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Where is Settler Colonialism?

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Abstract

This essay considers both the limits and necessity of mobilizing settler colonial frameworks in the contemporary moment. It traces the rise of Settler Colonial Studies as the dominant framework for making sense of colonial relations in Canada and considers the limits of this framework for understanding colonization in Inuit Nunangat, where the settler state's interest in dispossession, extraction, and proletarianization have played out differently than in southern Canada. Guided by Aimé Césaire's directive to ask, again and again, what colonization *is*, I consider why Settler Colonial Studies frameworks are so readily mobilized in the study of northern Canada but are hyperpoliticized when they are applied to Israel/Palestine, why Inuit theories of colonization barely figure in Qallunaaq research about the North, and what this means for theorizing colonialism in the current conjuncture.

Keywords

settler colonialism, Inuit, North, Nunavut, Arctic, Palestine

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I've been connected to and doing research about Nunavut for almost 20 years, around the themes of colonialism and colonial knowledge systems, Inuit-settler relations, resource extraction, struggles to oppose specific mining projects, and around language and translation.

I started my PhD in 2005, before Settler Colonial Studies as we know it today had come into being. At that time, most people studying colonialism in Geography were doing so by drawing on postcolonial theory, broadly defined (including the writings of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and others), and were oriented toward colonial discourse, imaginative geographies, and colonial governmentality, drawing significantly on Michel Foucault. Some drew on the work of Indigenous scholars like Haunani-Kay Trask, Marie Battise, Sákéj Youngblood Henderson, John Borrows, Gerald Vizenor, Patricia Monture-Angus, and Lee Maracle, but most did not.[1] And although Indigenous geographers like Renee Pualani Louis, Deborah McGregor, Chantelle Richmond, and Brad Coombes were helping to build Indigenous geography as a subfield, there was relatively little traffic between scholars studying Indigenous peoples and geographies, and scholars focused on theorizing colonial formations (but see Gelder and Jacobs 1998, de Leeuw 2007). Anglo-American Geography at the time was even more white than it is today, and geographic writing on colonialism and imperialism was almost wholly concerned with the imperial center, the imperial imagination, and the modes of domination enabled by the intersection of knowledge and power.

In 2004, Cole Harris published a challenge to postcolonial and postructuralist theoretical frameworks and their uptake by geographers. His paper, entitled "How did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire", published in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, took aim at what he found to be an excessively abstract and generic approach to understanding colonial formations. The emphasis on culture and discourse, he argued, was insufficiently attentive to the actual material processes through which land was dispossessed in British Columbia, his area of expertise. Colonial discourse analysis tells us almost nothing, Harris observed, about the physical violence involved in dispossession, about legal and bureaucratic tools, about police, about capital, about settlers themselves and their interests. Discourse can help us understand how those processes were justified and naturalized, but it doesn't actually tell us much about specific historical geographies. It was an appeal for grounded, patient, empirical research that might be informed by theory, but not wholly reliant on theory to characterize the issues at hand.

When this intervention was published, the multidisciplinary formation we now know as Settler Colonial Studies (SCS) had not yet been formalized as such. It would be several years before it fully exploded into the dominant framework for understanding colonial formations in Canada. Today, settler colonialism is effectively a synonym for colonialism in many settings, and the core claims about the nature of settler colonialism elaborated by Patrick Wolfe (its most famous intellectual figure but not the first to develop the concept) – 1) that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event (it is ongoing, the settlers never left); 2) that it operates according to an eliminatory and sometimes explicitly genocidal logic; and 3) that it irreducibly aims at land and territory, rather than the exploitation of Indigenous labour – are taken as givens, including in studies of colonial relations in northern Canada.[2] It is now assumed, in

[1] Most of the engagement at the time was with writings on Indigenous resurgence (see Stark 2023 for an overview of this literature and its citational politics) and with the literature on decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies, particularly Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

[2] Historian Bryan Palmer recently argued, for example, that although it is now "mandatory, in certain circles (with which I often associate myself), for Canada to be described in terms of settler colonialism and racial capitalism," these frameworks are often mobilized "without sufficient interrogation of the country's history and a rigorous

many corners of the academy, that to study colonialism in the contemporary North is to study settler colonialism and its specifically northern articulations.

Against this development, and concerned, as always, about the explanatory limits of theory, Cole Harris returned, many years later, to the question of how we ought to theorize colonialism in Canada. He argued in his most recent and last book, *A Bounded Land* (Harris 2020), that the concept of settler colonialism is useful for understanding colonial formations in the most intensively settled regions of the country, but that it does not actually apply to the far North, where a large and lasting immigrant population never managed to establish itself. The settler colonial project in Canada, he argued, was radically truncated and incomplete, bounded by physical geography. It only fully expressed itself in the southern margins of the country; the rest of the country was either subject to a different colonial formation or not fully colonized at all (unfortunately Harris didn't elaborate on what conceptual apparatuses he would bring to bear on these other regions; he just makes a point about the south and a broader point about the importance of physical geography in limiting colonial expansion).

In a recent review of Harris' book, I laid out my objections to this line of argument (Cameron 2022). While I agree with Harris that differences in history and geography matter and that we need more analytical precision, more historical-geographical specificity in understanding both past and present colonial formations in northern Canada, to argue that these differences amount to a lack of settler colonialism, or perhaps to a less totalizing, incomplete, haphazard formation, is, I think, both incorrect and insufficiently grounded in the breadth of settler colonial scholarship.

But over the past couple of years, Harris' provocation has stuck with me. While I disagree with much of his argument, I share Harris' unease with the rote, sweeping application of a particular understanding of settler colonialism to all of Canada, at all times. What does this mode of analysis open up for us, and what does it foreclose? What happens when we stop asking, as Aime Césaire insisted we must never do, "what is colonization?"

"The essential thing," Césaire (2000, 2) wrote "is to see clearly, to think clearly – that is, dangerously – and to answer clearly the innocent first question: what, fundamentally, is colonization?"

What is it?

