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How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire

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The emphasis on culture in studies of colonialism tends to obscure other forms of colonial power while making it impossible to contextualize the cultural argument and assess its salience. Rather than focusing on texts, systems of signification, and procedures of knowledge generation, as the colonial discourse literature is wont to do, a fuller understanding of colonial powers is achieved by explaining colonialism's basic geographical dispossessions of the colonized. In so doing, the issue of power is not prejudged and the particular roles of different modes and theories of colonial power come into focus. I explore these propositions by considering the powers underlying the reserve (reservation) system in British Columbia, a system that, by allocating a tiny fraction of the land to native people and opening the rest for development, facilitated the geographical reorganization of the province. My conclusions are these: the initial ability to dispossess rested primarily on physical power and the supporting infrastructure of the state; the momentum to dispossess derived from the interest of capital in profit and of settlers in forging new livelihoods; the legitimation of and moral justification for dispossession lay in a cultural discourse that located civilization and savagery and identified the land uses associated with each; and the management of dispossession rested with a set of disciplinary technologies of which maps, numbers, law, and the geography of resettlement itself were the most important. Although no one body of theory explains colonial power, several theoretical perspectives yield crucial insights. *Key Words: colonialism, colonial discourse theory, deterritorialization, colonial land policies, governmentality, reservations, British Columbia.*

Influenced by Michel Foucault's analysis of the relationships of power and knowledge (1972), by Edward Said's examination of *Orientalism* (1978), by textual theory harnessed to colonial discourse analysis, and by many studies of the values and ideologies enmeshed in particular colonial encounters, most postcolonial scholars now identify culture and associated procedures of knowledge generation as the dominant power relations associated with colonialism. Whereas Frantz Fanon (1963) emphasized violence— the power of the gun—and Marx, to the extent that he wrote on colonialism, the aggressive reach of capital, postcolonial research and writing situates the momentum of colonialism in the culture of imperialists and colonists. A central goal, therefore, of colonial discourse theory is to identify the assumptions and representations inherent in colonial culture—in the binary of civilization/savagery, in the erasures of Aboriginal knowledge of time and space, in assumptions about race and gender, in the concept of the land as empty (*terra nullius*), and so on—and then, insofar as possible, to expose their contemporary manifestations. This work has focused much scholarly energy and has yielded important theoretical and practical results, but it is less clear that it has revealed the principal momentum and power relations inherent in colonialism.

Originating in literary and cultural studies, colonial discourse theory, indeed postcolonial scholarship generally, privileges the investigation of imperial texts, enunciations, and systems of signification. In so doing, it exposes implicit modes of seeing and of understanding that are held to infuse and validate colonialism while imparting much of its momentum. If Said offered broadly inclusive descriptions of colonial culture, and if others, more recently, have emphasized the variety of colonial voices and the importance of a local, contextual appreciation of different colonial cultures (e.g., Thomas 1994), in either case, culture is treated as a primary locus of colonial power. Moreover, as elements of colonial culture are assumed to have outlived formal colonial regimes, their identification becomes an active political project—the decolonization of representation (Hall 2000, 5). In itself, this is commendable enough, but if studies of colonial culture are not contextualized among other forms of colonial power, then it is well nigh impossible to assess the particular work and the relative salience of colonial culture itself. A study of travel writing, for example, may yield an appreciation of the inflected seeing of travelers and of the complicity of such seeing with colonial projects, while not beginning to address the relative importance of travelers' seeing and writing in the whole colonial enterprise. Given its focus, it cannot. At best, it can yield a nuanced understanding of traveler perceptions and values, and suggestive ideas about their relationships with colonialism. Colonialism's complexity may be affirmed, so

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too, perhaps, the discursive construction of reality—comments tied more closely to theory than to a situated knowledge of colonial practices and power relations.

In the hands of some of its most able practitioners, postcolonial scholarship is a potent means of exploring the reworking ("provincializing") of European thought at and for the margins of empire (Chakrabarty 2000, 16). However, most postcolonial scholarship is written out of British or American universities and emanates from the heart of a recently superceded empire or of a recently ascendant one that hesitates to acknowledge its own imperial background. American postcolonial scholarship is not preoccupied with America (Hulme 1995; Thomas 1994 172–73). In the background of such scholarship are European theorists, particularly Foucault, Derrida, and Gramsci; in the foreground, European colonial thought and culture. In these circumstances, as many have pointed out, it tends to be Eurocentric—or as the Australian anthropologist Patrick Wolfe puts it, occidocentric (1999, 1). So positioned, it is well placed to comment on the imperial mind in its large diversity, and even—especially in the hands of scholars like Homi Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty who grew up in former colonies—on the ways in which European thought has been inflected and hybridized by its colonial encounters, but not on the diverse, on-the-ground workings of colonialism in colonized spaces around the world. A central claim of the distinguished Indian subaltern historian, Ranajit Guha, is that if British historical writing on the subcontinent reveals something of Britain and the Raj, it reveals nothing of India (1997). Somewhat similar criticisms have been made of much of the postcolonial literature: that it (or parts of it) anticipates a radically restructured European historiography, that it allows for nothing outside the (European) discourse of colonialism, that it is yet another exercise in metatheory and in European universalism (e.g., Slemon 1994; McClintock 1994). As the literary theorist Benita Parry puts it, the postcolonial emphasis on language and texts tends to offer "the World according to the Word" (1997, 12)—and the word tends to be European. But unless it can be shown that colonialism is entirely constituted by European colonial culture (a proposition for which it is hard to imagine any convincing evidence unless the concept of culture is understood so broadly that it loses any analytical value), then studies of colonial discourse, written from the center, must be a very partial window on the workings of colonialism.

The discipline of geography has responded to postcolonial thought in a variety of ways (Clayton 2003). Among others, studies of colonialism itself have come into vogue, most of them written in Britain, a few from the edges of empire. I am struck by how much the character of these studies has been influenced by the locations of their authors. Consider, for example, two recent books by historical geographers: Felix Driver's *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (2000), and Frank Tough's *"As Their Natural Resources Fail": Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870–1930* (1996). From opposite perspectives, they treat a fairly similar period of British colonialism. Driver analyzes the culture of exploration, particularly the sites and nature of its production and consumption—as at the Royal Geographical Society. His is a study of the ways in which the British imperial mind, both popular and academic, processed explorers' information. Tough's work is embedded in the materiality of a declining fur trade in the northern Manitoba bush. It deals with forts and trade routes; with economies and survival strategies as a two-hundred-year-old system of commercial capital vacated the region; and with native livelihoods found in a precarious balance between what remained of a hunting, fishing, and gathering economy and intermittent employment in uncertain industrial resource economies. Each is an authentic study, yet they have little to say to each other, and this is basically, I think, because one is written from London, the heart of an empire, and the other from the Canadian Shield, one of its many colonial margins. At least, as Derek Gregory has put it, "what seemed plausible in the lecture hall of the Royal Geographical Society in London . . . might well become a half truth on the ground" (1998, 21). The distinction, perhaps, is between studies of imperialism and of colonialism: imperialism ideologically driven from the center and susceptible to conceptual analysis, colonialism a set of activities on the periphery that are revealed as practice (Young 2001, 16–17). Only a few geographers have tried to bring both the imperial mind and the particularities of local colonial circumstances into focus (e.g., Clayton 2000 and Lester 2001).

But if the aim is to understand colonialism rather than the workings of the imperial mind, then it would seem essential to investigate the sites where colonialism was actually practiced. Its effects were displayed there. The strategies and tactics on which it relied were actualized there. There, in the detail of colonial dispossessions and repossessions, the relative weight of different agents of colonial power may begin to be assessed. If colonialism is the object of investigation, then Tough's sparse Canadian Shield is promising terrain. It was not detached from London, of course, and may have been profoundly influenced by elements of imperial thought and culture, but the extent of this influence cannot be ascertained in London. Rather, I think, one needs to study the colonial site itself, assess the displacements that took place there, and seek to account for them. To do so is to position studies

of colonialism in the actuality and materiality of colonial experience. As that experience comes into focus, its principal causes are to be assessed, among which may well be something like the culture of imperialism. To proceed the other way around is to impose a form of intellectual imperialism on the study of colonialism, a tendency to which the postcolonial literature inclines.

The experienced materiality of colonialism is grounded, as many have noted, in dispossessions and repossessions of land. Even Edward Said (for all his emphasis on literary texts) described the essence of colonialism this way: "Underlying social space are territories, land, geographical domains, the actual geographical underpinnings of the imperial, and also the cultural contest. To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about" (1994, 78). Frantz Fanon held that colonialism created a world "divided into compartments," a "narrow world strewn with prohibitions," a "world without spaciousness." He maintained that a close examination of "this system of compartments" would "reveal the lines of force it implies." Moreover, "this approach to the colonial world, its ordering and its geographical layout will allow us to mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be reorganized" (1963, 37–40).

