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Decolonizing Feminism: From Reproductive Abuse to Reproductive Justice

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Abstract
This paper asks why reproductive gains have sometimes amounted to reproductive abuse for Indigenous women in Canada. Guided by an intersectional and decolonial approach, it provides a historical material critique of the individualized rights discourse and reformist goals that tend to underlay feminist struggles in Canada. It explores how Western feminism might support decolonization and reproductive justice.

Résumé
Cet article demande pourquoi les gains en matière de reproduction se sont parfois traduits par des abus en matière de reproduction pour les femmes autochtones au Canada. Guidé par une approche intersectionnelle et décoloniale, il fournit une critique matérielle historique du discours sur les droits individualisés et des objectifs réformistes qui ont tendance à sous-tendre les luttes féministes au Canada. Il explore comment le féminisme occidental pourrait soutenir la décolonisation et la justice reproductive.

There is presently much discussion among scholars, activists, and social policy researchers over the meaning, methodology, and theory of intersectionality. What began as a critique by women of colour and Indigenous women of social movements that overlooked the realities of life for those marginalized because of their gender, but also because of their race, class, sexuality, indigeneity and/or (dis)ability (Crenshaw 1991; Combahee River Collective 1983; Collins 2000; Davis 1983; Smith 2000; Smith 2005c; Lorde 1984), has expanded to include a vast literature on the multifaceted aspects of oppression and how laws, policies, and social structures are experienced differently based on the social location one occupies. Intersectionality is now increasingly incorporated into Women's and Gender Studies programs as a legitimate approach to social theory and is being adopted by mainstream scholars and activists as a tool guiding research, organizing, and analysis (McCall 2005; Hankivsky 2011; Mason 2010; Simpson 2009). Through this mainstreaming process, much of the radical potential that comes from understanding the interlocking social relations that oppress risks being blunted or misunderstood as a plea by marginalized populations for assimilation into the current system (Dhamoon 2011; Puar 2007). Worse still, this approach is in danger of being used to reify identities into objects of study, or of it becoming the object of study, rather than a prescription for transformative action (Hillsburg 2013; Jordan-Zachery 2007; Simien 2007). Although no definitive conclusions have been reached, current discussions confirm the need to keep "intersectionality" grounded in the struggle for social justice by developing politics of liberation that seek explicitly to challenge, on a material level, the social relations that oppress while paying attention to our interconnectedness and differences, or the different work required of us to ensure justice for our communities.

For this thematic cluster, I contribute to ongoing discussions by outlining a grounded politic of liberation that employs an intersectional approach and

focuses on issues of reproductive justice as one aspect of a larger project of social justice. Starting from the lived experiences of Indigenous women in Canada, this essay refers to rarely acknowledged instances of coercion, like forced sterilization, abusive abortions, and the promotion of birth control for population control ends, which took place while mainstream feminism was fighting for or celebrating increased access to these same services. Seeking to develop a decolonial analysis useful to non-Indigenous peoples living on Indigenous lands, this work provides a historical and material critique of what could more accurately be termed a form of settler feminism and the individualized rights discourse and reformist goals that, by and large, underlay the movement. It is a central premise of this paper that reproductive rights gained from within an inherently unjust system have reinforced relations of exploitation and subjugation for all women despite the improvement in quality of life some may experience from these. Conceding these rights has allowed the state to shape our movements in ways that has limited their relevance for many. This has restricted the ability of Western feminism to call for a radical transformation of the social relations of oppression in ways necessary to ensure justice for anyone. I argue that by falling short of fundamentally revolutionizing the relations of exploitation upon which the current capitalist, heteropatriarchal, and colonial system is based, what is being offered to women as reproductive rights pales in comparison to the knowledge and self-determination women could hold and have held over our bodies under different modes of social organization. At the same time, these options have helped reinforced reproductive regulation and relations of colonialism for Indigenous women and their peoples. To achieve reproductive justice requires that we explicitly challenge the larger social relations that have led to our lack of bodily self-determination in the first place. It also requires that we grapple with the longstanding criticisms waged against our movements.