Césaire used this question to refute what he called the "slavering apologists" who came in the wake of conquest to justify and naturalize a colonial world order, to hide from themselves the degradation, savagery, violence, racism, covetousness, and moral relativism colonization required of Europeans and the poison it introduced into European so-called civilization. Let us "admit once and for all", he argued, "without flinching at the consequences" (32-33) that colonization was not about evangelization, or philanthropy, or about pushing back the frontiers of ignorance, disease, and tyranny, nor was it an attempt to extend the rule of law. But rather that "the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the

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and discriminating theoretical discussion of just how such conceptualization advances us beyond conventional appreciations of colonialism and capitalism" (2024, 15). Whether or not readers agree with Palmer's description of SCS-informed scholarship, the fact that Palmer felt he needed to defend his lack of engagement with SCS frameworks in the front matter to his multi-volume study of colonial-capitalism in Canada speaks to the ascendency of settler colonialism as a concept and theoretical frame across the social sciences and humanities.

wholesale grocer and the ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant, appetite and force, and behind them, the baleful projected shadow of a form of civilization which, at a certain point in its history, finds itself obliged, for internal reasons, to extend to a world scale the competition of its antagonistic economies." (33) Colonization was about exploitation and profit, was about resolving a crisis in capitalism, was about theft. Ultimately, Césaire argued, colonization resulted in:

> societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out… I am talking about millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life – from life, from the dance, from wisdom. I am talking about millions of men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkeys…. *I* am talking about food crops destroyed, malnutrition permanently introduced, agricultural development oriented solely toward the benefit of the metropolitan countries, about the looting of products, the looting of raw materials. … My only consolation is that periods of colonization pass, that nations sleep only for a time, and that peoples remain. (43-44, emphasis in original)

Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* was first published in 1950. He was born in Martinique, was a key figure in the Négritude movement, was an important influence on Frantz Fanon. He wrote as decolonization movements in Africa and the Caribbean gained momentum and was deeply concerned with Black identity and liberation. Césaire asked the question – what is colonization – as an act of anticolonial truth-telling, as a form of consciousness raising and subject formation, as a refutation and critique, as an accusation.

I will have more to say in a moment about Césaire's essay, but for now, I want to ask how Césaire's question - what is colonization – might be answered today? By whom, and where? And to what ends?

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012, 21) argue that Césaire's question provokes us to be suspicious of generalized, transhistorical understandings of colonialism, and to be particularly watchful of metaphorical glosses that claim to be addressing colonial or decolonizing dynamics but actually obscure or exacerbate colonial relations. "Colonialism", they insist, "is marked by its specializations."

What kinds of "specializations" characterize colonial formations in northern Canada? And to what extent does an SCS frame aid in apprehending those specializations?

Consider the geographies of settlement itself. In SCS, settlement – the dispossession and forced removal of Indigenous peoples from the land and the establishment of farms, towns, and cities by a settler population on that land – is a crucial tool of colonial expansion and domination. It is both the process and the goal of colonization. Settler societies destroy to replace; their goal is not simply to exploit the land (to extract resources, to grow crops), but to claim it as their own. Settlers aim to feel at home on the lands they have stolen and occupied, and to establish an enduring presence there.

With some exceptions, this mode of settlement did not unfold in the Far North. Certainly, parts of the Yukon and NWT are settler dominated spaces where multi-generational

settler families assert a sense of home and belonging. Nunavut is not. In Nunavut, settlers have never established permanent, multi-generational settlements. Settlers absolutely live in Nunavut and white administrators played, and continue to play, a crucial role in establishing the structures of government through which Inuit modes of governance and jurisdiction were suppressed. But settlers almost never come to stay in Nunavut, very few own homes or land (in part because there is very little private property available, although much of it is controlled by settlers), and settlers have never been demographically dominant – Nunavut's population is around 85% Inuk, and Qallunaat (the term in Inuktut for non-Indigenous, non-Inuit peoples, sometimes translated as white people or settlers) have never outnumbered Inuit in the region. Many settlers come for a year only, some stay multiple years or a decade. Some work their entire careers in Nunavut. But then they go "home" – back to Ontario, Alberta, Newfoundland (and, increasingly, the Philippines, India, and Nigeria). As a resident of Iqaluit recently said in a contentious community meeting, "if this is your land, where are your dead?"

But even though settlers are a highly transient workforce in the North, as a *class* settlers are enormously stable and they occupy very particular roles in Nunavut (Prokipchak 2024, Inutiq 2022). An elementary school teacher, for example, may only stay 1-2 years before returning south, but that teacher will be replaced by another southerner fresh out of teacher's college. Structurally, settlers dominate education, health, the legal system, policing, and government administration in Nunavut and their dominance has remained enormously durable despite the signing of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement and accompanying promises to ensure the public service reflects demographic realities in Nunavut. But individual settlers do not come to stay permanently in Nunavut, and even those who stay for decades often maintain expat cultures, narrating their time in Nunavut as a kind of sentence, as something they must do in order to return home.

Sai Englert (2020) would caution against viewing Nunavut's labor and demographic patterns as somehow not settler colonial – he would argue that settlers in Nunavut need not be numerous or permanently settled in order to seek their share of the loot of colonial dispossession, in the form of high wages, career advancement, and other incentives offered to attract southern workers, paid for by Nunavummiut and by the extraction of minerals from their lands. Julia Christensen and Rebecca Hall (2025) have also recently argued that the specificities of the colonial project in the North are different than in the South – they involve distinct weavings of welfare and resource colonialism – but that these specificities are *part* of settler colonialism, not outside it (see also Bernauer 2024, 2025; Beckett 2025). But the point remains, settlers have not settled in Nunavut in the same ways or for the same reasons as they have in the south.

The coerced settling of *Inuit*, however, is central to understanding colonial relations in Nunavut. It was Inuit who were incentivized and forced into settlements and whose relations with land, livelihood, kin, spirit, and culture were strained and remade by this process (QTC 2014a). The federal government largely ignored Inuit and Inuit lands until after WW2, but in the 1950s that approach abruptly changed. In part the shift was geopolitical; the federal government was anxious to secure its Arctic sovereignty claims and thus found new uses for a visible and permanent Inuit presence. This resulted in the infamous High Arctic relocations, where multiple families from Inukjuak and Mittimatalik were relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute, invented settlements in the high Arctic, over 2000km away (see Figure 1). The trauma of this move, from a homeland to a wholly unfamiliar region with scarce wildlife, short

summers, and harsh weather conditions, of being made to function, in their own words, as "human flagpoles," had generational impacts on those who were moved, separated, and left behind (QTC 2014b).

Figure 1. "View of Grise Fiord", no date, reproduced with permission from Library and Archives Canada/Post Office Department fonds/a061670.

