

The Canadian Carceral State: Violent Colonial Logics of Indigenous Dispossession

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines the over-representation of indigenous women in Canadian federal prisons. I situate the prison as a site of modernity to draw attention to the ways that the prison is underpinned by the logics of white supremacy. I posit that the prison is a complicated geography wherein the differential and overlapping colonial histories of slavery and indigenous genocide are intricately linked and also bifurcated. The prison enables racial violence and at the same time, erases this violence against indigenous women from public purview. This is to say, that the prison upholds the project of modernity through the sequestering and dispossession of indigenous communities, and this spatial act must be considered *alongside* other geographies of removal, such as the plantation and the reserve. Colonial carceral logics also operate beyond the space of the prison, which leads me to consider the staggering numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women as part of the colonial project that is deeply invested in the maintenance of white supremacy. In addition to reviewing key theories in black and indigenous prison studies, I discuss reports released from the Correctional Investigator's Office to clarify how reportage narratives of "change" are unable to rectify the disproportionate rates of federally incarcerated indigenous women. I also explore maps of Canadian prisons to think through how colonial and carceral geographies conceal racial violence. Throughout this project, I centralize that within colonial spaces there are always decolonial narratives. I posit that prison abolition must be accompanied by decolonial projects invested in dismantling the logics of white supremacy. Specifically, turning to creative texts, such as storytelling, illuminates how practices of human relationality are subversive acts wherein articulations of a better future emerge.

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List of Abbreviations

CAEFS	Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies
CCCs	Community Correctional Centres
CSC	Correctional Services Canada
DRAP	Deficit Reduction Action Plan
Mothers ROC	Mothers Reclaiming Our Children
OCI	Office of the Correctional Investigator
PIC	Prison Industrial Complex
PPPs	Public-Private-Partnerships
U.S.	United States

Chapter One

Introduction

In the 10-year period between March 2003 and March 2013, the incarcerated population has grown by close to 2,100 inmates, which represents an overall increase of 16.5%. During this period, the Aboriginal incarcerated population increased overall by 46.4%. Federally sentenced Aboriginal women inmates have increased by over 80% in the last 10 years (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 3).

This thesis explores how colonial practices that historically sought to manage and remove indigenous peoples underpin contemporary patterns of marginalization. More specifically, this research program focuses on indigenous women's incarceration and thinks through how the prison, in the present, is underwritten by racialized colonial histories. The high federal incarceration rate of indigenous women necessitates an examination of the colonial histories and attendant contemporary logics that produce indigenous subjects as inherently criminal and susceptible to normalized practices of state management. Following Foucault (1995), I posit that the prison is a site of modernity—a disciplining system of power, knowledge, and control that adversely impacts upon marginalized communities. Extending Foucault, I follow scholars such as Paul Gilroy (1993) and Sylvia Wynter (2003), to note that modernity is delineated by entwined racial histories: transatlantic slavery, indentureship, and the genocide of indigenous people. In illuminating systems of classification, modernity is also driven by practices of white supremacy.

Identifying the prison as a site of modernity has allowed me to focus on how practices of incarceration are underwritten by histories of slavery and colonialism, and, at the same time, hides these racial histories. Put another way, the prison manages race in ways that cannot be readily seen precisely because these geographies are meant to hide, and lock in, incarcerated populations. Through conceptualizing the prison as a site of modernity, my work clarifies how

the different and mutually constitutive colonial histories of black and indigenous communities overlap within the geographical space of the prison. Colonial carceral logics, and their attendant geographies (the plantation, the reserve, and the prison), operate to extract and sequester indigenous people and black people in separate and similar ways. With this, and following Davis (2003), Gilmore (2007), and Sudbury (2005), the prison is a site of social control and punishment, used to house and criminalize those who are marginalized, racialized and vulnerable. My thesis therefore also contributes to feminist studies of race, settler colonialism, and indigeneity (Smith 2005; Hannah-Moffat 2000 & 2001; Razack 2002; Hayman 2006; Monture-Angus 1999; Comack 2006; Balfour and Comack ed. 2004 & 2006; Backhouse 1999) and sheds light on how the criminalization of racialized women circulates over time and space.

Viewing the criminalization of racialized bodies through a lens that notices the complexities that tie modernity to incarceration, and the past to the present, provides an opportunity to discuss the increased criminalization of indigenous bodies in relation to ongoing practices of normalized violence. Christina Sharpe's work (2010) discusses how racialized subjectivities were created through histories of colonialism and slavery: *modernization* was only possible through shoring up racial scripts that promoted white superiority, racial inferiority, and practices of racial violence. These scripts, Sharpe argues, recirculate and emerge in the present as everyday racial horrors (3). My thesis clarifies how the prison works to enable racial violence and, at the same time, is an institution that erases this violence against indigenous women from public knowledge. My work also examines how colonial carceral logics operate beyond the space of the prison: I draw attention to how the over-representation of incarcerated indigenous women needs to be examined *alongside* the horrific numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women. In short, I work to understand how the project of modernity is intimately

tied to a wide range of genocidal and oppressive practices that adversely affect indigenous communities generally and indigenous women specifically.

The significance of this research is threefold: it contributes to feminist scholarship that links past colonial representations and stereotypes of non-white women to contemporary spaces; it draws attention to increased racialized incarceration in the Canadian context; and it underscores how the prison hides economic and political processes that are invested in the maintenance of white supremacy.

Methods

My research and methodology are feminist and interdisciplinary. The theoretical framework of this MA thesis will bring together indigenous studies, black studies, and feminist studies, as well as the sub-disciplines of carceral and prison studies. I will utilize a discourse analysis, using the aforementioned theoretical framework, to examine how the prison is a tool of geographic dispossession that facilitates the continual disappearance of indigenous bodies and upholds settler colonialism (Harris 2004; Smith 2005). I will closely read, and compare and contrast, the following texts and data:

- Selected archives from the Office of the Correctional Investigator
- “Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries” (2014) a report released by the Auditor General of Canada
- “Marginalized: The Aboriginal Women’s Experience in Federal Corrections” (2012) a report from Public Safety Canada on Aboriginal women in the prison system
- A map visually marking where Aboriginal reserves are located across Canada
- Eight maps visually marking where federal prisons are located across Canada

The other analytical sites that I will be drawing from and analyzing represent visible resistance to violence against indigenous women:

- “Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities” (2009) an education and policy initiative of the Native Women’s Association of Canada
- “Idle No More”: “Calls on all people to join in a peaceful revolution, to honour Indigenous sovereignty, and to protect the land and water” (Mission statement)

The recent archives from the Office of the Correctional Investigator outline the links between criminalization, prison experiences, gender, and indigeneity. The Office of the Correctional Investigator was established in 1973 to act as an ombudsman for offenders. The office receives offender complaints and makes non-binding recommendations regarding the humane and fair treatment of offenders. The office acts as a method of external oversight to Correctional Services of Canada (CSC). Howard Sapers (2004-present) is the Correctional Investigator of Canada. The research I am conducting will critically analyze the reports from 2012-2013; and, the report for 2013-2014. I choose to analyze the reports from 2012 to 2014 because of their discussion of racialized representation in Canadian prisons, conditions of confinement, access to programs, etc., and the recent publication of these reports reflect the presentation of concerns to CSC. The Correctional Investigator’s reports have historically highlighted “Aboriginal Issues” that outline concerns surrounding indigenous peoples’ prison experiences, however the 2012-2013 report calls special attention to the increasingly racially diverse offender population. The 2012-2013 report clarifies the rising rates of incarcerated indigenous communities, specifically indigenous women, and black communities as well as other

racial minorities (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 3). I begin with this report because it offers a way to critically examine prison demographic trends, which I couple with an analysis that attends to colonial histories of racial subjugation, management, and sequestering. The 2013-2014 Correctional Investigator's report has a special focus on the "safe and timely reintegration of offenders," and explains how there has been an increase in the development of new prison units, and yet this expansion has not been matched with an increase in operating budgets to prepare offenders for resettlement back into the community (4). I examine the 2013-2014 report to critically discuss how prison development is considered a form of economic stimulus and to critique political processes that position the prison as a solution to managing racialized communities. I will critically analyze the Correctional Investigator's reports alongside a report released by Public Safety Canada in collaboration with the Wesley Group, "Marginalized: The Aboriginal Women's Experience in Federal Correction" (2012). I am interested in what types of recommendations were and are being put forward regarding the increased criminalization of indigenous women and methods of respecting indigenous cultures. These reports illuminate contemporary carceral practices and contextualize the need for this research, as well as foster discussion around the social conditions that lend to the increasing rates of incarcerated indigenous women.¹

I use critical studies on the "Prison Industrial Complex" (PIC) from the U.S. to complement and clarify my analysis of Canadian carceral practices (Sudbury 2005; Alexander 2012; Wilson-Gilmore 2007; Davis 2003). More specifically, rather than comparing and contrasting the histories and academic works from the U.S. and Canada—which is beyond the scope of this MA thesis—I will bring these different analyses into conversation with texts and

¹ I want to highlight that this work cannot account for the complexities around who can "officially" identify as indigenous, because the data is based on government statistics that recognize indigeneity based on who is given status under the *Indian Act* (Sections 5-17, Definition and Registration of Indians).

data noted above in order to develop an original take on race, incarceration, and indigenous women in Canada. Through reading the prison as a site of racialized modernity, I will be able to better understand how historical violent encounters have shaped the current practices of over-policing, (indigenous dispossession and increased levels of incarceration) on the one hand, and under-policing (specifically regarding the violence around murdered and missing women) on the other hand. I also want to underscore the historically present workings of race and modernity: by outlining how colonial violent encounters have shaped the contemporary context, and making linkages between the past and the present, I draw lines between the over-representation of indigenous communities in the prison system, the accelerating “prison-industrial-complex” (PIC) in Canada, and longstanding carceral histories. For this reason, I also analyze maps in order to think through how questions of racialized displacement are linked to cartographic processes.

