

SETTLER COLONIALISM AND MAINSTREAM ECONOMICS

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Foreword

Both my maternal and paternal grandparents left Portugal in the mid-1960s. The move was motivated by politics and economics. From 1933 to 1974, Portugal was under a dictatorial regime—the Estado Novo. Thoughts and movements were constantly surveyed by the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE)—the secret police. The country was imperial, fascist and corporatist. My grandparents had the opportunity to leave—had the vision to change their (and my) conditions, and they took it . . . unknowingly continuing the (Settler colonial) occupation of Kanien'kehá:ka territory. For that reason, it is difficult to understand myself as a child of immigrants, and not as a child of Settlers. Are we immigrants of the Kanien'kehá:ka nation, of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, or are we immigrants of the Canadian (Settler) state? I have thus come to understand Canada as an immigrant nation that unjustifiably and persistently behaves in a Settler colonial manner—a dispossession and replacement project that has not ended. Of course, I am here, alive, due to the great sacrifice of my grandparents following better economic opportunities. Yet, these opportunities exist through centuries of genocide and slavery, on Turtle Island.

My plan of study was to better understand colonialism and economics in Canada. I am curious as to whether mainstream economics can be decolonized. At the beginning of my studies, I saw both economics and colonialism as two very simple and separate systems. I started reading more about the critiques of mainstream economics' ontology and epistemology, revealing many hidden secrets about my economic thinking. After reading many books and articles about colonialism in Canada, my critical mind moved away from liberal authors. Settler colonial studies and critical Indigenous studies lit the darkness of the Indian Act, the Indian Residential School system, the politics of recognition, of

neoliberalism and of capitalism; lit the darkness of Canada's history. Feminist economics made me understand how blended gender-bias/sexism is in the mainstream discipline. After reading the work written by revolutionary Feminist Indigenous scholars, I took my Major Paper in a completely different direction. Rather than decolonizing the discipline, literally too large of a graduate venture, I geared my critical analysis towards the ontological and epistemological foundations of mainstream economics.

Of course there was literature on decolonization research methodologies on my desk, but—at the time—I was never completely drawn to it. I was absolutely terrified of using Indigenous theories, especially since as a Settler I could use the knowledge inappropriately.

When I approached the second year of my graduate studies, I decided to focus on my original thesis, a Settler colonial critique of mainstream economics. This Major Paper was an immense opportunity to gather evidence of the heavy colonial patterns within Canadian mainstream economics. A disturbing aspect of the discipline, considering how prior beliefs greatly informs economics epistemology. In other words, I demonstrate that the production of (mainstream) economics knowledge is immensely informed by colonial beliefs, set by a capitalist, sexist, racist and colonial ontology.

Abstract

The general purpose of this research is to ask how mainstream economics understands the nature of being (ontology) and how the discipline produces knowledge (epistemology). In this Major Paper, I critically study the Settler colonial patterns embedded in Canadian mainstream economics, and economics in general. First of all, I perform a content analysis of several Canadian economics textbooks with a specific look at three critical terms: land, wealth and economics. For the surveyed textbooks, the latter terms are absolutely detached, erasing Indigenous thought and bodies from economics education. I understand the disconnection as a biased and constructed narrative, as theoretically depicted by critical Indigenous studies and Settler colonial studies. All in all, the ontological basis of Canadian economics education reproduces the systematic violence of Settler colonialism: dispossession and replacement. Second of all, I investigate early and modern versions of the Staples thesis to outline the Settler colonial discourse at the center of Canadian economics history. For instance, Staples theorists do not critically connect the colonial foundations that enabled the commercial development of staples industries since the 17th century. Indeed, some Marxist and political science scholars argue that the study of staples industries in Canada requires a better focus on the socio-political context embedding economic relationships pertaining to a staples commodity. Finally, with a clearer picture of Canadian mainstream economics' ontology, I investigate how the discipline (in general) produces knowledge. Indeed, as the mainstream method for economists, mathematical-deduction reproduces knowledge that follows prior beliefs. If colonialism is erased from the memory, the ontology, of economists then it is a very narrowed history that economists rely on. Ultimately, I argue that economics is not

innocent in its study economic relationships—all economic relationships (e.g. trading, gifts, energy, love and such). To conclude, I dare experiment with an accounting methodology using a revised Staples thesis and ecological footprint analysis, with a focus on petrochemical economic relationships within itself, the people and the land.

*By centering Settler economic relationships, the study' rationally' paves over
Indigenous territories, bodies, politics and economics*

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I am surrounded by spectacular folks, without which this paper would never have been thought of. Not all shall be named, but they are all loved!

Professor Ellie Perkins, my supervisor, you encouraged me to engage and pursue my passion. You gave me carte blanche to continue the feminist investigation of mainstream economics. The journey was long and confusing, but your absolute trust in me generated enough courage for me to engage the hard questions. Thank you!

My two beautiful and generous parents never questioned my motivations for graduate studies. Yet, they probably had different plans! Yet, they always trusted my feelings and constantly took care of me. The reason I have been in school for almost twenty years is without question their best of faults. I wrote this Major Paper while 530 kilometers away from the family, but absolutely knew that their love and support surrounded me.

I met a very special person in the first half of my undergraduate studies at Concordia University. She is the most important person in my world. We have grown so much together, although we were apart in the first two years of our relationship. Partly as a daily act of love, she constantly encourages me to be critical of the way I see and encounter the world. Thank you for sharing your life with me. I love you Shawna Moore!

Dedicado à minha família

Coelho e D'Arruda

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Introduction: Economic Thought and Colonialism

There is a serious issue within mainstream economics pedagogy. It does not reflect reality. American studies have demonstrated that the overall pedagogy of economics does not match what economists do (Colander, 2005), and lacks plurality in its curriculum (Reardon, 2009), and that it still relies on historical specificity (Schiffman, 2004). The economics pedagogy seems to be temporally stuck, making it an irrelevant study for contemporary political contexts. Moreover, mainstream economics has strayed far away from the evolution of knowledge in other sciences. The popular ‘Open Letter’¹ (Autisme-Économie, 2010) from French university students demonstrated the general frustrations of young economists with regards to economics education. They briefly elaborate three points of discontentment: (1) lack of empirical work, (2) uncontrolled usage of mathematics, and finally (3) pedagogical dogmatism (Autisme-Économie, 2010).

Economics students with revolutionary ambitions can feel very discouraged by the content taught in the classrooms. While many students want “to end global poverty, to solve the food crisis” and “to overcome [climate change]” (Reardon, 2009, p. 4), the economics curriculum trains us to reproduce the current economic system (i.e. derivatives of capitalism) and generate fixes instead of impactful transformations. As the world changes, so should our education, so should the diversity and relevance in the economics pedagogy.

I have experienced similar frustrations as an economics student, particularly the discipline’s lack of memory. As such, I was trained to become a mathematical economist, an education conveniently devoid of any reference to Canada’s economic history.

¹ English translation of ‘Lettre Ouverte’.

Therefore, this research project is my opportunity to restart my education—to start from scratch, to unlearn and thus critically learn. This time, for a stronger understanding of Canadian economics, I debunk theoretical and historical foundations professed in economics that erase the initial conditions of wealth accumulation in Canada. Specifically, this research draws on settler colonial theory to reveal patterns of dispossession and oppression towards Indigenous peoples as inscribed within the ontology and epistemology of mainstream economics.

There is a very relevant and crucial economic aspect in Canada's economy that is often misconstrued, even forgotten, in economics pedagogy. Settler colonial theory can help students learn about the very beginning of the Canadian economy and its persistent need for more land, and to commodify nature. However, that perspective is entirely left out in economics. In fact, mainstream economics textbooks do not discuss about the wealth stolen from Indigenous nations (Green T. , 2012).

Settler Colonialism in Canada, and Economics

Across America, there were “free, vibrant, sovereign indigenous nations with complex forms of social and political organization and territorial jurisdiction” (Tully, 2001, p. 38). These 3,000-30,000 year-old societies of about 70-100 million inhabitants (prior to 1492) were much older and more populous than societies in Europe. From the arrival (invasion) of Europeans to the subsequent increasing immigration of the early twentieth century, about 90% of the Indigenous population was reduced, due to European diseases, wars, the destruction of “existing traditional forms of government”, and the “appropriation of the land, resources, and jurisdiction of the indigenous peoples” by the dominant society

(Tully, 2001, pp. 38-39). As the political scientist James Tully (2001, p. 39) argues, these processes not only served the interests of settlement and capitalist exploitation, but also “the territorial foundation of the dominant society itself.” It is the latter characteristic of physical occupation and the perpetual development of Settler institutions over Indigenous territories that are generally notable.

There are several systemic structures underlying Settler colonialism. These involve genocide, assimilation, territoriality, modernity, questions about land, and others (Wolfe, 2006). Theoretically, there are two general forms of colonialism: internal and external. Of course, these do not act independently from each other or from the political context. Internal colonialism is different from external colonialism since the latter depicts an (external) Imperial society that is geographically and territorially detached from the colonies. In order to consistently refer to Settler strategies and instruments performing its interests and visions, I will be using the term Settler colonialism rather than internal colonization. Indeed, Settler colonialism closely mirrors internal colonization. For Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014), Settler colonialism structurally seeks to eliminate Indigenous peoples and their relationships with the land, in order to install and develop a European settler regime. As such, a Settler country, much like Canada, enforces its statehood and sovereignty over unceded and contested Indigenous territories. For this research, the definition that I will be referring to is relatable to Canada.

Canada is a Settler colonial State. My understanding for this label is that the country’s politics and economics are embedded within its (uneven) colonial relationships with Indigenous nations and the land. As a Settler state, Canada perpetually advances legal, political and economic systems that usurp Indigenous peoples from their lands and envision

their complete disappearance (Barker & Lowman, 2015). While the colonial means have become less “overtly coercive” (Coulthard, 2014), the colonial ends have not changed. All in all, the objective of the Canadian Settler state, as Coulthard (2014, p. 125) argues, is to continuously gain as much access as possible to the territories of Indigenous people “for the purposes of state formation, settlement, and capitalist development”. Settler colonialism never sleeps. It is “territorially acquisitive in perpetuity” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 152) to pursue the “dissolution of native societies” and erect “a new colonial society on the expropriated land base” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Nonetheless, it is not a completed project due to Indigenous survival, resistance, resurgence, and refusal to surrender their territories (Simpson L. , 2011; Simpson A. , 2011; Veracini, 2014; Tully, 2001). In other words, the Settler colonial structural effort is also informed by (what I call) the ‘sovereignty-insecurity’ of the Canadian state, with the Indigenous physical and ghostly presence resisting and haunting Settler claims to the land (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Ree & Tuck, 2013).

There is a Settler colonial structure and culture at the core of contemporary Canadian society and identity (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Coulthard, 2014). The aspects constituting the capitalist nature of the Canadian state also inform its Settler colonial reality. However, Settler colonialism is not dependent upon capitalism, or any other economic systems. Instead, we need to view the State and capitalism as methods for enabling and managing colonial projects (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Furthermore,

Critiques of capitalism and socialism have identified that both systems require the elimination of Indigenous connections to land. Whether to achieve profit or rational efficiency, capitalism and socialism are concerned with achieving control over territory (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 76)

For this research, I focus on Settler colonial ontology and epistemology. Respectively, these philosophies of knowledge refer to origin stories and knowledge production that completely ignore complex Indigenous relations to land, and center exploitative Settler relations to land—e.g. private property, land improvement. These will inform my analysis of Canadian mainstream economics textbooks (Chapter I) and the Staples thesis (Chapter II)—a catalyst for the study of Canadian economic history. In the same frame of reference, Settler colonial epistemology produces knowledge that legitimizes land dispossession for the sole benefit of Settler interests.

In general, my methodology follows the colonial discourse theory which, as Harris (2004, p. 165) defines, “identif[ies] 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.” In other words, I perform a content and discourse analysis of Canadian economics textbooks, the Staples Theory and mainstream economics methodologies, through a critical and focused Settler colonial theory lens.

Following a literature review of mainstream economics epistemology, I compare this literature with research on settler colonial epistemologies (Chapter III). Thereon, my conclusion sets out an early experimentation towards an economics methodology informed by Settler colonial theory. Briefly, I draft an accounting methodology that accounts for land dispossession from land-intensive industries—using a methodology based in ecological

footprint analysis, environmental-extended input-output analysis, and by slightly reforming the Staples thesis.

It goes without saying that this research requires an introductory historical analysis of economics. The following section therefore situates my research thesis within the present political context. Moreover, it also delves into the alternative economics frameworks that shaped the content and critique formed in this research paper.

Neoclassical Economics: From Keynes to Friedman

During the post-WWII era and until the 1970s, most major world economies practised the Keynesian economic framework—i.e. to reduce unemployment, the government invests heavily in the economy; to slow down inflation, the government enforces economic measures that take money away from the economy. Starting in the 1970s, the stagflation crisis (i.e. combination of high price-index inflation and high unemployment) opened the political space for neoliberalism (Srnicek & Williams, 2015). In short, neoliberal supporters seek to fully optimize market mechanisms through monetarism² intervention, anti labour-union policies, and the expansion of private property rights—at the expense of publicly owned institutions. In other words, they profess the liberalization of the market economy, through the protective and discretionary guise of respective State governments, international monetary and trade institutions (e.g. the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization), and

² Within this paper, both ‘monetarism’ and ‘Friedman’ are regarded as early specimens of the economics of neoliberalism.

international trade agreements (e.g. the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership).

Political science professor Jonathan Swartz (2013) assessed the transition of political economies from Keynesian to neoliberal orders, through a constructivist lens. The author's investigation follows the concept of the 'social imaginary', as "the social world cannot be understood solely as a series of rationalist responses to a variety of a priori, inherent human needs" (2013, p. 11). Likewise, the particular constructivist perspective of Swartz (2013, p. 11) understands that the ends of the state and the economy are guided and constrained by the ideas formed within a political-economic imagination, which "acts as a powerful conceptual lens". Accordingly, the neoliberal movement developed and promoted their ideas through multiple media and political platforms. Ever since the 1920s-30s, several famous intellectuals and think tanks—namely Friedrich Hayek, the Mount Pellerin Society, and the Chicago School—were already brewing the neoliberal thought before the occurrence of stagflation (Srnicsek & Williams, 2015). Srnicsek and Williams (2015) argue that capitalists and elites had to be convinced that neoliberalism was in their best interests. Additionally, due to its ideological flexibility, neoliberalism easily conformed itself within various movements around the world (Srnicsek & Williams, 2015). To this day, the neoliberal economics paradigm continues to surge even through crises, such as the recent 2008 banking crisis, which rippled through the global financial sector (Peck, 2013). Yet, the paradigm is not without contradictions. The Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz (2010, p. 145) points to an inconsistency of neoliberal economics, "The belief that markets can take care of themselves and therefore government should not intrude has resulted in the largest intervention in the market by government in history". In fact, the U.S. government 2008

bailout of its sinking banking system³ was defended by the ‘Too Big to Fail’ rhetoric (Collins, 2015). Canada also provided a bailout package to its private banking institutions after the 2008 financial crisis⁴.

Much of today’s Euro-American economics originates from 18th century physiocrats (Quesnay and Turgot) and from classical economists (Smith and Ricardo). For the Physiocratic School, wealth was derived from agricultural land. On the other hand, the subsequent classical economists understood wealth as generated by trade. Later on, starting with Walrasian economics⁵ (New World Encyclopedia), neoclassical economists transformed the discipline with the development of (theoretical and empirical) mathematical modelling to analyse economic activities. We will focus on the latter tradition of the economics discipline.

As two general bodies of neoclassical political economic theories⁶, Keynesianism and Monetarism represent two important (Dostaler, 1998), although not the only, theoretical capitalist formations—respectively, a welfare state and a (purportedly) non-interventionist state. Yet, Milton Friedman, the originator of monetarism (or as he prefers to call, ‘quantitative theory of money’), considers his theories as a revolutionary maturation of Keynes’ work (Keynesianism).

Friedman distinguishes Keynes from his Keynesian disciples and that, despite the gap between his own views and those of Keynes, he often argues that Keynes is

³ A bailout of \$16.8 trillion was promised by the U.S. government to the failing banks (Collins, 2015).

⁴ The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives alleges that the Canadian government supported its biggest banks with a ‘secret bailout’ of \$114 billion (Henderson P. , 2012). On the other hand, the finance minister at the time, Jim Flaherty assured that it was not a ‘bailout’, but simply ‘liquidity support’ for the struggling Canadian banking system (Henderson P. , 2012).

⁵ Walrasian economics derives from the works of the French 19th century economist Léon Walras.

⁶ In fact, a “gulf exists between Joan Robinson’s Keynesianism and that of Samuelson and there are important differences between the [monetarist] analyses of Friedman, Culbertson, Brunner and Meltzer” (Dostaler, 1998, p. 317).

closer to him than is generally believed. We even find Friedman putting Keynes in his own camp, as against the Walrasian orthodoxy that raised to domination in the post World War era. It is as though Friedman tries to show that Keynes derives erroneous policy conclusions from a fundamentally sound theory that is grounded in a correct Marshallian methodology. Even in the realm of policy proposals, we will see Friedman putting his Chicago teachers in the same camp as Keynes versus Keynes's London School of Economics critics (Dostaler, 1998, p. 320).

A major implication of Walrasian economics is that markets are constantly equilibrating quantity and demand excesses/shortages, assuming prices and wages are flexible. For instance, the Walras general equilibrium theory states, “if there is excess supply (negative excess demand) in one market, then there must, corresponding to this, be positive excess demand in at least one other market” (New World Encyclopedia). On the other hand, Keynes posited that involuntary unemployment is equilibrium within a (free) market economy. While Keynes thought that Walras’ theory was not applicable to unemployment, Walrasian economists believe that all markets (including the labor market) are either in equilibrium, or in disequilibrium—a market cannot be in both states at the same time. Therefore, Walrasian economic modelling considers unemployment as an observable characteristic of a market in disequilibrium, “prone to return to full employment” (Laidler, 2015, p. 3) with perfect market conditions.

The Walrasian orthodoxy was succeeded by the economics of Keynes, which was then led by Monetarism. In fact, both Friedman and Keynes had respective issues with the Walrasian approach, preferring the Marshallian (as in Alfred Marshall’s work) alternative and its attention to empirical content (Dostaler, 1998). Monetarism emphasised the function of money with regards to macroeconomic behaviour, as opposed to the Keynesian focus on the function of consumption/demand (Laidler, 2015). With the ‘stagflation’ era of

the 1970s, early monetary institutions attempted to restrain inflation of prices and wages, paying no attention to unemployment rates. Consequently, the latter produced new financial incentives and a political movement towards deregulation (Laidler, 2015). Additionally, monetarism greatly informed the neoliberal economic policies of Nixon, Regan and Thatcher in the 1980s. Still, “it is dangerous to say of any policy that it originates in a given theory. Often, the theory is elaborated *a posteriori* to justify a political position” (Dostaler, 1998, p. 319). Yet, Friedman was a supporter of Hayek, as well as a member of the neoliberal Mount Pellerin Society (Dostaler, 1998), which advocated for stronger and more liberalized markets, and opposed government intervention in the economy.

In the 1950s, a third revolution in economics contested the assumed relationship between inflation and unemployment. Rational-expectations neoclassical (RENC) economics contended that expectations of economic agents inform economic variables—“that forward looking maximising agents would form the expectations upon which their choices depended by applying to the problem an understanding, based on economic theory, of how the relevant variables would indeed behave” (Laidler, 2015, p. 9). This relatively new form of neoclassical economics worked within a very similar paradigm to monetarism (Laidler, 2015). As a matter of fact, RENC economics radically transformed the theory of quantity⁷ with the development of a new economic model. It was based on the behavior of economic agents faced with fluctuating prices, commonly modelled by supply and demand curves. In other words, it is the economic relationships between agents (i.e. trade) that fluctuate market prices, with the agents’ rational expectation ensuring optimal and rational

⁷ A monetarist theory; economic agents respond to increases and decreases in the quantity of money within the market. In terms of State financial policy-making, a country’s central bank can thus manage the inflation between minimum and maximum rates.

inflation of prices and wages. In that manner, RENC de-emphasized the focus on monetary system relation to inflation, and interpreted the rational expectations of fully-informed individual economic agents (i.e. consumers and producers) as the drivers and clearers of (free) markets—*ceteris paribus* and without State intervention. Interestingly enough, Milton Friedman eventually opted for the new theory (Laidler, 2015), clearly following his earlier faith that “economic freedom is [...] an indispensable means toward the achievement of political freedom” (Friedman, 1962, p.8 as quoted in Dostaler, 1998). Likewise, Friedman’s latter political view was a slight transition from Keynes’ understanding that economic freedom cannot replace social justice, since (economic) inequality is an equilibrium in a free market (Dostaler, 1998). The three aforementioned neoclassical forms exhibit different assessments of the market. Still, they display similar, yet respective, motivations and curiosities supporting the general nature of capitalism.

Starting in the 1970s-80s, and until recently, neoclassical dominance (i.e. Keynesian and Monetarist) in the economics discipline began to be questioned, with mainstream pluralism rising within the ranks of doctoral research programmes. In general, the latter departure from neoclassical economics was marked by several innovations, such as game theory, psychology/experiments, and non-linear complexity (Davis, 2006). Additionally, in the same era, certain economists started integrating perspectives from other sciences (Davis, 2006). Therefore, as the economics discipline turns its attention away from the neoclassical paradigm, contemporary heterodox frameworks of economic analysis begin to influence the transition.

What other sub-disciplines are available to assess economic systems? There are at least four other alternative (heterodox) economics frameworks, such as ecological, Marxist, feminist, and anti-racist economics. The first three frameworks currently have a well-developed academic presence—considering the peer-reviewed journals that cover those topics. On the other hand, economists do not delve into the axis of racism. The lack of the axis' presence in the discipline discounts and delegitimizes the reality (and impacts) of racism in economics. There are many other axes of oppression (not discussed here) that should as well be presented to economics students.

Heterodox Economics: Ecological and Anti-Oppression Economics

The economics discipline needs to be grounded in an updated vision of reality. Otherwise, its students and practitioners will not be prepared to critically contribute to a world connected by local and global structures and events. There are at least two alternative visions of economics. First of all, ecological economics, discussed in the next section below, presents itself as the most reasoned alternative to neoclassical⁸ economics. The following section describes a variety of anti-oppression economics, which deal with classism, sexism, and racism. These are seen as alternative and heterodox pedagogies. I believe that the economics discipline requires awareness of these analytical frameworks to better address the unequal and discriminatory conditions present in society; the intersectional webs of disequilibrium that form our (free) market society.

⁸ Usually, the adjective “neoclassical” and “neoliberal” are both very similar, since they both prioritize market mechanisms in our societies. However, the former adjective is much more appropriate to the history of economics, as it builds from the legacy of the classical economist Adam Smith.

