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Recentering Place and Imagining Other Worlds

**Structures of Settlement and Possibilities for the
Future in Contemporary Anarchism**

Adam Gary Lewis

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residues and structures can be continually challenged. In some ways the solution is simple—direct engagement and learning from those who have resisted colonization from the start. The works of Indigenous women’s literature highlighted by Warburton provide some roots and routes forward, as do the radical resurgence writings and action of those like Leanne Simpson or Glen Coulthard. What Warburton’s work does is state the problem plain and simple and push us towards a better path. One where ‘Yes, another world is possible. One of the reasons we can even know this, though, even entertain this thought, is because there are other worlds here—if only we would honor them’ (Warburton 2021: 206).

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Introduction

Theresa Warburton’s book *Other Worlds Here: Honoring Native Women’s Writing in Contemporary Anarchist Movements* (2021) brings forth a compelling intervention into anarchist theory, practice, and politics. In the era of #LANDBACK and ongoing discussions of Indigenous histories, community resurgence, and resistance to colonialism it is even more crucial for anarchists, and all those interested in resisting colonialism and capitalism on stolen land, to consider the ways that our theories and practices themselves are wrapped up in the fabric of colonization.

Warburton argues for specific attention to be paid towards the ‘logics of settlement’ that persist within anarchist movements, theories, and practices. Pointing to the tendency for anarchists to seek out traces of anarchism in other movements, cultures and forms of resistance, she argues that there is a pronounced need to turn a little more inward, to see the ways that anarchist means and methods continue to uphold or re-entrench the structures of settlement that they purport to be fighting against. Warburton weaves together a critique of anarchist practices through an examination of anarchist texts, imagery, framing and action, and the ways that they maintain dynamics of settlement. Then, using Indigenous women’s literature, Warburton points to some possible and necessary routes towards the ‘other worlds that are already here’ imagining alternatives to colonial capitalism and the state. Bringing in Indigenous women’s writing in particular, in addition to a more general engagement with Indigenous politics and critique, points to a land-based pedagogy that resists both the state and capitalism, while reaffirming the importance of land and connection that disrupts the dispossessive aims of settler colonialism. Further, and important to the collection to which this article belongs, Warburton’s text specifically tackles the gendered dimensions of structures of settlement and settler

colonial dispossession, and paves the way for feminist futures that are centered within ongoing dialogue and accountability with Indigenous resurgence and ways of being.

My aim with this essay is to review and showcase the importance of Warburton's work, and use this as a jumping off point for further discussion on the necessity of engaging in disruptive anti-colonial work within anarchism. Her book is a crucial and timely work that digs deeply into the relationship between anarchism, anti-colonial politics, Indigenous resurgence and structures of settlement, and should be crucial reading for all those seeking to imagine new(old) worlds on stolen lands.

As Glen Coulthard, among many Indigenous writers, has argued, there is a pressing need for radical social movements of all stripes to more carefully and concertedly consider the context in which they struggle for a better world. He argues:

By ignoring or downplaying the injustice of colonial dispossession, critical theory and left strategy not only risks becoming complicit in the very structures and processes of domination that it ought to oppose, but it also risks overlooking what could prove to be invaluable glimpses into the ethical practices and preconditions required for the construction of a more just and sustainable world order. (2014: 12)

It is these 'glimpses' that Warburton argues persist within Indigenous women's writing and represent alternatives to settler colonialism, capitalism and the state that are 'already here' if only we are willing to look a bit closer. It is also this complicity around processes and structures of settlement that she identifies within contemporary anarchist movements in the North American context. The desire for a 'new' world is not one reducible to an anarchist politic, but is a radical form of imagination that has long formed a thread within radical and resurgent

under-theorized and under-discussed topics within anarchist theory. This means that although there is a concerted and committed level of solidarity action, the reflection and broader understanding of the continuing structures of settlement and their links to capitalism and the state remain under-developed.