The High Arctic Relocations were coerced and based on lies. But settlement as a tool of colonization across what is now Nunavut also involved forced, incentivized and sometimes voluntary moves by Inuit into the settlements that had arisen around trading posts, mines, DEW Line and military sites, and administrative centres across Inuit Nunangat (QTC 2014b, Damas 2002). It involved changes in movement, away from seasonal flows between a series of camps, and toward permanent, sometimes stranded life in settlements. Prior to the 1950s, Inuit who "lingered" in the settlements too long would be chased back out on the land by HBC post operators or settlement administrators; both the HBC and the federal government wanted to minimize Inuit reliance on corporate and state welfare and maximize their independence (Tester & Kulchyski 1994). Postwar, the federal government began planning for more systematic resource extraction in the far North, necessitating a rationalization of land, people, and workers, and also turned its high modernist, welfare state gaze northward. Modernization, assimilation, and proletarianization all required the breaking of land-based life and the centralization of Inuit into places where they could be governed and transformed. Thus, Inuit were prevailed upon to settle in communities through the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

Some Inuit describe their move into settlements at this time as voluntary, while others point to the conditions under which those choices were made: settlement residency was required to receive federal welfare and family allowance cheques, for example, and families who wanted to be close to children forced to attend federal day schools often opted to live

in the settlements for this reason (QTC 2014b). This was the era in which Inuit were forced to attend residential schools, in which they were trained to take up jobs that didn't exist, in which some were evacuated to the south for years of tuberculosis treatment, in which serious restrictions were imposed on Inuit wildlife harvesting, and in which control was exercised over the most intimate reaches of Inuit life. As has been documented by the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, the transition to settlement life from cyclical movements between hunting camps was rapid, traumatic, and irreversible, facilitated in some cases by the RCMP shooting of sled dogs. Many Inuit continued to move in and out of settlements, many still do. But the shift from Inuit nunagivaktangit to centralized settlements is narrated by Inuit as one of the most defining, transformational experiences in their history (QTC 2014b, 2014c).

Is this settler colonialism? Yes, in the sense that forced relocation and an assault on Inuit modes of life was carried out by a state whose larger interest was in securing colonial domination over the entirety of Canada and the assimilation of Inuit into settler society. In that sense it was both eliminatory and territorial. Settlers did not want to live in the far North - it's cold, it's remote, there is no arable land. Territorial interest in this case was geopolitical, nationalist, and extractive, not agricultural. Settlement was managed, moreover, by bureaucrats in Ottawa, and carried out by government administrators who themselves were steeped in both settler logics and social relations. A case can certainly be made, in other words, that sedentarization needs to be understood within a settler colonial frame. That there are specifically *settler* colonial formations, relations, and desires that shaped sedentarization as a government objective and practice.

And yet, understanding sedentarization exclusively within the conceptual and analytical frame of SCS is, I think, indefensible. It matters that it was Inuit who were settling, not Qallunaat. It matters that Qallunaat did not come to stay. It matters that many Inuit narrate their transition to settlement life as voluntary and refuse analyses that cast them as generic victims of a totalizing settler colonial state. Somewhere between ahistorical, sweeping application of the concept of settler colonialism to Nunavut, in other words, and total rejection of its applicability, there are complex, contradictory historical and contemporary relations and practices that demand we ask, again and again, with care, what *is* colonization here, there, back then, right now?

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My intention in sketching some of this out is not to actually make a case for whether or not, or to what extent, Nunavut can be characterized as a settler colony. I do hope that the more obvious limits of a straightforward application of SCS frameworks to Nunavut will give many scholars pause, and provoke us to slow our analyses, not just in Nunavut but everywhere this set of tools is mobilized. But I want to do so something different today.

I want, instead, to problematize the undertaking itself, and to do so from two directions. First, I want to make strange the project of applying a very particular formalization and schematization of what colonialism looks like in settler colonies to a place like Nunavut. I want to provincialize SCS a bit, point to some of the particularities and partialities that define it, despite its mobilization as an obvious fit for the study of colonial processes in all settler colonies, and I want to point to *other* theorizations of colonialism that can help train our attention on some of the specificities of colonial formations in Nunavut. And second, I want to dwell on Césaire's prompt to not only ask what colonization is, but to do so dangerously.

To ask dangerous questions about colonization- what it entails, who it implicates, and where. I want to argue that deploying a generic SCS frame in Nunavut is not necessarily dangerous at all, and that the more dangerous analyses of the colonial present come from different places.

Before proceeding, it's important to be clear on what I mean by an SCS framework. In fact, I need to be clear that there is more than one SCS framework at play here: there is a heterodox academic field of inquiry that gathers people studying colonialism in settler societies, and then there are a range of shorthand caricatures of SCS, some of which are outdated or based on selective reading, and others that are strategically produced in an effort to discredit the field itself[3]. When SCS took off in the early aughts, many viewed it with some wariness; like "Whiteness Studies," which had also shot to prominence at this time and was viewed by critics as an attempt by white scholars (and universities) to protect and expand the institutional legitimacy of whiteness itself, critics noted that, as a field, SCS was strikingly centred on the writings of Patrick Wolfe, a white Australian anthropologist, and on his colleague, historian Lorenzo Veracini, also non-Indigenous. Wolfe himself continuously emphasized that he did not invent the term settler colonialism (it is widely attributed to Palestinian scholar and diplomat Fayez Sayegh and his 1965 book *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine*), nor did Wolfe develop his work in isolation from Native American and Indigenous Studies. Wolfe was respected by many Indigenous scholars, who saw his work as building on their own analyses and struggles. And the broad field of SCS has always included vibrant, critical, original work grounded in Indigenous knowledges and politics, including scholars focused on present-day Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Israel-Palestine, but also Latin America, Asia and Africa. As J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (2020) notes, the study and critique of settler colonialism began long before SCS emerged as a 'thing', and it has multiple intellectual and political genealogies that far exceed the scope often assigned to it in shorthand accounts. These genealogies include a rich tradition of theorizing settler colonialism from within northern Indigenous territories, including notably Glen Coulthard's work (2014, 2025), but also the internationalist Dene intellectuals and political leaders Coulthard argues defined anti-colonial mobilization in the NWT for a generation (see Manuel & Posluns 2019 [1974]).

Wolfe and Veracini's work was (and continues to be) taken up, however, by vast numbers of scholars without a strong grounding in these broader literatures and political struggles. Just as simplified and often inaccurate understandings of Foucault's writings became the intellectual core of projects quite distant from his own (including the study of colonialism, a topic about which he had almost nothing to say), Wolfe's 2006 essay ("Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native") and sometimes his 1999 book on settler colonialism, along with Veracini's 2010 book *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* and his introduction to the field's flagship journal (Veracini 2011) are routinely cited as the Ur texts of SCS as a field. It is not uncommon for someone to cite Wolfe 2006, and sometimes only

[3] As I detail later in this talk, public takedowns of SCS have intensified since the framework began to be more publicly applied to Israel/Palestine after October 2023 (e.g., Stephens 2024) and these are based on highly selective engagement with the scholarly work itself. But I would argue that Harris' (2020) arguments about the limits of SCS were based on a selective reading of actual SCS scholarship and a misunderstanding of SCS as necessarily involving a focus on early settlers themselves.

Wolfe 2006, when deploying an SCS frame, including in northern studies.[4] The issue is not Wolfe. Wolfe's writings are careful, politically astute, and intellectually rigorous. He is worth thinking with. It's the ways in which SCS became institutionalized as a field and its study schematized according to the writings of a handful of scholars; it's about the way ideas travel, about the uptake of radical work by an academy that remains deeply colonial, extractive, heteropatriarchal, and white.

