic fashion. However, in order to recover the
comprehensive social horizon of Indigenous self-determination, one of the major mediations of this impasse, the colonial politics of recognition, would have to be first theorized, systematically analyzed and demystified as a condition of the further development and universalization of Indigenous resurgence.

The Colonial Politics of Recognition

A member of the Yellowknives Dene, Glen Coulthard has developed the most comprehensive formulation of the contemporary paradigm of colonial reform, which he has theorized in response to non-Indigenous philosopher Charles Taylor’s liberal conception as the ‘colonial politics of recognition’. According to Coulthard, the reproduction of settler colonialism in Canada is largely premised on a strategy of colonial reform that operates on the basis of a paradigm of recognition. He defines this strategy as follows: The politics of recognition refers to the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state. Although these models tend to vary in both theory and practice, most call for the delegation of land, capital, and political power from the state to Indigenous communities through a combination of land claim settlements, economic initiatives, and self-government agreements. (Coulthard 2014: 3)

Whereas in the led up to the 1969 White Paper policy, the government began to revitalize Indigenous organizations to the extent required to create the institutions that could legitimize it, which, subsequently, became extremely urgent in the face of its universal rejection, the colonial politics of recognition was grounded on the recognition of Indigenous rights by the highest courts, which decreed the necessity of a political compromise on governmental and jurisdictional authority in principle. However, this imperative would not initially give rise to a

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286 For a comprehensive analysis of Taylor’s theory, see Coulthard (2007).
hegemonic practice of colonial reform, faltering as it did through political resistance from above (most evidently in the failed Constitutional Conferences of the 1980s) and continuing to necessitate Indigenous grassroots direct action as a force to advance recognition or to simply defend Indigenous lands from unwanted transformations. For instance, although the modern land claims policy was introduced in 1973 after the SSC Calder decision forced the Trudeau government to revise its anachronistic position vis-à-vis Indigenous land rights, the state continued to drag the incremental gains of the Indigenous movement into the fold of enforced inertia. George Manuel could thus remark at the time that

> It is no coincidence that the Liberal government moved from a complete unwillingness to discuss the matter [Aboriginal Title] to this position [modern land claims policy] during the occupation of Wounded Knee by members of the Oglala Sioux Nation, who were demanding nothing more than a fulfilment of their treaty rights and a congressional investigation into the corruption of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. (Manuel & Posluns 2019: 228)

In other words, the threat of a similar armed occupation in Canada, i.e., militant direct action undertaken by grassroots Indigenous activists, was most likely a factor shaping the state’s response to move on land claims. At the time, the Red Power movement was still conditioning the general social practice of colonialism and the margins of its reform. In fact, according to Coulthard, “it was not until the tumultuous climate of Red Power activism in the 1960s and 70s that policies geared toward the recognition and so-called ‘reconciliation’ of Native land and political grievances with state sovereignty began to appear” (2014: 4).
The Dene Struggle for Recognition

In this climate, the Dene sought a proactive solution to the impending issues facing their land base and way of life in the mid-1970s. Coulthard’s theory of colonial reform is based on his nation’s struggle to have their self-determining power recognized at a time when the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project was threatening their territory. Although the ensuing Berger Inquiry would ultimately rule in 1977 that a moratorium was in order until all outstanding land claims had been settled, the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories (later organized as Dene Nation in 1978) took up the ideology of the Fourth World with its radical notion of culture and the influence of African socialism, especially as practiced in Tanzania, as the basis of a political project of autonomous national and social development (Coulthard 2014: 68-69).

Given political expression in the 1975 Dene Declaration, their vision called for a robust form of autonomy over social practice within the nation-state of Canada under the principle of mutual self-determination (Coulthard 2014: 69). These parameters led the Dene Nation, as Coulthard writes, to consider a range of political economic alternatives to the mainstream capitalist system, including decentralized, consensus-oriented political bodies (Coulthard 2014: 171), communal production for communal needs in the form of a combination of worker-managed enterprise, Indigenous cooperatives, local manufacturing and tradition productive activities, such as hunting and fishing, in the hopes of fostering a democratic form of self-sufficiency (Coulthard 2014: 68, 172). In other words, the principles, values, and social practices of Dene culture were to be institutionalized as a fully-fledged mode of social metabolic control or mixed
economy constituting a unique mode of production sustaining Dene autonomy. Despite receiving praise from many unions and the NDP’s radical wing as a form of ‘strident socialism,’ the Canadian state refused to seriously entertain these proposals (three different visions), with many politicians and pundits denouncing them as misguided left-wing intrusions (Coulthard 2014: 69).

Theoretical Developments on the Basis of the Dene Struggle

In spite of state refusal, it was these political efforts to practically institute a robust form of Dene culture, extending as it would have to the full range of social conditions affecting Indigenous self-determination, in and against the state’s terms of recognition, that led Coulthard to formulate two important concepts undergirding his more generalized critique of the colonial politics of recognition. On the one hand, the notion of Indigenous culture as a “form of life,” and, on the other, the notion of “grounded normativity.”288 The former, drawing on Marx’s concept of a mode of production,289 entailed a comprehensive sense of culture which

288 I return to this concept in more detail under the section entitled “Grounded Normativity” below.
289 Coulthard’s rationale for adopting and repurposing Marx’s category in found in the following passage: “In its broadest articulation, ‘mode of production’ can be said to encompass two interrelated social processes: the resources, technologies, and labor that a people deploy to produce what they need to materially sustain themselves over time, and the forms of thought, behavior, and social relationships that both condition and are themselves conditioned by these productive forces. As the sum of these two interrelated processes, a ‘mode of production’ can be interpreted, as Marx himself often did, as analogous to a way or ‘mode of life.’ A ‘mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of individuals,’ write Marx and Engels in The German Ideology. ‘Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part.’ I suggest that this broad understanding of mode of production as a mode of life accurately reflects what constituted ‘culture’ in the sense that the Dene deployed the term, and which our claims for cultural recognition sought to secure through the negotiation of a land claim. Simply stated, in the three proposals examined below, our demand for recognition sought to protect the ‘intricately interconnected social totality’ of a distinct mode of life; a life on/with the land that stressed individual autonomy, collective responsibility, nonhierarchical authority, communal land tenure, and mutual aid, and which sustained us ‘economically, spiritually, socially and politically.’ As George Barnaby wrote in 1976: ‘The land claim is our fight to gain recognition as a different group of people—with our own way of seeing things, our own values, our own lifestyle, our own laws. . . [It is a fight for self-determination using our own system with which we have survived till now’” (2014: 65, italics in original).
equally signified political power and material production, as it did artistic, spiritual, and intellectual developments. In other words, it signified a robust and politically safeguarded form of social practice. Grounded normativity, on the other hand, is conceived on a higher level of abstraction and pertains to a radical concept of land that situates human practice within a “system of reciprocal relations and obligations,” (Coulthard 2014: 13) and equally refers to the ethics and legal regulation that practically institutionalizes and sustains this consciousness and its obligations. Coulthard defines “this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice” as “the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with humans and nonhuman others over time” (Coulthard 2014: 13). “This,” Coulthard argues, “is precisely the understanding of land that grounded our critique of colonialism and capitalism in the 1970s and early 1980s” (2014: 61). Both of these notions, anchored as they were in a history of organized resistance, permitted a theoretical vantage point of exteriority vis-à-vis the domestication of Indigenous nationhood, sovereignty and culture via the land claims process, judging the latter as a practical subordination and truncation of the Dene form of life and the structural distortion of grounded normativity or, as Leanne Simpson would come to conceive it, its strangulation (Simpson 2017: 24).

Structural Parameters of the Colonial Politics of Recognition

These notions allowed Coulthard to identify the structural parameters within which Indigenous self-determination is ultimately permitted to be exercised; namely, as a form of autonomy that

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290 I argue below that strangulation denotes a form of capitalist subsumption as well as a positive conception of the exercise of grounded normativity under major social constraints.
is politically, legally and, above all, practically subordinated to the settler state’s authority and constrained by the social determinations and imperatives of capital or what the Dene called in 1975 the “externally initiated economy” (Coulthard 2014: 69). This is how he puts it regarding the Dene Nation’s land claim of the mid 1970s:

for the state, recognizing and accommodating ‘the cultural’ through the negotiation of land claims would not involve the recognition of alternative Indigenous economies and forms of political authority...; instead, the state insisted that any institutionalized accommodation of Indigenous cultural difference be reconcilable with one political formation – namely, colonial sovereignty – and one mode of production – namely, capitalism. (Coulthard 2014: 66, italics in original)

These are the objective and socially un-circumventable constraints that prescribe what Coulthard elsewhere generalizes drawing on Fanon as ‘master-sanctioned forms of recognition’ (Coulthard 2014: 26), which he will generalize as the content and limits of the ‘colonial politics of recognition.’ According to this, settler colonial domination is sustained by a political practice that concedes a degree of relative but subordinate political and jurisdictional autonomy, while maintaining effective control over Indigenous lands and circumscribing Indigenous social practice in a manner that does not only secure the generality of capitalist development on and through those lands, but subjects Indigenous governments and their constituents to the premises and imperatives of capital, i.e., its social relations of production and exchange,

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291 As Coulthard writes: “the federal suggested that while land claims would provide ‘native groups’ with financial compensation for any infringement of their property rights, Canada’s ‘national interest’ dictated that the Crown ‘maintain its ownership and control of the potentially significant non-renewable resources in the Northwest Territories’... [and] declared that business would continue unabated... Land claims, according to the Crown, would better enable the Dene to ‘play a part’ in this process, but in no way would they provide the economic and political infrastructure necessary to block or effectively cultivate a nonexploitative alternative to it” (2014: 72-73).
292 In a similar way, but through different means, Shiri Pasternak points our attention to the history of land alienation, whereby colonialism does not necessarily imply Indigenous land dispossession but “the perpetuation of a set of exhaustive administrative regimes that undermine, erase, and choke out the exercise of Indigenous jurisdiction, rendering the people immaterial to any effective participation in land management, even as they continue to reside upon and assert responsibility for their lands” (2017: 25-26).
which they must pursue actively as both a condition of their general social reproduction as well as their distinct cultural identity as Indigenous Peoples. For this reason, Coulthard conceives this process, drawing on Marx, as a form of primitive accumulation insofar as it consolidates capitalist social relations within Indigenous nations. The reproduction of settler colonialism via recognition thus entails a form of capitalist subsumption, whereby the radical relationality of Indigenous forms of life and grounded normativity is practically separated into distinct spheres of social practice (economy, politics, culture, etc.) that are hierarchically structured into and reconciled with a whole premised on the general social conditions of capital accumulation.\textsuperscript{293} In other words, Coulthard’s critique of the land claims process reveals the inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations in challenging colonial rule through the principal channels of reform won through struggle, and identifies the function of the colonial politics of recognition in securing that practical integrity. His critique thus foregrounds the macro-socio-political parameters which the theory of dual dispossession responds to, not by proposing an alternative constellation of political economic organization whereby Indigenous nationhood and self-determination could potentially be recognized if the political will were forthcoming, but by unpacking the tendencies explicit and implicit in the movement that rejects the colonial politics of recognition (and colonial dependency more broadly) in practice, i.e., the Land Back

\textsuperscript{293} Coulthard writes: “Although primitive accumulation no longer appears to require the openly violent dispossession of Indigenous communities and their entire land and resource base, it does demand that both remain open for exploitation and capitalist development” (2014: 77). This separation is grounded on the practical premises of capital, a concept developed by István Mészáros. According to Mészáros, the fundamental practical premises of the capital system, which are a set of interconnected determinations, include: the radical divorce of the means and material of production from living labour; the assignment of all the important directing and decision-making functions in the established productive and reproductive order to the personifications of capital; the regulation of the social metabolic interchange between human beings and nature and among the individuals themselves on the basis of capital’s second order mediations; and the determination and management of the all-embracing political command structure of society in the form of the capitalist state, under the mystifying primacy of the material base (Mészáros 2010: 419-420).
movement. Despite this difference, Coulthard’s critique has been essential to consolidating the movement and its politics.

Generalization of Dene Experience to the Colonial Politics of Recognition

The Dene experience, based as it was on a demand for the recognition of a robust sense of culture and radical openness to realizing it in practice, allowed Coulthard to grasp the objective parameters of what he could then generalize as the structural conditions undergirding but also reproduced through the practice of a much broader trend. The Dene struggle was the practical premise for this theoretical insight because they did not at all accept these premises as the basis of social life and continued to struggle to find a compromise that respected their culture and distinctness as a people and nation. As a result, Coulthard could extend this analysis to a general theory that identified the same imperatives across a range of practices, including self-government agreements, Impact Benefit Agreements, and educational acts under the broader category of the colonial politics of recognition. Above all, Coulthard’s critique of liberal recognition politics identified the essence of this practice as colonial and thus provided a comprehensive theory from which co-optation could be avoided in practice or, at the very least, strategies of engagement could be supplemented with other tactics because of this understanding. In this sense, not only does his analysis help bring together a number of disparate phenomena under the umbrella of a generalized theory that foregrounds the structural nature of the problem, but it also helps consolidate the politics of organizations and movements who reject the state’s terms of engagement. As such, it affirms one of the main tendencies of the Red Power movement: the rejection of co-optation and the need to secure the autonomy of the movement. In contrast to its earlier expressions, this tendency is not only
based on prudence in the face of state enticement but is now elevated to a new degree of complexity and generality, diagnosing as it does a systemic problem at the heart of the practice of colonial reform as it had evolved in the ensuing three decades or so, and thus providing insights for alternative strategies to emerge in practice. However, there is another crucial dimension to this process of recognition-based colonial reform; namely, the internalization of its goals and results as the desired aims of Indigenous Peoples. Thus, for the politics of recognition to be properly identified as colonial, another level of demystification was necessary.

Internalization and Identification: The Colonized Subject

The colonial politics of recognition is a significant theoretical contribution in itself, one that concisely captures the strategy of nearly half a century of colonial counter-struggle from above,294 from the 1973 Liberal government’s Comprehensive Land Claims Policy to the hype around First Nations ownership equity in major capitalist enterprises today,295 in a manner that facilitates timely political education.296 However, as a necessary corollary of the structural

294 The colonial politics of recognition can be understood as part of a larger strategy of what Barker et al. call a ‘social movement from above,’ which they define as “as the development of a collective project by dominant groups, consisting of skilled activities centred on a rationality that seek to maintain or modify a dominant structure of entrenched needs and capacities, in ways that aim to reproduce and/or extend the hegemonic position of dominant groups within a given social formation” (2013: 66). This becomes clearer when we consider what they identify as strategies deployed by such movements: “Defensive strategies tend to be deployed in the context of substantial challenges from below, and can involve either accommodation or repression. A defensive strategy focused on accommodation typically revolves around granting concessions to the claims and demands of movements from below with the aim of appeasing and defusing a force that might otherwise threaten the existing social formation [e.g., the colonial politics of recognition]. A key example would be the mid-twentieth-century reforms implemented in much of Western Europe in response to workers’ movements. As this example suggests, such strategies often involve playing on existing differences within movements from below: alliances with social democrats against more radical Left actors, or coopting leaderships into positions of relative power while demobilising the movement” (Barker et al. 2013: 71).


296 Leanne Simpson writes about Coulthard’s efforts to disseminate his critique in the following passage: “I have been fortunate to witness Glen sharing Red Skin, White Masks with his people in his homeland, Chief Drygeese Territory of the Akaicho region of Denendeh, and I have seen a glimpse of what I’ve come to know as a long
determinations of colonial reform, Coulthard also provides an analysis of the subjective conditions of its reproduction, which draws heavily on the work of Frantz Fanon. This appeal to Fanon, according to Coulthard, is anchored in the Red Power movement and is the subject of his recent work, which, admittedly, has only been published in smaller articles to date. In this work Coulthard refers to what he calls “cross-fertilizations” or theoretical and ideological exchange between Indigenous Peoples in Canada and other social movements, especially international ones, through which Indigenous Peoples developed their self-understanding and aspirations at the time.\(^{297}\) According to Coulthard, it is this practice, anchored as it was (and continues to be) in the coalitional politics and struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, that justifies the prominent use of Frantz Fanon in his theory.

In his theory of colonial subject formation, Coulthard draws on Fanon’s earlier politically oriented psychiatric work in *Black Skin, White Masks*. In that book, Fanon essentially argued that

> in situations where colonial rule does not depend solely on the exercise of state violence, its reproduction instead rests on the ability to entice Indigenous peoples to identify, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profound asymmetrical and nonreciprocal forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the settler state and society. (Coulthard 2014: 25 italics in original)\(^{298}\)

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practice of Dene internationalism. I’ve seen Glen explain this work, a rather difficult and challenging work at that, in a language and a manner that are fundamentally Dene—gentle and tough, careful and expansive, and riding a current of profound love—to uncles and cousins, elders, hunters, Dene theorists, political leaders from the 1970s, and current chiefs and councils, and to my favorite, a group of young Dene feminists. I’ve watched his people connect with the concepts of recognition and resentment and the pitfalls of reconciliation, and even Marx and Fanon, as they live out as best they can the grounded normativity he articulates in *Red Skin, White Masks* in a deeply meaningful way. I’ve watched these non-Indigenous theories resonant within their grounded normativity” (2017: 64).

\(^{297}\) See for instance, Coulthard’s article “Once were Maoists: Third World Currents in Fourth World Anti-Colonialism, Vancouver, 1967-1975” (2021).

\(^{298}\) Elsewhere Coulthard writes that for Fanon, “the long-term stability of a colonial system of governance relies as much on the ‘internalization’ of the forms of racist recognition imposed or bestowed on the Indigenous population by the colonial state and society as it does on brute force,” (Coulthard 2014: 31).
For Fanon, he continues, “recognition [in the context of colonialism] is not posited as a source of freedom and dignity for the colonized, but rather as the field of power through which colonial relations are produced and maintained” (Coulthard 2014: 17). Recognizing that Canadian colonialism in Canada has been marked by a general trend since the late 1960s and early 1970s towards non-violent reform, Coulthard extends this analysis to his critique of the politics of recognition as the paradigm of this practice in Canada.

The processes of identification and interiorization that sustain the force of recognition as a practice of colonial reproduction are multiple. As such, they are not exclusively the result of the colonial state’s agency, but the long-term and general effects of colonial racism and heteropatriarchy, producing in the colonized, following Fanon’s terminology, a number of psycho-affective (Coulthard 2014: 26), racist (Coulthard 2014: 41), attitudinal (Coulthard 2014: 32) and ideological attachments (Coulthard 2014: 18). Together, these elements make up the phenomenon of ‘internalized colonialism,’ whereby Indigenous Peoples identify with their inferiority while idealizing the social forces that construct and project it upon them. In the process, they come to accept the unidirectional political possibilities of their domination as the only legitimate basis of social life and development. In other words, it produces a form of subjectivity, i.e., what Fanon calls the ‘colonized subject,’ by virtue of the “production of the specific modes of colonial thought, desire, and behavior that implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued

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299 For instance, the shame internalized through the Indian Residential Schools and Day Schools can be understood in light of this analysis as a material force in colonial social reproduction (Coulthard 2014: 41-42). Coulthard writes that “as a result of this process, these images, along with the structural relations with which they are entwined, come to be recognized (or at least endured) as more or less natural” (2014: 32).
domination” (2014: 16). In light of this, Coulthard argues that the colonized subject is a critical condition of the effectiveness of the colonial politics of recognition and the sustainability of settler colonialism more broadly. As he puts it,

> the practices of dispossession central to the maintenance of settler-colonialism in liberal democratic contexts like Canada rely as much on the *productive* character of colonial power as it does on the coercive authority of the settler state. Seen from this angle, settler-colonialism should not be seen as deriving its reproductive force solely from its strictly repressive or violent features, but rather from its ability to produce *forms of life* that make settler-colonialism’s constitutive hierarchies seem natural. (Coulthard 2014: 152, italics in original)

Thus, while the practice of the politics of recognition relies on these internalized forms of identification, as a non-violent process of colonial reform, it is equally a practice of subject-formation.

**The Politics of Recognition as a Practice of Colonial Subject Formation**

With the advent of major colonial reform in the early 1970s, a new practice of colonial subject formation therefore also began to develop, which Coulthard theorizes as essential to the colonial politics of recognition. The latter is, according to Coulthard, a productive process that shapes the subjectivity of those engaged in it, a form of human activity that generates both a set of circumstances - colonial reform - and subjects - the ‘colonized subject’ or Indigenous people who are committed “to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination” (Coulthard 2014: 16). He captures the general colonial impact of this practice upon the subject when he writes that the “gradual displacement of questions of Indigenous sovereignty and alternative political economies by narrowly conceived cultural claims... is better understood as an effect of primitive accumulation” via the hegemonization

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300 That is, the formation and/or consolidation of capitalist social relations through colonial dispossession.
of the liberal discourse of recognition” (Coulthard 2014: 20). The politics of recognition thus not only imposes the terms of colonial reform but is equally a practice that transforms them by remoulding the subjectivity of Indigenous subjects by forging new ideological commitments through the abandonment of previous ones. The result is an Indigenous subject that no longer embodies a sovereign sense of self or a commitment to socioeconomic order beyond capital, nor, it should be stated, is critical of this abandonment or the truncated forms through which their political distinction is recognized. By actively endorsing the terms of settler state solutions to the colonial conflict, the intrinsic antagonism of the colonial relation recedes from the discourse of justice. In the process, there is a qualitative transformation that takes place, whereby the trend that that negated inferiority through the politicization of pride and a rejection of colonial subordination is inverted into one forging an active disposition among Indigenous Peoples that validates colonial practice. Coulthard captures the insidious nature of this process, when writes with reference to the more specific practice of the land claims process:

Aside from the inevitable debt trap that land claims lock many First Nations into, which can in turn compel these communities to open up their settlement lands to exploitation as an economic solution, it appears that the land-claims process itself has also served to subtly shape how Indigenous peoples now think and act in relation to the land. As Paul Nadasdy suggests in his work with the Kluane First Nation in the Yukon, ‘to engage in the process of negotiating a land-claim agreement, First Nations people must translate their complex reciprocal relationship with the land into the equally complex but very different language of property.’ I would suggest that one of the negative effects of this power-laden process of discursive translation has been a reorientation of the meaning of self-determination for many (but not all) Indigenous people in the North; a reorientation of Indigenous struggle from one that was once deeply informed by the land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations (grounded normativity), which in turn informed our critique of capitalism in the period examined above, to a struggle that is now increasingly for land, understood now as material resource to be exploited in the capital accumulation process. (Coulthard 2014: 77-78).
Thus, a transformation in the subject becomes critical for a transformation in the object. As the example above suggests, this change pertains especially to the land itself, the foundational premise of settler colonialism and the basis of Indigenous sovereignty (Wolfe 2006). The subjective internalization of capitalist property, whether as landed property or means of production, or commodification more generally, does not so much create this understanding as undermine the tension between it and the conception of land as a ‘system of reciprocal relations and obligations.’ As Coulthard mentions above, material compulsion, such as debt or financial domination, is also at play in coercing the process of subject formation. However, the terms of negotiation, in which subjective dispositions are forged, are critical to practically forging the unification of the subject and object conducive to colonial domination. Most significantly, however, is the implicit claim that the politics of recognition is a practice of struggle from above insofar as it seeks to undermine the competing ideological understanding of self-determination that developed during the Red Power movement, which, in the work of individuals like Adams and Maracle, politicized settler society as a totality. Thus, subject formation is an important product of the colonial politics of recognition insofar as it undermines the basis for politicizing settler colonialism as an historically transient and therefore transcendable social structure.

Moreover, Coulthard also refers to the effects the colonial politics of recognition has had on fracturing the Indigenous movement by consolidating a segment of activists who are exclusively committed to pursuing justice through dominant state-sanctioned channels.

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Drawing on Alfred’s work, he writes: “the dominance of the legal approach to self-determination has over time helped to produce a class of Aboriginal ‘citizens’ whose rights and identities have become defined more in relation to the colonial state and its legal apparatus than the history and traditions of Indigenous nations themselves” (Coulthard 2014: 42). The alienation of traditional Indigenous sources of inherent rights is thus another colonial product of this practice. Moreover, this stratification is further entrenched as colonial identification and ideological indoctrination are developed through colonially facilitated socioeconomic practice, as Coulthard writes, echoing Adams’ theory of neocolonialism, that “strategies that have sought independence via capitalist economic development have already facilitated the creation of an emergent Aboriginal bourgeoisie whose thirst for profit has come to outweigh their ancestral obligations to the land and to others” (2014: 42), and therefore have more to lose in the face of those whose politics of decolonization would challenge the social ground of their activity.

However, the most decisive product of the colonial politics of recognition in sustaining the structural asymmetry of settler colonial domination is what Adams, following many neocolonial analyses of the time, called “Aboriginal comprador regimes” (1995: 2).\footnote{Coulthard discusses this phenomenon mainly through Fanon’s work throughout \textit{Red Skin, White Masks}.} This phenomenon consists of colonized elites, who make up an Indigenous political class, as the primary Indigenous interlocutors at the heart of the politics of recognition.\footnote{For an excellent analysis of this development in the context of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, see \textit{Paper Tomahawks: from Red Power to Red Tape} by Burke (1976).} A major part of what is at stake in these processes of identity formation is thus the development of a layer of Indigenous elites who identify with the pursuit colonial reform. However, they do so not merely by complying with the state, but, critically, by alienating the grassroots from politics in a way that
does not abandon colonial reform (or revolution) to the potential danger of their self-activity, but simultaneously prevents their participation from rupturing the parameters of the politics of recognition. As the needs of this class become more mediated and integrated with state interest, the intervention of others is experienced as a direct threat, which serves the purpose of sustaining settler colonialism. This is akin to Adams’ theory of the constitutional strategy insofar as Indigenous protagonism is eliminated or suppressed as a critical condition of containing the force of decolonization within the parameters of colonial reform. Concomitantly, the recognition of other social movements and struggles as intrinsic to liberating the social conditions of Indigenous self-determination is eliminated from the process of ‘decolonization,’ which becomes entrenched in a vertical relation between the settler state and specific bodies of Indigenous people, whether as individual First Nations or conglomerates of communities. In this sense, the colonial politics of recognition functions to undermine or stymy the tendency developed in the Red Power movement to cultivate self-transformation and empowerment through self-activity and struggle, especially the subjective disposition towards mass coalitional and revolutionary politics and the objective ties with other organizations and struggles as it was cultivated in individuals like Fred Kelly and collectives like NARP through their interaction with Black radical political organizations, which I described in chapter two.

In effect, the colonial politics of recognition functions to obliterate or at the very least ideologically conceal the inherent antagonism at the heart of the colonial relation by cultivating

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304 Recent movements such as Idle No More and the Wet’suwet’en uprising in 2020 suggest their ability to do so is effectively waning. Coulthard was already arguing in 2014 that Idle No More represented the end of the colonial politics of recognition or, at the very least, a major crisis in their legitimacy. As he writes, “I suggest that Idle No More is an indication of the ultimate failure of this approach to reconciliation. After forty years the subtle lure of Canada’s vacuous gestures of accommodation have begun to lose their political sway” (Coulthard 2014: 163).
subjects who no longer contest the issue in terms that politicize the comprehensive and constitutional violence of settler colonialism or understand decolonization in terms of radical social transformation. Rather, they come to advocate the self-development of Indigenous Peoples and nations not only under the aegis of the settler state’s sovereignty but as also compatible with the rule of capital. This identity formation is not merely the result of state-sanctioned activity in the abstract, but a deliberate practice of counter-struggle from above. If those shaped by it no longer affirm their sovereignty on the whole or refuse to contest the capitalist mode of production in principle, then there is evidently a historicity of the colonized subject and one that is not unidirectional at that.

The Subject Formation of Resurgence

It is precisely because different practices develop subjects differently that Coulthard advocates a ‘resurgent politics of recognition’ in response to the practice of colonial subject formation. “[P]remised on self-actualization, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices” (Coulthard 2014: 24), this strategy is developed on the basis of Fanon’s insistence on the revolutionary significance of self-affirmative action and conceived as a direct counterstrategy to the colonial politics of recognition. Coulthard writes that

For Fanon it is through struggle and conflict... that imperial subjects come to be rid of the ‘arsenal of complexes’ driven into the core of their being through the colonial process... struggle serves as the mediating force through which the colonized come to shed their colonial identities... In contexts where recognition is conferred without struggle or conflict, this fundamental self-transformation... cannot occurs... the structure of domination is modified, but the subject position of the colonized remains unchanged... [and] Indigenous society will tend to come to see the forms of structurally limited and constrained recognition conferred to them by their colonial ‘masters’ as their own. (2014: 38-39)
The mediation of self-development through struggle or protagonism is thus for Fanon indispensable to a full transcendence of colonialism. Coulthard characterizes this as “a process of strategic desubjectification” (2014: 38-39), that is, a practice of negating the forms of subjectivity internalized by the colonized that facilitate the subject as an active agent in the reproduction of the colonial social order. Given the history of Indigenous dehumanization under settler colonialism, Coulthard argues, the negative or non-identarian process of desubjectification is accomplished through a positive practice of empowerment that centres Indigenous identity, culture, values, knowledge, and social practice more broadly. In this way, Coulthard conceives of the project of Indigenous resurgence as theorized by Alfred and developed by Simpson as a direct response to the colonial politics of recognition, and as the basis of a social force capable of pushing the balance of power in a direction that fosters Indigenous national liberation. The practice of self-development on the basis of the radicalized notion of culture at the heart of resurgence is thus understood to be an essential political development in challenging the structure of settler colonial society, especially as it is consolidated and perpetuated through colonial reform, and, accordingly, fosters the Red Power tendency of self-transformative practice in and against the socio-historically determinate shift in the aftermath of its defeat. As such, it foregrounds and valorizes that tendency as well as efforts to move beyond the comprehensive social fragmentation characteristic of the age through a retrenchment of cultural particularism and nation-centric development.

Against the Political Instrumentalization of Indigenous Culture

In light of this, we can understand why Coulthard does not follow Fanon entirely, critiquing his view of Indigenous culture, which has no intrinsic value beyond its function in revolutionary
struggle as “a foundation for collective action” (Coulthard 2014: 146) and “an important means of temporarily breaking the colonized free from the interpellative stranglehold of colonial misrecognition” (Coulthard 2014: 148). Coulthard rejects this conception of Indigenous culture, concluding that “Fanon’s overly instrumental view of the relationship between culture and decolonization renders his theory inadequate as a framework for understanding contemporary Indigenous struggles for self-determination. Indigenous Peoples tend to view their resurgent practices of cultural self-recognition and empowerment as permanent features of our decolonial political projects, not transitional ones” (Coulthard 2014: 23, italics in original).305

At first glance, this appears to be a thoroughly ahistorical and non-dialectical claim based on a transhistorical and quasi-metaphysical conception of Indigenous culture. However, the historical ground of this claim is the structurally compelled nation-centric position from which Indigenous Peoples had been forced to defend themselves within the fracturing of the social conditions of Indigenous sovereignty and the politics of resurgence initially proposed by Alfred as a solution to this predicament. Its absoluteness is thus the moral equivalent of the antagonistic force of settler colonialism during the consolidation of colonial recognition politics, which managed to repress the broader social conditions of Indigenous national liberation. Within the determinate context of this social horizon, if we recall Alfred’s prescription, Indigenous culture is not only inseparable from nationalism and vice versa as a matter of preservation and development, but its radicalization is understood as the theoretical and practical answer to the impasse of cooptation and colonial reform. The viability of Indigenous

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305 Elsewhere Coulthard writes, “This view simply does not provide much insight into either what motivates Indigenous resistance to settler colonization or into the cultural foundations upon which Indigenous noncolonial alternatives might be constructed” (2014: 154).
self-determination during this period was, and to a large extent remains, premised on the
defensive identification between nation and culture with the latter, as the form of the nation,
taking on the primary force of determination within the movement insofar as it remained about
radical decolonization grounded on Indigenous historical agency. Thus, regardless of
Coulthard’s intention, there is a socially determinate basis for his claim about the permanence
or primacy of Indigenous culture within the negative process of decolonization and the positive
project of creating a liberated society. However, Coulthard’s position is evidently not the
uncritical reflection of this social situation but represents a qualitative development insofar as
his critique and rejection of the colonial politics of recognition bolsters the project of
resurgence and the radicalization of Indigenous culture in a way that legitimizes its
development on the grounds of an alternative practical basis from the terms and practices of
colonial recognition and reform. The ‘permanence’ of Indigenous culture thus not only alludes
to the necessity of reversing the systematic violence and damage of settler colonial
development and the cultivation of dignified Indigenous subjects with a cultural richness
capable of shaping the course of generalized social development, but the possibility of
practically sustaining the project of Indigenous resurgence beyond settler recognition and
dependence. As such, Coulthard’s work consolidates in theory the terms of decolonization and
form of struggle, such as the kind embodied in the organizational forms of the Land Back
movement, which dual dispossession attempts to develop further.

Furthermore, many have discussed the limitations of transposing Fanon’s theory of
decolonization from the social conditions of an anti-colonial war of liberation to the context of
Indigenous struggles in Canada, and, as mentioned, Coulthard draws the line regarding the value of Indigenous culture in the both the process of decolonization and its role in any sustainable alternative to settler colonial society. To understand his departure from Fanon on this question, it is more fruitful to relate Coulthard’s critique to the same problem as it is found in Adams’ work, for which the latter’s notion of radical nationalism provides a solution.