Ecological Economics

As per its title, ecological economics mainly covers the topic of the environment. Despite the focus, the diversity of its content is comparable to neoclassical economics. Actually, the literature of ecological economics encompasses “much of contemporary neoclassical economics and heterodox schools of thought, including behavioural economics, evolutionary economics, institutional economics, post- Keynesian economics, radical economics and social economics” (Erickson & Gowdy, 2005, p. 208). The ecological economics movement started around the 1970s with Georgescu-Roegen and his inclusion of thermodynamic constraints into the discipline, going against the neoclassical assumption of unlimited economic growth (Nayak & Sahu, 1994). His curiosity and determination inspired economics students to understand the limits of market economies. Many agree that ecological economics is defined by its basic understanding that the economy is a subsystem operating within an even larger biophysical system that “contains and sustains it” (Costanza, Perrings, & Cleveland, 1997 as cited by Malghan, 2014, p.2261). Thereon, the discipline focused on what ecological economists advance as three important pillars: scale, allocation and distribution, within certain efficiency parameters (Malghan, 2014).

With regards to the concept of wealth, Tom Green (2012) argues that mainstream economics textbooks do not discuss about how wealth is accumulated. For Green (2013, p. 200) wealth accumulation occurs through the “liquidation of natural resources”, or through the dispossession of lands from Indigenous peoples. As discussed later, the textbooks instead focus on the theory of choice, and of preference, since the distribution of wealth “is assumed as given” (Green T. , 2012, p. 200). I expected the top ecological economics

textbook written by the ecological economists Herman Daly⁹ and Joshua Farley (2011) to provide a segment as to how wealth is accumulated. The answer can be found through the definition of economics provided by the ecological economics textbook:

Economics is the study of allocation of limited, or scarce, resources among alternative competing ends (Daly et al., 2011, p.3).

Although the footnote to this definition is critical of the idea of scarcity, Daly and Farley (2011) seem to stay within the general neoclassical definition of economics. However, the difference of the term ‘allocation’ between neoclassical and ecological economics is a defining feature of ecological economics. While the market is the only mechanism for allocation in neoclassical economics, ecological economics recognizes the market as one of many other mechanisms for allocation. Although the latter definition of economics is clearly critical of neoclassical economics, the ecological economics textbook’s definition does not critically question how resources are accumulated. For instance, in the *From Hunter-Gatherer to Industrialist* paragraph of the textbook, the authors mentions that wealth accumulation was “impractical and absent for most of human existence” and that it led to surplus production, which allowed for a “greater division of labour and specialization” (Daly & Farley, 2011, p. 9). In other words, wealth accumulation (and private property) engendered our present capitalist society.

If we return to Tom Green’s brief explanation of wealth accumulation, the ecological economics textbook is still a relatively appropriate textbook depicting the impacts of the liquidation of natural resources. In other words, it goes beyond the question of allocation, by depicting how the economy affects planet Earth and by proposing different

⁹ Herman Daly is an ecological economist, also considered as the disciple of Georgescu-Roegen.

theories and methodologies (e.g. ecological footprint) to study the environment-economy relationship.

Finally, while ecological economics does present an alternative analysis of the consequences of wealth accumulation on the environment, Canadian (ecological) economics students would still not fully understand the implications of wealth accumulation in Canada. The second component of Tom Green's aforementioned wealth accumulation definition—i.e. the dispossession of lands from Indigenous people—is extremely necessary to consider in Canada. In the following chapters, I argue that axes of oppression, such as Settler colonialism, cannot be absent in the study of economics and should be a crucial basis for economics education.

Anti-Oppression Economics: Three Axes

Another interesting economics perspective connects Marxism, feminism and antiracism theory. This analysis is seemingly much more radical, and therefore much less accepted by institutional decision-makers. While Marxist and feminist economics are common heterodoxies and have peer-reviewed academic journals (e.g. *Rethinking Marxism, Historical Materialism, Feminist Economics*, and others), anti-racist economics is a much less discussed topic. In fact, by experience, I reckon that neoclassical economists agree that the topic of 'race' does not fit within the general economics curriculum. In the late 1990s, Julie Matthaei (1996) drafted an outlined vision of how an anti-oppression theoretical framework for economists could look. Although there are many axes of oppression in economics, Matthaei's focus is on guiding anti-classist (i.e. Marxism), feminist and anti-racist theories into a common theme for economic analysis. The objective

of the author was to inspire “theoretical merging of Marxism, feminism and anti-racism” for “a more inclusive, and more liberatory, understanding of our economy” (Matthaei, 1996, p. 36)—i.e. an intersectional analysis of economics. This clearly follows the rationale that we need to analyse the oppressive features of wealth accumulation in our economies, in order to solve the great social and environmental crises of our times. Moreover, the aforementioned three axes can lead to a better understanding of wealth accumulation, and plural and progressive economics pedagogy centered on the reality of the Canadian settler state.

Marxist Economics

For Karl Marx, the origin of capitalism was through primitive accumulation. In other words, the capitalist economy was born through the historical transformation of the means of production, which divorced the immediate producer (the worker) from the product, to finally establish the wage labourer (Glassman, 2006). In his analysis, Marx saw this transformation as a “necessary step in the direction of fuller human development” (Glassman, 2006, p. 611), entailing that human history follows one path. In fact, Marx was an ‘evolutionary optimist’ (McLellan, 1992), since his work was influenced by Darwin’s theory of evolution (Marcy, 2009). It seems that the proletarian revolution becomes realizable after our civilization (although, mostly the people on the margins) suffered enough. Moreover, eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe perceived the world in progressive stages (also called conjectural history), but primarily used the ‘four-stages theory’ to explain temporal and geographical differences between nations (Blaney & Inayatullah, 2010; Stocking, 1997). The theory explains a consecutive four-stage

development from hunting, then pasturage, then agriculture, and finally ending in a commercial society (Stocking, 1997). Moreover, based on Stocking (1997) it was during the Scottish Enlightenment that Adam Smith and Baron Turgot (early classical economists) invented the latter stadial theory. In brief terms, the stadial theory of how society evolves, of how humans progress, is a feature of conjectural history developed during the Enlightenment period (Wolloch, 2011). It assumes a linear progression through four stages: from hunting, to shepherding, to agriculture, and “finally arriving at the most advanced stage, that of commercially-based civilization” (Wolloch, 2011, p. 253). In other words, human societies are at first primitive and then naturally transition into an industrial society, much like Europe. The theory informed “European colonial discourse on Aboriginal people supposedly demonstrating the ‘absence’ of Indigenous government, and a general lack of legislative capacity” (Buchan, 2005, pp. 15-16). It is still a very common basis in neoclassical economics pedagogy, as economics textbooks describe growth and development as drivers of progress, innovation, higher utility for individuals, and increased wealth for nations. Not only is the discourse of non-European civilizations labelled around the ‘primal/primitive stage’ concept within common neoclassical economics textbooks, but the ecological economics textbook of Daly and Farley (2011) also describes hunting and gathering societies as the first stage in human civilization. The theory of developmental stages is still used as the original basis for neoclassical, ecological and Marxist economics (see McDonough, 1999), undermining alternative and traditional ways of living, erasing non-European economic constructions from economics pedagogy.

The contemporary Marxist scholar David Harvey (2003) later transformed the ‘primitive accumulation’ concept into ‘accumulation by dispossession’, which better

reflects the past and present economic situation in America. The former refers to the earliest ignition of capitalism, explaining why some have wealth/capital and others only “their labor-power to sell” (Read, 2002, p. 26), subsequently bringing capitalism “into full maturity—that is, a stage of development in which the systematic exploitation of wage labor provided the main engine of capital accumulation” (Gibson T. A., 2010, p. 134). On the other hand, ‘accumulation by dispossession’ refers to the persistence of primitive accumulation. It occurs in many ways, is omnipresent and “picks up strongly when crises of overaccumulation occur in expanded reproduction” (Harvey, 2003, p. 76). In other words, when wealth accumulation is maximized (i.e. overaccumulation) within a particular space, capitalists are required to search for new spaces to invest, and thus exploit for wealth, until those spaces are maximized as well. For instance, biopiracy describes the practice of knowledge and resource appropriation from Indigenous peoples, for corporate profit (see Shiva, 1997). It also includes the enclosures of the commons, the commodification of nature, asset speculation (Harvey, 2003) and the privatization of public goods and services. Harvey’s term can be chronologically distinguished from Marx’s primitive accumulation. Karl Marx presents the ‘accumulation of capital’ as a discrete occurrence, which transforms itself into a series of expanded reproduction, mainly through the exploitation of labour (Harvey, 2003). On the other hand, Harvey (2003, p. 74) describes the continuous and persistent “predatory practices” of primitive accumulation. Following Harvey’s concept, Gibson (2010, p. 135) argues that the present forms of neoliberal political States act as agents of primitive accumulation, expropriating collective social resources, services and goods—“including untapped pools of land, labor, and energy”—for (free) market circulation.

Feminist Economics

The economics discipline is definitely a social construction. Just like many other sciences, it was constructed by a small group of individuals with certain privileges.

Consequently, as the feminist scholar Luce Irigaray argues, even the words and logic used in a discipline can be pre-conditioned by the dominant gender engaged in the development of that system of thought (Olkowski, 2000). Therefore, for whom was society constructed and for whom was it not? Feminist economics has challenged economics as an androcentric academic body by re-centering gendered inequities into economics analysis. By ignoring the importance of gender, the economics discipline “speaks essentially of men’s experiences” (Matthaei, 1996, p. 23). The feminist economist Mary Mellor (1997) argues that the construct of ‘economic man’ lies within the theories of classical and neoclassical economics. In short, ‘economic man’ is a theoretical abstraction that externalizes the biological functioning of humans and also marginalizes nature (Mellor, 1997). In other words, “the position of women and the natural world” are both treated “as external to male-dominated economic systems” (Mellor, 1997, p. 131). For example, the influential feminist economist and former New Zealand Member of Parliament, Marilyn Waring (1989) depicts the many implications of not calculating women’s unpaid work in the household and the greater community in the nation’s wealth (cited by Mellor, 1997). There is however the danger that “money payment for women’s work” would legitimize the patriarchal structures undermining and excluding women from society (Mellor, 1997, p. 132). On the other hand, the valuation of women’s work in economic terms would demonstrate how economics fails to acknowledge that “women’s work forms the majority of work in society” (Waring, 1989 & Pietilä, 1986 both cited in Mellor, 1997, p.133). The debate

certainly continues, but demonstrates the lack of gender, sex, and nature recognition in economics.

In addition, we cannot forget the immense historical (and present) wealth accumulated by industrial nations on the back of women of colour and Indigenous women. More than one million Indigenous women in South and Central America were sterilized in the 1960s and 1970s, by the U.S. state-funded Agency for International Development (Hill G. , 2009). Around the same decade, about 800,000 Indigenous women across the U.S. also faced State measures of sterilization (Hill G. , 2009); 40-42% of childbearing age Indigenous women in the U.S. were sterilized by the Indian Health Service (Simoni & Walters, 2002; Hill G. , 2009). In sum, the reproductive rights of women of colour and Indigenous women were attacked by the State in order to reduce their organizational (and revolutionary) power, and because they “have no place in the schemes of capital” (Hill G. , 2009, p. 55).

Canada also participated in the destruction of Indigenous lives through the “cultural genocide” of residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) and during the 1960s where the Canadian State took custody of around 20,000 children from Indigenous mothers (Philip, 2002; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Leanne Simpson describes this as “gender[ed] colonial violence” [...], “a primary tool and strategy on the part of the states to attack and remove our bodies from our homelands” (Ahmad, 2015, p. 14). Moreover, between 1980 and 2012, more than 1,000 Indigenous women and girls were murdered in Canada—Indigenous women are four times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women in Canada—and more than 160 Aboriginal females were missing (Amnesty International, 2014; Royal Canadian Mounted

Police, 2013). Economists cannot reject the fact that wealth accumulation occurs at the intersections of such acts of violence—by removing Indigenous bodies from their territories, and thrusting the ‘empty’ land into market circulation. This is not of the past. It is a continuous oppressive structure, which started about 500 years ago, but recently disguises itself through the ‘positive’ objectives of development and growth.

Anti-Racist Economics

To understand the history of America is to acknowledge that the “life of European settlers – and the class structure of their society – [...] was dependent upon a foundation of conquest, genocide, and enslavement” (Sakai, 1989, Chap. 2).

All economists should be required to understand how the slave trade in the Americas explains the accumulation, production and distribution of wealth to this day. Although the economics literature on slavery is plentiful, it mostly centers its analysis on efficiency, profitability and other market mechanisms—unsurprising topics for neoclassical economics. For instance, Findlay (1990) produced a basic model that allegedly explains the 18th century U.S. slave trade economy. Also, the economists Engerman and Fogel (1974) argued in *Time on the Cross* that slavery was profitable for the Southern U.S. and that it was economically beneficial for African Americans¹⁰ (Haskell, 1975). Finally, Starobin (1970) analysed the national political structure of the Southern U.S. The author argues that the private sector was not the only domain profiting from slavery. State and federal agencies were also heavily dependent upon slavery, with the production and

¹⁰ Let us be clear that the thesis produced by Engerman and Fogel (1974) was flawed (Haskell, 1975) and obviously an absurd fabrication from econometric and rational economic analysis (Kolchin, 1992), especially considering that about 15 million Afrikan people were forcefully relocated to the Americas to work (as slaves) in the mines, textile mills, factories, and plantations (Hill G. , 2009).

manning of early government infrastructures (Starobin, 1970). However, Starobin's (1970) conclusion that slavery would still have persisted, if it were not for the U.S. Civil War of 1860, was still premised on principles of profit and efficiency. Additionally, other prominent economists wrote about slavery and economics (Sowell, 1975), race and economics (Arrow, 1998; Becker, 1971), and the inclusion of race into economics pedagogy (Bartlett, 1997).

To this day, Indigenous peoples and People of Colour are disproportionately represented in prisons and in terms of unemployment. For instance, the incarceration rate for Aboriginal peoples in Canada is ten times higher than the national rate and their unemployment rate is about twice as high as the national rate (Gilmore, 2015). In the case of black males, while they represent 1.25% of Canada's population, they make up 9.2% of the federally incarcerated population in Canada (Brown, 2007 cited in Warde, 2012). Unsurprisingly, Maclean's magazine (Gilmore, 2015, para. 2) recently reported that Canada has a "far worse race problem than the United States". By removing and displacing the bodies of Indigenous peoples and People of Colour from the land, white settlers can efficiently take advantage of what critical race theory calls racial privilege (Warde, 2012). The latter describes the advantage of white people having better access to the important resources in society, "by virtue of being a member of the dominate (sic.) group" (Warde, 2012, p. 463). Furthermore, Maroto (2015) posits "racial privilege" as a strong determinant for wealth accumulation.

Based on Maroto's (2015) analysis of the National Longitudinal Study of Youth data (1985-2008), there is a significant negative link between incarceration and wealth. The latter research demonstrated that incarceration reduces the probability of home ownership

in the U.S. (Maroto, 2015). Having a home is an important feature for anyone as it is the first step to “access better neighbourhoods and school systems, increase social networks”, and own various social status goods (Keister, 2000 & Spilerman, 2000, cited in Maroto, 2014, p.211). The high rate of incarceration limits the wealth accumulation of People of Colour and Indigenous peoples. Additionally, Shapiro (2004) found that home ownership is the highest source of inequality in the U.S., mostly affecting African American families. Racism is a structural economic issue that cannot be dismissed by economists as solely an external issue.

In this quick survey of anti-racist economics, we cannot forget the immense contributions of migrant workers, refugees and undocumented persons to the Canadian economy, and how wealth production in Canada is heavily dependent on their political and expendable non-citizen/permanent resident status.

Finally, Canadian economists need to understand how economics intersects with persistent racism. In his *Racist Economics* chapter, Justin Podur (2002) writes that most of the impacts of racism are transmitted through the economic system. In the case of Canada, economists also need to acknowledge in their historical analyses that Canada’s sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and land is based on racism (Coulthard, 2014). Consequently, while feminist economists are critical of the ‘economic man’ trope, anti-racist and intersectional feminist (or anti-oppression) economists are preoccupied by the economics axioms developed around the ‘economic white settler man’.

As discussed in the next chapter, Canadian mainstream economics textbook authors do not admit that wealth in the Americas was determined by the enslavement and

dispossession of Indigenous peoples and black peoples. In the following chapters, I continue the discussion about anti-oppression economics with a focus on the Settler colonial patterns in mainstream Canadian economics. Likewise, the Staples Thesis (an influential Canadian contribution to economics) also erases Settler colonialism from its staples-focused economic history of Canada. With such a blind ontology, the mainstream epistemology (i.e. knowledge production) of economics must therefore be examined as a suspected instrument that reproduces Settler colonial interests—through research and policy production—across the bodies and land of Indigenous peoples and People of Colour. Still, I wonder if it is possible to produce economics knowledge that centers on the wealth generated through our relationships with all life—rather than focusing on competition and the ‘determinacy’ of prices. In that manner, wealth that is produced under unequal, exploitative and coercive (e.g. colonial) relations eventually reproduces the same type of violence that wealth was supposed to purge. As such, I investigate the possibility to account for the economic relationships constituting the environmental and human violence that regularly occurs in Northern Alberta—strictly speaking, the Tar Sands.

Chapter I: Canadian Economics Textbooks—Layers of Settler Colonial Story(NOT)telling

Decolonization necessarily involves an interruption of the settler colonial nation-state, and of settler relations to land. Decolonization must mean attending to ghosts, and arresting widespread denial of the violence done to them
(Ree & Tuck, 2013, p. 647)

A particular tragedy and contradiction in mainstream economics is its manufactured background story. The presuppositions underlying the narrative of the discipline generally mirror a biased worldview; in general, that of an isolated individual performing rational (optimizing) decisions within a closed system (Pratten, 2007; 2004). Feminist economists argue that this model individual is also white, colonial, male¹¹ (Grappard, 1995). The story of individuals constantly taking selfish and rational decisions within a closed world informs the methodology used by economists. With a narrow experience of life, the constructed nature of existence (ontology) inscribed within mainstream economics generates unreliable knowledge production tools (epistemology) about the economy—a complex system in which collectives of individuals live and exchange with each other. Furthermore, mainstream economics epistemology employs mathematical and deductivist tools. Critical realism¹² argues that economics' deductivist methodology is only appropriate to study a 'small-closed-world' system (Pratten, 1996; Spash, 2012). All in all, economic event regularities are deduced from an unreasonable and unrealistic ontology. For the Cambridge Journal of Economics co-editor Stephen Pratten (2007), the only path beyond mainstream

¹¹ For this research, when I say white, colonial (or settler), male, I do not solely mean skin color. I also mean a character grounded in White supremacy, patriarchy, and Settler colonialism.

¹² Critical realism is the strongest alternative to mainstream economics philosophy. Another strong philosophical alternative in economics is pragmatism, as advocated by Julie Nelson (2001).

economics is through the abandonment of the deductivist framework. This is a call for a complete epistemological revolution!

I believe that to delegitimize institutions, their stories have to be delegitimized. If mathematical-deduction uses prior beliefs/stories to explain the past and predict the future, then a critical reformulation of economics ontology is absolutely required as well, but not sufficient. My ontological investigation of the discipline is inspired and drawn from revolutionary Indigenous feminist theorists. For instance, in *I am Woman*, Lee Maracle (1996) of the Sto:Loh nation pointedly argues that (mainstream) economics and mathematics are products of white (European) settler male worldviews. As a matter of fact, the latter character's beliefs and experiences of the world are also at the root of mainstream economics ontology, and a catalyst for its form of knowledge production. My analytical focus is also informed by my Settler space of birth occupying Kanien'kehá:ka territory. It is also informed by my present space and (white settler male) character occupying the land protected by and shared between the Anishinaabe, Mississauga, and Haudenosaunee people, as per the Dish With One Spoon treaty. In this paper, I argue that the definitions of land¹³, wealth and economics in Canadian mainstream economics textbooks depict a Settler colonial ontology.

Thesis

Land. Wealth. Economics. These three interdependent words connect how we see and act in the world. In my opinion, land is loving, abundant, intelligent, and always remembers. Land encompasses a long list of wealth; life, resources, knowledge, stories.

¹³All land, including water bodies, humans and more-than-humans. I understand land as a complex and loving being.

Land is wealth. Logically and ethically, an appropriate system of wealth exchange (an economy) can only be prosperous if it respectfully relies on land. An appropriate study of economics interlaces our material relationships with each other, with more-than-humans¹⁴ and with life all together.

Yet, it is not sufficient to build a better economic way to relate to the land, while Settler institutions occupy Indigenous land and territories. Different forces of power are at play within the Settler colonial complex. In general, there are three ‘structures of invasion’: spaces, systems and stories. In *Settler Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada*, Barker and Lowman (2015) refer to these structures as they delve into the construction of Settlers in Canada. They elaborate on the types of Settler colonial invasions performed in Canada, which reinforce Settler power and authority over the land. In all instances, the *spaces* we¹⁵ take, the *systems* we build, and the *stories* we tell “are [ultimately] focused on the land” (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 31). First of all, ‘spaces’ as a structure of invasion is defined as the Settler colonial spaces that displace and replace Indigenous places (Barker et al., 2015). For example, the city of Toronto is a Settler colonial space since it intentionally covers and displaces Anishnaabe spaces. Second of all, ‘systems’ are constructed so that Settler colonialism can assert and develop itself (Barker & Lowman, 2015). The Indian Residential School system was a system that severed the ties of young Indigenous children from the land. Thirdly, the ‘stories’ created by Settlers to legitimize occupation, such as the ‘Peacemaker Myth’ and ‘Terra Nullius’, displaces Indigenous

¹⁴ I prefer to say ‘more-than-humans’ rather than ‘non-humans’ or animals.

¹⁵ As of now, the third plural pronoun ‘we’ will be used to identify myself and other settlers in Canada, unless otherwise stated.

stories of land connection (Barker & Lowman, 2015). In the case of mainstream economics, the most relevant structures of invasion are the stories and systems it creates.

Economic stories and systems that dismiss and replace Indigenous relations to land thus intentionally participate in the displacement and erasure of Indigenous *spaces, systems* and *stories*. Canadian economics textbooks regard land as given for free by nature (to Settlers) and (initially) without any agency¹⁶ to generate wealth, until Settlers improve and value the land. In other words, economics students assume that before the European arrival on (what is now commonly known as) North America, nature gave the land to the European Settlers—metaphorically understood, of course. All of nature's contents was devoid of agency, and thus free for the new visitors (Settlers) to claim, to own. Completely ignoring wealth accumulation from land, the theoretical framework in Canadian economics textbooks does not question wealth distribution and mostly focuses on wealth production (see Green, 2013). Of course, wealth distribution and production occurs on land. Canadian economists nonetheless assume that all economic activities—in this case, production and distribution of wealth—begin on free and unoccupied land, transforming their respective spaces/locations (land) into improvable and privatized assets, ready for the (free) market. A Canadian definition of economics that does not encompass its socio-political (colonial) context is a structure that legitimizes Settler colonial invasion, against Indigenous peoples and their land. As such, young students who read, learn and interpret the world from Canadian economics textbooks do not face their complicity within Settler colonialism. Rather, they confidently reproduce their economic knowledge on unceded/stolen land.