This discussion is happening to a greater degree at the level of the 'street' or the blockade or the affinity group,⁷ where anarchists talk and reflect and theorize on an ongoing basis. But the discussion has not reached a broader and more sustained theoretical level, and suffers from a number of deficiencies that Warburton notes above. This is what, I think, Warburton is most challenging anarchists to do, to continue to act, but also reflect on a deeper level on the structures at play and the efforts that already exist to challenge them and bring forth alternatives. Therefore, there perhaps isn't an issue of opposition to settler colonialism and dispossession, but a question of focus and depth of our theories and actions, and how Indigenous resurgence politics could be more directly and purposefully engaged.

Theresa Warburton's *Other Worlds Here* is a crucial intervention that moves forward the discussion of the implications of being an anarchist on stolen land. As Indigenous resistance and resurgence movements continue to grow and challenge the power of state and capital, and as anarchists continue to foment revolt and imagine alternatives. There is no greater time than now to dig deeply into the complex ways that settler colonialism remains within anarchist movements and how these

⁷ This is precisely the topic of my ongoing and hopefully soon-to-be-finished dissertation research that looks directly at the ways that anarchists and anarchist cultures of resistance and understood settler colonialism and oriented themselves towards it as an ongoing structure intimately connected to both capitalism and the state. Anarchists can, and do, discuss colonialism, its impacts, and how to resist it alongside other forms of domination. Those I interviewed, however, were quick to point out that there is a lack of writing and circulation of ideas on this topic

Implications for Anarchism Moving Forward

Warburton's critique makes it clear that there is still much work to be done within anarchism. Primarily, anarchism needs to directly and intentionally consider the context of settler colonialism in which theory and action arise. This is not to say that there has been nothing of note here – there is an ongoing history of support and solidarity among anarchists for militant assertions of Indigenous autonomy and opposition to continued forms of capitalist dispossession. However, a primary concern continues to be the ways in which anarchists talk, write, theorize and understand the settler colonial context in which they foment resistance, but also within which they are deeply embedded.

As I have noted previously (Lewis 2012), anarchist involvement in opposition to the 2010 Vancouver Olympics under the banner 'No Games on Stolen Land' and the 2010 Toronto G20 meetings carried a strong anti-colonial core, and sought to deepen the politics of solidarity with radical Indigenous organizers on the front lines. This work has continued with larger flashpoint events at Standing Rock, ongoing Wet'suwet'en solidarity, and continuing struggles against development at Six Nations (among many others). I don't think the anarchist commitment to Indigenous solidarity is in dispute. Rather, the question is how anarchists have reflected, theorized, and applied insights gained by participating and committing to such work. How has this informed our theory in ways that can continue to inform our practice? How has this disrupted our understandings of where we are located and what is to be done? Comparatively speaking, there is little material out there that takes up this sort of theoretical reflection on a necessarily disruptive level. Colonialism, settler colonialism, dispossession, anti-colonialism etc. continue to be

forms of Indigeneity (see for ex. Simpson 2017; Alfred 2010). These forms, Warburton argues, should be seen as key reference points for how to live differently on the lands that many of us continue to call home.

Anarchists often, and certainly more recently, identify colonialism as a key force of oppression and domination that needs to be countered alongside the dominant forces of capitalism and the state (amongst others). There is no question that, generally speaking, anarchists oppose the historical and ongoing violence and brutality of colonialism. But declaring our opposition does not itself render these structures inert or non-existent. As Warburton notes, there has been some work on the subject of anarcha-Indigenism that has aimed to bring in a more focused look at colonialism and Indigenous alternatives to it. But this work has, at times, focused on drawing connections between anarchism and Indigenous resurgence, through points of connection and overlap, rather than on a more detailed critique of anarchism itself. This has been a focus of my own work, where my intent was to illustrate some aspects of connection that should prompt more concerted attention to Indigenous resurgence by anarchists (see Lewis 2012, 2016). But there are limitations to this approach and its ability to disrupt settler colonial processes that exist within anarchism itself. Looking at and being aware of the potency and power of Indigenous resurgence doesn't inherently disrupt anarchist theory and practice. As Warburton (2021: 17–18) argues:

Namely, if there is a correlation between the ethical commitments of anarchist and Native movements and ample discussion about how to develop an activist praxis that addresses settlement, why is there not a more concerted engagement with the question of *how* settlement has become normalized, or *settled*, in such movement spaces? In practice, the presumption of a natural affinity be-

tween anarchist and Native political movements obfuscates the problems that underlie the need for the restructuring of the relationships between Native and non-Native activists.