Along the edge of empire that was early-modern British Columbia, colonialism's "geographical layout" was primarily expressed in a reserve (reservation) system that allocated a small portion of the land to native people and opened the rest for development. Native people were in the way, their land was coveted, and settlers took it. The line between the reserves and the rest—between the land set aside for the people who had lived there from time immemorial and land made available in various tenures to immigrants—became the primary line on the map of British Columbia. Eventually, there were approximately 1,500 small reserves, slightly more than a third of 1 percent of the land of the province. Native people had been placed in compartments by an aggressive settler society that, like others of its kind, was far more interested in native land than in the surplus value of native labor (Wolfe 1999, 1–3). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the scale of dispossession.

At these sites of colonial dispossession, it seems particularly fruitful to ask by what means it came about. The common emphasis in the colonial discourse literature

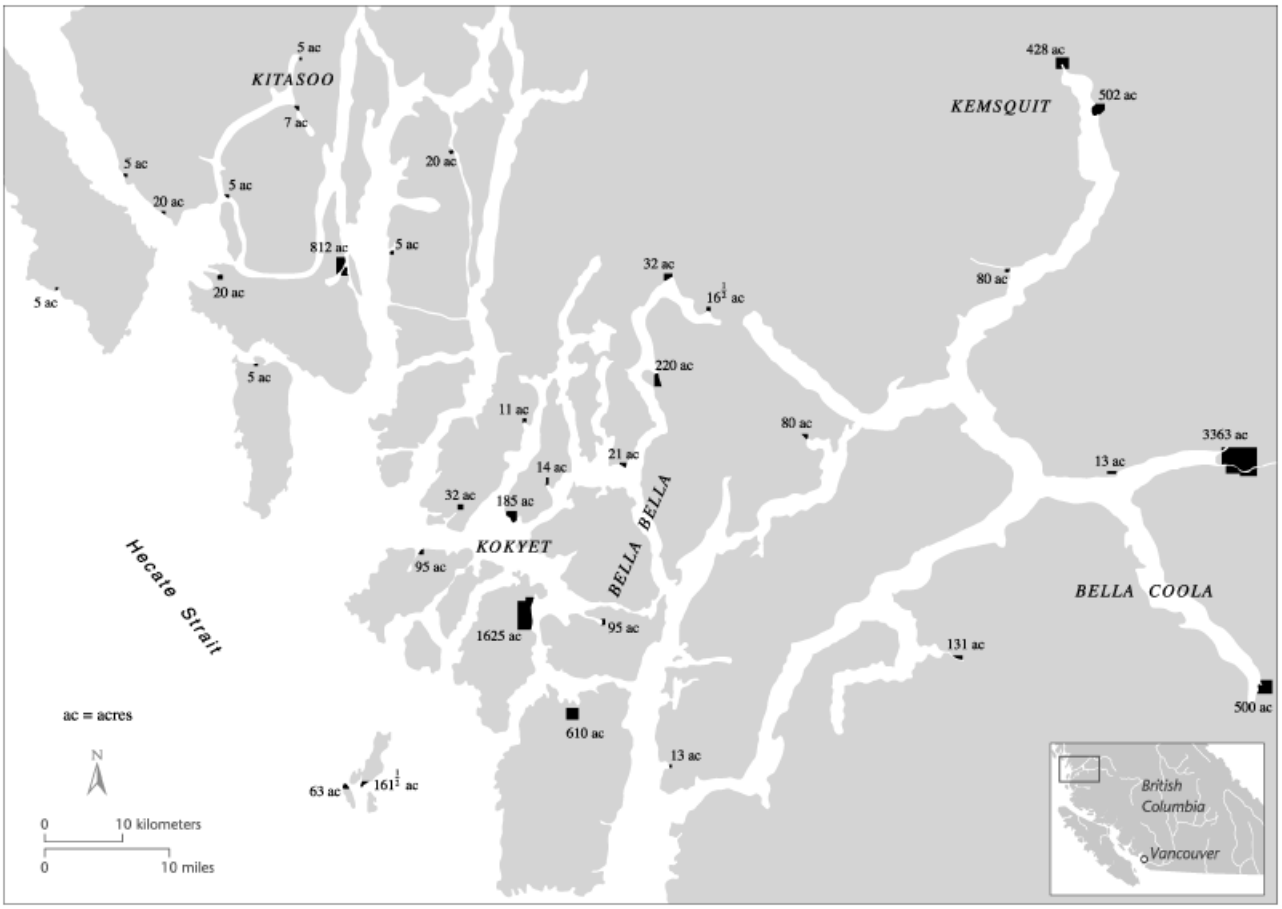


Figure 1. Portion of the Bella Coola Indian Agency, coastal British Columbia, 1916.

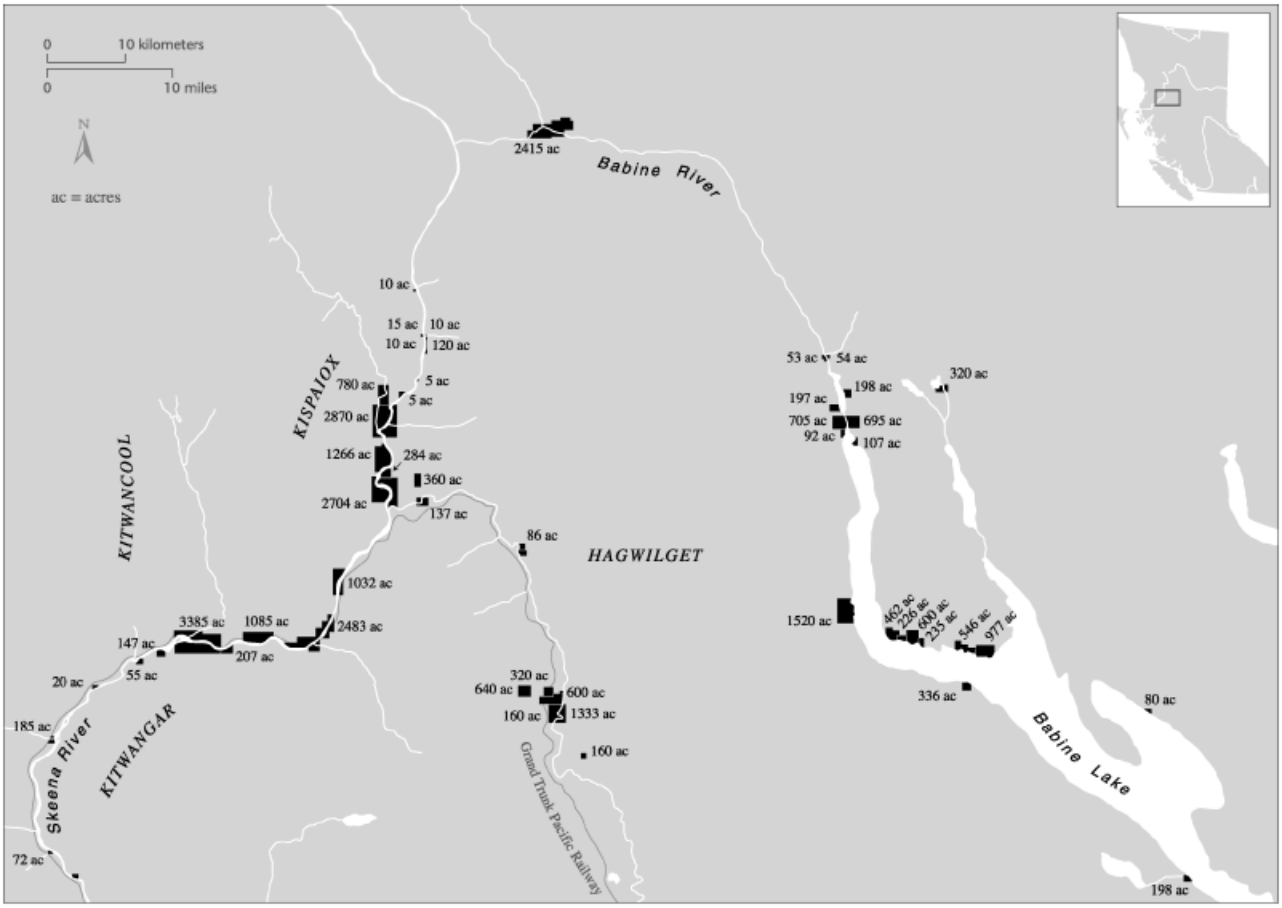


Figure 2. Portion of the Babine Indian Agency, north-central British Columbia, 1916.

is reversed. By starting not with texts, language, and strategies of representation, but with the dispossession of colonized peoples of their land — with, as it were, Figures 1 and 2—the relative weight of different colonial powers is not prejudged, and the question becomes simply: how was colonial power deployed to achieve this geographical effect? Rather than writing from the imperial center, rather than investigating colonial subtexts within a particular category of texts, the analysis turns on the primary effect of a particular settler colonialism and on the gamut of colonial powers that facilitated it. So situated, the distinctive roles of different components of the colonial arsenal should begin to come into focus (including maps like Figures 1 and 2). The cultural discourse of colonialism should begin to be contextualized, and some basis should be established for the evaluation of salience. Moreover, different theoretical points of attachment should come into focus, and it should be possible to sketch the work that particular bodies of theory accomplish.