¹⁶ Agency enables an entity to act within a given environment.

All in all, the underlying thesis of this chapter is that the constructed paradigm within Canadian standard economics textbooks derives from the imagination of a privileged and ahistorical Settler position of ‘objectivism’ and ‘authority’, camouflaged by Whiteness, by an empty ontology, and by storytelling derived from the dominant White Settler Male view.

Methodologies

This thesis is developed through a review of relevant literature and topics, a content analysis of several Canadian economics textbooks and a concluding discussion about the outcomes of the analysis.

Literature Review

The discussion about the oppressive narrative in Canadian mainstream economics textbooks begins with an overview of the intersectional influence of Whiteness and Settler colonialism within Canadian mainstream education. I then briefly review two general branches in economics: mainstream and heterodox economics. The delineation is absolutely critical since the objects of investigation (i.e. the textbooks) for this research are sourced from the mainstream branch of economics. Thereafter, I review historical analyses of mainstream economics through the lens of storytelling since economics has always been about stories, as clearly argued by Feminist economists. Furthermore, the stories (ontology) underlying mainstream economics form the rationale behind recent neoliberal reforms in education. The latter, also referred to as economics imperialism, argues that mainstream economics extends and reproduces its free market ontology and epistemology (knowledge

production) onto other academic disciplines and government policies. Afterwards, I review the literature on educational textbooks in Canada, and two academic articles concerning Canadian economics textbooks. Canadian pedagogical materials are generally produced from an American (U.S.A.) perspective, inferring that Canadian economics textbooks possibly have a very thin Canadian perspective.

Content Analysis

Although a diverse set of critical paths and methods are necessary to confront the colonial features of mainstream economics, the focus of this paper solely pays attention to Canadian post-secondary education, specifically Canadian mainstream (introduction) economics textbooks. I perform a content analysis of six Canadian editions of standard economics textbooks—Baumol et al. (1994), Bellan (1981), Fellows et al. (1993), Gade et al. (2010), Hird (2008), and Ragan (2013)¹⁷—specifically searching their glossaries and indexes for the following critical words: land, wealth and economics. I extract the definitions of each word from each textbook, and identify the patterns between them. Thereafter, I critically analyse the words—as defined by the studied textbooks—through the theory of Settler colonialism. Moreover, I envision an alternative and non-colonial foundation for the words in question.

Whiteness and Settler Colonialism in Education

Oppressive contradictions and complexities are also found in academic institutions. For instance, as a white settler male, the majority of academic spaces are especially safe

¹⁷ The textbooks were selected from the Toronto Public Library network (Canada): <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca>

for my character, while racialized and Indigenous people are excluded. This has recently been described as ‘hegemonic whiteness’ (Henry & Tator, 2009). Whiteness¹⁸ is a true “but rarely recognized component of white racial identity and domination” (Giroux, 1997, p. 380). In other words, Whiteness is a forceful social-construction and a dominant ideology that protects and enhances White privilege in society, while keeping it away and hidden from public scrutiny. In the case of education, Whiteness is reproduced within the academic pedagogies (Rivière, 2008; McLean, 2013) and bodies of the faculties (Campbell, Daniel, Portelli, & Solomon, R.P., 2005; Eisenkraft, 2010; Levine-Raski, 2000). Therefore, with persistent inequality and racism in education there are more opportunities for non-racialized people to obtain powerful professional and social positions directing the general curricula of academic faculties. Moreover, Canadian educational institutions are founded upon Settler colonial territories, on Indigenous lands. Yet again, this reality is covered by the many settler fantasies that ignore Indigenous people’s claim to stolen land, among other historical disavowals.

Professors McCoy, McKenzie and Tuck (2014) applied a critical lens to American environmental education and uncovered instances of Settler colonial reproduction within the discipline. In Ontario high schools, it is the ignorance of Aboriginal peoples in the provincial curriculum (Bednasek, Godlewska, & Moore, 2010) that hides Settler colonialism and its history in Canada from young students. As Bednasek et al. (2010, p. 419) argue, “ignorance is not neutral nor incidental”. In this case, ignorance only serves as a front to reproduce the oppressive parameters of Settler colonialism. Moreover, Calderon (2014) has critically demonstrated how social studies textbooks in the U.S. maintain a

¹⁸ Again to be clear, in this case ‘white’ and ‘settler’ does not only describe a racial or political identity. It also describes any character that reproduces Whiteness and Settler colonialism (e.g. White Settler supremacy).

‘settler colonial land ethic’. This ethic is transmitted through narratives of Settler nationalism, White supremacy and territoriality, which “construct damaging and unsustainable relations to land” (Calderon, 2014, p. 6). In *Decolonizing Education*, Mi’kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2013) argues that the Canadian education system also reproduces Eurocentric knowledge, undermining Indigenous knowledge and ways of being. My research thus continues this critical analysis in Canadian education, but through a particular discipline; Settler colonial narratives are also inscribed in the academic discipline of economics in Canada.

Mainstream and Heterodox Economics

Although economics seems to be a monolith, it represents an umbrella of different schools of thought. In general, these are the mainstream, orthodox and heterodox approaches. The first two labels, as well as the neoclassical label, are usually employed interchangeably, although they share complex dissimilarities. In order to simplify my analysis, I use the mainstream label to point at the current dominant economics discourse “in the leading academic institutions, organisation, and journals” (Dequech, 2008, p. 281) which also portray orthodox and neoclassical economic theories. What about non-mainstream economics?

There have been huge efforts to de-center economics from its mainstream ‘supreme’ academic pole. It has been the general objective of heterodox economics¹⁹ to oppose the ontological foundations of mainstream economics—“a commitment to

¹⁹ The simplicity of the ‘mainstream-heterodox’ binary will not be confronted in this research. Rather, it will be taken as leverage to distinguish my heterodox approach to economics from the mainstream.

individualism, coupled with the axiom that individuals are everywhere rational (optimising) in their behaviour” (Lawson, 2006, p. 488). Critical theorists²⁰ denounce how the discipline hides behind an epistemic fallacy, while covering its ontological tracks (Spash, 2012). In other words, mainstream economists do not discuss the nature of existence and being, neglecting ontology. The ontological gap of the discipline is instead filled with epistemological matter, generating methodologies detached from stories of being and existence. Without an investigation of ontology, the epistemology-bias uncritically perpetuates the formation of a mathematical and deductivist basis within mainstream economics methodologies (Fleetwood, 1999; Spash, 2012). It is the task of heterodox economics to revisit economics ontology²¹—encouraging a pluralist methodology, as Dow (2007) advocates—and to undermine “the rhetoric of the liberating character [in mainstream economics] [...] used by corporations and governments extracting resources, dislocating indigenous populations and creating environmental destruction” (Spash, 2012, p. 44). Moreover, a critical branch of heterodox economics that has delved into the ontological abyss of mainstream economics is Feminist Economics. As discussed in the following section, feminists have used storytelling as the focus for their ontological investigation of economics.

²⁰ Critical realism: there is a knowable and describable objective reality, but without full certainty, knowledge claims are still prone to err.

²¹ With an ontological fixation there is however the possibility of falling into ‘ontological fallacy’, which generates other issues. Therefore, heterodox economists are advised to pursue a balance between ontology and epistemology. For more information, Bouwel (2003, p.87) explores the “question of how to avoid both [fallacies] and how to elaborate an alternative reorientation”.

The Constructed Narrative in Economics

Before the 19th century, economic ideas used to be explored through stories. For instance, the Bible, Plato's *Republic*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, and works such as Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*, are classic pieces of literature that have delved into the questions surrounding economics (Henderson W. , 2005). Feminist economist Willie Henderson (2005) outlined how storytelling is a great vehicle to develop and present economic ideas. The author mentions that the English writer John Ruskin used the attractive 'isolated island economy' story-template to discuss money and trade theory (Henderson W. , 2005). Stories as such were also shared through oral traditions even before the invention of the printing machine. For example, in *Tsawalk*, Richard Atleo (2004), the hereditary chief of the Ahousaht First Nation, talks about the Nuu-chah-nulth practice of *pachitle*²² (to give) through the teachings of Son of Raven: "Giving is completely dependent upon receiving" and vice versa (Atleo, 2004, p. 39). In short, this economic principle is a balance and harmony between giving and receiving goods and services—a practice of reciprocity—which also guides the relationships of physical and spiritual worlds.

Story telling with significant economic content was one way of reflecting on the changes that were taking place in economic life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Henderson W. , 2005, p. 8)

At the start of the 19th century, "significant women writers and economics educators" taught formal economics through story telling (Henderson W. , 2005, p. 8). Then in the 1950s, economic thought began its formalization into economics student-oriented textbooks (Henderson W. , 2005). Feminist economists studied the links between Defoe's

²² Also known as potlatch.

literary *Robinson Crusoe* and mainstream economics textbooks. For instance, Feminist economist Ulla Grappard (1995) understood *Crusoe* as the emblematic model of the ‘economic man’ in economics textbooks. Indeed, *Robinson Crusoe* fits the theoretical character of the “single, white, colonial, male” in economics storytelling (Grappard, 1995, p. 37).

Storytelling is still perceptible in mainstream economics, but its narrow stories are seen as the only factual accounts of reality, of history, to construct a ‘legitimate’ foundation for economic theories and models, marginalising and erasing a multitude of stories. The models theorized by economists are actually “storyworlds based on default assumptions” (Grappard, 1995, p. 34) that rely “on voluntary interaction and hide the inequality of power between economic agents” (ibid, p.47). Moreover, since economists use terms like ‘model’, ‘theory’ or ‘law’, they produce a semblance of scientific objectivism (Strassman, 2012). In reality, as feminist economist Diana Strassman (1996, p.16) stresses, “the [economists’] stance [of objectivity] is a power-conferring one”. The personal and social detachment of the economist from their work (i.e. objectivity) allows them to write from a position of authority, while dismissing their true role as storytellers.

The constructed narrative within mainstream economics, the stories embedded in the discipline, should be deconstructed. As professor and breath-taking storyteller Thomas King (1993) puts it, “There are no truths. Only stories”.

Economics Imperialism

The mainstream dismissal of the storytelling nature of economics begets great consequences, such as economics imperialism. The latter subjects young economics

students, and other students, to economics epistemological foundations. For instance, educational policies are influenced by mainstream economics principles, affecting the behaviours of classrooms, and also reproducing them outside the classroom. Curriculum theorist Stephanie Allais (2012) argues that the core ideas belonging to mainstream economics have guided reforms in education, with respect to the national qualification frameworks in education. Through outcomes-based qualifications frameworks, countries can better connect the supply of knowledge and skills produced in schools with the demands of the economy (Allais, 2012). In other words, the revised frameworks construct “education systems which are more learner-centred, but also more responsive to the needs of employers, communities and economies” (Allais, 2012, p. 255).

Moreover, the typical individualistic ideology in mainstream economics resonates well with educational reforms. The discipline only understands reality as a consequence of rationality and the maximization of individual utility: if every single person learns what is best for themselves (i.e. what increases their own individual utilities), then the aggregated final outcome of those individual decisions will be best for everyone. Consequently, competition between students (and even academic faculties) is thus a normalized reproduction of (free) market economics principles. Additionally, economics imperialism attempts to reduce the non-economic or social attributes of individuals (Fine & Milonakis, 2009), allowing the revised educational frameworks to assume that society is free of discrimination and structural oppressions (e.g. racism, sexism, colonialism, etc.). As such, if mainstream economics is not capable of perfectly analysing societies in general, then the rules of society need to become more compatible and abiding with the axioms of mainstream economic analysis. In other words, economics imperialism can be regarded as

a mechanism for mainstream economics, and neoliberalism, to reproduce its assumptions and models into society.

Economics imperialism does not solely impact public education, but also an array of other sectors, such as law and development (Perry-Kessaris, 2011), and the public funding of the arts and copyright law (Rushton, 1999). Finally, economics imperialism can also be considered as a means used by the Settler colonial complex to deny the persistence of colonialism, and continue its persistent expansion over Indigenous land.

Textbooks in Canada

Textbook analysis is one gateway for researchers who are interested in uncovering what is taught in the university classrooms. It is a particularly useful method to analyse the content within introductory economics courses in North America. At the present moment, there is a very low amount of research on Canadian economics textbooks. It can be speculated that the aforementioned absence is due to the dominance of only a handful number of standard economics textbooks—all descending from the classic Paul Samuelson economics textbook of 1948 (Green, 2012). Likewise, economics only became formalized in student-oriented textbooks starting in the 1950s (Henderson W. , 2005; Colander, 2010), with Samuelson’s textbook as the mainstream standard template, at least up until 2010 (Colander, 2010).

Moreover, from a historical perspective, between 1830s-1930s, the center stage of economics was primarily dominated by Europe, with the classical economists such as Smith, Ricardo, Mill and Marshall (Colander, 2010). During this period, as the American economist David Colander (2010, p. 2) explains, it was “European texts, not American

texts, [that] set the template for what economists did, and for what they taught”. This trend turned on its head when American economist Paul Samuelson published his first economics textbook in 1948, selling over 120’000 copies in that same year and placing “economics in a scientific framework” (Colander, 2010, p. 12). That leaves us with the following question: Do American economics textbooks dominate the Canadian market?

In the 1970s, two major Canadian educational publishing firms were sold to American companies, and since then there has been a gradual decline of Canadian-owned educational publishing (Clark & Knights, 2011). Moreover, as communications professor Jennifer Macleannan (2000, p. 37) p.37) mentions, “most textbook publishers in Canada are subsidiaries of American multinationals” producing ‘Canadianized’ versions of American educational materials. Additionally, compared to the Canadian market, there is a much larger demand for textbooks from people living in the U.S. (Macleannan, 2000). With respect to Canadian economics textbooks, this argument can only be speculatively applied, since there is no extensive research investigating the influence of American economics textbooks in the Canadian market (see Simpson & Emery, 2012).

Nevertheless, there is a good chance that with American influence over Canadian educational materials, most Canadian versions of economics textbooks are simply ‘Canadian editions’ of American standardized economics textbooks. Moreover, based on my research, I believe that the Canadian editions are only slightly different than the regular editions. In other words, the editions do showcase Canadian examples, but the overall content is the same. Even though I have not investigated that speculation, this particular analysis is still important for a clearer investigation of the Canadian economics textbook.

Canadian Economics Textbooks

There are presently two articles that present an investigation of the content within Canadian economics textbooks. First of all, economics professors William Brooks and Yarema Kelebay (1991) analysed six introductory economics textbooks published between 1979-1985, and used in Canadian high schools. The authors came to the conclusion that the textbooks had a stronger focus on Keynesian theory (i.e. demand-side theory) while leaving out supply-side theories. Their major concern was that with a Canadian economics education “dominated by socialist values [...] we cannot think we are educating students who will contribute to a productive economy as a result of that education” (Brooks & Kelebay, 1991, p. 94).

Ecological economist Tom Green (Green T. , 2012) also analysed the Canadian economics textbook, to investigate its environmental and sustainability content. His work analysed eight introductory economics textbooks, dated from 2005-2008, and used in universities across British Columbia (Canada). Green’s major finding was that, on average, only 3.36% of the text within the eight surveyed textbooks addresses “the environment-economy linkages” or has any content “significant to sustainability” (Green T. , 2012). Moreover, his analysis also points to the textbooks’ growth imperative advocated as “society’s primary macroeconomic policy objective” (Green T. , 2012), leaving environmental issues as externalities that can be fixed by ameliorating market efficiency.

Although I will not delve into the contrasting diagnosis between the two articles, it is necessary to acknowledge the need for more research on Canadian economics textbooks. I also suggest a more diverse philosophical investigation of Canadian economics textbooks,

especially when more than one million students in Canada every year study economics at the introductory level (Green T. , 2012). In other words, with U.S. hegemony in textbook publications in sight, economics educational practitioners in Canada have a responsibility to uncover the disconnections in the economics textbooks from the distinct realities of Canadian society and history—especially its colonial history and contemporary present.

Settler Colonialism and Canadian Economics Textbooks

In the following three sub-sections, I delve into the definitions of land, wealth and economics pertaining to the selected Canadian economics textbooks and uncover certain patterns and contradictions. A fuller analysis of each word and their interdependent connections is developed in the discussion section.

On Land

Land is at the center of attention for any Settler colonial analysis. In fact, it is the most contentious sphere between the Settler state and Indigenous people. While the attacks on Indigenous land are inimical for Indigenous lives in Canada, the attacks are a crucial aspect of the continuity of the Settler colonial state in Canada. For Mi'kmaq professor Bonita Lawrence, these attacks are based on “the assumption that the remaining Indigenous lands of the world must still continue to be exploited for the sake of so-called ‘progress’ [...] at the cost of the remaining Indigenous lands of the world” (Rutherford, 2010, p. 10).

The crucial connection to land for Indigenous people is completely absent in (the reviewed) economics textbooks. Actually, land is instead mentioned in three fashions that prioritize the production of private property. First, land is considered as society's natural

resource (Ragan, 2013), along with labour and capital (Hird, 2008). Secondly, some authors also refer to land as a factor of production (Gade & Parkin, 2010; Baumol, Blinder, & Scarth, 1994), or as one of the “productive powers of a nation” (Bellan, 1981). Finally, land is not only described as a resource, but also as the repository of natural resources (Ragan, 2013; Gade & Parkin, 2010; Bellan, 1981; Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993). In other words, the textbooks consider land as the umbrella category of all natural endowments, such as fertile land, forest, lakes, crude oil and minerals. All of these definitions share one purpose of the land: it is used to produce goods and services. Moreover, Hird (2008) asserts the sovereignty of land in Canada, as he refers to land as “more than the ten million squares kilometers that comprise Canada’s land mass” (Hird, 2008, p. 4).

Unsurprisingly, the textbooks also provide a market-analytical perspective on land. It is very common for the economics textbook to emphasize the requirement of property rights in order to enhance market efficiency. In the case of the textbooks, the ownership of land, and natural resources, is considered to be given by nature for free (Gade & Parkin, 2010; Bellan, 1981; Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993)—yet, unfortunately, this alleged initial giving is not reciprocated. For instance, the following excerpts about land (as quoted from the reviewed textbooks) make it clear.

Land consists of all gifts of nature (Gade & Parkin, 2010, p. 3)

Land was there as the bounty of nature (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993, p. 441)

Historically, free land was not uncommon. Early settlers to Western Canada were given free land, provided they fulfilled all the requirements, as homesteaders (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993, p. 440)

Interestingly enough, however, the usage of the land is not free.

While it is true that, for the country as a whole, land is a free gift of nature, any individual must pay for its use (Bellan, 1981, p. 238)

It is the owner of the land that receives (an economic) rent from the user. The economic rent is payment for the use of the land (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993).

Money is paid to the owner, not for any function that he performs, but simply because of ownership rights (Bellan, 1981, p. 238)

The economic rent is earned because the supply of land is perfectly inelastic: the supply of land cannot be determined by its market price, and the demand for land cannot affect the quantity of land supplied to the market. In lay terms, because the owner of a piece of land has complete ‘monopoly’ over it they can demand economic rent from the user (e.g. farmer) just for owning the land.

Although the Canadian economics textbook will uncritically refer to the ownership of the land as given by nature for free, the services of the land are priced through a rental rate paid to the owner (Gade & Parkin, 2010). As such, the owner is given the rightful entitlement to receive economic rent because they own the piece of land. However, some authors discuss land taxation, in order to grab some economic rent, and use it for public purposes (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993). The rent logic surrounding the economics textbook is further supported by its authors’ claim that nature has no agency without human work. Economists may even believe, “land exists without need for any human effort or sacrifice” (Bellan, 1981, p. 234), but it cannot create or have life prior to human effort or sacrifice on the land.

Canadian economics textbooks indicate that land has no value until humans value it. Fellows et al. (1993, p. 6) mention, “what makes them [natural resources] natural is that they are found in a state of nature, untouched by humans”. Moreover, Baumol et al. (1994, p. 423) refer to any “land that is just on the borderline of being used” as ‘marginal land’ that does not earn any economic rent. For the authors of the textbooks, land has no initial intrinsic economic value. It is the human improvement of the land that makes it ‘unnatural’ and subsequently marketable. In addition to that, Gade et al. (2010, p. 376) mention that the value of land is determined by the demand for it:

$Demand_{Land} = MarginalProduct_{Land}$. This equation says that the rent value of land is determined by the demand for the goods and services derived from the land (i.e. marginal product of land), and determined by the scarcity of land.

Furthermore, the factor mobility explanation as derived from the textbooks depicts the positivist²³ philosophy of its discourse. For instance, land has a fixed supply that cannot be enlarged or moved around, but “the usable amount can be increased by human effort” (Bellan, 1981, p. 235). Thus, land is economically mobile, since humans can derive economic alternative uses from it (Ragan, 2013). Nevertheless, as Fellows et al. (1993) explain, human improvements on the land are not perfectly inelastic, and consequently the improvements do not earn economic rent. Also, marginal land value decreases for each additional human improvement (Bellan, 1981). For mainstream economists, the human owner is the sole intermediate agent who can enable the provision of goods and services from land to the market. In other words, human owners are the only subjects with agency that can derive value from objects, which in this case is land. It would be interesting to

²³ Positivism argues that authentic and reliable knowledge can only be produced from scientific means, excluding alternative ways of producing knowledge.

form an alternative economic understanding of the latter relationship through a non-positivist philosophy.

The contradiction then arises: If nature can give land for free, why could it not also provide its ‘fruits’ for free as well? If we follow my precedent logic, the positivist perspective of the economics textbook usurps the life and agency from nature, or the ‘wild’. Was land then taken from nature, and not simply given for free? Is land in Canada ‘stolen land’ from people, and not land given to Settlers for free?

On Wealth

Wealth is another crucial concept in Settler colonial analysis, since “wealth is land, Native land” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 23). For the Canadian economics textbooks, to increase wealth the land and its sub-surface have to be expropriated, and privatized, by displacing Indigenous peoples from their land (Hoogeveen, 2015). In the following paragraphs, I will present and interpret the concept of wealth as theorized in Canadian economics textbooks.

The mainstream economics depiction of the concept of wealth is incomplete and puzzling. For instance, in his research, Green (2012) argues that the economics textbook does not discuss wealth accumulation, although the classical economist Adam Smith wrote a long rationale for wealth accumulation on a world scale. Secondly, as ecological economists Herman Daly and Joshua Farley contend, “economics [has] no theory at all to explain the distribution of wealth among individuals” (Daly & Farley, 2011, p. 304), since the distribution “is assumed as given” (Green D. , 2012, p. 200). Without any theories about

wealth accumulation and distribution, the economics textbook is then only left with the examination of wealth production—an observation that Green (2012) also posits.