In discussing possible ways forward in our struggles, as settlers, this work engages Indigenous critiques that highlight intersecting issues, which are central to Indigenous understandings of reproductive justice, a concept directly connected to questions of decolonization and Indigenous resurgence. These critiques have direct implications for western reproductive rights movements and settler feminism in general. I apply these in conjunction with other feminist works to better understand what it means for Western feminism to adopt a justice approach in its struggles for bodily self-determination with hopes that it can also become a tool of decolonization. To take a reproductive justice approach necessitates a change in conversation and a broadening of the nature and scope of the struggles we face. Our physical and reproductive bodies are intrinsically connected to the broader social world in which we live, the structural relations that inform our social locations, and our consequent experiences of privilege and/or oppression. To improve our reproductive lives in ways that avoid reinforcing these polarities of experience, we must understand the interconnections between these and the social relations that create them and intersectionality as a tool of analysis is useful here. Insights gained by doing so hold the possibility of radically transforming our struggles in ways that could allow us to cultivate necessary and decolonial alliances with others. Taken together, this work asks us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of intersectionality as a tool for social justice. It pushes us to think beyond identity politics by re-centering a systemic analysis and a focus on structural change as key aspects of justice work, goals which have always been central to the critical scholars whose thinking is often credited with informing the term.

Reproductive Rights or Reproductive Abuse? It Depends on Who You Ask

I recently completed research on the coercive sterilization of Aboriginal women in Canada (Stote 2015). This work confirms that up to 1200 sterilizations were carried out from 1970 to 1976 on Aboriginal women from at least 52 northern settlements and in federally-operated Medical Services Hospitals. There are many aspects of this history that make these sterilizations coercive, including the failure of health officials to follow guidelines on when sterilizations could be performed and the lack of informed consent and inadequate use of interpreters when these took place. There also existed a general climate of paternalism that sometimes led doctors to perform the procedure on women "for their own good" (70-73). As this research progressed, it became clear that Aboriginal women experienced abuse through the provision of other reproductive services as

well. The documents reviewed tell us that prior to the 1969 amendment to the *Criminal Code* decriminalizing contraceptives, the first high dose hormonal birth control pill was distributed to Indigenous women in areas across Canada as a part of a "departmentally directed course of instruction" in an attempt to reduce the birth rate in Indigenous communities (60-70). At least some officials hoped this would translate into savings by allowing government to decrease the size of the homes it would need to provide for Indigenous peoples. Discussions at the time also show a concern with how this practice was perceived by Indigenous peoples who were charging genocide in response to their treatment at the hands of government and this influenced moves toward decriminalization. It was anticipated that making contraceptives available to all would protect government from potential liability while influencing the birth rate among specific groups, like Aboriginal peoples (68).

The passage of the 1969 *Omnibus Health Bill* also allowed a woman to legally procure an abortion when a therapeutic abortion committee agreed a pregnancy would endanger her mental, emotional, or physical health (*Statutes of Canada* 1968-69). While some continued to be denied access to the service, others were subject to the procedure for economic reasons (Stevens 1974a, 1974b). The Badgley Committee (1977), formed in 1975 to study the equitable operation of abortion law in Canada, also found that some women were pressured to consent to sterilization when in the vulnerable position of applying for an abortion and that this was sometimes used as a prerequisite to obtaining the service (360). An investigation into abortion practices in the North began as a result of one Indigenous woman claiming she was forced to undergo the procedure without anaesthesia. Her story led to nearly 100 complaints from others who had similar experiences (Walsh 1992; Lowell 1995) and a subsequent medical audit confirmed these and other abuses. In British Columbia, a Task Force on Access to Contraception and Abortion Services (1994) revealed that, because they lived in poverty, Indigenous women were sometimes pressured by health care providers to have abortions, consent to sterilization, or submit to long-acting contraceptives, denying them the right to make genuine choices about their reproduction (10, 14). More recently, allegations were made that Aboriginal women were subject to Depo-Provera as a first choice option in an attempt to alleviate strain on inadequately funded public health and social services (Hawaleshka 2005; Smith 2005a; Tait 2000, 14-15).