It is this movement from a few writings to an entire field, from heterodox critique to institutionalization, that early critics of SCS took aim at. Those of you who know this field and its debates have heard these critiques many times; people have been making the point that SCS is excessively focused on settler formations and ambitions (as opposed to Indigenous resistance or resurgence) and overly reliant on Wolfe and Veracini (as opposed to the many Indigenous scholars who theorize settler colonialism – e.g., Jean M. O'Brien (2010), Jodi Byrd (2011), Audra Simpson (2014, 2016), Glen Coulthard (2014), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017), Nick Estes (2013, 2024), Shannon Speed (2017), Mishauna Goeman (2023), Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (2016), Vanessa Watts (2020), Dylan Robinson (2020), Anne Spice (2018) and within Geography Sarah Hunt/Tłaliłila'ogwa (2014, 2023), Michelle Daigle (2016, 2019), Julie Tomiak (2017, 2023), Jen Rose Smith (2025), Heather Dorries (2017; Dorries et al 2022), Andrew Curley (2023) and many others) for many years (see, e.g., Kauanui 2016; Carey and Silverstein 2020; Snelgrove et al 2014, Bhandar and Ziadah 2016). Over the past 10-15 years, scholars working directly within SCS or in serious conversation with it have internalized many of these critiques and significantly expanded the range of scholars they think with and the aspects of settler colonialism they interrogate; it is no longer essential to anchor scholarship about settler colonialism in Wolfe and Veracini's work, or even in the work of some of the most highly cited Indigenous scholars typically invoked in SCS scholarship. The actual field of SCS, in other words, has evolved significantly since these critiques were made. But a shorthand understanding of SCS as essentially involving the study of settlers themselves or an elaboration of Wolfe and Veracini's most famous arguments persists, both among scholars who are mobilizing an SCS frame and those who are dismissing it, as does a rehearsal of early critiques of SCS as conceptually rigid and prone to overestimating the reach and universality of settler colonial formations.

But, rigid or not, conceptually narrow or not, to me the striking thing about the rise of SCS as a means of understanding colonialism in Nunavut is that it is often deployed by settler

[4] I am interested in the broader epistemological and institutional contexts that shape northern-focused scholarly work in general, including the kinds of questions and approaches that seem obvious and necessary and those that are almost unthinkable or consistently made invisible. Citing specific papers here might assist with illustrating these larger patterns, but it risks reducing an argument about knowledge systems and structural patterns to specific scholars and scholarly works, which is not my goal. I am also wary of lines of argument that suggest some scholars are theorizing the North "correctly" and others are not, particularly if such categorizations rest on ungenerous and incomplete readings of specific works or a larger body of work (there are papers about northern settler colonialism, for example, where the author only invokes Wolfe as a theoretical source, but I know from their other work that they have read and thought much more widely). My goal is not to critique specific scholars or have their work stand in for a larger set of questions and concerns, but rather to invite all readers to reflect on the extent to which their work has been shaped by the dynamics I explore here, and to point to other ways of theorizing northern colonialisms. Some recent works that, in my opinion, grapple directly and generatively with how to theorize colonialism in northern contexts include: Smith 2025, Zawadski 2024, Beckett 2025, Christensen and Hall 2025, Bernauer 2025.

scholars as though it is the only relevant theory of colonialism at their disposal, and as though theory itself necessarily comes from elsewhere. What would happen if academic analysis of colonialism in Nunavut was instead grounded in, or at least in conversation with, Inuit writings, teachings, theories, and testimony about what colonialism is, what it does, how it works? (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Image still from *Silaup Putunga*, Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory and Jamie Griffiths, 2018, used with permission. "For me *uaajeerneq* is a deeply personal and cultural challenge to find true expressions of oneself in an effort to decolonize. It is a fearsome, sexy clown act that comes from precolonial and postcolonial Greenland … handed down to me from my mother and other Inuit activist artists from Greenland's movement to self government in the 1970s. *Uaajeerneq* is the cornerstone of my artistic practise – it gives me fodder to expand on, as well as confidence as an Inuk woman." (Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory cited in Ore 2020).

There are a variety of reasons why, I think, Inuit analyses of colonialism have not been substantially taken up in the settler academy. Unpacking them would be its own talk. I will flag that part of the reason is that Qallunaat still dominate northern and Inuit studies, even though more and more Inuit are pursuing academic research, publishing academically, and taking up academic positions. Most Qallunaaq researchers simply do not have access – linguistically, culturally, epistemologically, or geographically – to conversations about coloniality. But also, Qallunaat are trained to recognize certain kinds of texts as 'theory' and 'knowledge' (those that appear in peer reviewed journals and monographs, for example, which are overwhelmingly written by settlers) and other kinds of texts and knowledge as primary or ethnographic data (which includes what Inuit have to say). Where Inuit knowledge is sought out, it is very often apprehended through the lens of tradition and as formalized in a handful of documents about Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Zawadski 2024), leading to engagement with Inuit research participants for their "cultural" expertise, as understood by Qallunaat, rather than their expertise in social relations, in dispossession, in world formation, in how things actually work in Nunavut. Settler research in Nunavut is also dominated by practical, policy-relevant inquiry – with how to adapt to climate change, with gathering Inuit knowledge about wildlife. Difficult, controversial research is not widespread.

Where Inuit undertake and lead research that addresses coloniality, theory-building looks very different. The Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre in Iqaluit names colonialism as a force that has impacted Inuit health and constrained Inuit knowledges and knowledge systems, but they then move on to articulate a vision for both thriving Inuit health and the centering of Inuit epistemologies and methodologies in research (e.g., M. Inutiq et al 2024). Jackie Price (2007) describes how colonial governance structures regulate Inuit decision-making, but then goes on to propose a "kitchen consultation" model that she suggests hews closer to core values and needs in Nunavut communities. Diane Obed (2017, 3) traces the traumatic impact of colonial structures and social relations in Nunatsiavut with an eye to "re-building narratives of Inuit community resilience and resourcefulness that have ensured our ongoing survival and futurity." Krista Ulujuk Zawadski (2024, 5) identifies this kind of work as distinctly Inuk – in describing her Iglu model of Inuit research, she argues that "There is little significance in a theoretical approach in research by and about Inuit if it is not useful and relevant to Inuit. The basic premise of the Iglu Model is that things need to be useful and relevant to Inuit as everything is inside an iglu."

Useful does not necessarily mean directly policy-relevant. It can mean useful in the affirmation of survival, strength, endurance, beauty, life. Useful in the building of better worlds (Figure 3). There is an orientation in much Inuit scholarship to what can be made, what can be done. Even in the most pointed critiques of colonial relations in Inuit Nunangat (e.g., Nungak 2017, Allooloo 2016, Peter 2023, Inutiq 2019, Tagaq 2018), I have not seen an account that frames colonization as totalizing, annihilating, ubiquitous, final. Damning, yes. Anguished, yes. Specific, yes. But Inuit critics of colonialism refuse to live in an imaginative formation that sees colonial domination as inexorable, perennial, universal. There are lives to live, people and land to care for, and that means orienting continually toward what is possible, what can be made, including orienting to what colonial formations continually narrate as gone, broken, or past.