In his analysis of “Indigenous Marxisms,” David Myer Temin identifies an instrumental conception within Adams’ theory of Indigenous nationalism and self-determination, much like Coulthard does regarding Fanon’s treatment of Indigenous culture, which for Fanon is intimately connected to the political function of nationalism in combatting colonial rule, given that it provides the essential content for consolidating the dignity of the colonized and the unity of their nation in anticolonial opposition to the colonizer. Here is how Temin puts it:

While Adams is understandably inconsistent on this point given the daunting necessity of transforming the entire social formation and the need for an elusive coalitional politics to accomplish this, he ends up ascribing to Indigenous nationalism a more transitional and momentary role that is at least ideologically subsumed by the terms of a more narrowly construed “class” politics. In turn, the core’s white working class could eventually reimagine their interests and conception of oppression itself in a more universalistic light and, in doing so, align themselves outside of the Canadian settler state with the global majority, that is, those oppressed nationalities that have served as the internal and external extractive peripheries to the imperial core. In this way, Adams leaves some room for the idea that Indigenous self-determination is more a temporary way station on the journey to a socialist polity than a permanent, existential, and structurally transformative reclaiming and/or reconstruction of individual and collective selfhood from colonial domination. (2023: 171, italics in original)

Although there is a textual basis for this assessment, it is premised on an understanding of Adams’ theory of radical nationalism that is deprived of its methodological essence and

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306 For example, already in the 1960s, Jim Brady was critical of this adoption. Although he admired Fanon, he viewed “armed struggles in Africa as having little to offer the colonized of Canada” (Dobbin 1981: 234).
307 This is not surprising given that Adams was highly influenced by Fanon.
significance as a category of Indigenous protagonistic politics, which is grounded in the
dialectical development of self-liberation, which Adams understood as the foundational
premise of decolonization. Contrary to Temin’s reading, on the basis of radical nationalism,
class struggle for Adams is a critical dimension of the concrete development of Indigenous
nationalism, not its logical supersession or subsumption. In light of this, it is simply not clear
how Indigenous people engaged in protagonistic politics can simply jettison their nationalism
“once” it has facilitated vital transformations, e.g., developed new languages, needs, capacities,
self-understanding, skills, knowledges, relations, responsibilities, values, institutions,
mediations, political commitments, etc.,

and achieved a relative but significant degree of
self-determination in favour of a homogenous (and therefore abstract) form of class politics.

Only a logical subject, i.e., an abstract, de-historicized, and socially indeterminate subject, i.e., a
non-subject, can move through deductive stages of social transformation. This framing
depoliticizes the conditions of subjective transformation and externalizes protagonism from
Adams’ theory of radical nationalism, its essential premise. Moreover, the notion of self-
determination as a temporary way station is another ahistorical framing that removes self-
determination from its concrete dialectical interdependence with nationalism, culture, class
struggle, and broader social (revolutionary) conditions, a form of relationality that Adams
understood as irreducible even in the face of its ideological and practical suppression, precisely

308 In what socio-historically determinate sense culture can be jettisoned is quite incomprehensible if we keep in
mind the concrete development of the subject through practice and protagonism. Claims such as these remain on
the level of a one-sided dialect (non-dialectic) that is focused solely on the object and effaces the subject, the
latter being subsumed by logic deduction between purely formal categories. In what historically determinate sense
permanent is to be understood here is unclear, especially in light of my previous discussion about the historicity
of the second product of both domination and struggle.

309 Temin refers to this horizon as a “a more singular democratic revolutionary process” (2023: 143).
because his concept of radical nationalism internalized these relations as a condition of its
development. Socialism for Adams was the horizon within which a robust form of Indigenous
self-determination could be exercised. In fact, Adams understood Indigenous nationalism and
national liberation as forms of class struggle, if not intrinsically then certainly at a qualitative
moment in their development. To simply project Indigenous self-determination and nationalism
as logical moments in the historical development of decolonization is to lose the internal
relation between Indigenous self-determination, nationalism, and class struggle, which,
according to the principle of radical nationalism, and the politics of protagonism it presupposes,
is grounded on concrete historical development. Furthermore, it separates the major practical
tendencies within the Red Power movement from Adams’ theoretical intervention, especially
the self-transformative function of struggle in and against the antagonism of colonial society
and the rigorous dialectic of theory and practice it fostered in the consciousness and practice of
the colonized, which notions such as radical nationalism were deliberate attempts to radicalize
and generalize at the time. Thus, whatever Adams himself actually believed about the
ultimately fate of Indigenous self-determination and nationalism, itself quite an arbitrary
exercise, the consistent application of radical nationalism, as a methodology of struggle,
contradicts the assumption that class politics would necessarily supplant Indigenous
nationalism within a revolutionary political practice. Rather, as a concept rigorously grounded
in the dialectic of theory and practice and one that brings to full theoretical fruition the
principle and tendency of self-transformation through struggle as it was evolving during the Red
Power era, radical nationalism is thoroughly incompatible with a speculative philosophy of
history or abstract theory of social transformation, in which protagonism plays no essential role.

There is an important sense, however, in which the political implications and power of Indigenous culture are underdeveloped by Adams, which, admittedly, is what Coulthard ascribes permanence to in opposition to Fanon, not nationhood or self-determination, but the two are deeply entwined in Adams’ work. It is true that in *Prison of Grass* Adams appears more concerned about the degradation of cultural revitalization into the impasse of cultural nationalism, which he understands as a politics divorced from a progressive ideology of nationalism, than the positive and robust development of culture central to Indigenous resurgence. This is because Adams, like Alfred later, understood the inseparability of culture and nationalism if the former was to avoid this pitfall. As Adams writes in a passage highly reminiscent of Fanon, “Nationalism will usher in a new humanism and harmony that will set native culture in motion once again and open the doors to new cultural developments. This revival of culture will not be refined or sophisticated but it will be vigorous. Formalism and ritualism will be abandoned in favor of new forms of expression that will depict struggle, freedom, vitality, and hope” (1989: 169). It is thus clear that in Adams’ work nationalism is far more theoretically developed than Indigenous culture, which is primarily defined in highly indeterminate and abstract terms, and takes political precedence over it. However, this had more to do with the social conditions of struggle at the time, which, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were being developed by a politics that was, or at least struggling to become,

310 In another passage, Adams talks about a “reorganized culture that would be in harmony with liberation” (1989: 170).
internationalist, predicated on an explicit notion of totality, and thus revolutionary. From the vantage point of these concrete developments and possibilities, Adams could not help conceiving (radical) nationalism from the outset in dialectical relation to the social totality. In this sense, not only were the broader conditions of Indigenous national liberation emphasized in Adams’ theory, including the general class struggle as well as Black and Third World liberation, but their coherent development appeared feasible in practice, despite some extremely challenging social obstacles. Thus, the (hasty) theoretical priority ascribed to the broader social conditions functioned to some extent to relativize Indigenous culture, nationhood and self-determination, especially in retrospect. Paradoxically, it was the failure of social revolution, i.e., its aggressive repression, that created the conditions in which Indigenous culture could be radically developed practically and theoretically, an historical experience and imperative that Adams did not face at the time of his major theoretical contributions.

In Coulthard, by contrast, a strong dialectical relation between culture and nationalism is affirmed, but the social struggles that politicized and challenged the social totality in the 1960s have been largely supplanted by the state-mediated colonial politics of recognition, which overdetermines the social conditions of Indigenous national self-determination, and is thus the primary target of his critique. Despite this overwhelming social impasse instituted by the politics of colonial reform, the turn to nation-centric politics, first in the constitutional crisis

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311 But this relativization is problematized if one restores the priority Adams attributes to protagonism, which Temin astoundingly does not explore at all in his otherwise insightful, albeit one-sided analysis. Although protagonism would seem to further relativize Indigenous culture given its emphasis on development, its dynamic is a dialectical one and transcendence is not tantamount to abandonment but supersession, retention, and enrichment, i.e., a qualitative development grounded on an internalization of comprehensive determinations.
of the 1980s and then galvanized by the Resistance at Kanehsatà:ke, fostered a qualitative change in the value of culture, which the theory and politics of Indigenous resurgence has sought to enhance politically as the solution to this impasse. In other words, like class struggle for Adams, the political prioritization of culture or the inward turn of Indigenous resurgence is an historical imperative grounded on the concrete development of Indigenous nationalism in and against socio-historically determinant constraints. It is also in this sense that the concept of dual dispossession is developed under current historical circumstances. Thus, Coulthard’s proposal of a resurgent politics of recognition (or the politics of Indigenous resurgence) as a response to the objective impasse of the colonial politics of recognition, especially as a process of subject formation, is, above all, a call for the restoration of protagonism or self-liberatory praxis as a condition of Indigenous national liberation under socio-historically specific circumstances. The priority of radical cultural revitalization is the primary mediation through which the dynamic of protagonism unfolds, and the accompanying (abstract) ascription of ‘permanence’ or intrinsic value to it is thus grounded on a methodology of struggle akin to Adams’ notion of radical nationalism. The politics of decolonization and national liberation must therefore reject the instrumentalization of Indigenous culture ascribed to it by Fanon out of concrete historic necessity312 as further development of the major tendencies of the Red Power movement identified throughout earlier in this dissertation in and against settler state recognition.

312 As Mészáros writes, “In Marx’s dialectical conception the unfolding phases of historical necessity are envisioned as in due course necessarily ‘vanishing necessity,’ and the social structures—described by him as ‘constantly evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals’—are subject to the deepest historical qualifications” (2011: 28). It is in this qualified sense that I conceive historical necessity.
Grounded Normativity

It is on the basis of these historical and methodological grounds that Coulthard develops the notion of grounded normativity as a socio-historically determinate category capable of articulating the so-called ‘permanence’ of Indigenous culture and the struggles, both historical and contemporary, that have defended the relation to land so central to it. It also represents a theoretical response to the imperative of resurgence to radicalize Indigenous culture by conceiving the latter not just as an aspect of social life but a paradigm of productive activity.\(^{313}\)

In this manner, grounded normativity refers not only to a subjective disposition, epistemology, or practical attitude, but a dynamic synthesis of subjective and objective conditions that articulate Indigenous forms of the practical interchange between society and nature, radically challenging the settler colonial capitalist demarcation between these two dialectical poles.\(^{314}\)

Safeguarding and developing this dynamic, according to Coulthard, is a necessary condition for decolonization and the basis of his claim for the permanence of Indigenous culture, which I understand as a development under specific sociohistorical circumstance, given that it entails political and legal obligations. By generalizing the self-understanding of Indigenous Peoples in

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\(^{313}\) Leanne Simpson captures this sense of grounded normativity when she writes the following: “This is the foundation of our self-determination and freedom—producing everything we need in our families within grounded normativity within a network of caring and sharing. We made our food, our clothes, our homes. We made our education system, our health care system, our political system. We made technology and infrastructure and the systems of ethics that governed its use. We made our social services, our communication system, our histories, literatures, and art. We didn’t just control our means of production, we lived embedded in a network of humans and nonhumans that were made up of only producers” (2017: 80).

\(^{314}\) As a dynamic of productive activity, it therefore always has two essential products: the land understood as a dynamic reciprocal system and the subjects that embody, protect, and develop this relational ethical practice. The perpetual radicalization of this consciousness and the subjective capacity for its practical realization are critical dimensions of the subjective product of grounded normativity. Through the work of Coulthard and Simpson, and the traditional teachings upon which their theories are developed, we are taught that the subjective product of resurgence is not only a thriving people whose culture defines the form of their practical self-development as nations, but also a social understanding of the land that establishes both limits and possibilities for social practice, i.e., grounded normativity or what could also be interpreted as Indigenous law.
struggle, as the practical basis of the concept, the notion of grounded normativity provides Coulthard with the theoretical means to subsume Fanon’s insights into the transformative value of cultural self-affirmation without undermining its intrinsic value by reducing it to the instrumental value of an expedient. Coulthard is thereby able to elevate this relational concept of land to an irreducible horizon of anti- and decolonial practice. Thus, a period of relative but general political stagnation has fostered the radicalization of Indigenous culture through important concepts, such as grounded normativity, which contribute to foregrounding and developing the contradictions of exercising Indigenous self-determination under current socio-historical circumstances and therefore the possibility of transcending those contradictions. As I show in the next chapter, the settler state’s notion of ‘critical infrastructure’ has been appropriated by Land Defenders such as Fred Huson of the Unist’ot’en Camp as a means to defend and uphold the Yintah or, using Coulthard’s terminology, Wet’suwet’en grounded normativity, under conditions of intensifying encroachment, which the theory of dual dispossession aims to further elucidate by providing insight into the objective conditions sustaining that practice and struggle.

Nevertheless, the social impasse of the colonial politics of recognition, drawing as it does fragmented Indigenous nations, primarily in the form of First Nation bands, into its orbit as the arena of (de)colonial justice, has largely confined the protagonism of a resurgent politics of recognition, which upholds the conditions of grounded normativity, to isolated and localized land-based, nation-specific, struggles.\textsuperscript{315} This is further emphasized by the significance of the

\textsuperscript{315} It is also for this reason, as I will argue in my concluding chapter, that Indigenous resurgence has often presumed an unmediated notion of land as the basis for its theory.
blockade, which is marked by a tension, according to Coulthard, between its reactive and ‘prefigurative’ significance.\textsuperscript{316} In the face of political and social atomization, this tension is overly determined by its defensive character given that the sustainability of grounded normativity under current settler colonial conditions first and foremost depends upon it. Most significantly, the lopsidedness of this determination affects the way Coulthard frames the possibility of social transformation, which is branded by the centripetal, inward-turning compulsion grounded on defensive, nation-centric politics and strategy:

The question I want to explore here, albeit very briefly, is this: how might we begin to scale up these often localized, resurgent land-based direct actions to produce a more general transformation in the colonial economy? Said slightly differently, how might we move beyond a resurgent Indigenous politics that seeks to inhibit the destructive effects of capital to one that strives to create Indigenous alternatives to it? (2014: 170, italics in original)

The issue here is largely conceived in nation-centric terms (for historic reasons) and concerns the magnification of unique and particular cultural practices developed in specific states of defence. In this sense, it is primarily framed as an issue of expanding a particular to the level of a universal, and not yet explicitly in terms of the qualitative transformation of the particular as it integrates and confronts the social conditions of its own development, as it was with Adams’ notion of radical nationalism. Yet, Coulthard’s questions have the merit of foregrounding two major issues confronting the contemporary Indigenous movement in a very clear way. On the

\textsuperscript{316} Coulthard writes, “Forms of Indigenous resistance, such as blockading and other explicitly disruptive oppositional practices, are indeed reactive in the ways that some have critiqued, but they are also very important. Through these actions we physically say “no” to the degradation of our communities and to exploitation of the lands upon which we depend. But they also have ingrained within in them a resounding “yes”: they are the affirmative enactment of another modality of being, a different way of relating to and with the world. In the case of blockades like the one erected by the Anishinaabe people of Grassy Narrows in northwest Ontario, which has been in existence since 2002, they become a way of life, another form of community. They embody through praxis our ancestral obligations to protect the lands that are core to who we are as Indigenous peoples” (2014: 169).
one hand, the issue of scale and the question of building and maximizing leverage in the struggle for Indigenous rights recognition and national liberation, which activists like George Manuel and his son Art have insisted on as essential to the struggle in the face of a recalcitrant and antagonistic settler state and recent developments in the broader Indigenous movement, such as Idle No More and the Wet’suwet’en uprising of 2020, have responded to in increasingly effective ways; and, on the other, the issue of a qualitative transformation in the general mediation of social productive activity, which is currently dominated by the determinations and imperatives of the capital system. Coulthard’s emphasis on Indigenous resurgence and grounded normativity can clearly contribute to developing the problem of augmenting resistance and enhancing leverage; but his emphasis on “Indigenous alternatives” to the capital system seems to suggest a vision of autonomous developments, whose proliferation, presumably on the basis of the plurality inherent in the concept of grounded normativity, will somehow cause a qualitative transformation in the general social conditions of existence dominated by capital simply by their quantitative expansion.

In this respect, his assumptions about the practice of Indigenous resurgence by grassroots people and organizations resemble Alfred’s notion of anarcho-indigenism, which identifies commonalities between Indigenous and anarchist worldviews and strategies, such as “a rejection of alliances with legalized systems of oppression, non-participation in the institutions that structure the colonial relationship, and a belief in bringing about change through direct action, physical resistance, and confrontations with state power” (2005: 46). While these commonalities are undoubtedly true in some ways, the practices that ground them have primarily been discussed in abstraction from major social determinations, not least the
compulsions of capital, which has given rise to a form of ‘autonomism’ within Critical Indigenous Studies and activist discourse. This position simply does not recognize the manner in which autonomous developments themselves are embedded in the social determinations of capital, however mediated the latter may be in these practices, and emerge in and against major social constraints. As a result, significant relations that constitute their practice internally are externalized, and their margin of action and social power continues to be restricted by social determinations that remain invisible to them in theory and practice. In Coulthard’s work, this can be traced back, as I mentioned in chapter one, to his focus on colonial dispossession at the expense of Indigenous proletarianization, instead of grasping their codetermination. As I will demonstrate in the final chapter, the concept of dual dispossession responds directly to this problem, and its application to (semi) autonomous spaces of struggle and resistance valorized by Coulthard and Indigenous resurgence scholars shows that the logic of enhancing their power quantitatively, whether in terms of scale or their effective ability to enforce their interests, implies the need for a qualitative transformation in their political orientation towards capital by identifying and politicizing their conditions of possibility. In this sense, developing the ‘prefigurative’ aspects of blockade as (semi) autonomous spaces of resurgence beyond their preponderantly defensive nature is a dialectical question of discovering their practical presupposition and consciously fostering the logic of their development in and against the social constraints thereby discovered. This, above all, assumes that spaces of resurgent social practice are relatively autonomous, given that they emerge within but do not transcend the social constraints of capital. As a result, their development

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317 See e.g., the recent publication of Anarcho-Indigenism edited by Dupuis-Déri and Pillet (2023).
must confront the generality of the latter as a condition of its realization, which, as I will argue, this is a critical condition of sustaining and upholding grounded normativity. In this respect, dual dispossession is a notion conceived on the basis of the methodology similar to Adams’ radical nationalism.

**Idle No More**

Despite the limitations of his assumptions, Coulthard’s concern with the generalization of resurgence draws his politics into a productive tension. This is due, above all, to the fact that *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) appeared shortly after the Idle No More movement of 2012 to 2013, and its conclusion represents Coulthard’s efforts to deal directly with some of the more progressive tendencies within it. This produces a critical tension within his work that points beyond the isolated nation-based politics of the post-Kanehsatâ:ke era, while retaining its important developments. In other words, Idle No More created the practical conditions for going beyond this fragmentation and (re)developing the universal horizon of the Indigenous struggle that had been marginalized by the colonial politics of recognition.

Idle No More was essentially a mass mobilization led by Indigenous Peoples in response to a major threat to Indigenous lands, self-determination, and treaty rights. However, unlike the frontal assault of the White Paper in the late 1960s, with its explicit effort to eliminate Indigenous legal and political difference, the Harper government’s colonial strategy took on a more subtle and insidious form by couching detrimental changes within the cryptic pages of a massive piece of legislation. Nonetheless, it sparked a resistance on a scale not seen since the late 1960s. This response was characterized by the mass mobilization of Indigenous Peoples, both reserve-based and urban, as well as large sections of the settler population, including a
considerable amount of international solidarity, and was largely coordinated via social media, which allowed for rapid organization and spontaneous action. The tactics deployed during the movement varied and diversified over the course of its development, ranging from flash mob round dances in shopping malls; mass demonstrations in front of Parliament Hill; a hunger strike carried out by Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat First Nation; and highway, border crossing, and railroad blockades, most notably the one at Aamjiwnaang First Nation located next to Canada’s ‘chemical valley.’ The movement was also fraught with tensions among Indigenous political representatives as well as between the grassroots and formal Indigenous organizations, which many ascribe, along with the lack of a coordinated deployment of economically disruptive tactics, to the movement’s derailment and demise. Its character as a properly mass movement was signalled by the fact that it prompted a major consolidation of state surveillance and security forces during its ascendancy, which would become the norm going forward for policing Indigenous movements.

Coulthard’s concluding theses, conceived as “lessons from Idle No More,” respond to a number of issues raised by the movement. For instance, Coulthard argues for the need to develop a strategy that deploys tactics of direct action in a coordinated fashion to disrupt the circulation of capital thereby creating the leverage needed to secure conditions of self-determination. He also advocates for the Indigenous struggle to become explicitly anti-capitalist, above all, by applying traditional concepts of Indigenous governance “to the realm

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318 Coulthard clearly sees that Indigenous self and national development will continue to be circumscribed by the determinations and imperatives of capital if the latter is not eradicated as the dominant mode of social reproduction when he writes, “Without such a massive transformation in the political economy of contemporary settler-colonialism, any efforts to rebuild our nations will remain parasitic on capitalism, and thus on the perpetual exploitation of our lands and labor” (2014: 171); but as his proposals remain grounded on assumptions that
of the economy” (Coulthard 2014: 171), which, according to Coulthard, following the Dene example of the 1970s, could be implemented in the form of a mix-economy that practically institutes and substantiates core Indigenous values (Coulthard 2014: 171-72). Further, he recognizes the limitations of the relatively isolated and defensive efforts to maintain space to create alternative social relations to settler colonial capitalism (Coulthard 2014: 173). However, thanks to Idle No More and the antifracking resistance at Elsipogtog in late 2013, he sees the necessity and possibility of mass solidarity across the colonial divide and social movements as a condition of effectively supplanting the capital system and realizing the type of alternative political economy envisioned under the primacy of Indigenous governance. This postulate, accordingly, equally presupposes the transcendence of the urban/reserve dichotomy as spaces of Indigenous sovereignty and the strategic importance of their mutual development in the social transformation of settler colonialism (Coulthard 2014: 176). He also highlights how Idle No More demonstrated the critical importance of Indigenous women as leaders of the struggle to protect Indigenous lands and lifeways and the imperative of eradicating colonial gender violence from all spheres of Indigenous social practice, as a condition of the radical development of Indigenous values, ethics, and laws, which Indigenous resurgence postulates as its foundation (Coulthard 2014: 177). Lastly, Coulthard argues for the need to transcend the nation-state primarily in terms of decolonial strategy given the pitfalls of the colonial politics of recognition and its impact on Indigenous subjects, causing them to abandon their own legal and political traditions as critical sources of emancipation (2014: 179). This latter thesis is largely capitalist production can be instrumentalized for Indigenous ends if properly determined by principles of traditional Indigenous governance.
developed in idealist terms throughout *Red Skin, White Masks* as the imperative to ‘turn away’ from the settler state’s legal and political apparatus and engage in Indigenous resurgence. Before I discuss this last point, it is important to remark that these five theses, as developed on the basis of the practice of Idle No More, signify an important tension in Coulthard’s work; namely, a tension between the concentric force and inward turn of nation-centric and localized parameters of Indigenous resurgence, with its emphasis on particularity, the micro-scale, cultural specificity, and often prioritizing land-based practice in the sense of traditional forms of production, and the thrust to integrate broader social conditions within the dynamic of resurgence as essential to the development of its fundamental premises, which the impulse of Idle No More towards a general mass movement began to articulate in practice, however incompletely. In other words, Coulthard’s theses indicate the gradual integration of the larger social determinants affecting the exercise Indigenous self-determination, the possibility of national liberation and enfolding of radical cultural revitalization and development into the theory of Indigenous resurgence. Most significantly of all, Idle No More and its theoretical reflection in these five theses, pointed to an emergent tendency within the broader Indigenous movement away from defensive tactics towards offensive and active forms of practical intervention. Together, these practical and theoretical insights point to an answer of how to ‘turn away,’ which fuses the tendencies of the Red Power era with the post-Kanehsatà:ke era, namely, self-development through struggle, the politicization of pride, the necessity of direct action, and self-empowerment through resurgence, with a comprehensive critique of cooptation in the form of the critique and rejection of the colonial politics of recognition.
Turning Away

The imperative to ‘turn away’ from state-sanctioned recognition is derived from Fanon’s conclusion that, in a colonial context, reciprocal recognition of the colonized is not forthcoming from the colonizer and, therefore, “those struggling against colonialism must ‘turn away’ from the colonial state and society and instead find in their own decolonial praxis the source of their liberation” (Coulthard 2014: 48). Based on his diagnosis of the politics of recognition as structurally colonial, Coulthard argues that

this conclusion demands that we begin to collectively redirect our struggles away from a politics that seeks to attain a conciliatory form of settler-state recognition for Indigenous nations toward a resurgent politics of recognition premised on self-actualization, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices that are attentive to the subjective and structural composition of settler-colonial power. (Coulthard 2014: 24)

Coulthard thereby affirms the applicability of Fanon’s imperative in the context of settler colonialism in Canada. Moreover, Coulthard further specifies what this imperative entails when he writes:

the empowerment that is derived from [the] critically self-affirmative and self-transformative ethics of desubjectification must be cautiously directed away from the assimilative lure of the statist politics of recognition, and instead be fashioned toward our own on-the-ground struggles for freedom. (Coulthard 2014: 48)

Turning away is here conceived as a process that sustains a protagonistic politics against the mediation of state practices of recognition. Evidently, it is not an unmediated practice, but one determined by the protocols, knowledge, and institutions of grounded normativity. The issue of ‘cautiously directing these practices away’ is therefore the question of how to reject the politics

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of recognition in practice; that is, how to secure the objective conditions that allow for a practice which is not constrained by the forces that compel one to accept its parameters or simply continue to suffer the detrimental consequences of the mis- or nonrecognition of Indigenous claims or inherent rights by refusing to participate in it. Moreover, it also calls attention to the broader objective constraints, in their varying forms and intensity, that compel Indigenous Peoples not only into the practice of the politics of recognition but circumscribe the exercise of resurgence and grounded normativity more broadly. Therefore, inasmuch as turning away is about rejecting and evading the mediations of the politics of recognition, it is equally about the mediations that permit Indigenous Peoples to undermine the objective compulsions that draw them into it and ground the forms of activity and organization that can sustain the conditions of a practice wherein the social relations of grounded normativity are maintained and developed. The conditions that permit Indigenous people and organizations to turn away from the settler state’s terms of engagement and centre the principles of resurgence in their practice is precisely what the theory of dual dispossession identifies and aims to develop. In considering these issues, Audra Simpson’s Mohawk Interruptus (2014) and Leanne Simpson’s As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance (2017) provide a critical orientation.

Refusal

Appearing around the same time as Red Skin, White Masks, Audra Simpson’s Mohawk Interruptus develops a theory of refusal that is explicitly developed in relation to state recognition, which Simpson characterizes as the “much sought-after and presumed ‘good’ of multicultural politics” (2014: 11). Refusal, according to Simpson, is “a political and ethical stance
that stands in stark contrast to the desire to have one’s distinctiveness as a culture, as a people, recognized... [and] comes with the requirement of having one’s political sovereignty acknowledged and upheld, and raises the question of legitimacy for those who are usually in the position of recognizing” (2014: 11). The theory of refusal is grounded on ethnographic work carried out in Simpson’s home community of Kahnawà:ke, whose persistent resistance and robust self-assertion form its practical basis. Like Alfred before her, Simpson specifically traces this disposition to the ideological polarization that has developed in the community across time, especially the work of Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall. Simpson writes that Hall’s “position speaks from the particular interpretation of ‘tradition’ within Kahnawà:ke as differentiated from other Confederacy reservations, which has made for a less conciliatory form of politics in dealing with settler occupation – an act of turning away, less willingness to ‘play the game’” (2014: 26). As a result, this labour of refusal, as Simpson often refers to it, has, in theory and practice, generated its own kind of identity formation, namely, the sustained sense of a sovereign self and nation and the ongoing historical viability of radical sovereignty as a political expression of Indigenous self-determination. While much can be gleaned from Simpson’s rich analysis, the most important insight for the strategy of turning away from the politics of recognition in practice and the theory of dual dispossession concerns the limitations of the First Nation or band form of political organization. This is most evident in her discussion about membership.

Internal Contradictions

As we saw with Coulthard’s emphasis on subject formation, the fundamental antagonism of the colonial relation is also internalized by Indigenous communities, whereby various factions have
come to personify the interests of the colonizer and colonized accordingly. This is especially pronounced in the community of Kahnawà:ke, where refusal has sustained the structural antagonism of colonialism vis-à-vis the settler state by resisting its ideological and practical collapse into particularized and localized conflicts within the yoke of state power. In other words, they have not allowed the relation between colonizer and colonized to become naturalized and continue to contest it as a politically sovereign nation. Yet, because of this ongoing assertion of political sovereignty, Simpson argues, it is “fundamentally interruptive both to themselves and the settler states within which they find themselves” (2014: 186, italics added). As a result, the internal contestation about how to respond to colonial subordination is extremely polarizing. This is particularly evident in the practical dichotomy between citizenship and membership that has historically developed in Kahnawà:ke and continues to be a dominant issue in the community. Simpson describes the difference in the following way:

As we saw in interview data, a clear distinction is being made by some interlocutors between membership and citizenship. Membership entails formal recognition by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (and in all cases, the state), whereas citizenship entails something else, a complex of social belonging, of family, of intracommunity recognition and responsibility. This is not to say that there is not overlap between membership and citizenship, or that one does not inform the other. As we saw with the Band Council meeting, these forms of recognition (and processes) are in a dialectical tension with each. (2014: 188-89)

This complexity of belonging, anchored as it is in a refusal of state recognition and an ongoing assertion of political sovereignty, has played out in a number of elevated conflicts. As I mentioned above, the 1973 evictions issued by the Longhouse and enforced by the Mohawk Warrior Society were countered by the chief and council leading to state intervention, especially considering AIM had been involved as an ancillary force at the time, which was
grounded in a broad-based political movement and presented a major threat to national
security according to the RCMP.320

The heightened contradictions fostered by these social forces were attenuated to some
extent by the establishment of Ganienkeh. As Kakwirakeron aka Art Montour recalls:

There were many conflicts between the band council people and the traditional people,
but the majority ended up siding with the traditional people. We felt if we stayed in
Kahnawà:ke and wanted to continue with our line of thinking we would probably just
end up fighting among ourselves. It would have been Native against Native, and that
wasn’t feasible. We talked about going back to the Mohawk River Valley or somewhere
within the Mohawk territory that was unceded. That’s how we ended up at Moss Lake
[in a journey that would ultimately establish Ganienkeh]. (2023: 54)

However, responses such as this have not displaced the dynamic that continuously gives rise to
these dichotomies within the community, which remain anchored in settler colonialism and
cannot be reduced to band council and traditional people. After all, the Mohawk Council of
Kahnawà:ke has also been at the forefront of various robust iterations of membership reform in
the face of colonial intervention, which, as Simpson makes abundantly clear throughout
Mohawk Interruptus, is the practical presupposition of all internal polarization.321 As she writes,

In Kahnawà:ke’s life as a community, the achievement of consensual decision making
and participation in all levels of political processes have been cleaved by influences from
and interactions with the outside, namely, with Canada and the United States... United

320 “Accompanying Security Service documents indicate that its concerns with native activism of the era
heightened ‘following the participation of Canadian Indians at the occupation of the Bureau of India Affairs in
Washington, D.C., early November 1972,’ says one confidential intelligence report”
(http://www.nationnewsarchives.ca/article/rcmp-kept-secret-red-power-file-on-dissident-natives/)
321 This is seen in the fact that the politics of refusal initially exercised through formal band policy in the way of
severe restrictions on membership, which are designed to stave off colonial elimination, are themselves refused
through the broader category of citizenship. Refusal is thus a force that produces important dualities like the
difference between citizenship and membership by virtue of being mediated by its own radicalization, thereby
disrupting the unidirectional historical tendency within settler colonial domination, which is equally personified by
various individuals and factions within the community as it is by the state, even as they initially embody the
tendencies of the politics of refusal against the latter. These contradictions have developed precisely on the
grounds of the tension inherent in the larger relation that marks settler colonialism and cannot be understood
properly outside of it, which is precisely Simpson’s main argument.
only in their rejection of Canadian control over membership, these alternatives [i.e.,
differing criteria] at once oppose and embrace each other, creating fissures of discord.
On a collective level, the Mohawk Law on Membership is at once a response to and an
interaction with a changing world that is pushing Mohawks inward to themselves for
instruction on how to manage the present. (Simpson 2014: 44-45)

The impetus of this centripetal force driving Indigenous nations inward is, of course, the settler
state, but more determinately, as I have been arguing, it is, above all, the counterrevolutionary
function of the colonial politics of recognition, mediating as it does the general relation
between Indigenous Peoples and nations and other progressive struggles across society, locking
Indigenous nations, primarily in the form of bands, into an atomized relation with the state. The
intensification of contradictions, creating in the process deep polarizations and conflicts, are
anchored in this relation, especially in Kahnawà:ke where a radical refusal to identify with it is a
major social and political factor shaping social development. What the social intensification of
conflict in Kahnawà:ke reveals, above all, is a constant test of the limits of the colonial
integument of the band or First Nation, as manifest in aggressive membership laws and
concomitant evictions, or, in the case of Ganienkeh, the externalization of the most
antagonistic contradictions. However, while purging the composition of the (formally
recognized) members of the nation or establishing autonomous enclaves or so-called ‘liberated
zones’ may provide temporary relief and develop important subjective transformations, they

322 In his interview with Sakej Ward of the East Coast Warrior Society, Taiaiake Alfred asks the following question,
which is very insightful with regards to the ongoing discussion: “TA [Alfred]: Is it these kinds of autonomous,
liberated indigenous governance zones that you’re looking to achieve? S [Ward]: I do see that as a goal. What I
don’t see is it happening in my lifetime. I recognize the fact that this is going to be a very long struggle. What
myself and the people I work with are hoping for is that we can be catalysts to kick things off and get things
started. If we don’t, the rate of assimilation is so great that we won’t have any thinkers or people willing to put
themselves on the line any more. We’re all getting so canadianized that we can’t even stop to think about taking
some kind of action against the colonial state. We’ve been so assimilated into that state that we can only look for
redress within the parameters already established by that state. I don’t know if it’s going to be this generation or
the next, but I don’t believe there is a lot of time left for those who are thinking in terms of revolution and
resistance and creating the liberated zones for indigenous people to survive in” (2005: 70). Autonomism is the
are hardly generalizable, nor do they transcend the atomized community form. After all, even Ganienkeh, which is relatively successful, robustly autonomous, and admirably uncompromising, is integrated within the capital system and its local control is fundamentally subject to external conditions beyond it, to say nothing of the fact that it is extremely isolated.³²³

Beyond the Contradictions of the Band Form of the Nation

Despite the failure to transcend the structural impasse of settler colonialism, the politics and practice of safeguarding and developing Indigenous political sovereignty in and against colonial constraints, while refusing the band or First Nation form all the while operating through it out of structural necessity, is a disposition that forces systemic limits to the surface. Simpson’s work is a powerful testimony of her efforts to work through contradictions instead of evading them. Her theory of refusal clarifies and elevates the practice that marks the limits of the nation-centric politics of the post-Kanehsatà:ke era while refusing the closure of the colonial politics of recognition. As such, its theoretical insights foreground the necessity of developing social conditions and forces beyond the nation as a condition of its self-determination, especially if the latter is predicated on political sovereignty. It also reveals that transcending the vicious circle of these internal conflicts can only be developed through the negation of their constraints and not by somehow bypassing them.³²⁴ I point in the direction of resolving this broader product of the social historically determinate situation of being locked into atomized negotiations with the state, whether through asymmetrical compromise or violent confrontation.