As noted above, one of the methods I employ is the incorporation of interdisciplinary frameworks and research as a way of producing scholarship that honours knowledges across disciplines. I read prison studies, maps, and the Office of the Correctional Investigator archives, alongside reports such as “Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit” because the latter includes accounts of indigenous women’s experiences. I position storytelling, as theory, that complements activist and academic writings. This has led to my interest in thinking about how “Idle No More” can be read alongside other analytical sites that more directly attend to incarceration. “Idle No More” is a grassroots movement that aims to reclaim indigenous sovereignty through peaceful political protest. One of the movement’s “Calls for Change” is lobbying for a national inquiry regarding murdered and missing indigenous women, which includes having indigenous women design and head the decision-making process in implementation of a national action plan that will resist violence (“Calls for Change” # 6—“Idle No More”). “Idle No More” actively challenges colonial

violence against indigenous lands and indigenous communities and utilizes indigenous cultural practices, such as the Round Dance, as a method of resistance. I discuss the “Idle No More” movement to consider how a multi-faceted approach is required for indigenous communities to reclaim sovereignty, which I argue is necessary to fight the increasing number of incarcerated indigenous women. I use creative texts in my research as a method of moving beyond what has been categorized as “academic” knowledge; the stories written by the families of murdered and missing women, outlined in the “Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit,” are central to this portion of my thesis. The use of creative texts in my research, specifically storytelling as theory in my research facilitates a discussion premised on transformational change—beyond the confines of conventional theory—through being able to envision and articulate imaginings of a different future.

Breakdown

In addition to this introductory chapter, my thesis will contain three other chapters and a conclusion. Chapter Two will provide an overview of theories and literature, from both the Canadian and U.S contexts, that have helped me demonstrate how the prison as an ongoing colonial logic, which “cages” and erases indigenous women and therefore upholds settler colonialism and white supremacy. This chapter will include the interdisciplinary theories and methodologies (black studies, indigenous studies, carceral/prison studies) that I employ throughout the thesis. In Chapter Three, I critically analyze reports released by the government. I look specifically at the Correctional Investigator’s reports and statistics regarding increased representation of racialized peoples and indigenous women in prisons. While these reports shed light on many of the issues that criminalized indigenous women face, as well as the conditions

they face as incarcerated peoples, they also fail to attend to the longstanding colonial underpinnings that shape the prison. Consequently, the recommendations put forth in the reports seek to “improve” prison life rather than attend to ongoing practices of colonial violence. Chapter Four employs the use of maps to clarify how the project of modernity is enacted geographically. This chapter considers how colonial carceral logics operate beyond the space of the prison. I look specifically at where prisons are located in Canada and focus on geographies of incarceration as well as resistance. McKittrick’s scholarship (2011, 2013) discusses how racialized communities are managed and disciplined by the *spatialization* of criminality. The space of the prison demonstrates, geographically, how many indigenous women become isolated from their communities and families; prison maps thus allows one to see how the management of indigenous bodies, by the state, is part of an ongoing project of colonial dispossession that relies on very specific spatial practices that are rooted in upholding inequitable racial categories. Chapter Four will therefore trace how the geographies of the prison have been, and continue to be, presented as the *solution* to managing indigeneity. The prison system disavows the structural racism that indigenous women face and the poverty and violence they experience.

I turn to resistance in my final chapter. I explore how storytelling can be used as a decolonial framework to subvert colonial scripts and articulate decolonial longings. In my concluding chapter, I examine the “Idle No More” movement as visible resistance to the interlocking systems of colonial violence. I think about how this spatially visible and meaningful activist project is tied to methods of reclaiming indigenous sovereignty. This thesis shows, then, that an examination of how Canada was built on and through colonialism and patriarchal processes that are now carceral practices. These methods of incarceration, inside and outside the PIC, have contributed greatly to the dehumanization of indigenous women and are central to

understanding the continued violence against indigenous women. Importantly, *at the same time*, these carceral and geographic practices are called into question, thus opening up a way to think about how decolonial projects are engendered and working to dismantle the logics of white supremacy.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Frames

As noted in my introduction, my thesis is interdisciplinary and contributes to research that has emerged from the fields of prison studies, black studies and feminist studies.

Conceptualizing the prison as a site of racial management and surveillance, I explore the overrepresentation of indigenous and racialized incarcerated peoples. I argue that the prison discloses the logics of white supremacy that are intricately related to histories of slavery, colonialism, and racial violence.² With this in mind, I posit that the prison is a site of modernity. This is to say that the prison, in many ways, sustains narratives of colonialism, the genocide of indigenous peoples, and the racial scripts that emerged during and after transatlantic slavery; the prison, then, illuminates racial histories which, in turn shed light on how modern classificatory systems shape nonwhite oppressions, resistances, and struggles (Wynter, 2003; Gilroy, 1993). The theoretical frames that inform my literature review and this thesis as a whole works with the scholarship of Michelle Alexander (2010), Dylan Rodriguez (2007), Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007), Andrea Smith (2005), and Katherine McKittrick (2013), among others. These writers differently inform how I am thinking about the connections between transatlantic slavery, the genocide of indigenous peoples, colonialism, modernity, and the prison.

Much scholarship in the field of prison studies has traced the commonalities between the Middle Passage (the slave ship as an apparatus of containment and punishment), the plantation (a location of racial violence and surveillance), and the contemporary structure and geography of

² I use the terms “logics of white supremacy” and “colonial logics” interchangeably, as descriptive statements pointing to the various ways that conceptually and materially racist ideologies and practices are employed during and after colonial encounters; these logics point to the various processes—from scientific racism and discrimination to racial violence and incarcerations—that have secured, and continue to secure, white supremacy.

the prison (Davis 2003; Rodriguez 2007). As well, Michelle Alexander's scholarship shows the relationship between processes of racialization and criminality, and delineates how mass incarceration in the U.S. context perpetuates a racial caste system that can be traced to the rhetoric, political environments, and ideologies that emerged during slave and the Jim Crow eras. While the prison is underwritten by longstanding racial structures—Middle Passage, the plantation, Jim Crow—Ruth Wilson Gilmore's geographic analysis of California's prison expansion clarifies how the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) is a response to surpluses of capital land, labour, and state capacity; she examines how prison expansion is a geo-political maneuver that is this is wrapped up in what she describes as “catchall solutions to social problems” (Gilmore 5).³ The work of these scholars has provided a rich context for me to think about the racial workings of incarceration in Canada. In looking to critical studies on the PIC from the U.S. context I will note parallels in the Canadian context in order to understand how Canadian prisons are also positioned as “solutions” for disciplining “problematic” racialized bodies that have been deemed “unmanageable” and “threatening.”

I have been suggesting that much of my thesis engages overlapping histories, which has led me to ask the following questions: How do we talk about the processes of colonialism and slavery in tandem while recognizing their unique and separate histories? How does the prison work as a geographic site of modernity, where divergent and mutually constitutive colonial histories meet? How have the interconnected displacements of colonialism shaped our historically present moment of mass incarceration as well as resistances to a range of racial oppressions? What does the prison hide from public knowledge? How does the institution of the

³ I use the term “prison-industrial complex” as a broad and encompassing term to point to mechanisms of incarceration that fuel prison expansion and the racial management of marginalized communities. These mechanisms include: political interests, policing strategies, harsh sentencing practices (mandatory minimum sentences), the production of criminality, and the management of race and vulnerability (marginalization and poverty).

prison work to disavow histories of slavery and colonialism? What narratives of abolition emerge when considering the prison as a site of modernity? What spaces of resistance emerge when de-naturalizing the ideological work that the prison performs?

In the discussion below, I track the different ways in which geography, modernity, race, the law, and incarceration, together, shape how we understand racism and carceral practices. I examine the colonial histories of black and indigenous communities in order to demonstrate how racial markers, past and present, help us better understand carceral logics. My conceptual framework considers how the prison is a site of modernity, underpinned by the colonial histories of both black and indigenous communities, to highlight the overlapping, and differential, workings of how white supremacy shapes incarceration. While my thesis specifically examines the incarceration of indigenous women, reading black and indigenous histories, together, is necessary for bringing clarity to the disappearance, incarceration and marginalization of indigenous women—who are my focus in this research project.

Geography, The Prison, and Race

The prison is a tool of geographic dispossession that facilitates the continual disappearance of indigenous communities, upholds white settler colonialism, and facilitates practices of racial violence. A key theorist informing my research is Ruth Wilson Gilmore, whose writings focus on the ideological work and political agendas that inform incarceration, prison expansion, and indigenous struggles. Gilmore's (2007) book, *Golden Gulag: Prison Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, questions the role of the prison in the state of California. Gilmore critically examines the ways in which the prison has been positioned as the "solution" to economic restructuring and political rhetoric focused on "ameliorating"

crime. Gilmore's analysis unpacks how prison expansion has been deemed a "productive" component of economic expansion, while she also simultaneously exposes the naturalized racial violence that makes mass-incarceration possible. In the U.S.—and Canada, although outside Gilmore's purview—crime rates are on a downward trend, and yet politically there continues to be a "get tough on crime" agenda through mandatory sentencing and "three-strikes law" (Gilmore 108). In Canada, the Conservative government has, since 2006, adopted a "Tough on Crime" agenda and introduced a series of public legislations to *increase* public safety (Mallea 5). A reliance on mandatory minimum sentences (MMSs) is common for a tough on crime stance, and ensures that infractions will be met with a punishment that matches the severity of the crime (Mallea 13). The troubling nature of MMSs is that it removes judiciary discretion, which removes the ability for judges to sentences according to the unique situations that lead to the crime, and enforces minimum sentence to the crime (Mallea 13). In both Canada and the U.S., there has been a politically postulated fear around crime, which has been used to legitimize political agendas focused on increased prison expansion. These agendas are also tied to the promise of job creation and economic development. Gilmore clarifies the economic negotiations of surplus land and labour, which facilitated what she calls (87-127) the "prison fix," in California; she also describes how prison expansion is deeply connected to geography by being necessarily hidden from public view. Her analysis is all encompassing, and she is able to demonstrate how all of these processes bifurcated the divide between the rich and the poor and left marginalized racialized communities increasingly vulnerable to criminalization and incarceration.

As I work through Gilmore's framework, which uncovers how state mechanisms work to foster prison development, I want to think about how—in the Canadian context—the

incarceration of black and indigenous peoples impact political and economic “progress.” This will allow me to also address what the prison *hides* from public knowledge and how what is unseen relates to the complex workings of carceral geographies (prisons themselves as well as the spaces such as the reserve or the “ghetto”). This means, then, that the prison does not simply lock in and conceal those who are incarcerated—it is not a standalone geography that is disconnected from other spaces and places. The borders of the prison can also be thought of as porous in order to think about how the people inhabiting the prison, who are in a complex transitional space, are not always not separate from those communities who reside outside prison walls. Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s research has allowed me to think about how the prison is not a homogenous *solitary* site of punishment and discipline. It is, in fact, a complicated location wherein differentiated racial histories play out within and outside prison walls. Gilmore’s insights about the geographic underpinnings of the prison have allowed me to identify that very different racial histories overlap and bifurcate: the prison locks in *and* differentiates black and indigenous (past and present) incarcerations. As a site of modernity, the prison also reveals how “progress” and geographic processes are deeply racialized (e.g. protecting citizens by *locking up criminals*) and also discloses the ways practices of marginalization and racial violence are obscured from public view (e.g. protecting citizens by *locking criminals away*).