From here, her work seeks to take up this more specific task to ‘explore the connection between anarchism and settlement, rather than anarchist and Native movements’ (Warburton 2021: 18). This puts the focus back on anarchism as a political perspective that has much to offer in the creation of a more just world, but one that also needs to take up its own internal work of routing out the residues of colonization and settlement. Ultimately, anarchists need to develop a greater attention to the ‘structures of settlement’ that persist within our own theory, practice, and movements.

Settler Colonialism and Dispossession

Clarifying the specificity of settler colonialism and forms of dispossession is crucial in order to connect these structural realities to those of capitalism and the state that anarchists are so fundamentally focused on. Foundationally, Patrick Wolfe (1999: 2) argues that: “Settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay—invasion is a structure not an event.” Settler colonialism specifically names the process of permanent and ongoing settlement of Indigenous lands, with the accompanying processes of dispossession and violence. Mar and Edmonds (2010: 2) detail the scars of settler colonialism and settlement on the land itself:

In geopolitical terms, the impact of settler colonialism is starkly visible in the landscapes it produces: the symmetrically surveyed divisions of land;

instead towards relationships between Indigenous peoples. It ‘can be read as a novel that works against the depiction of Native peoples as immobile, isolated groups and, instead, illustrates the centrality of movement to a global Indigenous worldview’ (197). Indigenous contexts are placed at the centre, while ‘disidentifying’ with the structures of the settler state (198).

Overall: ‘It is precisely the assumed completeness of the history (and thus political and spatial ordering) of the United States that limits the ability of anarchist approaches to transnationalism to effectively confront the persistence of the structure of settlement with anarchist spaces and to account for the operation of US empire in their global inquiries’ (Warburton 2021: 199). For anarchists to effectively engage with transnationalist and global politics, the reference point of the state needs to be jettisoned, and a more detailed and intentional look at Indigenous ways of understanding place and context must be incorporated. In this way, Indigenous women’s literatures offer myriad ways out, through and beyond the structures of settler colonialism.⁶

⁶ This is a point that exists for Indigenous theory and practice in general, insofar as it can further disrupt (anarchist) structures of settlement. There is a fruitful potential for engagement, learning, relationality and accountability that can come from more directly engaging these bodies of work, which point towards alternative ways of being in the world and on the lands that we continue to inhabit. The work of Leanne Simpson (2017), mentioned above, is particularly instructive in this regard as she engages notions of state, capital and resurgence from within her own Nishnaabeg perspective, in a way that I think mirrors the work of the Indigenous women Warburton discusses, and in such a way that there is much to learn here for anarchists as well.

transformative rather than inclusive move' (Warburton 2021: 140). Indigenous women's works cannot be simply added on to the existing canons, but exist and resist on their own terms. Such works respond to dominant American figures like Allan Ginsberg or Robert Frost using a methodology that reveals the underlying structures of settlement that persist through the construction of these authors narratives of American history and culture, where Indigenous land is used as 'both the literal and figurative foundation of the American literary canon' and 'constituted through gendered discourses' (128).

Warburton (2021: 178) points to Indigenous literary criticism, and Indigenous women's work specifically, for:

its ability to emphasize the commensuration of Native nationalist and transnational approaches while demonstrating how this commensuration challenges claims to sovereignty by the US settler state ... how Native literary nationalism, as an approach that attends to the specific political, territorial, and cultural contexts of Native literatures, might be able to at once emphasize the specificity of tribal and national locations while also considering how such texts operate on a broader scale. Such a method of critical engagement had been cultivated among scholars who seek to disentangle the settler state as the required point of reference for a comparative approach to Native literatures.

Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* serves as a specific example of a 'transnational Native literary practice in which Native figures operate in the global world as national subjects, not of the settler state but of Native nations' (Warburton 2021: 179). The text locates itself in a transnationalist Pacific that moves beyond the locus of the US settler state structure, and

fences, roads, power lines, dams and mines; the vast mono-cultural expanses of single-cropped fields; carved and preserved national forest, and marine and wilderness parks; the expansive and gridded cities; and the socially coded areas of human habitation and trespass that are bordered, policed and defended. Land and the organised spaces on it, in other words, narrate the stories of colonisation.