³²³ See Dinneen 2019 for some examples of how the community generates revenue, which it depends on for cultural and social development.
³²⁴ This is emphasized throughout Mohawk Interruptus by Simpson’s constant insistence on the impossibility of realizing the kind of governance and social practice implicit in refusal. For instance, she writes: “Nationalism expresses a particular form of collective identity that embeds desire for sovereignty and justice. However, it does so only because of the deep impossibility of representation and consent within governance systems that are
contradiction below when I discuss the relation between the effective power of Indigenous authority and law and the network of solidarity that undergirds them as it was revealed during the Wet’suwet’en uprising in winter 2020. In any case, Simpson’s work, which foregrounds the limits of the band form, nation-centric developments, and the embeddedness of sovereignty or autonomy, contributes to the problem of turning away and the theory of dual dispossession in at least two fundamental ways. On the one hand, it points to the necessity of organizing autonomous spaces beyond the restrictions imposed on bands as well as the need to develop a generalized social force capable of supporting local struggles and simultaneously mounting a comprehensive challenge to the social conditions of settler colonial domination. On the other, conceiving struggle and (relative) self-determination within social constraint is critical to identifying the conditions of its further development and empowerment, most importantly, as I will argue, recognizing how (semi) autonomous Indigenous struggles, to say nothing of First Nations bands, must challenge the generality of capital beyond redistributive justice as a relation of production. Both of these aspects are developed by the theory of dual dispossession.

Generative Refusal

Leanne Simpson’s later work also provides insight into the problem of turning away and the relevance of dual dispossession to understanding and developing the forms through which it takes place. She does so through a call for radically autonomous spaces of Indigenous development and the need to locate Indigenous struggle firmly within the social constraints of

predicated upon dispossession and disavowal of the political histories that govern the populations now found within state regimes” (2014: 18). Or again, when she writes: “Settler colonialism structures justice and injustice in particular ways, not through the conferral of recognition of the enslaved but by the conferral of disappearance in subject. This not seeing that is so profound that mutuality cannot be achieved. ‘Recognition’ in either a cognitive or juridical sense is impossible. It simply would require too much contortion from one protagonist and not the other to be considered just” (Simpson 2014: 23-24).
capital. In her 2017 book *As We Have Always Done*, Simpson attempts to synthesize the work of Coulthard and A. Simpson. This is achieved by conceiving of refusal in a manner that is internally related to the practice of grounded normativity. As she puts it, “A productive place of refusal is one that generates grounded normativity” (Simpson 2017: 176). Drawn together, these dimensions constitute what Simpson theorizes as the practice of “generative refusal” (2017: 44), which I return to at the end of this section. Generative refusal is a synthetic concept which refers to a process that dual dispossession develops further by virtue of identifying the objective conditions with which the radical subjective disposition of refusal is practically united as the basis of semi-autonomous social practice. As such, it identifies the circumstances under which grounded normativity, as a unity of subjective and objective factors, is autonomously exercised under conditions of social constraint.

**Reconciliation and Radical Resurgence**

The historical basis of this synthesis is to be found in the failure of Idle No More to achieve its promises and the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau’s elevation of ‘reconciliation,’

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325 Martin Lukacs writes that, “[Trudeau’s] election in 2015 marked an explosion in the politics of reconciliation. The ‘nation-to-nation’ relationship with Indigenous peoples, Trudeau told us, was his most important. An inquiry was launched for missing and murdered Indigenous women. The name of residential school’s architect Hector-Louis Langevin was removed from the Prime Minister’s Office and National Aboriginal Day renamed National Indigenous Peoples Day. The old, long-vacated U.S. embassy in Ottawa was slated to be given over to Inuit, Metis, and First Nations people. Jody Wilson-Raybould was appointed Minister of Justice, the most powerful cabinet position ever held by an Indigenous person. Harper’s government had voted against the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, but Trudeau pledged to implement it unconditionally” (2020: 136).
concept which had been in circulation since RCAP and the Supreme Court of Canada rulings of the 1990s, to the status of socio-political project. According to Corey Snelgrove,

The confluence of the work of the TRC – which pointed to the responsibility of Canadian individuals for addressing colonization and its effects – and the Idle No More movement that emerged in December 2012 along with associated or adjacent movements against pipelines and fracking operations (such as in Elsipogtog in 2013), the removal of children into state custody (especially the work of Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society), and other struggles paved the way for reconciliation to occupy its current spotlight. (Snelgrove 2021: 15)

Having integrated the critiques of recognition developed by Coulthard and A. Simpson, which were only general and latent in Dancing On Our Turtle’s Back, and endured three years of the most rationally concerted and comprehensive practice of the politics of recognition to date in the form of the Trudeau governments’ strategy of reconciliation, Simpson began to rethink the politics of resurgence. She writes: “The aftermath of Idle No More, and the election of a liberal

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326 Corey Snelgrove writes: “While the Commission called for a public inquiry into residential schools, the government refused, offering instead a Statement of Reconciliation in 1998 – the only direct government response to that report. Recognizing ‘the mistakes and injustices of the past,’ the statement announced a $350 million fund to establish the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and a $250 million fund for economic development, self-government, employment, and social services – well short of the $1.5–2 billion increase in spending every year for the next fifteen years called for in the report – in order ‘to set a new course in its policies for Aboriginal peoples’” (2021: 9).

327 Snelgrove writes that “As a judicial concept, Kent McNeil (2003) has drawn attention to how reconciliation evolved from a question of how to reconcile federal power with the federal fiduciary duty towards Indigenous peoples under Chief Justice Dickson in the SSC Sparrow decision (1990), to how to reconcile ‘the pre-existence of Aboriginal societies with the sovereignty of the Crown’ under Chief Justice Lamer in Van der Peet and Gladstone (1996). While then-Justice McLachlin read reconciliation as reconciling ‘aboriginal and non-aboriginal perspectives’ in Van der Peet, and, as Chief Justice, how to reconcile ‘pre-existing Aboriginal sovereignty with assumed Crown sovereignty’ in Haida Nation (2004)” (2021: 5).

328 Snelgrove writes, “It is this conjuncture between Indigenous struggle and the political economy of Canada – namely, of increasingly fragile conditions of capital accumulation where, beginning in the 1970s resource-led development has increased in relative importance, and since the economic crisis of 2008 ‘engineering structures (mining facilities, pipelines, rail lines and dams) have been the most important form of capital accumulation in Canada’ (McCormack and Workman 2015: 58)–that may also help explain why, available as an idea/concept as early as 1990 and most obviously since the RCAP report in 1996, it was not until the election of the Trudeau Liberals that reconciliation became a guiding idea or governing rationale” (2021: 40).

329 In 2011, Simpson wrote: “As reconciliation has become institutionalized, I worry our participation will benefit the state in an asymmetrical fashion, by attempting to neutralize the legitimacy of Indigenous resistance” (2011: 22). This expresses a clear and strong scepticism but hardly an explicit theory of a political practice that structurally excludes substantive Indigenous social practice.
government changed my thinking. I see a critical need for Indigenous organizing and mobilization more now that I did under Harper because of the subtle, yet powerful forces of neoliberalism demobilizing movements of all sorts and pulling Indigenous peoples into state-controlled processes to a greater degree” (2017: 47). As Coulthard argued with regard to the land claims policy, these state controlled processes, according to Simpson, function to separate Indigenous culture from political power and social production in practice, which effectively depoliticizes it, including previous iterations of the politics resurgence. This is the rationale for her call to radicalize the politics of resurgence:

In the context of settler colonialism and neoliberalism, the term cultural resurgence, as opposed to political resurgence, which refers to a resurgence of story, song, dance art language, and culture, is compatible with the reconciliation discourse, the healing industry, or other depoliticized recovery-based narratives... Cultural resurgence can take place within the current settler colonial structure of Canada because it is not concerned with dispossession, whereas political resurgence is seen as a direct threat to settler sovereignty. From within Indigenous thought, however, the cultural and the political are joined and inseparable, and they are both generated through place-based practices – practices that require land... Culture as a modifier that de-politicizes resurgence into the realm of neoliberalism (this can be a culture practice but not an economic or political one), and my insertion of the word radical is a taking back of resurgence from the realm of neoliberalism and reclaiming its revolutionary potential, that is, its potential to offer robust, ethical, and sustainable alternatives to settler colonialism. Cultural resurgence can be read as compatible with settler colonialism because it fits within an inclusive narrative of Canada as a multicultural society. Language, cultural expression, and even spirituality don’t (necessarily) pose an unmanageable threat to settler colonialism, because cultural resurgence can rather effortlessly be co-opted by liberal recognition. Indigenous peoples require a land base and therefore require a central and hard critique of the forces that propel dispossession. (Simpson 2017: 49-50, italics in original)\footnote{Here we find clear echoes of Lee Maracle and Howard Adams’ critique of cultural nationalism from the 1970s.}
The necessity of reintegrating social practices integral to a robust sense of culture, or ‘form of life’ as Coulthard conceives it, and the practical impasse of the colonial politics of recognition, now hegemonic, gives rises to a number of important theoretical shifts in Simpson’s work.

Settler Colonialism as Strangulated Grounded Normativity

Critical to this reorientation is a qualitatively different understanding of settler colonialism than in Simpson’s earlier work. In *As We Have Always Done*, Simpson conceives settler colonialism explicitly as a process of thwarting the comprehensive character of Indigenous forms of social practice, i.e., grounded normativity, and not merely as usurping Indigenous land and political authority or erasing Indigenous knowledge. As she writes:

> Colonialism has strangulated grounded normativity. It has attacked and tried to eliminate or confine the practice of grounded normativity to the realm of neoliberalism so that it isn’t so much a way of being in the world but a quaint cultural difference that makes one interesting. When colonialism could not eliminate grounded normativity, it tried to contain it so that it exists only to the degree that it does not impede land acquisition, settlement, and resource extraction. (2017: 25)

Theorizing settler colonialism in direct relation to grounded normativity grants the latter a more determinate character because it recognizes settler colonialism as a force of constraint within a positive paradigm of Indigenous productive practice and self/national development. Rather than understanding Indigenous practice as marginal within a hegemonic society, settler colonialism is internalized within grounded normativity as a truncating and distorting power

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331 What is essential to this form of domination, according to Simpson, is the practical divorce of culture from substantive political and material power, which functions to undermine the social power of grounded normativity. She writes: “In the context of settler colonialism and neoliberalism, the term cultural resurgence, as opposed to political resurgence, which refers to a resurgence of story, song, dance art language, and culture, is compatible with the reconciliation discourse, the healing industry, or other depoliticized recovery-based narratives... Cultural resurgence can take place within the current settler colonial structure of Canada because it is not concerned with dispossession, whereas political resurgence is seen as a direct threat to settler sovereignty. From within Indigenous thought, however, the cultural and the political are joined and inseparable, and they are both generated through place-based practices – practices that require land... Culture as a modifier that de-politicizes resurgence into the realm of neoliberalism (this can be a culture practice but not an economic or political one)” (2017: 49-50).
that directly causes its underdevelopment by stymying the ability of Indigenous Peoples to completely substantiate its relations and fulfill the obligations based upon them. From this epistemological vantage point, it becomes possible to identify where the practice of grounded normativity is stifled or facilitated. This represents a further development of Simpson’s earlier work, which helped (re)establish the epistemological ground from which to understand settler colonialism and decolonization in terms adequate to the radical reconstitution of Indigenous subjectivity at the heart of the resurgence project but is now further radicalized in the face of a perceived objective impasse. Moreover, although the shift to a conception of settler colonialism as a form of strangulated grounded normativity centres the vantage point of grounded normativity, it also lays the basis for grasping the repression of it in a more socio-historically determinate sense as a form of capitalist subsumption. This concretization was already developed to an extent through Coulthard’s identification of the colonial politics of recognition with the process of primitive accumulation. However, Simpson’s theorization allows for an understanding of this process that is far more pervasive in terms of its power of determination over the social practice of Indigenous peoples, extending far beyond the macro-political issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction over land. Simpson thus provides an important theoretical development for the concept of dual dispossession, which identifies the codetermination of Indigenous experience by colonial and capitalist social relations and, above all, the organized response of Indigenous Peoples to this practical inseparability in the context of struggles premised on the rejection of the colonial politics of recognition.
Shifting Back from the Colonial Relation to the Capital Relation

In *As We Have Always Done*, Simpson identifies the social embeddedness of grounded normativity not just within the determinations of settler colonialism but those of the capital system more broadly. Throughout the book Simpson insists on the necessity of targeting the determinations and imperatives of capitalism explicitly as the premise of settler colonialism. As she puts it, the issue of capitalism is way too important a conversation not to have within the Nishnaabeg nation in particular and within the broader Indigenous nation-building movement, even if it is difficult. Indigenous peoples have extremely rich anticapitalist practices in our own histories and current realities. I think it is important that we continue the work of our Ancestors and our elders in critiquing and analyzing capitalism, how it drives dispossession, and its impacts on us from our own perspectives. (Simpson 2017: 72)

Moreover, Simpson points out that Indigenous Peoples have amassed invaluable practical knowledge due “hundreds of years of direct experience with the absolute destruction of capitalism” (Simpson 2017: 73).

The full theoretical integration of this practical knowledge, however, requires another important step that is taken by Simpson when she rejects the identification of capitalism with extractivism. Reflecting on her exchange with climate justice activist Naomi Klein, she writes,

As I drove home after the interview, and in the editing process that followed, I could see why Naomi was focusing on extractivism as a narrative that could open up a conversation with Canadians and spark mass movement on climate change without bringing up capitalism and the backlash that entails, but the more I thought about extractivism as a concept, it didn’t explain what had happened to my people and to me. Stewardship as an alternative was too simplistic a concept to describe the relationship of Nishnaabeg with land. The more I thought about extractivism, the more important it became to name capitalism, particularly in the context of radical resurgence. (Simpson 2017: 76)

This turn has vast implications, which Simpson does not develop, but are worth mentioning here. The non-identity between capitalism and extractivism is significant primarily because it
opens up the possibility of understanding the issue of capitalism vis-à-vis Indigenous people and nations as a problem internal to them, which cannot be reduced to the question of encroachment alone or in terms of the imposition of foreign and external social interests. That is, the shift away from this identity permits capitalism to be grasped as a dominant form of social metabolic interchange, i.e., a socio-historically specific productive paradigm, that equally compels Indigenous Peoples into its orbit on the basis of the separation of living labour from the means of production determining as a result the scope and range of their practical activity, whether or not they constitute a significant portion of the actively exploited working class. Moreover, it allows for a shift from “the colonial relation” back to “the capital relation” while retaining the important epistemological insights of Coulthard’s earlier methodological intervention, which advocated a turn to the former in order that “the inherent injustice of colonial rule is posited on its own terms and in its own right” (Coulthard 2014: 11) and that “the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism” be properly grasped “as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around the question of land” (Coulthard 2014: 13). As I mentioned in chapter one, these relations pertain to complex

332 In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard proposes a shift from the capital relation to the colonial relation in order to properly theorize settler colonialism as constitutive of capitalism and to recognize Indigenous struggles for land and self-determination on their own irreducible terms. However, because Coulthard conceives of proletarianization narrowly, as the process that gives rise to the subject position of the (male) wage-worker at the point of production (2014: 11), his critique is simultaneously an affirmation of this reduction, which identifies the category of the proletariat with this specific subject position. As a result, he cannot fully develop the internal relation between anticolonialism and anticapitalism required for the empowerment of grounded normativity. Although he states that the shift is one of emphasis not dichotomy, which recognizes the relevance of proletarianization to Indigenous peoples and “in no way displaces questions of distributive justice or class struggle” (Coulthard 2014: 15), he bases his conception of proletarianization, ironically, on the standpoint of capital, which, as Lebowitz points out following Marx, “treats the proletarian ‘only as a worker’ and ‘does not consider him [sic] when he is not working, as a human being’ (Marx, 1844c: 241)” (Lebowitz 2002: 142). According to Lebowitz, “A Marxist who believes that the struggle against capital and for community really is only to be found in the capitalist workplace reflects the one-sided perspective of capital, for which only the direct challenges initiated by workers to the expanded reproduction of capital matter” (2020: 195).
determinations within a social totality and not mutually exclusive systems. Indigenous peoples are internally affected by both of these general relations. Although Simpson does not explicitly identify capital as a relation of production nor does she target the latter as a sphere of paramount strategic importance, this shift does have a decisive impact on her thinking insofar as she locates the practice of grounded normativity explicitly within the constraints of capitalism. As a result, Simpson calls for “a critical reframing of the critique [of capitalism], one that is centered within grounded normativity” (73). These two shifts open the latter up to being developed in direct relation to the capital system in its totalizing power over society as a whole.

The consequences of this shift are symptomatic in the section of chapter 12 subtitled “mobilization within grounded normativity” (2017: 218), where Simpson writes:

The crux of resurgence is that Indigenous peoples have to recreate and regenerate our political systems, education systems, and systems of life from within our own intelligence. Our movements must respond to the basic social needs of our communities: relief from crushing poverty, clean drinking water, listening to youth and then doing what they tell us to create meaningful existences for them in their communities right now, supporting harm reduction approaches to addictions, dismantling children’s aid and supporting people recovering from the damage it has caused, setting up alternative accountability structures for gender violence so 2SQ people, women, and child are safe, and supporting midwifery, breastfeeding, and families with children. These ‘social issues’ are not social. They are political. They are a direct result of state violence in the form of settler colonialism that maintains and accelerates dispossession. Organizing to support urban and reserve communities on these issues in a politicized way must be part of any radical resurgence project because within Indigenous grounded normativity, these are our first responsibilities. (2017: 226-227)

In this conception, the relationality and interdependence presupposed and consciously developed by the practice of grounded normativity is not confined to a specific sphere of social practice but extends to the totality of Indigenous experience in actuality. As the quote above suggests, the experience of grounded normativity is not confined to the dispossession of the
land base in the most direct and immediate sense, e.g., through the erosion of the conditions required for the exercise of Aboriginal and Treaty rights or what is commonly referred to as land-based practice, such as hunting, trapping, fishing, etc., but embedded in the institutions that dominate Indigenous life more comprehensively, such as child services and the foster care system, the labour market and unemployment, basic infrastructure like water, security, and the health care system, etc. This is the social context in which grounded normativity is forced to take on a determinate mode as struggle, i.e., within the hegemonic institutions of settler colonial capitalist social reproduction, where conditions of radical Indigenous autonomy are marginalized and non-generalizable.

Coalitional Politics

Further, Simpson’s recent coalitional work with Robyn Maynard and the broader Black liberation movement, especially Black Lives Matter Toronto, deepens the centring of capitalism within her understanding of colonialism and leads her to a profound insight: that politicization of settler colonialism as a structural mediation of the capital system allows one to identify the conditions of Indigenous self-determination in the struggles of other segments of society, above all the struggle of Black people. This is no more striking than in Simpson’s claim that the demands of the abolitionist movement are more relevant to Indigenous liberation than state-centric remedies:

In my own homeland as you [that is, Robyn Maynard] know better than I do, movements for Black life including Black Lives Matter Toronto continue to work towards abolition with a list of demands that ranges from defunding and demilitarizing the police to decriminalizing poverty. Every single demand will make the lives of Indigenous peoples in Toronto and beyond better. Every single demand towards defunding the police could save the lives of Indigenous Two-Spirit and queer people. Every single demand addresses the issue of MMIWG, and represents movement towards abolition. This platform does more in my mind to regenerate Indigenous communities and
mitigate the trauma of colonialism than reconciliation or any state offering. (Simpson and Maynard 2022: 195-96)

Here we see the impulse towards the coalitional politics of the 1960s and 1970s and the recognition of the latter as a condition of transcending the impasse of the colonial politics of recognition. This practice belongs to the wider one of building a mass movement that can challenge global capitalism, which, as Simpson insists in As We Have Always Done, issues from the imperatives of grounded normativity. As she puts it:

What about the theories and practices of Black Radical Tradition, of revolutionary movements in the Global South, the work of Black womanists and feminists, anticapitalism, anti-white supremacists, antiheteropatriarchy, abolition? Can we ethically engage these bodies of work and struggle? Do our ethical practices within grounded normativities require us to engage not just with their theories but with the people and peoples that embody these theories? Do our ethical frameworks teach us that we must develop relationships of reciprocity and co-resistance with these communities that embody both our ethical practices? How can our intellectual processes of ethical engagement be used to decenter our intellectual study from whiteness and produce productive ethical engagement with our global provocateurs? (Simpson 2017: 66)

By framing these questions within grounded normativity, Simpson highlights the critical and potential role of mass movements in the challenge of turning away from the state-centric practice of recognition politics and colonial dependence. However, to properly establish the necessity of this coalitional politics also requires an analysis of Indigenous resistance which can identify the internal necessity of challenging capital as a social relation of production as a presupposition of its practice, which is what the analysis carried out in chapter five demonstrates.

Place-Based is not Land-Based

Moreover, the epistemological shift from the abstraction of settler colonialism to its determination by the capital system suggests that the notion of ‘place-based’ is not identical to
‘land-based,’ unless the former is understood as the deeply mediated actuality of the latter.

This is clearest when Simpson writes: “resurgence must be concerned with the reattachment of our minds, bodies, and spirits to the network of relationships and ethical practices that generates grounded normativity. It means the reattachment of our bodies to our lands, regardless of whether those lands are rural, reserves, or urban” (2017: 44). The mediated nature of place-based practice is thus signalled by Simpson’s progressive framing of the practice of grounded normativity, i.e., the struggle to uphold its relations and obligations, in and against the colonial state violence of capitalist institutions of social reproduction; that is, institutions which perform the positive function of sustaining society in a form dominated by the determinations and imperatives of capital. While Simpson does not make this argument explicitly, her insistence on the embeddedness of grounded normativity and the priority of challenging capitalism suggests that settler colonial state violence is gradually being identified as colonial mediations of capital’s domination over social life. Put differently, Indigenous Peoples are violently bound up with institutions and practices of settler colonialism that facilitate the reproduction of the capital system more broadly. However, this shift in no way displaces the significance of land-based practice as a critical source of grounded normativity. This comes across strongest in Simpson’s reflections on the possibilities of resistance, where any urban/reserve dichotomy is rejected and grounded normativity is explicitly practiced

333 Concerning this divide, Simpson writes: “Organizing around issues of poverty and social conditions in urban and reserve communities as a critical core of the project of resurgence, as a political issue, breaks this cycle. It also has the potential to build collectives of individuals taking on the responsibilities of the nation, while aligning themselves with those who face the greatest struggle and carry the greatest burden of settler colonialism. The division between reserve and city is an artificial colonial division. We are all related, and this is all Indigenous land.
within and against both capitalist institutions of social reproduction, such as the prison system and workplaces, as well as (semi) autonomous sites of Indigenous practices, such as freedom schools and blockades. She writes:

Indigenous resurgent organizing might look like a network of Indigenous intellectuals giving talks in the prison system in a coordinated, nation-based way across Canada; it might look like a network of urban breakfast programs highlighting Indigenous food systems and alliances between reserves and cities within Indigenous nations; it might look like a network of land-based freedom schools for all ages; it might look like co-ops, trade agreements, and economies that prioritize Indigenous modes of production and sharing; it might look like a series of coordinating, rotating blockades and camps across Turtle Island that challenge the extractivism. Resurgent organizing takes place with grounded normativity and is necessarily place based and local, but it is also necessarily networked and global. (Simpson 2017: 178)

The issue for Simpson is thus not a moralistic one about which spaces are more authentic Indigenous sites of social practice and cultural existence. However, she is clear on the need to focus strategically on the development and institutionalization of conditions more radically mediated by the relations and laws of grounded normativity. Here is how she puts it:

we need to make a shift from Indigenizing the processes that maintain the structures of settler colonialism, and expand, deepen, and reactualize the processes and knowledges of grounded normativity to structuralize Indigenous nationhood and resurgence and mobilizations as a mechanism to dismantle the structure of colonialism in all forms. (Simpson 2017: 47)

What underlies this assertion is a question of the degree to which the objective conditions of grounded normativity are safeguarded and facilitated within various institutional spaces and the concomitant issue of objective constraint, which, in some spaces, structurally marginalizes those conditions. It is thus not a question of the intrinsic impossibility of exercising Indigenous grounded normativity within hegemonic institutions, but a practical one concerning the balance

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*Strengthening reserve-urban relationships strengthens nations, and it has the potential to build movement*” (2017: 80).
of forces that prevail within those institutions as well as outside of them. Nevertheless, Simpson’s emphasis on structuralizing nationhood creates the basis for a strong autonomist strain her work, which seems at times to presume the existence and possibility of Indigenous space and practices that are completely unmediated by the settler colonial capital system. This tendency is most obvious in her concept of ‘flight.’

‘Flight’

In *As We Have Always Done*, Leanne Simpson conceives of generative refusal, as a practice that amounts to “a flight out of the structure of settler colonialism and into the processes and relationships of freedom and self-determination encoded and practiced within Nishnaabewin or grounded normativity” (Simpson 2017: 17). Simpson understands this process as a form of marronage akin to Neil Roberts’ definition, who defines it “as a group of persons isolating themselves from a surrounding society in order to create a fully autonomous community” (quoted in Simpson 2017: 17). This notion of flight is further emphasized when she explicitly formulates the concept of generative refusal in relation to the Anishinaabe story of the Waawaashkeshiwig (Deer) Nation. Simpson draws on this story as a means of theorizing the imperative to turn away from the politics of recognition and colonial reformism and engage in the form of self-activity that upholds Anishinaabe grounded normativity. In the story, the Deer

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334 Resurgence is now to be consciously developed against its colonial recognition and biiskaabiyang is explicitly conceived as “a flight out of the structure of settler colonialism and into the processes and relationships of freedom and self-determination encoded and practiced within Nishnaabewin or grounded normativity” (Simpson 2017: 17). This is because, according to Simpson, “The opposite of dispossession within Indigenous thought is grounded normativity. This is our power” (Simpson 2017: 45). As such, she argues that “our radical resurgence must come from within our own nation-based grounded normativities because these are the intelligence systems that hold the potential, the theory as practice, for making ethical, sustainable Indigenous worlds” (Simpson 2017: 25) and are the source of Indigenous sovereignty (Simpson 2017: 30, 164). Together, these insights and assumptions constitute the concept and strategy of generative refusal.
Nation withdrawals entirely from the Anishinaabe because the latter have violated their treaty with the Deer by disrespecting them through overharvesting and wasteful consumption, virtually destroying their nation as a result. This is perceived, according to Simpson, as a violation of grounded normativity (2017: 244). By invoking this story, Simpson foregrounds the strategy of withdrawal taken by the Deer Nation in the face of profound violence and conditions where reciprocal recognition is undermined. Withdrawal is here understood in the double sense of turning away from the colonizer or dominator and turning inward to rebuild the nation (Simpson 2017: 244). Like the notion of biiskaabiyang, evoked in her earlier work, this act of withdrawal is significantly characterized by Simpson as a form of flight. She writes:

There is also a thread of fugitivity, in this narrative because in their refusal and flight out of violence they liberated themselves into a physical reality that was entirely consistent with the one they deserved and wanted for themselves. In their flight, they turned inward. This is consistent with the idea that focused rebuilding using Indigenous processes enacts an Indigenous presence that has the ability to give life to an Indigenous future and changes not only the actors involved in the focused rebuilding, but the power dynamics between the deer and the Nishnaabeg or between the Nishnaabeg and the state. (Simpson 2017: 245)

The imperative to turn away from the politics of recognition, i.e., “the Nishnaabeg and the state,” therefore, assumes the form of flight or withdrawal. Although this framing presumably points to an objective process, it remains highly indeterminate. What exactly does this mean in practice? What are the objective conditions of flight or the conditions that permit one to withdraw “into a physical reality that [is] entirely consistent with the one [Indigenous peoples who refuse] deserve and want for themselves”? (Simpson 2017: 245). Whether such statements are to be taken literally or metaphorically is unclear in these passages, but when considering Simpson’s general argument and politics, it is likely meant literally. Despite these unclarified issues, Simpson’s insistence on the need for autonomous Indigenous development
and struggle has strongly foregrounded the need to inquire into the objective conditions of this process, which is the aim of the analysis in the final chapter of this dissertation.

**Collectives**

Critical to the process of resurgence through flight, according to Simpson, is the collective nature this kind of practice. She argues,

Collectives allow people with common goals to come together, produce, act, and then disband, reform, or continue as needed. They are an opportunity to govern ourselves using Indigenous processes, to challenge heteronormativity in our ceremonial practices, to critically examine how our movements erase and marginalize 2SQ and replicate transphobia. Individuals can and should have their own practices of production, but these collective spaces can be used to generate resurgence modes of production in addition to their own work, and when these collectives start to develop relationships with other collectives, constellated organizing intensifies across orders of magnitude (Simpson 2017: 217).

Simpson goes on to list a variety of examples of collective practices of resurgence, which includes the Dechinta Bush School, the Onaman Collective and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, as well as the Unis’tot’en Camp and the decades-long blockade at Grassy Narrows (Simpson 2017: 217). These collectives are mobilizations that transcend individual efforts and, in doing so, not only augment the scale on which the power of grounded normativity is exercised but also, as Simpson notes above, its quality. The issue of scale is where Simpson locates the crux of anticolonial or decolonial strategy, writing in a reflection reminiscent of Coulthard,335 that she is “interested in thinking about how to build upon these place-based resurgent mobilizations to build a network or resurgent struggle” (Simpson 2017: 194) Although the issue of scale is undoubtedly a critical factor in the possibility of enhancing the power of

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335 Recall that Coulthard asks a similar question at the end of *Red Skin, White Masks*: “how might we begin to scale up these often localized, resurgent land-based direct actions to produce a more general transformation in the colonial economy?” (2014: 170).
resistance and the exercise of grounded normativity, the relation between the objective conditions of struggle and the quality of the social practice grounded upon it is of equal importance, especially insofar as those conditions permit a form of practice that is determined or mediated to a larger degree by Indigenous culture, values, laws, knowledge, protocols, institutions, governance, etc. This is all the more important when we consider that acts of generative refusal, particularly those identified by Simpson above, and the project of radical resurgence they sustain are premised on rejecting the colonial politics of recognition in practice, i.e., actually evading the constraints of its parameters upon the exercise of Indigenous self-determination. The analysis of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement in the final chapter, which is carried out through the application of the concept dual dispossession, not only provides a theory of this dimension of the struggle but also identifies the levers through which it can be further developed.