This article is a rather schematic attempt to undertake such an analysis and, on that basis, to offer some preliminary conclusions. In a recent book on the reserve system in British Columbia (Harris 2002), I provide more texture for those who wish it. Yet the very starkness of an article that surveys an array of colonial powers may serve to emphasize my argument and encourage the discussion of the relationships among different forms of colonial power—and of different ways of theorizing them—out of which, I think, a more balanced geographical contribution to the study of colonialism is likely to emerge. I deal with British Columbia while assuming that my arguments bear, to some fair extent, on other theaters of settler colonialism.

The Power to Dispassess

The problem of reserves in British Columbia arose with the establishment of colonies and settlers some 70 years after people of European background began to frequent its coastal waters. After commercial capital reached the coast in the 1780s and 1790s, and the interior in the first decade of the 19th century, trade became the basis of the relationship between natives and nonnatives. The relationship was frequently mediated by violence, sexual liaisons

of various sorts, and cross-cultural borrowing, but land was not at issue. Except for the few acres within their palisaded forts and, in some cases, a little land beyond for a farm or two, traders did not need it. For their purposes, it was sufficient to insert a handful of outsiders in ships or forts into native space.

But a territory had become known to the outside world, and its outline had been mapped. In French sociologist Bruno Latour's terms, such "inscriptions" were transported to distant "centers of calculation" (1987, ch. 6). Sketchy information about a distant corner of North America was processed, thousands of miles from its source, within complex calculuses of diplomatic ambition, ideology, cultural stereotypes, and raw geopolitical power (Clayton 2000). Spain relinquished any claim to sovereignty along the north Pacific coast in 1795. Britain and the United States contended much longer, an intricate diplomacy at times verging on war that was settled only in 1846 when the border between British North America and the United States was extended along the 49th parallel to the Pacific. This agreement, the Oregon Treaty, was a legal understanding between distant governments "respecting the sovereignty and government of the territory on the northwest coast of America." It did not mention native people. In the eyes of the governments involved, the issue of sovereignty was settled. Three years later, in response to the American settlement of Oregon and the news of gold in California, the British government established the proprietary colony of Vancouver Island. Then, in 1858, following a rush of underemployed miners from California to the Fraser River, it established the crown colony of British Columbia. As Daniel Clayton puts it, "native space was reproduced as an absolute space of British sovereignty," (2000, 236) although initially, in the aftermath of the Treaty of Waitangi and judicial rulings in New Zealand, officials in the Colonial Office were uncertain about the extent to which British sovereignty in these colonies was burdened by native title (Harris 2002, 15–16).

With the creation of these two colonies, land was framed in a new problematic. Colonies entailed settlers, and settlers required land, which could be got only by dispossessing native people. A relationship based on trade was replaced by one based on land. As their land was taken away, native people had to be put somewhere. A solution with many precedents in other settler colonies was to put them on reserves. Dispossession began in the 1850s and continued through the rest of the century. Physical violence, the imperial state, colonial culture, and self-interest all underlay it.

Violence. The establishment of colonies on Vancouver Island and the mainland changed the nature of violence there. It had long accompanied the fur trades. Coastal trading ships bristled with arms, greed was rampant on both sides, cross-cultural misunderstandings were frequent, and killing was the common result (Clayton 2000, ch. 6; Gibson 1992, 163, 170). In the interior, an axiom of the land-based fur trade was that perceived assaults on the personnel or property of the traders would be met with quick, spectacular displays of violence—sovereign power in the Foucaultian sense, though without a validating regime of rights (Harris 1997, ch. 2). Nor was the gold rush peaceable. Miners arrived with the latest weaponry (including six-shooters and spiral-bored rifles) and tactics of Indian fighting worked out in the American southwest. At the first sign of trouble, they organized themselves into companies, elected officers, and advanced in paramilitary formation. But with the creation of settler colonies, a new level of organization and calculation—the British military—was built into the equation of violence (Gough 1984). British warships operated along the coast; a detachment of Royal Engineers was sent out to survey land and maintain order. Such power was more often displayed than used—a few quick and very public hangings of suspected murderers after summary trials on the quarterdeck of one of Her Majesty's warships, or a few villages shelled and destroyed—spectacles intended to instill fear. Officials considered such power "a grand persuasive." Some held that it saved lives by preventing settler–native wars. Frequently, they judged it sufficient to anchor a warship just off a native village and ostentatiously prepare the guns.

In the interior, the space beyond the reach of a ship's guns, the military equation was more balanced. In the 1870s, as settlers were moving in and preempting land, many natives leaders talked of war. Settlers feared, perhaps with justification, that a native uprising could wipe all of them out in a single night. But, as the chiefs knew, a short-term victory was one thing; keeping at bay settlers and the armies that, sooner or later, would back them up was quite another. The results of wars across the border in which native warriors (some from British Columbia) had fought federal U.S. troops, was evidence in hand. Those who counseled war did so out of desperation. One chief put it this way: "A war with the white man will end in our destruction, but death in war is not so bad as death by starvation" (cited in Harris 2002, 206). Overall, the balance of physical power lay overwhelmingly with the state.

The imperial state. From the vantage point of London, Vancouver Island and British Columbia were two remote and relatively inconsequential colonies. Imperial attention focused, rather, on India and Ireland. After the advent of free trade in 1846, the role of settler colonies in

the imperial scheme of things had become increasingly murky. Earl Grey, secretary of state for the colonies when the colony of Vancouver Island was created, held that colonies returned important image value for a great power and also that the honor of the crown required it to protect British settlers overseas (who had chosen to settle within the British empire) and also to protect native people from settlers who, left to their own devices, would probably exterminate them (Grey 1853, vol. 1, letter 1). Yet the coffers of the Lords of the Treasury opened reluctantly for honor, and British settler colonies around the world were expected to support themselves. Moreover, the duty of the crown to protect native people from settlers conflicted with the Colonial Office's growing willingness to accord responsible government. As liberal humanitarian sentiments about the essential oneness of human kind and the opportunity to create a world of civilized, Christian people faded, responsible government came to dominate protection in Colonial Office thought (Metcalf 1996; Porter 1999). In settler colonies, where access to land was the predominant issue, only a hollow form of responsible government would exclude land policy from colonial jurisdiction. In effect, by the late 1840s and 1850s, the Colonial Office had no clear, consistent native policy. As a result, when the colony of Vancouver Island was created, it was readily inclined to turn over the management of native people to the Hudson's Bay Company (which, it thought, had handled them much better than the Americans) and to rely on the judgment of the fur trader-cum-governor (George Douglas), who managed both colonies until his retirement in 1864. Thereafter, land policies were formulated by local settler politicians. The Colonial Office hardly interfered, and in 1871 when British Columbia became a Canadian province, land policy, now constitutionally a provincial responsibility within the Canadian confederation, remained in the hands of these same politicians. The state created a framework for the ordered development of a settler society, but did not, itself, provide the momentum for the development of that society or for the dispossessions and repossessions of land that accompanied it. When power passed to local politicians, they reflected the values and interests of their constituents.

Culture. The assumptions about the colonized other analyzed in the colonial discourse literature were pervasive in early modern British Columbia. Hardly a white person questioned the distinction between civilization and savagery or the association of the former with Europeans and the latter with native people. Nor did they question the proposition that civilized people knew how to use land properly and that savages did not. From these assumptions it followed that until Europeans arrived, most of the land was waste, or, where native people were obviously using it, that their uses were inadequate. Nor was there room for alternative understandings of civilized modernity. Rather, thought about native people focused on a simple binary: civilization and savagery with little of consequence between. From this it followed that if native people did not become civilized, and if, in a changing world, it was no longer possible for them to be savage, then they would die out, a common prediction in British Columbia well into the 20th century.