The Prison as a Site of Modernity

I have already briefly identified the prison as a site of modernity is underwritten by racial geographies: the prison locks in criminals (in the name of progress), hides colonial and racial violence, and, at the same time, is a location of overlapping yet differentiated racial histories. As a site of modernity the prison is also intricately linked to histories of slavery and colonialism that

continue to underwrite contemporary processes of racial marginalization. I conceptualize the histories of white supremacy, slavery and colonialism in tandem in order to think about how racial violence—rather than the teleological processes of progress, reason, rationality and economic progress—are implicit to modernity. Political economists, for example, have constructed the slave trade and colonialism as solely strategic economic actions, thus removing any discussion of ethics and racial politics from the project of modernity (Gilroy 39). More clearly, framing modernity as an economic *action* disavows the brutality of the slave trade and the violence of colonial encounters. Transatlantic slavery, the genocide of indigenous peoples, and indentured labour did (and do), however, underpin the making of “western civilization”; these interconnected racial and geographic displacements are necessary to how we understand modernity and attendant resistances to colonial orders (McKittrick, *Sylvia* 2). Gilroy defines modernity as, “a distinct configuration with its own spatial and temporal characteristics defined above all through the consciousness of novelty that surround the emergence of civil society, and the modern state, and industrial capital” (49). Ideas of Enlightenment in North America and Europe were used to sustain racial orders based on differential conceptions of humanness (Gilroy 49).

With this, blackness is an important site of analysis, “positioned not outside and entering into modernity but rather the empirical-experiential-symbolic site through which modernity and all of its unmet promises are enabled and made plain” (McKittrick, *Sylvia* 2). Colonial logics and violent dispossessions rendered black people as property and “enslaveable” (Smith, “The Colonialism” 2). Slavery was a key tool in economic development precisely because it produced black people as commodities (and blackness as a signifier of property and ownership); racially based slavery was, as well, a product of the law (Walker 5). This means that the enslavement and

commodification of black peoples was legally, and thus socially and politically, institutionalized. *Modernization* was only possible through racial scripts that *legally* promoted white superiority, racial inferiority, and racist violence. Colonial logics that cast black peoples and indigenous peoples as primitive and whiteness as civilized was a key tool in the creation of ethnic, and thus human differences; this was characterized by linking phenotypical and other racial markers to cognitive abilities, with black and indigenous people being labeled, differentially, as less-than-human and blackness as signifying the lowest rung of humanity (Gilroy 1993; Wynter 2003). Indigenous proximity to whiteness (as closer to white than black, for example) did not mean freedom, however; it meant forced to assimilation (into whiteness) and, therefore, the disappearance of indigenous cultures and indigenous genocide and indigeneity as constantly vanishing (Smith, “The Colonialism” 2).

The process of racialization and attendant racial scripts just noted clarify how white supremacy underpins modernity. These racist scripts, furthermore, continue to circulate and racialized bodies, both black and indigenous, are disciplined by them and rendered intelligibly less-than-human through them. Consequently, present day understandings of race are tied to colonial and slavery discourses and thus inform the embodied experiences and material realities for white, black and indigenous bodies. Modernity created hierarchical relationships that emerged from violent encounters, and, through the logics of white supremacy, determined the meaning of freedom and unfreedom in the present. Racialized violence has, therefore become normalized and commonsense, because it is *institutionalized through modernization*; the site of the prison thus perpetuates the normalized, commonsense, and institutionalized “symbolic production of race” (Alexander 197). The culture of mass incarceration means that indigenous and black bodies are interpellated through a colonial lens and carceral logics (policing, white-

supremacist juridical proceedings) and therefore become managed and disciplined by these logics. Alexander writes,

Today mass incarceration defines the meaning of blackness in America: black people, especially black men, are criminals. That is what it means to be black.... The stigma of race was once the shame of the slave; then it was the shame of the second-class citizen [Jim Crow]; today the stigma of race is the shame of the criminal (197-198).

With this in mind, what histories and historical geographies do these contemporary carceral logics and processes of racial modernization contain?

The Middle Passage, the Reserve and the Prison

Many scholars in prison studies have traced the genealogy of incarceration from the Middle Passage and the transatlantic slave trade to the plantation, to the prison. Dylan Rodriguez (2007) theorizes the prison as a “white-supremacist module or prototype” that can be traced back to the slave ship (41). He posits that the “Middle Passage foreshadows the prison as it routes and enacts chattel slavery, constituting both a passage into the temporality and geography of enslavement” (Rodriguez 42). Therefore, the slave ship laid the groundwork for the contemporary racial crisis of mass incarceration in the USA (Rodriguez 41). Rodriguez argues that the prison is a “*productive* component of the U.S. nation state’s internal coherence” that secures white hegemony, through replacing the “‘irrational’ horrors of chattel slavery with the juridical ‘rationality’ of the prison” (39-40). The ship was a containment vessel of profound bodily punishment (Rodriguez 46). The carceral logics of ship captivity were employed to create *human* as cargo, and the ship opened up the space for slavers to bring Africans to the market, while simultaneously using horrific violence to *teach* black communities about an “incipient global order” (Rodriguez 45).

The Middle Passage system of slavery, as a space of suspension, captivity and preservation also forcibly took diasporic African communities to the European colonies. Upon arrival, slaves were placed on the plantations (of varying sizes) and became symbolically and materially and ontologically, enslaved property (McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds* 44). As objects of property, black subjects were measured as legal “things” according to European conceptions of property and land (Rodriguez 45). Through examining the space of the plantation it becomes clear that modernity is a contingent relationship where black labour was exploited and black subjects were used as economic objects—all of which contribute to processes of dehumanization (McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds* xvi). Transatlantic slavery, the plantation, and the logics of settler colonialism denied humanity to black communities and created an exploitative relationship (“blackness as on the boundary of labourer-as-human”) that opened up the conditions for the emergence of civil society and white hegemony (King, “Labor’s Aphasia” 3). The histories of anti-black racial violence thus begins to clarify that the prison is a site of modernity because it sets the stage for thinking about how racialized peoples continue to be managed and punished.

Colonial and carceral logics historically sequestered and violently subjugated black peoples while also instituting the white supremacist underpinnings of the settler colonial state—which is tied to indigenous marginalization and genocide. It follows, then, that colonialism and slavery—the settler state, and the plantation—disavowed indigenous peoples and black peoples in separate, similar, and intimately connected ways. More clearly, in questioning what are often thought of as *discrete* geographic spaces—the middle passage, the ship, the plantation and the reserve—it becomes evident that these are spaces of encounter that are underpinned by overlapping racial histories. White, indigenous, black geographies are entwined *by and through*

encounter—are intimately connected in the project of modernity and white supremacy (McKittrick, “Plantations Futures” 6). The reserve, then, stands as a key carceral geography.

The *Indian Act* (1867) was a technology of modernity that legally implemented racial apartheid in Canada. This federal legislation was tied to the larger colonial project in Canada: it rejected traditional indigenous modes of being and sought to assimilate indigenous people into Canada and “white” nationhood (Sangster 302). European explorers began demarcating indigenous lands under the doctrine of *terra nullius* (the myth of wilderness, or “awaiting human occupation of husbandry”) and colonists began making claims to the lands as though they were unoccupied (Deur 6-7). The legal doctrines of European colonists thus became established on the soil (Deur 6). A colonial geography emerged that was dependent on an understanding of individual property rights and was backed by the nation-state (Harris, “Native Lands” 16). The development and “subduing” of indigenous lands was rationalized through the understanding that indigenous communities did not know how to use the land and resources: “That the outward trappings of European land use were held to be diagnostic of ‘occupancy’ and prerequisite for the extension of property rights is revealing; it says much of the racialized logic and the territorial ambitions implicit in the colonial legal system of the time” (Deur 7). Indigenous lands were demarcated, mapped, and classified, and a “discipline [was] imparted on the land” (Harris, “Native Lands” 17). This colonial mapping “situated the reserve within an official ambit of sovereignty, surveillance, and management while, at the same time, detached it from its surroundings and the complex land uses and spatial patterns of preexisting native lifeways” (Harris, “Native Lands” 18).

The nineteenth century *Indian Act* and other legislation at this time restricted indigenous movements and defined indigenous communities as legal wards of the state. The Department of

Indian Affairs instituted the Act—thus overseeing, managing, and disciplining indigenous communities. Indigenous communities were placed in the confines of geographic territories (reserves), and often these allocated lands were depleted of resources, which meant that the long-term viability of indigenous communities was threatened (Deur 9). The historical pattern that Canadian indigenous communities faced was a system where federal agents took land and resources through a treaty process, which has resulted in indigenous economic dependence on the nation-state (Deur 10). The federal policies were predicated on the conception that spatially containing indigenous communities and “making modest compensatory payments would be considerably less costly than patrolling poorly consolidated national territories and provisioning standing militaries in the western and northern hinterlands” (Deur 10). The reserves were (and are) carceral geographies that were not only supported by state-run surveillance and governmental management, but also removed indigenous communities from their traditional territories. The reserves also fostered the space for coerced assimilation by Indian Agents and missionaries through the building and forced indigenous occupation of residential school systems (Deur 10).

Some scholars in the field of indigenous studies have drawn linkages between the carceral geographies of the reserve and the residential school system to the prison space (Monture-Angus 1996; Johnston 2007). The forced sequestering of indigenous children in residential schools, “prison-like institutions,” was a practice of incarceration meant to expunge indigeneity from indigenous children (Johnston x-xi). Patricia Monture-Angus traces how the break down of indigenous families and communities because of the residential school is directly linked to the over-representation of indigenous peoples in prisons. Monture-Angus writes, “The child welfare system feeds the youth and adult correctional systems. Both institutions remove

citizens from their communities, which has a devastating effect on the cultural and spiritual growth of the individual” (*Thunder In My Soul*, 194). The continuum between the residential school system and the prison discloses how colonial carceral logics operate to sequester and manage indigeneity.⁴ Although the reserve does not mirror the plantation, colonial carceral logics inform how the geography of the reserve is a space of suspension that conceals ongoing colonial violence.