Conclusion

The analysis of Indigenous critical theory presented in this chapter argued that Indigenous resurgence theory originated in the defensive nation-centric retrenchment of the post-Kanehsatà:ke era. As a result, its early formulations, particularly in the work of Alfred, is significantly marked by concepts that reflect this historical reality. These early contributions set an agenda that has promoted the radicalization of Indigenous culture as the foundation of Indigenous social practice and resistance to settler colonialism. As theoretical interventions, they have generalized principles latent in the context of specific struggles into a coherent political project and thereby helped foster the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge, values, and institutions in a way that has made their right to determine the course of generalized social
development, both within and without Indigenous communities, non-negotiable to many, especially the contemporary protagonists of the Land Back Movement. Moreover, Indigenous resurgence scholarship has also provided a powerful and systematic critique of contemporary colonial reform, whether as recognition or reconciliation, in a manner that has functioned to legitimize the self-activity and organization of Indigenous people who refuse to be co-opted by that process and consolidate the impetus for turning away from state recognition. In doing so, they have simultaneously developed the two major tendencies I identified in the Red Power movement: subjective transformation through struggle, which resurgence centres in the practice of radical cultural revitalization, and the critique and rejection of co-optation, which is elevated to a general theory of the systemic impasse of colonial reform. Unlike the mass coalitional politics and internationalism of the Red Power movement, with its emphasis on the social totality and the need for revolutionary socialist transformation, resurgence has emerged in a context of social fragmentation and atomization where the politics of totality and revolution have been largely undermined or marginalized. However, in the aftermath of Idle No More, Indigenous resurgence theory and practice began to develop categories and nurture practices that point to the recovery and development of that early universalism, although, the contemporary movement is now doing so on the basis of having integrated the concrete determinations of the deep inward dive, which the theory and politics of Indigenous resurgence have helped consolidate and propagate. Nevertheless, it has taken more practical developments within the Indigenous struggle to help clarify these tendencies and trajectories, especially those of the organizational forms of the Land Back Movement and the dynamics of heightened struggle first at Standing Rock in 2016 and then in winter of 2020, when mass
solidarity blockades and demonstrations broke out in support of the Wet’suwet’en struggle against the CGL pipeline project and the Canadian state.

Identifying the socio-historically determinate character of Indigenous resurgence theory and its development across time, instead of promoting it as an abstract universal program, is critical to developing the politics of resurgence in and against the social constraints that inhibit its further evolution. In this sense, it is akin to applying the methodological core of Adams’ concept of radical nationalism, with its foundations in Indigenous protagonism and the objectivity it discloses through the priority and vantage point of struggle, as a condition of the further development of the politics of resurgence. This is the aim of the next chapter, which applies the concept dual dispossession to an analysis of the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement.
Chapter Five: Indigenous Resurgence, Critical Mediations, and the Land Back Movement

Introduction

The following chapter applies the concept of dual dispossession to an analysis of the organizational forms of the Land Movement with a specific focus on the Unist’ot’en Healing Centre, the Tiny House Warriors, and the camps that made up the line of resistance at Standing Rock in 2016 to 2017. The chapter begins by examining the function of these organizational forms as both blockades and pre-emptive reoccupations through which Indigenous grounded normativity is sustained, primarily through the exercise of Indigenous governance and the enforcement of Indigenous law. It then turns to an analysis of the conditions that sustain these organizations. By maintaining the practical inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations in theory, the concept of dual dispossession prescribes that these organizational forms, as forms of social practice, must be grasped within the tension of these relations and necessitates an explanation which accounts for the semi-autonomous practice institutionalized by these organizational forms. As such, the analysis focuses on the material conditions that underpin these institutionalized practices and is guided by the question concerning the conditions of possibility of full-time Water Protection and Land Defence. My inquiry into these conditions is carried out on the basis of material gathered primarily from organization websites, including sites facilitating the collection of donations, whether in the form of money or goods, and those recruiting assistance on the frontlines in the form of voluntary labour. This investigation is further supplemented by accounts of the work that has taken place on the
frontlines, work that has been rendered possible by the resources amassed through soliciting and solidarity and encompasses a range of coordinated activities.

Using these sources, my analysis demonstrates that the semi-autonomous character of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement is premised on the redistribution of labour, money, and goods, which make up a quasi-circuit of Water Protection and Land Defence. This is primarily facilitated by various forms of voluntary labour and donations of money and goods drawn from multiple and disparate sources within the working class, which give Land Defenders and Water Protectors access to the means of struggle. The means of struggle include both means of subsistence and production as well as mediated access to the market, whereby Land Defenders and Water Protectors do not have to exchange their labour power to sustain the objective conditions of their struggle. The concept of dual dispossession allows this infrastructure of redistribution to be conceptualized as a form of organized mitigation, which functions to suppress the mute compulsion of economic relations that compel individuals deprived of the means of production to sell their labour-power in exchange for a wage. As a result, these organizations function as concrete mediations that unite the subjective capacities valorized and cultivated by Indigenous resurgence theory and practice with objective conditions in a way that is not directly constrained by the colonial politics of recognition or the generalized dependency of First Nations and therefore permits the activity carried out through them to be determined by a higher degree of self-mediation. This unification is thus also the central dynamic through which the tendencies of the Red Power movement and the principles of Indigenous resurgence are practically synthesized with the critique and rejection of cooptation and recognition in order to facilitate a form of protagonism
that is not only self-transformative but, significantly, a means of exercising traditional governance and upholding Indigenous law. In this respect, these organizations have practically instituted the historical tendencies I documented in earlier chapters in a novel way. The upshot of the analysis is that the blockade, as the central organizational form of the Land Back movement, functions as a bulwark in two important ways. On the one hand, it sustains Indigenous grounded normativity by resisting colonial capitalist incursion through the enforcement of Indigenous law; and, on the other, it mitigates the coercive force of capital grounded on the separation of the direct producers from the means of production and thereby allows Water Protectors and Land Defenders to evade exploitation and sustain their activity on the frontlines. In this sense, it is a force that confronts colonial dispossession and proletarianization simultaneously.

After applying dual dispossession to the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, I then turn to a general analysis of the Wet’suwet’en mass movement of 2020, otherwise known as Shut Down Canada. I argue that, under the conditions of heightened struggle that evolved in the winter of that year, the semi-autonomous character of the Unist’ot’en Camp was critical to activating mass solidarity, which, in turn, functioned to enhance the coercive power of the Hereditary Chiefs and the traditional government of the Wet’suwet’en vis-à-vis the forces of the settler state and capital.

The analysis then returns to the implications of the infrastructure of redistribution to show that its function in mitigating the mute compulsion of economic relations does not transcend the circuits of capital and wage labour but only displaces them. This entails that the infrastructure of redistribution does not generate its own conditions of reproduction and
remains dependent on capitalist relations of production, although it mediates them in significant ways. As such, the social relations of capital remain an essential premise of frontline anticolonial activity and constrain it in decisive ways.

The chapter then briefly applies the concept of dual dispossession to the solidarity network of 2020 and concludes that many who stood in support of the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs and Land Defenders by maintaining blockades at key sites of the country’s economic infrastructure did so by virtue of the fact that their activity was also premised on the relative suppression of the mute compulsion of economic relations. Although I do not provide a sociological description of the individuals and groups who engaged in solidarity blockades and other actions, this analysis reveals that, like the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, frontline anticolonial solidarity also presupposes a form of redistribution that mediates capitalist social relations of production.

Owing to these insights, the chapter concludes with an analysis of this mediated dependence and its implications regarding the limits and possibilities of enhancing the social power of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement and the kind of solidarity network that was activated in the winter of 2020. Above all, this implies the need within the anticolonial struggle to challenge capital as a social relation of production. Based on this, I conclude that these sites of radical resurgence should be conceived as embedded forms of autonomy, and I propose mediation as a way to grasp both their constraints and the conditions of their quantitative and qualitative expansion as relations internal to them. As such, the analysis illuminates the limits and possibilities of challenging the comprehensive social
conditions of settler colonialism and, therefore, of developing the broader conditions of
Indigenous self-determination.

The ‘Land Back’ Movement

Over the last few years, many Indigenous people and allies have begun to organize and strive
under the slogan of ‘Land Back.’ Starting as an online hashtag trend, it has bloomed in a variety
of spaces ranging from beaded earrings to raise money for land-based struggles (Moscufo
2020), to the Yellowhead Institute’s 2019 Red Paper policy Land Back, to a general political
philosophy in the case of the NDN Collective (Manuel and Klein 2020). According to Secwepemc
Land Defender Kanahus Manuel and environmental activist Naomi Klein (2020), “‘Land Back’
means precisely what it sounds like: taking land back under Indigenous control and protection
that was never legally ceded in the first place.” The movement is thus unequivocally about
Indigenous justice, which forcefully asserts that a return or transfer of power and territory is
the non-negotiable premise of a just relation between Indigenous nations and settler society.

However, while the material transfer of land and total effective control over territory
are central to the imperative of ‘land back,’ the political demand at the heart of the movement
cannot be reduced to the transfer of legal and governmental jurisdiction over territory. As
Nickita Longman writes, these conditions form the premise of a more comprehensive
restoration and practice of national and self-development that encompasses all aspects of
social life:

Land Back needs to happen so all other aspects of Indigenous livelihood can return with
it. Land Back means nourishing our relationship to all things on the land, but it would
also mean getting back in touch with our languages and our traditional familial and
governing systems, and creating a better relationship with healing and medicine. (Gray-
Donald 2020: 5)
Moreover, Mike Gouldhawke argues that the reference to land in the slogan is not simply a material entity or economic resource but refers, above all, to a social practice: “Non-Native people, both those for and those against Indigenous resistance, often oversimplify our struggle as being just about who owns the land, whether it belongs to Canada or our Peoples. But just as importantly, it’s about how the land is owned – how we relate to it, how we relate to each other through it, and who ‘we’ are as Indigenous Peoples” (Gouldhawke 2020). What is more, according to Gouldhawke, land is not only conceived as a direct relation between people and the earth or nature, but is understood as a dynamic form of interdependence that extends its constitution beyond the immediacy of society to non-human beings and entities as well: “In settler-colonial societies, land appears as an immense accumulation of property titles. To traditionalist Indigenous Peoples, in contrast, land is not a thing in itself but a social relationship between all living and non-living beings” (Gouldhawke 2020). In this sense, the notion of land is akin to the relations that constitute the practice Coulthard conceives as grounded normativity, whereby the latter denotes a comprehensive practical synthesis between subjective and objective conditions grounded on the plurality of Indigenous laws and forms of governance.

Moreover, according to Manuel and Klein (2020), the general strategy of the movement coalesced in a little-known organization called Defenders of the Land, which was guided into existence in 2008 by Secwepemc Arthur Manuel and Mohawk Russell Diabo, the movement’s key intellectual leaders. Mr. Manuel… passed away in 2017, but his writings in Unsettling Canada and The Reconciliation Manifesto laid out a blueprint for using mass actions and creative legal tools, along with strategic alliances with sympathetic parts of Canadian society, in order to force governments and businesses to recognize Indigenous people’s sovereign rights to their lands.

This is a development with clear precedent in earlier strategies, especially that of Art’s father, George, who, as mentioned above, developed the notion of a ‘peoples’ movement’ in the mid-
to-late 1970s to back the assertion of Indigenous rights and title, which ultimately paid off through the Constitution Express and the inclusion of section 35 in the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982. The difference now is that the Defenders of the Land are developing the same principles with the experience of four decades of the colonial politics of recognition behind them, the insights of Idle No More, and the increasing knowledge, tested in practice, of the strategic value of disrupting the circulation of capital in Canada as a means of negotiating Indigenous rights.

However, what is completely novel about the Land Back era is that this strategy is undergirded by a robust land reclamation movement, which has taken the form of reoccupation and land defence camps, especially in the face of fossil fuel extraction. Most notably among these are the Unist’ot’en Cultural and Healing Centre (2010–present), the camps at Standing Rock (2016–17), the Tiny House Warriors (2017–present), the Stop Line 3 Protest in Minnesota by the Giniw Collective, Camp Migizi, Honour the Earth (2020–present), and 1492 Land Back Lane (2020–present). As various organizational forms of the blockade, they have created the practical ground out of which Water Protectors and Land Defenders emerged, which, as Winona LaDuke remarks, crystallized into anticolonial protagonists during the mass resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock in 2016: “[S]omething special happened at Standing Rock in 2016 – a fulfillment of prophecy, the blossoming of a historic social movement led by Indigenous Peoples and rooted in Indigenous teachings, but offering a home to anyone, of any race or culture, willing to fight for the water. Water Protectors are everywhere” (2020: 93). In this sense, the organizational development of these blockades has implemented the crucial lessons of allyship and solidarity as a critical condition of protecting
Indigenous lands and waters, while simultaneously developing these relations under the leadership of Indigenous people and nations and in conformity to Indigenous culture, law, and the kind of social practice central to Indigenous resurgence.

These semi-autonomous organizational forms institutionalize the conditions of ‘flight’ in Simpson’s sense and constitute critical mediations through which the tendencies of the Red Power movement and those later developed by Indigenous resurgence examined in the last chapter are radically developed. Premised on the rejection of colonial recognition and the necessity of direct action, they foster the radical cultural development of individuals and collectives based on Creation Stories and Indigenous knowledge, values, and ethics, while facilitating a protagonistic politics through the practice of self-liberation. As Leanne Simpson writes, “In reality, behind the barricades, whether the blockades are enacted on Anishinaabeg land at Grassy Narrows, Dakota land at Standing Rock, at the port of Vancouver, or at Unist’ot’en, blockades are rich sites of Indigenous life, of a radical resurgence” (2021: 10-11). By virtue of the social relations and practices they facilitate, these organizational forms are understood by those inhabiting them as necessary for upholding a form of Indigenous law and governance that is not compromised by the settler state and capitalist class’s interest in securing capital accumulation above all else. In positive terms, they are understood as critical for maintaining what Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chief and Land Defender Freda Huson calls her nation’s ‘critical infrastructure’ or the relations and obligations that make up the Yintah, which is akin to Coulthard’s more general concept of grounded normativity. Thus, not only are they defensive but also creative, sustaining the social practices of Indigenous resurgence.
The Land Back Movement: The Historical Ground of the Concept of Dual Dispossession

It is by virtue of the practices that sustain these organizational forms that the concept of dual dispossession, introduced in chapter 1, has been rendered legible in historical terms. This is primarily because they are self-organized in a way that secures the material conditions of their operation so as to evade direct state and market dependence, thereby minimizing colonial and capitalist dictates. The motivation to do so is, of course, the impasse represented by the colonial politics of recognition and the negation of Indigenous self-determination grounded on colonial dependence more broadly. In this way, they have practically internalized the lessons of this history in their organizational form itself. Moreover, the attempt to pre-emptively secure the material conditions of their activity signifies that capitalist social relations, insofar as they are manifest in money, commodities, and the compulsion to work, are becoming more central and urgent for the theory and practice of anticolonialism. Although the effort to combat capitalist encroachment as an external force has always been central to the struggle between colonizer and colonized, the strategy to organize that resistance outside of dependency in order to enhance the social power of that resistance entails an intervention into the social relations of capital as they affect the agent of anticolonialism internally. In this sense, the need to politicize colonial and capitalist social relations simultaneously is revealed by the form taken by the struggle at this historical juncture.\footnote{This is not to say, of course, that both of these social relations were not dominant in earlier periods of struggle, they certainly were, and, as I showed above, their inseparability was politicized by some in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, the practical suppression of this tradition along with the rise of colonial reformism, created conditions that forced their one-sided politicization. It is against this impasse that the movement has begun to challenge settler colonial society in a way that is beginning to reveal once again the inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relation in the struggle for Indigenous self-determination. The historical development of the struggle is a general learning process that reveals certain objective insights at specific historical moments.}
Indigenous Critical Infrastructure and the Blockade

Unist’ot’en Healing and Cultural Centre

“What we’re doing here is protecting our critical infrastructure” – Freda Huson (quoted in Spice 2021)

In her struggle to protect and cultivate the Yintah, Wet’suwet’en wing chief and Land Defender Freda Huson has appropriated the Canadian state’s notion of ‘critical infrastructure’ as a clear statement of uncompromising sovereignty in the face of the capitalist state and its class counterpart. While this legal notion was developed to legitimize the social forces that safeguard the country’s capitalist infrastructure, Huson’s use of it, according to Tlingit anthropologist Anne Spice, pertains to “the interconnected networks of human and other-than-human beings that sustain Indigenous life in mutual relation” (2018: 41). Huson specifies what Wet’suwet’en critical infrastructure entails in the following way:

our critical infrastructure is the clean drinking water, and the very water that the salmon spawn in, and they go back downstream and four years, come back. That salmon is our food source, it’s our main staple food. That’s one of our critical infrastructures, because the berries not only feed us, they also feed the bears, and the salmon also don’t just feed us, they feed the bears. And each and every one of those are all connected, and without each other, we wouldn’t survive on this planet... for example, the bears will eat the berries and they’ll drop it, and the waste that comes out of the bear, it’s got seeds in it, so that germinates and we get more berries. We need the bears in order to keep producing our berries, and same with the salmon. The bears eat the salmon as well because once the salmon spawn, they end up dying anyways, and that becomes food for the bears, so it’s not being wasted. All of that is part of the system that our people depend on, and that whole cycle and system is our critical infrastructure, and that’s what we’re trying to protect, an infrastructure that we depend on. And industry and government are pushing these projects that would destroy that critical infrastructure, most important to our people. (Spice 2018: 41, emphasis in original)

Spice refers to the following definition provided by the government of Canada: “Critical infrastructure refers to processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets and services essential to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians and the effective functioning of government... Disruptions of critical infrastructure could result in catastrophic loss of life, adverse economic effects and significant harm to public confidence” (2018: 40).
This is clearly not the infrastructure of generalized commodity production, i.e., the fixed capital of the built environment — pipelines, railways, ports, dams, seaways, roads, internet service, electricity grids, etc. – that is integral to sustaining Canadian society in capitalist form; that is, an infrastructure premised on a social system that structurally subordinates the intrinsic value of the cycles and processes named by Huson to the imperatives of capital accumulation and expansion.³³⁸ Rather, Huson’s use of the concept refers to the conditions that ground the socio-historical structure of Wet’suwet’en social practice, i.e., the Yintah, as well as the form of self-development that embodies the values that sustain it. In this sense, Huson’s use refers to an infrastructure which, as Spice argues, stand “in stark contrast to the critical infrastructures of government and industry” (Spice 2018: 41) precisely because it does not operate “within the same epistemological and ontological relations of land and kin” (Spice 2018: 40).

Moreover, Huson’s appropriation of the colonial state’s category, as an act of ideological counter-struggle, elevates the consciousness of grounded normativity beyond the historically determinate dynamics of a struggle against the capitalist state and class incursion into Wet’suwet’en lands to a social practice that is understood as structurally incompatible with the

³³⁸ The capital system’s structural subordination of all interests and values that do not conform to these imperatives is far more comprehensive than the repression and exclusion of cultural and/or ontological difference through colonial violence insofar as it subordinates the universality of human need itself to its imperatives. Tony Smith captures the structural (in)compatibility of different cultural practices with capital, when he writes: “The ceaseless reproduction and expansion of capital is the driving force, the inner telos, of each individual capital circuit and the ultimate end of a capitalist social order as a whole, and we humans must pursue our individual and shared conceptions of the good as best we can within that framework... Once the reign of capital has been established, individual ends are systematically subordinated to the end of capital, and conceptions of the good embedded in the culture and history of a community are systematically subordinated to the good of capital. Human ends furthering the (inhuman) end of capital accumulation, and conceptions of the good of the community furthering the good of capital accumulation, are systematically advantaged over time. Human ends and shared conceptions of the good that do not meet this criterion are systematically disadvantaged over time. Human ends are inverted to serve the (inhuman) end of capital; the human good is inverted to serve the (inhuman) good of capital” (2017: 116).
form of society entailed by these social forces. In this sense, the concept of critical
infrastructure is evoked to signify the fact that colonial capitalist incursion forces the Yintah into
ontological crisis. Her use of ‘critical infrastructure’ is thus tantamount to a theory of
Wet’suwet’en grounded normativity under conditions of struggle, whereby it is grasped not as
an independent social dynamic but a tendency within a broader field of competing and
antagonistic social forces.

Furthermore, this consciousness is practically reinforced by the fact that the Unist’ot’en
Cultural and Healing Centre, which Huson has been instrumental in establishing and
maintaining, was strategically built in the pathway of multiple pipelines. This effectively
institutes a practice of Indigenous resurgence based on a strong conviction concerning the
structural incompatibility of mutual Indigenous and colonial capitalist development. The fact
that the Unist’ot’en camp is both a healing centre, i.e., a site and practice of Wet’suwet’en
resurgence, and a blockade means that it functions simultaneously as a creative force and a
bulwark against crisis-inducing forces. As both blockade and means of exercising Wet’suwet’en
values, the Unist’ot’en camp represents a practical synthesis of Indigenous law and resistance
and is an essential condition of Wet’suwet’en critical infrastructure at this current historical
juncture. As such, it is the positive form of that law’s enforcement in safeguarding the nation’s
infrastructure and therefore signifies not merely one element among others within the critical
infrastructure of the Yintah, but the specific form of the Wet’suwet’en nation’s social power
under the shifting historical conditions of struggle.
The Tiny House Warriors

In their struggle to assert Secwepemc law and jurisdiction in the face of the Canadian state-owned TMX pipeline, Kanahus Manuel and the Tiny House Warriors have also created a particular practical synthesis of Indigenous law and resistance. In this context, the enforcement of Secwepemc law takes the socio-historically specific form of multiple small-scale mobile homes that house Land Defenders and Water Protectors like Manuel and TOO, which are stationed at various strategic points along the route of the pipeline as it is being built. These houses constitute a mobile blockade that conforms to the pipeline’s development in real time. As their webpage attests, the houses represent an initial step in the (re)development of a material basis for Secwepemc law and jurisdiction or, referring to Huson, what may be understood as Secwepemc critical infrastructure: “The Tiny House Warrior movement is the start of re-establishing village sites and asserting our authority over our unceded Territories.”

The fact that these houses represent the initial phase of this process suggests that, like the Unist’ot’en Healing Centre, the Tiny Houses do not represent one element among others within the general network of Secwepemc critical infrastructure, but the crux of its viability in the face of colonial capitalist incursion and domination precisely because they embody a mediation against the forces of its ontological dissolution.

Furthermore, at the present historical moment, the critical infrastructure of Secwepemc grounded normativity is upheld by the enforcement of Secwepemc Law in direct confrontation

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339 This socially determinate form of resistance and affirmation of Indigenous law corresponds to the socio-historical specificity of the TMX, a state-led project conceived as a strategic response to the general crisis of Canadian capitalism, i.e., a particular conjuncture in the history of capitalism in Canada (see Gordon and McCormick 2020).

with the personifications of capital because its jurisdiction (to say nothing of its materiality) has been denied by the state. The fact that enforcement must proceed during the construction of the pipeline points to the structural exclusion of Indigenous political authority insofar it refuses capital as its practical premise, in contrast to First Nations that sign IBAs. As such, the Tiny House is a specific mode of Indigenous law that bypasses the mediation of the state in order to criminalize the colonial transformation of the conditions necessary for its exercise. Moreover, because enforcement is full-time and there are no opportunities for employment associated with it, it must also take on a form that sustains the enforcers; hence, this form of blockade acts simultaneously as a type of shelter, which itself, is a socially determinate critique of the present historical moment given that each tiny house also provides, according to the website, “housing to Secwepemc families facing a housing crisis due to deliberate colonial impoverishment.”

By bringing these various dimensions together, the Tiny Houses constitute a decisive mediation in the critical infrastructure of Secwepemc grounded normativity in the face of the TMX pipeline and the colonial capitalist forces that sustain it.

The Standing Rock Movement

In their struggle to stop the Dakota Access pipeline, the Water Protectors and Land Defenders who gathered in Oceti Sakowin territory in 2016 were also organized into a unique fusion of Indigenous law and resistance. This time the blockade was made up of several large camps. Winona LaDuke recalls the experience that sustained these camps in the following way:

To me, it was in the camps at Standing Rock that we remembered what it feels like to be free. We remembered what it feels like to be free. We remembered what it was like to create a village of thousands of people, a powerful Indigenous space that welcomed people of all different colors and nations. And we remembered what it feels like to

create the infrastructure we need to care for ourselves entirely outside the colonized money economy – to feed and clothe our people, to have stable housing and quality medical care for everyone, to have control of our children’s upbringing, to practice our spirituality freely and share our stories unafraid. (2020: 96)

It was this infrastructure of social reproductive labour, at the heart of the blockade, that enabled the mass resistance to be carried out at Standing Rock. According to Estes and Dhillon, “More than three hundred Native nations and countless allied movements planted their flags in solidarity at Oceti Sakowin Camp, the largest of several camps... north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation” (2019: 2) and helped Water Protectors in generating and upholding a different kind of law contrary to settler law (one that places relations with nonhumans, the land, and water equal to, or sometimes surpassing, human-made laws), while also reminding the United States of its own obligations to uphold its own treaties—its original agreements— with the Oceti Sakowin. (Estes and Dhillon 2019: 2)

Thus, whereas the critical infrastructure evoked by Huson refers to the general conditions necessary for sustaining the social practice that grounds Indigenous ontology, the infrastructure alluded to by LaDuke, and whose effects are described by Estes and Dhillon, refers more specifically to the conditions and processes internal to the blockade necessary for sustaining resistance and enforcing Indigenous law within a context of heightened struggle or what Peter Russel calls a ‘flashpoint’ event. To be sure, networks of mutual aid and social reproductive labour are necessary to the functioning of all of these blockades under conditions

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342 Social reproductive labour generally has to do with the paid and unpaid work of generationally sustaining the working class in capitalist society given that it is critical to sustaining the commodification of labour-power as an essential premise of capital. In this context, the kind of labour-power generated and sustained on the basis of this network of self-organized labour is the kind that facilitates Indigenous resurgence, nationhood, sovereignty and law.

343 According to Russel, “The flashpoint event occurs when members of the Aboriginal community see that government, without settling the long-standing dispute, is permitting activities to take place that ignore Aboriginal interests in the area and, in effect, deny Aboriginal or treaty rights. Under these conditions, members of the Aboriginal community may decide to take direct action to stop the activity and produce a flashpoint event. Usually the direct action takes the form of occupying land and blockading public access to the land” (2010: 29).
of daily reproduction, but they intensify both quantitatively (the need for larger numbers of
people, money, and supplies), and qualitatively (the need for different coordinated skills and
knowledge as well as infrastructure) as crisis conditions intensify in direct confrontation, as they
did at Standing Rock. Indigenous critical infrastructure thus depends upon the development
and expansion of an infrastructure of resistance under crisis-inducing circumstances.

Lastly, it is important to observe that all of three of the blockades mentioned here
function as mediations that embody a counterforce in the colonial struggle. As forms of direct
intervention into the circuit of capital, whether at the point of production (via external
interference) or circulation, they are vital for upholding the relationships at the heart of
Indigenous critical infrastructure and the practice of grounded normativity more broadly,
whether in the tradition of harvesting berries to maintain and cultivate the Yintah, the
enforcement of Secwepemc Law by trying to prevent the building of ‘man camps’ (Morin
2020), or in the form of a pot of chilli to sustain the frontlines of resistance against the
Dakota Access Pipeline. Depending on the circumstances, the infrastructure that constitutes
these blockades varies in terms of complexity and capacity, and, in the case of the
Wet’suwet’en, is expanded to social forces beyond both the blockade and the nation, a point
that I will analyze in more detail below. But what allows people to show up in the first place and
sustain these blockades? Answering this question helps us understand how Indigenous critical
infrastructure and its development under conditions of struggle as an infrastructure of
resistance is both possible and realized in practice.

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344 See also Kanahus Manuel’s post on X (formerly Twitter), May 24, 2022,
https://twitter.com/KanahusFreedom/status/1529326802669162496.
'Full Time' Water Protection and Land Defence?

At the apex of the struggle against Enbridge’s Line 3\(^{345}\) expansion in Minnesota in 2021, Anishinaabe activist and former executive director of Honor the Earth Winona LaDuke (2020) reported that “In our camps, we are welcoming new water protectors daily. People such as Alex Golden-Wolf, 25, who quit her job and moved to Camp Migizi to become a water protector.”\(^{346}\) At the time, Golden-Wolf was quoted as saying: ‘It’s my life now. I gave up my other life.’ In short, this work is bringing life and purpose.”\(^{347}\) In a similar way, LaDuke also observes that at Standing Rock “People came from the far corners of the world [and that] Many gave up their jobs, their houses, even their relationships back home” (2020: 101). In an interview with Freda Huson conducted by Anne Spice, we similarly learn that “The Unist’ot’en encampment was established seven years ago, when Freda Huson moved onto her people’s land full time and began to build a permanent home” (Spice 2019: 211). Moreover, in an article by Brandi Morin (2022) covering the Wet’suwet’en resistance against the CGL pipeline, we read that “For the past seven years, [Land Defender] Molly [Wickham] has lived in a cabin on the yintah (land or territory) with her husband Cody Merriman and their three young children,” and that Mohawk award-winning singer/songwriter Logan Staats from Six Nations “left his home, gave up performing on stage and travelled thousands of kilometres to serve on the frontline of the Wet’suwet’en battle to save their territories.” Further down we also read that when Quendauxw (Megan) and Kumxlaqs (Madeline) of the Haisla Nation “learned of the raids on the Wet’suwet’en resistance camps, they dropped everything to join the blockade set up by the

\(^{345}\) [https://www.stopline3.org](https://www.stopline3.org)

\(^{346}\) For a general call out for people to become water protectors see the following webpage: [https://www.honorearth.org/welcome_water_protectors](https://www.honorearth.org/welcome_water_protectors)

\(^{347}\) Honor the Earth - mass email – Thursday, March 11, 2021.
Gitxsan in New Hazelton” in solidarity with their embattled neighbouring nation (Morin 2022).

And, as residents of the Tiny Houses, Kanahus Manuel informs us in a Tweet (2020) that her and her twin sister Mayuk “live on the frontline & sacrifice so much to fight back against canada’s tar sands pipeline...”

Returning to the Land

“Giving up” one’s “other life,” “returning to the land,” “dropping everything,” and “living on the frontline” all imply transformation. If these processes form an essential condition of “serving on the frontlines” and living one’s life as a Water Protector and/or Land Defender, then we need to account for the conditions that permit one to exercise and sustain this practice. For in a capitalist society, one is structurally compelled to either exchange one’s labour power for the money needed to buy the means of subsistence or life, i.e., employment, or forced into a dependence upon it mediated by the labour of others, e.g., a stay-at-home parent, which may be supplemented by money transfers from the state, e.g., ‘family and caregiving benefits.’ Whether Water Protection and Land Defence is carried out on a full-time basis by

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349 Harry Cleaver writes: “In the home, capital has done much the same through the state, by shaping laws to define marriage and family and laws to regulate intra-family relationships and the distribution of wages so as to divide the family between waged and unwaged and pit them against each other – thus poisoning the relationship between spouses and between parents and children. Systemic sexism in which more husbands than wives have been able to obtain waged jobs has given men more power within the family, and they have often been expected to control unwaged wives. Similarly, both parents have been expected to control their children. Controlling unwaged wives has meant making sure they do the domestic work of producing (procreating) and reproducing labor power – that of their husbands, themselves, and their children” (2017: 128). While the microcosm described by Cleaver certainly does not pertain to all Indigenous peoples, as the work of Rebecca Hall has shown (2022), dependency on money, commodities and wage-labour still prevails across these differences.

