

Ojibwe and Settler Modulations of Space: A Case of Historical Injustice for Native Americans

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Abstract- American colonial history is rooted in the hostile takeover of Indigenous territories and the genocidal execution of the native population. The settler colonial narrative that proclaims Manifest Destiny as the founding principle of the settler states, subsumes Indigenous counter-narratives of systemic gendered violence enacted against the Native Americans. The acquirement of land continues to be the principle basis for the progressiveness of settler states. The paper observes how colonial conceptions of space continue to influence Eurocentric epistemologies, in the interpretation of Indigenous American cultures. The paper details the historical progression of the colonial influence exerted by Euro-American colonies on the Indigenous population. The paper delineates the distinctive epistemic attributes of Ojibwe tribal knowledge, represented through their a-chronological conceptions of space.

Keywords: Gynocentric, Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, Spatial, Native American, Epistemologies, Indigeneity, Eurocentric, Manifest Destiny, Colonists, Deities, Doctrine of Discovery.

I. COLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS SPACE

Eurocentric epistemes isolate space and time from one another exerting its influence over both dimensions. The isolation of space and the linearization of time positions the centeredness of Euro-American pursuits and interests, over the Indigenous need for the preservation and continuance of their way of life. The interpretation of space as an isolated dimension allows its manipulation by the governing settler colonial structures. The colonial modulation of spatiality ensures that Eurocentric governing structures occupy the positional center.

The corporeal and theoretical borders of the epistemological-ontological divide characteristic of

European perceptual systems “act to centre the human and peripherate nature into an exclusionary relationship” (Watts 26). The treatment of land as an isolated dimension stems from the underlying assumption that space is stationary and devoid of intelligible agency. The segregation of space its treatment as a quantifiable and purchasable resource contribute “to colonial interpretations of nature,” that situates the European male as its sole inheritor. Through the application of Eurocentric critical paradigms, the land is reduced to a commodity “scaled and modified in terms of progress and advancement” (Watts 26). Colonial American history is fraught with genocidal violence perpetrated against Indigenous Americans. The motive underlying the institutive enactment of violence at a mass scale continues to be the ownership of territories.

“Colonial interaction with land has historically been one of violence and bordered individuations where land is to be accessed, not learned from or a part of” (Watts 26). European colonies are established on Indigenous territories on the assumption that the lands rightfully belong to the colonists, through means of eugenic supremacy with the exercising of terra nullius. The “epistemological-ontological distinction” characteristic of Eurocentric knowledge systems also refers to its tendency to accord intelligible consciousness to man, and to further assume he is separate from his ecological surroundings and independent of its mechanisms. This segregation “creates spaces for colonial practices to occur” (Watts 28). The separation of the environment from man results in its reduction into epistemological spaces commodified by colonizers as stationary resource and capital property.

The quantification of space represented through the privatized ownership of Indigenous territories, ensures the hierarchical distribution of capital power and wealth rooted in the privileges afforded by class and the “doctrine of discovery” (Ortiz 3). Space is interpreted as a stationary and commodifiable dimension that can be owned, shared, and distributed by the governing Euro-American center. The distribution and ownership of space through the taking of land by ancestral claim and royal birthright, enables the formation of an inequitable class structure in which a greater portion of the spatial dimension is claimed by the richer class. “Once in the hands of settlers the land is no longer sacred as it is for the Indigenous. Land is transmogrified into “a private property or commodity to be acquired and sold” (Ortiz 55). Transactions of land enable European colonists to expand their reach and heighten their status to feudal lords.

“Every man a possible king, or at least wealthy” (Ortiz 55). The privatized ownership of space through means of kinship allows the claiming of land generationally passed down from one genealogical kin to another for establishing feudal homes, capital institutions, and industries. The colonial linearization of isolated space is represented through the spatial claim, rooted in ancestral and genealogical associations within families. The blood ties within inter-generational members of a family structured within the European familial paradigm are linear. Through the continuum process of colonization, gynocentric and totemic clan structures are erased and “replaced by the nuclear family” (Allen 42). The establishment of a heteronormative nuclear familial structure mediates the replacement of “non-authoritarian gynocentricity and women clan leaders,” (Allen 42) with a patriarchal head.