Examining colonial histories and colonial dispossessions as well as their infrastructures (plantations, reserves, residential schools) is necessary in order to critically think about the prison as a site where divergent and mutually constitutive colonial histories meet and shape our racialized incarceration in our present moment. This is to say, the production of space, and modernity, allow us to glean how what might be considered different racial histories overlap *because of* colonial carceral logics. If, as I argue, the prison is a site of modernity, colonial carceral logics require the forced sequestering of marginalized, racialized communities. Modernity requires the incarceration of black, indigenous and racialized peoples to make sense. Sequestering practices uphold and hide processes of marginalization and dehumanization—the sequestering of racialized peoples is a *key* component in the maintenance of white supremacy.

⁴ Anne McGillivray and Brenda Comaskey’s book *Black Eyes All of the Time: Intimate Violence, Aboriginal Women, and the Justice System* documents indigenous women’s struggles surrounding their experiences of intergenerational familial violence and intimate partner violence. The text clarifies indigenous women’s experiences of intimate partner violence in relation to cyclical colonial violence—particularly how the residential school system impacted kinship structures and how these colonial legacies still directly impact intergenerational familial violence. Indigenous women’s main recourse for addressing violence is the criminal justice system, and yet their experiences with the police are characterized by a lack of consistent police presence, mandatory charging (both parties are charged in spousal assault cases), misogyny and racism. The consequences of mandatory charging is an increase in charges laid against complaints, both parties are charged despite extreme differences in the level of violence alleged (McGillivray and Comaskey 106). Also, indigenous women discussed their fear to involve the police, incase the women were thrown in jail and particularly if they had dependent children (McGillivray and Comaskey 106).

Therefore, the colonial histories of black and indigenous communities connect *because of practices of containment*. These communities are contained differently, but they are contained nonetheless.

As noted above, some scholars in the field of prison studies conceptualize the slave ship, and the plantation, and the reserve, as akin to the contemporary structure of the prison. Rodriguez considers, as noted, the prison as a site of institutionalized dehumanization that emerged from the slave ship. Angela Davis, similarly, conceptualizes the prison as historical continuation of racist institutions, such as chattel slavery and segregation laws. It is, however, important to recognize that while colonial logics and plantation logics continue to operate in post-emancipation contexts, ideologically and materially, the prison does not mirror the ship, plantation, or the reserve. This is why I theorize the prison as a key site of modernity, one that contains and is underwritten by different but overlapping and entwining racial histories. More clearly, we cannot understand the ideological work of the prison without conceptualizing it as a site of modernity because *as a site of modernity*—rather than, say, solely carceral geography or a Foucauldian site of discipline and punishment—the prison discloses complex racial and gendered scripts, underwritten by a colonial order, that operate to manage and oversee bodies in differential ways. This assumes that the past does not *mirror* the present, but rather that the past *informs* the present and our contemporary racial order. This frame, as well, uncovers how indigenous women’s historical experiences with colonialism underpin modernity, incarceration, and prison geographies in the present.

Gender, Indigeneity, and the Prison

Andrea Smith’s *Conquest* (2005) examines the gendered dimensions of colonization and

patriarchy as they impact upon indigenous people, particularly indigenous women's bodies. Smith discusses how gender violence was and is a tool of genocide and argues that issues of gendered violence and oppression cannot be separated from issues of racism and colonialism (*Conquest* 8). She analyzes how historical violence is linked to colonial understandings of indigenous subjectivity, particularly ideas about indigenous women as inherently "rapable." Specifically Smith writes, "Because Indian bodies are 'dirty' they are considered sexually violable and 'rapable,' and the rape of the bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count" (*Conquest* 10). The racist dehumanization of indigenous women served to facilitate the colonial project; colonizers subjugated indigenous women through enforcing a hierarchical and patriarchal social structure that simultaneously stereotyped, violated, and demeaned them (Smith, *Conquest* 23).

In addition to geographically marginalizing indigenous communities in Canada, the *Indian Act* was a legal method of violently instituting European patriarchal family structures and disregarding indigenous kinship systems, including many "matrilineal and matrilocal ones" (Sangster 307). In the early twentieth century, monogamous heterosexual marriage was used as a method of regulating indigenous women's sexuality: "While the federal government clearly wished to limit those 'legitimate' state Indians eligible for treaty support, sexual control was also central to their overall policy of cultural assimilation, for monogamous, lifelong unions were seen as signs of sexual order/civilization, while deviations from this model were a sign that Native peoples remained attached to sexual disorder/primitive endurance" (Sangster 308). The regulation of indigenous women's bodies, through controlling and managing sexuality and reproduction, was a form of violence and a "tool of racism and colonialism" (Smith, *Conquest* 1) that sought to control the indigenous population. Smith's scholarship links the historical violence

perpetrated against indigenous women's bodies to contemporary acts of violence that seek to destroy indigenous sovereignty and indigenous modes of being (*Conquest* 3). Indigenous women were literally and symbolically brutalized and this violence, consequently, upheld white supremacy. Indigenous communities become an enduring "present absence" in the North American landscape thus supporting "the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands [and bodies] is justified" (Smith, *Conquest* 9).

Despite the brutality of colonization, the growth rate of the indigenous population dramatically outpaces that of non-indigenous people in Canada, "[b]etween 1996 and 2006 the Aboriginal population grew at a much faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population at 45% and 8% respectively" (Statistic Canada, "Population Growth" 2010). With contemporary population growth in mind, as well as the aforementioned long history of violently managing and marginalizing indigenous communities, I posit that the high incarceration rates of indigenous women draws attention to practices of gendered colonialism and an ongoing *method* of settler colonialism that removes indigenous bodies from the land. According to Correctional Service Canada (2014), "[f]rom 2002 to 2012 the number of incarcerated Aboriginal women rose by 97 percent" increasing the magnitude of the already problematic over-representation of indigenous women in the Canadian criminal justice system ("Aboriginal Offenders Research Results"). Smith's analyses of the gendered dimensions of colonization are critical to understanding the over-representation of indigenous women in Canadian prisons. It is also important to consider this in relation to staggering and deeply unsettling numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women: "according to Canadian government statistics, Indigenous women are five times to seven times more likely than other women to die as the result of violence" (Amnesty International "No More Stolen Sisters"). The prison hides those racialized communities that have

been deemed “unmanageable” from the public eye, yet can also be understood as a method of assimilation, because incarceration forcibly removes indigenous people from their communities and locates them within governmental facilities. The forced removal and sequestering of indigenous women is a colonial practice that has traces of slave ship, plantation, and reserve geographies in that it highlights the need to discipline and manage race. Related, and just as important, these carceral practices *resituate* these violences within the prison thus demonstrating that modernity is underpinned by a range of overlapping colonial experiences: racial violence adversely impacts upon different people in different ways while the prison system locks in, and therefore shows the connections between, marginalized and racialized communities and their histories. Thinking through indigenous women’s contemporary carceral histories and lives, then, brings complex racial and gendered histories into view in the present without, ideally, conflating time, space, and race.

Colonial Logics Re-Circulated in Relation to the Law

Indigenous communities negotiate a legal system that ostensibly anticipates their criminalized subjectivities and identities. Comack and Balfour’s text, *The Power to Criminalize* (2004), discusses the over-representation of indigenous people within the criminal justice system, particularly violent crime cases heard at the Manitoba Court of Queen’s Bench (78). Criminalized indigenous women live in precarious social locations, due to harms caused by colonization, poverty, unemployment, lack of essential resources, and an inability to obtain education, which are all individualized responsibilities within our neoliberal economic structure. Comack and Balfour analyze how particular communities are defined within criminal cases, wherein the accused, complainant and witnesses are read through white constructions of

“masculinity, femininity, race, class and social space” (*The Power* 10). The legal system ostensibly anticipates indigenous criminality so defence lawyers use a strategy called “devaluative ideology of Indianness” (qtd. in Comack and Balfour, *The Power* 83). This strategy disparages indigeneity through relying on racist scripts that understand indigenous lifestyle choices as characterized by drunkenness and violence (Comack and Balfour, *The Power* 83). “Aboriginal peoples must therefore construct a lifestyle that is valued by the courts—and defence lawyers are very cognizant of the importance that courts place on self-change and moral conduct” (Comack and Balfour, *The Power* 83). Comack and Balfour also analyze how indigenous people are presumed to be poor witnesses in court and explain that part of this assumption comes from the fact that the Canadian law is Eurocentric and does not account for cultural differences within the law, such as, language or other differences that might make indigenous communities appear unintelligible (*The Power* 85). For example, in some indigenous communities “truth” has a specific cultural meaning, therefore, when witnesses are told they must tell the truth, for some indigenous cultures the “absolute truth” is an abstract concept and, perhaps, unknowable in Eurocentric terms (Comack and Balfour, *The Power* 85). Comack and Balfour highlight the use of racialized stereotypical rhetoric within legal processes, such as standards relating to, “sobriety, intelligence, and education” (*The Power* 86). For example, defence lawyers will sometimes challenge the credibility of an Aboriginal Crown witness by drawing on racist rhetoric, painting the witness as an alcohol dependent, welfare recipient, lacking education and sophistication, in order to sway the case and give the defense the upper hand (Comack and Balfour, *The Power* 86-87). Racialized stereotypes that circulate within the legal system demonstrate how indigenous subjectivities are interpellated in relation to

objectification and subjugation, which is tied to the (re)articulation of colonial logics and, ultimately, geographies that criminalize.

Colonial logics regarding racialized women also emerge within sentencing processes.

One defense lawyer (interviewed by Comack and Balfour) said,

The worst thing you can do is kill a white women. If the victim happens to be Aboriginal, the lawyer suggests, although admittedly it is still a 'serious' crime, you do not have to worry about the aggravating factor of your client having killed someone particularly deserving of protection by society ("The Power" 89).

This quote is another example of how indigenous women are not deemed to be recognizable subjects, and how indigenous people are framed through white supremacist legal constructs. It is not surprising, then, that race has become a significant marker in the characterization of violent crime, and yet, through the law there is a systematic erasure of histories of colonization. There are complex histories that criminalize racialized communities, and yet the "Official Version of Law" is understood as being "blind justice" and promoting formal equality (Comack 22). As Comack argues, the law reproduces inequalities because it fails to acknowledge various experiences and social locations (22). Related, Alexander argues that the "colour blind" justice system has created a permanent underclass of racialized communities, who should have tried to "avoid" committing these crimes (Alexander 215). The rhetoric of individual "choice" therefore underwrites criminalization, which in turn leads to a discussion of respectability politics. More specifically, drawing attention to seeming individual power and agency, removes a discussion of the role of the state in perpetually condemning the racialized, marginalized, and impoverished from being deemed as "criminal" (Alexander 216).