These social constructions were assumed, not debated. They pervaded thought about native people in the Colonial Office, in political, administrative, legal, and missionary circles in British Columbia, and in the settler mind. An Indian reserve commissioner, charged with laying out reserves, said this to a native audience on Vancouver Island in 1876:

> Many years ago you were in darkness killing each other and making slaves was your trade. The Land was of no value to you. The trees were of no value to you. The Coal was of no value to you. The white man came he improved the land you can follow his example—he cuts the trees and pays you to help him. He takes the coal out of the ground and he pays you to help him—you are improving fast. The Government protects you, you are rich—You live in peace and have everything you want.
>
> —(cited in Harris 2002, 108)

At the time, few if any white settlers would have disagreed. There were arguments about how quickly native people could be assimilated and, therefore, about how much land should be allocated to them. Some settlers, biological racists to the core, considered natives utterly lazy, degenerate, and unredeemable; but a few found much to appreciate or pity in native lives, were well disposed toward native people nearby, and now and then supported their pleas for more reserve land. But even kindness—tinged by an educated, romantic appreciation of nature and, therefore, of lives assumed to live close to nature—was situated within the assumptions of the civilization/savage binary. So was salvage anthropology, which in the influential presence of Franz Boas reached the coast late in the 19th century, there intent upon recovering the uncontaminated primitive condition. Boas had little interest in the native societies around him(which, he thought, were becoming civilized), except insofar as they supplied informants about earlier, precontact times.

These values had not been invented in British Columbia. As a considerable literature has shown (e.g., Seed 1995; Hulme and Jordanova 1990; Buckle 1991; Arneil 1996), some of them were as old as the European

connection with the New World and had surfaced in the first European theorizing about their rights there by the Spanish theologian Francisco de Vitoria in the 1530s, or by the Dutch legal theorist Hugo Grotius a century later. They were powerfully and influentially elaborated by John Locke ([1690] 1947, ch. 5) in his labor theory of property. Locke held that God's gift of land to Adam and his posterity acquired value only as labor was expended on it, and that labor justified individual property rights. Those who did not labor on the land wandered over what Locke called unassisted nature, land that yielded little and lay in common. This, he thought, was the condition of America before European settlers arrived. The land was "a wild common of Nature," the original condition of the world before labor was expended on land and benefits accrued therefrom. Hence his famous dictum: "In the beginning, all the world was America." In all the early settler colonies, ordinary (frequently illiterate) settlers—people who had never heard of Vitoria, Grotius, or Locke—held unsophisticated versions of these views.

By the mid-19th century, these old and pervasive ideas were powerfully reinforced by an increasingly strident racism and the achievements of industrial production. These years were the high water mark of "scientific" racism. The ideas of phrenologists, craniometricians, and polygenesists were in the air, and after Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (published in 1859), it could be argued that, even if humans shared a common origin, there had been ample time for evolution to take different courses and produce different peoples. The very achievements of industrial society were the measure, it seemed, of an evolutionary advantage. The lurid tales of the massacres of English women and children at Morant Bay in Jamaica, or, later, at Lucknow and Cawnpore during the Indian Mutiny, confirmed in many minds the absurdity of treating natives as the equal of whites. Such judgments reached British Columbia. Even more important, I think, as the historian Michael Adas has pointed out, was the growing technological gulf between Europe and the rest of the world and the tangible measure it provided of the disjunction between civilization and savagery (Adas 1989). European weaponry and military discipline had made conquest relatively easy (Headrick 1981). Contrasts between Europeans and others seemed obvious: machine power versus animal or human power, progress versus stagnation, science versus superstition. The whole material paraphernalia of European modernity was a tangible yardstick of superiority, and the idea of progress, conceived in these material terms, was in the air as never before. Moreover, as the historian Mark Francis has shown, if civilization and progress came to be equated with technology and material wealth, then a measurable standard had been invented that native people could not attain (Francis 1998). They could be mannered, but they could not match European technologies or material wealth. Nor did they have the Europeans' growing ability to dominate nature, another measure of progress. People who marked the land lightly and lived within the rhythms of nature were obviously unprogressive and backward. If civilization were measured in these terms, then native societies must be savage. For British Columbians of European background, the conclusion was obvious, and the rhetoric surrounding civilization, savagery, and unused land awaiting development was pervasive and uncontested.

Self-interest. Missionaries excepted, immigrants had not come to British Columbia to civilize native people. They had been attracted by the prospect of unused land. Indeed, by any standard with which they were familiar, such was land in British Columbia. In 1881, the first date for which there is a general census, 50,000 people were scattered across an area larger than Britain and France combined (Galois and Harris 1994). After the epidemics (smallpox, measles, influenza) and before substantial immigration, the population of this recently defined political space was lower than it had been for perhaps a thousand years. Native numbers had declined in the previous century, perhaps by as much as 90 percent, and some parts of British Columbia were almost completely depopulated. Moreover, the time–space compressions of the mid-19th century had repositioned this distant corner of North America in the world system. In 1830, the travel time from London to the Northwest Coast, whether by way of Hudson Bay or the Horn, was six to seven months. By 1890 it was three weeks. Telegraph messages took three days. Useable land had been recently opened up to the outside world, facilitating the opportunity to which the momentum to develop and settle was the response.

In these circumstances, the commercial economy of the fur trade soon yielded to industrial economies focused on mining, forestry, and fishing. The first industrial mining (for coal) began on Vancouver Island in the early 1850s, the first sizeable industrial sawmill opened a few years later, and fish canning began on the Fraser River in 1870. From these beginnings, industrial economies reached into the interstices of British Columbia, establishing work camps close to the resource, and processing centers (canneries, sawmills, concentrating mills) at points of intersection of external and local transportation systems. As the years went by, these transportation systems expanded, bringing ever more land (resources) within reach of industrial capital. Each of these developments was a local instance of David Harvey's general point that the pace of time–space compressions after 1850 accelerated capital's "massive,

long-term investment in the conquest of space" (Harvey 1989, 264) and its commodifications of nature. The very soil, Marx said in another context, was becoming "part and parcel of capital" (1967, pt. 8, ch. 27).

As Marx and, subsequently, others have noted, the spatial energy of capitalism works to deterritorialize people (that is, to detach them from prior bonds between people and place) and to reterritorialize them in relation to the requirements of capital (that is, to land conceived as resources and freed from the constraints of custom and to labor detached from land). For Marx the "wholesale expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil . . . created for the town industries the necessary supply of a 'free' and outlawed proletariat" (1967, pt. 8, ch. 27). For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1977)—drawing on insights from psychoanalysis—capitalism may be thought of as a desiring machine, as a sort of territorial writing machine that functions to inscribe "the flows of desire upon the surface or body of the earth" (Thomas 1994, 171–72). In Henri Lefebvre's terms, it produces space in the image of its own relations of production (1991; Smith 1990, 90). For David Harvey it entails the "restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes," and postpones the effects of its inherent contradictions by the conquest of space—capitalism's "spatial fix" (1982, ch. 13; 1985, 150, 156). In detail, positions differ; in general, it can hardly be doubted that in British Columbia industrial capitalism introduced new relationships between people and with land and that at the interface of the native and the nonnative, these relationships created total misunderstandings and powerful new axes of power that quickly detached native people from former lands. When a Tlingit chief was asked by a reserve commissioner about the work he did, he replied, "I don't know how to work at anything. My father, grandfather, and uncle just taught me how to live, and I have always done what they told me—we learned this from our fathers and grandfathers and our uncles how to do the things among ourselves and we teach our children in the same way" (cited in Harris 2002, 241). Two different worlds were facing each other, and one of them was fashioning very deliberate plans for the reallocation of land and the reordering of social relations. In 1875 the premier of British Columbia argued that the way to civilize native people was to bring them into the industrial workplace, there to learn the habits of thrift, time discipline, and materialism. Schools were secondary. The workplace was held to be the crucible of cultural change and, as such, the locus of what the premier depicted as a politics of altruism intended to bring native people up to the point where they could enter society as full, participating citizens. To draw them into the workplace, they had to be separated from land. Hence, in the premier's scheme of things, the small reserve, a space that could not yield a livelihood and would eject native labor toward the industrial workplace and, hence, toward civilization. Marx would have had no illusions about what was going on: native lives, he would have said, were being detached from their own means of production (from the land and the use value of their own labor on it) and were being transformed into free (unencumbered) wage laborers dependent on the social relations of capital. The social means of production and of subsistence were being converted into capital. Capital was benefiting doubly, acquiring access to land freed by small reserves and to cheap labor detached from land.

The reorientation of land and labor away from older customary uses had happened many times before, not only in earlier settler societies, but also in the British Isles and, somewhat later, in continental Europe. There, the centuries-long struggles over enclosure had been waged between many ordinary folk who sought to protect customary use rights to land and landlords who wanted to replace custom with private property rights and market economies. In the western highlands, tenants without formal contracts (the great majority) could be evicted "at will." Their former lands came to be managed by a few sheep farmers; their intricate local land uses were replaced by sheep pasture (Hunter 1976; Hornsby 1992, ch. 2). In Windsor Forest, a practical vernacular economy that had used the forest in innumerable local ways was slowly eaten away as the law increasingly favored notions of absolute property ownership, backed them up with hangings, and left less and less space for what E.P. Thompson calls "the messy complexities of coincident use-right" (1975, 241). Such developments were approximately reproduced in British Columbia, as a regime of exclusive property rights overrode a fisher-hunter-gatherer version of, in historian Jeanette Neeson's phrase, an "economy of multiple occupations" (1984, 138; Huitema, Osborne, and Ripmeester 2002). Even the rhetoric of dispossession—about lazy, filthy, improvident people who did not know how to use land properly—often sounded remarkably similar in locations thousands of miles apart (Pratt 1992, ch. 7). There was this difference: The argument against custom, multiple occupations, and the constraints of life worlds on the rights of property and the free play of the market became, in British Columbia, not an argument between different economies and classes (as it had been in Britain) but the more polarized, and characteristically racialized juxtaposition of civilization and savagery that I have alluded to above.