In the Canadian economics textbooks, that I analysed, the concept of wealth is theorized around the macroeconomic analysis of the market, around inequality, and briefly derived from Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Additionally, wealth is usually defined as a stock of 'things' owned by individuals, and households, that generate income. Moreover, nations, or countries, also hold wealth. The following are definitions of wealth from the Canadian economics textbooks.

The value of all things that people own—the market value of their assets—at one point in time (Gade & Parkin, 2010, p. G12)

[Wealth:] size and composition of the stocks of assets (bank accounts, cash, bonds, stocks, houses, etc.) owned by consumers (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993, p. 559)

[Wealth] generate[s] income, called property income, for their owners (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993, p. 469)

The wealth of a nation at the end of the year equals its wealth at the start of the year plus its savings during the year (Gade & Parkin, 2010, p. 544)

Another way that economics textbooks understand wealth is through the comparison of the barter system and the money system. On the one hand, in a barter system wealth is kept “in the form of a durable commodity” (Hird, 2008, p. 204), in order to perform exchanges for other commodities. In this manner, wealth is accumulated in the form of durable objects. On the other hand, wealth can be stored and held through the medium of money (Hird, 2008). The barter system is treated as antiquated, and wealth in

the form of money makes market transactions more efficient and less costly. We can also infer that money intensifies and accelerates the accumulation of wealth.

Canadian economics textbooks also use the conception of wealth to discuss certain aspects relevant to market analysis. For instance, Gade et al. (2010) mention that inflation can redistribute income and wealth and divert resources from production. Additionally, wealth (among other variables) informs the supply of loanable funds (Gade & Parkin, 2010). Wealth is also one component of the aggregate expenditure of GDP²⁴ (Hird, 2008). Furthermore, the “level of accumulated wealth also influences consumption expenditures” (Hird, 2008, p. 177) and “desired consumption”, among other things (Ragan, 2013, p. 525). In other words, with a greater accumulation of wealth comes a higher level of consumption and a greater ability to spend. Finally, Baumol et al. (1994) affirms the need for economic growth because

Faster growth does mean more wealth, and to most the desirability of wealth is beyond question (Baumol, Blinder, & Scarth, 1994, p. 1041)

Only a wealthy economy can afford to give all individuals the opportunity for full satisfaction (Baumol, Blinder, & Scarth, 1994, p. 1042)

However, the authors throw doubt on the common belief that unlimited growth will lead to unlimited wealth.

The desirability of further economic growth for a society that is already wealthy has been questioned on grounds that undoubtedly have a good deal of validity (Baumol, Blinder, & Scarth, 1994, p. 1042)

²⁴ GDP: Gross Domestic Product = Consumption + Government Expenditure + Investment + Net Exports

Certain economics textbooks also have space to discuss wealth inequality in Canada (Gade & Parkin, 2010), between Canada and the United States, and with Britain (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993). Gade et al. (2010, p. 444) say, the “distribution of wealth is much more unequal than the distribution of income”. Furthermore, the authors argue that wealth inequality is determined by the different life cycle stages of households, and due to the “life-cycle saving patterns and transfers of wealth” between generations (Gade & Parkin, 2010, p. 452).

Lastly, almost all of the economics textbooks I have reviewed refer to Adam Smith and *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 1776). Still, the range of topics that the textbooks draw from Smith is varied: wage differentials (Hird, 2008); international trade (Ragan, 2013); wealth of nations (Gade & Parkin, 2010; Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993); the ‘invisible hand’ (Gade & Parkin, 2010); the “division of labour and its relationship to economic development” (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993, p. 12).

The conceptualization of wealth in economics textbooks leaves out the description of wealth accumulation. Instead, as Green (2012) points out, the textbooks base their discussions of wealth on the assumption that the distribution is given. Through the perspective of the surveyed economics textbooks wealth is therefore only created through ownership (i.e. private property) and other market mechanisms, and is not explicitly derived from land. Nowhere are land and wealth connected.

On Economics

Since the fourth century BCE, economics used to be described as the “art of household management” (Backhouse & Medema, 2009b). Early classical economists, such

as Adam Smith, thereafter centered the discussion on wealth. The wealth-based definition is referred to as ‘classificatory’, where its scope was mostly focused on the production and use of wealth (Backhouse & Medema, 2009a). For example, the following traditional definition of economics demonstrates the latter classical focus:

Economics is the science which treats of those social phenomena that are due to the wealth-getting and wealth-using activities of Man (Ely, Adams, Lorenz, & Young, 1926, quoted from Backhouse & Medema, 2009a, p. 810)

It was in the 1960s that Robbins’s ‘analytical’ definition of economics came to be accepted (Backhouse & Medema, 2009a), and this transformed the analytical perspective of economists:

Economics is the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses (Robbins, 1932, p. 15)

Robbins wrote a 141-pages essay to defend his definition, but it was not universally and rapidly endorsed, as economics professors Roger Backhouse and Steven Medema argue (2009a). Still, the definitions of economics that I extracted from the Canadian economics textbooks do seem to be sourced from the ‘ends versus means’ demarcation with the emphasis on limitless needs and the scarcity of means. Actually, Robbins’ definition moved the original economics discussion from exchanges to choice (Marciano, 2009). The following definitions are from the surveyed Canadian economics textbooks:

Economics is the study of how we make decisions regarding the use of our scarce resources (Hird, 2008, p. 6)

Economics is the study of scarce resources to satisfy unlimited human wants (Ragan, 2013, p. 4)

The social science that studies the choices that individuals, businesses, governments, and entire societies make as they cope with scarcity and the incentives that influence and reconcile those choices (Gade & Parkin, 2010, p. G4)

Economic activity consists of the daily work of mankind, performed to acquire the means of satisfying human wants and needs (Bellan, 1981, p. 14)

Economics is the study of how people and society choose to employ scarce productive resources to produce commodities and services and distribute them for consumption among various persons and groups in society (Fellows, Flanagan, Shedd, & Waud, 1993, p. 4)

It is therefore evident that the surveyed textbooks' definition of economics has moved beyond the pre-1930 focus on wealth. Rather, the authors follow Robbins in order to define economics. For Hird (2008), the concept of scarcity is very important. In fact, "if it were not for the concept of scarcity, there would be no need to study economics" (Hird, 2008, p. 3). Furthermore, choice and individualism also inform the 'big' questions that summarize the scope of economics: "How do choices end up determining what, how and for whom goods and services are produced? How can choices in the pursuit of self-interest also promote the social interest?" (Gade & Parkin, 2010, p. 3). The design of the latter listed 'Robbins-style' definitions of economics has several implications such as influencing other social science disciplines. Actually, as I explain later, the definitions used in economics inform the analysis of many academic circles (Mäki, 2009).

Discussion

A brief critical synthesis of the words 'land', 'wealth' and 'economics' suggests that although all the conceptions are actually tightly and materially connected, the authors of economics textbooks have effectively decoupled the terms from each other. Therefore,

the hypothesis and worldview describes an implicit erasure of Settler colonialism and of Indigenous people in economics; mainstream economics, in this case.

The definition of land, derived from the economics textbooks, does not point to the historical reality of how land was owned by early (and contemporary) Settlers. For the surveyed authors, wealth is not explicitly derived from land, since it is assumed that accumulation and distribution is given. The definition of economics did at least focus on wealth (and economic growth) in the classical century of economic thought (Backhouse & Medema, 2009b), but the North American economics' attention on wealth started to be delinked in Samuelson's text in 1948 (Backhouse & Medema, 2009a). Based on the surveyed textbooks, the authors do not define economics as a study of wealth. Rather, the definition of economics mainly attracts questions around unlimited needs, scarce means, and the utilitarian choice-making character of the individualistic economic actor. Thus, there are layers of erasure between each term that 'logically' delink the whole study of economics in Canada from the land dispossessions.

Settler Colonial Land Story

For Barker and Lowman (2015, p. 33) the Settler narratives "are the means through which violent colonization is transformed into the story of heroic struggle and the inevitable establishment of an exceptionally successful, just, and distinct society". The concepts of land used in Canadian economics textbooks are stories that invade and displace not just Indigenous stories, but Settler as well. The most common narrated story in the textbooks is that nature gave land to the early Settlers for free. Moreover, the textbook's narrative explains that only the Settlers' improvement of the land gave it any economic

worth. This myth makes White European Settlers as subjects with agency, and nature (or the 'wild') as an object with no agency. This positivist perspective then implies that Indigenous people are 'wild', as part of the natural background. In other words, since the textbooks do not mention Indigenous people living on or using the land, they are then imagined as 'savages' without agency, or even life. In fact, we can infer that life and value can only be transferred through White Settler ownership. The belief that nature gave land to Settlers "obscures" the fact "that many settlers only survived because of the generosity, knowledge and skills of Indigenous communities" (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 34).

The story given by the economics textbooks closely resembles the Terra Nullius ideology: the "notion of empty land and a dualism between uncivilized people and 'unworked'/unimproved land" (Hoogeveen, 2015, p. 124). The land is therefore believed to be empty and unimproved if there is no human agency, which is only formed by economic agents guided by market mechanisms. As a consequence, these stories then influence actual state policies. For instance, there are examples of early paper bills of credit backed by colonial arrogations over Indigenous lands, and how its continuous circulation in the form of money reproduced the colonial expropriation of Native land and labor (Vimalassery, 2013). Additionally, based on the critical geographer Dawn Hoogeveen (2015), the mineral claim-staking regime in Northern Canada parallels the Settler colonial structure of dispossession of mineral staking across North American, and the world. In fact, mineral staking is due to the free-staking principle. Basically, the principle gives full right to mining prospectors and companies to claim a piece of land (whether private or Crown land) without informing the people who own or live on the land (Hoogeveen, 2015). As Hoogeveen (2015, p. 123) claims, present "mineral tenure regimes are not innocent or

neutral but premised on an erasure of Indigenous claims to land”—legitimized by the textbooks’ narrative on land.

Finally, this illustration of land and property also follows John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government* (1690). Briefly, John Locke’s theory of property (‘law of nature’) goes as follows: at first, land was God’s gift equally given to the heirs of Adam as a common. Subsequently, land becomes the private property of the individuals who improve it. In other words, nature is privatized when humans add value to it through labour. “His labour hath taken it out of the hands of nature, where it was common and belonged equally to all her children, and hath thereby appropriated it to himself” (Locke, 1690, Sect. 29). Additionally, Locke saw the ‘art of government’ as the provider of land for those who wish to properly improve it and produce surplus. Thus, since mainstream political economics regards Indigenous people as pertaining to a lower level of economic development, Locke’s idea of improvement and labour absolutely favours the European philosophy of property exclusivity. Unsurprisingly, as argued by several scholars (Tully, 1995; Hsueh, 2006), the Lockean perspective in political philosophy invalidates the discipline’s capacity to study aboriginal self-government and ecology. The interesting research of political scientist Vicki Hsueh (2006), interrogating the credibility of Locke’s thesis, suggests that John Locke’s direct financial stake in American slavery and Indigenous dispossession depicts a vested interest in his political ideas. In other words, for Hsueh (2006), there was a clear conflict of interest. As such, and by extension that all Settler economists benefit from similar conflicts of interest, I argue that mainstream economics cannot generate epistemologies to evaluate any Indigenous economic relations to land. The discipline

devaluates their political economies and superimposes (European) Settler stories and structures over those of Indigenous nations.

Settler Colonial Wealth Story

Canadian economics textbooks forgo the important relation between land and wealth, although wealth is clearly an original feature of land. The textbooks' view on land only permits the market as the provider of improvement and economic value to land, generating surplus, and amounting to wealth accumulation. Moreover, since this wealth is extracted through a structure of white settler ownership of land, as I argued earlier, we can also ascertain that the wealth is therefore what history scholar Patrick Wolfe (American University of Beirut, 2013) calls "white man's property". In the Settler colonial context, Indigenous bodies obstruct the settlers' access to land, and therefore access to wealth accumulation (Wolfe, 2006). Hence, the textbook's disconnection erases the persistent land dispossession and appropriation, and wealth accumulation of Settler colonialism, in Canada. This post-accumulation/dispossession narrative is therefore a second layer in Canadian economics pedagogy that removes all Indigenous entitlement and sovereignty over wealth. With unceded/stolen land occupied and extracted by Settlers, all accumulated wealth is also unceded/stolen. In fact, as Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012, p. 24) logically infer, "[i]f we took away land, there would be little wealth left to redistribute"—gain, "wealth is land, Native land" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 23).

The free-entry regime is an example of how wealth is accumulated in Canada, and how the textbook's story about wealth also informs Settler "systems". The regime in question allows mining to supersede all private property interests, especially all aboriginal

land rights. It also favours mining operations as “the best and highest use of Crown lands” and the “mineral tenures are appropriately granted on a first come first serve basis” (Hoogeveen, 2015, p. 128). Furthermore, mineral potential is considered as the most valuable resource, rendering any other resource interests as much less important (Campbell, 2004, cited in Hoogeveen, 2015, p.128). In terms of mineral staking in Canada, the free-entry system divides property into surface and sub-surface legal categories (where sub-surface rights supplants surface rights). It “is strictly for the purposes of any potential resource extraction or to raise money for capitalist mining interests” (Hoogeveen, 2015, p. 136). To increase wealth, the land and its sub-surface have to be expropriated by displacing Indigenous peoples. This is legitimized by classical economics axioms protecting property rights. The economist’s definition of wealth is thus not innocent or neutral as it propagates a Settler colonial story (ideology) of wealth in its pedagogy, and in praxis as well.

Settler Colonial Economics Story

Following the preceding layers of erasure of Settler colonialism in Canadian economics textbooks, I argue that the definition of economics is a third layer of erasure. The physiocrats of the 18th century were the first classical economists to consider land as the source of wealth. With respect to physiocracy, economic processes operate through the objective “Natural Law”, which is independent of human free will (Cleveland, 1999). Moreover, the classical physiocratic model regarded agriculture as the “supreme occupation” and “economic rent as derived from uncompensated work done by Nature” (Cleveland, 1999, p. 129). While this early perspective of classical economics viewed Nature (land) as the source of wealth, it could not consider the uncompensated labour of

Indigenous people on the land. Later on, post-Physiocratic definitions of economics still considered wealth as the object of analysis, up until the 20th century. After the 1940s, the popular Robbinsonian definition of economics—losing the attention on wealth, and rather focusing on the individual economic actor and scarcity—took hold of the mainstream discipline, especially in North America (Backhouse & Medema, 2009a). Therefore, the movement away from an economics informed by land and by wealth, and ultimately informed by the ‘theory of choice’, can be interpreted as overlapping layers deepening and obfuscating a Settler colonial analysis.

Beyond any doubt, these mainstream definitions of economics inform the management of land and wealth in Canada, without considering the ingrained Settler colonial power structures. In other words, I argue that the current definition of economics supersedes and invades any non-colonial relation to the land. Economics imperialism provides another valuable description of the invasive characteristics of neoclassical economics in the academic realm (Mäki, 2009; Allais, 2012; Fine & Milonakis, 2009) and within other public matters (Perry-Kessaris, 2011; Rushton, 1999). More specifically, I argue that the Robbinsonian definition of economics legitimizes the academic and social reach of economics imperialism. As such, the story of the profit maximizing and rational economic actor derived from the neoclassical definition creates legal institutions (or ‘systems’) in Canada that dispossess Indigenous people (e.g. the mineral claims-staking regime) and eliminate them as well (e.g. the Indian Act).

Finally, the narrative in Canadian economics pedagogy is a complicit supplier of legitimacy and persistence for Settler colonial invasions that erase stories of dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands. The preceding conclusion is a logical derivative of

the latter-elaborated three layers of definitions in economics: land, wealth, and economics. Actually, within the context of economics, I perceive the three words as stratified layers that work to erase the complexities and contradictions of Settler colonialism from mainstream economics analysis and State policies.

Alternative Ontology for Economics, and More Thoughts

The understanding of the Settler colonial patterns in economics education is still in its early development. Indeed, I sincerely believe that my content analysis of the Canadian economics textbook is but one step into uncovering the larger array of hidden Settler colonial complexities within the orthodox and heterodox discipline. The envisioned ambition of this project is for all economics students in Canada to know at least one story: “The ‘new world’ was perceived as a source of unlimited wealth by an “old world” that had exhausted most of its own resources” (Atleo, 2004, p. 65). In a practical manner, this story can underlie a non-colonial economics theoretical framework that analyses the unsustainability and unfairness of Settler colonialism. Furthermore, this project also has to seek for an updated ontological basis that better informs philosophical questions of economics (in the sense of how people live on Planet Earth). My suggestions for non-colonial economics pedagogy are at a pre-mature state since I only look to include the Settler colonial perspective rather than completely changing the discipline. Nonetheless, I provide below an alternative sequence for the definitions of ‘land’, ‘wealth, and ‘economics’, where each definition instead flows through a similar non-colonial foundation.

Indigenous relationality challenges the empty ontological gap in economics and connects the mainstream economic definition of land to Settler colonialism. It provides a different labor theory of value that takes the Settler colonial context into account. In short, Indigenous relationality “helps draw our attention to questions of control over Indigenous lands” (Vimalassery, 2013, p. 295). In fact, Noonucal professor Karen Martin (2003) explains that relational ontology restores the missing connections to land; a helpful start to reground the definitions of land and wealth. If economics paid attention to Settler relations to Indigenous land, places and people, the Canadian economics textbooks’ definition of wealth would hopefully not overlook the accumulation of wealth. Finally, I suggest a reconfiguration of the definition of economics where the common Robinsonian perspective is replaced by a ‘neo-physiocratic’ one—with alternative and non-Lockean visions about land-use. Although the latter perspective does not have an explicit form or definition, the political ecologist Alf Hornborg (2015) refers to ecological economists as ‘neo-physiocrats’ since the discipline also seeks to theorize about unequal exchanges in a biophysical sense (e.g Hornborg, 1998). Nevertheless, the ambition to reconfigure the definition of economics cannot solely rely on ecological economics since its textbook definition of economics resembles its mainstream counterpart:

Economics is the study of the allocation of limited, or scarce, resources among alternatives, comparing ends (Daly & Farley, 2011, p. 3)

The major difference between the ecological economics definition and the mainstream definition of economics is that the former does not consider all resources to be “scarce in an economic sense” (Daly & Farley, 2011, p.3, note 1). Additionally, at the very least, ecological economics has a rather similar view about the connections to the

ecological system, as does Indigenous relationality. However, ecological economics has not analysed the economic implications of Settler and Indigenous relations to land and each other, as of yet. While the ecological economics discipline confronts the liquidation of natural resources²⁵, it does not touch upon the dispossession of Indigenous land, and wealth. I believe that the expropriation of land from Indigenous people, and other corresponding colonial aspects, should also inform the ontology of heterodox economics, since it ultimately forms the contemporary nature of reality in Settler colonial states and around the world. In that manner, a greater investigation of ecological economics and Indigenous relationality is therefore due in order to form a historically-sound definition of economics.

Additionally, we need to point to a controversial space that white Settlers have appropriated to apply biased economics perspectives, uncritical of the political context. In my opinion, the experimentation of ‘ethnoeconomics’ (Cavalcanti, 2002), ‘indigenous economics’ (Hill P. , 1996) and ‘hybrid economics’ (Buchanan, 2014) by white Settler economists or researchers cannot begin until the colonial aspects mainstream economics, and its implications in education, are better understood. Also, the previous economics research works against decolonization—the repatriation of land to Indigenous people and the full recognition of Indigenous sovereignty (Tuck & Yang, 2012)—since it is an inconceivable futurity within the present mainstream economics narrative. In other words, we should not think of economics as innocent and capable of studying non-Euro-Canadian economies by simply, adding for instance traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to the analysis. This pattern of ‘knowledge integration’ also does not recognize the underlining

²⁵ And its negative impacts on nature and people.

realities of Indigenous people within Settler colonialism. This method is thus arguably a form of cultural appropriation (Simpson L. , 2001; Ng-A-Fook & Reis, 2010). It does not problematize colonial and oppressive aspects of mainstream economics, which it is ontologically founded upon. Moreover, in Canada the education system does not allow students to think about and challenge colonialism. There is a lack of resources dedicated to educate Canadians about Aboriginal peoples (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), especially in high schools (Bednasek, Godlewska, & Moore, 2010). Finally, Nēhiyaw student Erica Violet Lee (2015, para. 26) raises the concern that the integration of Indigenous content inside academic faculties may be “driven by corporatization and investments in extractive industries”—arguably by economics imperialism. There are several necessary steps before any Settler academic can respectfully engage with Indigenous knowledge, especially in the case of Settler researchers experimentally harmonizing Indigenous content with economics. Therefore, instead of reproducing mainstream economics over Indigenous ways of being, it is of high importance that economists rally in the deconstruction of the oppressive features encapsulated in the narrative of mainstream economics. In the next chapter, I throw an investigative lens onto the Staples Thesis. My study examines whether/how Settler colonialism is reproduced in the study of Canadian economic history.

Chapter II: Settler Colonialism and Canadian Economic History

History is written by the victors. As we ponder on this famous maxim, we can deconstruct some of its parameters: *who are the victors* and *why are they the victors*. By applying these questions with regards to the formulation of Canadian history, we can illustrate a general and oversimplified binary: Settlers and Indigenous peoples. In this case, it would be the Settlers who write history, inadvertently erasing the histories told by Indigenous people—a similar argument to that elaborated by Adam Barker and Emma Lowman (2015). Within Settler colonial studies and Indigenous studies, it is understood that the Settler colonizer's intention to eliminate Indigenous people is indeed deliberate (Wolfe, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Coulthard, 2014). The Indian Residential School is one of many state policies in Canada that exhibit the latter motive.

From before Confederation (1867) to the 1980-90s²⁶, more than 150,000 Indigenous children in Canada were taken from their families and sent to residential schools, predominantly and respectively headed by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). As a matter of fact, the report produced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) denounces Canada's residential school system as 'cultural genocide'.

Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are

²⁶ The last Canadian federally run residential school closed in 1996.

persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 1)

We can deduce that this history was not written by the Settler state, but merely funded by it. Actually, the establishment of the TRC in 2008 was the outcome of a class action lawsuit by survivors of the residential school system who settled out of court with the federal government and four churches²⁷ (Curry, 2015). Through the settlement, Canada will provide \$1.9-billion to the survivors (‘Common-experience payment’, and other payments for damages caused by sexual or serious physical abuse), and \$60-million for the establishment and work of the commission (Curry, 2015; Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, 2006). Since the payments for the survivors and the commission were drawn from a settlement agreement, we can easily assume that the payments were not acts of kindness or of generosity, but rather a legal obligation. Furthermore, the settlement legally relieves the Canadian government and the participating churches from “further liability except as set out in [the] Agreement” (Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, 2006, p. 8). Yet, it is interesting to understand that the residential schools were also designed for the State “to divest itself of its legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 3). What is this persistent structure that seeks to (literarily and literally) eliminate Indigenous people?