The law is a Eurocentric tool and does not account for social factors that marginalize racialized groups; carceral logics can therefore be understood as concretizing these kinds of processes of racialization through the law and colonial legal practices. The colonial nation state

can, it follows, be conceptualized as modeling and producing bodies based on legal processes and power relations that “induce modes of behavior” (Foucault 295). The prison is, thus, a geographic extension of colonial law; it is a locus of institutional power that regulates bodies through surveillance and discipline (Foucault 215). Put differently, colonial laws assess “unmanageable” and “unintelligible” racialized bodies and the prison sequesters, disciplines, and manages these bodies. With this, the law and the prison, together, calcify negative representations of indigenous women and naturalized indigenous criminality within the context of modernity and overlapping racial histories.

Decolonial and Abolition Frameworks

The prison, as a site of modernity, also opens up a range of decolonial possibilities. As noted above, the colonial scripts that operate on *all* bodies and peoples (white and nonwhite) are tied to slavery *and* colonialism. Yet these colonial scripts are read in very different ways—which is critical because this offers a space for a nuanced analysis that can work toward articulating a decolonial future that, in bringing these racial histories together, seeks to undo longstanding racial hierarchies—and following Andrea Smith—dismantles white supremacy. Part of this work involves dislodging black and indigenous carceral narratives from dehumanizing *conceptual and theoretical logics* (McKittrick, 2013). In this final section of my literature review I want to touch on some of the ways decolonial theories and practices of resistance undermine the ways in which geographies, the law, modernity, gender, and the prison shape the ongoing criminalization of indigenous women.

As noted above, the historical antecedents of the prison—the slave ship, the plantation, and the reserve—are important sites of incarceration. Dylan Rodriguez argues, though, that the

ship was a space of suspension, temporary confinement, and that black bodies became queered by the bowels of the ship (44-45). Following Omis'eke Tinsley this suggests that queer is a “disruption to the violence of normative order and powerfully so: connecting in ways that commodified flesh was never supposed to, loving your own kind when your kind was supposed to cease to exist, forging interpersonal connections that counteract imperial desires for Africans’ living deaths” (199). Tinsley connects how the geography of the Middle Passage created the production of black identity as queer—meaning that the subjugation as slaves was simultaneously accompanied by acts of resistance, relational practices of community, and love. The ship opened up a (forced) space where new relationships were formed; particularly important were racial connections and disconnections, and the ways in which blackness was created in relation to whiteness (and vice versa) through alternative kinship practices. Rodriguez and Tinsley thus provide a conceptual opening to rethink how practices of colonialism, racial violence, incarceration, inside and outside the prison, are reimagined.

This kind of reimagining can also inform theoretical frameworks. Tiffany King writes that “[r]eimagining Blackness and theorizing anti-black racism on unusual landscapes requires that we rethink the usefulness of convenient and orthodox epistemic frames” (“Labor’s Aphasia” 3). The theoretical limitations of conceptualizing the prison as *only* a site of dehumanization and extermination—that houses black and indigenous deaths—are that the *lives* and communities within the prisons are often forgotten. McKittrick asks that we consider how the geography of the plantation can be traced to the prison, spaces of poverty, and the “ghetto” but she asks us to consider how the plantation as a “location might also open up a discussion of black *life* within the context of contemporary global cities and futures” (“Plantation Futures” 5). How can we think about incarcerated peoples as part of non-incarcerated communities? What discursive

spaces emerge when thinking and imagining a decolonial future? McKittrick writes that “our future modes of being might hinge on a decolonial poetics that reads black dispossession as a ‘question mark’—punctuating postslavery violences and posed to our present modes of being—thus providing a critique of the very historical process that brought the Manichean workings of the plantation to ‘such heights of fulfillment’” (“Plantation Futures” 5). Articulating black future modes of being as a “question mark” offers the space to engage with articulations and longings for a different future, beyond our current colonial order. A discussion of plantation logics necessitates an analysis that links plantation histories to the recirculation of antiblack and racial violence, and calls for decolonial thinking that is premised on human life (McKittrick, “Plantation Futures” 3)—also opening up a way to think about the incarceration and erasure of indigenous women in ways that do not replicate colonial violence. Importantly, McKittrick clarifies that creative texts hold in them decolonial narratives. McKittrick asks scholars to incorporate creative texts as theory in their work, because creative texts can conceptually undo our present order of knowledge.

Related, Andrea Smith’s article, “Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy” (2010) argues that decolonization strategies that work within the framework of white supremacy are unsuccessful in dismantling colonial logics, because they take the settler colonial state for granted. She explains that practices of racial solidarity have often focused on overlapping experiences of struggle, particularly because groups of people have seeable racial markers, cultural similarities and/or geographical proximities (Smith, “Indigeneity” 3). Instead, Smith clarifies the need to organize around the logics of white supremacy (the logic of slavery, the logic of indigenous genocide, the logic of orientalism) because this model of activism destabilizes identity politics. The model of identity politics has been unsuccessful in

transformative change because it invites marginalized peoples to “integrate” into the dominant order. Therefore, the problem with not critically addressing white supremacist logics and settler colonialism is that social-justice struggles become complicit in racism, as opposed to destabilizing it (Smith, “Indigeneity” 7). Smith discusses how the settler-state is implicit in (re)producing colonial logics and her analytical framework provides a method of activism that de-legitimizes state sanctioned violence. Smith’s framework is radical because it centers how our global order is enmeshed in the logics of white supremacy and elucidates how one’s relation to the logics of white supremacy changes according to time and space (“Indigeneity 3). Smith writes, “[T]he point I am trying to argue is that analyzing white supremacy in any context may benefit from not presuming a single logic but assessing how it might be operating through multiple logics (even as these multiple logics may vary)” (Smith, “Indigeneity 3). Smith asks scholars to envision forms of governance that are not premised on racial hierarchies and colonial logics, because this is central to ending white supremacy (“Indigeneity” 4). Smith’s framework is important because it elucidates the need to dismantle the logics of white supremacy, which will undo our current colonial order. Her framework is all encompassing and showcases that the logics of white supremacy, which are underwritten by colonial histories, operate to subjugate racialized peoples in different and intimately connected ways.

According to Smith there is a need to disrupt and remove institutions invested in the maintenance of white supremacy. North American modernity was and is premised on the racial state. Smith calls for activism and theoretical work to be premised on the “politics of liberation” which means seeing liberation outside of the confines of white supremacy and the settler state (Smith, “Indigeneity” 10). The state does not ameliorate harm, because it continues to enact settler colonialism through institutional violence, managing and disciplining that is intimately

implicit in anti-blackness, racial violence, and indigenous disappearances. The racial scripts that operate in relation to the legal system position whiteness in relation to freedom and civility, while the racialized communities negotiate a fraught relationship with the state. The prison works to disavow histories of slavery and colonialism through hiding how freedom (white hegemony) is underscored by unfreedom for the racialized *Other*.

If thought about alongside Smith's insights, the links between prison and modernity illuminates racial histories and experiences that are normally hidden from view and, furthermore, draws attention to how white supremacy—not *just* racism that targets non-white people and communities but *white supremacy*—needs undoing. Therefore, prison abolition is inherently and anti-racist endeavor, because it disrupts *commonsense* codes of racial violence and practices of management and sequestering. This does not mean imagining alternatives to the prison. Drawing from Angela Davis, it means imagining a variety of practices that continue to dismantle colonial carceral practices, through a politics of reconciliation as opposed to retribution (107). I employ an abolitionist framework because this involves taking steps to dismantle the logics of white supremacy—which includes the removal of interlocking processes that require racial subjugation (including racial capitalism, prisons, gendered violences, settler colonialism, and anti-black racism).

This literature review has clarified my conceptualization of the prison as a site of modernity. I have shown that the prison is underwritten by colonial histories and geographies that sequester, manage, subjugate black and indigenous peoples: the Middle Passage, the plantation, the reserve, the residential school system. These historical geographies draw attention to how the project of modernity maintains white supremacy while also demonstrating how very different racial pasts—black, indigenous—overlap and within the contemporary space

of the prison. I have also drawn attention to the ways that the prison hides ongoing practices of racial subjugation and marginalization and, as well, how decolonial theories and practices of resistance underpin carceral logics. I have concluded that an abolitionist framework is required to dismantle the logics of white supremacy and its attendant geographies. This means imagining a project of liberation for all people.

In the next chapters, I explore how the prison is tied to political and economic agendas. I discuss how prison reform projects, specifically reportage narratives, are unsuccessful particularly because these practices do not address the colonial histories that underwrite the prison. I also consider how the project of modernity is enacted through geography—and incorporate maps as a way to showcase where prisons exist. I employ the frameworks of critical race scholars (McKittrick 2011; Gilmore 2007; Georgis 2013) to consider how racialized spaces always hold narratives of resistance and articulations for a different future. I consider how the practice of radical storytelling creates a space of human relationality, which subverts scripts of subjugation and violence. The practice of sharing narratives of survival also opens up a space to collectively share decolonial imaginings and therefore narratives of a better future.

Chapter Three

What Does the Prison Hide From Public Knowledge? A Critical Analysis of Prison Expansion, Conditions of Confinement, and the Over-Representation of Indigenous Women Behind Bars

In 1973, a Correctional Investigator of Canada was appointed to act as an ombudsman for federally sentenced offenders. Since that time, the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) has released an annual report outlining concerns and recommendations for improving conditions in Canadian prisons. This chapter will examine the Correctional Investigator's Reports from 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, because these reports reflect contemporary carceral practices, conditions of confinement, and systematic issues of concern surrounding federal offender's complaints and grievances. These reports offer insight into concerns around access to programming, how mental health is managed in the prison setting, issues surrounding overcrowding and double bunking and, more recently, discussions concerned with the increasing racialized offender population. Specifically, I examine the reports from 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 because they illuminate the current political and economic conditions of prison expansion occurring in Canada: crime rates are on a downward trend, and yet there continues to be an increase in the incarceration of racialized communities, particularly black and indigenous peoples. With the increasing rates of indigenous incarceration, particularly of indigenous women, there is lack of understanding regarding indigenous communities' longstanding experiences with colonialism, the ongoing effects of dislocation and dispossession of indigenous communities, and how these histories and experiences are inextricably linked to criminalization and incarceration. Related, the experiences within residential school systems, as well as government

policies that continue to leave indigenous communities impoverished, impact upon criminalization, incarceration, and racial violence. These histories and experiences are gendered, and indigenous women are especially vulnerable to exploitation and violence (Marginalized—The Aboriginal Women’s Experience in Federal Penitentiaries, 6).