Moreover, in British Columbia, capital was far more attracted to the opportunities of native land than to the

surplus value of native labor. In the early years, when labor was scarce, it sought native workers, but in the longer run, with its labor needs supplied otherwise (by Chinese workers contracted through labor brokers, by itinerant white loggers or miners), it was far more interested in unfettered access to resources. A bonanza of new resources awaited capital, and if native people who had always lived amid these resources could not be shipped away, they could be—indeed, had to be—detached from them. Their labor was useful for a time, but land in the form of fish, forests, and minerals was the prize, one not to be cluttered with native-use rights. From the perspective of capital, therefore, native people had to be dispossessed of their land. Otherwise, nature could hardly be developed. An industrial primary resource economy could hardly function.

In settler colonies, as Marx knew, the availability of agricultural land could turn wage laborers back into independent producers who worked for themselves instead of for capital (they vanished, Marx said, "from the labor market, but not into the workhouse") (1967, pt. 8, ch. 33). As such, they were unavailable to capital, and resisted its incursions, the source, Marx thought, of the prosperity and vitality of colonial societies. In British Columbia, where agricultural land was severely limited, many settlers were closely implicated with capital, although the objectives of the two were different and frequently antagonistic. Without the ready alternative of pioneer farming, many of them were wage laborers dependent on employment in the industrial labor market, yet often contending with capital in bitter strikes. Some of them sought to become capitalists. In M. A. Grainger's *Woodsmen of the West*, a short, vivid novel set in early modern British Columbia, the central character, Carter, wrestles with this opportunity. Carter had grown up on a rock farm in Nova Scotia, worked at various jobs across the continent, and fetched up in British Columbia at a time when, for a nominal fee, the government leased standing timber to small operators. He acquired a lease in a remote fjord and there, with a few men under towering glaciers at the edge of the world economy, attacked the forest. His chances were slight, but the land was his opportunity, his labor his means, and he threw himself at the forest with the intensity of Captain Ahab in pursuit of the white whale. There were many Carters.

But other immigrants did become something like Marx's independent producers. They had found a little land on the basis of which they hoped to get by, avoid the work relations of industrial capitalism, and leave their progeny more than they had known themselves. Their stories are poignant. A Czech peasant family, forced from home for want of land, finding its way to one of the coal towns of southeastern British Columbia, and then, having accumulated a little cash from mining, homesteading in the province's arid interior. The homestead would consume a family's work while yielding a living of sorts from intermittent sales from a dry wheat farm and a large measure of domestic self-sufficiency—a farm just sustaining a family, providing a toe-hold in a new society, and a site of adaptation to it. Or, a young woman from a brick, working-class street in Derby, England, coming to British Columbia during the depression years before World War I, finding work up the coast in a railway hotel in Prince Rupert, quitting with five dollars to her name after a manager's amorous advances, traveling east as far as five dollars would take her on the second train out of Prince Rupert, working in a small frontier hotel, and eventually marrying a French Canadian farmer. There, in a northern British Columbian valley, in a context unlike any she could have imagined as a girl, she would raise a family and become a stalwart of a diverse local society in which no one was particularly well off. Such stories are at the heart of settler colonialism (Harris 1997, ch. 8).

The lives reflected in these stories, like the productions of capital, were sustained by land. Older regimes of custom had been broken, in most cases by enclosures or other displacements in the homeland several generations before emigration. Many settlers became property owners, holders of land in fee simple, beneficiaries of a landed opportunity that, previously, had been unobtainable. But use values had not given way entirely to exchange values, nor was labor entirely detached from land. Indeed, for all the work associated with it, the pioneer farm offered a temporary haven from capital. The family would be relatively autonomous (it would exploit itself). There would be no outside boss. Cultural assumptions about land as a source of security and family-centered independence; assumptions rooted in centuries of lives lived elsewhere seemed to have found a place of fulfillment. Often this was an illusion—the valleys of British Columbia are strewn with failed pioneer farms—but even illusions drew immigrants and occupied them with the land.

In short, and in a great variety of ways, British Columbia offered modest opportunities to ordinary people of limited means, opportunities that depended, directly or indirectly, on access to land. The wage laborer in the resource camp, as much as the pioneer farmer, depended on such access, as, indirectly, did the shopkeeper who relied on their custom. In this respect, the interests of capital and settlers converged. For both, land was the opportunity at hand, an opportunity that gave settler colonialism its energy. Measured in relation to this opportunity, native people were superfluous. Worse, they were in the way, and, by one means or another, had to be removed. Patrick Wolfe is

entirely correct in saying that "settler societies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies," which, by occupying land of their ancestors, had got in the way (1999, 2). If, here and there, their labor was useful for a time, capital and settlers usually acquired labor by other means, and in so doing, facilitated the uninhibited construction of native people as redundant and expendable. In 1840 in Oxford, Herman Merivale, then a professor of political economy and later a permanent undersecretary at the Colonial Office, had concluded as much. He thought that the interests of settlers and native people were fundamentally opposed, and that if left to their own devices, settlers would launch wars of extermination. He knew what had been going on in some colonies—"wretched details of ferocity and treachery"—and considered that what he called the amalgamation (essentially, assimilation through acculturation and miscegenation) of native people into settler society to be the only possible solution (1928, lecture xviii). Merivale's motives were partly altruistic, yet assimilation as colonial practice was another means of eliminating "native" as a social category, as well as any land rights attached to it—as, everywhere, settler colonialism would tend to do.

These different elements of what might be termed the foundational complex of settler colonial power were mutually reinforcing. When, in 1859, a first large sawmill was contemplated on the west coast of Vancouver Island, its manager purchased the land from the Crown and then, arriving at the intended mill site, dispersed its native inhabitants at the point of a cannon (Sproat 1868). He then worried somewhat about the proprieties of his actions, and talked with the chief, trying to convince him that, through contact with whites, his people would be civilized and improved. The chief would have none of it, but could stop neither the loggers nor the mill. The manager and his men had debated the issue of rights, concluding (in an approximation of Locke) that the chief and his people did not occupy the land in any civilized sense, that it lay in waste for want of labor, and that if labor were not brought to such land, then the worldwide progress of colonialism, which was "changing the whole surface of the earth," would come to a halt. Moreover, and whatever the rights or wrongs, they assumed, with unabashed self-interest, that colonists would keep what they had got: "this, without discussion, we on the west coast of Vancouver Island were all prepared to do." Capital was establishing itself at the edge of a forest within reach of the world economy, and, in so doing, was employing state-sanctioned property rights, physical power, and cultural discourse in the service of interest.

A discourse that treated colonial land as waste awaiting development and its inhabitants as backward and lazy, was exceedingly serviceable. It allowed the improvement of a people's habits *and* land uses to become a cultural imperative, part of the civilizing mission, and a manifestation of progress. It validated the dispossessions and repossessions intrinsic to settler colonialism—as it had the consolidation of market economies in western Europe—while adding a veneer of altruism. But, apart from missionaries who came to win souls for God and civilize native people in the process, it did not provide the momentum for settler colonialism, which came, rather, from the interests of capital and settlers in what both perceived to be the profits/livelihoods associated with new, land-based opportunities.

Although, as the example of the sawmill on Vancouver Island suggests, these different colonial powers were interrelated in many ways, they tended to comprise different parts of the system of power that introduced colonialism to British Columbia. Of this system, the following points can be made: Physical violence and the framework of the colonial state appear as necessary preconditions for successful settler colonialism. The impetus for such colonialism appears to be associated primarily with the interest of capital and settlers in land. To the extent required, the legitimation of the dispossessions and repossessions of land associated with settler colonialism in British Columbia came from a cultural discourse that emphasized the gulf between civilization and savagery and the different land uses associated with each.

The Management of Dispossession

As the years went by and settler society consolidated its power, physical power moved into the background (while remaining crucial), and the disciplinary strategies associated with the management of people, nature, and space, came to the fore. British Columbia, a Canadian province after 1871, was similar to other jurisdictions in this regard, although, given its size and the central problematic of land in a new settler society, the disciplinary focus was inflected toward the politics of land and space. The reserve system itself was a spatial strategy of dispossession and of population management.