Settler colonialism structures the context in which resistance occurs and the ways land and life are ordered within that context, and is therefore a necessary consideration for how we organize, destroy, build, and imagine.

Glen Coulthard's work on primitive accumulation expands our understanding of such settler colonial dynamics and processes of capitalist accumulation and expansion. Coulthard (2014: 8) argues that Marx's concept of primitive accumulation (where peasants were dispossessed from their land by the enclosures in Europe and forced into wage-based forms of labour without access to land) must be translated to become in 'conversation with the critical thoughts and practices of Indigenous peoples themselves.' To do so, Coulthard argues, like Sylvia Federici (2004), that Marx's concept needs a temporal reframing away from something relegated to the past and mostly complete. Its 'normative developmentalism' and modernist associations with progress need to be jettisoned, along with a contextual shift 'from an emphasis on the *capital relation* to the *colonial relation*' away from the primary subject as the waged worker to the colonized (Coulthard 2014: 9–11). By reframing primitive accumulation in this way, Coulthard suggests that it is dispossession that becomes the fundamental logic that underscores capitalism, not proletarianization or the push into wage-work relations. Coulthard's intervention suggests, then, the very real need to engage with settler

colonialism as a structure that developed alongside and in connection to capitalism, but which is also maintained to this day. This modification, or recontextualization, of primitive accumulation shows that the root of capitalist expansion is in the dispossession of Indigenous nations, but also the continued processes of capitalist accumulation. There can be no separation of capitalism and colonialism within a settler colonial context, or within anarchist theory and practice that occupies such a space.

Recent work by Robert Nichols (2020) contests the terminology of primitive accumulation and its application to the settler colonial context of North America, arguing for the term dispossession. Primitive accumulation, he argues, is best used to characterize the move from non-capitalist to capitalist relations, whereas it is difficult to say that there continue to be any relations, even within Indigenous alternatives, that are wholly outside capitalism.¹ He (2020: 83–84) argues that:

dispossession comes to name a distinct logic of capitalist development grounded in the appropriation and monopolization of the productive powers of the natural world in a manner that orders (but does not directly determine) social pathologies related to colonization, dislocation, and class stratification and/or exploitation, while simultaneously converting the planet into a homogenous and universal means of production.

Dispossession certainly captures the ongoing processes of logics of settlement and their connection to capitalist expansion. Both primitive accumulation and dispossession, as ways

¹ While the specifics and nuances of his discussion are beyond the scope of this piece here it is worthwhile pointing to them as Nichols specifically engages the anarchist concept, derived from Proudhon, 'Property is theft!' and considers it in the context of Indigenous dispossession and settler colonialism.

In particular she points to *form* as arising from specific histories and places (77), as an important aspect of Indigenous women's interventions whether through poetry, storytelling, memoir or genealogy that illustrate other ways of thinking and constructing the world, the 'other worlds here,' while pushing back against colonial structures of settlement. Warburton notes the ways that Indigenous women have showcased their own narratives and stories as forms of theory, while also taking and remaking dominant narratives of settlement. There is a 'writing back' that occurs alongside a reassertion and resurgence of Indigenous land and life. Indigenous Women's literature explores the 'what if' against dominant narratives, as a construction of other possible worlds and realities (136) with a 'refusal to separate bodies from bodies of knowledge' (140). In this way theory is not something external to life, place, body or experience, but something inherently bound up within it (116).⁵

Further, Indigenous women's literature forcefully resists mere inclusion within other bodies of writing, whether within women's narratives, larger constructions of the 'American' literary canon, or as part of male-dominated Indigenous literatures. For example, the poetic works by Heid E. Erdrich and Janet Rogers 'offer a transformative methodology that insists on recognizing the foundational role that settlement plays in American politics (and literature), by demonstrating clearly how that structure is manifested through gendered discourse and by requiring that the centering of Native women be a

⁵ It can be difficult for literary works to resonate with an audience that is not familiar with the works directly. I find this myself in terms of making the connections more concrete. As such I've opted to discuss some of the general aspects of Indigenous women's literature that Warburton teases out here, those which can be used as general theoretical and practical concepts to disrupt structures of settlement within anarchism. The more important point, perhaps, is that anarchists themselves need to read these literatures and begin to understand their importance in discussions of place, space, context and possibilities for the future.

of the state, rather than undoing border imperialism⁴ while ‘centering a definition of the transnational that accounts for the sovereignty of Native nations and their complicated status within US articulations of domesticity and foreignness’ (171).