Figure 3. "Sound can heal. Sound can kill. Sound can be a spear or a needle." Text and image still from Chelsea McMullan & Tanya Tagaq, *Ever Deadly* (2022), Reproduced with permission.

On what basis, and for what purposes, might settler scholars like me develop a relationship with Inuit analyses and accounts of colonialism? And on what terms would my understanding

of those analyses be brought to a room like this? I have thought deeply about these questions for my entire career, and been guided in my thinking by many intellectuals, activists, friends and colleagues. I don't think I'll ever answer it with any sense of closure. I am compelled to undo the answers I offer every time, and often, my answer is, I can't. But there are some things I do know. I know that I am not just a settler in relation to Inuit but Qallunaaq. I am named and known within an epistemology, a language, a system of values and relationships, that makes sense of me in ways I do not and can not fully understand, and yet I am responsible to and for (see Cameron 2015). This requires that I am continually attentive to Qallunaaq relations with knowledge and with Inuit, including desires to consume and control, to claim expertise that is not ours, to speak and name rather than listen and stop. But it also requires that I take seriously what Inuit say, what they write, as scholars and theorists, but also as artists, filmmakers, activists, speakers, policy makers, and political leaders. That I refuse the exceptionally narrow theoretical space within which coloniality is conceptualized by Qallunaat, and witness and engage with acts of theory-building that come from different places.

One of these places is language. There is no standard translation of the word colonialism into Inuktut, nor is there a single term in Inuktut that describes colonization. English and Inuktut are radically different languages and knowledge systems, and it is not uncommon for English terms to have multiple, descriptive translations in Inuktut that evolve over time or change depending on context (Mallon 1993). In order to translate colonialism, in other words, decisions must be made about what colonialism consists of, what it looks like, what matters about it in a particular context.

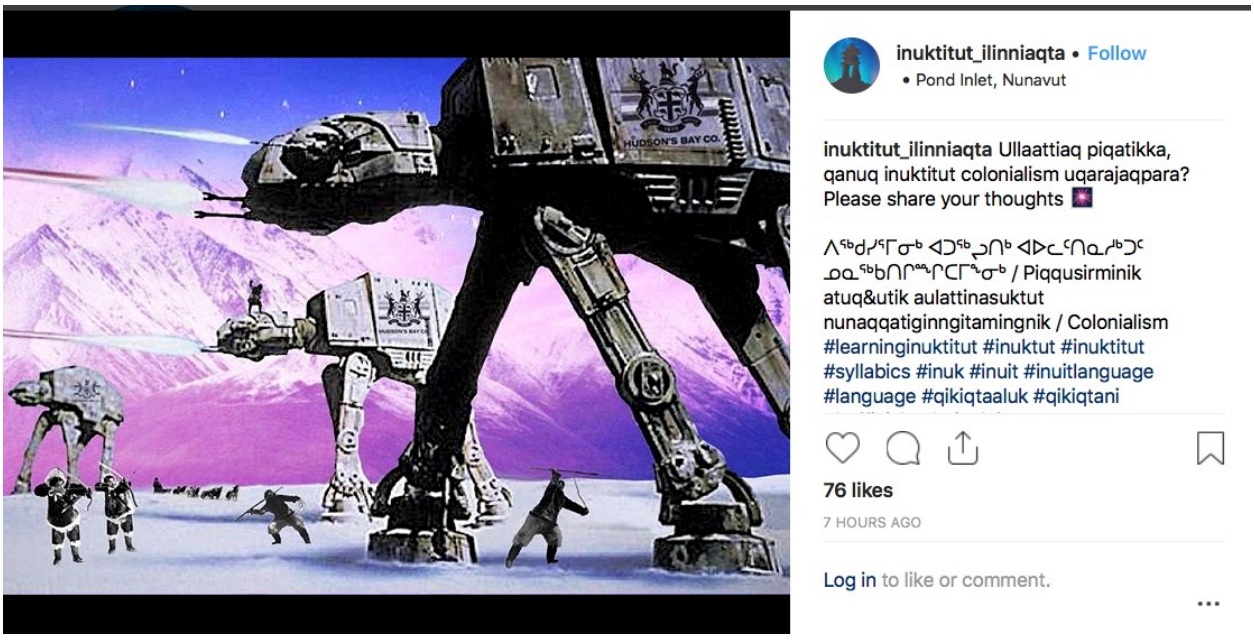

Figure 4. Instagram post by Inuktitut Ilinniaqta, 16 September 2018. Reproduced with permission.

As a result, defining colonialism in Inuktut is an alive, ongoing, and highly contextual undertaking. Consider this Instagram post (Figure 4). It's from an account that is now quiet, but was active from 2016 to 2020, Inuktitut Ilinniaqta ("let's learn Inuktitut"). Self-described as a "community-led Inuktitut learning resource", the account featured a series of collages meant to facilitate language learning. This post aimed to get a conversation started about how colonialism is defined in Inuktut. It begins by asking people how they define colonialism,

before offering one definition, "Piqqusirminik atuq&utik aulattinasuktut nunaqqatiginngitamingnik," which roughly translates as (and here I want to acknowledge scholar, teacher, and linguist Janet Tamalik McGrath (2019), who helped me with this translation): "Using their own *piqqusiq* (ways of doing) they try to *aulatti-* (direct, run things, arrange in motion) those they don't have land together with."

There are dynamics and subtleties in this definition that are unavailable to me, and not just because my Inuktut is not sophisticated enough to parse this conversation. But I do want to draw your attention to the emphasis on being directed, on being told what to do, and of having Inuit ways of doing things supplanted by Qallunaaq ways. And that those Qallunaaq ways come from a people with whom Inuit do not share land, they come from another place. This description of the colonial experience runs through the Qikiqtani Truth Commission hearings and reports, through Inuit submissions and testimony within the federal Truth and Reconciliation process (TRC 2015) and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry (ITK 2018, MMIWG 2019). It is emphasized in the writings of settler scholars who tried to characterize welfare colonialism, white supremacy, and racism in Inuit Nunangat in the pre-land claims era (e.g., Brody 1975, Paine 1977) and in the work of past and present Inuit scholars, intellectuals, artists, elders, and political leaders (e.g., Arnaquq-Baril 2016; Inutiq 2019, 2022, 2024; Allooloo 2016; Price 2007; Pfeifer 2020; Ipellie 1988, 1996; Kaluraq 2020; Penney 2017; Igloliorte 2019; Scottie et al 2022; Nungak 2017, Amagoalik 2007; Kunuk & Cohn 2006; Johnson-Castle 2025; Zawadski 2024; Obed 2017, Tagaq 2018; Williamson Bathory 2024; Watt-Cloutier 2016; Jessen Williamson 2014, Nappaaluk 2014). And it is also captured in the Inuit "power curve" developed by Nunavut Sivuniksavut, a college transition program for Nunavummiut located here in Ottawa (Figure 5).