350 Harry Cleaver writes elsewhere: “Throughout this history of antagonistic class struggle, there have always been the unwaged, those who do not earn a money wage or salary in exchange for selling their labor power but who play vital roles in the reproduction of capital. Whether generated through 1) enclosures forcing indigenous peoples or farmers off their land, 2) the laying-off of once-waged workers, 3) population growth, or 4) immigration, the unwaged constitute—in the language of chapter 25 of volume 1 of Capital—a “reserve army” that must still receive some kind of income or die” (2017: 134).
individuals who devote their lives to the struggle, like Freda Huson and Kanahus Manuel, or by individuals who answer the Unist’ot’en Camp’s call to ‘Come to the Land’ for a minimum of two weeks,\textsuperscript{351} the issue raised here remains valid because it pertains to the possibility of the continued presence of Water Protectors and Land Defenders on the frontlines and not of any particular individual’s life trajectory, no matter how decisive an impact radical commitment may have on the overall struggle and the kind of solidarity it is able to generate.\textsuperscript{352}

All of these cases point to the fact that the practice of carrying out Land Defence and Water Protection on the frontlines is a form of activity that is not constrained in the same manner by the social force that coerces those deprived of the conditions of labour to commodify their capacity to work and sell it on the market to an employer in order to survive,\textsuperscript{353} i.e., the essential social determination of the working class under the capital system.\textsuperscript{354} That is, they do not have to exchange their labour (power) directly for the money

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{351} https://unistoten.camp/registration/
\item \textsuperscript{352} For instance, Freda Huson’s “fearless dedication to reclaiming her people’s culture and defending their land against disastrous pipeline projects” earned her a 2021 Right Livelihood award. See Right Livelihood’s announcement post: https://rightlivelihood.org/the-change-makers/find-a-laureate/freda-huson/
See also Chatelaine Magazine’s award to the Wet’suwet’en Matriarchs (including Huson) “for standing up for unceded lands”: https://www.chatelaine.com/living/wetsuweten-matriarchs-women-of-the-year-2020/Kanahus Manuel and the Tiny House Warriors were also the recipients of an award in 2021 in recognition of “their role as Secwépemc land defenders, taking action to protect their unceded lands – Secwépemcúlecw” https://povertyandhumanrights.org/2021/11/kanahus-manuel-and-tiny-house-warriors-receive-human-rights-award/ Moreover, “The award is intended to assist recipients in their continued work in organizing for social justice and human rights,” i.e., a form of redistribution that sustains the struggle, a point that I will develop below.
\item \textsuperscript{353} See Marx’s discussion of the free worker in a double sense as a condition of the production process of capital in \textit{Capital Volume 1} p. 271-273 (1976). I will elaborate on this below.
\item \textsuperscript{354} The category of the working class does not refer exclusively nor can it be reduced to the employed segment of the proletariat. This point is made by Lebowitz when he writes: “Who is ‘not-capital’ today? Who is separated from the means of production and must approach capital as a supplicant in order to survive? Surely, it is not only those who sell their labor power to capital but also those \textit{unable} to sell their labor power to capital. Not only the exploited but also the excluded. And surely, it includes those who, in the context of a massive reserve army of the unemployed, work within the sphere of circulation of capital but are compelled to bear the risks themselves, that is, those who struggle to survive in the informal sector. They may not correspond to the stereotype of the working class as male factory worker, but that stereotype was always wrong. Certainly, we need to begin with the recognition of the heterogeneous nature of the working class” (2015: 145 emphasis in original).
\end{itemize}
needed to buy the things they require to live\(^{355}\) and, by extension, carry out their practice as Water Protectors and Land Defenders. Given the totalizing and generalized nature\(^{356}\) of the practical compulsion to do so, we need to account for this fact, which disappears beneath the banality that characterizes the circulation of money and commodities which dominates our social interaction\(^{357}\) and the commonplace notions of mutual aid and donations, all the while appearing to be an essential condition of Water Protection and Land Defence insofar as they constitute a sustained social force. In other words, we have to account for the Water Protector and Land Defender’s ability to evade the commodification of their labour-power and the concomitant exploitation of it in the capitalist production process.\(^{358}\) Furthermore, we also need to understand how, in a society where capital prevails as the mode of social metabolic control, the exercise and enforcement of Indigenous law becomes consequential.\(^{359}\) Thus, what

\(^{355}\) Harry Cleaver writes: “But while capital’s commentary is limited to surface appearances, we know not only from Marx but from experience that the real ‘price’ of goods is the labor we must expend to obtain the money necessary to buy them” (2017: 244).

\(^{356}\) Cleaver again: “Because capital has been so thorough in its enclosure of land, tools, and information, money is all too often our only means to obtain all those things (available as commodities) that we can’t grow or raise or make for ourselves” (2017: 245).

\(^{357}\) See Bertell Ollman’s “Market Mystification in Capitalist and Market Socialist Societies” (1998), where he argues that the practices associated with the experience of the market “produce a very distinctive view of the world” (84). This general experience and corresponding ideology are major factors in the eclipse and depoliticization of the conditions of Water Protection and Land Defence.

\(^{358}\) Commodity production is clearly not the only form of work necessary for the reproduction of the capital system; there are many other waged and unwaged forms of work (non-productive in Marx’s sense) that are socially necessary to this form of social metabolic control, e.g., household, government and surveillance labour. However, I want to emphasize that Water Protection/Land Defence, in essence, requires the evasion of direct capitalist exploitation, i.e., the point of value-production, no matter the extent of the mediations that makes this possible.

\(^{359}\) Some might argue that Land Defence and Water Protection are forms of labour that provide a general ‘service’ to society by maintaining socio-natural conditions that would otherwise be quite different and far more deleterious to the reproduction of society on the basis of unfettered capitalist development (see Altamirano-Jiménez 2013 for a critique of this position). It could also be argued that this form of resistance contributes to the reproduction of social capital insofar as it pushes against aggressive development and forces the state and capital to operate within conditions conducive to their own class reproduction. However, I think these are essentially class interpretations that favour capital. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate the fundamental significance of this anti-colonial/decolonial work in the push towards the transformation of the current social order.
is critical to their practice is a social process that mitigates the structural coercion of the capitalist labour market and production process, which are grounded on the relations of capitalist production. This process establishes conditions that allow one to evade the exigency of alienating one’s productive capacity in the form of a commodity sold to a capitalist buyer, and the imperative of exercising it under the command of the latter which this entails. This also pertains to the paid and unpaid labour of socially necessary reproductive work, such as raising children, cooking, cleaning, formal education, healthcare, government, etc., which, while indirectly related to the production process of commodities, is nonetheless subsumed under capital and structurally constrained by the latter, albeit to a lesser degree.\footnote{Susan Ferguson captures this well, when she writes: “Yet because such labour is \textit{necessary} to the realization of surplus value and because it is performed overwhelmingly by those who are already dispossessed by capital, it is never \textit{simply} outside capitalist processes and discipline. It is inflected with the rhythms and paces of value production, even as it is not directly value-producing: resources for living are constrained by wages (and credit limits); time for eating, sleeping, helping a child with homework, playing, and more is generally prescribed by the waged workday; the pressure to perform well at work often determines whether someone parties all night or goes to the gym and then home to bed” (2020: 126).}

\textbf{Organized Mitigation: The Infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection}

This social process of mitigation is facilitated by two general forms of redistribution. On the one hand, the redistribution of money and goods in the form of various kinds of donations drawn from the wages and possessions of the broader working class as well as organizations like Honor the Earth\footnote{Honor the Earth, an Indigenous-led charitable organization that operates in the U.S., facilitates the funding of Indigenous grassroots initiatives and organizations through a grant program. Their website states that “Honor the Earth is excited to invite your organization to submit a grant proposal. Our priority area of focus is in the protection and revitalization of sacred ways, rivers, and places. We are passionate in supporting the opposition to extreme extraction and the transition to an Indigenous economy. At this time, our funding is limited to indigenous-led organizations only. Honor the Earth awards grants solely to organizations that are led and managed by Native peoples. Priority is given to grassroots, community-based organizations and groups with a lack of access to federal and/or tribal funding resources.” (\url{https://www.grantinterface.com/Process/Apply?urlkey=HTE}).} and the Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples\footnote{\url{https://www2.fundsforngos.org/latest-funds-for-ngos/land-defenders-and-water-protectors-grant-for-indigenous-peoples-in-united-states/}}; and, on the
other, the redistribution of (non-commodified) labour-power. This second source consists of a redistribution of knowledge and skills that consolidates a material basis that provides two key functions: on the one hand, it contributes labour that facilitates Indigenous resurgence; and, on the other, this labour frees Water Protectors and Land Defenders from essential forms of social reproductive labour in order to exercise their coercive social power in a direct way in the face of colonial capitalist incursion. This redistribution of labour-power draws on people from various social positions and is facilitated by the political organization of the blockade, which activates volunteers who are motivated by ethical obligation, political ideology, or Indigenous law. Together they constitute an infrastructure of reproduction that sustains the conditions for full-time Land Defence and Water Protection and the organizational forms of the Land Back movement.

Money and Goods

One of the essential conditions that functions to mitigate the mute compulsion of economic relations and facilitate Water Protection and Land Defence as well as the enforcement of

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363 I am using this concept in a broader way than its capitalist social determination as a commodity. The analysis in this chapter is intended to show how labour-power can be determined other than in commodity form.
364 Water Protectors and Land Defenders also perform this kind of work; the organization of the labour does not follow a strict division and certainly not a reified hierarchical social division.
365 I will discuss the implications of this in a later chapter.
366 With reference to the unfolding conflict at Standing Rock in 2016, Susan Sunshine Manning recalls that “Like thousands of others watching from their smartphones, I was shaken so intensely, so viscerally, that I was drawn into the movement almost instantly. Within a week, I was there, breathing in the air of hallowed ground rumbling with possibilities” (2019: 291). As a good example of Indigenous internationalism, Skylar Williams, spokesperson of 1492 LandBackLane, travelled to Wet’suwet’en territory in the fall of 2021 to stand in solidarity with them against the CGL pipeline. In a Tweet published on October 10, 2021, Williams wrote the following: “I’ve traveled to Wet’suwet’en Territory to stand with Gidimt’en Checkpoint as they stop Coastal Gaslink from forcing a pipeline under Wedzin Kwa headwaters, answering their call for international solidarity action” (https://twitter.com/landbackskyler/status/1447269165631483911).
367 Sustainability is a relative notion, but Water Protection/Land Defence has become a socio-historical phenomenon that plays an important role in the struggle against colonialism. As I will argue below, this infrastructure is quite precarious and is in constant need of support; it does not constitute a circuit.
Indigenous law is the redistribution of money and goods through various kinds of donations made by Indigenous people and settlers alike across Canada and the world. As Alex Golden-Wolf puts it,

There are many ways [to help]. There’s spamming social media with protesting activism art. That’s one way a lot of people show their support for the frontline. That and general donations, so we can buy the materials we need. That means any kind of donations; old clothes that you don’t need, winterized clothes, money donations, food donations. There’s a lot of ways people help with the frontline that aren’t able to come up. (Quoted in Larsen 2021)

Thus, where labour cannot be provided out of solidarity, one’s share in the general social product is equally required for the operations of the blockade, whether in terms of money or particular goods.

All prominent organizations fighting to empower the struggle of Water Protection and land defence have call outs for funds and options to donate money on their websites and rely heavily on them. For instance, the Stop Line 3 website offers the option to “Donate Directly to the Frontlines” in a range of denominations, which is facilitated by Apple Pay and Square Space, to support frontline resistance to Enbridge’s Line 3 pipeline. The Unist’ot’en Camp website provides the means for one-time donations via PayPal or monthly donations through Action Network. The Tiny House Warriors likewise accept donations through GoFundMe or direct e-

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368 Harry Cleaver writes: [M]oney embodies ‘value’ to capital as a means to put us to work. Inversely, money provides us with means to refuse that work. Access to sources of money gives us the power to resist being exploited at work – with all the alienation it involves – by buying time away from it (e.g., weekends and vacations that are more than mere recuperation), by buying time to struggle (e.g., strikes and political organizing), or by buying time to invent alternatives (e.g., new modes of collective decision-making and new kinds of decisions)... It buys us moments of that ‘disposable time’ that Marx imagined could replace labor – open-ended time for the invention of new values... In short, money has value for us, in this sense, in a way diametrically opposed to the value it has for capital. It can be a weapon for us to wield in order to obtain a limited freedom from capitalist domination via work. The more we have, the more powerful that weapon (2017: 243).

369 [https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/](https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/)
transfers on their website. These all represent a general demand for money, which functions as the universal capacity for exchange within a social system of generalized commodity production, i.e., the capital system. It is the means by which all members of capitalist society participate in the process of production and consumption of the social product. This fact is generally trivialized and obscured by the commonplace rubric of ‘material conditions’ of struggle, which effaces their social character yet contains significant implications for the anticolonial struggle, a point which I am developing in this chapter.

Moreover, the redistribution of money through donations is required given that Water Protection and Land Defence are not materially supported or safeguarded social goods under the capitalist system through such state redistributive mechanisms as taxation. This general

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370 http://www.tinyhousewarriors.com

371 Marx writes in the Grundrisse that “To the degree that production is shaped in such a way that every producer becomes dependent on the exchange value of his [sic] commodity, i.e. as the product increasingly becomes an exchange value in reality, and exchange value becomes the immediate object of production – to the same degree must money relations develop, together with the contradictions immanent in the money relation, in the relation of the product to itself as money. The need for exchange and for the transformation of the product into a pure exchange value progresses in step with the division of labour, i.e. with the increasingly social character of production. But as the latter grows, so grows the power of money, i.e. the exchange relation establishes itself as a power external to and independent of the producers” (1973: 146). This evidently also holds for the worker, i.e., the real producer, whose labour-power can only be reunited with the means of production via the mediation of capital. While the above speaks of production, consumption is mediated by distribution, which “is itself a product of production, not only in its object, in that only the results of production can be distributed, but also in its form, in that the specific kind of participation in production determines the specific forms of distribution, i.e. the pattern of participation in distribution” (Marx 1973: 95). Tracing the function of money back to commodity production is significant to my general argument because I want to show that Water Protection and Land Defence is premised on a particular form of redistribution that is itself the result of a particular (shifting) constellation of production. As will become clearer in later chapters, the relation between the circuit of Water Protection and Land Defence and its mediated source in production is decisive to its further empowerment.

372 Marx writes: “When money enters into exchange, I am forced to exchange my product for exchange value in general or for the general capacity to exchange [i.e., money], hence my product becomes dependent on the state of general commerce and is torn out of its local, natural and individual boundaries. For exactly that reason it can cease to be a product” (1973:150). I do not intend to provide a theory of money or capital here; I only want to point out the necessity of it.

373 Harry Cleaver writes that taxes “constitute— within capitalism and its institutions of the state and of money—part of our contribution to the management of human affairs and of human relationships with the rest of nature” (2017: 246). On the basis of this general point, Land Defence and Water Protection would seem to qualify for support, but the main issue pertains to the form of the social metabolism which taxes contribute to sustaining.
point is clearly expressed in Anne Spice’s discussion of ‘critical infrastructures’ referred to above, where she argues that “The uneven distribution of infrastructures also draws attention to who is seen as part of a society worth reproducing and who is not” (2018: 50). Not only are Water Protection and Land Defence socially unnecessary for the reproduction of the capital system, they are, by and large, antagonistic to it, a fact that is largely attested to by the continuous criminalization of these activities and the constant need for legal defence funds.\textsuperscript{374}

The necessity for legal funds is one of the most urgent countermeasures to state intervention and remains indispensable to a sustained presence on the land. All of the organizations mentioned here request legal defence funds as a basic condition of their operations and premise of their relative autonomy, especially when the practical enforcement of their laws through direct confrontation with the personifications of capital is criminalized by the state’s legal apparatus for having violated the dubious terms under which Indigenous law is recognized as an effective power. This demand is the first thing that pops up when you go to the Tiny House Warrior’s webpage.\textsuperscript{375} In some cases, this money is raised through the sales of merchandise. For example, Solidarity Art Space in Vancouver produces ‘Heal the Land Heal the People’ T-shirts in support of Unist’ot’en. According to the website, “The phrase ‘Heal the People Heal the Land’ is Unist’ot’en Spokesperson Freda Huson’s motto for the work her and her family are doing on their Traditional Yintah Talbits Kwah,” and that “All funds raised by the

\textsuperscript{374} See for instance, the Line 3 Legal Defense Fund, which “provides support to people facing arrest, jail time, and state repression because of their opposition to Enbridge’s Line 3 pipeline project. We are a volunteer-run nonprofit organization that is based out of the Twin Cities. We were founded in 2019 and will continue to operate for as long as is needed. We are so grateful for the risks that water protectors have taken, and so excited to support them! We are flexible and adaptable to the needs of defendants, and will respond to requests on a case by case basis” (https://www.line3legalfund.com).

\textsuperscript{375} “We are facing legal challenges because we are occupying our land. We are criminalized for doing so and are forced to defend our land in court. We must maintain camp” (http://www.tinyhousewarriors.com).
sale of these shirts goes directly to the Unist’ot’en Legal Fund.” These contributions remain indispensable even if, as the Red Nation puts it in their Red Deal, “Water protectors and land defenders are the new generation of political prisoners” (2021: 24).

While the redistribution of money helps sustain resistance to the state’s attempt to undermine Land Defence and Water Protection by way of its criminal justice system, which is primarily needed during times of intensified conditions of struggle, there are far more mundane ways in which this kind of redistribution facilitates Land Defence and Water Protection. Some other specific ends to which this money is generally put are also described in the following statement on the Unist’ot’en Camp website, which reads: “Your contribution ensures that supporters on the land have food and medical supplies, that Unist’ot’en Youth are able to visit their territories, that Wet’suwet’en Elders have the necessary materials on the land to teach traditional hunting, gathering, food processing, language skills, songs, stories and more. Your monetary contributions enable the Unist’ot’en Clan to stop the pipelines that threaten all of us.” In this way, donations in the form of money provide for the satisfaction of basic

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376 [https://www.solidarityartspace.com/store/rz8u5yxe2dsaftsd2tjkrcneoftv2j](https://www.solidarityartspace.com/store/rz8u5yxe2dsaftsd2tjkrcneoftv2j)

In a similar way, The Tiny House Warriors produced a digital album in 2018 ‘The Tiny House Warriors Vol. 1’ for online streaming for a suggested minimum $10.00 donation. According to the website, “40+ artists have donated their music to this album, to assist the Tiny House Warriors to complete the 10 tiny mobile homes that will protect tradition unceded Secwepemc territory from the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Expansion. We are grateful for their support of this crucial work defending the land and water. And of yours!!” ([https://tinyhousewarriors.bandcamp.com/album/tiny-house-warriors-vol-1](https://tinyhousewarriors.bandcamp.com/album/tiny-house-warriors-vol-1)).

377 Leanne Simpson writes that “In the spaces behind the barricades... You’ll find an ethic of care as harvesters and cooks engage in a bush economy to feed the frontlines” (2021: 11). While this is a significant form of social reproductive labour, especially because it fulfills the needs of both sustenance and resurgence simultaneously, it relies on the capitalist market in terms of store-bought ingredients and hunting equipment to name only two important factors. This implies that the bush economy is circumscribed by the general parameters of the capital system, a fact that in no way detracts from the political significance of the relative autonomy it helps create.

378 [https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/](https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/)
needs, such as nourishment, health, transportation, and supplies, as the foundation for all other activities, most significantly Indigenous resurgence.

Grants have also played a significant role in supporting Water Protection and Land Defence. As Freda Huson points out in an interview with Anne Spice, they contributed in large part to the initial phase of their reoccupation and resistance: “We started the construction of this [cabin] and what had happened was Smogelgem had secured a big grant in order to build five clan cabins when he was working at the office of the Wet’suwet’en so, this is one of the clan cabins and my uncle chose this location, so we put it right in the way of the GPS route of the pipeline’s proposed route” (2019: 213). As mentioned above, organizations such as Honor the Earth have been significant contributors within the movement. For instance, one of their most recent grantees is the Cas Yihk Territorial Monitor Program in partnership with the Gidimt’en Checkpoint in Wet’suwet’en territory, which will train and employ a Wet’suwet’en eco-monitor team to survey Cas Yihk territory providing real time information to support Cas Yihk Territorial Management. Our project has the aim of fostering local Indigenous leadership on their territories that builds upon a traditional knowledge base to enact protocol, policy and best practices in a forward thinking manner that considers climate change, Indigenous connection to the land and connecting diverse communities a vital part of a healthy, equitable society.379

Moreover, because Water Protectors and Land Defenders have explicit goals and do not engage in abstract or generic consumption, that is, they do not need money in order to ‘shop around,’ they can therefore bypass the money form and request specific goods, such as tools, equipment, and supplies. For instance, the Gidimt’en Checkpoint has a ‘wish list’380 posted on its website with a very precise list of goods and materials that is based on the season and

379 https://www.honorearth.net/grants
380 The fact that Amazon plays a mediatory role here is indicative of the complexity to which these struggles are embedded in capitalist social determinations, a point that will be developed below.
classified according to four main groupings, including ‘Building Supplies – Current,’ ‘Camp Supplies,’ ‘Food,’ and ‘Tools.’ According to a statement on their webpage, “The Gidimt’en Yintah Access Point has ongoing and reoccurring donation needs. Here is what we currently are in need of to sustain the protection of the Gidimt’en Yintah.” In other words, donations, and the basic goods that they allow Water Protectors and Land Defenders to acquire, form part of the infrastructure that sustains the Yintah, the ontological ground of Wet’suwet’en law, by virtue of the protection carried out on the basis of the material reproduction they facilitate.

Indigenous Peoples and collectives have also provided critical supports to each other in the way of supplies and equipment. For example, Sacred Earth Solar (formerly Lubicon Solar), a Cree-run project led by Melina Laboucan-Massimo, donated solar panels to the Tiny House Warriors (Laboucan-Massimo 2018). These panels are critical to the operation of this particular form of the blockade, which must be mobile and adaptable to various terrains regardless of its proximity to public infrastructure. In fact, the independence afforded by this technology from that very infrastructure is critical to generating the counterforce needed to effectively interfere with the TMX pipeline, while protecting them from being vulnerable to state strategies of isolation. This kind of provisioning through international solidarity between Indigenous Peoples was also on display at Standing Rock in 2016. According to Winona LaDuke, “tribes sent semi loads of logs for firewood, endless buffalo meat, dried salmon, [and] plant medicines”

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381 https://www.yintahaccess.com/wishlist
382 https://www.yintahaccess.com/wishlist
383 Manning also notes that at Standing Rock “Solar panels and small wind turbines produced energy” (2019: 297). Kanahus Manuel has been quite clear that the Tiny House Warriors were inspired by her experience at Standing Rock: https://www.huffpost.com/archive/ca/entry/indigenous-activists-are-building-tiny-houses-to-protest-b-c-trans-mountain-pipeline_a_23202037.
384 This is a powerful example of how the circuit of Water Protection and Land Defence is realized through what Leanne Simpson calls “Indigenous Internationalism” (see Simpson 2017, chapter 4).
Together, all of these sources of money and goods make up the other essential premise of the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence and the organizational forms of the Land Back movement.

On the basis of these two fundamental conditions of the redistribution of labour and the redistribution of money and goods, the blockade, as embodied in the examples given above, functions as a mediation of both redistribution and resurgence. The reallocation of creative human capacity facilitated by its organization amounts to a metamorphosis of skills and knowledge from their commodification as wage-labour into abilities which may be developed and exercised for other ends, namely the practice of revitalizing and asserting Indigenous traditions and governance while sustaining the Indigenous critical infrastructure that underpins them by reconnecting Indigenous people to the territory and its relations in a direct way. In other words, it lays the basis for a form of activity that is self-mediated or determined by Indigenous values, knowledge, and priorities to a larger degree than in the context of institutions of social reproduction more constrained and beholden (however mediated) to the conditions of capitalist wealth, e.g., friendship centres, universities, bands, settler governments, capitalist workplaces, etc. Said differently, it facilitates a practice of grounded normativity less mediated by the structural constraints of capital. The redistribution of money and goods, on the other hand, provide the means of struggle necessary for activating the reallocation of labour into an organ that can sustain and develop Indigenous critical infrastructure in the face of colonial capitalist encroachment. By reuniting the subjective and objective conditions that constitute the practice of Water Protection and Land Defence, this circuit of redistribution
effectively functions to slacken the compulsion at the core of capitalist social relations of production, and, by virtue of this, provides a basis for the enforcement of Indigenous law.

The Redistribution of Labour

On the Unist’ot’en Camp website, we get a strong sense of what kind of volunteer labour this entails, specifically under ‘Supporter Registration,’ where potential camp attendees are asked if they possess any of the following skills: first aid, cooking, childcare, using a chainsaw, using a snowmobile, traditional skills, wilderness camping, mechanical repair, construction, or any other skilled trade. According to Lillian Wilson (Laksamshu), who visited the Unist’ot’en Camp in 2013, these kind of skills were used to build a permaculture garden, a pithouse, greenhouses, and a small smoke house, as well as preserving traditional and donated foods and crafting hunting tools like bows. Settler journalist Brad Hornick recalls that during his stay at Unist’ot’en people were needed to vet newcomers at the gate; bake bread; gather water from the river to fill cisterns for the outhouses; give lectures and workshops; maintain 24 hour

Margaret McGregor and Larry Barzelai (2021) recall in a Canadian Dimension article that “Catering for anywhere from 10 to 100 people, and hosting guests and supporters to the Centre can itself be a full-time occupation. Over the brief time we were there, I would often see Brenda or Karla poring over recipes for a wonderful variety of meals we enjoyed including bannock tacos and salmon with quinoa. Not only did Brenda’s cooking skills impress me, but I was struck by their attention to presentation and meticulous accommodation of people with food sensitivities.”

According to Margaret McGregor and Larry Barzelai (2021), the welcoming ‘protocol’ at Unist’ot’en requires visitors to state “who they are, where they came from, and what skills [they] could bring to support their efforts.”

Environmental activist Hannah Campbell recalls that “The stories shared were woven together through experiences of pain and triumph. We were fortunate to hear Wolverine speak about his sovereignty and protect his territory. We heard stories of resistance from the Secwepemc Women Warrior Society about their triumphs in reclaiming their sovereignty and building a healthy community.” Margaret McGregor and Larry Barzelai (2021) relate a story in which “Freda [Huson] welcomed this man to the territory. After he had arrived and settled in, she loaned him a Ski-Doo and sent him off to trap. This was a skill he had learned as a child that allowed him to reconnect to the land. Over the course of his stay he thrived, but eventually decided to return to the city. Sometime later he contacted Freda expressing a desire to return to Unist’ot’en where again he reconnected with the land and regained his spiritual and mental health. This
security, which required the construction of a bunk house; and conduct non-violent defence training, which included workshopping and role playing potential trespass scenarios (Hornick 2014). Settler physicians Margaret McGregor and Larry Barzelai recall in their 2021 *Canadian Dimension* article after seeing all the structures along the service road between Smithers and the Morice River that “It then dawned on us why people refer to Unist’ot’en as a ‘village.’ We also learned that the many homes, garages, workshops and other structures have partly been constructed with wood harvested on Unist’ot’en territory and milled at the village.” Other significant forms of labour at Unist’ot’en include traditional healing practices for addiction and intergenerational trauma and land-based traditions, such as trapping (Golkar 2019. These are just some of the basic forms of labour that perpetuate the blockade in this particular form.

**Sites of Radical Resurgence**

Recalling that the blockade is equally a site of resurgence, the labour and goods mentioned here also function to transform the quality of the resurgence carried out on its basis into a dynamic of self-development more directly mediated by Indigenous knowledge, values and institutions. As Freda Huson relates:

> Just reoccupy your lands. Do everything like your ancestors. The ancestors are here helping us. Learn everything about your history and start reconnecting back with your lands and don’t be afraid to garner other supports from other people. Because we didn’t know the first thing about doing protesting, or standing up. There were numerous hands that contributed and helped with what happened here. There’s experienced people out there, don’t be afraid to garner those supports. Because we can’t claim all the credit for everything that happened here, there were so many hands that took part who had

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390 This is akin to what Harry Cleaver identifies, when he writes, “In Tepito, a Mexico City barrio known for its fierce political independence, families often distribute necessary tasks so as to minimize the time each must spend working in order to free up time and energy for political engagement (and communal festivities)” (2017: 76, footnote 8).
fundraising experience and put a lot of these structures up. And then we then we have people that know how to do nonviolent direct action; they came up and provided training so we have all kinds of skilled people. (Spice 2019: 220)

Huson’s response highlights the critical significance of the redistribution of labour to the practice of reoccupation and reconnection.\(^{391}\) The nature and purpose of the ‘free time’ secured by the redistribution of labour and goods is thus not time for abstract social experimentation, but a time for Indigenous resurgence, which, while certainly experimental in the sense of its open-ended developmental character, it is a determinate response to the socio-historical reality of colonial violence and the expression of a sustained sense of sovereignty over all aspects of social life.\(^{392}\) In this sense, it is time for the fulfillment of Secwepemc, Wet’suwet’en, Lakota, or Anishinaabe law; the time of family and clan/house responsibilities; the time for “the re-emergence of political leaders based not on a band council election, but upon Indigenous practices of deep relationality” (Simpson 2021: 11); a time of learning from the Elders; and the time of upholding the treaties with Animal Nations\(^{393}\) - the time of Mooz, Amik, and Migizi, whose presence in this space take on the form of social relations marked by ethical and political imperatives to actively promote their self-development as nations, that is, a form of practice that cultivates the mutual self-development between these nations and those

\(^{391}\) It is also critical to structuring “a politics of ‘refusal’ (Simpson, 2014) rooted in a rejection of settler legal systems and norms in favour of Indigenous nationhood, traditional law and its practice” (Midzain-Gobin 15).

\(^{392}\) In this sense, it is distinct from the kind of projects advocated by Autonomist Marxists (Cleaver 2017, Weeks 2011, Holloway 2010). I do not want to dismiss this tradition’s insistence on working class autonomous development and self-valorization (see Cleaver 1992), but much like the ‘commons’ betrays itself as Indigenous land (Coulthard 2014: 12), the autonomous subject needs to confront the reality of colonial constitution through epistemicide (Santos 2014), which brands the apparent open field/tabula rasa of social experimentation through which the autonomous subject seeks to realize themselves. This is the basis of the imperative for a politics of ‘cognitive justice’ (Santos 2014) in the struggle against capitalist domination or a class struggle that can internalize the anticolonial struggle against this form of violence.

of Indigenous peoples. In short, it is the time of safeguarding the critical infrastructure of Indigenous nations and enhancing the practice of grounded normativity by ‘structuralizing’ Indigenous nationhood. 

In this way, the social reproductive labour and the redistribution of money and goods described above are necessary for sustaining the practice of Indigenous resurgence in a particular way, whereby the quality of that practice is enhanced insofar as it is directly determined by the form and content of Indigenous culture. In other words, it is less mediated by other determinations that inhibit the power of Indigenous traditions, values, protocols, institutions, laws, etc. to shape social practice. For instance, at the Unist’ot’en Camp, the command of Indigenous authority and leadership is unmediated by the settler state and directly determines the activity of those present on the frontlines in the territory. The organization of labour and the use of goods secured through redistribution, as key dimensions of the organized

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394 The dignity of Mooz, for instance, is tied to a practice of respect that ensures the perpetual reproduction of their Nation in relation to the Anishinaabe Nation. In this sense, Mooz transcends individual moose, whose lives may be taken for nourishment and self-development, but whose Nation may never be instrumentalized for the same purpose, especially to the point of destruction and annihilation. See Leanne Simpson’s “Our Treaty with the Hoof Nation” (2017: 58-61). Shiri Pasternak points at these the significance of these relations, when she writes, “By taking into account their own social reproduction as well as other-than-human agency on the land, Barriere Lake challenged regimes of accumulation on their lands and effected powerful controls on the political economy of the territory” (2017: 9).

395 This is how Leanne Simpson characterizes the effect of these efforts. She writes: “I think we need to make a shift from Indigenizing the processes that maintain the structures of settler colonialism, and expand, deepen, and reactualize the processes and knowledges of grounded normativity to structuralize Indigenous nationhood and resurgence and mobilizations as a mechanism to dismantle the structure of colonialism in all its forms” (2017: 47). Elsewhere she writes: “the fuel for our radical resurgence must come from within our own nation-based grounded normativities because these are the intelligence systems that hold the potential, the theory as practice, for making ethical, sustainable Indigenous worlds” (2017: 25).

396 This is what I take Coulthard to be referring to, when he writes, “Those approaches that are increasingly deemed ‘illegitimate’ include, but are not limited to, forms of ‘direct action’ that seek to influence power through less mediated and sometimes more disruptive and confrontational measures” (2014: 166).

397 This is clearly stated on the Unist’ot’en Camp’s “Preparing for your Visit” webpage, where it states “When you first arrive at camp, you participate in the Free Prior Informed Consent Protocol (FPIC), which is a centuries-old practice at the border of Unist’ot’en territory. This process honours the consent given by the keepers of this permitting you to be on their territory. By accepting the rules of camp leadership, you agree to uphold the autonomy of the land, people, and yourself” https://unistoten.camp/come-to-camp/preparing-for-your-visit/.
power of mitigation, thus effectively allow for the institutionalization of tendencies identified in the history analyzed in the previous chapters; namely, the refusal of cooptation and the practical rejection of the colonial politics of recognition; the necessity of direct action; protagonism or self-liberation; the self-development of individuals through a radicalization of culture; the practice of national self-defence; and the enforcement of Indigenous law. In this sense, core tendencies of the Indigenous movement are given a specific institutional character premised on a specific set of objective circumstances. In this sense, principles that were first given robust political expression during the Red Power era through such developments as the politicization of Indigenous pride and the importance of Indigenous spirituality and tradition in transcending colonially induced inferiority and asserting Indigenous rights, and later theorized as the primary tenets of Indigenous resurgence and radicalized through its practical prescriptions, are here provided with a broader margin of action thanks to the infrastructure of redistribution. As a result, all of these tendencies can be practiced in a manner that is less mediated by the fragmentation that marks the dominant social relations of daily life, including other institutional contexts, such as First Nations governments and other government funded organizations, and thus determined to a greater degree by those involved on the basis of their traditional governance and law. The infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection, as a form of organized mitigation, provides, therefore, the objective conditions for a qualitatively different practice of Indigenous resurgence.398

398 As such, it constitutes the practical basis for what Leanne Simpson calls ‘flight’ and what Coulthard calls a resurgent politics of recognition, identified in the last chapter.
The Need for Self-Defence

Furthermore, these practices take place under constant surveillance and disruption by the state, whether directly, e.g., in the form of the RCMP, or indirectly by private contractors and anonymous people. Anne Spice gives us a sense of what this consists of in the following response to an interview question:

I think a lot of the time, and in ideal circumstances, it just looks like Indigenous people living on the land and all of the things that are involved in attempting to rebuild communities that are centred on the land. And so when we’re not being constantly interrupted by police, which is a sort of a daily thing that’s happening, people are going out hunting and they’re cooking for each other and they’re hiking around the territory and learning about the different plants and animals that are there and passing that knowledge along. The goal is just to be able to live as Indigenous people that is constantly being interrupted and challenged by the settler state and by industry. So it’s really hard to go out hunting when they’re upwards of 100 industry trucks driving by on the roads that you used to be able to just drive along without seeing anyone or when every time you go out to go berry picking, you’re followed by police. It’s not particularly glamorous a lot of the time, I think that there’s this view of Indigenous warriors as being like the sort of glamorous thing happening out in the territory. A lot of the time it’s just daily life and a consistent resistance to attempts to interrupt and disrupt that daily life. (Spice 2021)

It therefore comes as no surprise that those who intend to come to camp are also asked if they are experienced in the areas of Indigenous solidarity, environmental action, and decolonization. This latter list of demands refers to tactical skills that are critical for the blockade precisely because they can respond to the evolution of needs generated through the anticolonial struggle and thus to a particular type of social reproductive labour needed under

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399 Kanahus Manuel continues to document this kind of surveillance on Twitter. For example, see Manuel’s post from July 23, 2021: https://twitter.com/kanahusfreedom/status/1418781616395235329

400 Here is a CBC article documenting an attack on the Tiny House Warriors in April of 2020 by Chantelle Bellrichard (2020): https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/tiny-house-village-rcmp-investigate-incident-1.5541726 While Trans Mountain denied that the men who perpetrated the attack were employees of the company, the men were heard making statements that would suggest otherwise.