While each of these aspects deserves its own in-depth discussion, and will need to be directly confronted within contemporary anarchism, Warburton argues that there is a need to prevent the ‘reinscription of the colonial ordering of both territorial and political space, one which silently subsumes Native resistance and self-determination within the borders (again, both territorial and political) claimed by the US settler state.’ Here again Warburton issues a direct challenge to the ways that structures of settlement are upheld within contemporary anarchist discourses.

Native Women’s Literature

How then can contemporary anarchism begin to disrupt these structures of settlement? Through her examination of Native women’s writing Warburton showcases the kind of ‘transformational accounting’ she calls for. She notes the mapping and storytelling methodologies that move us towards deeper and alternative ways of understanding place and place-making that can begin to unravel the structures of settlement that persist within anarchism. ‘Other Worlds Here’ she argues, ‘draws on the words and works of Native women’s literatures to demonstrate that anarchists can no longer depend on a politics that looks at this place and assumes that there are no politics here; that such politics must be created to envision a world without the state and without capitalism’ (Warburton 2021: 25).

⁴ A key influence, and required reading, here is Harsha Walia’s *Undoing Border Imperialism* (2013).

to illuminate and understand the structural nature of settler colonialism, could find greater discussion, dialogue and theoretical importation within anarchist theory and practice. We might ask: How can these structural understandings complicate our considerations of the state and capitalism? How does this change our approaches and analysis? What are the implications for anarchist theory? What are the ways we can build on these perspectives to further our own anarchist potentials within such settler colonial contexts? I hope this brief and ultimately inadequate review of some aspects of settler colonialism and dispossession provides some context to the colonial relations which Warburton illuminates and critiques within anarchism itself.

In *Other Worlds Here*, Theresa Warburton locates three ‘structures of settlement’ within contemporary North American anarchist movements: “the invocation of anarchist stories without a grounding in both place-based and historical context, the flattening rather than reckoning with histories of conflict between Native and non-Native communities, and the attempt to assert inherent parallel relationships between anarchist movements and Native sovereignty” (2021: 61). Focusing on the dominant cultural reference points within anarchism, Warburton points to the ‘Battle of Seattle’ in 1999, as a frequently referenced highpoint of the anti-globalization movement, that informs or perhaps ‘begins’ the current period of contemporary anarchism. Using this event, and others such as the Haymarket Riots and the Occupy Movement, she suggests that the remembrance and reference to such events occurs without placing them within the context of ongoing processes of settler colonial dispossession, Indigenous resistance to the state and capital, and relationships to land and place. It is a story told without reckoning with the settler colonial context in which it occurs.

Warburton argues that such ongoing omissions, which erase prior Indigenous presence, resistance and alternatives to

the state and capital, result in a form of ‘settler anarchism’ that ‘aligns itself with the settler colonial project both structurally and philosophically.’ She uses this ‘term to both acknowledge and push beyond the argument that settlement is merely inherited in anarchist spaces, bleeding through into radical politics from the dominant social and political structures’ (2021: 33–34). These dynamics persist through a number of other examples that are highlighted in the text.