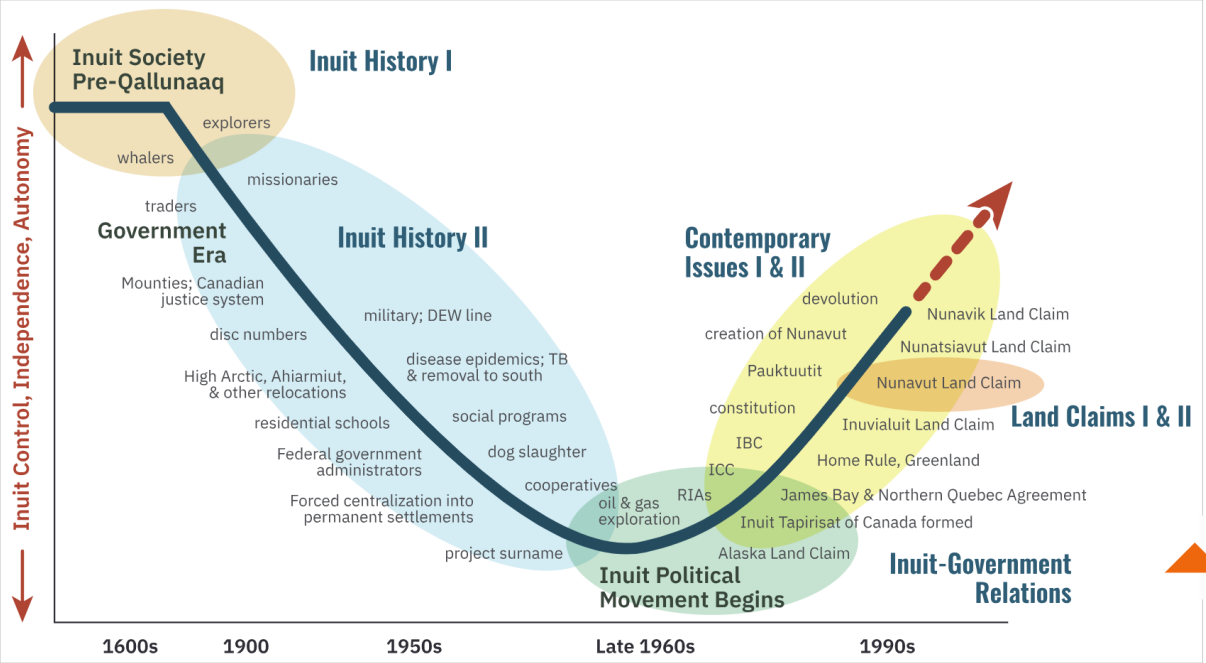

Figure 5. "Inuit Power Curve", copyright Nunavut Sivuniksavut, reproduced with permission.

The emphasis here is not on loss of land in and of itself, it's not on physical violence. It's on intervention into how Inuit do things, undermining Inuit control and jurisdiction over self, family, community, culture, spirit, animals, health, learning, and livelihoods. It's a process that

has roots in early colonial contact but that really gained momentum after WW2. Its agents included the church, residential schools, the RCMP, nurses, teachers, social workers, judges, wildlife management officers, and government administrators, but also the imposition of Westminster governance modes themselves. Indeed, the plunge of the power curve in Nunavut Sivuniksavut's figure begins with what they call "the Government Era" – it is government itself, governance, that is central to Inuit experiences of domination and colonization.

When Kunuk Inutiq (2019, 2022, 2024) critiques the dominance of Qallunaat in Nunavut's public service, she is not just insisting that Inuit ought to occupy managerial jobs in their own government. She is also pointing to the insidiousness of Qallunaaq values, assumptions, modes of speech, modes of decision-making, relations with knowledge, that persist in Nunavut because they are literally embodied by so many of the people making decisions, and because the government structures themselves demand these modes of engagement. In Nunavut, despite the signing of the land claim, the creation of the territory, and the ardent efforts of so many to make fundamental changes to how the territory is governed, Inutiq argues that it is still Qallunaat, who do not share land with Inuit, directing Inuit affairs using their own *piqqusiq*, their own ways of doing things. Those ways of doing things are not just embodied in Qallunaaq administrators, they are deeply baked into the structures themselves.

"On the surface", she writes, "Inuit in Nunavut look like they have achieved self-determination through a public government model that serves the majority of Inuit, with land claim rights that are to be implemented. However, the assumption that the public government is a form of self-determination is a farce: Inuit interests have not been served by the government because Inuit lives have not improved. What we have is a façade of self-determination where senior bureaucracy is made up of 85% non-Inuit upholding a system that benefits settlers." (2022, 2)

Twenty-five years after the creation of Nunavut and implementation of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, a new generation of scholars, activists, artists, and political leaders in Nunavut are seriously interrogating the colonial dimensions of what Inuit also celebrate as a great political triumph – the creation of Nunavut, a primarily Inuit jurisdiction within the Canadian federation, the signing of a land claim agreement, the assertion of authority over Inuit homelands. In Nunavut Sivuniksavut's power curve (Figure 5), mobilization toward the land claim marks the turning point in Inuit history, and the creation of Nunavut is just one accomplishment on an arc toward increasing autonomy, control, and independence. Inuit are supposed to be living more empowered, more Inuit lives today than they were at the peak of post war settlement and assimilation projects. But critics within Nunavut are looking at the structures established by the land claim and formation of Nunavut, and asking to what extent these can ever deliver a truly decolonized, liberatory, Inuit-centred life for Nunavummiut. They are talking about colonial continuities, about how relations of domination and oppression can live on even when it is Inuit who are running the environmental assessment hearings, acting as Ministers of Economic Development or Education, debating policies in their own legislature.

Writing in response to the announcement last year that the federal government, the Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (the organization representing Inuit under the land claim) had signed a devolution agreement – an agreement,

among other things, to transfer responsibility for federal Crown lands and resource rights to the territorial government – Inutiq (2024) refused the narration of this event as reconciliation and decolonization. Devolution, she notes, was part of the vision underpinning Inuit self-determination struggles in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. When the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement was signed in 1993, it was agreed by all parties that devolution would be negotiated down the line, after the territory of Nunavut was established and key pieces of the Nunavut agreement had been implemented. The land claim agreement was a huge accomplishment at the time, Inutiq notes, and was rightfully celebrated by Inuit. But it involved Inuit retaining title over only 2% of the territory's subsurface resources, and 20% of the surface lands. The rest of Nunavut's land mass was, until the devolution agreement was signed last year, federal Crown land, meaning decisions about land use ultimately fell to the federal government, resource royalties flowed overwhelmingly to the South, and the territory of Nunavut remained in a position of almost total reliance on federal transfers for its budget. Devolution will change that. Nunavut will soon collect royalties on all Crown lands, and it will have greater control over decision-making about proposed mines; these will no longer require federal approval.