While these injustices were being carried out, whether forced sterilization, abusive abortions, or the promotion of birth control for population control ends, others were mobilizing, and in some cases continue to mobilize, for increased access to these same services. Voluntary sterilization is a popular form of birth control among primarily middle-class heterosexual couples; birth control is viewed as a key means of reproductive control; and access to safe, legal, and state-provided abortion on demand is considered a fundamental right that remains of central concern to Western feminism. There are consistent contradictions between the sought after reforms of Western feminism (relating to our reproductive lives and beyond) and how these are experienced by Indigenous women. To acknowledge these contradictions is an important first step toward understanding that securing state-sanctioned and individually-based rights does not necessarily ensure justice for communities of people. Rights and justice are in fact two different ends, though one need not be exclusive of the other. This reality also highlights the need to listen to the voices of those most marginalized who have not always experienced rights as gains.

Is Anybody Listening? Taking Critiques Seriously

There is no shortage of voices challenging the relevance of a movement that has often been on the wrong side of the history when it comes to the lived realities of marginalized people(s). Western feminism has been accused of various forms of racism and of benefiting from or actively participating in colonialism (Danforth 2011; Devereux 2005; Lawrence and Dua 2005). Sometimes, it has ignored or dismissed the fact that women occupy fundamentally different positions within Indigenous societies and are respected for these (Grande 2004; St. Denis 2007; Wagner 2001). Other times, feminism has appropriated this knowledge for its own purposes or has imposed on Aboriginal women the need to choose between their gender identity and indigeneity (Danforth 2010; Monture 1995; Smith 2005c). More recently, a swell of literature has called on feminism to decolonize by paying attention to how we teach and what we leave out and how our struggles are shaped in ways that erase Indigenous peoples

and continue to make us complicit in the colonization of Indigenous lands (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 2013; Grey 2003; Morgenson 2011; Sehdev 2013; Smith 2013; Tuck and Yang 2012; Walia 2012). Nearly 15 years ago, anti-racist feminist Sunera Thobani (2001) pushed us to realize that there will be no social justice, no anti-racism, no feminist emancipation, no liberation of any kind for anybody on this continent unless Aboriginal peoples win their demands for self-determination. She is quite right, but with few exceptions, I am not sure conversations in non-Indigenous communities have progressed much beyond this initial challenge. Certainly little scholarship acknowledges the reproductive abuses mentioned here or ties broader Indigenous critiques explicitly to issues of reproduction justice (Cook 2008; Danforth 2010; Wiebe and Konsmo 2014). I seek to further these discussions from a settler perspective by reflecting on the implications of these critiques for Western feminism and its notions of reproductive justice and decolonization.

Western reproductive struggles have too often overlooked the reproductive experiences of women marginalized because of their racialized, poverty, and/or Indigenous status. The very notion of reproductive justice originates in this fact. Coined by a caucus of African American women in 1994, reproductive justice can be defined as the ability of any woman to determine her reproductive destiny and it links this ability directly to the conditions of her life and her community (Ross 2011). Loretta Ross (2011) explains that the ability of Indigenous women and women of color to control what happens to their bodies is constantly challenged by poverty, racism, environmental degradation, sexism, homophobia, and a host of other injustices. This concept challenges us to understand that our reproductive lives do not exist in isolation from other aspects of ourselves and that reproductive oppression is connected to other human and Indigenous rights violations, economic exploitation, and the pollution of the environment (Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice 2005; Sillman et al. 2004; Wiebe and Konsmo 2014). Too often, the struggle for legal access to abortion has taken precedent over the concerns of women of color, Indigenous women, or those from other marginalized groups. As a consequence, the experiences of reproductive oppression lived by these groups through state attempts to control their fertility and undermine their communities have been ignored (Roberts 1998; Torpy 2000). As Ross (2011) states:

> The isolation of abortion from other social justice issues that concern all our communities contributes to, rather than counters, reproductive oppression. Abortion isolated from other social justice/human rights issues neglects issues of economic justice, the environment, criminal justice, immigrants' rights, militarism, discrimination based on race and sexual identity, and a host of other concerns directly affecting an individual woman's decision-making process. (4)

Reproductive justice calls us to pay attention to how broader social, political, and economic factors work to discipline the reproductive lives of some and to privilege those of others while these conditions shape the choices we all make (Luna and Luker 2013). At its core, reproductive justice is an intersectional concept. It is useful to understanding the experiences of Indigenous women discussed here because it requires attention be paid to the social relations which give rise to coercion and calls on these to be transformed in order to achieve justice.