A critical analysis of the Correctional Investigator’s Reports (2012-2014) clarifies how the act of reportage is a discursive strategy that “hides” and “obscures” the colonial workings of the prison. Although these reports outline narratives of reform, specifically reforms that seek to “change” conditions of incarceration, they explicitly name grievances and racial violence without attending to the deeper colonial processes that naturalize racial marginalization and criminalization. This is to say that these reportage narratives, as reform scripts, *name* oppression but fail to think through how to dismantle or challenge systemic racism and white supremacy. Despite these critiques, the Correctional Investigator’s Reports have been theoretically helpful for this thesis project because they provide a written record of concerns regarding conditions in Canadian federal penitentiaries as well as a historical record of dialogue between CSC and the OCI. These reports explicitly document various concerns with the current prison system, as well as the inability of the prison, as an institution, to address the needs of the growing racialized and marginalized offender population. The OCI is a prominent voice in prison reform advocacy and I think it is necessary to engage with their reports to understand and critique mainstream dialogues regarding prison reform. These reports clearly demonstrate how reportage narratives are presented as *doing* something about prison conditions, and thus seemingly *changing* prison conditions. However, I argue that through these reports one can also see how the prison is secured as a permanent part of the Canadian landscape. Throughout this chapter, I draw from the

Correctional Investigator's research and findings to showcase the need for prison abolition as opposed to efforts of prison reform.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator is part of a wider trend in prison reform, wherein written recommendations contribute to a model for fostering change and improvement within the prison infrastructures. *Creating Choices* (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990), as well as many other reports and national level investigations, are examples of reformative recommendations.⁵ It is my contention that these efforts need to be focused on prison abolition and methods of community care and social welfare—access to physical and mental health care, counseling, affordable child-care, education, for example—for marginalized communities both inside and outside the prison. Indeed, the recommendations for prison reform have not been adequate in addressing the complex needs of the incarcerated population while, at the same time, paying little attention to structural inequalities outside the prison. Prisons have, as well, become normalized as part of the Canadian landscape and postulated as a necessity for managing “criminal” and “problematic” racialized communities that have been deemed “unmanageable” and “threatening.”

The tensions noted in my second chapter and above—between racialized (and therefore criminalized) indigenous women, longstanding colonial violences and structural inequalities, and the reformative work of the prison—shape my discussion in this chapter. My central questions are: What do these reports on prison hide from public knowledge? How do governmental reportage narratives attend to—or not attend to—the interlocking workings of race, gender, criminalization, colonialism, and racism? I critically analyze reports release by the OIC from the

⁵ National Level Investigations 2012-2014: *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act* 2013: *A Case Study of Diversity in Corrections: The Black Inmate Experience in Federal Penitentiaries* 2012-13 Annual Report: *Deaths in Custody* (Mortality Review) 2013-14 Annual Report: *Chronic Self-Injury Among Women Offenders* 2013-14 Annual Report.

years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014; a report released by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada titled “Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries” (2014); as well as a report released by Public Safety Canada titled “Marginalized: The Aboriginal Women’s Experience in Federal Prison” (2012). These texts will be read for what they reveal and conceal about the colonial underpinnings of prison. I discuss how the prison has been positioned as a *productive* component of society and how the continued expansion of prison infrastructure produces it as a societal necessity. Simultaneously, however, there has been a reduction in the overall budget for running the prison and funding for programming. What becomes evident is that the role of the prison is not focused on rehabilitation and reducing recidivism, but rather is a location of racial management, containment and punishment within the context of reduced funding and resources. A critical analysis of the various reports mentioned above discloses how processes of racialization are concealed, yet concretized, within the space of the prison; this analysis also necessitates imagining prison abolition as a way to dismantle this racial violence.

My discussion centralizes the incarceration of indigenous women, employing scholarship in the field of black studies and indigenous studies to emphasize the ways in which colonialism and white supremacy shape carceral practices within the Canadian context. Much scholarship in the field of black studies (Davis 2003; Gilmore 2007; Alexander 2010; McKittrick 2011, as well as other scholars) challenges the prison as a commonsense apparatus in our society and clarifies how the prison is a site of racial violence and dispossession; this work also shows how the prison is underscored by transatlantic slavery, colonialism, and racism. Similarly, researchers and scholars that attend to indigenous peoples in Canada have demonstrated how the prison is an extension of colonialism and the residential school system and is therefore a site that evidences apartheid reserve logics and practices of racial containment (Monture-Angus 1999; Hannah-

Moffat 2001; Comack and Balfour 2004; and Smith 2005). My analysis of the reports brings forth these themes and draws attention to how these documents of “change” and “improvement” actually replicated colonial logics. As McKittrick (2011) writes, “[O]ur racial pasts can uncover a collective history of encounter—a difficult interrelatedness—that promises an ethical analytics of race based not on suffering, but on human life” (“On Plantations” 948). McKittrick’s “plantation futures,” (2013) is a conceptual framework that provides a way to think about colonial encounters and racial violence, not solely as sites of oppression, but rather as processes that open up a way to consider how “spaces of encounter” hold in them “anti-colonial narratives and practices” (2011: “On Plantations” 955). Her analytical framework urges that research and scholarship move away from analytical questions that only serve to replicate racial violence (McKittrick, “On Plantations” 950). With this in mind, this chapter brings forth my concerns with contemporary federal carceral practices and uses the Correctional Investigator’s Reports to illuminate how our carceral system is failing to address the needs of our society’s racialized and most marginalized communities. My discussion situates these specific reports as narratives that can, in many ways, analytically replicate racial violence precisely because they seek out reformatory measures, and therefore conceal more complex understandings of inequity and race. As noted above, it becomes increasingly clear that an abolitionist agenda is vital to decolonial practices that seeks to dismantle, rather than manage, conceal and reproduce, racial violence.

Crime rates in Canada continue to show a downward trend, with fewer incidents being reported each and every year since 2003.⁶ Regardless of this downward trend in crime, there continues to be an increase in the incarceration of racialized peoples, particularly black and indigenous communities. The black community is over-represented in federal prisons, as they are

⁶ Statistics Canada (CANSIM table 252-0051), total criminal code violations (excluding traffic).

3.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than the white population.⁷ And black women who represent only 3% of the Canadian female population make up a staggering 9% of the incarcerated female population.⁸ Also, indigenous people continue to be disproportionately represented in the Canadian criminal justice system and are 5.5 times more likely to be federally incarcerated than the white population.⁹ This figure is even more staggering for indigenous women who represent only 4.5% of the Canadian female population, but make up 33% of the incarcerated female population, resulting in an incarceration rate 10.5 times higher than that of non-indigenous women.¹⁰ These statistics demonstrate that *who* occupies federal penitentiaries represents more than just changing demographic patterns in larger Canadian society: a younger, pluralistic and multicultural population, increasing number of Canadians from indigenous heritage, and an aging and decreasing white population (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 4). The Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013 states, "[o]n quite another level, disproportionate rates of incarceration of some minority groups, including Black and Aboriginal Canadians, reflect gaps in our social fabric and raise concerns about social inclusion, participation and equality of opportunity" (4). I argue that these statistics illuminate more than just "gaps in our social fabric," and necessitate an analysis of the prison as a site of modernity, which showcases that the accelerating "prison industrial-complex" in Canada is, in fact, a method of racial management based on racial-legal scripts of criminality, surveillance, containment, management and punishment.

⁷ Statistic based on 2011 National Household Survey data (with projected 2013 figures); and, Public Safety Canada, "Corrections and Conditional Release: Statistical Overview" 2013, 49.

⁸ Statistics based on 2011 National Household Survey data and the Office of the Correctional Investigator, *A Case Study of Diversity in Corrections: The Black Inmate Experience in Federal Penitentiaries*, Feb. 2014.

⁹ Statistic based on 2011 National Household Survey data (with projected 2013 figures); and, Public Safety Canada, "Corrections and Conditional Release: Statistical Overview" 2013, 49.

¹⁰ Statistic based on 2011 National Household Survey data (with projected 2013 figures); and, Public Safety Canada, "Corrections and Conditional Release: Statistical Overview" 2013, 53.

Office of the Correctional Investigator and the Failure of Prison Reform

Recent archives from the OCI outline patterns in criminalization, and prison experiences, as well as specific data surrounding gender and indigeneity. As noted above, the OCI was established in 1973 to act as an ombudsman for offenders. The OCI was created in response to the “repressive and dehumanizing” conditions of confinement that were documented in the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Certain Disturbances at Kingston Penitentiary* (Correctional Investigator’s Report 2012-2013, 2). The OCI followed the 1971 Kingston Penitentiary riot. After the riot, the Kingston Penitentiary served as Regional Reception Centre (classifying new inmates for transfer to a parent institution) for the Ontario region until 1981 (Johnston, “Historical Overview” 2). In the following years, until its closing in 2013 the Kingston Penitentiary acted as a space to hold maximum-security inmates who could not integrate into other institutional populations (Johnston, “Historical Overview” 2). But it is the 1971 riot that is a key moment. Disturbingly, Howard Sapers—the current Correctional Investigator of Canada—writes that many of the grievances that led to the 1971 riot still characterize prison life in federal penitentiaries:

Today, as my report makes clear, many of the same problems that were endemic to prison life in the early 1970s – crowding; too much time spent in cells; the curtailment of movement, association and contact with the outside world; lack of program capacity; the paucity of meaningful prison work or vocational skills training; and the polarization between inmates and custodial staff – continue to be features of contemporary correctional practice (Correctional Investigator’s Report 2012-2013, 2).

These problems speak to the fact that recommendations for prison that emerged in the 1970s were reforms that did not adequately change the repressive and punitive methods of management and discipline employed within the prison space. With this, rehabilitation, providing access to

programming focused on preparing offenders to reintegrate back into the community, are also undermined or elided.