As historian Patrick Wolfe (2006) explains, Settler colonialism is not an event, but a structure. From that angle, the Indian Residential School system was an event, but

²⁷ The four churches involved in the final settlement: the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, The United Church of Canada, and Roman Catholic entities (RSSA, 2006).

also definitely part of a structure that thrives on the elimination of the Indigenous person. Hence, although the last residential school was shut down about twenty years ago, the event's termination does not translate into complete finality; the 'event' systematically pervades through its long lasting effects, as demonstrated by the survivors' stories. The broader Settler colonial structure remains and persists.

As shown in Chapter I, Canadian economics textbooks assume Indigenous people and their relations to land were superseded by (European) Settler people and structures. The TRC should not merely be filler for the historical gap in Canada's history, but another prime example that the history books and educational resources about Canada need to be completely redrawn. Otherwise, the persistent literary erasure will continue to legitimize the literal erasure of Indigenous people through rigid economic means, such as the extractivist²⁸ industry.

Settler Colonialism and Resource Extraction

Although not explicitly mentioned by the TRC, it is evident from its report that Settler colonialism provides a critical and necessary perspective on the history of Canada. For instance, Jen Preston (2013) argues that resource extraction in Canada should be historically analysed through the Settler colonial perspective. The author contends that the contemporary colluding relationship between the Canadian Settler state and private corporations echoes the early period of British colonialism in what is now Canada. While the "Hudson Bay Company worked with and on behalf of the British Crown" to negotiate

²⁸ Extractivism: to extract the most natural resources at an economically efficient pace (i.e. the lowest cost and shortest time possible).

with Indigenous populations, to acquire land and resources, nowadays energy and natural resource (extraction) corporations function in a similar manner with the Canadian State in order “to secure access to land and resources while strategically managing ‘the Indian problem’” (Preston J. , 2013, pp. 48-9). The aforementioned transition from a mercantilist economic structure to a neoliberal (industrial) economic structure functioned and developed within asymmetric colonial forms of domination. Preston (2013) also demonstrates how in present-day Canada the public and private relationship is informed by a White Settler colonial system. For example, independent researcher Jennifer Huseman and human rights lecturer Damien Short (2012, as cited by Preston, 2013, 47) explain that suddenly after reports of the Tar Sands (also known as Oil Sands) existed under Treaty 8 land the Canadian government started to launch policies to “extinguish aboriginal title to the vast Athabasca resources”. Therefore, any critical analysis of Canada’s energy and resource extraction projects must be construed through the neoliberal Settler colonial context, especially given the industry’s willingness to expand Canada’s export base²⁹ and the Canadian State’s need to claim authority over Indigenous land (Coulthard, 2014).

The purpose of this chapter is to interrogate Canadian economic history, with attention given to the Staples Thesis³⁰. This particular interrogation seeks to identify the possibility of a Settler colonial analysis of the important, yet controversial, Staples Thesis, which depicts Canada’s economy as historically extractive. The first section is a general overview of the Staples Thesis. Following its description, we then move on to review modern staples analysis (Second section). In section three, we consider the criticisms from

²⁹ See Enbridge’s web page ‘Our Pipelines’: <http://www.enbridge.com/DeliveringEnergy/OurPipelines.aspx>

³⁰ Although the Staples Thesis/Theory is heavily criticized and rejected, the thesis has not been replaced with an alternative hypothesis about Canada’s economic history (Neill, N/A). Thus, the staples approach cannot be completely disregarded (Neill, N/A).

the disciplines of orthodox economics and Marxist political economy. Finally, the amalgamation of the first three sections serves as a support for the final critical review of the Staples Thesis through the Settler colonial lens (Section four).

On the Staples Thesis

In the first and second section, we follow the chronological evolution of the Staples Thesis, starting from the 1920s and into the 21st Century. In that manner, we start with the early development of the staples concept, and finally complete the chronology with a review of modern staples approaches. Although Harold Innis was a prime developer of the Staples Thesis, the sections will not investigate the scholar *per se*. Rather, the investigative focus will be on the work arising out of his initial staples approach.

The Staples Thesis illustrates Canadian economic history by following the development of certain staple industries within Canada. From the early European colonial period to 21st century Canada, staples extraction has always been central to the country's development (Hutton, 2007). A staples industry can be briefly defined as producing "agricultur[al] and extractive resources, not requiring elaborate processing and finding a large portion of their market in international trade" (Bertram, 1967, p. 75). For example, the staples analytical focus evolved as follows: from the early cod fisheries, to the fur trade, to wheat development, and in the 20th and 21st century, to "mineral, oil, and hydroelectric staples" (Haley, 2011, p. 98). In other words, staples are essentially primary unprocessed resources derived from the land. Another sufficient characteristic (stemming from the original Staples Thesis) requires the staples in question to be highly exportable outside the country's border, to foreign markets. The latter aspect plays an important part in the thesis' understanding of center-margin relations. Briefly, in the case of Canada, this portrays a

historical situation where the staples-exporting country is perceived as part of the margin feeding staples to the center. Conversely, it attempts to explain a certain condition of dependence, since the investment (i.e. capital) required for the margin's staple industry originates from the same center.

In order to historically situate the Staples Thesis we travel back to 1923 when Harold Innis completed his doctoral thesis on *The History of the Canadian Pacific Railway*. This dissertation was his first attempt to develop an economic history of Canada, through the development of the first transnational railway system in Canada. According to Mackintosh (1953, p. 186), it was not his best work since it was filled with footnotes³¹ and was too technical, "dull". Fortunately, Innis' ideas materialized seven years later, when he completed *The Fur Trade in Canada* (c1956). This book is acclaimed as Innis' notable debut in the domain of economic interpretation (Brady, 1953). His work elaborated on the early history and development of the fur trade in Canada, and how the industry affected the economy, and Indigenous populations³². Three years later, Innis broadened his staples analysis (see Innis, 1933) and viewed staples production and export as principal determinants for the development of the Canadian economy (Mackintosh, 1953). In 1936, Innis finished his book on *Settlement and the Mining Frontier* where he examined the influence of the mining industry over the development of (Northern) Canada. Finally, he also evaluated the repercussions of Canada's early codfish industry within an international perspective (Innis, 1940). Afterwards, Innis slightly shifted gears by focusing his academic

³¹ Indeed, the footnotes outweighed the text for at least sixty-five pages (Mackintosh, 1953).

³² However, as it will be demonstrated in section four, the distinction and relationship between the Settler economy and Indigenous economy (and people) is neglected, since the latter is amalgamated into the former in Innis' Staples Thesis.

endeavour towards culture (see Innis, 1944) and the media of communication (Brady, 1953).

Staples Approaches

The staples approach was predominant in Canadian history studies between the 1920s and 1940s (Wellstead, 2007). As Mackintosh (1953, p. 191) claims, the “great project” of detailing and analysing the development of Canada’s economy through the lens of “the leading export staples” was completed by 1940. Yet, about twenty years later, the staples approach received a second wind from diverse modern approaches. In this section, we will examine recent staples concepts that have extended Harold Innis’ vision of Canadian economic history with concepts, such as economic linkages, staples trap, carbon trap, rigidity, and post-staples.

A Staples Theory of Economic Growth

Mel Watkins is another prominent, albeit comparatively contemporary, staples theorist, who developed the staples theory of economic growth in Canada. It is Watkins’ (1963, p. 144) claim that “staple exports are the leading sector of the economy and set the pace for economic growth”. His work promoted a considerable improvement to the study of how staples export industries develop. He stretched the development economist Albert Hirschman’s (1958) three separate linkage effects to theoretically connect staples industries and economic growth: backward, forward and final demand linkages. In other words, Watkins suggested an analysis that follows the expansion of staples export industries through their corresponding domestic connections with: the “home-production

of inputs” for the staples export sector (Backward linkage); the domestic “industries using the output of the [staples] export industry” (Forward); and the “domestic industries producing consumer goods” in exchange for the income generated in the staples export sector (Final demand) (1963, p. 145). These linkage effects are described as measurements of the “inducement to domestic investment” from an expansion in the staples (export) sector (Watkins, 1963, p. 145). Watkins (1963, p. 145) understood the staples thesis as “a theory of capital formation”. In other words, each linkage is shaped by its respective allocated investment, directing local capital formation, and finally shaping the overall export industry in question. In addition to the three linkages, Watkins (2007) later introduced a fourth linkage. The fiscal linkage pursues the generation of economic rents from the staples export industry. The primary intention of this linkage is to understand “who appropriates these rents and what is done with them”, especially since national economic growth is affected by these rents (Watkins, 2007, p. 218).

Staples Trap

The first three linkages permitted Watkins to illustrate the ‘staples trap’ phenomenon. In terms of the aforementioned linkages, the staples trap occurs due to a “weak set of linkages”, limiting domestic investment at the margin, and “support[ing] a strong economy at the centre” (Drache, 1982, p. 38). As a consequence, any nation under a staples trap lacks the capacity to innovate beyond a staples-led export economy and to thereafter further develop new economic systems (Haley, 2011). For the labour economist Jim Stanford, the staples trap is similar to the infamous ‘Dutch Disease’ concept, where for example, “an appreciating petro-dollar crowd[s] out the manufacturing sector” (Haley,

2011, p. 106). In other words, the income flow from the staples industry returned to the local economy is not enough to generate diverse non-staples opportunities. With passion, Mel Watkins alternatively describes a crucial, yet marginally analysed, characteristic of the staples trap:

The bottom line on the staples trap is that, on the Canadian list of fundamental freedoms, the very first is to export anything, anywhere, regardless of the consequences [...] They [Canadian staples firms] also export a tendency to violate human rights and foment conflict—something done in Canada with respect to the rights of aboriginal peoples (e.g., mine their land and leave it spoiled) and the rights of workers as well (Watkins, 2007, p. 220)

Low-carbon economy researcher and PhD graduate Brendan Haley (2011) illustrates the staples trap as a cyclical pattern between three characteristics: ‘Center-margin relation’, ‘Rigidities’ and ‘Problems of adjustment’ (Figure 1). In brief terms, the margin nation produces and exports staple goods to major industrial centres (Clarke, 2013). This relation draws investments for the development of rigid institutions and infrastructures to protect and expand the staples-export interests. As a consequence, the margin staples-export nation is also heavily invested in these rigidities. Thus, during economic crises and instabilities, “the capacity installed [goes] unused and the overhead costs incurred produce[s] debts” (Haley, 2011, p. 102). The debt and unused capacity are certain embodiments of the adjustment problems faced by the staples-export margin with regard to economic changes. To solve for the latter issues, Haley (2011, p. 102) explains that the margin is forced to search for more staples, demanded by the center, in order to “fill the unused capacity, pay off its debts, and assuage its vested interests”. Finally, the staples trap cycle closes, and the center-margin relation restarts by reproducing additional, although very similar, rigidities within the margin’s borders.

Carbon Trap

Possibly answering Watkins' (2007) call for an ecological version of the staples approach, Haley (2011) adapted the 'staples trap' to analyse Canada's carbon dependence—i.e. 'carbon trap'—and suggested a framework to “transition toward a low carbon economy”. The carbon trap is a specific reference to the bitumen (or tar) staple, and its respective impacts. For instance, as a form of “systemic lock-in”, a carbon trap obstructs any sustainability transition and “contribute[s] to the maintenance of global carbon lock-in” (Haley, 2011, p. 121). Haley argues that due to center-margin relations, certain series of rigidities are installed and self-reinforced at the margins, strategically benefiting the center economies. These rigidities³³ deepen the economies of the margin's dependency on the staples export industry supplying to center economies. In the case of Canada, the overhead costs of these (rigid) infrastructures are usually covered by the margin State. For instance, the “initial technology to separate bitumen from sand”, an imperative innovation for the oil economy, was developed by the provincial and federal governments in Canada (Haley, 2011, p. 113). Additionally, the State provides large subsidies to staple industries. In fact, the federal and provincial governments covered \$2.8 Billion of the Tar Sands industry's operating expenditure³⁴ in 2009, yet the industry produces only about 2% of Canada's GDP (Asadollahi, 2014). Therefore, with the Canadian State politically and financially implicated in the infrastructure enabling the expanding development of staple industries it becomes practically impossible to suddenly turn away from the large public subsidies it invested.

³³ There are at least four listed rigidities: organizational, political, intellectual, and ecological rigidities (Haley, 2011). Harold Innis also talked about structural, and price rigidities (Drache, 1982).

³⁴ Excluding the 'carbon tax' opportunity loss—between \$4-\$18 billion a year (Asadollahi, 2014).

Towards Post-Staples

Although the historical staples trap presence in Canada cannot be ignored, the staples economy has nevertheless witnessed radical transformations in the last two decades (Hutton, 2007). We can follow these changes through three periods, as delineated by the energy economist Adam Wellstead (2007). First of all, Innis identified the early period of the staples state along the classic staples lines of the center-margin political framework. Wellstead (2007) considers it the Golden Age period for the staples economy in Canada. Thereafter, the Canadian staples political economy declined at the start of the Keynesian welfare state period (1946-1990). Wellstead (2007, p. 12) claims that the Canadian economy started shifting away “from dependence on staples production” in the 1960s. A third distinctive period arrives as the fall of the Keynesian state enables the neoliberal state to emerge and redirect the staples economy.

The new political state also entails a new path for the staples industry organization: a post-staples political economy, as labelled by Wellstead (2007) and urban studies professor Thomas Hutton (2007). Nevertheless, ‘post-staples’ is not an absolute identity for Canada, nor does it refer to its political economy as a ‘non-staples’ one. The latter’s definition provided by Hutton (2007) represents particular shifts—from a mature staples economy to a post-staples economy. However, there are Canadian regions still at a mature chapter with regards to staples development. In other words, there are many “new opportunities for staples-led development” in Canada (Hutton, 2007). Nevertheless, both Hutton (2007) and Wellstead (2007) argue that the Canadian economy is transitioning towards a service-led and knowledge-based economy. Additionally, the staples center-

margin relation has spatially transcended to a metropole-periphery relation in Canada. As such, the (post) staples analysis recalibrates the staples focus onto the internal relations within (and between) Canadian provinces, such as British Columbia, Québec, and the prairie and Maritime provinces (Hutton, 2007). The conditions pertaining to the post-staples transition in Canada also radically impact Canadian socio-politics:

New rounds of industrial restructuring, the repositioning of cities and settlements within the Canadian urban hierarchy and [...] international networks, and influential social movements (including multiculturalism and environmentalism) [...] increasingly privilege cities and urban interests over those of resource industries, settlements, and allied constituencies [further marginalizing] the staple economy in the shaping of public consciousness, in the ordering of priorities within the agencies of the state and among policy communities, and in the formation of social identity (Hutton, 2007, 11-12)

Finally, Haley (2011) also outlined an ‘escape’ strategy in the ‘Staples Development Pathways’ model (Figure 1). His analysis resembles the aforementioned post-staples direction of Canada. Haley (2011) refers to Watkins’ instruction to exploit the series of linkages in the staples industry in order to invest in new non-staples industries. An ‘Advanced Development Pathway’ would purportedly generate diversification and innovation, and lead to ‘Advanced Industrialism’ (Haley, 2011). For instance, Canadian industries could produce value-added products such as aluminum, and pulp and paper production by exploiting forward linkages from hydroelectric and forest resources. Rather than completely halting Canada’s resource extraction economy and developing a non-staples economy, staples theorists generally agree that Canada’s post-staples transition can only be fruitful if Canada’s staples were mainly drawn as inputs for domestic industries.

Staples Thesis and its Critics

The latter overview of the staples thesis literature is incomplete without laying out some of its extensive academic criticism. In general, there are two brands in economics that respectively identify some difficulties with the original staples thesis: orthodox economics and Marxist political economy.

Orthodox Critique

On the one hand, orthodox economists do not endorse the political and economic problems in Canada articulated by Innis, or by Watkins. For the orthodox economist W.A. Mackintosh, the staples economy was simply regarded as a developmental transition that would ultimately favour Canada. Political science professor Daniel Drache (1982, p. 39) mentions that, in contrast with Innis and Watkins, orthodox economists view the Canadian staples problem as a geographical conflict and a “purely internal” issue. In that manner, rather than investigating the production of staples in Canada, it was the discord between the early Settlers and the surrounding geography that slowed Canada’s industrial development. In other words, the issue at play for Mackintosh and other economists was the non-conformity of the “intractable” and “irrational” environment to the Settler’s “rational economic market forces” (Drache, 1982, p. 39). Additionally, one ‘internal’ issue identified by Mackintosh was that the early Settlers did not fully control the Canadian industry. Instead, the capital invested within the northern Commonwealth country was historically supplied and owned by foreign investors, a contrasting determinant to the early American industrial experience.

Drache (1982) argues that the latter criticism of Mackintosh is referred to as the geographical determinism concept—a theoretical contribution unsurprisingly originating from Canada. The concept reasons that market forces (i.e. production) are not impactful variables. On the other hand, Drache (1982) argues that market forces ultimately transform the geography, reducing distance and topographical barriers. Finally, although Drache (1982, p. 39) remarks the ‘purely internal issue’ critique as “seem[ingly] crude and simplistic”, he still acknowledges its important relevance to Canadian economic history.

In *Staples Redux*, Mel Watkins (2007) replies to general criticisms with regards to the staples thesis. Doubtlessly perceived as a dismissive act, Watkins (2007, p. 213) regards the criticisms towards the thesis as “put forward mostly by noneconomists who misunderstand the staples theory of growth and mishandle the data.” Nevertheless, Watkins does not completely ignore the need to improve the approach, as he encourages the development of an environmental extension to the staples thesis. One common criticism labels the thesis as an overly staples-oriented historical explanation of the Canadian economy. In other words, the staples thesis apparently depicts Canadian economic development and growth as *solely* a product of its staples-export industry. For instance, Watkins (2007, p. 214) cites the entry on staples thesis from the *Oxford Companion to Canadian History*: “it is particularly inadequate as an account of the balanced, diversified economies” (McCalla, 2004, p. 597). For Watkins (2007) these critiques missed the explicit point of the thesis, which is to observe and investigate the ‘bias’ or ‘imbalance’ of staples-dominance in Canada. Another argument posed against the thesis contends its irrelevancy to Canada, “a country sufficiently mature, developed, and important to be in the G-8” (Watkins, 2007, p. 215). While the post-staples literature present itself as evidence of the

growing insignificance of staples, Canada is still dependently attached to trade deals, such as NAFTA³⁵, further liberalizing (foreign) access to Canada's oil and gas resources and classifying the Canadian dollar as a petrocurrency. Also, the post-staples state is not a non-staples state, since certain regions in Canada have not emerged beyond a staples-led economy. In fact, "in 2015, Alberta's produced about 80% of Canada's crude oil and 68% of its natural gas" (Alberta Economic Development and Trade, 2015). The 'irrelevancy' argument is a very loose simplification of Canada's complex economy, especially with regards to certain resource-dependent regions. In fact, the 2014-16 severe drop in oil prices has produced large repercussions in Alberta, such as a higher unemployment rate (Parkinson, 2016), a higher suicide rate (CBC News, 2015) and a "crime spike" in Edmonton (CTV News, 2015).

Marxist Critique

Although misguided, according to the Marxist theorist David McNally (1981), there were many reported efforts to explain Innis' work as a Marxist approach to political economy in Canada. However, McNally (1981) and Watkins (2007) believe that Harold Innis was much rather influenced by the economics of Adam Smith. McNally (1981, p. 40) argues that Innis' staples approach was essentially "put in classic Smithian terms", with its focus on the price system and commodity production. Furthermore, as a student of Innis, the late economist William Easterbrook also referred to his PhD supervisor as a "disciple of Adam Smith" (McNally, 1981, p. 38). In addition to Smith's influence, the economist Thorstein Veblen also significantly guided Innis' academic experience (Brady, 1953;

³⁵ The recent, but still in-the-works, Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement will supersede NAFTA.

McNally, 1981; Baragar, 1996). McNally (1981, p. 38) explains that both Innis' critique of neoclassical economics and his "neglect of the role of social relations of production in economy life" were largely due to his early exposure to Veblen, at the University of Chicago.

Of the heterodox (political) economics field, David McNally (1981, p. 38) argues that Innis' staples approach represents commodity fetishism—"the attribution of creative powers in the historical process to the staple commodity as a natural and technical object". In other words, the staples thesis observes the construction of society as the outcome derived from particular staple commodity characters, rather than social relations. The latter approach writes an economic history of Canada that forgoes all inequalities present in labour relations within capitalism. This form of 'market abstractionism' and 'commodity fetishism' is precisely what Karl Marx confronted: vulgar materialism (McNally, 1981). The wedding of the staples thesis to Marxist analysis is thus a misguided effort for McNally (1981).

A Marxist version of the staples thesis would see "staple production and export as dominated by a market-centred process of surplus expropriation that results in chronic dependency and underdevelopment", as argued by McNally (1981, p. 41). A historical materialist analysis of Canada would instead investigate the wage-labour and capital dialectical relationship, and the centralization and reproduction of capital, among other relatable Marxist approaches (McNally, 1981; Kellogg, 1989). Historical materialism would thus identify staple commodities as products of those relations, rather than historical agents as purported by the staples thesis.

Staples (Thesis and Settler) Colonialism

In this section, Settler colonial theory will be used as the point of reference to explain that Settlers wrote the staples thesis, for Settlers, and for the betterment of the greater Settler colonial complex. However, the fundamental argument derived from the following analysis is not that staples theorists intentionally did not write about the dispossession of Indigenous lands—albeit, that may be a legitimate argument. Instead, the analysis depicts a missed opportunity for the development of an alternative and genuine Canadian economic history.

Colonial Linkages

In addition to the previous section, any critical discussion about the staples thesis, as well as the economy it describes, is also incomplete without a focus on the structural violence embedding staples-led industries. Along with many other authors, writer and environmental activist Anna Pringle understands the series of linkages intertwining numerous oil industries in Canada as a form of neocolonialism:

The fracking of liquefied natural gas from First Nations' unceded territories in B.C. [British Columbia] produces the liquefied natural gas that is subsequently used for in situ drilling projects. Tarsands processing occurs near the Aamjiwnaang community in Sarnia, Ontario. Kilometres of rail lines and pipelines transport oil across treaty territory. The oil industry is only able to exist through neocolonial land grabs and occupation (Pringle, 2016, p. 20)

Altogether, this detailed sketch of the oil industry is very interesting and accurate, but it is especially compelling with regards to the staples thesis as well. In fact, it is (unintentionally) an ontological departure from Watkins' (1963) early linkages, and it also goes beyond his later suggestion of “an ecological history of staples” (2007, p. 220). Firstly,

Watkins (1963) regards (part of) the (nature of) existence of economic growth to be derived from the financial linkages of the staples-export industries. On the other hand, Pringle (2016, p. 20) pays full attention to “neocolonial land grabs and occupation” as a perpetual structure that lies at the existential core of the oil industry, and all subsequent economic growth. Secondly, Watkins (2007, p. 220) argues that the staples thesis is narrowly focused on the “linkages via the market”, and that it allocates “insufficient attention” to the environmental impacts. “The popular mind”, as Watkins (2007, p. 220) held, “may tend [...] to ignore the persistent damage done to nature by staples production”. Reaching far beyond Watkins’ (2007) environmental extension, Anna Pringle’s (2016) description of the unconventional oil industry in Canada recognizes that there are people who actually live on the lands persistently damaged by staples production, and its distribution. Basically, Anna Pringle forces us to recognize the undeniable intersections between extractivism—the industrial practice of extracting and exporting natural resources as defined by the economist Alberto Acosta (2013)—and environmental racism³⁶ across Canada.