The reproductive justice movement has offered trenchant criticisms of mainstream reproductive struggles. A fundamental aspect extensively critiqued is the notion of individual choice that underlies much reproductive rights discourse. Many point out that we cannot ignore the fact that women make choices in different contexts and there are multiple factors that constrain the options available to us at any given time. Marlene Gerber Fried and Loretta Ross (1992) tell us that freedom of choice is a privilege not enjoyed by those whose lives are shaped by poverty and discrimination (36-37). Because of this, as Rickie Solinger (2001) writes, choice often has two faces. Even though the contemporary language of choice promises dignity and reproductive autonomy to women, when it is applied to the question of poor women and motherhood, it begins to sound a lot like the language of eugenics: women who cannot afford to make choices are not fit to be mothers (223). Indeed, eugenics played a role in legitimating coercive sterilization, and population control and economic interests were motivating factors in the reproductive abuses experienced by Indigenous, racialized, and other marginalized women.

We also cannot separate the reproductive violence experienced by Indigenous women from the larger systemic violence perpetrated as a result of colonialism. Sheila Cote-Meek (2014) argues that the process of colonialism in whatever its form is necessarily violent. Indigenous women and their peoples, and the environments upon which they depend to subsist, have been subject to violence since settler colonists came to the Americas. This violence has manifested in many ways, whether through forced starvation policies (Daschuk 2013), the portrayal and exploitation of Indigenous women as sexual objects (Anderson 2016), or through legislative and policy means, including but not limited to residential schools and the Indian Act (Jamieson 1978; Chrisjohn and Young 2006). Leanne Simpson (2004) highlights how this violence extends to the other forms of life and the land in general, whether through clear-cut logging, overfishing and hunting animals to extinction, or resources extraction projects, which upset the ecological and cultural balance of communities. All this negatively impacts the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples, the ability of communities to subsist outside the wage economy, and hinders, though it has not completely impeded, the ability of Indigenous peoples to fulfill their responsibilities as caretakers of the land (Brown 1996; Cook 2008; McGregor 2009).

It is this historical and material setting that informs the reproductive abuses experienced by Indigenous women in Canada and these cannot be fully understood outside of this context. Indigenous women continue to make reproductive choices under conditions of colonialism and assimilation. The abuses mentioned here have been perpetrated by a colonial government with the help of Western institutions, including Western medicine. Aboriginal women have the right, as members of their own peoples, to decide what reproductive options to employ whether these originate in Western or Indigenous ways. In Indigenous societies, women practice/d autonomy over their bodies and reproductive lives and have alternate ways of controlling fertility, inducing abortion and giving birth (Anderson 2011; Boyer 2014; National Aboriginal Health Association 2008). It is only through the process of colonialism that this autonomy and these ways were undermined (Jasen 1997; Lawford and Giles 2013). This was a necessary part of imposing colonial relations on Indigenous peoples. As Theresa Lightfoot states, "It's disrespectful to pretend like RJ wasn't alive in our communities… Our RJ was made illegal on purpose, but that's never mentioned anywhere" (cited in Danforth 2010, n.p.). Colonialism has created a situation where Western services are often presented as the only option and this allows for coercion and abuse.

Simpson (2014) states that Western feminism has not been an ally in the fight against the violence Indigenous women experience because this violence, including reproductive violence, cannot be addressed without engaging with issues of colonialism. Tara Williamson (2014) is more explicit when she says that most Canadians "don't give a shit" about the violence Indigenous women experience because our existence as settlers is vested in a system that depends on this violence. The prominent focus on rights and individualized choice in our movements overlooks this larger context and obfuscates any systematic abuse directed toward certain populations. As Justine Smith (1999) points out, in the current Native context, where women often find the only contraceptives available are dangerous, where unemployment rates are as high as 80%, and where life expectancy can be as low as 47 years, reproductive "choice" defined so narrowly is meaningless. Instead, Native women and men must fight for community self-determination and sovereignty over health care (211). In order to create a context in which choice becomes a meaningful concept, decolonization on a material level needs to happen. Aboriginal peoples must be returned the lands, resources, and freedom to provide for their own subsistence in ways they choose without stipulations.