The disciplinary strategies associated with modern states and economies have tended to simplify complex realities within narrow fields of legibility (Scott 1998). At the scale of the nation-state or the corporation, nature and space could not be managed otherwise, and state and capital, usually in close alignment, relied (whether consciously or not) on an array of disciplinary technologies to bring localities into focus by eliminating most of their detail. Of these many technologies—subsumed in Foucaultian terms within the concept of governmentality

(1991; also Hannah 2000, ch. 1)—those that bore particularly on the organization of land and reserves in British Columbia were probably maps, numbers, the common law, and the new geographies of settler colonialism. I comment on each.

Maps. British Columbia could not have been reorganized into colonial space without something like the map. Maps enabled newcomers to locate themselves in this space and find their way around. More than this, maps conceptualized unfamiliar space in Eurocentric terms, situating it within a culture of vision, measurement, and management. Employing a detached vertical perspective, this cartography rendered space as a plan—as a surface. As such, Kenneth Brealey points out, maps comprised a system of territorial surveillance that "reached across vast distances, flattening space, compartmentalizing it, renaming it, and assimilating these representations into the geometry of the Cartesian grid" (2002, 10; Ryan 1996; Huitema, Osborne, and Ripmeester 2002). By such means, newcomers found their bearings. Their early maps were often little more than outlines of coasts and rivers that erased almost all the contents of the space they depicted. It was not so much that outsiders using these maps then considered this space to be a tabula rasa, as a good deal of the literature on cartography and colonialism suggests, for settlers were drawn to resources not indicated on these maps, and colonial officials knew that native people inhabited many of the maps' empty spaces. In 1858, E. B. Lytton, secretary of state for the colonies, instructed the commander of the detachment of royal engineers he was sending to British Columbia as to his dealings with the "savage tribes" that "surrounded" the few white settlers—this after decades of cartography that, with few exceptions, had erased native people. Rather, this cartography introduced a geographical imaginary that ignored indigenous ways of knowing and recording space, ways that settlers could not imagine and did not need as soon as their maps reoriented them after their own fashion. On the west coast of Vancouver Island, as Bruce Braun has shown, the space from which native knowledge had been subtracted would eventually be reconfigured within scientific classifications, industrial management strategies, and visions of wilderness (2002, ch. 2).

More explicitly, maps were tools in the process of land allocation. Property required a location, and maps were the means of establishing it. In the early years, when the demand for land exceeded the capacity to survey it and land could be acquired by preemption, these maps could be exceedingly crude. A few lines scratched on a page (Figure 3), sufficed to establish a preemption and, in the eyes of the law, to remove a piece of land from native control.

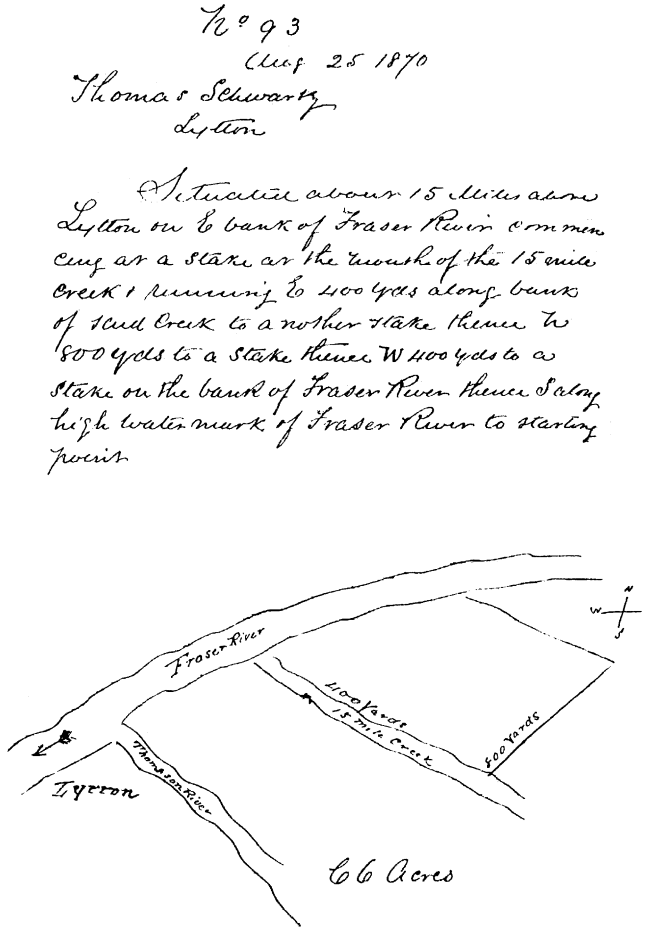


Figure 3. Property description and map accompanying a preemption application, 1870.

Eventually, preemptions would be surveyed, the basis of a more precise cartography and, sometimes, of scuffles between native people and survey parties. When villagers on the north coast resisted surveyors, the government deployed a gunboat, and surveying resumed in a theater of power focused not, as in Foucault's famous analysis, on the sovereign's right to kill, but on the government's right to lay out lines on the land. The surveyor reported, "I shall begin my survey at once, under the observation of Capt. Nicholls of the Cormorant . . . in front of the village Church, immediately beside the Provincial Lock-up, and in full view of the entire village. Nothing shall be hidden, and there shall be no opportunity for saying the beginning of the Survey was 'surreptitious' " (cited in Harris 2002, 204-05; see also Edney 1997). Guns, surveys, maps; commissions appointed to make final allocations of reserves depended on maps at every turn. They made rough cadastral maps, and they asked chiefs to point out on maps the lands they sought. They poured over maps before making their decisions. Maps enabled them to locate these decisions in an abstract, geometrical space

containing only what their own data collections and predilections inclined them to place there. They provided a measurable, transportable, and archivable record on which the commissioners were completely dependent. The maps that followed from their decisions ended up, eventually, in government files, often several outlines of small reserves mounted on a single sheet, rather like insects displayed on pins (Figure 4). A reserve had a name, an acreage, a location. It could be looked up. It was situated in a bureaucracy.

Numbers. The commissioners were equally dependent on numbers. Few of them knew much of British Columbia,

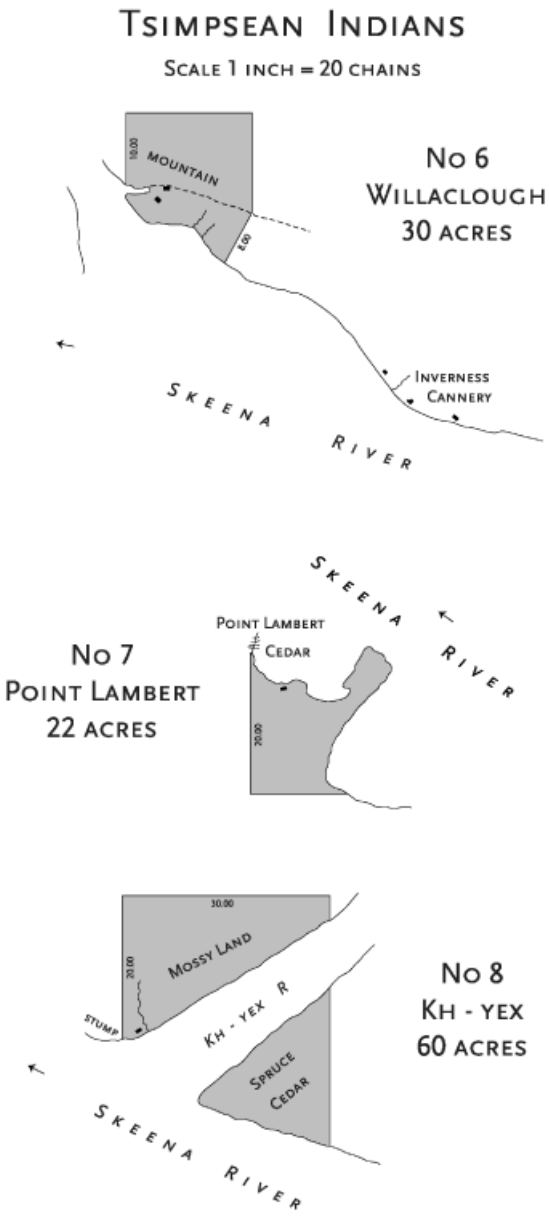


Figure 4. Reserves as bureaucratic exhibitions.

and none was very familiar with native ways. They had been assigned an almost impossible task: to allocate reserves quickly over a huge territory. As they met and talked with native people about land, they began to encounter the deep local lore in which native lives were situated. Given the opportunity, the chiefs could talk for days about the complexities of local land use—about how, as one chief said, the landscape reflected "our work in past times"—in so doing, providing far more information than the commissioners had time for or wanted. Invariably, they rejected almost all such local knowledge. They could not process it. On the other hand, the commissioners avidly collected numbers. They wanted to know how many cultivable acres a band possessed and how many were actually being cultivated, how many school-age children were in the band and how many attended residential schools. This was firm, quantitative information. The four-volume report of the last major reserve commission turned all such information into tables (British Columbia 1916). The commissioners had worked out, they said, a scheme for the "scientific analysis and tabulation of all information gleaned by the commission." They had replaced local knowledge with numbers. Earlier, reserve commissioners tried to take censuses.