Despite the gap between Pringle (2016) and Watkins (1963; 2007), staples theorists have somewhat addressed the concern of staples production and Indigenous peoples. In many cases, it is far from an explicit staples concern. For instance, Innis’ PhD dissertation mentions the 1881 *Act Respecting the Canadian Pacific Railway*. However, he does not mention Article 12 (Canada, 1881), a crucial aspect that ‘politically’ enabled the construction of the trans-Canada railway at the expense of the extinguishment of Indigenous claims to land.

³⁶ Environmental philosopher Laura Westra (1999, p. 112) defines environmental racism as, “racism practiced in and through the environment. It refers to environmental injustice whereby, for instance, toxic and hazardous waste facilities and business operations are sited with disproportionate frequency in or near poor, nonwhite communities.”

The Government shall extinguish the Indian title affecting the lands herein appropriated, and to be hereafter granted in aid of the railway (Canada, 1881, Article 12)

Founded in 1881, the Canadian Pacific Railway “was formed to physically unite Canada and Canadians from coast to coast” (Canadian Pacific Railway, N/A). Additionally, this particular confederacy project was enhanced through the deliberate act of Sir John A. Macdonald (the first prime minister of Canada) to starve thousands of Indigenous people, in order to make way for the flux of white settlement (Daschuk, 2013). There are academic examples that point to a staples thesis reflection of the impacts unto Indigenous peoples (see Innis, c1956; Mackintosh, 1953; Watkins, 2007), but they do not explicitly refer to the greater colonial system that affects them. Rather, staples theorists assign an older theoretical form of colonialism to explain the issues of center-margin relations, as argued in the next sub-sections.

Settler Colonialism: Historiography

For this section, the historical location of the definition of colonialism used by staples theorists will be situated within the present Canadian form of colonialism, as prescribed by the history scholar Lorenzo Veracini’s historiographical research of settler colonialism. Veracini (2013) identified four distinct periods in which ‘settler colonialism’ as an analytical category evolved through time.

Up until the 1960s, the concept of colonialism did not interrogate the Settler, but rather studied their ‘pioneering’ character and the uncharted frontiers. Lorenzo Veracini (2013, p. 316) explains that the “analysis of pioneering endeavours centred on frontiers,

their exceptionality or, conversely, their comparability”. For instance, the Settler’s exclusive relationship with the ‘indigenously’ lands, as was claimed, and the expected reproduction of their European sociopolitical bodies onto those lands were compelling topics for scholars in the 1960s (Veracini, 2013). Shortly, about a decade later, Settler minorities were engaged in anti-colonial struggles fighting for Settler independence, particularly across Africa. Running alongside the emerging Settler efforts, the ‘settler colonialism’ word compound and analytical category started to emerge in the academic world, but it was still paralleled to the ‘colonialism’ category (Veracini, 2013). As a consequence, the Indigenous and Settler identities were conflated and were considered as fighting against the same metropolitan imperialism. In other words, colonialism was allegedly affecting both Settlers and Indigenous peoples indistinguishably. Veracini summarizes the focus of ‘hyper-colonialism’³⁷ during the 1960s and 1970s:

As the focus was on anti-colonial confrontation, accomplished settler colonial forms in locales characterised by the absence of open anti-colonial challenge (that is, the white settler nations) fell from view (Veracini, 2013, 321)

The spotlight of ‘settler colonialism’ analysis was once again adjusted, in the late 1970s and 1980s, as the analytical category moved towards the economic history and sociology of the Settler world. It was largely used as an academic evaluation of Settler societies and their capitalist characters. First of all, through this analytical category the “settler world was neither constituted by European (or neo-European) fragments [...] nor [as] a subset of the colonial world”, as Veracini (2013, p. 323) argues. Additionally, Veracini (2013, p. 321) clarifies that the study of ‘Settler’ or ‘dominion’ capitalism—implying, but not

³⁷ The author also labels the ‘hyper-colonialism’ category as: ‘Settler colonialism’ within Colonialism (Veracini, 2013, 317).

critically studied as, the “sustained high levels of economic performance together with the sudden and irretrievable disappearance of indigenous polities and agency”—was very common amongst scholars.

Veracini (2013, p. 325) explains that up until the last decade of the 20th century, “nobody ever denied the existence of colonial history.” Nevertheless, colonial history wrote about Settlers and their settlement, but usually ignored the presence of Indigenous peoples and their subjective experiences within the Settler societies (Veracini, 2013). Starting in the mid-1990s, Settler colonial studies became an autonomous scholarly field. Amongst many other critical disciplines, this new intellectual space was mostly concerned with “the recovery of the historical experience of indigenous peoples in the white settler nations” (Veracini, 2013, p. 324). This rather radical, yet marginal, public awareness engendered many reconciliatory initiatives and public apologies within Settler nations (Veracini, 2013). In fact, after the 1990s, Canada participated in a similar public awareness of colonialism, with the closure of the last Indian Residential School in 1996, the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People in 1999 (Hurley & Wherrett, 1999), the recent report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), and the upcoming national inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Canada, 2015).

Situating Harold Innis’ Staples Thesis

With regards to the Staples thesis, Veracini (2013) situates the approach within the 1970s-1980s conception of Settler colonialism. Actually, Veracini (2013, p. 321) explains that the late scholarly category focused “on the economies of the settler polities”. Renowned staples theorists regarded the center-margin relations as colonial relations that

rendered their society's development as dependent and "closely integrated" to the center (Veracini, 2013, 321). In other words, Settler colonialism for staples theorists was theoretically without *their* occupation on Indigenous land³⁸. Rather, the staples thesis tells the story of Settlers in the New World and their commercial relationships with the Old World (Europe), and later with the United States. Additionally, post-staples theorists also recognized the internal provincial relations in Canada, as depicted by Wellstead (2007), but again without a critical look at Settler colonial relations.

Harold Innis' works provide examples of the 'colonialism' conception respectively foregrounding the staples thesis. In *The Fur Trade in Canada* (c1999) Innis explains the importance of the European and Indigenous contact for the development of the fur trade, in the 17th century. As Innis (c1999, p. 15) puts it, "the fur trade was the line of contact between a relatively complex civilization and a much more simple civilization." Furthermore, the 'Indians' (specifically, the Iroquois and Hurons) were seen as instrumental middle persons/agents supplying Europeans with raw commodities derived from beavers (i.e. meat and furs). The 'Indians' were in turn supplied with European goods, and certain technological 'improvements' (Innis, c1999). Innis also depicts certain early consequences at the start of the new commercial relationship: "renewed Indian wars and destruction" (c1999, p. 20), "immediate and complete destruction of the animal [beaver]" (c1999, p. 5) and their dependence on European products. Innis elaborated his thoughts on the repercussions from the fur trade economy, as such:

As old cultural traits fell gradually into disuse and old ways of getting livelihood were forgotten, the Indian became increasingly dependent on the products of the specialized

³⁸ Here assuming that staples theorists in Canada are Settlers.

equipment of Europe and increasingly dependent upon his [the Indian's] supply of furs (Innis, c1999, p. 18)

In the same manner, Mackintosh (1953, p. 187) mentioned that Innis' fur trade analysis with regards to the subject matter surrounding Indigenous peoples was focused on the "modifications in Indian culture". The analysis indirectly follows Patrick Wolfe's 'logic of elimination': Settler colonizers seek to "liquidate" Indigenous societies and finally "erect a new colonial society on the expropriated land base" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). For Innis (c1999, p. 18) it was clear that Indigenous "old ways of getting livelihood" were slipping away, with an inevitable European replacement. Additionally, the logic is indirectly applied because Innis (c1999) never mentions 'colonialism'. The European invasion is perceived as a natural, uncontested and desired economic 'evolution' for Indigenous peoples. However, for Indigenous critical theory, there is a paradox with the 'logic'. American geography professor Nicholas Brown (2014, p. 6) explains that the "violence has not ended, yet invasion has not succeeded." What is preventing the completion of Settler colonialism? Indigenous resistance and survivance³⁹ have, in the words of anthropology professor Audra Simpson (2011, p. 205), "called up the failure of the project [Settler colonialism] itself"⁴⁰. By extension, the 'logic of elimination' is flawed. As such, Veracini (2014, pp. 311-313) posits that "[w]hile the structure *attempts* to eliminate Indigenous peoples", Settler colonial studies contend that "it fails to do so" primarily due to "the Indigenous capacity for

³⁹ I use the term 'survivance' in the same manner as Anishinaabe prolific poet and novelist Gerald Vizenor. "Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry" (Vizenor, 1999, vii).

⁴⁰ For a historical account of Indigenous resistance and resurgence in Canada please start by reading Coulthard (2012), Simpson L. (2011) and Simpson A. (2014).

survival”⁴¹. If the project can never be finalized, then the lack of Indigenous agency and power in the staples story needs to be contested and examined.

The ‘logic of elimination’ is indirectly followed by Harold Innis since the latter confrontation is ignored. Furthermore, since staples theorists assume agency to be embedded in the commodity, as in *commodity fetishism* (McNally, 1981), the Indigenous and Settler narrative is supposedly managed and guided by the socio-political and economic development of the fur industry, and other staples. However, is it actually true that the Settler’s narrative is also equally dependent upon staples? By running the Settler colonial lens upon the question a second, yet striking, question arises. Within a staples economy, do Settlers control the(ir) overall narrative due their exclusive privileges in a Settler colonial society? This question is partly fulfilled by, what Patrick Wolfe (2013) calls, the transference of colonial agency. The historian also explains that “[c]olonialism is a historical process through which both parties [Settler and Native] become transformed”, but the Settler’s transformation is regarded as “self-justifying” and “optimistically represented as progress”, while “change on the Native’s part figures [...] as a fall from grace, the grace of authenticity” (Wolfe, 2013, p. 11). Therefore, if we understand colonialism as an unending relationship, then it is not absurd to analyse the relationship as complementary to a Settler staples state and economy. In that manner, the Settler develops its staples economy at the expense of Indigenous livelihood and sovereignty⁴².

Actually, the aforementioned question also echoes another quite identical inquiry developed by Nicholas Brown (2014). The author asks, “does a distinct form of

⁴¹ In response to historian Tim Rowse’s (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2013) critique of the indeterminacy of ‘settler colonial studies’, Lorenzo Veracini (2014, p.313) argues that the dialectic between elimination and survival “is never resolved”.

⁴² The ‘transference of colonial agency’ concept is an extension of Patrick Wolfe’s theoretical adjustment of the dependency theory: “[...] colonialism is a relationship: one party develops at the expense of the other” (2013, p.11).

accumulation emerge from the dialectic between primitive accumulation⁴³ and settler colonialism” (Brown N. A., 2014, p. 1)? In brief, the author’s dialectic ‘logic of settler accumulation’ examines why and how “primitive accumulation matters within settler-colonial contexts” (Brown N. A., 2014, p. 7). Brown seems to affirm that in a Settler colonial context the project of ‘primitive accumulation’ failed, but nonetheless persists in an alternate form, namely, ‘settler accumulation’. Ultimately, Brown’s latter dialectical category depicts how the persistence of accumulation (i.e. dispossession) is enhanced by, and takes advantage of the ‘naturalized’ Settler colonial structures.

Conclusion

Ultimately, my rough hypothesis is as follows: staples theorists formulate the unequal commercial relationship between the center and margin as a structure that reproduces itself through linkages, crises and rigidities (Haley, 2011), but colonialism is rendered as a past and completed event. If the wrongs were committed in the past, could colonialism be considered as a Settler accomplishment? As discussed above earlier, Lorenzo Veracini (2014) and Audra Simpson (2011) argue that Settler colonialism is a structure that cannot be finalized due to Indigenous resistance and capacity to survive. In the same manner therefore, a Settler Staples economy is contested and incomplete since it is constantly confronted with alternate ways of being with the land. In other words, the

⁴³ In the case of what is sought throughout this research, Marx’s ‘primitive accumulation’ is not suitable enough as a critical lens to operate an analysis of capitalism and Settler colonialism. As will be explained, the ‘settler accumulation’ concept is preferable. Rather than a singular event that divorced the producer from their means of production or separated Indigenous peoples from their land (McMichael, 1980), David Harvey’s ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (2004) identifies the *persistence* and *reproduction* of dispossession in capitalism. Brown (2014) reads ‘primitive accumulation’ and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ respectively as an event and a structure. Settler accumulation is understood as a dialectical analysis between two structures (Settler colonialism and accumulation by dispossession) that historically and simultaneously reinforce and legitimize each other (Brown, 2014).

Settler economy's authority over stolen staples generated from stolen land is contested and not fully complete.

Furthermore, the Staples thesis conceivably mirrors at least one 'move to innocence'⁴⁴. Actually, the Staples thesis equivocates (Settler) colonialism with center-margin relations, a favoured analytical framework amongst staples theorists. As discussed earlier, the 1970s-80s 'colonialism' definition conflates the history of Settlers and Indigenous peoples as one and the same—in this case, as the economic history of Canada. In other words, staples theorists equivocate the (Settler) struggles relating to center-margin relations with the (Indigenous) struggles within Settler colonial relations. As a matter of fact, Robert Winks' 1969 foreword to *The Fur Trade in Canada* obliquely affirms the latter 'move': "It [the book] is Indian history in its evidence of how the Hurons and the Ottawas became the middlemen in the fur trade" (Innis, c1999, p. xxx). Additionally, historian Arthur Ray wrote in the introduction of *The Fur Trade in Canada* that

Innis argued that the resulting scramble for the beaver and other furs that aboriginal traders and hunters supplied set in motion a circular and cumulative process that propelled the industry across Canada and drew a succession of Native economies into the European economic orbit (Innis, c1999, p. vi)

For revolutionary scholars Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012, p. 19) equivocation is applied to depict "the vague equating of colonialisms that erases the sweeping scope of land as the basis of wealth, power, law in settler nation-states". Ray's description of the fur trade story written by Harold Innis depicts a very common liberal sentiment. For Barker and Lowman (2015, p. 6), this sentiment strives to correct the colonial wrongs of the past

⁴⁴ Settler moves to innocence "problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity" (Tuck et al., 2014, 3). Tuck and Yang (2012, 4) lists six such moves and explain that the moves "ultimately represent settler fantasies of easier paths to reconciliation".

by “fully includ[ing] Indigenous communities in the benefits of citizenship in the multicultural state of Canada.”⁴⁵ In the words of Arthur Ray (Innis, c1999), Native economies and societies are propelled into the European economic orbit and reap the benefits of citizenship in the multicultural state of Canada. Ultimately, I argue that Harold Innis equated center-margin colonialism with Settler colonialism, but centered the critical analysis on the Settler, disregarding his own Settler (colonial) political-economic organization occupying unceded Indigenous land.

‘History Written by Settlers’

‘History is written by the victors’. I absolutely disagree. It follows the logic of elimination, whereas the TRC demonstrates that there are no victors, no conquerors, within the contested geography of Canada. In fact, the TRC report is a rendering of the Settler colonial project and of its incompleteness. In the case of the history told by Staples theorists, Settlers and their respective institutions appear to be the sole bearers of agency and power to transcend/produce futurity. Although the logic of elimination is not explicitly followed by the Staples Thesis, Innis (c1999) does frame the disappearance of Indigenous peoples and their traditional means and ways of being as inevitable, with the Settlers moving onto their lands. The Staples Thesis thus omits an important contention in the history of staples (resource) extraction in Canada. Jen Preston (2013) contends that the resource extraction industry in Canada is supported by a White Settler colonial structure.

⁴⁵ The other hand—on the conservative side—harbors Tom Flanagan and Conrad Black and their respective assimilationist visions.

Additionally, Staples theorists fetishize staple commodities (McNally, 1981), rather than assess the relationships that enabled the extraction and production of staples.

Finally, settler colonial theory presents a contrasting prevision to the liberal ideal of Canadian society⁴⁶. As in many histories, the narrative surrounding staples economic development is likely controlled by the self-entitled agency of the alleged victor; the Settler. In other words, Settlers and the Settler state manage the production of knowledge. This form of epistemology normalizes the colonial history of Canada. The Staples thesis ‘indigenizes’ Settler society and subsequently conflates the Settler’s staples struggle as the Indigenous struggle, putatively enabling the Settler to replace the Indigenous person.

Arguably, Canadian economics ontology (i.e. its textbooks and the Staples Thesis) can be thus studied as seeking to replace Indigenous history. Yet, ontology is of very small importance for the discipline. It is the technical and abstract production of (economic) knowledge that mostly preoccupies mainstream economists. As I discuss in the following chapter, I identify the identical Settler colonial parameters inscribed in the epistemology of mainstream economics.

⁴⁶ Notwithstanding as well the deep contrast between settler colonial theory and the Canadian conservative ideal society (Barker & Lowman, 2015).

Chapter III: Mainstream Economics and Settler Colonial Epistemology

“Real progress in economics, as in all sciences, presupposes real world involvement, not only self-referential deductive reasoning within formal-analytical mathematical models”

(Syll, 2016, p. 21)

The production of knowledge is not innocent; certain epistemologies tend to categorize, improving management and control; this affects and forms the world. In the case of imperial governance, “predicting and accounting for the minds of empire’s Others is a competence on which governance depends” (Stoler, 2008, p. 355). As such, European imperial formations were premised on the racial categorization of subjects. However, with blurring lines of physical (racial) differentiation between European and non-European subjects, epistemic anxieties complicate the guidance of colonial administrators (Stoler, 2008). In other words, the “tactical register”—the framework that distinguishes ‘you’ from ‘others’, as provided by the so-called ‘science of race’—was not always an efficient tool for the colonizers (Stoler, 2008, p. 360). Therefore, the resultant epistemic choice (i.e. how racial belonging or political desires are assessed) for colonial agents “depended on a reading of sensibilities [beyond] science, on a measure of affective states—of affiliations and attachments” (Stoler, 2008, p. 352). The way we see the world and each other within it does matter since it predicates how wealth and rights (and freedoms) are distributed (Stoler, 2008). Furthermore, as anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler (2008) implicitly indicates, the character of the producers (and possessors) of knowledge also matters to the configuration of institutions and society.

In a Settler colonial society, knowledge production can serve to dispossess and eliminate Indigenous peoples. Professors Eve Tuck and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2013, p. 74) argue, “Settler colonialism is typified by its practiced epistemological refusal

to recognize the latent relations of the settler colonial triad⁴⁷; the covering of its track.” In other words, Settler colonial societies produce knowledge that covers the systematic and structural oppressive delineations underlying its institutions and cultures. This involves forgetting the past, yet present, to draw convenient Settler futurities⁴⁸, or as Stoler (2008, p. 353) puts it, “Epistemic practice focused not what had occurred but on what could be in the future.”

The exclusive object of investigation for this chapter is the epistemology of mainstream economics in the context of Settler colonialism. How are economic relationships (i.e. the exchange of goods/services) studied in a Settler society in pursuit of land and the elimination of Indigenous personhood? To develop part of the answer, we follow the ‘logic of elimination’: Settler colonizers seek to “liquidate” Indigenous societies and finally “erect a new colonial society on the expropriated land base” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388)—Indigenous peoples are politically out of view; they do not exist anymore; there is no resistance; Settler society is absolutely uncontested. However, Indigenous theorists have pointed to the logic’s paradox. Indigenous peoples and nations are still very much alive, and are in fact resisting colonialism and blossoming from within their communities (Simpson L., 2011). If there is no logic, is it still common sense? The settler common sense, as studied by Marc Rifkin (2013, pp. 322-3), views the project of settlement—“the exertion of control by non-Natives over Native peoples and lands”—as part of the “ordinary, non reflexive conditions of possibility”. In my opinion, common sense says that Settler

⁴⁷ “In North America, settler colonialism operates through a triad of relationships, between the (white [but not always]) settlers, the Indigenous inhabitants, and chattel slaves who are removed from their homelands to work stolen land” (Gaztambide-Fernández & Tuck, 2013, 74). Settler colonial practices embody land theft, private property (capitalism) and slavery.

⁴⁸ As professor Eve Tuck (personal communication, during a conference, March 22nd, 2016) defined [paraphrase], futurities are what we do in the present to create many futures.

colonialism is not a complete assumption in Settler societies, but still mostly part of its historical ontological progression. Therefore, a more suitable, yet similar, question is posed: How does the epistemology of economics exhibit the Settler common sense, reproducing the Settler colonial venture of land through elimination and dispossession?

In order to inform the investigation of Settler colonial epistemological tendencies in economics, the pertinence of accounting methodologies for colonial ambitions will be demonstrated as structurally and systematically persistent within colonial governance institutions, especially in the context of Canada. The second section of this chapter reviews general orthodox and feminist critiques of economics epistemology. All in all, there is a growing academic consensus that reveals mainstream economics' obsessive reliance on mathematics, deduction and rationality, allegedly generating knowledge for a controllable, manageable and predictable society. Finally, since there is yet no literature with an explicit critical Settler colonial appraisal of economics epistemology, the arguments forming the final section will be drawn from and inspired by the overall heterodox assessment, Settler colonial studies, and Indigenous feminist theories. My conclusions will ultimately be a mix of each critical approach. As such, the third and fourth sections investigate the potential for epistemological erasure⁴⁹ inherent within the methodologies of mainstream economics. Revolutionarily, Indigenous refusal breaks the 'logic of elimination', as envisioned by Settler common sense, as well as the oppressive epistemology of mainstream economics, to generate and affirm Indigenous political-economic resurgence. Finally, I conclude with my final thoughts about this chapter.

⁴⁹ For this research, epistemological erasure means the production of knowledge that centers the economic interests of the Settler Capitalist state, and is used to 'legally' justify infringement of Indigenous rights and title.

Accounting and Colonialism

There is a recent trend in accounting literature that investigates the role of accounting with regards to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, their lands, cultures, politics, and socio-economic structures. In general, the literature agrees that accounting is seen as a technique done *to* and *for* Indigenous people, rather than done *by* Indigenous peoples (Buhr, 2011). For several accounting scholars, the issue at hand is the intent of the means of knowledge production; the underlying purpose for using accounting.