401 https://unistoten.camp/registration/
conditions of (potential) crisis. The foresight of this provision is a further development of the need for self-defence theorized by Indigenous resurgence. However, unlike its original formulation, which centred primarily on the labour of Warrior Societies, the Unist’ot’en Camp draws on the knowledge and skills of various allies, especially from the environmental movement, in an effort to sustain a pre-emptive organizational form of reoccupation.

As Freda Huson relates in her Right Livelihood Award interview from 2021, she and others engaged in reoccupying the land reached out to non-Indigenous people and environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace, Everyone is Downstream, and Deep Green Resistance, among others, who started running environmental workshops and action camps, where they taught non-violent direct action\footnote{See minute 35:00 of \url{https://rightlivelihood.org/how-to-mobilise-change-freda-huson/}} to participants ranging from 70 to 200 people for one week periods. These were spaces of exchange and learning where people learned a number of skills, such as climbing trees or hanging banners. In the beginning they ran eight annual camps, but this ultimately became difficult to sustain. These measures have been necessary, above all, because the reproduction of Indigenous critical infrastructure is exercised under settler colonialism and thereby faces a permanent structural threat to its existence so long as these social conditions prevail; in other words, these are forms of labour that contribute to defending sustaining the practice of Indigenous grounded normativity more generally.\footnote{Freda Huson discusses this aspect of the camp in an interview with Anne Spice: “Well with what we’ve been doing here we’ve been here seven to eight years, and we just finished our eight annual action camp. So we’ve had anywhere from sixty to two hundred people at a time coming here, and those camps have been to train people. And from my understanding, a lot of people that came here through action camps were the people that went down to Standing Rock to help” (Spice 2019).}

Moreover, the totality of this labour, articulated through the infrastructure of resistance, constitutes the collective social subject of Water Protection and Land Defence. The
frontline Water Protector and Land Defender, as the direct enforcers of Indigenous law, is the immediate force of a collective social practice. It is this collective subject that allows individuals like Alex Golden-Wolf to ‘lock down,’

Freda Huson to issue an eviction notice to CGL (Forester 2020), for Lihkt’samisyu Chiefs Dsta’hyl and Tsebesa to seize and decommission the latter’s equipment, and for Kanahus Manuel and the Tiny House Warriors to obstruct the establishment of ‘man camps’ to house TMX workers. All of this points to the deeply mediated nature of the subjective capacity of frontline Land Defence and Water Protection. The redistribution of labour-power is a necessary condition of Land Defence and Water Protection and the enforcement of Indigenous law and is a critical subjective element in the unity of subject and object institutionalized in the blockade.

Organized Mitigation

In the face of these structural parameters, the redistribution of money and goods through donations, along with the organization of labour that sustains the blockade, i.e., the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence, functions as a mediation that mitigates the force of the mute compulsion of economic relations based on the separation of the direct producers from the means of production, while allowing Water Protectors and Land Defenders to confront the direct forces of colonial dispossession, e.g., in the case of Gidimt’en and Unist’ot’en, the state in the form of the RCMP and the construction of the CGL pipeline. In

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404 See an interview with Alex Golden-Wolf from August 20, 2021, YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_3o8C2TmvY.
405 Real Peoples Media, “Wet’suwet’en Chief Dsta’hyl deactivates Coastal Gaslink Excavator: orders CGL out,” YouTube, October 19, 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sH2AXW-uEs
406 See Kanahus Manuel’s post on X (formerly Twitter), October 13, 2019: https://twitter.com/kanahusfreedom/status/1183566374960095234
407 The idea that only the state perpetuates this form of colonial dispossession is false. The illegality of these projects according to Indigenous law not only extends to the illegitimacy of the political process whereby they
this way it functions a bulwark in a double sense: on the one hand, it defends Indigenous critical infrastructure by intervening into the circuit of capital and, on the other, by attenuating the social forces that prevent one from serving on the frontlines in a sustained way. The infrastructure achieves this in two primary ways.

First, it structures access to the product of labour, whether in its commodity or money form, without Water Protectors and Land Defenders having to exchange their labour for it. This effectively amounts to externalizing the exploitation of labour from the activity of Water Protectors and Land Defenders by redistributing or spreading it across a number of workers. In other words, that exploitation is internalized by individuals whose conditions of production remain external and mediated in the operation of the blockade and therefore obscure, not in the sense of being more exploited as a result but insofar as their share of the social product is consumed on the frontlines. Because the wage of those labourers is (consensually) appropriated without being subjected to the compulsions that circumscribe its origins, those on the frontlines are capable of instrumentalizing it for their own ends, in contrast to its constrained use in the reproduction of the labour-power of those to whom it was originally paid out.  

Second, the social reproductive labour that allows the blockade to function similarly externalizes a series of essential tasks from the capacity and activity of frontline Land Defenders and Water Protectors through a redistribution that takes the form of an organization of labour consisting of multiple people. Just as the redistribution of money and goods allows them to be

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have been approved but the material transformation of the land through production, which ultimately is the most decisive factor for the exercise of Indigenous grounded normativity and the sustainability of its critical infrastructure.

408 The voluntary act of donating is based on the free will of the worker, who functions as a buyer in a realm of consumption, however one already marked by capitalist relations of production. See Michael Lebowitz
repurposed towards the goals of Water Protectors and Land Defenders, the organization of labour constitutes a complex mediation that frees up their labour-power for a practice determined by the content of Indigenous resurgence and prescribed by Indigenous law.

Together they constitute a direct form of intervention into the impersonal force field of social compulsion that facilitates exploitation under the capital system by allowing Water Protectors and Land Defenders to evade the subjection entailed by this compulsion, while simultaneously functioning as a safeguard against the commodification of their creative or productive capacity and the personification of their subjectivity implied by the latter. In other words, what is mitigated is the force of separation insofar as it transforms subjectivity into a real abstraction that can only be realized through a reunification with its objective conditions in the form of capital. As such, the circuit de-personifies their subjectivity to the extent that it is no longer beholden to the immediate structural imperatives of wage-labour or the social reproductive labour that both depends on and sustains the latter for capital. This allows for a significant degree of self-mediation or self-determined activity by opening up the possibility for a type of practice, namely Water Protection, Land Defence, the enforcement of Indigenous law, traditional Indigenous Governance, etc., that is less determined in a direct way by the imperatives of capital and therefore less constrained in terms of its objectives and the values it seeks to substantiate through struggle. Subjective capacity is thereby reunited with objective conditions in a manner where it becomes a use-value for itself, that is, the means of struggle

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409 To qualify, I am not suggesting that what is evaded is an original process of separation but the process by which this separation is reproduced on a daily basis through the circuits of capital, i.e., the organic reproduction of labour-power.

410 This, of course, is not a reunification on the level of society as a whole but an isolated process.
can be instrumentalized towards ends determined by the decision-making processes of Water Protectors and Land Defenders. However, while it counters the force of proletarianization, it does not undermine its structural constraints, a point I will develop in the conclusion of this dissertation.

**Intensifying External Threat and the Effective Enforcement of Indigenous Law**

Moreover, under increasing external threat, the labour that undergirds the blockade tends to ramify and become more complex in its coordination and execution. The struggle at Standing Rock in 2016 illustrates how the intensification of anticolonial struggle impacts the constellation and quality of this social reproductive labour. Like the Unist’ot’en Camp, similar skills were required to maintain the plurality of camps at Standing Rock. In a *Socialist Workers* article from December 2016 entitled “How the Water Protectors Won at Standing Rock,” five activists provide first-hand accounts of how the complex coordination of this social reproductive labour was critical to the organization and maintenance of the blockade in the face of encroachment. This, of course, included a number of basic forms of labour, including “a self-organized security system, garbage collecting, donation sorting, fire keepers, construction [with a centralized tent, ‘which found ways to put people to work even if they lacked construction skills’], volunteer coordinating, winterization and direct action” (Petty 2016). It also consisted of butchering, cooking, and washing dishes in one of nine kitchens, food deliveries “to ensure elders and fire keepers were fed,” childcare and areas for the kids to play, and distributing warm clothing and hand warmers (Petter 2016). As Sarah Sunshine Manning (2019) recalls, “During that time, roads were well worn into the grass, culture-based schools for children were established by volunteer teachers, kitchens sprang up, structures for living and gathering were built, legal
teams organized, and medic tents with massage therapists,\textsuperscript{411} Reiki practitioners, and even acupuncturists took care of the health and well-being of Water Protectors” (2019: 297).

Moreover, this labour also consisted of ceremonial practices,\textsuperscript{412} traditional teachings and education more generally as well as entertainment. For instance, Edna Bonhomme recounts that

On 4 December, early-morning prayer began at 6am By 7:30am, as dawn was setting in, a history lesson began, in which a Lakota historian and teacher made parallels between surveillance under the Israeli occupation of Palestinians and the surveillance of Natives under the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He continued by dismantling the stereotypes that Native peoples do not pay taxes – in fact, they have paid taxes through the Homestead Act and the Dawes Act. (Petty 2016)

Thus, the labour involved in maintaining the camps reproduced both the objective and subjective conditions of their sustainability. It was the totality of this labour that, in part, constituted the infrastructure of care and resistance referred to above by LaDuke (2020: 303).

Critically, people in the camps were also able to respond to needs as they arose under the volatile conditions of the struggle.\textsuperscript{413} Manning writes that

In the camps and on the front lines, individuals became a necessary part of the whole, as they each become tightly woven into a reciprocal relationship with the community that would sustain them through even the harshest conditions. As frontline Water Protectors organized dynamic frontline actions, the atmosphere grew increasingly more

\textsuperscript{411} “The medic camp provided healing methods from the world: massage, acupuncture, crystal and stone healing, herbal remedies, and much more. The lines were long to get the opportunity to receive such gifts, and those who provided this loving service worked throughout the day to provide peace and healing for everyone. Native people needn’t stand in line; we were moved to the front of the line to receive such gifts. The medic camp also provided midwives for pregnant women to receive care and prepare for childbirth. In this environment, women could feel confident in their bodies and decisions about childbirth, a gift that has long been removed from many Native communities. Young women engaged in conversations about nutrition, vitamins, healing teas, exercises, mother–child relationships, and on and on, geared toward having healthy babies as we are meant to, through home birth methods with help and direction from women” (2019: 287).

\textsuperscript{412} Manning writes that “Sweat lodges were erected all throughout camp, and ceremonies took place daily” (2019: 297).

\textsuperscript{413} As Leia Petty (2016) recalled, “There was also the more spontaneous self-organization of someone seeing a need and stepping in to address it.” For example, an ‘Animal House’ was established to shelter dogs that were separated from their owners, as in one case where a medic was sent to a nearby hospital due to hypothermia.
dangerous, and still they pushed on. Dog attacks, mace, freezing water in the black of night, blizzards, and hundreds of arrests were not enough to deter the many who came to protect the water, the land, and the health and well-being of future generations. New tactics constantly emerged to stop construction of the pipeline, keeping the Morton County Sheriff’s Department and Dakota Access security on their toes. (2019: 297)

As a result of this dynamic organization of labour, the camps at Standing Rock “quickly blossomed into [a] self-sustaining and self-governing town” according to Leia Petty (2016). Petty (2016) recalls that “From the moment we arrived, it was clear that there was no way the Army Corps of Engineers would be able to carry out their eviction notice. In every direction, the camp was expanding, the numbers were swelling, and supply trucks were arriving with donations. The infrastructure had simply become too massive.” In other words, through the quantitative expansion of consensually coordinated tasks, i.e., the development of a complex and dynamic infrastructure, this form of social interchange gave rise to a qualitative shift by institutionalizing a counterforce that was capable of practically undermining the possibility of eviction. That is, through the concentration and development of this infrastructure the latter became effectively illegal according to Oceti Sakowin law. In this sense, the ‘critical infrastructure’ of Oceti Sakowin required a concentrated\textsuperscript{414} autonomous organization of labour not just as a critical condition of its reproduction but as a condition of enforcing Indigenous law.

Accordingly, this infrastructure of resistance, as a tactical form taken by Indigenous critical infrastructure under intensifying external pressure, is a qualitative development of the general social conditions of Indigenous grounded normativity, enabling a social historical transformation of the latter that facilitates its reproduction vis-à-vis the changing conditions of

\textsuperscript{414} This organization was more diffuse during the Wet’suwet’en struggle in winter 2020 but was effectively the same.
colonial capital domination. The blockade, as the objective manifestation of this unfolding
relationality, embodies this qualitative transformation and becomes the linchpin of Indigenous
land and life under determinate conditions of struggle. As such, the labour constituting this
network and the social reproductive labour realized within it are both productive and
defensive, together forming an essential premise of the social basis of Water Protection and
Land Defence as a material force, i.e., a positive form of power capable of influencing the
course of generalized social development or what Shiri Pasternak refers to as “the role
Indigenous law plays [not only] in resisting dispossession, but also in shaping the political
economy of regions across the nation” (2017: 9). Thus, the organization of labour that
expresses itself in the concentrated form of the blockade is equally the infrastructure of
Indigenous Law alluded to by Estes insofar as the redistribution of labour at the heart of the
blockade creates a degree of leverage wielded by Water Protectors and Land Defenders that
grants this law coercive power.

Activating the Social Power of the Land Back Movement: The Wet’suwet’en Uprising

As stated in chapter one, the Wet’suwet’en Uprising of 2020\textsuperscript{415} not only expressed a strong
tendency within the broader Indigenous movement towards the necessity of direct action but
was also grounded on the development of the semi-autonomous organizational form of the
Unist’ot’en Cultural and Healing Centre as a concerted strategy of rejecting the colonial politics
of recognition in practice. In the winter of 2020, this organizational form demonstrated the

\textsuperscript{415} The mass movement commonly referred to as hashtag ShutdownCanada or the Wet’suwet’en Uprising of 2020 was based on a conflict, which is still going on today, between the Wet’suwet’en Nation as represented by its hereditary chiefs and traditional government and the Canadian state and TC Energy (formerly TransCanada) because of TC Energy’s Coastal Gaslink Project, a natural gas pipeline currently under construction in B.C. Although securing support from the majority of Wet’suwet’en First Nations band councils along the pipeline path, the hereditary chiefs have never consented to the pipeline.
capacity of activating and sustaining for a considerable period a broad-based extra-
parliamentary social force. The latter, constituted from politicized segments of the Indigenous
and settler population, took the form of solidarity blockades, occupations, and demonstrations.
As one mainstream media outlet reported on February 18th, “protests by Indigenous people
and supporters have shut down the CN rail network in eastern Canada, suspended most Via
Rail passenger service, and temporarily blocked traffic on streets and bridges and at ports in
multiple cities” (The Canadian Press 2020). Like the qualitative developments that occurred in
the camps at Standing Rock under increasing threat from the National Guard, this mass
solidarity created the leverage which granted Wet’suwet’en law and governance coercive or
effective power.

Defenders of the Land

A critical factor in the activation of this mass solidarity that supported the Wet’suwet’en
Hereditary Chiefs and the Unist’ot’en camp can be traced back to the work of an organization
known as Defenders of the Land. This organization brought together a number of Indigenous
frontline activists, including key leaders from the Unist’ot’en Camp and a number of
communities who had been involved in high-profile conflicts in defence of their territories since
the early 2000s as well as radical analysts and theorists, like Russ Diabo, Shiri Pasternak, and Art
Manuel. The anticolonial strategy they had been promulgated since at least 2008 when they
first formed played a critical role in the uprising.

Shortly after the apex of the struggle, journalist Martin Lukacs published an article in the
Tyee on the role of the Defenders in the mass movement that erupted that winter. Writing
about one of their meetings shortly after Idle No More, he recalls that “All of those present
intimately understood a certain fact: their blockades, sit-ins and encampments on the land had resulted in victories against governments and resource companies, despite lectures from media pundits about how such tactics were counterproductive” (2020). Despite this consciousness, “They had, however, come to the conclusion that fighting their battles in isolation had not resulted in enduring systemic change. Even many of their achievements... remained tenuous, poorly supported, or potentially reversible” (Lukacs 2020). The goal of their gatherings, which dated back to 2008, was “to coordinate their activities on an unprecedented scale” if they wanted their rights and power of self-determination to have any practical substance (Lukacs 2020). The imperative to create leverage by developing a popular basis can be traced back to George Manuel’s ‘Peoples’ movement’ and the insistence on a coordinated strategy of large-scale intervention into the economic infrastructure of the country at least to the UBCIC’s Chilliwack decision and ‘Militant May’ as well as the proliferation of blockades across BC in the 1990s. Moreover, since Idle No More and the mass surveillance and intelligence gathering it prompted, scholars such as Shiri Pasternak had been unearthing documents exposing state anxiety around the vulnerability of ‘critical infrastructure’ and the threat to it Indigenous communities posed by virtue of their proximity to some its key junctions. This knowledge helped consolidate a strategy based on a large-scale disruption of these pressure points. As they argued,

The real potential power of economic disruption... was not in the cities but back in the home territories of Indigenous land defenders, crisscrossed by highways, rail lines and logging roads and facing proposed pipelines, mines or mega-dams. [And] If the movement could enlist both the growing numbers of Indigenous rights supporters in urban centres [especially in the wake of Idle No More and the TRC] and the potential for economic disruption wielded by communities in rural areas, its bargaining power with government and industry might be decisive, providing the leverage that Art Manuel, [as
we saw in earlier lectures,] believed necessary to enforce Indigenous rights on the ground (Lukacs 2020).

Such a strategy relied on another important precedent set by Idle No More in terms of settler solidarity, which had never before manifested on such a scale, due to inclusive forms of protest, such as flash mob round dances and teach-ins, especially in urban public centres like shopping malls, and the widespread dissemination of its demands and analyses on social media, which not only informed many people but also mobilized them quickly. Thus “On the issue of the role of non-Indigenous people in this movement, they were unequivocal,” writes Lukacs,

Many in the network also envisioned a non-native solidarity network working alongside Defenders of the Land [and other Indigenous peoples and nations]. Solidarity was crucial to building the kind of power that could change the calculus of what was politically possible. This was partly a question of math [given that] Indigenous peoples make up barely five per cent of Canada’s population, so any political transformation would require the support of non-Indigenous people and organizations. The approach of the network to working with non-native organizers was open-minded and practical: if a non-native person had knowledge and skills to contribute, they were welcome. (2020)

This openness to non-Indigenous solidarity is precisely what we saw with the Native People’s Caravan in the 1970s, although it is no longer clear today if this kind of solidarity is based on the understanding of a mutual need for liberation or the instrumental relation of allyship. Part of the contention of this dissertation is that restoring the struggle against settler colonialism and for Indigenous self-determination as struggles against capitalist society is the condition for (re)developing the basis for grasping the struggles of others as intrinsic conditions of one’s self-development, i.e., the possibility of mutual self-development. In any case, this pragmatic openness and relationship has been integral to the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, as we see with Standing Rock and Unist’ot’en. The latter create spaces for social relations and practice capable of developing this solidarity both ideologically and practically.
Above all, the recognition of the necessity of mobilizing social forces beyond Indigenous nations as a condition of their substantial political power in the face of an antagonistic political and capital class is the essence of this strategy. What was clear is that the 2020 uprising had internalized important historical lessons in its response to the invasion of Wet’suwet’en territory. As Lukacs writes, with “its mix of tactics — marches, ceremonies and round dances, as well as blockades of legislatures, railways and ports — the moment blended the most inclusive expressions of Idle No More with the economically disruptive tactics that Defenders of the Land had once envisioned” (2020).

Critical to the dissemination of this strategy was the work of individuals like Freda Huson, who had established the Unist’ot’en camp as early as 2010 and over the years had travelled around to various Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, especially those who had lent their defensive tactical knowledge and skills to the Unist’ot’en camp, speaking about the intent and aims of the camp. As a result, many Indigenous and settler allies were mobilized when the RCMP invaded Unist’ot’en territory for the second time in 2020.

Moreover, this self-activity and organization was critical to sustaining a social base that was impervious to the direction and cooption of the AFN as a means of demobilizing anticolonial forces. As Lukacs writes, alluding to the decline of broad-based Indigenous grassroots movements, such as the Constitution Express and perhaps AIM,

There had not been anything like this in two generations of Indigenous politics: a grassroots organization of land defenders that could provide national leadership and coordinated action. At the same time, they could act as an alternative to establishment

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organizations like the Assembly of First Nations, whose dependency on funding from the federal government had long compromised its political independence. (2020)

Although it could not be said with any accuracy that the Defenders of the Land directed the multiplicity of solidarity actions that took place during the movement, the ineffectuality of the AFN was on full display. Former national chief Perry Bellegarde’s calls for “de-escalation” and “dialogue”\footnote{See Brean 2020 for example.} hardly put a stop to the solidarity blockades grounding Wet’suwet’en resistance to the pipeline, garnering him some criticism from mainstream political powers, especially from the conservative Right who were upset with what they saw as the Trudeau government’s complacency. Rather, it would take the enforcement of another injunction, this time in Tyendinaga Mohawk territory, a key choke point and source of Wet’suwet’en power,\footnote{The significance of this action was made clear by the fact that the federal government sent minister of Indigenous services Marc Miller to talk with the land defenders.} whose action was governed by the Mohawk traditional clan system,\footnote{See Christi Belcourt’s experience on Warrior Life podcast.} as the OPP dismantled the blockade of a main corridor in late February.

Regardless of the ultimate results of the struggle, strategies like the Defenders of the Land’s, along with a broader political education, managed to activate a significant portion of the population in a way that was actively resistant to state mediations in the resolution of (heightened) colonial conflict and ultimately needed to be strong-armed into submission. In other words, the Wet’suwet’en uprising of 2020 embodied many of the tendencies from the broader Indigenous movement highlighted in earlier chapters: a rejection of co-optation and the politics of recognition more broadly, the facilitation of protagonistic politics, the necessity of direct action, the leadership of Indigenous Peoples, cultures and laws called for and
developed by Indigenous resurgence, etc. The work of Defenders of the Land, among other organizations, of building relationships, raising consciousness about the history of the struggle, and legitimizing certain tactics based on that historical consciousness, was essential to creating the conditions that were activated across the country during the Wet’suwet’en conflict. Of course, one cannot attribute this to any particular group, but the development and dissemination of this kind of conscious political intervention certainly played a significant role in the movement of 2020.

**General Coercive Power**

Much was made in the media during the uprising about the contradiction between the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs and the elected chief and councils of the Wet’suwet’en First Nations, above all to discredit the former as a non-democratic and presumably anachronistic form of government. This ideological representation of the conflict does not only suppress the fact that the Supreme Court of Canada has recognized, specifically in relation to the Wet’suwet’en, the Hereditary Chiefs and traditional government as the proper legal authority over the traditional land base, but the real social ground of this contradiction, which is based in the long history of structural domination, systematic neglect, social abandonment, the capitalist use and abuse of the natural basis of Indigenous social practice, and generational Indigenous exclusion from social wealth. Under these broad socio-historical conditions, it is completely reasonable that atomized and structurally dependent First Nations would enter into relation with capitalist development to enhance their self-development. This ethical question is not a debate dealt with in this dissertation. Rather, I am concerned with the conditions under which a
social force is capable of challenging this general situation, which submerges the antagonistic struggle of colonialism within this moral quagmire.

As an active reoccupation, the relative autonomy of the Unist’ot’en camp, premised as it was on the organized rejection of the politics of recognition in practice, was a critical condition for activating the offensive mass struggle or the coercive power of an extra-parliamentary social force in the winter of 2020. It did this in two ways. On the one hand, it provided a distinct social basis and institutional grounding for the authority of the Hereditary Chiefs, which was not marginalized by the Indian Act Chief and Council system; and, on the other, the organized mitigation at its foundation permitted the formation of a subject and object unity and political entity not beholden to the external determinations of the state and capital in the unmediated way of First Nations. These conditions allowed for a clearly identified leadership to guide the uprising and thus a clear object of support for the masses that was not obscured by the colonial morass of legal ambiguities and contradictions exacerbated by political denial and repression. Above all, this force acted as leverage for Wet’suwet’en nationhood, law, and self-determination, i.e., government, beyond state recognition and facilitated a direct confrontation with the forces of state and capital. As a comprehensive power, the social force of mass solidarity and its disruptive tactics were essential in restoring the colonial conflict to its proper generality against its political reduction to the particularistic relation between atomized communities and the state, which is assumed to be corrigible in principle, as a structural process in which Indigenous national liberation is a critical counterforce.

In this sense, it constituted a force that had the power in principle to bind not only governments and capital but individual bands/First Nations. The push to apply a general
constraint on all bands is especially important because the second nature of the social environment, generated by previous processes of dispossession and capitalist accumulation, effectively functions as a ‘free gift’ to capital. This is so despite the social necessity of Indigenous democratic participation prescribed by the Canadian constitution, given that capital finds people desperate to work without the conditions to realize it or the means to avoid it in a dignified way. Thus, because they are forced to act out of self-interest as atomized units, the only reasonable form of Indigenous (self) determination that can be actualized by First Nations as individual bands under these conditions is more often than not one conducive to the encroaching capital’s interest. Similar to what Coulthard says about land claims, under these circumstances Indigenous constitutional power is possible only to the extent it is united with capitalist development. This ‘take it or leave it’ option is accompanied by the alternative of legal gridlock, which is often even less attractive, as the Wet’suwet’en know only too well. To be sure, bands also have fought back in their respectively ways, including through collectivizing their interests and amalgamating their power; for example, First Nations in and around the so-called Ring of Fire have acted in concert to prevent its development due to conditions deemed disrespectful of their rights, while the Ontario government continues to strategize ways in which they can deal with the bands individually or bypass them altogether. However, those who are compelled to cut a deal with the state and capital exercise their self-determination within the social constraints of colonial domination; their self-determination takes the form of a consensual coercion at the best of times and outright exclusion at the worst of times. It is thus critical to make a qualitative distinction between the type of political power exercised through these distinct forms of redistribution, that is, the difference between the form of governance
exercised on the basis of state transfers and the type of power facilitated by the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence, which, in the Wet’suwet’en struggle against the CGL and the Canadian state, grounded and was enhanced by the mass solidarity that erupted in 2020. Despite the fact that the uprising was ultimately quelled by the pandemic,\textsuperscript{420} the Wet’suwet’en uprising demonstrated in practice the fact that settler colonialism must be universally confronted and transcended \textsuperscript{421} precisely because it represented a movement in this direction.

**Implications of General Coercive Power**

Throughout this conflict, the power and authority of the Hereditary Chiefs was substantiated or granted effective material force by a mass solidarity network made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies, who created the leverage required by the Chiefs to confront the state and pipeline corporation in a way that put the project at risk, at least temporally. This significant fact suggests that the power of an Indigenous nation’s traditional authority, governance, and law equally lies outside the bounds of that nation. In other words, the uprising demonstrated that conditions external to Indigenous nations are critical to the effective power of those who defy the politics of recognition in practice. As an infringement of Wet’suwet’en law, the CGL pipeline was only effectively criminalized for trespassing by virtue of the infrastructure of solidarity that expanded after the invasion to include large numbers of allies across the country who intervened in the so-called critical infrastructure of the country. It is this social force that

\textsuperscript{420} Admittedly, it had already been largely re-localized shortly before the pandemic erupted in March 2020, but the latter halted its potential resurgence, which would have most likely occurred in a political context unhampered by emergency responses to the pandemic.

\textsuperscript{421} The level of generality cannot be properly assessed or grasped outside of the structural parameters of capital and its hegemonic confrontation by labour.
constituted the coercive power of Wet’suwet’en law and sovereignty. After all, it is one thing to accusesomeone of breaking the law and it is another to be able to enforce it. Because the power of the settler colonial state and the capitalist class is extremely disproportional to that of Indigenous nations and Water Protectors and Land Defenders, the values and decisions of nations such as the Wet’suwet’en will remain structurally subordinated and marginal within democratic processes circumscribed and prejudged by the structural imperatives of capital, whether in the context of the colonial politics of recognition or the terms of consultation that currently prevail. Their practical effectiveness is thus measured by the vitality of the struggle carried out in their name. It is this struggle that creates the conditions of enforcement and converts Indigenous authority and law into a material force capable of coercing those in defiance.

This requires a solidarity network that evidently transcends the boundaries of conventional national membership. Although Indigenous Peoples like the Wet’suwet’en determine their own criteria of national belonging as well as decision making rights, the conditions of nationhood, if this is understood as a social power capable of enforcing one’s authority and law in a manner which is not subordinated to the state and the interests of the capitalist class, is constituted by a solidarity network that cuts across the colonial divide. This does not mean, for instance, that settlers are members of the Indigenous nation with whom they are acting in solidarity, but their practical solidarity is a condition of that nationhood insofar as the latter is a material force capable of shaping the social whole. Thus, the power of Indigenous nations for anti-colonial self-determination resides equally in conditions external as well as internal to them. We might say that this solidarity network is external to the nation but
internal to its nationhood. The nation remains constituted by its Indigenous members who
determine the course of its self-development, while the agents of solidarity are intrinsic to the
latter’s realization. The infrastructure of solidarity is a critical condition for the assertion of
Indigenous self-determination in anti-colonial form and potentially anti-capitalist form, a point I
will develop in the concluding chapter.

Presupposition of Circuits of Wage-Labour & Capital

What the foregoing analysis suggests is that both Indigenous critical infrastructure and the form
taken by it under crisis conditions, i.e., the infrastructure of resistance, which is critical to the
enforcement of Indigenous law, practically presuppose the circuit of wage-labour and therefore
that of capital regardless of the extent to which they are mediated.

Circuit of Capital

As Marx noted, to speak of capital is always to speak of competing units of capital, i.e., a
plurality of capitals (1973: 414). Each of these units is dominated by the “valorization
imperative” or the necessity that money begets more money, which is invariably represented
in the Marxist literature by the formula of M-C-M’ in which money is an end-in-itself. As Tony
Smith writes, M-C-M’ is the abstract representation

of the indefinite number of overlapping circuits making up generalised commodity
production and exchange. All the interacting circuits together form a macro-monetary
circuit that begins with the aggregate amount of money capital initially invested in the
society in a given period, progresses through the aggregate production and circulation

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422 “Capital exists and can only exist as many capitals, and its self-determination therefore appears as their reciprocal interaction with one another” (1973: 414).
423 This is Tony Smith’s conception (2017: 108).
424 As Tony Smith writes, “The heart of Marx’s critique of political economy is the thesis that this subordination of m-c-m’ circuits cannot be established in generalised commodity production. There may be social orders in which money functions primarily as a means to further human ends, but ours is not one of them. In generalised commodity production, a fundamental inversion takes place; money, a supposed means, becomes an end-in-itself on the level of society as a whole” (Smith 106).
of commodities in that period, and culminates with the aggregate returns from sale of these commodities. (2017: 109)

This formula thus represents a practical process of metamorphosis that must be brought to fruition by each unit of capital if that end is to be realized and the unit is to sustain itself as a part of the ‘total social capital.’\footnote{Tony Smith writes: “Units that do not systematically direct their endeavours to ‘valorisation’ in m-c-m’ circuits, that is, to the appropriation of monetary returns (m’) exceeding initial investment (m), tend to be pushed to the margins of social life, when not forced out of existence altogether. They must therefore systematically subordinate other ends to the pursuit of monetary returns” (107). As such, “The ceaseless reproduction and expansion of capital is the driving force, the inner telos, of each individual capital circuit and the ultimate end of a capitalist social order as a whole, and we humans must pursue our individual and shared conceptions of the good as best we can within that framework (116). Regarding the notion of “total social capital,” István Mészáros writes, “Capital is not a homogeneous entity... There can be no way of bringing the capital system under one big monopoly that would provide the material basis of... a global government. In reality, we have a multiplicity of divisions and contradictions, and ‘total social capital’ is the comprehensive category that incorporates the plurality of capitals, with all their contradictions” (2008: 72).}

As such, it signifies a concrete circuit. Smith sums up the movement of this circuit in the following way. Based on Marx’s analysis, he writes

Capital first takes on the form of investment capital (m), which is then used to purchase commodity capital (c). This is followed by a phase of capital in production (p), resulting in commodity outputs (c’; inventory capital), produced in the hope of being sold\footnote{This phase of capital’s circuit appears to suggest that capital is utterly subordinated to the will and ends of consumers because it remains contingent on the sale of its product in order to realize its expanded form. Thus, Smith writes: Of course, there is also an important sense in which m-c-m’ circuits are incorporated within (subordinated under) c-m-c circuits: the former produce and distribute the goods and services with which the latter culminate. But the symmetry is not complete in one important respect. When the sale of commodities to final consumers completes a m-c-m’ circuit, consumers have given up some of their income. In a world where money is generally required to gain access to the means to satisfy wants and needs, this income must be replenished. And that process is, once again, logically and practically dependent on circuits that have money as their endpoint. c-m-c circuits thereby remain systematically subordinated under m-c-m’ circuits over time (108).} for a monetary amount exceeding the initial investment (m’, realised capital, that is, capital that has realised its end of being increased or ‘valorised’). (Smith 2017: 110)

The Marxian notion of circuits thus takes us away from the abstract standpoint of the impersonal and totalitarian nature of capital and foregrounds the latter as a practical power that passes through various concrete forms in its process of reproduction.