The positioning of the European patriarch at the familial center and the authoritarian ownership that comes with the title, mediates the causal distribution of spatial wealth amongst the kin members genealogically associated with the patriarch. The passing down of land through successive generations is determined by the degree of direct relationship between the patriarchal center and his closest kin. The closest degree of familial kinship determines the quantifiable distribution of spatial wealth. Land is stripped of its agency and complex epistemologies.

Indigenous territories are reduced to measurable spatial units. The exclusionary ownership of territories by European patriarchal families and its distribution through the mechanism of inheritance, establishes a continuum monopoly of Indigenous lands that restricts its reclamation by the original inheritors.

The monopolization of territories by the wealthy fraction amongst the European colonists ensures the continuance of hierarchical structures, and the preservation of spatial wealth within patriarchal units. “Hierarchy had to be infiltrated into Indigenous constructions of family so that men were agents of heteropatriarchy and could therefore exert colonial control from within” (Simpson 109). Space is monopolized across non-Western spheres to access Indigenous resources. Settler colonialism is rooted in movement through their traversal across European geographical lines to claim Indigenous spaces, as a means of expanding their power over non-Western spheres to establish commercial trade and commodify Indigenous lands. The establishment of commerce on Indigenous soil mediates the settlement of European societies on native territories, and the forcible eviction of the Indigenous population from their territories. The colonial power centered in Europe relies on the monopolization of space, to ensure the continuance of its capital and political structures.

The Euro-centered mapping of spatial dimensions and its acquirement of spaces through lineal claim, allows the colonial center to maintain its hierarchical control over the territorial dimensions within the European colonial homeland. The reorientation of space to expand the European colonial influence is evident in the spatial positioning of Europe as the center. Through this spatial realignment, Europe becomes the normative basis by which the progress of other civilizations is measured. The colonial center relies on the extraction of raw resources for the expansion of its economic structures. “Extraction has always been a part of colonialism. Settler colonialism extracts Indigenous knowledge, women, and territories” (Simpson 75). The continuous extraction of Indigenous resources and the transformation of ancestral lands into stationary spatial units, also impacts the relational distribution of intelligent agency amongst all life forms. “Colonization has disrupted the ability of Indigenous people to think, communicate

with place, and has corrupted agency with foreign impositions” (Watts 23). The diminution of land entails the absolute erasure of agency, represented through its underlying feminine principle of creation.

II. SETTLER COLONIZATION OF TRIBAL HISTORIES

Once the gynocentric orientation of lands are erased, “the acquisition of territories becomes all the more realized” (Watts 30). The “doctrine of discovery” (Ortiz 3) constitutes the justification for the claim of Indigenous spatial dimensions, through unjust and violent means that target the tribes who occupy the lands. The doctrine constitutes “one of the first principles of international law Christian European monarchies promulgated to legitimize investigating, mapping, and claiming lands belonging to people outside Europe” (Ortiz 199). According to this Euro-centered construct, the act of discovering a habitable space is equated with the act of owning the discovered space, and exerting dominance over its local population.

The rights of incontestable ownership provided to European colonists through the exercising of this doctrine are not restricted to Indigenous territories alone. Tribal knowledge and belief systems are also subsumed by colonial methods of anthropological documentation and knowledge preservation. “The doctrine remains the basis for federal laws still in effect that control Indigenous peoples’ lives and destinies, even their histories by distorting them” (Ortiz 198). The anachronization of tribal knowledge and histories paves the way for their inevitable extinction. This doctrine is characterized by the belief in the singular supremacy of European monarchy over Indigenous spheres. The overarching supremacy of European reign in the claiming of Indigenous spatial dimensions, is associated with the Christian biblical interpretation of creation. In the creation account of paradise, Eden is solely created for Adam and Eve. “The Christian roots of colonization are ignored or excused, to characterize European invaders as mere products of circumstance when suppressing Indigenous peoples” (Killsback 131). The bestowal of the paradisiacal ecosystem on the prototypical man and woman, indicates the supreme Western notion of rightful claim over the spatial dimension. The

incontestable ownership of space is rooted in the belief that Europe is chosen by a higher spiritual order as natural inheritors of the Earth.