Numbers were powerful. They provided apparently objective information that could be analyzed by established procedures to reach verifiable conclusions. They enabled the commissioners to distinguish between good Indians (those who were cultivating their land and sending their children to school) and bad. The former might get a little more land. And they were transportable, in a way that local knowledge was not. Like the simple cadastral maps the commissioners produced, they could be moved to a "center of calculation," however distant. There, maps and numbers could be analyzed together and decisions made about the allocation of land. In this respect, they were both, in historian of science Theodore Porter's apt phrase, "technologies of distance" (1995, ix), means of managing land and people from afar. Native people soon understood this and refused census takers and the quantitative inquiries of reserve commissioners more frequently than they tried to disrupt surveyors. In such cases, the commissioners would seek the information from an Indian Agent, or some other apparently knowledgeable settler. In one way or another, numbers were usually obtained. Like maps, they were at once egregious simplifications and effective colonial tools. They enabled a bureaucracy, essentially without local knowledge, to make decisions about localities.

The law. English common law was also an abstract, generalized means of normalizing and managing people

and nature within the purview of the state and at the expense of local custom. But it had far more memory than maps or numbers and more ability to transpose complex ideas, values, and social relationships from one location to another. The product of accumulated social and legal understandings, it tended to hold on to time and, when shifted in space, to transfer these understandings with it. It was, therefore, historically rooted and geographically expansive. It had the capacity to overwhelm other ways of being in the world—as Don Mitchell has put it in another context, the capacity to annihilate space by law (2001). When English common law, a work of English centuries, was relocated overseas, a framework for the transplantation of English society had been introduced. Its influence was pervasive. The workings of capital in colonial settings depended on such law—as native fishers working for the salmon canneries at the mouth of the Fraser River found, for example, when charged with breaches of the terms of master and servant law (D. Harris 2001, 49–55). Similarly, settlers' property rights depended on the law, first the right to exclude, then to alter, sell, will, and so on. Even more than this, the law expressed and constituted what some legal theorists call a legal consciousness, a matrix of ideas, ideologies, and values that tended to be assumed rather than debated (Blomley 1994, ch. 1). Both law and popular mind, for example, constructed the rights of private property. So imbricated was law and the culture of legality in colonialism that some theorists consider them—perhaps too possessively—constitutive of colonialism itself (e.g., Comaroff 2001, 309). Wide-ranging as the law was, and complicit as were some of its assumptions with popular values, it was also wrapped in a specialized professional language and in practices that were obscure to most people and set its detailed interpretation beyond their reach—what Pierre Bourdieu calls a juridical field (1987).

By the time that English common law was introduced to British Columbia, the triumph of a centralized, standardized law applicable to all of England was virtually complete. Nicholas Blomley has explored Sir Edward Coke's hugely influential efforts early in the 17th century to replace the variegated, decentered map of English law with an ordered, rational, national system based on the assumption of a unitary legal knowledge interpreted by experts (1994, ch. 3). The process of standardization had begun much earlier, however, as the mosaic of local legal practices of feudal England gradually gave way, at different times in different sectors of the law, to the common law (Milsom 1969; Baker 1971; Berman 1983). At the top, the authority of the king was consolidated and then challenged and increasingly circumscribed by the landed elite. At the bottom, rights based on local custom, possession, and reciprocal feudal obligations slowly gave way to the normalized and relatively placeless understandings embedded in contracts and private property rights. The law that reached British Columbia was not a set of timeless legal truths, but the product, rather, of these long, bitterly contested transformations.

In British Columbia (probably in all other settler colonies overseas) property law was the most immediately powerful component of the legal ideas, social values, and cultural understandings embodied in English common law. When a settler preempted land and met the terms of preemption, he (almost invariably, he) acquired title to the land in fee simple, an estate that had appeared in the 13th century, embodied a perpetual and indestructible right to the land potentially for ever, and gradually became normative as the claims of overlords and of custom diminished. Well before the 19th century, free and common socage was the predominant English tenure and fee simple the predominant estate, both widely supported by legal theory and popular opinion. William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books*, published in 1765 and frequently reprinted, remained a guide through the 19th century. Blackstone held that society's principal aim was "to protect individuals in those absolute rights, which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature." For Blackstone, property was such a right; it was "inherent in every Englishman," to the point that individuals gave up some of their liberty to enjoy the legal protection of property. "So great moreover is the regard of the law for private property, that it will not authorize the least violation of it; no, not even for the good of the whole community. . . . The public good is in nothing more essentially interested, than in the protection of every individual's private rights" ([1765]1809, 138). A long-contested and fairly recently popularized legal understanding had become an immutable law of nature. With Blackstone and his like in the background, no government or Indian reserve commissioner in British Columbia contested the rights of private property. When settlers complained that Indians were trespassing on their property or had been given too much land, they assumed an Englishman's property rights, much as Blackstone had spelled them out. In the courts, as in the settler mind, the rights of property embedded in the common law tangibly legitimated the dispossessions and repossessions of land for which assumptions about civilization, savagery, and the progressive use of land had provided a more abstract justification.

From a native perspective, the lands they had lost were more than simply occupied by others. They had become defined by bundles of rights and values that were foreign to their ways and were defended by courts, the procedures of

which were often impenetrable. Somewhat as in a much earlier England, native life in British Columbia was lived within networks of local customs, languages, and understandings. Native law was imbedded in locality and produced at many local sites, at none of which people could have begun to understand Blackstone. In a sense, a transition worked out over the centuries in England, had been compressed into the moment when native lands were preempted (or purchased, or leased from the crown) and relocated in an alien legal regime. Native people in British Columbia had experienced a particularly sudden and extreme form of a transition that the philosopher Jürgen Habermas describes as the systems penetration of the lifeworld and associates with emerging modernity (Habermas 1989, vol. 2, pt. 6). They were suddenly exposed to, and increasingly regulated by, the common law of England and the Canadian Indian Act, not only as they expressed themselves formally in law but also as they were represented in the values of officials and settlers. Moreover, when they found themselves in court, they struggled, usually in translation, with another language, and, in somewhat attenuated colonial form, with Bourdieu's juridical field of recondite legal procedures and customs, which many an ordinary English person, much less an Nlha7kápmx whom coyote had placed on Fraser River, would not begin to understand (Foster 1981). Behind the law meted out in such incomprehensible circumstances were fines, jails, or gallows—ultimately, British military might.

The geography of resettlement. These disciplinary technologies, coupled with the more foundational colonial powers discussed above, enabled the resettlement of British Columbia. A settler society emerged, and with it, a new human geography (Figure 5). This new human geography—the survey lines, the property boundaries, the roads and railways, the farms, the industrial camps, the towns—became, from a native point of view, the most pervasive disciplinary technology of all. Superimposed on their former lands, it defined where they could and could not go. Made by newcomers, it was reinforced by property rights held by landowners (or renters or leasers) wary of trespassers, people who knew their rights and where, in their terms, "Indians" belonged. Theirs was a decentered gaze that emanated from the geography of resettlement itself. From their various vantage points, landowners