But what implications do these critiques have for Western feminism in its struggles for reproductive self-determination? By pushing us to go beyond current rights discourse, which presupposes the existence of fundamentally unjust relations, a justice approach requires us to connect issues more broadly by mobilizing against the relations that create all of our struggles and to see how these struggles are interrelated. As Andrea Smith (2005b) highlights, we need to reject single issue politics as they have informed reproductive rights discourse and feminism in general as an agenda that not only does not serve Indigenous women, but actually promotes structures of oppression that keep all women from having real choices or healthy lives. Instead, the dismantling of heteropatriarchal capitalism

and colonialism needs to be made central (133, 135). This means Western feminism needs to resist renaming our reproductive rights struggles as justice struggles and carry on in a way that continues to take for granted the current historical and material relations. If we are to pursue goals that are good for all women, we must move beyond reformist strategies by making the active transformation of these longstanding relations a priority. In doing so, we are inescapably bound to Indigenous peoples in that our liberation, reproductive or otherwise, cannot come without that of Indigenous peoples. As Scott Lauria Morgenson (2011) has written, Natives and non-Natives are "caught up in one another" (2) and, as settlers, we need to learn to act in relationship to others in struggle (230). A justice approach can allow for this by requiring us to locate the struggle for control over our reproductive bodies within a broader context that is not disconnected from, but fundamentally related to, these other issues.

Acting in Relationship: Connecting the Historical Dots

As I follow the state of reproductive and broader feminist struggles in Canada, I find myself wondering whether Western feminism has forgotten that the capitalist, heteropatriarchal, and colonial system in place is dependent on the oppression and exploitation of all women (albeit in different ways)? For Western women, this includes a history of subjugation as patriarchy was imposed and, later, with the rise of primitive accumulation and the removal of peasants from the land (Lerner 1986; Federici 2004). The process of imposing these relations was accompanied by brutal attacks against common folk, and against women in particular, the most notable instance of this being the witch hunts (Federici 2004; Mies 1986). The witch hunts were part of a process which saw private interests solidify access to land and the wealth flowing from it (Federici 2004). This process involved the imposition of a set of laws and practices that reinforced heteropatriarchal relations conducive to capitalism by establishing strict gender binaries; by promoting sexual and other forms of violence against women; and by policing alternative sexualities. The witch hunts were also part of a war against women as they were separated from their means of subsistence, their labour was devalued, and knowledge and control over their bodies was expropriated (Federici 2004; Riddle 1997). The increased medicalization of women's bodies also saw female healers, midwives, and alternative health and healing practices suppressed and discredited (Ehrenreich and English 2005). Modern Western medicine arose out of these relations and was based on this theft. What does it mean, then, to turn to this same state-supported medical system as the only option for reproductive justice?

Current reproductive struggles that seek to establish, secure, or strengthen access to state-provided services stemming from the medical-industrial complex leave our movements vulnerable to the whims of the state and private interests. This reality effectively works to frame the scope of our struggles by limiting our demands to those rights that are offered and then withheld or by us thinking institutions that have been actively involved in our oppression are the most effective means through which to better our individual and collective lives. It also impedes potentially more radical and all-encompassing demands for collective change in a way that reproductive justice demands. I believe this is part of what Audre Lorde (1984) was getting at in her much quoted words, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (112). Pursuing change within the already laid out parameters set by the state may allow some of us temporary reprieve, but this route alone will never bring about genuine change. She also says this fact is most threatening to those who still define the master's house as their only source of support (112). By and large, Western feminism continues to be invested in the settler colonial state as the only medium for change and Western medical services as the only options from which to gain reproductive control and its struggles are limited as a result.