At various points, anarchists are portrayed, or portray themselves and their movement predecessors, as the primary instigators or maintainers of radical forms of resistance, as those holding out hope for a better world, as the inheritors of radical political histories, all while furthering an erasure of Indigenous resistance historically and into the present. This, Warburton argues, continues with an equivalency or genealogy that is presumed between Indigenous resistance and contemporary anarchism. Warburton (2021: 40) highlights this trend in anarchist publications that reference the historic Indigenous resistance that occurred at Seattle in 1856, but with no reference to ongoing struggles in the present. Claims of general Native acquiescence are upheld, lamenting a loss of ‘what was once free’, while claiming an anarchist lineage with those that attempted to resist the encroachment of capitalism and the state. The erasure of ongoing Indigenous resistance, let alone presence, permits a certain ‘settler amenability’ where ‘the political grammar of this particular anarchist story has made New Anarchism *amenable* to the settler project, contra the assumption that anarchist movements are inherently aligned with those for Native self-determination’ (Warburton 2021: 34).

The Occupy movement as well, while carrying a number of key anarchist values and practices (but without an explicit anarchist political slant in name), became a more public point of confrontation over settler colonial politics. As has been noted by a number of critical discussions of various facets of

Anarchist Internationalism

The final aspect of contemporary anarchism that Warburton explores is framings around internationalism and transnationalism. Warburton points to anarchist anxieties regarding the movement’s white and European-dominant character that often leads to a desire to include as many other movements and struggles as possible within the anarchist lineage. The focus of the issue becomes, in short, one of historiography (2021: 149), rather than a deeper analysis of the ways that anarchist politics can be compatible with discourses and structures of white supremacy and settler colonialism (151). Again, we return to the structures of settlement imbued within anarchism itself as a deep seated problem, rather than one that can be solved by inclusion or furthering an internationalist scope.

The Zapatista uprising of 1994 is an instructive example here. As Warburton argues (2021: 152): ‘Rather than inspiring an interest in concomitant indigenous movements across North America, however, the anarchist fixation on Zapatistas has continually located indigeneity outside the boundaries claimed by the United States and Canada, reifying US claims to territory and sovereignty within an anarchist paradigm.’ The result is a further centralizing of the US state as a reference point to order the world, and a placement of Indigenous peoples in relation to this structure of empire, rather than as disruptive to it. This dynamic is replayed first in terms of anarchist approaches to nationalism that continue to conflate Indigenous nationalism with the nation-state (158). It continues with anarchist mythologies of the Haymarket affair that are primarily filtered through themes of migration and transnationalism, rather than ongoing resistance in the context at the time, or the intensification of processes of settlement and dispossession (167). Finally, it continues with anarchist experiences and histories of borders that uphold the internal/external framings predicated on the primary structure

to anti-colonial politics, such as the anti-colonial solidarity expressed by Emma Goldman vs. the individualism rooted in American liberalism espoused by Voltarine de Cleyre (96). In the equivalent approach, on the other hand, there is a universalizing of women's experience, again outside of a specific consideration of context and place, and 'the assumption of an inherent correspondence between anarchism and feminism works to prevent a critical engagement with the question of how heteropatriarchy works to normalize the structure of settlement within anarchist politics in the United States' (100).

Finally, the exchange approach, while starting to incorporate the concerns of Indigenous feminists and the context of colonization, presumes a certain equality of exchange between anarchism and feminism and Indigenous theory. 'In the simplest terms,' however, as Warburton (2021: 105) argues:

Native feminists don't owe anarchists anything in exchange for the development of a critical approach to settlement that accounts for its gendered and sexualized dimensions. Instead, an approach to anarchism and feminism that does not replicate either an implicit or explicit claim to Native resources, whether land or knowledge, requires not an exchange or synthesis, but rather a transformational accounting for what it means to do anarchist feminist work on stolen land.

The task at hand, which runs through the whole of Warburton's work, is to understand how anarchist politics, from a range of focal points, continue to refuse a concerted analysis of the structures of settlement in which anarchism participates. In spite of our anti-colonial declarations, a core set of colonial relations remain unchallenged and undertheorized.