The notion of being chosen by God further functions as the driving force for the colonial expansion of capitalist structures and extractive industries, that further justifies the exploitation of Indigenous populations through their erasure from native territories. The metanarrative that characterizes the founding of the Euro-American settler colonies “involves Puritan settlers who had a covenant with God to take the land” (Ortiz 3). The preordained choosing of the colonists as sole inheritors of Indigenous territories functions as the indisputable origin story.

This segment of fabricated history is further “supported and reinforced by the Columbus myth and the doctrine of discovery” (Ortiz 3). The colonists’ belief that they were chosen by the divine Christian order in claiming Indigenous lands, has also been used “to justify appropriation of the continent and the domination of Indigenous people” (Ortiz 47) through violent means. This ideology that promulgates Euro-American exceptionalism “normalizes the invasions of Indigenous nations as the consequence of ordained progress” (Ortiz 118). The subsumed narratives are the forgotten tribal histories and the violence perpetrated against Indigenous communities. The American myth also perpetuates the false notion of “the gift-giving native helping to establish and enrich the development of the United States” (Ortiz 5). The stereotypical construct associated with the noble primitive who passively accepts the arrival of the European colonists as an inevitable event, “is a smoke screen meant to obscure the fact that the very existence of the country is a result of the looting of an entire continent and its resources” (Ortiz 5). Manifest Destiny functions as the catalyst that mediates the colonization of Indigenous territories, the looting of its resources, and driving away its natural inhabitants.

The Euro-American metanarrative on the formation of the settler colonies is primarily characterized by a “mythological unconscious belief in Manifest Destiny” (Ortiz 6). The American myth is also characterized by the notion that the frontier expansion is an inevitable temporal event in American national

history, and is the result of the “united settler colonies expanding across the continent to assume its preordained size and shape” (Ortiz 118). “Euro-American colonialism had from its beginnings a genocidal tendency” (Ortiz 8). That the Westward Movement (1801-1861) is mediated by the violent killing of Indigenous tribes and the stealing of tribal territories, is never acknowledged by adherents of the American exceptionalist ideology.

Colonial narratives on the expansion of European colonies and the national formation of the settler states insists that the American Dream is “a positive development strategy that afforded the expansion of a new, important, and superior nation” (Arvin Tuck Morrill 26). More than a catalyst for the rapid economic and capital expansion of the colonies on Indigenous soil, the dream is “a convenient rationale that has permitted genocide” (Arvin Tuck Morrill 26). The Indigenous perspective of these historical events are erased, as Native Americans gravitate “between assimilation and extinction” (Allen 84). Indigenous communities are forced to accept settler state formation as inevitable. Settler colonialism depends on the manipulation of spatial dimensions. The linear capital progression of settler America is characterized by its subsuming of Indigenous spaces into settler colonies. Indigenous spatial dimensions are governed by a relational epistemological paradigm that interconnects the land with tribal cosmologies, and the non-human species that constitute the Indigenous ecosystems. The creation stories and ceremonies “tells the native that he is part of a relational whole and all organisms are related to one another,” (Allen 60) within the tribal cosmological framework.

“The unity of the whole is preserved and reflected in language, traditions, and thought processes” (Allen 61). Indigenous spaces are not stationary or commodifiable dimensions that can be owned, shared, or extracted. The land constitutes the basis of Indigenous epistemologies, and the sustenance of tribal traditions. Indigenous spaces are encoded with ancestral knowledge of sacred rituals and practices that mediate the actualization of tribal sovereignty in settler America. Native American tribes are relationally bound to their traditional spaces. Their presence in interrelated ecosystems contribute to the preservation of its resources, and the continuance of

the Indigenous mode of living that postulates the homogeneous interconnectivity, within the ecological human and non-human species singularly rooted to a common creator.