We need to ask ourselves whether institutions responsible for creating unjust relations or that have arisen out of and are meant to perpetuate these can, at the same time, be looked to for justice. I am not alone here. More generally, Martha Gimenez (2005) writes that reforms sought by Western feminism from within the system have been partial and incomplete because these gains are only accessible to those with the privilege to take advantage of them. No doubt, the increase in various rights has resulted in substantial improvements in the opportunities and quality of life of some individual women, but as Gimenez points out, these have not and cannot substantially alter the status of all

women. They remain inherently limited achievements because they have not altered the social relations that form the basis of our struggles and that are presupposed by the very existence of the state (28). This sentiment is echoed by Barbara Smith (2000) whose words here are directed at the gay rights movement, but which are directly relevant to reproductive rights movements as well. Smith writes:

> If the gay movement wants to make a real difference, as opposed to settling for handouts, it must consider creating a multi-issue revolutionary agenda. This is not about political correctness, it's about winning…Gay rights are not enough for me, and I doubt that they're enough for most of us. Frankly, I want the same thing now that I did thirty years ago…freedom. (184)

State-provided reproductive rights are not enough to achieve justice. It is only by revolutionizing the relations upon which exploitation and oppression are based that the abuses experienced by women can be overcome (Mies 1985, 553). In her critique of attempts by Western feminism to secure concessions from the state rather than overthrow the larger relations that oppress, Lee Maracle (1993) tells us that our mutual survival as settlers and Indigenous peoples requires that we cut the strings that tie us to the current system and find new threads to bind us together (158).

Jessica Danforth (2010) has written one of the few pieces that explicitly addresses Indigenous reproductive justice in a Canadian context and, through her work as the founder of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, she and her colleagues have connected Indigenous reproductive health to a host of interlinked issues, including but not limited to the right to culturally-safe sexuality education, environmental justice, violence prevention and awareness, sex work outreach, prison in-reach, two-spirit advocacy and awareness, and the reclaiming of traditional knowledge of Indigenous masculinities and feminisms. In this piece, Erin Konsmo offers a description of reproductive justice in the following way:

> Reproductive justice to me means having my cycles as a woman being connected with the cycles of nature, it means having that connection be strong and healthy. It means being able to make decisions over that health including when and if I have children, the ability to make decisions to not follow full term with a pregnancy… It also means having the ability to sit and listen to my kookum (grandmother) tell me in her own indigenous language (which she lost) with my feet in the dirt and hands planting seeds how my reproductive system is interconnected with the earth. It is not some foreign white concept written on cleaned up white paper, it is poetry, beautiful and real. Beautiful with my feet in the dirt. (in Danforth 2010, n.p.)

Reproductive justice for Indigenous peoples is intimately related to broader struggles for environmental justice, cultural rights and respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, and, ultimately, for material decolonization and self-determination.

Danforth (2010) also challenges us to consider whether justice for Indigenous peoples can be achieved without challenging the very legitimacy of the Canadian state as it currently exists. She is not alone here either. Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence (2009) point out that the notion that Indigenous nations can coexist with the Canadian state, whose ideologies, values and institutions lead to the poisoning of the air, water, and land upon which we all depend and that form the basis of Indigenous identities and cultures, is increasingly being questioned. The existence of a nation-state presupposes relations of domination and control that are at odds with Indigenous struggles and approaches to the world (105-136). These relations give rise to reproductive coercion and abuse and there are direct connections between environmental injustices in Indigenous communities, reproductive health, and the cultural wellbeing of a people (Cook 2008; Wiebe and Konsmo 2014). As non-Indigenous people, we need to know that the existence of the current nation-state presupposes social relations that also deny us the ability to exist in healthy ways or to justly provide for our subsistence as well. The relations that undermine the rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination are products of a system that is responsible for polluting our bodies and environments too.[1] It is erroneous for feminism to think that reproductive justice for anyone can be achieved from within this context.

Possible Ways Forward? Or, Things to Think About

In practice, what does all this mean for Western feminism and our reproductive struggles? As first step,

I think we must critically assess the types of choices we are being offered and from which we all must choose. Many of the options available are developed by pharmaceutical companies with profits in mind and they are harmful to our bodies or are only available from an expert-based, male-dominated medical system (Minkin 1980; Shea 2007; Warsh 2010). Are these state-sanctioned choices truly gains or do they pale in comparison to the control and understanding we could hold and have held over our bodies under different modes of social organization? Judith Richter (1996) argues that any method of reproductive control must be women-centered and the benefits and risks of technologies need to be assessed before they are developed. This assessment should be based on the needs and concerns of women and a consideration of how these technologies may be employed within the larger social context. In other words, society should not develop contraceptive technologies just because it has the ability to do so if these are harmful to our bodies or run the risk of being wielded in coercive ways.