Moreover, the successful completion of the circuit itself is governed by the law of value, i.e., production for exchange on the basis of labour-time or what Marx called socially necessary
labour-time,\textsuperscript{427} which is a practical norm that arises from the structural determinations of capitalist social relations\textsuperscript{428} and determines the conditions under which capital is sustained as such. It is essentially the standard of exploitation, which is continuously changing due to class struggle, technological innovation, the concentration and centralization of capital, imperialism, etc. For Marx, capital is alienated labour.\textsuperscript{429} The law of value and therefore the circuit of capital are thus premised on the commodification of labour-power, i.e., a social relation between the owners of labour-power and the owners of the conditions of labour. As Smith writes, this is not merely an economic process but, above all, a social process in which “each moment in the

\textsuperscript{427} See chapter 1 of Volume 1 of Marx's \textit{Capital}.

\textsuperscript{428} As Lebowitz writes, “Naturally, commodity and money also have their premises. They imply a separation of producers such that their need for the products of each other is not satisfied through a direct social relation between their products, a social relation expressed as the exchange value of their commodities. If the social relation among producers were such as to permit a direct exchange of ‘activities, determined by communal needs and communal purposes,’ the conditions that require a commodity-money economy – that is, ‘the market’ – would not be present; in short, atomization of the producers is a condition for commodity and money and thus capitalism” (2020: 48) The relation of these units is what Tony Smith calls ‘dissociated sociality’: “In the historically specific division of labour that is generalised commodity production, the production of goods and services is (generally) undertaken privately by individual units of production. These units do not know ex ante if they will succeed in exchanging the products they have produced. The social necessity of the privately undertaken production can only be established ex post, through successful exchange. This arrangement defines a historically specific form of human sociality, appropriately termed ‘dissociated sociality.’ ‘Dissociated’ refers to the way production is undertaken privately by separated ('dissociated') producers, who are in turn separated ('dissociated') from potential buyers. ‘Sociality’ refers to the fact that products are not produced for private use, but for sale to other members of society to meet their wants and needs. When the social validation of privately undertaken production occurs through the sale in the market, the product then acquires the abstract property, value, understood now as the property ‘produced by privately undertaken labour whose social necessity has been socially validated’. This definition of value both implies, and is implied by, the definition in terms of ‘universal exchangeability’” (80).

\textsuperscript{429} Lebowitz writes, “Considering capital, Marx concluded that it too contained a distinction. Encountered initially as a unity of commodity and money, as capital in the sphere of circulation, capital was shown to require (in order to exist as self-expanding value) a process that lay beyond circulation itself – a process of production. Capital, thus, differentiates into capital in circulation and capital in production. It must leave the sphere of circulation and enter into that of production; and, it is in this latter sphere that we see capital, as self-valorising value, generate the production of surplus value and secure the production of commodities containing surplus value” (2003: 60). Seen as a whole, we recognize that capital must move through a continuing circuit, which can be expressed in several ways. In the circuit of money-capital, we begin with money-capital (\(M\)) purchasing as commodities (\(C\)) both means of production (\(Mp\)) and labour-power (\(Lp\)); there is an intervening process of production (\(P\)) during which commodities containing surplus value are produced (\(C\)) which must be sold (\(C-M\)) in order to return to the money-capital form: \(M-C(Mp, Lp) \ldots P \ldots C-M\). (Lebowitz 2003: 60)
macro-monetary circuit of capital (m-c-p-c′-m′) is a moment in the systematic reproduction of the social relation between those who control capital and those who do not” (Smith 2017: 120).

In other words, the results of the circuit are its own social premises. As Michael Lebowitz writes, the circuit of capital entails its premise in the appropriation of unpaid labour:

> From money-capital to productive-capital to commodity-capital and back to money-capital – there is the circuit of capital as a whole that permits the reproduction of capital as the premise of capitalist production... By understanding this continuing circuit of capital, we recognize that the capital that appears as a premise for capitalist production does not drop from the sky or otherwise from outside the circuit of capital. Even, indeed, if capital were to come initially from another source, Marx insisted that ‘the mere continuity’ of this process of production and circulation converts all capital into ‘capitalized surplus-value.’ That is, it is the result of the exploitation of workers. (2020: 49-50)

Thus, capital is identical to alienated labour or the product of exploitation and not derived from sources external to the relations of production. But as Lebowitz notes elsewhere, this also means that the circuit of capital is not self-sufficient:

> there is an element that is not part of capital, which is not produced and reproduced by capital, which is a point of departure but not one of return in the circuit of capital, a presupposition that is not a result of capital itself. And, it is one that is necessary for the reproduction of capital, which is required for the very existence of capital itself. (2003: 62-63)

This necessarily implies, according to Lebowitz, who follows Marx’s methodology quite rigorously, a second circuit; namely, the circuit of wage-labour.430

430 The full passage reads with reference to the circuit of capital: “We have here the consumption of labour-power but not its production and the production of articles of consumption but not their consumption. In short, the system can only be complete by positing explicitly another process of production, a second moment of production (Pw), distinct from the process of production of capital – one in which labour-power is produced in the course of consuming articles of consumption. Thus, the circuit of capital necessarily implies a second circuit, the circuit of wage-labour” (2003: 64-65).
Circuit of Wage-labour

As Tony Smith argues, despite the valorization imperative’s domination over the reproduction of society, Exceedingly few individual agents make the transformation of m into m’ their primary life goal... most simply wish to obtain money in order to be able to use it to obtain goods and services for themselves and their families. From this perspective most of their economic activities, then, can indeed be comprehended in terms of c-m-c circuits, with money acquired in order to gain access to goods or services that further non-monetary ends, rather than in terms of circuits where money is an ultimate end in itself. Nonetheless, Marx asserts, the use of money as a means to further human ends is subsumed under a higher-order structure where monetary returns have the status of ends in themselves. (2017: 113)

Although the circuit of capital dominates the totality of social reproduction, the vast majority of people engage in the subordinate circuit of c-m-c, whereby labour-power is sold for a wage, which is then used to buy commodities. And though wage-labour presupposes the capital circuit as its fundamental condition, it remains not only a key premise of the system but a production process in its own right, whereby workers reproduce themselves. As Michael Lebowitz puts it,

The process of production of the worker, in short, is a process of consuming use-values; and, these use-values are not limited to those associated with physiological subsistence, but include any which produce the worker in ‘some particular aspect’... [and] the result of this process of production is the worker himself. (2003: 67-68)

Following Marx, Lebowitz writes that the goal of this production process is “‘the workers own need for development’” (2003: 69), whereby consuming commodities, whether as goods or service, is an activity that develops the self, both in terms of subsistence and the growth of capacities. This activity constitutes its own (embedded) circuit. As Lebowitz writes,

the production of labour-power involves a complex sequence encompassing (a) the moment of production of articles of consumption; (b) the payment of money-wages to the worker; (c) a moment of circulation in which the worker exchanges his or her [or
their] money for articles of consumption; (d) a second moment of production in which those use-values (as well as concrete, uncounted labor) are consumed in order to prepare labour-labour for exchange; and (e) the sale of labor-power to the capitalist. (2021: 93).

However, this “process has as its result the worker, as living labour capacity... [as] its only product. The use-values, necessary as presuppositions, are not produced, are not results. Thus, this labour process by itself cannot be a system of reproduction” (Lebowitz 2021: 70). This is why Marx referred to consumption as a process of annihilation which “simply reproduces the needy individual” (Lebowitz 2021: 71). Thus, because this production process does not result in the means of its reproduction, e.g., when I consume food, it is evidently no longer fit for re-consumption, the individual remains dependent on the source of these means of life, which is located in the circuit of capital. The worker must thus comply with the determinations of successfully operating according to the imperatives of this latter circuit. For this reason, it is a circuit of wage-labour, i.e., the reproduction process of a particular social relation of production that presupposes a specific form of production under the dominance of capital. The circuit of wage-labour is thus embedded in the circuit of capital without which it cannot complete itself.

Critical to my argument is the fact that this entire circuit presupposes the worker’s exercise of a degree of autonomy insofar as they are free to spend their wages on the commodities of their choice in the market or to redistribute them. As Marx writes:

The slave receives the means of subsistence he requires in the form of naturalia which are fixed both in kind and quantity – i.e. he receives use-values. The free worker receives them in the shape of money, exchange value, the abstract social form of wealth... it is the worker himself who converts the money into whatever use-values he desires; it is he who buys commodities as he wishes and, as the owner of money, as the buyer of goods, he stands in precisely the same relationship to the seller of goods as any other buyer. Of course, the conditions of his existence – and the limited amount of money he can earn – compel him to make his purchases from a fairly restricted selection of goods. But some variation is possible. (1976: 1033)
It is within this realm of restricted autonomous action, i.e., the circuit of wage-labour, which itself presupposes the circuit of capital, that the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence and the organizational forms of the Land Back movement are largely based. The money, goods and labour that make up the infrastructure analyzed in the previous section issue from these circuits by virtue of the voluntarism of individuals and groups embedded within them. This has important implications for developing the tendencies identified across the Indigenous movement, which have their most advanced form of institutionalization in the organizational forms of the Land Back movement.

Displacing the Circuits

In light of this discussion of circuits, the organized mitigation of the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence allow frontline activists to elude a particular moment within the circuit of wage-labour, namely employment, i.e., direct subjection to the process of capitalist valorization, or the indirect subordination of social reproductive labour, which remains dependent on wages within a household for example. However, they do not escape the larger circuit of capital as through which generalized commodity production (and thus social reproduction) takes place, given that they remain dependent on the social product of labour and the means of acquiring it. Therefore, one is released from the immediate compulsion of finding the conditions to actualize one’s capacity to work in order to survive without escaping

Susan Ferguson captures this well, when she writes: “Yet because such labour is necessary to the realization of surplus value and because it is performed overwhelmingly by those who are already dispossessed by capital, it is never simply outside capitalist processes and discipline. It is inflected with the rhythms and paces of value production, even as it is not directly value-producing: resources for living are constrained by wages (and credit limits); time for eating, sleeping, helping a child with homework, playing, and more is generally prescribed by the waged workday; the pressure to perform well at work often determines whether someone parties all night or goes to the gym and then home to bed.” (2020: 126).
the general forms through which the social alienation of labour circulates, i.e., money and commodities. In this sense, labour-power is de-commodified without being reunited with the general conditions\footnote{However, as I have been arguing, the unity of subject and object facilitated by organized mitigation does permit a higher degree of self-determination even if this cannot be universalized via this strategy.} of its realization in non-capitalist form, or, said differently, the subsistence of Water Protectors and Land Defenders remains commodified\footnote{Henry Bernstein writes: “Commodification is the process through which the elements of production and social reproduction are produced for, and obtained from, market exchange and subjected to its disciplines and compulsions... The central tendency of capitalism towards generalized commodity production does not mean that all elements of social existence are necessarily and comprehensively commodified. Rather it signifies the commodification of subsistence: that reproduction cannot take place outside commodity relations and the disciplines they impose (Marx’s ‘dull compulsion of economic forces’)" (2010: 102).} even though they no longer need to exchange their labour for it. The evasion is therefore a matter of mitigation and not escape because it is based on the relative suppression of capitalist compulsion and on successfully bypassing it. By virtue of this mitigating counterforce, the realm of immediacy on the frontlines of Land Defence and Water Protection is not determined by the direct imperatives of wage-labour nor the social reproductive requirements of the atomized worker’s consumption within the circuit of wage-labour. This permits a higher degree of self-determination.

The Infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection is a Non-Organic System

Although the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence and the organizational forms of the Land Back movement reconfigures the social tension grounded on capitalist relations of production in a way that presents new practical possibilities, the use or consumption of redistributed goods and money on the frontlines is a production process in Lebowitz’s sense that does not create the conditions for its renewal. As he argues regarding the circuit of wage-labour, the use-values consumed in the production process of the worker are “not also outputs
of this process” (2003: 69). The circuit of wage-labour thus does not generate the conditions of its reproduction. In this sense it does not constitute a system of self-reproduction in which its premises are its results and vice versa (Lebowitz 2020: 47) or what Marx called an ‘organic system’\textsuperscript{434} with reference to the dynamic of capital. The same holds for the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence and the organizational forms of the blockade it grounds. The money and goods that circulate through it as use-values for Water Protection and Land Defence are simply consumed and must be perpetually secured anew. As mentioned above, this is akin to what Marx says about the consumption of the working class more broadly, which is a form of consumption that annihilates use-values and thereby reproduces the needy individual (Lebowitz 2021: 48). In this sense, the circuit of Water Protection and Land Defence is limited by its merely redistributive function, which reproduces the organizational forms of the blockade in a state of constant need, hence the tireless efforts of these organizations and collectives to secure donations. The blockades require a constant influx of labour, money, and goods because they do not produce all that they require to sustain themselves autonomously. This is reflected, above all, in the fact that donations cannot be substituted in principle by the presence of those who would offer up their labour in solidarity with Water Protectors and Land Defenders regardless of the scale of their participation precisely because the blockade is not a

\textsuperscript{434} As he writes in the \textit{Grundrisse}, “While in the completed bourgeois system every economic relation presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form, and everything posited is thus also a presupposition, this is the case with every organic system. This organic system itself, as a totality, has its presuppositions, and its development to its totality consists in subordinating all elements of society to itself, or in creating out of it the organs which it still lacks” (1973: 278). Elsewhere in the \textit{Grundrisse} Marx writes that “the result of the process of production and realization is, above all, the reproduction and new production of the relation of capital and labour itself, of capitalist and worker. This social relation, production relation, appears in fact as an even more important result of the process than its material results. And more particularly, within this process the worker produces himself as labour capacity, as well as capital confronting him, while at the same time the capitalist produces himself as capital as well as the living labour capacity confronting him” (1973: 458).
self-sufficient site of social production. They therefore must draw on a source beyond themselves.

**Externalizing Exploitation**

The structural access to the means of struggle via the organized mitigation of the infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection evidently presupposes a realm of production given that the organizational forms of the Land Back movement are not self-sufficient sites of social production. The social practice on the frontlines is premised on displacing the circuits of wage-labour and capital, not the elimination of dependence upon them. The means of struggle thus originate in the circuit of wage-labour and therefore in the circuit of capital, along with the state’s function in stabilizing the generalized social relations at the heart of these circuits through corrective measures, e.g., money transfers to segments of the population which the market cannot sustain. This implies that the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence and the organizational forms of the Land Back movement are dependent on the capitalist form of wealth and the antagonistic relations of production that constitute it given that the infrastructure is a redistribution of the latter not a transcendence of it. Its ultimate lifeline is capitalistically created wealth.

Frontline consumption is thus equally determined by the social relations of capitalist production. As Michael Lebowitz argues, “In the course of producing ourselves... we consume not only specific use-values but also the social relations under which those use-values are produced...” (2003: 153). Although Lebowitz is referring here to the general conditions of consumption under the social relations of capitalist production, this equally holds for the organizational forms of Land Back movement. While the mediation of the infrastructure secures
use-values unmediated by the practical compulsions of their production for exchange, i.e., the law value, the organized mitigation of the infrastructure does not purge the consumption of these use-values on the frontlines of their social origins, it merely displaces them. In this sense, the fetishism of the commodity holds on the frontlines as much as it does in the supermarket insofar as wealth appears to be completely external to human activity, i.e., ready-made for appropriation. Evidently, the frontlines are not identical to the market, where products are exchanged at prices for money and the relation between those undertaking social productive activity is manifest as a property of their products (exchange value expressed via price).

However, the opacity of the social relations that determine the realm of circulation and the redistribution of organized mitigation issues from the same source, it is simply further mediated. The infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection is directly related to

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435 As Mészáros writes, “Fetishism, in Marx’s use of the term, means... to view wealth as something outside man [sic] and independent of him: as something that possess the character of absolute objectivity... [t]o consider wealth only as an external object, and not as a specific manifestation of human relations... (2005: 132).

436 It is not by virtue of ignorance that we do not perceive the relations of social production directly, as if it were simply a matter of tracing the commodity back to its origin and peering into the factory so to speak, but the objective nature of the commodity as a necessary mediation of social productive activity organized on the basis of capital, which is mediated by the commodity and money forms by necessity. As Marx emphasized the social relation between the productive activity of various people is a relation expressed of necessity as the relation between the exchange value of commodities (the specific social form of their product), which is what he termed ‘commodity fetishism’: “The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men’s own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers” (1976: 165). Moreover, David McNally captures the objective nature of the fetishism of the commodity succinctly when he writes: “It is certainly true that appearances frequently obscure the essential relations involved in a phenomenon. But this obscurity [of the commodity form] is not accidental; it is essential to certain kinds of phenomena that they should appear in mystifying ways. And this is especially the case for estranged social phenomena, which is why Marx can say that commodity fetishism expresses (alienated) human relations as what they are, ‘material relations between persons and social relations between things’ (Marx 1976: 166). Rather than a mere illusion, the commodity fetish is real; it expresses a truth about a reality that is false, i.e. inverted. The fetish does not simply reside on the side of consciousness, therefore; it is also an objective feature of an alienated world in which producers actually are dominated by the things they produce. As a result, fetishism cannot be overcome by the merely subjective effort of a consciousness – which would imply a form of idealism. Rather, ‘the veil’ that obscures capitalist relations can only be removed when social production ‘becomes
individuals that donate money, goods and/or their labour but remains indirectly related to the social relations under which those means of struggle are produced and validated as social products. Even though mediated, this indirect relation remains a condition of activity on the frontlines. As Lebowitz argues, “The development of an individual is determined by the development of all others with whom he [sic] is directly or indirectly associated” (2003: 153). In this sense, exploitation not only constitutes the means of struggle of Water Protection and Land Defence but the commodity and money form of those means also imply that frontline activity is fundamentally determined by the dehumanized and class-determined activity of others however indirectly. This is what is meant by the commodity as a social relation or when Marx refers to money as a relation of production, i.e., forms through which the social metabolism dominated by the determinations and imperatives of capital are necessarily reproduced not as means but mediations. Dependence on commodities and money structurally commits each of us (so long as we are socially atomized) to practical contradictions, e.g., the objective fact that the exercise of Indigenous law on the frontlines remains intrinsically related to and


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437 This is not a matter of specific conditions where commodity production and exchange take place under particularly egregious circumstances; rather, exploitation is inherent to the commodity form itself, and the production of commodities and their social validation in the form of money is literally the form in which the dispossession labour circulates in society. The commodity is already a form of the social product in which the self-determination of living labour is thoroughly negated. Tony Smith captures this succinctly with reference to Marx when he writes that capitalist ‘sociality cannot be directly manifested as a form of sociality. Commodities and money, which are supposed to have the subordinate ontological status of means vis-à-vis human sociality, are in this sense literally the forms in which human sociality exists. When Marx writes in one of the Grundrisse most striking formulations that each individual ‘carries his social power, as also his connection with society, in his pocket,’ he wants us to take this statement literally. Sociality cannot appear as what it essential is (our ‘connection with society’), but only as what it is not (the odd particular thing in our pocket with universal exchangeability). Thinking of money primarily as an instrument of ‘convenience’ for individual social agents not only misses the fact that for the first time in world history a depersonalised and monetised form of coercion operates on the level of society as a whole... It also overlooks the ontological inversion in which human sociality comes to take the form of alien things separate from human subjects (2017: 97).
dependent on relations of exploitation and oppression, a contradiction whose transparency most if not all engaged in these struggles would find morally repugnant and intolerable. Moreover, this is a most vexing issue for the practice of grounded normativity given that the indirect nature of capitalist social relations, mediated as they are by the commodity and money forms, structurally undermines the capacity for radical ethical engagement insofar as the latter is carried out exclusively on the basis of immediate experience and direct relations alone. In short, I may treat my kin and allies with respect and fulfill my responsibilities to others with whom I am engaged, including non-human beings, but the hammer I use to build the healing centre is the product of systematic exploitation and its social conditions of sustainability.

The structure of mitigation is a process that structures access to the product of social labour, whether in its commodity or money form, without Water Protectors and Land Defenders having to exchange their labour-power and its concomitant exploitation for it. As such, it secures the object as a use-value for a subject whose activity is not immediately constrained by the imperatives governing the production of that object, i.e., the production of exchange value. But this by no means implies that exploitation is negated. Rather, this effectively amounts to externalizing the exploitation of labour from the margin of frontline activity by displacing or spreading it across a number of workers who are not on the frontlines. As a result, that exploitation is internalized by individuals whose working conditions remain external and obscure in the immediate operation of the frontlines, not in the sense of being

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438 See V. Prashad’s article ‘Africa is on the Move,’ where he argues a similar point with regard to our use of the iphone – a use value that contributes to our self-development – is inextricably related to the mass illiteracy of children in Zambia. https://monthlyreview.org/2022/05/01/africa-is-on-the-move/?fbclid=IwAR0LeZwVRe24pAtjExvi0VD8dIMAc7pQSKhZOUg2LUJFT8ZwJ8O_ziATwLo&fs=e&s=cl
more exploited but insofar as their share of the social product (exchanged for their labour) is consumed on the frontlines. Admittedly, the social product is voluntarily exchanged and not coerced from these individuals and organizations who are politically motivated, but this fact does not negate the conditions of production under which the social product was created in the first place or the system of generalized commodity production in which money circulates as the universal representative of social labour. This not only implies that the organizations of the Land Back movement are embedded in the broader circuit of capital and therefore not self-sufficient, but more importantly it means that the frontlines of anticolonial struggle and the enforcement of Indigenous law are mediated by individuals and groups that are directly embedded in the social relations of capitalist production and their concomitant struggles, i.e., class struggle in the workplace as well as the broader class struggle in which the latter is embedded. Moreover, the fact that the redistribution that sustains the frontlines is voluntary and issues from a number of disparate sources, primarily from individuals, implies a practice premised on the atomization and fragmentation of the working class, one where the hierarchical social division of labour remains intact.

Dual Dispossession and the Network of Solidarity

Moreover, applying the theory of dual dispossession to this solidarity network also reveals similar issues. The comments of then Conservative leader Andrew Sheer quoted in the introduction give some indication of its implications. Recall that, at the height of the struggle, Sheer accused activists of abusing their privilege by disrupting the infrastructure on which working class and small units of capital, including farmers, depend, conveniently not mentioning the capitalist entities that subject them to dependence and volatility in the first
place. In times of disruption, politicians have the convenient alibi of the mute compulsion of economic relations, which has painfully real consequences, and whose ideologically naturalized dynamic provides the perfect grounds to demonize Indigenous Land Defenders and their allies as committing the ultimate infraction by disrupting its motion. Privilege was thus understood as the use of free time, i.e., time not used for the expansion of capital, not for the latter’s social reproduction but to be engaged in counterproductive activity. This counterproductive activity, however, was in fact imperative for creating conditions whereby the traditional government of the Wet’suwet’en could ply their rights in the face of arbitrary exclusion and a blatant violation of Canadian constitution. In this sense, it was productivity of another kind, one not marked by capitalist class content, but the productivity of Indigenous law, governance, and critical infrastructure, as Freda Huson puts it. In chapter one, I referred to this as the labour of Indigenous national liberation, however inchoate, stymied or underdeveloped it turned out to be, because it refers to the process of an emerging form of social reproduction, which was put down by a combination of settler law, police, and the class politics from above of divide and rule which deceptively sides with labour vis-à-vis a politics of Indigenous national self-determination that rejects capital as its foundation.

Moreover, Sheer’s evocation of privilege also denoted a proximity to work or direct exploitation. Presumably, those who could not show up at the blockades or the streets to demonstrate are the unprivileged who must work. After all, Marx said that it was a misfortune to be employed by capital. Sheer’s use of privilege created a dichotomy between those who are completely at the mercy of the mute compulsion of economic relations and the ‘luxury’ of those who sustained the frontlines and whose activity was less mediated by the compulsion to
work on pain of ruin and therefore open to a different kind of practical determination. Sheer’s moralistic dichotomy thus concealed, and therefore depoliticized, class relations, the hierarchy and internal divisions of labour and the proletariat more broadly, and, most importantly, the antagonistic social relations of production, which identify capital with the exploitation of labour and the appropriation of its product and grounds the internal divisions of social labour. In contrast to this misrepresentation, the uneven redistribution of both labour and its product amongst the working class allows some individuals and groups, e.g., students, retirees, professionals with flexible work schedules, the unemployed, those on social assistance, etc., to engage in other forms of activity, such as solidarity blockades. This is the same principle as the infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection theorized above. While understanding who was on the frontline and how they got there involves important sociological work to clarify and enhance the power of that solidarity, the fact that it is based on a redistribution of labour and wealth presupposes the social production of that wealth. So long as redistribution remains the foundation of anticolonial social power, Sheer’s dichotomy will prevail in practice, if not for the same reasons as he gave, and anticolonialism will be confined to disrupting the circulation of capitalist wealth in the hopes of partaking more equitably in its production and redistribution and not as the foundation for a different form of social practice. Thus, the worker(s) at the point of production must be integrated internally both within the infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection and the network of solidarity that has become indispensable to the assertion of Indigenous self-determination beyond settler state recognition. While a degree of uncoordinated spontaneity undoubtedly determined the mass action in 2020, further theoretical and ideological intervention can help clarify that network so integral to anticolonial
resistance as a product of capitalist class relations. By doing so, the anticolonial leverage of disrupting circulation can be further enhanced by disruptions at the point of production. More than this, however, applying the analysis of dual dispossession can unleash a strategy, much like Adams’ radical nationalism, that seeks to progressively challenge the full extent of the social conditions determining Indigenous national self-determination and fully activating the social forces that can not only challenge the redistribution of capitalist wealth but the way it is created in the first place and not simply what we can use it for within the diminishing parameters of its constraints, including the enhancement and expansion of Indigenous critical infrastructure and the practice of grounded normativity.

Mediations as Socially Embedded Autonomy and their Implications

The infrastructure of resistance, which LaDuke rightly celebrates for its transformative qualities in the passage quoted earlier, is not “outside the colonial money economy” at all. Rather, it is embedded, albeit through the mediation of an organizational form that mitigates powerful social constraints and facilitates a greater degree of self-determination. However, this embeddedness implies that the means of struggle are in fact the results of other struggles, which remain obscure and depoliticize in their genesis by virtue of their strictly instrumental valorization vis-à-vis the goals of frontline Land Defence and Water Protection, including the enforcement of Indigenous law. Thus, while the objective conditions of Water Protection and Land Defence are established with decisive impact, they only secure a relative form of autonomy that remains structurally constrained by limits external to its immediate sphere of operation yet internal to its conditions of possibility. This has significant implications for the problem of turning away from the colonial politics of recognition in Coulthard’s sense and
Leanne Simpson’s concept of flight, especially when locating important developments of these processes in the organizational forms of the Land Back movement. For, as I have been arguing, the latter represent sites through which the antagonism of the colonial relation is elevated to its highest state of confrontation by virtue of organizing the rejection of colonial recognition and cooptation in practice. However, the same analysis reveals that these organizations are thoroughly embedded mediations of struggle, not external autonomous formations. The point here is not a moralistic argument about the purity of action wherein frontline activity is sullied by its entanglement in the contradictory nature of capitalist social relations. Rather, my goal is about identifying intrinsic relations implicit in that activity which structurally inhibit the enhancement of its social power.

Based on these premises, developing the conditions of turning away or flight therefore entails the progressive confrontation with its internal social constraints and not attempts to escape the social disciplinary power over practical activity enforced by the social forms of capital and the precarious hope of warding off total subsumption as a long-term political strategy. This is already inherent in Adams’ early concept of radical autonomy and later in Leanne Simpson’s insistence on the struggle to exercise grounded normativity within the constraints of its actual social embeddedness. The ongoing analysis suggests that Indigenous self-determination and the path toward its deepening politicization, that is, the theoretical grasp of and practical challenge to the full range of its actual social conditions, needs to be conceived in-against-and-beyond capital, to borrow John Holloway’s helpful phrase,439 and not as a parallel force somehow premised on escaping or bypassing the structural forces of capital’s

439 See Holloway 2010.
social control. The impression of having escaped the forces of capital is based on ignoring the process I have called attention to in this chapter. As I have been arguing, the process that facilitates the relative autonomy of Water Protection and Land Defence is one of mitigation. The process of empowerment that accompanies it is thus better understood as dialectically related to that of the attenuation and dissipation of impersonal domination under capitalist social relations. For this reason, the organizational forms of the Land Back movement should be grasped as political mediations and not liberated zones. Mediation is a dialectical concept that entails the development of relative autonomy within its actual socio-historical determinations; whereas a concept of autonomy, or what may be called autonomism, which I alluded to in my discussion of Coulthard in chapter four, promotes an understanding of autonomy based on an abstraction from the extent to which it is historically determined and socially constrained from the social conditions of its practical development. Moreover, the notion of meditation is dynamic and intrinsically open to expansion and qualitative transformation (as well as contraction and marginalization) because its conditions of development are intrinsic to the concept, not merely the relative and arbitrary assessment of an action or organization’s

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440 The argument for a mixed economy as the material basis for the radical exercise of Indigenous self-determination predicated on resurgence is grounded on autonomism and encounters immense difficulties from the outset due to its fundamental assumptions. The essence of the critique against the mix-economy solution to radical Indigenous self-determination, even if largely determined by “the most egalitarian and participatory features of our traditional governance practices” (Coulthard 2014: 172), is that communities, First Nations, and autonomous organizations are still forced to become personifications of capital, if not initially then gradually, squeezing out slowly the elements of social production that inhibit conformity to the law of value. The is because the objective conditions of production are still determined by the imperatives of capital, especially the tyranny of the market, which forces living labour to be systematically exploited as a condition of viability regardless of egalitarian relations within the unit of production. See David McNally’s analysis of the effect of the law of value on socially isolated cooperatives in Against the Market p. 185-187. Moreover, as Colin Barker et al. argue, “All too often, the practical upshot of autonomism is to undermine the rather important Marxist recognition that exploitation and oppression are underpinned by powerfully organised forces who will resist all serious attempts at structural change and who will, in some form, need to be take on and defeated” (2013: 20).
authenticity vis-à-vis colonial culture and society. In this sense, the concept of mediation is more suitable to articulating the political practice and ideology of radical nationalism as a self-conscious struggle that internalizes the conditions of its development in and against the social totality and the full objective weight of its determinations. The organizational forms of the Land Back Movement are powerful expressions of the principle and politics of radical nationalism by virtue of the fact that they have in their strategy of proactively securing their means of reproduction internalized the knowledge of social constraint as manifested in colonial and market dependence and demonstrated clear evidence of learning vis-à-vis the history of cooption as a means of undermining Indigenous radicalism.

Moreover, the analysis presented here demonstrates an internal relation between the frontlines of anticolonial struggle and the class struggle, which is in need of further theoretical and practical development. More generally, it suggests that the domination of the broader working class is a condition of settler colonialism, regardless of the degree of Indigenous participation in the labour market, precisely because capital is in commanding control of the social metabolism. However, the analysis more specifically shows that the social force of Indigenous anticolonial struggles, specifically on the frontlines of Water Protection and Land Defence, is contingent on the state of the broader class struggle and its articulation with it. Recognizing that the infrastructure of Land Defence and Water Protection, as an organized form of redistribution, is structurally constrained and dominated by capitalist social relations of production is critical to developing the counterforce of Water Protection and Land Defence and requires the activation of the class struggle as a radical development of this infrastructure. This is decisive to challenging capital’s domination of the social metabolism and not only the
disruption of its circulation as a sufficient anticolonial strategy, certainly if the goal is to exercise
Indigenous self-determination in a non-capitalist form and not merely the precarious
instrumentalization of capitalist wealth as a basis of decolonial justice. After all, the history of
the Indigenous struggle for self-determination I have foregrounded in this dissertation has not
fundamentally been about sharing capitalist power but the more radical issue about the nature
and form of social practice itself.