Figure 6. "This is a place that is rich with culture, traditional knowledge, critical minerals and other resources that are needed as we build the economy of the future together. And with this increased control, you will be able to have more say and more prosperity as Nunavut chooses to take advantage of these opportunities" – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at signing of Nunavut Devolution Agreement, with Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok, Iqaluit, NU, 18 January 2024, cited in Tranter 2024. Image copyright Canadian Press, reproduced with permission.

On the face of it, transferring title and jurisdiction over Nunavut's lands and resources from the federal to the territorial government, a territory whose population is overwhelmingly Inuit and is subject to a land claim agreement, would seem to be the definition of decolonization

and even Land Back. If settler colonialism is all about territory, all about control over land and resources, then surely a massive land transfer (Trudeau framed it as "the largest land transfer in Canada's history, two million square kilometres of land and water" (Tranter 2024)) and transfer of administrative and jurisdictional powers is a dismantling of settler colonial structures. And if, as so many Indigenous scholars and intellectuals have argued, control over land and the nurturing of land relations is central to Indigenous resurgence and thriving (e.g., Coulthard and Simpson 2016; Barichello and Charlie 2022, Yellowhead 2019), then surely formalizing Inuit control over their lands and resources will amplify Inuit resurgence and healing, and increase Inuit capacities to build lives, economies, communities, and thriving futures on their own lands, on their own terms.[5]

Inutiq (2024) argues that devolution has the *potential* to enhance Inuit self-determination and well-being in this way. But she also insists it is more likely to retrench colonial relations and inequalities in Nunavut, and to weaken Inuit self-determination. Much of her concern stems from the structure and function of the territorial government, and from its utter failure over the past twenty-five years to deliver any improvement in quality of life to Inuit in Nunavut. Inuit may be the majority population of Nunavut, but disparities between Inuit and non-Inuit residents in terms of income, education, health, food security, and housing remain stark.

Inutiq has also been critical of Nunavut's extractive regime, arguing that decision-making about proposed mines is not carried out in ways that ensure Inuit truly decide, on their own terms, what they want for the land, and calling into question the actual economic benefits of extractive development for northern communities (Inutiq et al 2024). Although some form of extraction was part of the vision underpinning the creation of the territory, and many Nunavummiut are supportive of some mining, critics argue that the land claim itself established land relations and governance structures that necessitate extraction, sideline traditional economies, threaten the survival of caribou and marine mammals, and ultimately prioritize the interests of multinational capital (Bernauer 2019, Scobie and Rodgers 2019; Scottie et al 2022; Cameron and Kennedy 2023). It is as hard to stop a mine in Nunavut today, critics argue, as it was before the land claim was signed.

"We have to confront the reality", Inutiq (2022, 4) insists, "that Nunavut is for southern Canada—for these transient settlers I refer to as 'incomers.'… Nunavut is still very much a colony; it is a place for others to generate wealth from our lands and resources and leave the scraps and waste for the Inuit…." "Colonialism," she writes, "is a cunning beast. We have bought into a system that still oppresses us."

Inutiq's take on devolution and, more broadly, on the coloniality expressed in a moment of apparent decolonization is, I would argue, dangerous in Césaire's sense. It is dangerous in a very real sense for her, because she is naming dynamics and relationships that implicate not just Qallnuaaq administrators but also Inuit, people who she knows, loves, is related to, that she and her family will be living alongside until they die. She is daring to say

[5] Note that many scholars and activists involved in land-based resurgence and Land Back movements understand modern land claims as a continuation of centuries of land alienation and dispossession, not their antidote, and thus would likely share Inutiq's concerns about the potential for devolution to hamper Inuit resurgence and self-determination rather than amplify it (see Yellowhead 2019, Coulthard 2014).

that the Nunavut project has not delivered, that Nunavut's leaders are failing Inuit, and she is daring to say so not from the comfort of a southern Canadian armchair. It is dangerous in the sense that it displeases elites both in Nunavut and in southern Canada, who want to celebrate the devolution agreement as an act of reconciliation and justice. And it is dangerous in the sense of being alive, being willing to look and speak clearly about what is happening right now, and to draw connections between histories and presents that are willfully stretched apart in stories that locate the signing of the land claim as the beginning of the decolonization of Nunavut. Colonialism is supposed to be ever-receding in Nunavut, a past that is remembered and whose echoes live on, perhaps, but not a pulsing, active, deepening force. To ask the dangerous question, "what is colonization", in Nunavut today, and to answer in the ways Inutiq does, is to point to messy, uncomfortable, painful, contradictory truths.

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Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* was dangerous not just because it dared to suggest that it was the colonizers, not the colonized, who were barbaric. It was also dangerous because of the explicit links he made between violence in the so-called imperial periphery, and the emergence of Nazism in Europe. The supposed supremacy of European civilization, he argued, masked a deeply corrupted soul, a baseness, an incivility that was magnified and deepened by colonial domination, by the repeated, relentless acts of violence and oppression in the colonies and their normalization at home:

> each time a Madagascan is tortured, and in France they accept the fact, civilisation acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a centre of infection begins to spread, and at the end of all these treaties that have been violated, all these lies that have been propagated, all these punitive expeditions that have been tolerated, all these prisoners that have been tied up and interrogated, all these patriots that have been tortured, all this racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been instilled into the veins of Europe and slowly, but surely, the continent proceeds towards *savagery*.
>
> And then one fine day, the bourgeoisie is awakened by a terrific reverse shock: the Gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers around the rack invent, refine, discuss.
>
> People are surprised, they are indignant ... and they hide the truth from themselves, that it is barbarism, but the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism. That it is Nazism, yes, but before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated Nazism before it was inflicted upon them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimised it, because, until then, it had only been applied to non-European peoples, that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and before engulfing the whole of Western, Christian civilisation in its reddened waters, it oozes, trickles and seeps from every crack. (Césaire 2000, 35-36, emphasis in original)

Here, Césaire traces a direct line between the violence of colonization and the violence that gave rise to the Holocaust – he insists, as others have done before and since, on refusing both the exceptionalism of the Holocaust – the idea that nothing before or since could ever

compare or contextualize it – and the European claim to innocence, horror, and shock in the face of that violence. He insists, in other words, on understanding colonialism and Nazism as relational geographies, as refracted, articulated, as different flowers of the same gangrenous root. This was a dangerous claim in 1950 and it remains dangerous today. For Césaire, answering the question of what colonization is required tracing connections between geographically distant places, and refusing a hierarchical, racist ordering of violence that would cast the murderous elimination of some bodies as natural and necessary, and of others as shocking and inhumane. The danger was in understanding Nazism as a variant, as a recognizable type, as affiliated with (and in fact a consequence of) the violence unleashed against colonized peoples around the world, and to hold a mirror up to those in Europe who sanctioned, ordered, and accepted that violence.