The relational epistemic paradigm that characterizes Anishinaabe perceptual systems “describes the interconnectedness between animate beings as enawendiwin, referring to their relationships with all of Creation” (Geniusz 57). The Anishinaabe epistemic perspective “places humans as an integral part of the cycle, rather than at the center or above the rest of creation” (Geniusz 57). When Indigeneity encounters the colonizing and capitalist aspects of settler governance the traditional spaces are removed from the Indigenous contexts that gives the land its complex epistemic layers, and are converted into stationary dimensions solely occupied by settler colonials. “Anishinaabe knowledge and histories have been attacked since the beginning of colonialism, through processes of dispossession that remove Indigenous peoples from their homelands” (Simpson 159). The colonization of Indigenous spaces entails the linearization of the dynamic epistemological framework associated with land. When land is disassociated from the local population who depend on it for sustaining their way of life, it turns into a non-living commodity capitalized to accommodate settler colonial interests. The colonial process of linearization refers to the diminution of the tribal epistemologies, rooted in gynocentric interpretations of the natural world. The colonization of Indigenous territories results in “the systematic undermining of tribal women,” (Allen 202) who are responsible for the creation and continuance of Indigenous societies.

III. THE OJIBWE FEMININE PRINCIPLE

Gynocentric tribal cultures contextualized within Eurocentric theoretical paradigms rooted in anthropocentric assumptions, results in the transformation of the qualitative data into “interpretations that are incongruent with the tribes’ philosophies and theories” (Allen 223). The colonial interpretation of space refuses to acknowledge the synchronous relationship between land and the Indigenous woman.

The separation of land from its native tribe is a systemic process that begins with the colonial targeting of Indigenous women. “Western studies of Native American tribal systems are erroneous at base because they discount, degrade, or conceal the gynocentric aspects of tribal cultures” (Allen 4). The systemic segregation of the land from its tribe begins with “the overthrow or subversion of the gynocentric nature of tribal systems,” (Allen 32) through the diminishment of the underlying role of Indigenous women as creators and their relegation to the status of dutiful wives rooted in masculine-centered, heteronormative paradigms. The complete erasure of gynocentric cultures characteristic of Native American tribes, synchronously results in the destruction of ritual and ceremonial traditions that celebrate the feminine principle. The absence of gynocentric rituals and its replacement by European heteropatriarchal principles, mediates the absolute disintegration of tribal societies.

According to tribal epistemologies, land is rooted in the internal bodily rhythms and functions of the Indigenous woman. The biological changes and mechanisms within the Indigenous woman, pre-determines the orientation of the ceremonial traditions and ritualized practices. “Menstrual or postpartum blood is held sacred as the blood of woman is infused with the power of Supreme Mind” (Allen 28). In gynocentric tribal cultures such as the Ojibwe, “Indigenous women are held in awe and respect,” as they are the creators of organic life. Within the tribal context of feminine-centric ceremonies, a woman undergoing such biological changes are “empowered in a ritual sense” (Allen 28). The biological processes indicates the sole feminine ability of creation. The Anishinaabe creation stories teaches its listeners the land is an extension of Sky-Woman, Grandmother Moon, and Earth Woman.

The discharge of fluids during the heightened phase of feminine processes is ritualistically interpreted as preparation for the creation of life, and is symbolically in union with Sky-Woman’s act of creating the land and the Anishinaabe. Tribal rituals are characterized by changes within the body of the Indigenous woman, and “the positions of women within the phases of womanhood are used to empower specific rites” (Allen 47). The spatial orientation of Indigenous

territories is further rooted in the presence of land created by the celestial feminine constructs in the creation stories. Anishinaabe epistemologies are characterized by the overarching presence of women. Indigenous women are crucial in the creation of epistemes and the sustenance of tribal communities. Like the Grandmother deities in the creation stories, the Ojibwe woman is “the true creatrix for she is thought itself from which all else is born, and is the necessary precondition for material creation” (Allen 14). The Indigenous woman is a source of creation and is the direct result of the feminine principle, represented through the Ojibwe deities in the oral stories.