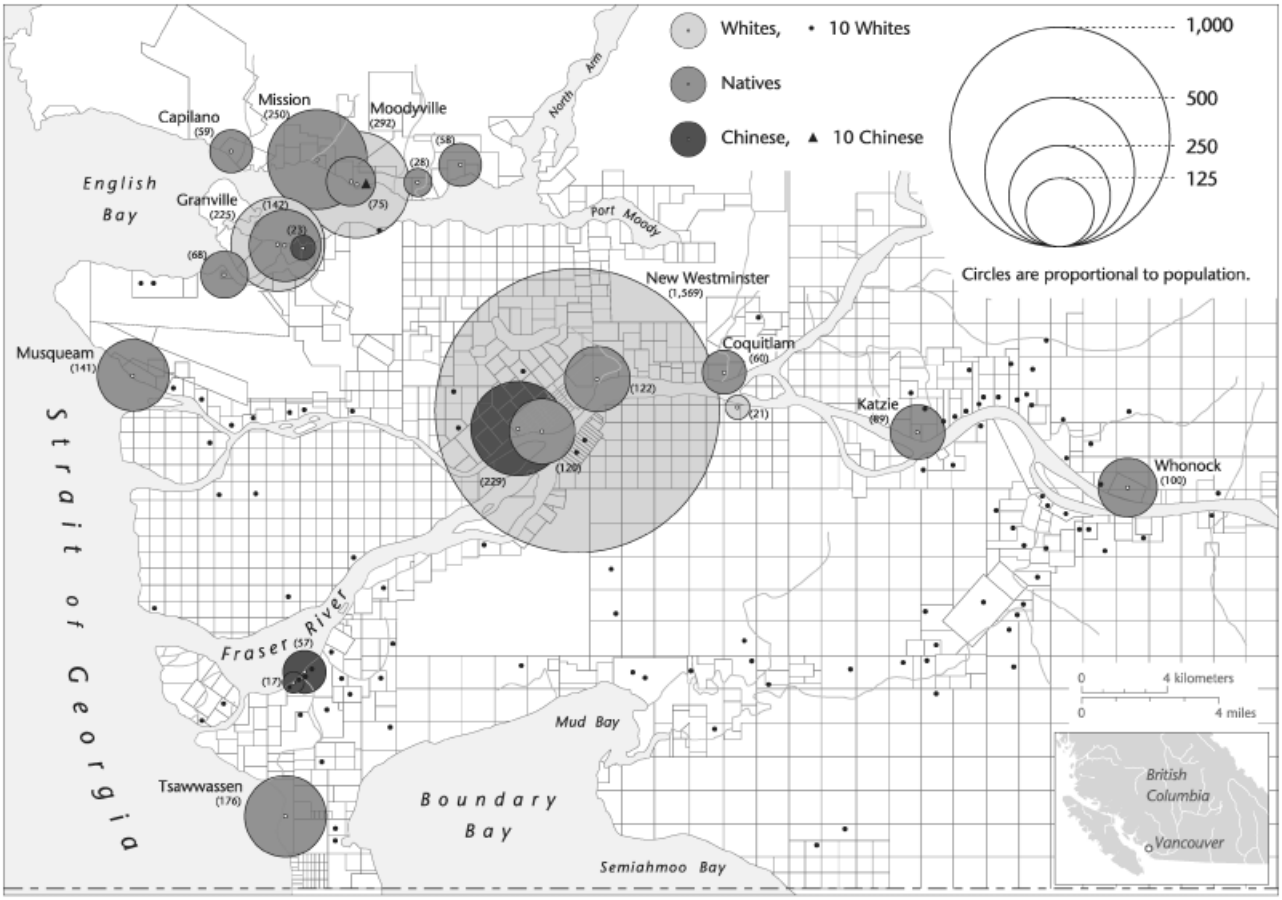


Figure 5. Population of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, 1881.

watched and excluded. The courts, indeed all the colonial powers that I have described, backed them up. Native people could no longer go where they had. Their movements were blocked or channeled, and the resources on which they had always lived were increasingly out of reach. Severe malnutrition was common, at times to the point of starvation. Others, and the geographies of others, dominated the management of space, the essence, as Foucault knew, of disciplinary strategies (1979, 141). To the extent that they made space for themselves (at quite different rates in different parts of the province), these others created an increasingly carceral environment for native people, of which the reserves were only the most obvious manifestation.

Concluding Observations

Such were probably the principal elements of the complex of power that settled around the native land of British Columbia in the last half of the 19th century. Comprehensive and intricate, it quickly dispossessed one set of people and established another. But to emphasize the complexity of colonial power, as the postcolonial literature tends to do, is not in itself particularly helpful. The challenge, rather, is to look inside the complex to establish how particular powers operated and to what particular effect. Different components of the colonial arsenal were not unrelated to each other, but nor were they blended in an amorphous imperial soup. They can be positioned somewhat and a measure of salience established. The geography of dispossession (Figures 1 and 2) is explained more precisely when the powers that effected it are disaggregated.

In this light, the following claims can be made, and scrutinized in other theaters of settler colonialism:

The momentum to dispossess derived primarily from the interest of capital in profit and of settlers in getting somewhat ahead in the world, both interests, in a new colony where land was the principal resource, dependent on the acquisition of land. Only the missionaries stood apart from this. They were drawn by a religious and cultural agenda and were not interested in land. Often they supported native land claims, in so doing frequently alienating themselves from settlers, capital, and government. *The initial ability to dispossess rested primarily on physical power and the supporting infrastructure of the state*. Once the power of violence had been demonstrated, the threat of it was often sufficient. The colonial state sought and, backed by the British military, was often able to impose, a monopoly on violence. It introduced the governmental framework of the modern state, within which colonization proceeded. *The legitimation of and moral justification for dispossession lay in a cultural discourse that located civilization and savagery and extolled the advantages for all concerned of replacing the latter with the former*. The achievement of the colonial discourse literature has been to bring this discourse into focus, while its failing has been a tendency to neglect other forms of colonial power and, therefore, to decontextualize its own cultural arguments. *The management of the dispossession of the colonized of their land rested with a set of disciplinary technologies of which maps, numbers, and law were perhaps the most important*. All these disciplinary technologies were necessary, but law provided a far more comprehensive framework than did the others for recalibrating land and life on the colonizers' terms and without reference to indigenous antecedents. *All these powers facilitated the emergence of a new, immigrant human geography, which became native peoples' most pervasive confinement*.

It follows that no one body of theory offers a sufficient interpretation of colonial power. Fanon was right about physical violence. It did underlie the whole colonial enterprise. In so doing, it created the opportunity for other forms of colonial power to come into play. Marx was right about the capacity of capital to detach people from land and right too about the landed opportunity that settler colonies offered ordinary people. Combine capital's interest in uncluttered access to land and settlers' interest in land as livelihood, and the principal momentum of settler colonialism comes into focus. The colonial discourse literature has impressively clarified the implicit and explicit assumptions that, in the minds of imperialists and colonists, validated the colonial enterprise. Foucault's analysis of the decentered disciplinary technologies associated with modern life is enormously suggestive in colonial settings. It leads to the analysis of the many technologies of power (four of which I have discussed here) that were associated less with the introduction of colonialism than with its ongoing operation.

There is one more point to make. Although native people were not able to contain this juggernaut of powers and stop the dispossession and repossession of their land, they did what they could to slow it down or to mitigate its effects. At times, as pointed out above, they considered war, while knowing that, in the long run, they could not win. Over and over again, they told officials that they and their progeny would not be able to live on the patches of land reserved for them, and pleaded, often eloquently, for more land. One chief said that he would try kindness (which availed him nothing). Like oppressed people everywhere, they engaged in a virtually constant micropolitics of resistance: moving fences, not cooperating with census enumerators, sometimes disrupting survey parties. There was a stream of letters and petitions, often written

with missionary assistance, to officials in Victoria, Ottawa, and London, and meetings with cabinet ministers, prime ministers, and even, on one occasion, the king. Early in the 20th century, they began to create intertribal native rights organizations (Tennant 1990) and, with the help of sympathetic nonnative lawyers, to use the colonizers' law as a site of resistance. A legal case, elaborated in 1908 in a Cowichan petition intended for the judicial committee of the Privy Council in London and in a Nisga'a petition to the same body a few years later, argued that native people had never relinquished their title to the land, which therefore was still legally theirs (Foster 1995). By this time, some native leaders had emerged who spoke English fluently, understood a good deal about the complex of colonial power, and sought ways of bending it to their advantage. Native people were not passive victims.

Nor was their resistance without effect. Reserve commissioners listened to Native requests, and, if the land were not already taken by settlers, would allocate small reserves at some of the sites requested. A superintendent general of Indian affairs in Ottawa reestablished a reserve commission because a chief urged him to do so (Harris 2002, 133–34). A few politicians (particularly in Ottawa) and a small but growing number of settlers became convinced that native people had been poorly used and that, in justice, they deserved some redress. However, the legal challenge anticipated by the Cowichan and Nisga'a petitions had scared federal and provincial officials, and in 1927 an amendment to the Indian Act barred native people from raising funds for land claims, effectively isolating them from legal counsel and undermining their principal intertribal organization, the Allied Tribes. It disbanded in 1928. In the longer run, the colonizers' law has proved a durable site of native resistance, as it has in other colonized jurisdictions (Comaroff 2001, 306-07). A version of the case laid out in the Cowichan and Nisga'a petitions reached the courts in the 1970s (Calder) and again in the 1990s (Delgamuukw), and, eventually, the Supreme Court of Canada established that native title had not been extinguished and laid out the terms by which it may be identified. Native title is still before the courts.

But native agency in British Columbia has been exercised within the profound asymmetries of settler colonialism, a colonialism with relentless momentum and a comprehensive package of powers. For all their efforts, it dispossessed native people quickly of almost all their land and established other peoples in their ancestral territories. It is important to identify the powers in the settler colonial arsenal, map their positions, and sort out some of their linkages—which, in a preliminary way, I have tried to do here. The impact of these powers on those on the receiving end of them is another story, one of making do in and around the compartments created by colonialism. That story needs be told at least as much as the one I have sketched. In that telling, it will be important to remember that native people neither succumbed to colonialism's "fatal impact" nor interacted with newcomers on a basis of equivalency, but coped as they could when confronted, as they were at virtually every turn, with one or more of the array of powers embedded in settler colonialism. From a native perspective, something like a desiring machine constructed of many parts had taken away their land.

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