the loosely constructed movement (Barker 2012; Grande 2013; Tuck and Yang 2012) the movement was challenged on the use of the term 'occupy' and the tactic of occupation that paid little attention to the specific settler colonial context of Indigenous land theft and dispossession in which it occurred.² Warburton argues, 'as the emergent node in the genealogy of anarchist politics after 1999,' where it 'came to represent a public embrace of the possibilities of anarchism as a viable method of political resistance in the twenty-first century' (2021: 48). This case draws similar connections with the case of Seattle in 1999 as 'an intrinsic part of the structure of New Anarchism' but similarly 'neglects the broader historical context of place, flattens complicated relationships between anarchists and Native activists, and invokes histories of Native resistance to place anarchists in a parallel lineage' (Warburton 2021: 49). As Barker (2012: 4) notes, the framing of the Occupy movement served little more than to 'co-opt the power of place' at the expense of Indigenous communities, reinscribing structures of settler colonialism, ignoring histories of dispossession as well as resistance, and refused to recognize the asymmetric power relations that affect Indigenous peoples, especially those engaged in land-based forms of resistance.

As I have argued elsewhere (Lewis 2016), this critique of Occupy can be more directly applied to the prefigurative, 'building a new world in the shell of the old' kinds of alternative construction politics within anarchism itself, and to more re-

² A number of Occupy sites did take steps to respond to such criticisms, often resulting in lengthy debates at general assemblies and in various organizing committees as to the necessity of such anti-colonial considerations. Some groups went as far as engaging and seeking relationships with local Indigenous nations and groups; bringing in anti-colonial and decolonial politics to groups analysis, issues, and processes; and pushing for name changes to better reflect the local realities of settler colonialism (such as Decolonize Oakland, for ex.). These efforts were, however, limited in their ability to fundamentally alter the theory and practice that structured the core aspects of the movement.

cent work that seeks to reframe or, problematically ‘reclaim’, ‘the commons’ as site of political struggle. As Craig Fortier (2017: 30) argues, ‘The problem with the idea of the commons in settler states is that it evades the question of ongoing settler complicity in the project of genocide, land theft, assimilation, and occupation. In this respect, omissions of settler colonial history in campaigns to reclaim the commons are not unique to Occupy.’ Looking at the Occupy movement and arguing for seeing settler colonialism as ‘strategically central’ to the context in which anarchist resistance occurs I argued that:

a generic opposition to all forms of oppression and domination, and seeking a broad-based unity within alternative struggles for the future that is open and inclusive (as anarchist projects aim to be) can do little to take stock of the structural realities of settler colonialism without very specific attention, and direct engagements within Indigenous communities. Anarchist prefiguration, if it follows a similar occupational logic as Occupy, will be a form of anarchist *terra nullius*.³ (Lewis 2016: 224)

The overall argument here, then, is not that there has been no discussion of Indigenous resistance within anarchist movements, but that these discussions are often constructed through a settler colonial lens and contain glaring omissions in terms of place, land, history, and context. Even more directly, they contribute to the erasure of Indigenous presence and ongoing resistance in the present. This returns us to the words of Glen

³ Terra nullius or ‘empty land’ has long stood in as a rationale for colonization, where either Indigenous peoples did not exist on the lands that were settled, or were not using the land in a productive enough fashion and thus settlers and the state were justified in their taking and remaking of the land in their settler colonial image.

Coulthard above regarding the gaps in left critical theory more generally. And even more so, as Warburton highlights, there is also a concerted ‘anarchist gap’ in the lack of attention to Native women’s writing and theorization.

Gender, Sexuality and Indigeneity

Theresa Warburton (2021) expands her critique further and looks at the ways that anarchists have engaged with questions of gender and sexuality as part of our politics. Warburton notes three key approaches anarchists have taken to discuss the relationship with feminism:

1. A genealogical approach where feminism is an ongoing and developing anarchist concern (93)
2. An equivalent approach where anarchism=feminism and vice versa. This approach sees each perspective’s focus on hierarchy as a primary concern as a key meeting point and source of equivalency/overlap (99)
3. And finally, an exchange approach, where feminism contributes a more pronounced analysis of patriarchy gendered relations and where anarchism brings in a deeper critique of the state and capitalism, amongst other sources of domination (102)

Each of these approaches suffers from similar erasures and omissions of the ongoing context of settler colonialism and Indigenous resistance, as well as the understandings that could be gained from looking at Indigenous theorizations of gender and sexuality, and their intimate connection to land and place. In particular, a genealogical approach excludes discussion of the disparate positions that historical anarchist feminists have taken, in general, and in particular