It is important to note that as of 2012, CSC stopped publically responding to the OCI's recommendations. Historically, CSC weighed in on whether or not they agree with the OCI recommendations, whether or not they could practically address the recommendations, and the barriers for improving prison conditions. The CSC responses used to be incorporated into the Correctional Investigator's annual reports. This dialogue was central to establishing and maintaining a responsive correctional system that was, on some levels, responsive to broader prison needs and reforms—a common practice for most review bodies.¹¹ However, as of February 01, 2013 the Government of Canada said it would not respond to the Correctional Investigator's recommendations until the reports have been tabled in Parliament (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 37). The Government of Canada failing to publically responding to the OCI's recommendations is highly troubling because it removes CSC's accountability to the public. CSC's responses to the recommendations should be available for federally sentenced offenders, the public, and Parliament. This move essentially undermined the dialogue and democratic process that has been established between CSC and OCI in that the CSC does not have to explain to the public why they disagree with a recommendation. The recommendations and discussion around enacting these recommendations are supposed to provide the substance for debate(s) upon tabling in Parliament (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 37).

The Correctional Investigator, Howard Sapers, was appointed to act as an ombudsman— independent to Correctional Service and the Minister of Public Safety—and act as the figure that

¹¹ The Auditor General's Report, "Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries—Correctional Service Canada" (referenced throughout this chapter) outlines CSC's responses to the recommendations discussed in the report.

externally oversees the prison system and addresses offender complaints against CSC. He writes, “[i]n the interest of transparency and accountability, I recommend the best practice of including the Correctional Service of Canada’s response as an integral part of my reports tabled in Parliament be reinstated” (Correctional Investigator’s Report [Recommendation #17] 2012-2013, 37). Howard Sapers requested that CSC, again, start responding to his Office’s recommendations in order to maintain a responsive correctional system. CSC’s responses are particularly important in recognizing the grievances of federally incarcerated populations, because the OCI’s recommendations are partially based on offender complaints. A responsive correctional system is important for the Canadian public because it helps illuminate carceral practices, conditions of confinement, and prison life—practices that are often hidden because the prison space is removed from public purview.

Prior to the February 2013 parliamentary change noted above, reports and recommendations such as *Creating Choices* were given to CSC. This 1990 report emerged from the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women and outlined the need for gender-specific and gender-appropriate system of justice that would strive to meet the unique needs of incarcerated women. Many indigenous women, as well as reform groups like the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society (CAEFS), joined the task force out of concern for incarcerated women. Some of these participants were hesitant about the effectiveness of prison reform, but were hopeful about changing the punitive modes of governing and discipline employed within prisons (Hannah-Moffat 144). *Creating Choices* outlined five integral principles for a women’s centered model: “empowerment, meaningful and responsible choices, respect and dignity, supportive environments, and shared responsibility” (Correctional Investigator’s Report 2013-2014, 47). Kelly Hannah-Moffat’s scholarship, *Punishment in Disguise: Penal Governance and Federal*

Imprisonment of Women in Canada, explains how *Creating Choices*, “was a pivotal event, for on this occasion feminist reformers participated in the evolution of a neoliberal model of penal discipline that reconfigured the relationship between state and community” (141). Her scholarship traces how CSC took up the principles for a women’s centered model and shifted toward “responsibilization” where the offender was seen, and continues to be seen, as “responsible for her own self-governance and for minimizing and managing her needs and the risk she poses to herself and the public” (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 155). The women’s centered model was supposed to address how racism, poverty and violence were central to women’s crime, and to incorporate community strategies with partners like CAEFS that would support the principles of *Creating Choices*. CAEFS and other stakeholders were supposed to help with the implementation of policy developments and planning new regional prisons (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 146). CAEFS recommended that new prison infrastructure be built near city centres so that criminalized women could maintain connections with their family members, have access to resources for professional development, and to “take advantage of existing educational, health, cultural and recreational facilities” (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 153). While CSC claimed and continues to claim that they use a women’s centered model of correction they ignored expertise and recommendations of CAEFS’s and other members of the Task Force; in fact, they reverted back to old bureaucratic models of management and prison development. Prison expansion outside of city centers continued after the *Creating Choices* recommendations were delivered and the focus and goals of a women’s centered model were disregarded: “[T]he implicit intent of *Creating Choices*, which was not to build more prisons but rather to decarcerate and provide better services for women, who present minimal risk to the

community and who have few if any community resources to facilitate their timely and inevitable reintegration into the community” (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 153-154).

Kelly Hannah-Moffat’s scholarship is helpful in historicizing an important time in prison reform and documenting the violence leading up to the closure of the Kingston Penitentiary for women. Her work traces feminist prison reform initiatives and outlines how CSC coopted many of the recommendations outlined in *Creating Choices* in punitive ways, under the guise of “empowerment” and “healing.” For example, the use of the Healing Lodge (recommended by the Task Force) for indigenous offenders was supposed to follow indigenous traditions and help incarcerated indigenous communities on the journey to healing and empowerment, through access to indigenous spiritual practices and traditions (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 158). CSC standardized intrusive security measures within the healing lodge. The first Okimaw Ochi Healing Lodge was opened in 1995 at the Nekaneet First Nation. By the end of 1998, Nekaneet’s elders were not actively engaged with running the Healing Lodge and non-aboriginals were working in senior management roles (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 160). Hannah-Moffat writes: “As the vision of the Healing Lodge matures it departs further and further from its original roots in aboriginal culture and tradition—and it gets closer to the traditional colonial legacy of imprisonment” (Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment* 159). The bureaucratic ways that CSC took up the *Creating Choices* ideas and recommendation were, in fact, very disrespectful to the indigenous women who offered their insights to think through correctional models differently. Patricia Monture-Angus, a member of the Task Force, discusses how the model of “risk management” and “risk prediction scales,” used by CSC, goes against indigenous understandings of relationships, which are based on mutual respect not management (“Women and Risk” 26). In her opinion, the current correctional model is incompatible with indigenous “culture, laws, and

tradition” (Monture-Angus, “Women and Risk” 26). The risk management model, fails to acknowledge the colonial history that continually impacts indigenous communities—and has lead to disproportionate levels of poverty, experiences of racism, and increased contact with the criminal justice system (Monture-Angus, “Women and Risk” 27). Canada’s current system of law is highly individualized and based on a philosophy of “responsibilization”; therefore the “law obscures systemic and structural facts” that directly correlate to the over-representation of indigenous communities, particularly women, in the Canadian criminal justice system (Monture-Angus, “Women and Risk” 27).

What becomes evident is that we need to consider the ways that reform itself is a form of penal power, rather than transformative of penal power. More specifically, reforms that work within the framework of carceral punishment assume the prison system is a natural or inevitable part of the social landscape and are therefore not invested in dismantling the prison system. The prison can be conceptualized as a modality of power, what Michel Foucault (303) describes as the “great carceral continuum.” Foucault outlines how the communication between the “power of discipline and the power of the law” work together to facilitate the right to punish as normative (Foucault 303). A Foucauldian analysis of the prison is helpful in illuminating how modern society functions through a carceral network: “The carceral texture of society assures both the real capture of the body and its perpetual observation; it is, by its very nature, the apparatus of punishment that conforms most completely to the new economy of power and the instrument for the formation of knowledge that this very economy needs” (Foucault 304). A Foucauldian lens discloses the ways that the prison, as an apparatus, continues to be a technology of modernity that is used to govern social behavior and normalize the various mechanisms of incarceration.

Drawing from Foucault's analysis it is important to consider how technologies of reform and punishment are tied to modalities of governance.

Building on Foucault's conceptual framework, I consider the carceral network as intimately connected to the colonial encounters that secured white supremacy. The prison is a normative apparatus that not only manages racialized bodies but also, because it is a *colonial* tool facilitates the removal of indigenous women's bodies from Canadian lands. I therefore employ Andrea Smith's analysis of the gendered dimensions of colonialism to draw attention to how the increasing rates of indigenous women's incarceration is part of a colonial project that requires indigenous bodies to be continually disappearing. It becomes abundantly clear that the recommendations that support a model of reform are failing to ameliorate the over-representation of racialized offenders in federal prisons. The history of feminist prison reform demonstrates that CSC will never be able to rectify how indigenous women's contact with the law is shaped by ongoing colonial practices because the prison, as an apparatus of modernity, is a technology of colonialism deeply connected to the preservation of white supremacy. The question that frames this chapter—what does the prison hide from public knowledge? —is particularly useful because it opens up a way to think about the prison with an interdisciplinary lens, noticing how it is a space underpinned by geographies of dispossession, economic *productivity*, political agendas (e.g. “tough on crime” discourses), and ongoing colonial violence.

Prison Expansion

As noted in my second chapter, Ruth Wilson Gilmore's book *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California* lays out important conceptual groundwork when thinking about prison expansion and what she calls the “prison fix” (17). Her

scholarship uses an interdisciplinary lens to illuminate the complex workings of prison expansion, in California and draws attention to the various political and economic conditions that provided the ideological and material *legitimacy* for prison expansion (Gilmore 17). Gilmore discusses the political postulated fear of crime, and how prison expansion was a geographical solution for a surplus of land and labour. Her research and activism on California prisons discloses a decrease in criminal incidents and an increase in offender population due to political discourses of “get tough on crime” legislations such as the “three-strikes” law. The “three-strikes” changed conceptions of “crime,” because it included “nonviolent prior convictions among eligible ‘strikes,’ sets no age, temporal, or jurisdictional limitations on priors, and allows prosecutors to use their power to ‘wobble’ charges in order to make current misdemeanors into felonies and therefore strikable” (Gilmore 108). Her text examines the state mechanisms and the restructuring of the “social reproductive landscape” that positioned the “prison fix” as a *solution* for the surplus labour, in which modestly educated black men (in the prime of their lives) become the unemployed and therefore overrepresented in California’s prisons (Gilmore 184-185). Gilmore’s book clarifies the relationship between urban and rural economic restructuring and how the building of prisons in rural areas was a response to economic changes such as deindustrialization and a shift towards neoliberalism. She discusses how these various “surpluses” coupled with political “tough on crime” agendas positioned racialized, marginalized communities—who previously would not have been vulnerable to criminalization—as at risk for spending time in prison. Gilmore’s analysis illuminates how political and economic processes of concealment and dispossession underwrite prison expansion, wherein racialized, marginalized, and impoverished communities are positioned as “less-than-human” and “expendable” and therefore vulnerable to incarceration. Her scholarship also discusses how storytelling and

community coalition focused on anti-prison activism can unsettle “commonsense” narratives of racialized violence. I employ Gilmore’s analytical framework in relation to the CSC reports to unpack how prison expansion, in the Canadian context, is underscored by political and economic state-sanctioned violence that criminalizes racialized and impoverished communities in an effort to preserve white supremacy. This allows me to consider, as well, how the prison conceals colonial workings of “naturalized” racial violence through employing the political discourse of improving “safety” and removing criminals from the streets.