Even more dangerous, today, is to not only link the colonization of Africa and the Americas with Nazism (a link Hitler himself acknowledged), but to also connect colonial domination and expansion in the Americas to the creation of the state of Israel and its now openly murderous, genocidal efforts to eliminate Palestinians from Palestine. In the months following October 7 2023, it became increasingly dangerous to describe Israel as a settler colony, both in the mainstream press and in universities. The question of "where is settler colonialism" became hyperpublic and hyperpolitical - editorial after editorial, explainer, or thought piece in the centre-right press sought to discredit, reject, and ridicule the charge that Israel is a settler colony, and refuse the possibility that theories and histories of settler colonialism might help us understand both the origins of violence in Israel-Palestine and possible pathways towards peace (e.g., Kirsch 2023; Stephens 2024, Powell 2024). Settler colonialism may well apply to the USA or Canada, it was argued, but to apply it to Israel was historically inaccurate, sloppy, an endorsement of terrorism, and antisemitic.

Against this, for a time, insisting that Israel is, indeed, a settler colony seemed both intellectually and politically essential. As scholar after journalist after UN special rapporteur reiterated, early Zionists were explicit and unabashed in their admiration for the methods of European colonization and in their call for a specifically settler mode of colonization to secure a Jewish homeland (Englert & Bhattacharyya 2024; Magid 2024; Albanese 2024). Settlement was and remains a dominant mode of occupying and dispossessing Palestinian land (UN 2023). Israeli, Palestinian, and Jewish scholars have been theorizing Israel as a settler colony for decades (e.g., Abdo & Yuval-Davis 1995; Bhandar and Ziadah 2016; Shafir 1989; Sabbagh-Khoury 2021; Khalidi 2020, Pappé 2012; Yiftachel 1997, 2008; Gordon & Ram 2016, Barakat 2017), and the term itself is widely attributed to a Palestinian scholar writing in the aftermath of the Nakba (Sayegh 1965). Within the field of SCS, including in Wolfe's most cited work, Israel is understood as fully meeting the definition of settler colonialism and even as a textbook case (e.g., Wolfe 2006, 2012; but see Barakat 2017; Shlomo & Braier 2024). The Israeli state openly admits their goal of a fully realized occupation of Eretz Israel as an ethno-state and the elimination of Palestinian life (Albanese 2024; Levy 2025), and they are carrying that goal out with relentless and increasing force.

To ask, in relation to Israel-Palestine, "what is colonization" and to respond, "it is this, it is the Nakba, it is the wall, it is checkpoints, it is settler occupation of the West Bank, it is the relentless bombing of Gaza" is both eminently true and a dangerous claim. But the quality of that danger is changing. Today, the panicked refutation and howls of indignation that were elicited by these claims a year ago can still be heard, but they have also given way to

something different. Today, we are witnessing the expansion of institutional policies and state laws formalizing the claim that any critique of the Israeli state amounts to antisemitism (including at Canadian universities) as well as the instrumentalization of the US state to criminalize and disappear those who dare to affirm the existence of Palestinian peoples and claims. It is more dangerous than ever, in that sense, to make the links that Césaire, that Francesca Albanese, that Edward Said, that Ilan Pappé, that Mahmoud Khalil insist we make.

But at the same time, we are living a kind of rebranding of coloniality as no longer something to be ashamed of, but rather as something to openly embrace and lionize. The moral claim, the accusation that inhered in calling Israel a settler colony even six months ago is losing its potency, as both Trump and Netanyahu seek to make colonialism great again, to step out of the reality in which coloniality is an accusation, one that might be backed up with UN reports and scholarly evidence, and possibly even punished with economic sanctions, and into a world where the accusation no longer matters because nobody is pretending anymore that it isn't so, and more than this, because colonial expansion is necessary, justified, and righteous. The project here is to cease making the accusation of colonialism matter – legally, rhetorically, morally, politically. It is to harden us against what we see, to beckon us into a world of imperial brinksmanship and unabashed genocide. It is to assert: it doesn't matter what you call it, I am doing it and it is right and glorious and mine to do.

What does this moment demand of us, specifically as scholars? And how does all this relate to Nunavut?

So many of us are breathless before this. We cannot breathe. These questions are big. They predate us and they will outlive us. But I will share with you, briefly, some of the ways I am orienting to them today.

I think this moment provokes us to reckon more fully with the deeply ingrained assumption within the settler academy that it is inherently political to diagnose settler colonialism in various places or circumstances. As Eve Tuck (2009) pointed out long ago, many of us are unconsciously committed to an unspoken but dominant theory of change that casts critical academic research as the necessary first step in some kind of reparative project. First we show the damage, first we confirm colonialism's insidious and ubiquitous presence here, there, over there too, and then later, somehow, we imagine, there will be a reckoning. There will be justice, action, some kind of evening of scales. But as Tuck points out, this later almost never comes. Our theory of change doesn't hold water. Instead, Indigenous communities are left with a pile of scholarship confirming their suffering and damage, and the engine of colonization grinds on.

But this does not mean we stop theorizing. I think it calls us to theorize with more precision, with more care. It calls for us to remember that Césaire was not writing for the French intelligentsia; he was writing for Martinicans, for Africans, as part of a broader communist, Black, anti-colonial political movement, as a poet. Laakkuluk Willamson Bathory is not practicing *uaajeerneq* (Figure 2) so that it can be made legible to Qallunaat, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2020) does not write for white ladies, even if we are hailed by her work and called into relationship with it.

Stuart Hall (2004) once wrote, "What is the use of a theory that tells you what you already knew? That is ideology… I want to unravel, what is specific about [this] moment … Why do I want to know this? Because I want to know what to do about it. I want to know how

we are going to deal with it." Hall reminds us that theory-work is careful, precise, attuned work. It is craft. Theory helps us trace connections between disparate places and histories but also demands we confront specificity and knit together what we see in ways that can meaningfully orient us toward what is to be done, not just "in theory" but in collectivities, in struggle. What is happening in Gaza is not the same as what is happening in Nunavut. Césaire was right that they grow from the same gangrenous root, and he was right to insist on a theory of colonization that is relational and that refuses regional exceptionalism or parochialism. He was right to insist on recognizable types. But to acknowledge this is not to suggest that a theory of settler colonialism can be built in a certain moment, by particular scholars, in very particular places, and then applied everywhere and always. The work of theorizing is alive, ongoing, endless work; it demands that we unravel what is specific and concrete about the moment and orient again and again toward what we do with what we see. Theorizing with precision, from the ground, even as that ground shifts beneath our feet, is essential work, even if it is not sufficient.

There is more to say about all of this, but I will leave it there for now. Thank you.

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