In the main, the literature depicts accounting, along with other management and governmental practices, as a means to create and reinforce historical inequities. Accounting is portrayed as a way to dominate Indigenous peoples and capture their territories. Coupled with this is the discourse of Indigenous peoples as economically impoverished victims. Many of the articles take a critical theoretical perspective and scholars writing about accounting and Indigenous peoples tend to use, either implicitly or explicitly, theories relating to governmentality. They look at the role of accounts in enabling action at a distance and how accounting serves as a technology of government (Buhr, 2011, p. 141)

Between 1830 and 1860, new accounting techniques in Canadian government reports changed the relationships between the State and Indigenous peoples (Neu, 2000). At the beginning of 1830, the British Crown and Parliament requested a re-evaluation of military cost management in the Canadas⁵⁰ by implementing ‘innovative’ accounting techniques (Neu, 2000). These techniques were relied upon as methods to control distant military operations, and distant lands and peoples (Neu, 2000). As Dean Neu (2000, p. 182) asserts, “although military force formed the background” of colonial governance in the Canadas, “the continual use of military force would likely have been too costly to maintain” for an

⁵⁰ The (early) Canadas include Lower and Upper Canada.

extended period of time. In that manner, accounting rationalized the cutting of costs across several categories of expenditures, without impeding British colonial control over the Canadas. Through simple semantic changes, relations between the governments in Canada and Indigenous nations worsened. By 1830 all references to treaty obligations (i.e. annuities) within government reports were transcribed as ‘presents’, rendering the distribution of annuities as voluntary (Neu, 2000). Indigenous peoples were thus believed to be inferior since it was believed that they depended on the ‘benevolence’ of the Crown and the government (Neu, 2000). Subsequently, the government unilaterally further modified their treaty obligations. For instance, rather than respecting treaty obligations and payments, the government distributed agricultural implements, “for the necessity of more active steps to civilize and educate the Indians” as Major General H.C. Darling⁵¹ proposed (Canada, 1845, S1, p.7, quoted by Neu, 2000, 178).

Numbers were also efficient means to impose Indian Act rules unto Indigenous nations and peoples. Almost a decade after Confederation, Canada legislated the Indian Act (1876), removing all pre-existing Indigenous self-governance and control over their territories. It “imposed systems of band governance that allowed the federal government exclusive control over Indian national leadership, land membership, and money” (Wilson & Urion, 2004, p. 35). It also relocated Indigenous peoples into reserve systems—restrictively small tracts of land. As set out by the Act, a reserve “means a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band [i.e. legal governing body representing First Nations]” (Indian Act, R.S., 1985, c. I-5, s. 2).

⁵¹ The military secretary to the governor general of the Canadas, at the time when RAIC (Canada, 1845) was written.

During the demarcation and allocation of reserves, federal commissioners would hasten the data collection process, rejecting extensive local knowledge, focusing only on ‘firm’, quantifiable data: “how many cultivable acres a band possessed and how many were actually being cultivated, how many school-children were in the band and how many attended residential schools” (Harris, 2004, p. 176). As Harris (2004, p. 176) posits, “like maps, [numbers] were at once egregious simplifications and effective colonial tools. They enabled a bureaucracy, essentially without local knowledge, to make decisions about localities.” Evidently, number production was an important technology used by the Settler state to legitimately dispossess and relocate Indigenous peoples away from Settler-Capitalist development (Harris, 2004).

Furthermore, the aforementioned colonial techniques also inform contemporary methods of accounting, in many other Settler states. Indeed, the custom of informing the practice of accounting with colonial intentions, as described by Neu (2000), still reverberates in present-day Australia. For Kathy Gibson (2000), these reverberations are reinforced by the conformity of accounting to the neoclassical economics paradigm. “The effects of the imposition of a neoclassical economic paradigm, reinforced by accounting language and systems, has been, and continues to be, an important factor in effectively undermining the rights of Australian Aboriginal communities, and in continuing the processes of dispossession” (Gibson K. , 2000, p. 291). In fact, there is a growing concern that the accountability requirements imposed on Indigenous communities—wherein the Settler government controls and oversees their finances—is comparatively unequal to the requirements of other organisations, echoing old paternalist relations (Gibson, 2000). Finally, Gibson (2000) also points to the inadequacy of accounting methodologies to

account for social values. Any type of transaction that is not determined by financial and/or economic prices is depicted as without value and therefore outside the scope of accounting. In that manner, the accounting practice “fails, as did the original European settlers, to take into account the richness of social structures and the values of wisdom and experience. It is dispossessive” (Gibson K. , 2000, p. 304). If the accounting community can interrogate its colonial epistemology, then it is definitely relevant to request a similar analysis of mainstream economics.

Epistemology of Economics

The following investigation forms the development of the Settler colonial critique, through condensed orthodox and feminist assessments of the epistemology of economics.

Naturalism and Mathematics in Mainstream Economics

The philosopher Joseph Margolis (1998, p. 56) summarized a concern present in the community of social sciences, “we no longer believe in the ensured accessibility of neutral facts, but we also lack a proper replacement for such facts”. The need for objectivity—i.e. the production of neutral knowledge—in economics is profound, possibly due to the lack of an alternative form of epistemology. Its prevalent lens of objectivity is regarded as naturalized. A naturalized epistemology “means that the study and assessment of knowledge rests on a naturalistic science base, viz., the methodological practices of the sciences” (Beed, 2005, p. 102). There are several concerns with the naturalized epistemology, as elaborated by Beed (2005). First, naturalized epistemology has no clear definition and, as a consequence, economists have a large and diverse array of scientific

tools to embrace. The vagueness of this epistemology erases the historical debates between science disciplines and their respective methodologies. “The theory of knowledge can be based on whatever science we choose, say, engineering” (Beed, 2005, p. 108) or other sciences. Second, the only justification for naturalized epistemology is the ‘science’ label, despite the varied epistemology of science. It posits the production of knowledge in economics as only provable by itself, in a circular fashion, “enmeshed in its own reflexivity” (Beed, 2005, p. 109). Without any doubt, the naturalistic path of mainstream economics led to the discipline’s use of mathematical-deductivist reasoning to theorize society. In fact, the influential economic growth theorist Paul Romer (2015, p. 90) regards scientific progress in economic theory as the reliance on “the clarity and precision that math brings”.

The mathematization of economics was a pivotal transformation for the discipline between the 1930s and 1970s. It became “normal practice for economists to develop their arguments and to present their results, at least to each other, using mathematics” (Backhouse R. E., 2002, p. 237). From the 1930s and onwards, the mathematical method of producing knowledge became a normal feature for the discipline. Although the use of mathematical models made it easier for economists to analyse issues “that were confusing for those who used only literary methods and simple mathematics”, other issues that could not fit into mathematical models “were ignored, or at least marginalized” (Backhouse R. E., 2002, p. 266). In fact, the practice and its research became less interested in real-world problems but more involved with the development of mathematical techniques (Backhouse R. E., 2002). Finally, by the mid-1970s the discipline slowly started losing its reputable stature as a science (Backhouse R. E., 2002). The confidence in the practice returned in the

1980s with the provision of a “new unifying framework for economic theory” by game theory and with “the advent of powerful personal computers [which] revolutionized econometrics” (Backhouse R. E., 2002, p. 268). In terms of twenty-first century economics, the chief analyst at *econometricus.com* Giancarlo Salazar (2014) argues, in a similar fashion to Backhouse (2002), “‘Big data’ will yield enough material for a better, more data grounded economic theory, and a larger information dataset used with the purpose of interpreting socio-economic reality.”

Furthermore, Robert Ekelund and Robert Hébert (1997, p. 575) also conclude, “the hallmark of modern economic history as we approach the millennium [the 2000s] is its mathematical character.” In fact, the theories supporting microeconomics and macroeconomics are entirely founded upon mathematical methods (Ekelund & Hébert, 1997). “The chief argument for continued formalization and mathematization of economics is that the discipline cannot become truly scientific until it attains the rigor and complexity of science—in other words—until its fundamental propositions have been tested and proved” (Ekelund & Hébert, 1997, p. 576). However, Nobel Laureate Gerard Debreu argues that the amount of “formal mathematical articles” in the economic literature is decreasing (Ekelund & Hébert, 1997, p. 577). With that in mind, there is also a body of scepticism that contend for a “formal split between the ‘economists’ and the ‘mathematicians’” for the sake of economics and its survival as a discipline (Ekelund & Hébert, 1997, p. 577). Ekelund and Hébert (1997, p. 577) suggest the following, in order to appreciate the limitations of mathematics in economics:

The trick is to forge ideas with meaningful economic content, and to avoid shunning economic problems [...] merely because they are not easily amenable

to mathematical manipulation (Ekelund & Hébert, 1997, p. 577)

Milton Friedman, Ronald Coase, and Wassily Leontief—Nobel Memorial Prize winners in Economics—also agree that economists have been focusing too much on mathematical modelling, and not enough on the real world. Why then does mainstream economics still rely on the mathematical approach? The economist Vinca Bigo (2008) argues that it is due in part to the psychology of the discipline and its respective surrounding society. Essentially, mathematical-deductivist methodology enables economists to presuppose ontology—the nature of existence—as founded upon a closed “system of isolated atoms [...] that have a separate, independent and constant effect” (Bigo, 2008, p. 529). Instead, Bigo (2008, p. 530) argues that social reality is best described as “an open realm of emergent phenomena that are structured in nature, as well as being highly processual and interconnected”, which continuously reproduces and transforms itself through praxis. All in all, there are extremely large ontological differences between the mainstream economists’ reductionist perception of the object of study (society), and society’s rather contentious and complex nature of existence. Unfortunately, the difficulty to fully acknowledge and close the latter discrepancy is disrupted by the constant insistence that mathematical-deductive reasoning is the only appropriate methodology for economists and that “only those who adopt methods of analysis regarded as proper or legitimate [...] be counted as “proper economists” (Bigo, 2008, p. 531).

Rationality in Mainstream Economics

Besides mathematical thought, rational belief and choice also inform economics epistemology. As such, economic agents are assumed to behave according to the theory of

subjective expected utility—i.e. “the beliefs and desires of the rational agent are representable by a probability measure and a cardinal utility, respectively” (Helzner, 2013, p. 782). The latter theory is based on the Bayes Theorem—with its “rule for updating beliefs in light of new evidence” and producing predictable outcomes—determining the probability of an outcome (Helzner, 2013, p. 783). One major limitation of Bayesian epistemology is its inability to understand the reasoning behind prior beliefs, which informs posterior beliefs. Therefore, ‘belief formation’ is a major issue—i.e. how does an agent construct their prior beliefs before the reception of relevant information/evidence, affecting initial belief formation?

What is rationality based on in mainstream economics? It is the Bayesian framework that ensures economic decisions are rational (Syll, 2016), but only if the prior beliefs conform to certain axioms (Gilboa, Postlewaite, & Schmeidler, 2009). The most common axioms (rules) of rationality for theories in economics are based on Leonard Savage’s *The Foundations of Statistics* (1956) (Gilboa, Postlewaite, & Schmeidler, 2009). The general argument of Savage was that choices made by individuals are based upon rationality behaviour, which maximizes their expected utility⁵². If an economic model does not abide to the axioms, then the knowledge it produces contravenes the model of rationality (Shafer, 1986).

[The axioms] describe the preferences of an ideal rational person, an imaginary person whose behavior provides a standard or norm for the behavior of real people. The normative interpretation does not assert that the preferences of real people obey the postulates [axioms]; it asserts only that they should (Shafer, 1986, p. 464)

⁵² In *my* experience as a student of the economics discipline, economists usually refer to the term ‘utility’ as a unit depicting happiness. However, I argue that it should not be strictly confounded as such, since fully maximized utility is only true when conforming to Savage’s axioms of rationality. It can easily be argued that happiness is not about following absurd behaviours, especially Savage’s axioms.

When the theory of subjective expected utility is up against epistemological questions, it fails to work. In fact, Helzner (2013) points to empirical evidence that suggests that people's decisions often break away from the subjective expected utility theory. Are they irrational? They are only irrational because they deviate from Savage's axioms behind the theory.

Interestingly, Bayes Theorem can rely on any set of prior beliefs (Syll, 2016). In other words, all decisions are rational except if the person does not behave according to a prior (constructed) model of rationality. A rational person is expected to use their beliefs as input for a "goal-directed reasoning" (Helzner, 2013, p. 782), but sometimes their initial means do not match their ends. In that manner, the agent should have the option to revisit their beliefs and modify their input.

The statistician Glenn Shafer (1986) contends that Savage's arguments for his normative axioms (i.e. rationality) rest on two assumptions: a person's preferences are *always* well defined and people can distinguish values from beliefs—i.e. choice does not rely on the probability of its outcome. Shafer (1986) argues that the latter assumptions are easily refutable; people's preferences are unstable, depend on the available—least to say, accessible and affordable—choices to them, and value cannot be purged from belief (Shafer, 1986). Finally, Savage's assumptions are nonconstructive (Shafer, 1986), implying that a person's framework of inference relies on prior/initial beliefs that cannot be refined when presented with facts. In that manner, if a person reconvenes a decision due to (new) facts, they would be violating the norms of rationality.

The Bayes Theorem, albeit abstractly innocent, can produce knowledge that affects the world. The political philosopher Richard Miller (1987) points to a situation where the

application of the Bayesian approach as a form of empirical argument can enable superficial beliefs. For instance, it is very common to explain black-white racial differential in unemployment rates in a phenomenological manner—i.e. explained by education, family background, location, and other variables—which is analytically limiting (Miller, 1987).

Yet on reflection, common sense dictates that racist attitudes and institutional racism must play an important causal role. People do have beliefs that blacks [sic.] are inferior in intelligence and morality, and are surely influenced by these beliefs in hiring decisions [...] Thus, an overemphasis on Bayesian success in statistical inference discourages the elaboration of a type of account of racial disadvantages that almost certainly provides a large part of their explanation (Miller, 1987, 325, cited in Syll, 2016, 16)

By applying a set of predetermined axioms (prior beliefs) with definite probabilistic distributions, Bayesian deduction unfortunately always produces outcomes that mirror prior beliefs. Even though racism is a substantial factor determining relationships, prior beliefs cannot be adapted since they are (conveniently) independent to new information and societal changes—e.g. persistent historical injustices and oppressions. Anything else would be construed as irrational. All individuals are equal in Bayesian thought, illustrating equal outcomes. Sure, fictional equality *begets* fictional equality.

Feminist Economics Critique

It is fair to connect the feminist critique with Bayesian theory to deduce that prior beliefs in economics are essentially prefigurative; axioms strategically constructed to reflect a future fantasized by mainstream economists, in this case. The latter is a persevering understanding in feminist economics theory. Indeed, the feminist critique of economics depicts the binarism and male-bias in mainstream economics epistemology.

Theories of infant development and psychology lay a strong foundation to explain the persistent use of mathematics and deduction in economics. In particular, Vinca Bigo (2008, p. 538) adopts the object relations theory, in which identities are formed “as we seek to establish close relationships with significant others”, from the early age and as we move through life. Bigo (2008) extends the object relations theory to gender in economics. The author explains that since women are usually the sole and prime carers, the separation of the child from their carer is harsher for boys than for girls. Boys are socialized differently than girls, and subsequently develop different coping mechanisms. Basically, Bigo (2008) argues that the use of mathematical methods in economics is more relatable to masculinity since men cope with separation differently. Finally, Bigo (2008) prescribes the Male’s fantasy of supremacy and of prediction as mechanisms in mainstream economics; anxiety coping mechanisms, “allowing the individual to feel in control” (Bigo, 2008, p. 542). The fantasy of supremacy involves “the distortion of differences and the rendering of them as hierarchical”—e.g. “unquestionable superiority” of mathematical methods over alternative methods (Bigo, 2008, p. 542). When it comes to tolerating difference, male economists tend to cope by differentiating ‘others’ in a hierarchical manner and as inferiors. The fantasy of prediction involves “a denial of mortality by way of pretence of control over the future”—emphasising formalistic economic modelling (Bigo, 2008). In order to cope with death and other uncertainties, male economists henceforth deny mortality and presume their world to be closed, controllable and predictable. The author thus shows mainstream economics as a male dominated epistemic community due to asymmetrical gendered forms of socialization.

Feminist economist Julie Nelson (2001) challenges the pervasiveness of market valuation in contemporary culture, and its ‘objective’ detachment from ethics and valuation. In fact, Nelson (2001) argues that the mechanistic process of the market undervalues any labor related to preserving, sustaining, nurturing, and caring. Therefore, the author proposes “pragmatist and process thought [which] offers a better formulation of the concept of value” (Nelson, 2001, p. 138). Specifically, Nelson (2001) demonstrates how a non-dualistic framework in economics, namely relationality, can better inform the discipline of economics. Hence, rather than analysing the material conditions (or economic well being) pertaining only to individuality or only to relatedness, relationality is concerned with the balance of the two latter contrasting forms. In the words of Julie Nelson (2001, p. 144), “Relationality is a dynamic tension, a refusal to settle into either extreme, a dialectic.” Pragmatism works in the same fashion, where reality is believed to be “made up of events or experiences that are fundamentally energetic, relational, and creative” (Nelson, 2001, p. 145).

Following the rational Bayesian approach, if young girls are raised and/or forced to be ‘certain women’, they will then become ‘certain women’ as expected. Anything else is irrational. On the other hand, a relational Bayesian approach could possibly allow for new influences and information to transform prior beliefs, making outcomes much less predictable but nonetheless relatively more relevant—generating non-static outcomes that adjusts according to critical analysis and evolving knowledge.

Settler Colonialism and Economics Epistemology

In this section, I develop two Settler colonial theoretical critiques of mainstream economics epistemology. First, if prior beliefs are not informed by axioms of rationality, the rational-Bayesian Theorem then profiles the outcomes of its decisions as irrational. Furthermore, economists would classify the individual attached to irrational decisions as different from ‘rational’, and ‘objectively’ inferior. With prior beliefs dependent on exclusive axioms, mainstream economics views Indigenous peoples as irrational and inferior, whose decisions and outcomes are irrational and inferior.

From the 19th-20th century, Australian Settler-nationalism was immensely informed by a desire for and belief of a ‘White Australia’—ideology encoding “specific racial ideas and fantasies about what held a nation together”—with white Settlers thus anxious about the condition of their nation; that Aboriginal people would degrade it⁵³ (Moran, 2002, p. 678). Anthony Moran’s (2002) application of the object relations theory explains the anxiety as caused by splitting—a splitting of Indigenous and Euro-Australian identities, of worldviews. Finally, playing on the feminist critique of economics, this split is produced as a difference and in a hierarchy, where an individual with white male Settler prior beliefs is more rational and superior to an individual with (their respective) Indigenous prior beliefs.

Secondly, many social sciences assume “that the nation/state/society is a natural social and political form of the modern world” (Schiller & Wimmer, 2002, p. 302). In that manner, social science epistemologies are informed by nationalist discourses, rather than problematizing the state, or even further analysing the conditions underlying its formations

⁵³ These settler anxieties are also informed by the fear that Asian people would overrun their nation (Moran, 2002).

(Schiller & Wimmer, 2002). Likewise, the economics discipline has always “studied the economy of nationally bounded entities [i.e. States] or their relations to each other through trade, capital flows and the like” (Schiller & Wimmer, 2002, p. 305). The assumption of State formation underlying economics, ever since *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 1776), also follows the ‘logic of elimination’: With Indigenous peoples gone, forever, and with Settlers’ supposed uncontested claim over the land, the study of economics is thus empowered to produce knowledge that optimizes Settler economies. Anything that resists and contradicts Settler common sense—i.e. prior beliefs—would be irrational and inferior.

Indigenous Feminist Refusals

Revolutionary Indigenous feminist theorists developed critical refusals to colonial epistemologies—meant to control Indigenous peoples and manage differences—forced against their bodies and their communities (Maracle, 1996; Simpson A. , 2014; Gaztambide-Fernández & Tuck, 2013; Flowers, 2015). Indigenous feminism also refuses economics epistemology grounded on oppressive beliefs and in nations occupying Indigenous lands and territories.

In *I am Woman*, revolutionary feminist Lee Maracle (1996) concisely critiques economics epistemology. The author points at the anxieties of White Settler heterosexual male economists. For example, Maracle (1996) argues that the use of mathematics reduces our understanding of love, making homosexuality abnormal. The author also contends, “White men cannot stop thinking in terms of mathematical norms” (Maracle, 1996, p. 136). The white male perception is thus “completely divorced from any sense of humanity” and not “born of the natural world” (Maracle, 1996, p. 136). All in all, if we realize that “all

decision-making is subjective and emotional” then economics epistemology is a product of “the rational thinkers among the Europeans [who] struggled to rationalize their own emotional attitudes and re-name their beliefs in vain” (Maracle, 1996, p. xi). As explained earlier, mainstream economists will not reform prior beliefs even when confronted with obvious political contradictions. Thus, mainstream economics copes with its anxieties by reproducing its futurity unto Indigenous peoples, nations, territories, and land; dismissing Indigenous nations of their distinct and respective economics knowledge and systems. Moreover, paraphrasing Lee Maracle (1996, p. 136), if prior beliefs are formed by the “unnatural condition of racism” then “internalized racism is the natural response [...] Likewise is hating the perpetrators of racism.” Resentment of knowledge production is natural when prior beliefs are abnormal.

Professor Glen Coulthard (2016, p. 157) also argues that resentment is a natural response to colonialism—“a politicized expression of Indigenous anger and outrage directed against a structural and symbolic violence that still subtly structures our lives, our relations with others, and our relationships with land.” Resentment powerfully generates refusals (‘no’) to economic and cultural rights handed down by the Settler state through forms of recognition and reconciliation that reproduce colonial relationships (Coulthard, 2016). In turn, refusals embody diverse affirmations (‘yes’), generating “forms of decolonized subjectivity and anticolonial practice” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 128). For Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2014, p. 812), Indigenous refusals of undesired research are generative stances, returning the burden of scrutiny and exposure unto “settler colonialism, and other colonial configurations, White supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and the pursuit of wealth by some at the expense of others [which] have indeed caused pain in the lives of

real people.” Refusing Settler colonial economic knowledge production that seeks to ‘rationalize’ and ‘inferiorize’ Indigenous peoples turns the investigative gaze onto the economist, his institutions and epistemologies—“a deliberate shift in the unit of analysis, away from people, and toward the relationships between people and institutions of power” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 815). The analytical shift is absolutely conceivable, as shown by the recent philosophical trend in accounting (Buhr, 2011).