The tribal women within gynocentric societies are responsible for “maintaining the life and stability of their tribes” (Allen 207). The continuance of Indigenous societies and practices by tribal women are mediated through their “preservation of the oral tradition,” the ritualistic narration with enactment of the creation stories, and the arrangement of “spiritual and physical provisions for ceremonies” that both honour and acknowledge the “creative, physical, psychic, and spiritual aspects of Indigenous womanhood” (Allen 207). The native women in these societies are also responsible for maintaining political order within the tribes, and with other Indigenous tribes that share common territorial regions.

Gynocentric societies are further characterized by its inherent matrilineal mechanism that reconfigures the genealogical tracing of a tribe member’s lineage, by replacing the standardized practice of determining one’s familial link to a patriarchal male with that of tracing a member’s roots to a matriarch. “The status of men in Native American tribes came to them through the agency of women, who got their own status from the Grandmother powers” (Allen 202). “In gynocentric systems a unified household is one in which the relationships among women and their descendants are ordered,” (Allen 251) in accordance with the ceremonial principle of creation that establishes a celestial kinship amongst Indigenous women regardless of direct blood-ties. The grandmother deities in the Ojibwe creation stories teaches tribal members that all creations are homogeneously linked amongst themselves, and do not conform to the Western epistemic tendency of

causal classifications or categorizations. In gynocentric cultures, the “ordering of sister relationships” (Allen 251) amongst women is rooted in their shared homogeneity with the creators.

The women are extensions of the grandmother deities, and are ritualistically bound to one another based on shared ancestral grounds. “A male’s spiritual and economic placement and the attendant responsibilities are determined by his membership in the community of sisterhood” (Allen 251). This practice suggests that Native American societies—such as the Anishinaabe—are structurally oriented around an Indigenous woman, who functions as a central figure responsible for the mediation of tribal affairs and the equitable distribution of tribal resources. The tribal notion of women occupying the positional and epistemic center of Indigenous societies, vastly contradicts the European colonial notion of a centralized patriarchal power. The supreme power accorded to Indigenous women is accompanied by a plethora of responsibilities, commonly centered on the continuance of Indigeneity.

The exercising of this power by Indigenous women is illustrated through their fulfillment of these sacred duties. The cyclic observance of rituals and initiation of ceremonial rites by tribal women, mediates the cultural continuance of Indigenous communities. Monarchical notions normatively associated with a singular form of authority, does not exist in Native American tribal cultures. “Gynocentric systems distribute power evenly amongst men and women” (Allen 41). The tribal notion of power contradicts the European understanding of this construct. While European colonies and settler states are characterized by hierarchical stratifications in the form of class structures, tribal societies are founded in the universalized assumption that all organic life forms are homogeneously linked to a common creator, and by extension are relationally bound to one another. While the expansion of settler societies is mediated through the causal exercising of unequally distributed capital power, tribal cultures are rooted in the egalitarian belief that each individual is equal. “Economic distribution follows a similar pattern as reciprocal exchange of goods and services amongst individuals are mediated,” (Allen 41) by Indigenous women

ceremonially bound to ensuring the sustenance of their fellow tribesmen.

The continuum existence of tribal societies through the fulfillment of ceremonial duties by women, functions as a ritualized enactment of the creation act by the Grandmother deities who brought “corn, agriculture, social systems, and blessed the people with the ability to provide for themselves and their progeny” (Allen 15). The creation stories “testify that primary power to make and relate belongs to the preponderantly feminine powers of the universe” (Allen 17). The Anishinaabe notion of creation through feminine agencies is cerebral than biological, as it is “the feminine power of thought and mind that gives rise to biological organisms, social organizations, and cultures” (Allen 28). The feminine power to create life is the source of all ritual traditions.