The fact that the form of redistribution undergirding the organizational forms of the
Land Back movement performs a mitigating function harbours a tendency that implies
challenging capital as a relation of production, as a condition for the further development of
Indigenous self-determination. After all, redistribution is a mediated form of the relations of
production, which it practically presupposes given that something must be created before it can
be shared. To recall, the relations of production refer to the historically specific structural unity
of society’s subjective creative capacity and the objective conditions of its realization, and
under the domination of capital, which is a social form of this unity, the objectification of
productive activity takes the form of alienation, whereby living labour is dominated by
externally imposed imperatives. This domination is governed above all by value or the standard
of exploitation, which is an imperative practically imposed by the separation of living labour
from the means of production and its commodification as labour-power and the post festum
sociality of production undertaken privately and mediated by the commodity and money forms.
It is a norm that dominates practical activity as the primary regulator of the social metabolism.
As such, it grounds the force of personification, whereby the general fusion of productive
capacity and the means of its realization are activated by the social determinations of capital,
whether as wage-labour or capitalist, circumscribing a margin of actions that radically excludes forms of social practice that do not conform to its imperatives. Under these premises, no one’s productive capacity is social from the outset, not the worker’s labour-power nor the capitalist’s means of production, and must therefore prove itself according to the law of value time and time again as an effort to stave off ruin. This is most detrimental to the struggle for Indigenous self-determination given that capital and its law of value undermine the viability of other forms of social practice and stunt their ability to become generalized. As Harry Cleaver writes, “one of the noxious aspects of money and markets is the reductionism they involve—especially the reduction of myriad human values held in different communities to exchange value measured by money” (2017: 290). This is not only an ideological intolerance, which it also aggressively fosters, but first and foremost a practical intolerance. As István Mészáros writes, parallel to the consolidation of capital’s socioeconomic order, the contest of the rival sets of values must be transferred to a separate realm, where their confrontations cannot endanger the practical functioning of the new structure. For what decides the issue in the end is the practical intolerance of the one and only set of operational rules with which capital’s mode of social control is actually compatible, notwithstanding the broadly diffused ideology of ‘pluralism.’ (2010: 152-153)

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441 As Tony Smith argues, “ends and conceptions of the good adopted by individuals and groups that further the ends and good of capital are systematically privileged; those that do not, tend to be pushed to the margins of social life, or eradicated altogether…. In a capitalist market society it is simply impossible to reach a level of pure spontaneous dispositions that have not been profoundly moulded by the valorisation imperative. Both the radical ‘open-endedness’ of capital and capital’s dependence on human agency help explain capital’s invisibility. From the standpoint of social agents pursuing their individual ends in a social world whose organising principle has such extreme indeterminacy, it does not appear that there is an organising principle built into generalised commodity production and exchange as a whole, shaping and restricting their ends. Extending the point to communitarian themes, from the standpoint of members of communities in such a social world, it appears that there are in principle no inherent restrictions on their ability to reproduce and develop their culture and traditions. These appearances are profoundly misleading (Smith 2017: 118). Indigenous peoples who encounter the RCMP as their principle interlocutor have no illusion about the “radical open-endedness” of capitalist society.

442 Mészáros continues: “In reality the much publicized ‘pluralism’ has for its terms of reference the plurality of capitals only, but never the possibility of instituting a meaningful valuational and functional alternative to the rule of capital itself” (2010: 153).
Furthermore, this practical intolerance, grounded as it is on the substantive premises of capital, provides the concrete social basis for the inferiorization and deintellectualization of Indigenous knowledge, practice, cosmology, law, and governance given their incompatibility with the valorization imperative (at least in their radical expressions promoted by Indigenous resurgence). On the basis of this, what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls ‘epistemicide’, that is, the material “destruction of an immense variety of ways of knowing” (2014: 8), is not simply the result of Eurocentric ideological commitment to the violent unity of a false universal worldview based on colonial supremacy, but, has a material basis in the coercive social relations of the capitalist law of value in which certain forms of knowledge, technology and organization are given preference out of practical necessity. The question of capital for the Indigenous movement thus pertains to the dominant, and therefore historically trendsetting, form of our active relation to the land. This is the level at which self-determination is radically constrained.443

The framing of the problem in these terms does not permit an unmediated notion of land, whereby seizing political power and legal jurisdiction, whether through recognition or blockades, represent sufficient conditions for the determination of our general relation to it, especially in the sense of grounded normativity. For this reason, the struggle against capital is not at all an issue of how to (critically) subsume it under the authority of Indigenous culture as it was for the ideology of the Fourth World and for many contemporary Indigenous resurgence

443 As Mészáros writes, “how could individuals have meaningful lives of their own if the overall conditions of social metabolic reproduction are dominated by an alien force that frustrates their designs and, in a most authoritarian way, overrules the self-realizing aims and values which the social individuals attempt to set themselves?” (2008: 270).
scholars, but “the liberation of humanly fulfilling activities in all domains” (Mészáros 2011: 328), i.e., activity that is not subjected to its fetishistic imperatives. The liberation of activity is the liberation of the form of creative social activity from external determination and therefore the subject that can (collectively) determine that form as an agent of self-mediation. This is why the Marxian critique of capital is indispensable to the radical tendencies of the Indigenous movement. For, as David McNally writes,

Central to the Marxian conception of socialism is the idea that it is possible to ‘defetishize’ economic life, to free human beings from subjection to impersonal economic laws, to organize the production of goods and services according to a conscious plan rather through the blind working of the market. At the heart of Marxian socialism, then, is the vision of a society beyond commodity exchange, the law of value and money. (1993: 170)

The analysis of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, which reveals the latter as a mediation of capitalist relations of production, demonstrate that this Marxist analysis is

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444 As Mészáros argues, “The change in question must embrace and redefine in an emancipatory way the meaning of activities in the material productive field no less than in the intellectual and artistic domain, so as to make possible the realization of the positive potentialities of the self-mediating social individuals” (2011: 329).

445 Mészáros writes that, “It is obvious that when human life-activity is only a means to an end, one cannot speak of freedom, because the human powers that manifest themselves in this kind of activity are dominated by a need external to them... Freedom is thus the realization of man’s [sic] own purpose: self-fulfilment in the self-determined and externally unhindered exercise of human powers” (2005: 186). Elsewhere he writes, “It is the cause – commodity-production itself – that must be done away with, because it dehumanizes every activity – including, of course, artistic activity – degrading it to the status of mere means subordinated to the ends of capitalistic market economy... It is precisely this problematics of the meaningfulness of human activities – their liberation from being mere means to alienated ends – which is at stake in Marx’s condemnation of the hierarchical social division of labour” (2005: 213).

446 The question of the relation between Indigenous self-determination and socialist democratic control over the social metabolism is not dealt with in this dissertation. The movement has not presented the problems yet when this issue would have to addressed concretely.

447 This was most emphatically declared by Marx in the Grundrisse, when he writes, “The very necessity of first transforming individual products or activities into exchange value, into money, so that they obtain and demonstrate their social power in this objective form, proves two things: (1) That individuals now produce only for society and in society; (2) that production is not directly social, is not ‘the offspring of association,’ which distributes labour internally. Individuals are subsumed under social production; social production exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not subsumed under individuals, manageable by them as their common wealth. There can therefore be nothing more erroneous and absurd than to postulate the control by the united individuals of their total production, on the basis of exchange value, of money...” (1973: 158-159). That is, self-determination over social productive activity on the basis of exchange value is completely negated.
internally related to the problems practically confronting them. Thus, when Leanne Simpson proposes a project of radical resurgence against the divorce of culture from substantive political and economic power,\footnote{As she writes against the neoliberal appropriation of Indigenous culture, “From within Indigenous thought, however, the cultural and the political are joined and inseparable, and they are both generated through place-based practices – practices that require land” (49-50).} the struggle to sustain it objectively in practice requires challenging the source of their practical separation, which cannot leave the external and perverse determination of capital as a relation of production untouched or viable in any sense at the centre or along the desired periphery of Indigenous social practice. In this sense, it entails a challenge to capital in general as the mediation of social metabolic reproduction and not to an individual or group of capitalists, i.e., one of its personifications, or, for that matter, the volatile, precarious use and fetishistic compliance with capitalist imperatives as the basis of radical Indigenous national and self-development. This unification must certainly take place and Indigenous intelligence, knowledge, values, protocols, ceremonies, institutions, traditional productive practices, skills, techniques, cosmologies, etc., must contribute to this social struggle if the constitutive violence of settler colonialism is not to inform that process of (historically open) (re)unification.

However, this struggle must confront the general social conditions that subordinate these cultural resources and cause their practical separation into depoliticized forms of social practice deprived of socio-political power. It must therefore simultaneously aim to break their subordination within the orbit of value not by fleeing the latter but confronting it in solidarity with other social struggles head on as a key historical development of the tendencies inherent in the broader Indigenous movement since the 1960s.
Challenging the relations of production under the rule of capital is an imperative that issues from the further development of the historical tendencies inherent in the Indigenous movement, especially the critique of cooptation and the rejection of the colonial politics of recognition. By unpacking the conditions under which the contemporary organizational forms of the Land Back movement are reproduced, the concept of dual dispossession exposes the internal relation, i.e., a relation of autonomous forces that mutually determine each other, between the forces of frontline resistance and the general class struggle. This discloses a number of important theoretical and practical possibilities, especially the conditions under which the tendency within the history of Indigenous grassroots direct action to sustain an autonomous movement and thereby an extra-parliamentary force can be developed. As such, it presents the levers that can facilitate a trajectory from fragmented and isolated direct actions toward an extra-parliamentary movement as a vital conditioning force for the realization of Indigenous self-determination in non-capitalist form. In this way, it points the way from a structurally inhibited defensive politics grounded on redistribution towards an offensive movement bent on liberating Indigenous (and other) forms of social practice by directly challenging the stranglehold of capitalist relations of production over the social metabolism. For this to happen, Land Defence and Water Protection need to be exercised equally at the point of production as they do on the frontlines against territorial encroachment in order to transform the very source of encroachment. This, admittedly, is still far from evolving in a coherent and robust way, but it is latent in a practice that is not only already taking place but represents the most concerted effort to challenge settler colonialism outside the parameters of colonial reform. Dual dispossession represents a theoretical contribution that has the potential of
developing this tendency, not by simply affirming a Marxist critique and politics or the general need for solidarity, but internally through an analysis of the social conditions of contemporary anticolonial struggle as mediations of socially embedded autonomous activity.

The analysis of the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence reveals that the basis of the social relations of internationalism, socialism, and coalitional politics, which once characterized the Indigenous movement, especially during the Red Power era, is implicit in the objective conditions of struggle that undergird the organizational forms of the Land Back movement. While solidarity continues to evolve in various external forms, whether between Indigenous people and environmental activists or students, locating the ground of these relations within the objective conditions of the anticolonial struggle points to their necessity insofar as their development is identical to the development of the infrastructure that defines them. With the consolidation of Indigenous single-issue politics through the rise of the colonial politics of recognition and the instrumentalization of solidarity as allyship that has accompanied this development, identifying the radical social interdependence inherent in the conditions of frontline struggle is critical to recovering the repressed tendencies of internationalist, socialist anti-capitalism, and coalitional Indigenous politics. Doing so identifies class struggle as a condition for the development of self-determination and draws a direct link to the labour movement as a key site of anticolonial struggle.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this final chapter demonstrated on the basis of dual dispossession that the semi-autonomous character of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp, is premised on the redistribution of labour, money, and goods,
which make up an infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence. By applying the concept of dual dispossession to the way these organizations secure their conditions of reproduction, I have demonstrated that this infrastructure functions to mitigate the mute compulsion of economic relations and sustain the exercise of Indigenous self-determination premised on rejecting the colonial politics of recognition in practice. I also showed that under conditions of intensifying threat, this infrastructure has tended to become more complex, both quantitatively and qualitatively, enhancing in the process the effective power of the frontlines. This, I argued, is critical to the material power of Indigenous governance, enforcing Indigenous law, and sustaining and developing Indigenous grounded normativity under conditions of intensifying colonial capitalist encroachment.

Moreover, on the basis of this theory, I argued that the semi-autonomous nature of the organizational forms of the Land Back movement generated by this infrastructure, most importantly the Unist’ot’en Camp, played a critical role in mobilizing social forces in the wider population during the Wet’suwet’en uprising of 2020, and that this functioned as a critical source of leverage, which gave the authority of the Hereditary Chiefs and the Land Defenders who support them effective power in the face of the colonial and capitalist incursion. This was due, first and foremost, to the fact that it substantiated an autonomous social base for the power and authority of the Hereditary Chiefs that is not marginalized by the chief and council system of First Nations and represented an independent entity and source of leadership and struggle around which the social forces of mass solidarity could direct their support.

My analysis then returned to the implications of the infrastructure of redistribution and demonstrated that its function in mitigating the mute compulsion of economic relations does
not permit those on the frontlines of anticolonial struggle to escape the circuits of capital and wage labour but only displaces them allowing Water Protectors and Land Defenders a high margin of action and the ability to determine their activity by Indigenous knowledge, laws, principles of governance, etc. Nevertheless, my analysis showed that they remain dependent on the social product of labour in the form of capital and the exploited labour of others. Water Protectors and Land Defenders are, therefore, released from the immediate compulsion of finding the conditions to actualize the capacity to work in order to survive without escaping the general forms through which the social alienation of labour circulates, i.e., money and commodities, wage-labour, and capital. For this reason, the evasion that sustains the frontlines is a matter of mitigation and not escape because it is based on the relative suppression of capitalist compulsion or the mute compulsion of economic relations. I also argued that this same process of mitigation undergirded the frontlines of the solidarity blockades that supported the Wet’suwet’en traditional government in 2020.

Because the form of redistribution undergirding the organizational forms of the Land Back movement performs a mitigating function, it harbours a tendency which implies challenging capital as a social relation of production. This is based on the fact that the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence, as a form of redistribution, only mediates the relations of capitalist production and therefore presupposes them, which entails that other fragmented social spheres of struggle are indirectly related to the frontlines of anticolonial struggle. This implies that the struggle for Indigenous self-determination beyond the terms of settler state recognition is intrinsically related to the class struggle of the broader working class. However, in order to recognize this and develop its implications, the dual function of the
blockade identified by the theory of dual dispossession, i.e., its role in challenging colonialism and mitigating the mute compulsion of economic relations, must be foregrounded and the organizational forms of the Land Back movement conceived as mediations that institutionalize a form of embedded autonomy. The concept of mediation, grounded as it is in this case on the theory of dual dispossession, is a way of conceiving these forms of anticolonial struggle in a manner that internalizes both the social relations that actually constitute and constrain them simultaneously. Doing so holds the possibility of expanding their social power and activating the Land Back movement explicitly as a form of class struggle that challenges capital’s domination of the social metabolism and thus our relation to the land. This is a condition for the further development of Indigenous self-determination based on the rejection of the colonial politics of recognition and, as I will argue in the conclusion to this dissertation, a means of further developing the major tendencies of the Red Power movement and the politics of Indigenous resurgence.
Conclusion

During the Siege of Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 a full-fledged infrastructure of resistance went into action to confront the military invasion.\textsuperscript{449} The reproductive order that arose was dynamic, rationing and allocating the lifeforce of Mohawk law in complex and sophisticated ways to maintain a viable counterforce. The state responded with a strategy of attrition by cutting off the food supply from entering the community. As a result, the resistance gradually became unsustainable. This is not surprising given that it was a heroic defence against the arbitrary might of the state, not a concerted effort to establish a system of autonomous Mohawk social production nor a movement explicitly aiming to transform the general conditions of social life under the rule of capital. While this fact does not detract in any way from the historical and transformative significance of this momentous act of resistance, it presents us with critical challenges that must be resolved going forward if Indigenous self-determination is to transcend colonial domination. Although the organizational forms of the contemporary Land Back movement, which I discussed at length in this dissertation, have not yet transcended this structural vulnerability, they have internalized in their objective and subjective conditions many important lessons from the past that have led them to respond to the problem of practically sustaining anticolonialism and Indigenous self-determination against state recognition and dependency in important ways that represent a qualitative development. My dissertation set out to identify and theorize the conditions under which these organizational forms have sustained this form of practice and to develop some of the major presuppositions and

\textsuperscript{449} See Donna Goodleaf’s book \textit{Entering the War Zone: A Mohawk Perspective on Resisting Invasions} (1995) for a detailed discussion of this infrastructure.
implications of it, which I accomplished through a two-pronged approach that employed an analytical and historical argument.

In order to properly identify these developments and their significance, I applied the theory of dual dispossession, which I developed in chapter one, to the organizational forms of the Land Back movement. However, before applying it for the purpose of this analysis, I argued that the practice of these organizational forms, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp and the Tiny House Warriors, which function as both blockades and active institutions of Indigenous governance and law, created the historical groundwork for the concept of dual dispossession to emerge. This claim was based on the fact that these institutions are organized in ways that practically reject the colonial politics of recognition and the lure of co-optation by preemptively safeguarding, in a relative way, the objective conditions of their reproduction without relying on the state or capital in a direct way, and, because of this, they represent the most self-conscious and organized efforts to ‘turn away’ from state recognition and colonial reformism.450 This fact presented me with two interrelated insights, namely, the need for a theory to explain how the relative autonomy of these organizations is secured in practice and the implications this has for understanding the objective conditions of Indigenous self-determination; and, as a result of this, the need to demonstrate how the organizational forms of the Land Back movement institutionalize specific tendencies from the broader Indigenous movement that emerged since the mid-1960s.

450 I also identified the practical basis of dual dispossession in the re-emergence of a tendency within the Indigenous movement towards mass solidarity and struggle, thanks to Idle No More and the Wet’suwet’en uprising of 2020, especially insofar as this force challenged colonialism by intervening in the circuit of capital.
The first of these was carried out in the rest of chapter one by developing the theory of dual dispossession as a concept based on the practical inseparability of colonial and capitalist social relations, which co-determine Indigenous experience. This presumes, I argue, that the structural subordination of Indigenous national authority and political power, which facilitates effective control over Indigenous lands and thus functions to dispossess Indigenous nations, is mediated by the separation of the means of production from living labour and their forced reunification under the determinations and imperatives of capital. As a result, Indigenous Peoples are both colonized and proletarianized. However, I argue that dual dispossession does not only condition colonial domination but also Indigenous resistance and struggle. On the basis of this premise, I pointed out that these organizations not only confront the settler state and capitalist entities on the frontlines of anticolonial struggle but also deal with the material conditions for reproducing and sustaining frontlines by intervening into the mute compulsion of economic relations. As such, they address both colonial domination and proletarianization as a condition of their practice. By dealing with the inseparability of these relations in practice as a condition of their struggle, these organizational forms could be analyzed through the concept of dual dispossession in a way that revealed the manner in which they unify subjective capacity and objective conditions in novel ways. As such, they have institutionalized major tendencies that have developed since the inception of the modern Indigenous movement in a manner that has qualitatively enhanced them.

I dealt with this second major insight throughout the main body of my dissertation in chapters two, three, and four. There I developed the tendencies identified in the practice of the contemporary organizational forms through a historical reconstruction of key grassroot forms.
of direct action and organizations and through an analysis of Indigenous resurgence theory. First, in chapter two, I focused on the Red Power movement, highlighting through the experience of Fred Kelly, the politics of NARP, and the Native People’s Caravan how their political practice embodied important tendencies, including the necessity of direct action; the principle of subjective transformation through struggle; the rigorous commitment to a dialectic of theory and practice; and the critique and the refusal of co-optation in order to maintain the autonomy of the movement. These practical principles generated a politics that was characterized by revolutionary internationalism and oriented towards mass coalition, and which was anticapitalist, and, in the cases I foregrounded, explicitly socialist. I developed this historical reconstruction further by analyzing the theory of Lee Maracle, especially her synthesis of Marxism and Indigenous thought and practice, which, I argue, is grounded in the concrete historical development of Indigenous subjectivity. I then concluded the chapter with a discussion of Howard Adams’ theory of radical nationalism, which I argue functions as a comprehensive and systematic formulation of the tendencies within the Red Power movement and is above all a methodology of struggle. For Adams, I emphasized, the development of Indigenous nationalism is grounded on the self-liberatory practice or protagonism of grassroots Indigenous people and entails the progressive confrontation with and conscious integration of its constraints as a condition of its further development, which is the reason Adams’ understood class struggle as a critical moment in the concrete development of Indigenous national liberation. In this way, I claimed that radical nationalism is a forerunner to the concept of dual dispossession, which is grounded on a similar methodology, only under vastly different historical circumstance.
In chapter three, I continued the process of historical reconstruction but with the goal of laying out the historical ground of Indigenous resurgence theory in a way that acknowledges both a break and continuity with the tendencies of the Red Power era. I began the chapter with a discussion of the development of radical reformism through the politics of George Manuel and his ideology of the Fourth World as important forerunner to later theoretical developments like Glen Coulthard’s notion of grounded normativity and his critique of the colonial politics of recognition, given that Manuel’s internationalism helped bolster the Dene’s struggle on the local plain in the mid-1970s, which Coulthard would later draw on. However, I also foregrounded NARP’s critique of the Fourth World as an ideology that lacks a critical theory of capital and therefore arbitrarily presumes that a robust form of Indigenous self-determination and national development, wholly determined by the revitalization culture, is capable of being fostered within the capital system. Most significantly, I argued that the period of the mid-1970s, which saw the rise of the international movement in which the Fourth World came to fruition, was marked, above all, by the defeat of the Red Power movement and the repression of the radical politics of mass coalition, revolutionary internationalism, and socialist anticapitalism, which also saw the concomitant rise of the colonial politics of recognition, albeit over a period of decades. I emphasized that the rise of recognition politics was not merely or even primarily a result of colonial reform through such things as court cases, land claims policy or state funding, but, especially, through state infiltration and, in the case of AIM, violent military intervention. Despite the paucity of sources on these developments, the main point of highlighting these historical facts was to call attention to the way that practical suppression
would later give rise to theoretical omissions with political consequences, particularly in the theory of Indigenous resurgence.

By way of transition, I discussed the so-called Chilliwack decision undertaken by the UBCIC in 1975, which, I argued, stands as an important objective lesson regarding the stakes of rejecting the colonial politics of recognition and colonial dependency more broadly in the name of Indigenous self-determination. Most importantly in this regard, the Chilliwack decision demonstrated that Indigenous self-determination is radically constrained at the level of social reproduction and not merely at the macro-political levels of sovereignty and legal jurisdiction, which the critique of Indigenous women’s organizations levelled against the UBCIC clearly foregrounded. Further, the tactics of ‘Militant May,’ intended to put pressure on the settler state and safeguard traditional forms of Indigenous production by defending access to traditional land-bases, was not a viable alternative to the reality of state and market dependence, in which the need for money dominates the social reproduction of Indigenous nations. Despite this, I argued, drawing on the example of the Neskonlith First Nation, that a refusal and efforts to sustain communal autonomy had a profoundly transformative impact of individuals, who became further politicized as a result and went on to participate in historically significant movements in its aftermath.

I concluded the chapter by arguing that these historical developments led to an era and politics of defensive nation-centric retrenchment that was consolidated in the post-Siege of Kanehsatà:ke period, in which the mediation of the settler state through colonial reform and repression fractured the comprehensive social horizon of the Indigenous movement and marginalized its mass character. As a result, Indigenous nations and communities became more
isolated and vulnerable, locked into a vertical and atomized relation with the settler state, in which the struggle for Indigenous rights was consolidated as a single-issue species of politics, and the struggles of other social groups from the Indigenous movement, above all socialist one, were effectively purged from the politics of decolonization, shoring up the ideological perception that they are unrelated. Most consequentially, this general situation was wrought by alienating protagonism from the practice of decolonization. The move away from pan-Indigeneity, mass coalitional politics, revolutionary internationalism, and socialist anticapitalism was structurally instituted by a counter-struggle from above. It is within this socially fragmented historical context, I argued, that Warrior Societies proliferated as a means of defending Indigenous sovereignty, land, and culture and the practical basis from which Indigenous resurgence theory arose.

Nevertheless, in chapter four, I argued that this defensive nation-centric era of retrenchment was historically significant in radicalizing Indigenous culture and nationhood, providing as it did the historical basis for the theory of Indigenous resurgence, which, in turn, valorized and helped consolidate and generalize these developments. Through an extensive analysis of some of the central contributors of Indigenous resurgence theory, I brought many of the theory’s core concepts in relation to their material basis and foregrounded their socio-historically determinate character, which drew on the more general contours described in chapter three. While earlier formulation of the theory emphasized co-optation, self-defence and renewal of national development on the basis of a radical sense of culture, later contributions, such as Leanne Simpson’s 2017 work, foregrounded the critique of capital, coalitional politics, especially with Black liberation struggles, and the absolute rejection of
colonial reform in the age of reconciliation, thanks particularly to a systematic theory of colonial recognition developed in the interim. These developments, which signal the universal impulse and politics of mass struggle that once characterized the Indigenous movement in the 1970s, I argued, were prompted by the Idle No More movement, which created conditions and showed signs of elevating the struggle for Indigenous self-determination to a universal social struggle beyond the piecemeal nature of colonial reform in the age of recognition. Since then, I argued, the Wet’suwet’en uprising in the winter of 2020 introduced new practical developments in the fight for Indigenous self-determination, which Indigenous resurgence has yet to properly theorize, such as the direct targeting of capital at the point of circulation and the significance of semi-autonomous land-based reclamations in activating mass solidarity, which my dissertation has responded to with the theory and analysis carried out on the basis of dual dispossession. By contextualizing Indigenous resurgence theory in relation to its historical ground, I was able to develop the theory of dual dispossession as a theoretical intervention that carried on this project by providing both a theory of Indigenous self-determination based on rejecting colonial reformism in practice and as a development of radical historical tendencies that have inhered in the modern Indigenous movement since its inception in the mid-1960s.

In the final chapter, I examined the objective conditions of Indigenous organizational forms that institute the rejection of the colonial politics of recognition in practice. Based on the premise of dual dispossession, my analysis demonstrated that this rejection is grounded on an infrastructure of redistribution that mitigates the mute compulsion of economic relations and thereby allows Water Protectors and Land Defence to sustain the frontlines of anticolonial struggle. In the cases I looked at, such as the Unist’ot’en Camp, the Tiny House Warriors, and
the camps at Standing Rock, this infrastructure creates the conditions for exercising traditional
governance and enforcing Indigenous law in direct confrontation with the personifications of
capital and the settler state agents that enforce their interests. Moreover, I demonstrated how,
primarily through the example of Standing Rock, that under conditions of intensifying external
threat, the infrastructure that constituted the camps expanded and complexified in the way
that enhanced the effective power of resistance on the frontlines.

Furthermore, my analysis of the Wet’suwet’en uprising in 2020 showed that the
Unist’ot’en Camp was critical to activating mass solidarity precisely because the infrastructure
that undergirds it permits traditional governance and law to be exercised autonomously in
relation to both the chief and council system of First Nations and the settler state’s terms of
recognition. As such, it created a clear object of solidarity vis-à-vis the settler state, capitalist
entities, and First Nation bands that the mass could support. I also argued that this eruption
was equally premised on the work of organizations like Defenders of the Land, who had been
organizing and educating Indigenous people and settlers alike for over a decade by the time the
RCMP invaded Wet’suwet’en territory. Together these forces helped unleash a number of
solidarity blockades targeting Canadian society’s so-called critical infrastructure. This disruption
created the leverage needed by the Hereditary Chiefs to ply their power and demonstrated that
Indigenous Peoples who refuse the colonial politics of recognition or state dependency more
broadly must activate social conditions and actors beyond the bounds of their nation if their
power of self-determination is to have any effective material power.

However, my analysis did not simply conclude that this force needs to be augmented
quantitatively for it to be effective as a source of leverage in the struggle for Indigenous rights.
The application of dual dispossession to the infrastructure of Water Protection and Land Defence demonstrated that its power of organized mitigation is a process that structures access to the product of social labour, whether in its commodity or money form, without Water Protectors and Land Defenders having to exchange their labour for it. While this is indispensable to their activity, it also effectively amounts to externalizing the exploitation of labour from their activity by displacing or spreading it across a number of workers who are not on the frontlines. In other words, that exploitation is internalized by individuals whose working conditions remain external and obscure in the immediate operation of the frontlines, not in the sense of being more exploited but insofar as their share of the social product is consumed on the frontlines. Not only does this imply that these organizations are embedded in the broader circuit of capital and therefore not self-sufficient, but more importantly it means that the frontlines of anticolonial struggle and the enforcement of Indigenous law are mediated by individuals and groups that are directly embedded in the social relations of capitalist production and their concomitant struggles, i.e., the general class struggle. Moreover, the fact that the redistribution that sustains the frontlines is voluntary and issues from a number of disparate sources, primarily from individuals, implies a practice premised on the atomization and fragmentation of the working class, one where the hierarchical division of labour remains intact.

As a result of the implications carried on the basis of dual dispossession, my analysis demonstrates that the further development of the tendency inherent in the principled rejection of the colonial politics of recognition in practice entails activating the Land Back movement as an explicit class struggle by developing its own presuppositions, which, in turn, entails the
progressive activation of the working class in its most comprehensive sense as the structural
antagonist of capital. Both of these conditions are presupposed in the practice of the
organizational forms of the Land Back movement and are necessary for enhancing and
qualitatively transforming the extra-parliamentary force that has been historically necessary
over the course of the last 70 years in advancing the Indigenous struggle for self-determination.
More significantly, they are a necessary development for uniting the forms of subjectivity
historically cultivated by the politics of Indigenous resurgence with objective conditions of self-
determination adequate to this development insofar as it represents the only way to break the
comprehensive and practical stranglehold of value, as the essence of capital, over the exercise
of Indigenous self-determination, which marginalizes autonomous activity and prevents the
generalization of national development on the basis of a radical cultural foundation. In other
words, the challenge to capital is the challenge to liberate social activity and our relationship to
the land from its fetishistic quantitative determinations, which subordinate all qualitative
criteria of self and national development to its quantitative expansion. As such, the liberation of
the working-class in general presents itself a fundamental condition for the exercise of
Indigenous self-determination in non-capitalist form. This does not mean subordinating or
abandoning Indigenous struggles for land and self-determination to narrowly conceived class
interests but, rather, following the practical methodology of radical nationalism, their concrete
development in and against their actual objective constraints, which ultimately implies
challenging and eradicating capital as the general mediator of the social metabolism. This is not
a cryptic claim but is already being articulated by many Indigenous scholars and activists, at
least by implication, and has been for a very long time. After all, as I mentioned in my
discussion of the Land Back movement, the aim of the movement is not merely the issue of control of over land, but the form of social practice instituted on and through it. Lastly, the theory of dual dispossession identifies and develops the practical presuppositions of the Land Back movement in a manner that points beyond the movement’s still largely defensive disposition, which remains geared toward redistributive justice, toward an offensive disposition oriented toward a creative alternative to the current form of our social metabolism in which Indigenous traditions, knowledge, values, institutions, governance, and law, can retain and cultivate effective power and influence over the course of generalized social development as a condition of Indigenous self-determination unhindered by colonial and capitalist forces.

The initial development of a theory of dual dispossession presented in this dissertation makes a substantial contribution to this theoretical and political process. However, my argument can be enhanced in two significant ways. On the one hand, my argument can be strengthened by elaborating the way capital restricts the exercise of Indigenous self-determination despite any gains made in terms of political and legal autonomy and the manner in which the major structural constraints of self-determination are grounded on the inner determinations of capital, especially in the radical divorce of producers from control at the level of production. This can be further supplemented by expanding the reasons for which capital cannot be overcome in a partial way but only in a socially comprehensive way, a fact that presents major challenges to autonomist and anarchistic leaning tendencies within resurgence theory and practice. On the other hand, the historical reconstruction carried out throughout the dissertation could have benefitted by a discussion of the history of Indigenous Peoples in relation to as well as within the labour movement. This would have presented a clearer idea of
where the situation stands around Indigenous self-determination and struggles at the point of capitalist production as well as highlight where solidarity and antagonism are articulated between the labour movement and Indigenous Peoples as national entities. This could have also been further developed by examining the role of non-Indigenous people and organizations in the actions and historical events I discussed throughout the dissertation as well as the role Indigenous people and organizations who are more deeply embedded in dominant institutions have played in these struggles. This would have provided a far more complex depiction of the socio-historical context in which the tendencies I discussed evolved and foregrounded other major social factors contributing to the development of the Indigenous movement more broadly. As such, these considerations open up tremendous areas of research on sociological, historical, and political economic fronts as well as further theoretical challenges about how to articulate the central relations identified through my analysis, above all, those between the settler population as a working class and those who occupy the frontlines of anticolonial struggle and continue to refuse state recognition.

In any case, the theory of dual dispossession elaborated throughout this dissertation makes notable contributions to Critical Indigenous Studies by theorizing the objective conditions of self-determination in a way adequate to the historical development of the Indigenous struggle up to now, and, in doing so, it also fosters a dialogue between Indigenous and Marxist Studies by demonstrating that the struggle for Indigenous self-determination, according to those who refuse, practically presupposes the theoretical and practical problems prioritized by the latter. As such, my dissertation represents a theoretical contribution with
significant practical implications for the empowerment of Indigenous self-determination in-against-and-beyond capitalism.
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