Personal Thoughts

White Settler males—of course, like me—must not expect Indigenous affirmations to be intelligible to us. Rather, our duty is to ensure that our respective governments respect refusals and do not interfere with the futurities, and resurgences of Indigenous nations (Flowers, 2015). In the case of Settler economists, the burden of legitimacy and non-interference should be on our economic epistemologies. It is not about using Indigenous normativity and knowledge as our axioms and prior beliefs. It is not about Settlers developing Indigenous economic theories. Rather, I believe that our duty is to produce knowledge that prioritizes and enhances non-colonial economic relationships. For instance, we must investigate the neoliberal reconciliation of Indigenous-settler relationships as economic investments that secure Settler-capitalist futurity (Green R. , 2015), as contested by Indigenous refusals to data collection (Gaztambide-Fernández & Tuck, 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2014), resource extraction (Preston J. , 2013) and the First Nations Property Ownership Act (FPOA)—“an opt-out mechanism from the Indian Act that would allow bands and individuals to hold their lands in fee simple title” (Pasternak, 2015, p. 179).

While “Indigenous peoples routinely advocate for holistic social investments and a suitable land base to economically develop”, settler governments instead perform financial investments through a neoliberal, capitalist and colonial logic—“to contain claims to Indigenous self-determination and to establish a profit or return for the settler state” (Green R. , 2015, p. 474). For example, to dispose of the restrictive Indian Act, the federal government developed and has been promoting the FPOA to First Nation bands. Regrettably, yet unsurprisingly, FPOA clearly follows mainstream economics epistemology: both seeking to rationalize/modernize settler colonial constructions (e.g. Indian reserves) into manageable capitalist constructions for the global markets, to off-load the State’s fiduciary obligations to Indigenous nations, and to carve the nations into ‘ideal’ Canadian economic actors (Pasternak, 2015).

A non-metaphorical decolonized study of economics “in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted”, and requires at least a grounding in prior beliefs that reject all forms of property, slavery and Settler state formations (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Settler economists must themselves refuse to produce colonial knowledge. Unfortunately, alternative Settler epistemologies can still center their futurities and epistemologically erase Indigenous futurities. As Rachel Flowers (2015, p. 35) flawlessly points out, “what affords settlers privilege is the ability to implicitly set the terms of what a shared future is, without realizing they are asymmetrically dictating the terms of this discussion.” Until we literally refuse and decolonize Settler colonial prior beliefs and privilege, we will continue to mirror and produce Settler-biased economic futurities. Canadian Settler economists will have to decolonize their prior beliefs

as they research non-colonial economic knowledge and strive to decolonize their economic relationships. On the other hand, we continue to reproduce—as the *Indigenous Environmental Network* executive director Tom Goldtooth (The Laura Flanders Show, 2014) cleverly puts it—a “hybrid system that will end up doing the same thing” over and over again.

Conclusion: Decolonial Staples Thesis and Last Words

It is my opinion—a cynical conclusion, possibly—that mainstream economics cannot be successfully refurbished to critically analyse a Settler colonial economy, especially based on staples industries. There are critical axioms inscribed in the discipline that need to part ways for a decolonial engagement of the Canadian (staples) economy. For instance, the economics principle of property and growth disrupts and devalues Indigenous relations and politics, by relying on the stadial theory of development. The (Canadian) mainstream textbook is founded on the understanding of land informed by Lockean property theory. As explained earlier, John Locke's philosophical and political manifest was used to rationalize the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples, and thus envision/plan for an industrial White Male Settler economy.

If ontology forms knowledge, is mainstream economics epistemology thus a mechanism that reproduces colonial beliefs and interests? Gibson (2000) and other critical accounting scholars have demonstrated that the production of quantitative data (i.e. numbers) is not entirely innocent or objective. Additionally, Indigenous feminist theorists have clearly pointed out the extreme violence done by Settler States to completely interrupt the reproduction of Indigenous peoples. I thus conclude—a cynical opinion, possibly—that mainstream economics cannot be used to produce non-colonial futurities, or even futures based on liberal reconciliation politics.

Although in accordance to my research, I explicitly object to (Settler) colonial mainstream economics, I still have a romantic impression of recent contemporary transformations in economics. It is an academic passion that I need to follow, guided

by critical frameworks of study. Canadian economics studies must critically investigate the Canadian economy's relationship to land, stolen Indigenous land, and its relationship with other Settler colonial (and imperialist) countries.

Indeed, I believe that an economics study of globalization through an investigation of Settler colonialism is highly pertinent and relevant. Unfortunately, the latter scope is beyond my research's particular engagement with Canadian content. Rather, I carefully extend a Canadian economic historical thesis and Canadian ecological economics methodology to account for colonial relationships enmeshed in Canada's fossil economy. Of course, the following Settler Colonial Staples Thesis—in its initial phase—is absolutely not sufficient to dismantle colonial common sense and institutions, but it is necessary.

A Settler Colonial Staples Thesis: Rationale

I believe that reestablishing the colonial relation of dispossession as a co-foundational feature of our understanding of and critical engagement with capitalism opens up the possibility of developing a more ecologically attentive critique of colonial-capitalist accumulation (Coulthard, 2014, p. 14).

As mentioned in Chapter II, Mel Watkins used Harold Innis' Staples Thesis to explain economic growth in Canada. The original Staples Thesis of Innis described the "successive waves" of staple goods exported from Canada (Stanford, 2014, p. 5). Watkins (1963, p. 144) then extended Innis' analysis to produce a staples theory of economic growth in Canada, which claimed "staple exports are the leading sector of the economy and set the pace for economic growth." He developed three separate linkage effects between the staples industry and the economy's growth: backward, forward and final demand linkage.

To be clear, Watkins' theory was developed in order to understand how an export-led economy, with a dominant commodity (staple good), affects the pattern of economic growth in Canada. Hence, it would seem out-of-place to recycle the previous ideas into an alternative framework. However, Watkins himself wrote in 2007 (p. 220), "there is an urgent need for an ecological history of staples as a way of illuminating the rapacious character of the Canadian variant of capitalism with its bias towards resource exploitation". How can the Staples Thesis illustrate the ecological and socio-economic impacts of industrial resource extraction?

While Mel Watkins demonstrated the dominance of the staples-export sector, the renowned ecological economist Bill Rees calls the expansion of the Tar Sands as cementing "Canada's reputation as an exporter of climate change" (Burrows, 2012). This path can be documented in many fashions. What I propose is a decolonial approach that analyses the trajectories of exported 'virtual land' from industries. In other words, the extension of the Staples Thesis, through ecological footprint accounting, can illustrate how much land is used from all the ecological linkage effects of the Tar Sands.

The decolonial perspective is at play here since what is excessively exported by the staples industry is *wealth*; "wealth [being] land, Native land" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 24). A decolonial stance then confronts the legitimacy of land ownership, or property rights, in Canada. The decolonial Staples Thesis then starts from the assumption that all land in Canada is Indigenous land. In other words, this methodology defies and rejects the view that land was ceded to the British Crown or the Canadian State. Additionally, it confronts an obsolete, but still persistent, assumption in classical economics. Adam Smith regarded property as only having its "occasion" when it is occupied (Blaney & Inayatullah, 2010, p.

39). This worldview consequently encourages settlers to view ‘unoccupied land’ as Terra Nullius, as empty land, displacing Indigenous communities from their livelihoods, their land.

A Decolonial Staples Thesis: Proposed Methodology

By bringing the ideas of this paper together, I formulate a modified version of the Staples Thesis in order to analyse the intersectional⁵⁴ impacts of the Tar Sands. This is done through Melville Watkins’ three linkage effects⁵⁵, an end-demand and distributional linkage effect. These linkages provide a complete picture of how the Tar Sands expands itself through its extraction, production and distribution practices.

My proposed methodology for a decolonial staples theory, on the Tar Sands industry, parallels the aforementioned linkages. However, my ecological linkage effects will not follow the growth perspective of Watkins and Hirschman. I use their terminologies and arrangements, but I have adjusted the direction of the linkage effects and added relevant determinants. This method illustrates an intersectional depiction of the (damaging) effects of the Tar Sands on the environment, the economy and peoples.

Before we proceed with the list of ecological linkage effects, some definitions are in order. Back when Harrold Innis wrote about staples, his work focused on the Canadian fishing and fur trades and their preeminence in the export sector. To stay with theoretical tradition, I also use ‘staple(s)’ as the term that identifies the analysed commodity in this

⁵⁴ That is, not only analyzing the environmental impacts.

⁵⁵ These linkage effects are an extension of Albert Hirschman’s (1958) earlier work.

paper. The commodity considered in this paper is the bitumen (a tar-like substance) extracted in Alberta, Canada, which is a staple commodity for the energy sector. Throughout this paper, I refer to this industry as the ‘Tar Sands’ (instead of ‘Oil Sands’), since bitumen is only transformed into oil after heavy refining.

Five Ecological Linkages

These include:

1. Backward ecological linkage: a measure of the local ecological impacts around and during the (domestic) extraction of the staples.
 - a. Determinants: Water contamination; Air pollution; Refurbishment of polluted/damaged land.
2. Forward ecological linkage: a measure of the ecological impacts from the other industries using the output of the staple-export industry as an input.
 - a. Determinants: Petroleum and durable goods transformation.
3. Final demand ecological linkage: a measure of the ecological impacts in the production of goods/services for factors in the staple-export sector.
 - a. Determinants: Capital production and natural resources.

Moreover, I also include two supplementary linkage effects:

4. End-demand ecological linkage: a measure of ecological impacts in the consumption of the (refined and processed) staple, and the decomposition of its unusable state.
 - o Determinants: Canadian and international consumption of the staple.
5. Distributional ecological linkage: a measure of ecological impacts in the distribution of the staple.

- Determinants: Transportation pollution and accidents.

Finally, the determinants are not to be regarded as fixed, but act as a guidance to include more factors that better characterise these linkage effects.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships between the Tar Sands industry and other industries, consumers and the land (the environment). The arrows indicate the direction of the ecological linkage effects.

With an input-output (IO) matrix we can observe all trades between the Tar Sands, other industries and final demand⁵⁶. This methodology details the quantity of a transaction from an economic relationship between two economic actors. In this case, ecological footprints will be used to quantify the exchanges between the economic actors, in ecological terms. The input and output exchanges can be depicted through an environmental extension of the IO matrix (Barrett, Minx, Wackernagel, & Wiedman, 2006). Energy economist Mauro Chavez-Rodriguez and mechanical engineer Silvia Nebra (2010) explain that the ecological footprint can also be separated into two other categories: Production land calculates how much land is required for the extraction of the staple industry (and further processes), and carbon uptake land calculates the “biocapacity required to sequester the emission”, the pollution. In other words, this methodology calculates how much ecological footprint (i.e. land) is apportioned to each ecological linkage effect. Finally, with the input-output matrix and the ecological footprint of the relevant linkage effects, we can measure and follow the appropriation and destruction of Indigenous land in Alberta, and across Canada. Moreover, this will help understand how

⁵⁶ For simplicity, ‘final demand’ includes people living within Canada. I basically assume they can either be consumers or non-consumers of certain industries, but they are at least a consumer of one industry. In other words, I assume that they all participate in the economy, one way or another.

much of the Canadian ecological footprint is directly from this staple industry and how much Indigenous land is supporting the Tar Sands industry. The input-output matrix is illustrated in Figure 3.

In Canada, about 89% of land is Crown land, where “the authority for [its] control [...] rests with the Crown”, while 11% is private lands⁵⁷. Furthermore, Crown land can also be subdivided into Aboriginal titles (comprehensive and specific claims), reserves, and treaty land. The differences between the latter mentioned land categories are important to break down in this methodology. In this manner, we can identify which type of land is the most impacted by the ecological linkage effects of the Tar Sands industry. Also, we can then clearly determine if there is a pattern between the types of land affected and their respective linkage effects. However, since the distinctions between each category of land are not very clear, and still disputed, this particular analysis needs to employ a political and historical perspective as well. I developed a list of references to search for the information relating to land in Canada (Figure 5).

There are still several gaps in this draft methodology. These deserve attention and adjustments. First of all, there are no fully developed databases to describe the linkage effects of the Tar Sands as ecological footprints. However, Figure 4 lists appropriate methodologies for the development of these. Secondly, although these methodologies can clearly identify the ecological linkage effects, they are not all measured with the same units. Hence, a probable next phase for this methodology is to produce a consistent measurement unit to indicate the quantity of land mass apportioned for the Tar Sands industry. Finally, as economist Nathan Fiala (2008) argues, the ecological footprint methodology cannot take

⁵⁷ From <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/crown-land/>

the intensity of extraction and the decline in land biocapacity into account. Although these limitations restrict the possibility of a comprehensive account of land appropriation from the Tar Sands, the scope of this methodology only pays attention to ‘physical space’. To correct for this I assume that all land affected by the ecological linkage effect cannot be refurbished, and is lost for present and near-future generations. The pedagogical application of this theory can serve to educate all economists to critically understand the overlapping connections between the economy, the environment, humans, and history.

Other Thoughts

Neo-Liberal Pedagogy

Although there is a limited amount of research to draw from, I believe we can conclude that economics pedagogy in Canada conducts its work between the two extremes of a capitalist economy: Keynesian and Monetarist/Neoliberal (Brooks & Kelebay, 1991; Green T. , 2012). I argue that, in reality, economics students are taught to reproduce a neoliberal economy. Simply put, liberalism is the push to allow every part of the socio-economic sphere to be solely guided by “the ideals of personal freedom and possessive individualism” (Robertson, 2008, p. 18), by undisturbed market relations, by the invisible hand. The ‘neo’ extension depicts the State’s involvement in assuring and encouraging “the freedom of the market, the free right to trade, the right to choose”, and the right to private property (Robertson, 2008, p. 18). The normalized homogeneity of how society functions then legitimizes the State and wealth/capital owners to (sleep together and) regulate everything on their own terms, for their own benefit. In Canada, neoliberalism has entered the public education as well, consequently influencing our epistemologies, research and

public institutions (Fisher, Jones, Rubenson, & Shanahan, 2009). In my view, we should not have neoliberal minded economists participating in and guiding the decision-making processes of our nations and communities. What we require instead are revolutionary political ideas and actions to rejuvenate our relationships to the land and to each other.

The study of Settler colonialism in economics can teach students how to resist and hopefully dismantle the neoliberal agenda interfering with their education. As described earlier, the proposed extension of the Staples Thesis can serve as a component in a decolonial economics curriculum. It not only continues the tradition of depicting how staples have transformed Canadian society, but also how the staples (extractive) industry drives Canada as a land-intensive economy founded on a Settler colonial trajectory. Chief Terrance Nelson⁵⁸ said it best, “[t]his is our wealth. The oil did not come on little wooden boats from Europe. It was here already” (Gallagher, 2011, p. 165).

Envisioning Aspects of Decolonial Economics Pedagogy

It should not be surprising that the first most inspiring market-capitalist scholar, Adam Smith, denied the importance of non-market economic relationships. Indeed, as professor Manu Vimalassery⁵⁹ posits, Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Natives* (2013) considered Indigenous modes of production as outmoded. How can economics students understand the implications of Settler colonialism in Canadian economics? While my research only investigated the discussions on land and wealth in economics textbooks, Dr.

⁵⁸ Chief Terrance Nelson: “Former Chief of Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, serving eight and half years as Chief” (<http://scoinc.mb.ca/grandchief>)

⁵⁹ Manu Vimalassery is a history professor, focusing on imperialism and capitalism. He explains how Adam Smith tried to justify the “operational logic of capital accumulation on a world scale”, constantly repeating “the conquest of the Americas” (Vimalassery, 2013, p. 295).

Vimalassery (2013) provides other insightful and foundational components to teach and study Settler colonialism within economics pedagogy. For instance, he provides great insight as to the questions of wealth distribution, land rent and the division of labour. Additionally, one very important issue that should be raised at the start of an economics class is the natural produce of land (Vimalassery, 2013). The latter values the unimaginable amount of years of “Indigenous works and relations with a particular place” (Vimalassery, 2013, p. 300). Finally, even though the economics discipline absolutely needs re-grounding, “any strategy geared toward authentic decolonization must directly confront more than economic relations” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 14). Economics is certainly important, but economic reductionism has its limits.

List of Figures

Figure 1: Staples Development Pathway (Haley, 2011, p. 101)

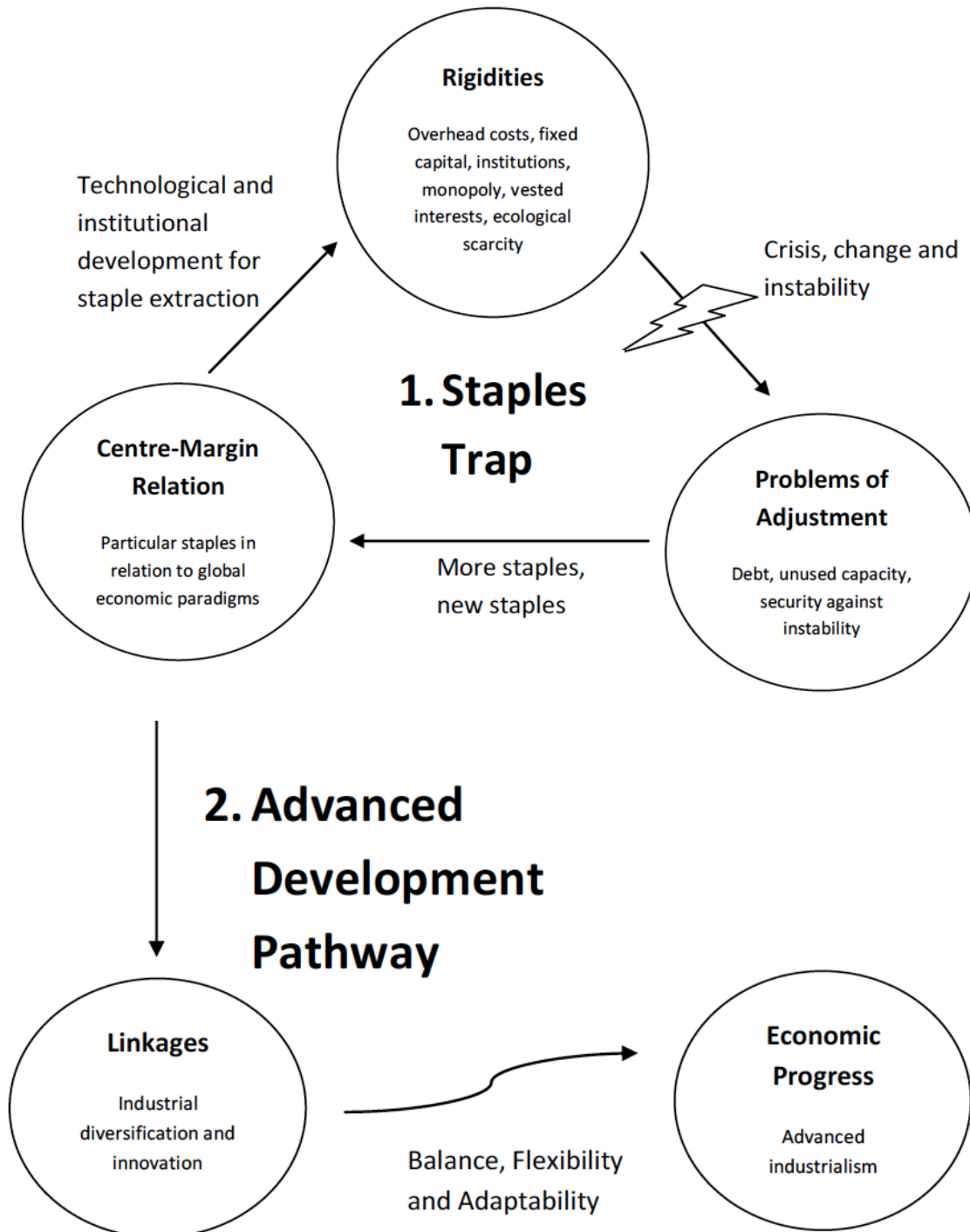


Figure 2: Tar Sands Linkage Effects (Relationships)

SETTLER-COLONIAL STAPLES THEORY	Ecological Linkage Effects	Other industries	Final Demand	The Land Environment
Tar Sands Industry	Backward			↑
	Forward	↑		
	Final demand	←		
	End demand		↑	
	Distributional		↑	↑

* Other industries receive the output of the Tar Sands and provide input for the Tar Sands as well. 'Final Demand' combines economic and political actors (i.e. consumers and citizens) who consume the refined bitumen, but can also be directly affected by distributional pollution and accidents. The land is the production factor that provides the possibility for the extraction of the bitumen. Consequently, the land absorbs the direct damaging transformations. It will also be directly affected by distributional accidents.

Figure 3: Ecological Staples Theory (Ecological Footprint Input-Output Matrix)

ECONOMIC ACTORS	Tar Sands	Industry A	Industry B	Final demand	The Land	Total
Tar Sands						
Industry A						
Industry B						
Final demand						
The Land						
Total						<i>Has to balance</i>

Figure 4: Ecological Linkage Effects—Methodologies

Ecological Linkage Effects	Methodologies
Backward	Giljum and Haslinger (2012) discuss about the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF). It calculates the environmental impacts of the resource extraction.
Forward	The FoE/SERI indicator ⁶⁰ , which supplements PEF, is “oriented towards inputs of natural resources over the global supply chain” (Giljum & Haslinger, 2012, p. 10).
Final demand	Freire and Marrero (2014), and Solís-Guzmán, Marrero and Ramirez-de-Arellano (2013) provide ecological footprint methods for the construction industry in Spain, which is relevant to measure the ecological footprint of capital inputs in the Tar Sands.
End demand	Kissinger, Moore, Rees and Sussman (2013) look at how to account for the ecological footprint of cities. The ecological footprint from the Tar Sands consumption can be decoupled for every city.
Distributional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good starting point for this linkage effect is to decouple the ecological footprint measure of Tar Sand oil transportation (e.g. trains, trucks, boats, and pipelines) in ecological footprint databases. • The other component relates to the probability of an accident during the transportation multiplied by the ecological footprint of the accident. The “Ecological Footprint-likelihood” measurement can be a gauge determinant of the effects on final demand (i.e. people). For instance, what type of land (Figure 5) has the highest “Ecological footprint-likelihood”? • This ecological effect can also be depicted by the amount of space (Km^2) apportioned by the transportation.

⁶⁰ Friends of the Earth/Sustainable Europe Research Institute indicator.

Figure 5: References for Types of Land in Canada

Types of Land in Canada	References
Aboriginal claims	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2010a) has an online page describing and listing the comprehensive and specific land claims in Canada.</p> <p>The Land Claims Agreements Coalition (N/A) also provides a map of the comprehensive land claims in Canada.</p>
Aboriginal titles	<p>McNeil (2000; 2011) and Hamilton (2014) describe what Aboriginal titles are in Canada.</p>
Treaties	<p>Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2010b) provides maps, descriptions and the original texts of the treaties in Canada. Additionally, www.Native-Land.ca produced an interactive online resource where anyone can identify the respective Aboriginal territory, treaty, and language associated with their location.</p>
Indian reserves	<p>The Department of Natural Resources Canada (1992) developed an articulated map of Canada in which Indian reserves are clearly located. Additionally, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (N/A) have a search engine for all the reserves in Canada.</p>

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