Indigenous land is the result of the symbiotic interaction between the feminine deity and ecological non-human species. In the re-creation story, it is the tripartite interaction within Sky-Woman, sea-turtle, and the muskrat that results in the formation of land. In the sixth order of creation story, the Earth is created through the interaction with the seeds of “Gzhee Mnidoo” (Watts 21). The centrality of Indigenous women represented through the Grandmother deities, are acknowledged and practiced within a tribal context to create societies epistemically and culturally rooted in the womb of the woman. The overarching connection with the Indigenous woman and Grandmother deities connotes a “connection with their womb, which is the container of power that women carry within their bodies” (Allen 24). The spatial significance of the womb is principally rooted in the ability of Indigenous feminine deities to create women, whose bodies function as sources of epistemes and houses political authority crucial for the formation and continuance of Indigenous societies.

The notion of woman “confined to maternity” characteristic of Eurocentric thought processes, functions as an imposing limitation on “the power inherent in Indigenous femininity” (Allen 15). According to Anishinaabe epistemologies, the womb of the Indigenous woman is more than a vessel for containing biological life. The cyclic orientation of the womb represents non-chronological spatiotemporal

perceptions and the continuum perpetuation of Indigenous thought processes, traditions, and societies. The Indigenous woman is the “creation thinker” and not merely the bearer of creation. Her thoughts constitute the “origin of material and non-material realities” (Allen 15). Ojibwe shamanic rituals and traditions centered on the feminine principle “integrally connects the power of creation thinking to the power of the Great Mothers” (Allen 29). The land is created through the application of Indigenous feminine thought. Its continuance is rooted in the acknowledgement of its feminine origins.

The Indigenous woman is “problematic to the colonial imperative given her powerful status in Indigenous societies” (Watts 31). Indigenous lands are unjustly claimed through the uprooting of gynocentric values, and practices that equip native women with the authority to initiate and influence the social and ceremonial activities within the tribe.

IV. SETTLER COLONIZATION OF TRIBAL GYNOCENTRISM

The colonial transformation of land to a stationary dimension requires its isolation from the gynocentric traditions that gives it epistemic and cultural significance. “The physical and cultural genocide of Native American tribes is about the colonial fear of gynocracy” (Allen 3). The European colonies comprise “Puritans, Catholics, Quakers, and Christian missionaries,” collectively oriented towards erasing gynocentric tribal systems through the systemic enactment of sexual violence that commodifies Indigenous women, who “occupy prominent positions at all levels of tribal societies” (Allen 3). The disruption of feminine-centric societies is effectuated, through employing the colonial tool of sexual violence. From being originators of Indigenous cultures and the holders of complex epistemes, the bodies of Indigenous women are commodified through their exploitation at the hands of settler colonials. The institutive implementation of sexual violence as “an effective colonial tool” (Simpson 88) to quell Indigenous uprising is “an integral part of nineteenth century strategies of domination that carries forward to the present day” (Dhillon 9). Sexual violence functions as means of dispossession represented through the separation of land from its

gynocentric epistemologies, and the “devaluation of women” (Allen 202) through the denial of their sovereignty.

The impact of colonial gendered violence on Indigenous women mediates the “erasure of the political orders and relationships within Indigenous bodies,” (Simpson 42) which causally erases the connection between those bodies and the land.

The commodification of Indigenous women results in the capitalist quantification of Indigenous territories. The colonial strategy of employing violence as a means of diminishing the primacy associated with women, allows the ransacking of Indigenous territories. Indigenous women are forcibly displaced out of the tribal contexts that situates them at the center. “Land and bodies are commodified as capital and objects of exploitation under settler colonialism” (Simpson 41). Through the colonial targeting of Indigenous women, settler colonists are effectively erasing the “intimate connection between Anishinaabe bodies, the associated knowledge and practices that connect them to land” (Simpson 41). Indigenous bodies—specifically the bodies of Indigenous women—are the “nodes of the network that continually regenerate,” (Simpson 117) the foundational structures of tribal societies. The genocidal erasure of Indigenous women, gynocentric tribal systems, and their exploitation at the hands of colonists effectively eliminates possibilities for the continuance of Indigeneity.