Twenty five years ago, Betsy Hartman (1987) argued there are two sets of rights at issue if women are to gain reproductive freedom. This must include the fundamental right of women to control our reproduction. To achieve this, we need to transform the relationship between the provider and recipient of reproductive services by taking control out of the hands of the medical profession and placing it back into the hands of women (32-34). This involves more than ensuring informed consent protocols are followed. It includes developing or (re)establishing alternatives to options stemming only from state-supported Western medicine. Are there potentially safer options, which exist or remain underexplored and under-researched, that are not based on technologies controlled by for-profit industries, but that rely instead on women having intimate knowledge and control over their bodies, lives, and environments? Women cannot have control over their reproductive lives if they do not have the choice to choose otherwise.

To have reproductive justice also requires that we consider as part of our reproductive lives the broader labours necessary and vital to our ability to live, feed ourselves, and reproduce, or for society to continue to function. Silvia Federici (2004) highlights how the enclosure of lands necessary to impose current social relations on Western peoples involved at the same time the enclosure of our bodies and reproductive processes in the interest of capital (61-163). She pushes us to consider reproductive labour as part of a broader social reproductive work, or the complex activities, relations, and institutions that exist to produce and reproduce life (and labour power) under a capitalist heteropatriarchy (Federici 2012). Reproductive labor, which goes beyond childbirth to include domestic work, child raising, daily provisioning, subsistence farming, or even sex work, is disproportionately performed by women and, in a capitalist heteropatriarchy, this work is devalued or unvalued while it remains integral to our existence and the continued functioning of the current system (Shiva 1989; Mies 1986; Waring 1990). Federici (2012) points out that more recent structural adjustments imposed through the politics of economic liberalization and globalization serve as a form of sterilization because of the decline in life expectancy that results from policies that are destructive to human life and the environment. In this sense, reproductive justice is joined directly here with economic justice in that the political and economic relations under which we live have direct impacts on our life expectancy, quality of life, and, more broadly, on our reproductive and social lives.

With respect to Indigenous peoples in Canada, Pamela Palmater (2011) has argued similarly that the effects of colonial policy and the structural poverty conditions and chronic underfunding of vital social services imposed by the federal government are causing a "death by poverty" in Indigenous communities. This reality, too, is directly correlated with the reproductive and broader health of Indigenous peoples. Reproduction justice, then, depends on us having control over our economic and social lives and this requires a radical transformation of the political and economic relations upon which Canada is based. Hartman (1987) has also argued that everyone on earth has the right to subsistence by having our basic human needs met and by having society value and support all the labors that go into meeting these needs (32-34). Despite government rhetoric, it is possible to create such a society. It is also possible for us to mobilize in ways which make this vision a priority. The question we need to ask is whether any of this can be achieved from within a system based on values, principles, and relations that are antithetical to this vision. In pursuing these goals,

settlers, including Western feminists, also need to understand that it is not our lands or resources that need to be redistributed to do all this, that we are living on the territories of Indigenous peoples. The fact that our existence has come to depend on what is not ours does not negate this reality. As Janet McCloud states, feminism needs to lose the privilege it acquires as a settler movement by joining Indigenous peoples in liberating their lands and lives for as long as it takes to make this happen (in Grande 2004, 150-151). Our conception of reproductive justice needs to be explicitly linked to these broader issues.

In order to decolonize, some argue that we actually need to make the state irrelevant by developing new structures and ways of meeting our needs based on mutuality, relatedness, and respect (Smith 2013; Maile, Tuck, and Morrill 2013). To be effective, these efforts need to involve Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Indigenous struggles for self-determination are unique to each nation in question and often include a focus on restoring land-based languages and ways of life, revitalizing Indigenous institutions and social structures as informed by Indigenous worldviews, and dealing individually and collectively with the effects of colonialism in Indigenous lives. This work is for Indigenous peoples to carry out in ways decided upon and directed by their communities. However, these efforts would be made much easier if Western impositions on Indigenous peoples stopped and this is where settlers, including Western feminism, can be most useful. Our work toward decolonization needs to go beyond only offering support to Indigenous struggles. We must also take up our responsibilities as treaty partners and as members of the natural world in ways that promote alternative ways of living, being, and relating to one another. As Nora Butler Burke (2004) writes:

> A decolonisation movement cannot be comprised solely of solidarity and support for Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and self-determination. If we are in support of self-determination, we too need to be self-determining. It is time to cut the state out of this relationship, and to replace it with a new relationship, one which is mutually negotiated, and premised on a core respect for autonomy and freedom. (4)

We cannot rely solely on the state to implement just relations with Indigenous peoples when its very existence is meant to help facilitate the continuance of a system based on exploitative relations and the control and suppression of viable alternative ways of life. It is up to us to engage directly and collectively with the historical and material relations of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and colonialism in ways that undermine their existence — by creating alternate means of production and reproduction that are based on just relations with Indigenous peoples and a direct connection with and respect for our means of subsistence.

In our efforts, we would do well to listen to and take the time to understand the fundamental critiques Indigenous peoples have consistently voiced about our way of life and worldviews. Krysta Williams (2011) tells us that, without acknowledging Indigenous voices, there can be no peace and no choice and this ignorance and lack of will to listen comes not only from oppressive forces, but from feminist and activist communities as well (Williams and Ligate, 153-164). The act of listening has much to teach us about real, living, and sustainable alternatives to the system in place. Indigenous ways of life have consistently stood in opposition to the ideologies, values, and ways of relating to each other and the natural world that are inherent to the current mode of production and, by and large, they continue to stand in opposition to these today. It is exactly these ways of life that need to be respected in order to properly address the grievances of Indigenous peoples. Re-learning different ways of living as we take up our responsibilities as settlers has the potential to shift our ideological frameworks and the nature of our struggles, and this will place us in a better position to reclaim autonomy over our reproductive lives as well. As Jeanette Armstrong (1995) asks in relation to the resurgence work being done by Indigenous peoples on the west coast:

> What do we stand for? What do we give our coming generations? How do we ensure a healthy lifestyle for them? How are we going to implement the changes that are necessary for the survival of our communities?…What, historically, do we need to remember and relearn and reteach, and what are the values that go along with that? (183)

These are not only questions for Indigenous peoples. As settlers, we also need to ask ourselves these ques-

tions and begin the difficult work necessary to (re) build our knowledge of practices and ways of living prior to, or different from, those required by the current system.

Taken together, the voices highlighted here are urging us to understand that justice needs to be all-encompassing or it is not justice. Neither is decolonization a metaphor (Tuck and Yang 2012). It is something that should unsettle us internally, as individuals, but most importantly, in how we collectively relate to the lands and resources and with the peoples upon whom we depend for our existence. Western feminism is being challenged to seriously reconsider and re-envision how we shape our struggles and what exactly we are fighting for. Patricia Monture (1999) once wrote that in order for decolonization to be successful, we need to imagine alternate worlds based on humanity, freedom, and independence. Our movements need to think bigger about what control over our bodies looks like and what steps are needed to achieve this. What type of world do we want to live in and what is fundamentally required to get us there? A struggle for justice is not achieved by settling for less than what is required or by limiting our demands only to those rights that the system oppressing us is willing to grant. As history and the present day shows, rights that are given too often fall short of those that are truly needed and are consistently under threat of being taken away. To win reproductive justice for all women requires profound change in our entire society. This is, at its core, an intersectional project. If intersectionality is going to be useful to us in achieving liberation, we need to ask what purpose we have in adopting the term in our theorizing or research. Intersectionality as a tool can push us to see beyond ourselves by understanding how struggles are different, yet interconnected. Most importantly, it can help us to identify the structures and social relations that inform these differences and to strategize on how to transform the relations of oppression in ways that ensure material change and justice for all.

Endnotes

[1] This point should not be misconstrued as a "move to innocence" by colonial equivocation or by asserting settler nativism (Tuck and Yang 2012) in a way that erases the colonial relations that continue to inform Indigenous-settler interactions or that diminishes Indigenous claims to self-determination. It is meant to remind western feminism that colonial and capitalist heteropatriarchal relations have not always been, are not inevitable, and will need to be transcended for both Indigenous and settler liberation.

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