The causal transformation of Indigenous societies from “gynocentric, egalitarian, ritual-based social systems to European secularized structures,” (Allen 195) further erases hope for resurgence in tribal gynocentrism. The removal of women from the Indigenous tribal framework results in the erasure of the gynocentric epistemologies associated with land. Indigenous territories are consequently devoid of its value and transmogrified into measurable commodities that can be owned or shared. “Colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Indigenous women are inherently violable and Indigenous lands are available for the taking” (Dhillon 10). When Anishinaabe women are uprooted out of their Indigenous paradigms and forcibly situated within European colonial contexts, they are

diminished from being “economically and politically autonomous” members of tribal societies to “dependent, subservient, and confined to the domestic sphere” (Simpson 110) in settler societies.

The diminishment of tribal gynocentric values is further reinforced through the “loss of rituals, assimilation of clans, and killing of tribal members familiar with the tradition” (Allen 42). American tribal societies are further weakened through the forced implementation of capitalist economic systems, and assimilative policies that aim at anglicizing the Indigenous population.

V. CONTINUUM EURO-AMERICAN COLONIZATION

Indigenous American tribes normatively practice the equitable distribution of tribal resources, and barter goods amongst members in the presence of a matriarch. The introduction of the capitalist mode of production on Indigenous land diminishes its population from being sovereign members to wage workers forced to produce material goods out of resources, extracted from their own territories and contribute to the expansion of settler colonial structures on Indigenous soil. Through the “persistent seizure of Indigenous land and displacement of tribal people for capital development and resource extraction,” (Dhillon 6) colonial industrialists ensure the availability of mass labour represented through Indigenous people stripped of their traditional identities and way of life, to fulfill the rapid demands of “capitalist accumulation and state-formation” (Coulthard Simpson 254). The infusion of techno-scientific capitalist structures on Indigenous territories, results in the causal formation of class hierarchies amongst the settler and Indigenous populations. Settler colonial structures institutionalize “violence or the threat of violence,” to ensure its continuum on Indigenous soil and “accomplish its expansionist goals” (Ortiz 8). While settler colonies monopolize on the capital wealth generated through mass labour, the hierarchical formation rooted in an unequal distribution of wealth results in a disintegration in unity amongst the Indigenous tribes. Settler colonialism is “a relentless structure not contained in a period of time,” that perpetuates its impact on the “first peoples of a place” (Arvin Tuck

Morrill 12) through means of violence and assimilation. The diminution in tribal population ensures “Indigenous claims over territories are diluted and settlers become its native owners” (Arvin Tuck Morrill 12). The assimilative policies are drafted to colonize their frame of mind and disempower the tribes “to make land claims” (Arvin Tuck Morrill 12). The policies are further oriented towards manipulating the Indigenous tribes into believing that “colonization is actually good for the Indians” (Killsback 130). Through the colonial enactment of assimilation policies Indigenous population are forced to repudiate their identities rooted in tribal paradigms, and forced to assimilate their colonizer’s mode of living with its accompanying belief systems. The collective and continuum assimilation of Indigenous people with distinctive tribal dynamics, to a homogeneous Christianized population results in the overall reduction of tribal people in settler America.

VI. CONCLUSION

Indigenous American epistemic perspectives continue to be rendered invisible, through the dominant application of Eurocentric methodologies. The paper calls for the acknowledgment of the colonial influence that underlies Western epistemologies. Through the delineation of the gynocentric roots that characterizes Native American epistemologies, the paper highlights the complex orientation of tribal knowledge, cultures, and the need for their resurgence in the colonized present.

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