Gilmore’s scholarship thus opens up a way to think about the political context in which we see prison expansion proceeding in Canada. Notable, there is a reduction in CSC’s overall budget (for the daily costs of running a prison and programming), which is part of the 2013 Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP) (Correctional Investigator’s Report 2013-2014, 22-23): “By the end of 2014, the Service’s [CSC] contribution to the government’s DRAP will mean a reduction in its operating budget of \$295 million. CSC’s planned spending for 2013-14 is \$2.6 billion, which marks a 14% decrease from the pervious year” (Correctional Investigator’s Report 2013-2014, 38). In terms of prison infrastructure specifically:

CSC operates penitentiaries in five regions: Pacific, Prairie, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic. Each region has a mix of penitentiaries of varying security levels (maximum, medium, and minimum), as well as institutions for women, and specialized units for the assessment of offenders upon intake and for mental health services. CSC also operates Aboriginal healing lodges in two regions (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries 1).

Since 2009, there has been an expected rise in the offender population, due to legislative changes including, “mandatory minimum sentences, the elimination of accelerated parole review, and limits on the credit given for pre-sentence custody” (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 1). Due to the fact that crime incidents have been decreasing in the last decade, the only way to fill the demand for prison beds is through the legislative changes listed above. In April 2012,

three penitentiaries were closed (Leclerc, Kingston, and the Ontario Regional Treatment Centre) to save about \$120 million per year; CSC retained \$33 million for the “relocation of 1,000 inmates in the Ontario and Quebec regions, some with complex mental health needs” (Correctional Investigator’s Report 2012-2013, 38; Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 11). In 2009, CSC was given approval to spend (over the next five years) \$751 million to expand existing institutions through adding 2,594 double bunks and adding 2,752 new cells (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 2).

There has therefore been a large amount of money allocated for prison infrastructure expansion even though criminal activities are decreasing; at the same time, the correctional budget for offender resettlement and integration into the community has not been increased. Indeed, the Correctional Investigator Report explains that “[the operating budgets] are set to decline in real terms in 2014-2015” (Correctional Investigator Report 2013-2014, 4). Public Safety Canada recommends, furthermore, that older, less efficient federal penitentiaries—most of which were built in the 1960s and 1970s and are costly to maintain—be replaced by new ones (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 1). With the political “tough on crime” agenda it can only be expected that prison expansion projects will continue in the near future. Despite the completed construction of 2,120 new cells—which will enable CSC to accommodate 16,700 offenders in single cells—in 2015, CSC’s updated population projections show that it will again have reached full capacity in a few years and must develop a post-2018 accommodation strategy (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 4).

Some important questions remain: What is the role of the prison? Is it to prepare offenders for release back into the community? Or does the prison function to manage marginalized communities? The cost saving measures and prison expansion tactics noted above need to be

examined to understand how the prison can be conceptualized as a *productive* component of Canadian society. Positing the prison as a *productive* component of society underscores the ways that infrastructure development is a form of economic stimulus. The recent financial crisis (2008) exemplifies a larger stimulus plan that invests capital expenditures in correctional infrastructure (penitentiaries, detention centers, and courthouses), all of which have been elevated and remain at a much higher level than in pre-recession years.¹² It is evident that the federal government's focus on prison expansion *and* cost-saving measures do not benefit federal inmates, but instead, disclose how the Conservative "tough on crime" stance is punitive and does nothing to ameliorate the increasing levels of racialized incarcerated communities. As Gilmore notes, racism is state-sanctioned, and "the prison is a new iteration of this theme" (247). Gilmore asks that abolitionists think at a macro-level to consider how "economic and environmental justice are central to antiracism" (247). Gilmore's comprehensive analytical framework explains how removing the institution of the prison from society does not mean imagining different methods of discipline and punishment, but demands that we consider how the whole system (economic and political) is tied to maintenance of white supremacy and ongoing racial violence.

DRAP: CSC's Cost Saving Measures—Who Benefits?

CSC has implemented several measures to reduce the overall cost of running and maintaining penitentiaries. These include: double bunking, inmate pay, larger caseloads for parole officers, as well as other cost-saving measures. The cost-saving measures impact the inmates' access to programming, and worsen their living conditions, which further hinders an already criminalized and marginalized incarcerated community. Let me explain how a few of these cost saving measures work. Double bunking is the practice of holding two inmates in a cell

¹² CANSIM table 029-0040.

designed for one inmate and it is supposed to be a temporary measure (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 1). CSC's goal is to provide each inmate with single-cell accommodations (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 1). In 2013, there were more offenders in custody than single cells, "this has resulted in capacity shortfalls at some institution and at some security levels, necessitating double bunking" (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 3). The need for increased prison expansion is higher in Ontario and the Prairie regions: "We found that 26% of offenders were being double bunked in the Ontario and Prairie regions in the 2012-2013 fiscal year. That same year, we also found that double bunking was occurring in segregation cells and in cells smaller than 5 square meters, which is contrary to the intent of CSC policy" (Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries, 5). Chapter Four of the Auditor General's report, "Expanding the Capacity of Penitentiaries," observed that capacity pressures were highest at women's institutions, particularly maximum security levels (7). The OCI documented that the practice of doubling-bunking causes an increase in problems between inmates, including aggression, violence and self-inflicted violence (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 22). The 2012-2013 OCI's report describes how inmate depression and anxiety is often demonstrated through diminished participation in recreational activities, and programming (22). Disturbances between offenders increase the use of disciplinary and institutional charges, including time in segregation, the use of force intervention, and self-harm incidents (Correctional Investigator's Report 2012-2013, 23).

Inmate pay, as of October 2013, means that most offenders will now pay for their cost of living, which will not exceed a payment of \$90 per week (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 41). The Correctional Investigator's Report reads that the "OCI estimates that, after mandatory deductions, the pay for a typical offender employed 40 hours a week in a prison

industry amounts to 40 cents an hour. While 10% of earnings are directed to an inmate's saving account, such meager amounts do not go very far in making meaningful contributions to assist safe reintegration" (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 41). For impoverished inmates this means that they have less money for daily living costs (hygiene products, postage, telephone use, etc.) and family support costs and that they are not financially ready for release back into the community (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 41). Another aspect of the DRAP effective April 2014 is increasing the number of offenders per parole officer, from 8 to 13 (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 16). Post release, inmates transfer to Community Correctional Centres (CCCs) in order to begin resettlement and reintegration into the community; parole officers monitor the former inmates during this time. The 2013-2014 Correctional Investigator's Reports documents some of the difficulties for offenders, who are vulnerable with various needs (mental health, aging and palliative) and where Parole Officers feel responsible for assisting with providing health care even though they do not have adequate training (15). CCCs are pivotal in fostering community reintegration and helping provide offenders with resources for a safe transition. However, due to DRAP there are limited resources and it becomes harder for parole officers to assist offenders within the community (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 16). CCCs are a very important part of the reintegration process, and yet less money is being allocated to community corrections. Howard Sapers recommends an operational audit to understand the financial needs of CCCs and hopefully reallocation of resources will allow for renewed strategies (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 18).

A discussion of DRAP and the cost saving measures employed by CSC showcases that Canadian carceral practices are not invested in rehabilitation, but rather punishment and

management. I argue that the reportage system that documents violence and grievances within the prison setting is a discursive practice that “conceals” how the prison is a site of modernity, thus a tool of colonialism that is invested in securing white supremacy. The practice of reportage positions the Canadian government as invested in prison reform and improving the conditions of federal penitentiaries; yet, the budgetary cuts (which impact access to programming and community corrections) underscores how little the government actually cares for the needs of racialized, marginalized, and vulnerable communities. The reportage reformation model will never be able to address or rectify the high rates of racialized incarceration, particularly of indigenous women, because the carceral system is invested in colonial logics, which assume that indigenous women’s marginalization and criminalization is “natural.” This is to say that reportage narratives naturalize indigenous women’s criminality because they do not critique colonial logics from the outset and therefore will never be able to rectify the over-representation of indigenous women in federal prisons.

Indigenous Offender Profile

Prison expansion, cost saving measures, decreased criminal activities, increased criminalizations, shape how indigenous women experience carceral practices. As already noted, indigenous women’s experiences with the law are directly related to colonialism, the violent histories of the residential school system, reserve logics, and normalized patterns of racial and sexual violence. While this colonial history impacts indigenous women’s experiences, both inside and outside of the prison, indigenous women are especially vulnerable to experiencing mental health issues within the space of the prison and these experiences are often met with punitive responses—such as isolation—rather than support to prevent self-injurious behavior

(Marginalized the Aboriginal Women's Experience in Federal Prison, 31). There were increasing rates of self-injury in 2013-2014: 559 incidents were reported and 1/4 of these incidents were met with use of force intervention (restraint equipment, or/and the use of chemical agents) (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 46). These experiences cannot be viewed separately from histories of colonialism, gendered violence, and social disadvantages that mark life on the reserve such as inadequate housing, lack of clean drinking water, and barriers to employment (both before and after being criminalized) (Marginalized—The Aboriginal Women's Experience in Federal Penitentiaries, 19). In 2013-2014 Howard Sapers noticed that there is community concern surrounding the over-representation of indigenous communities in prison and experiences of incarceration and he encouraged CSC to engage with this interest (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 45). Sapers also suggested that CSC conduct an audit to "assess whether aboriginal social history factors are being adequately considered in case management records and decisions (Correctional Investigator's Report 2013-2014, 45). It is important to contextualize this discussion with an analysis that positions the prison as site of colonial dispossession, deeply invested in the maintenance of white supremacy. The removal of indigenous women from their communities was (and continues to be) a key tool in the colonial project. The increasing rate of federally incarcerated indigenous women underpins an ongoing colonial project of indigenous dispossession, disappearance, and genocide. Sapers suggestion that CSC engage with community concern surrounding the increasing experiences of indigenous communities incarceration elucidates how "reformatory" reportage narratives work to hide colonial logics and processes. Specifically, this superficial (and liberal) method of "change" (descriptively documenting ongoing violences) hides how the state requires the management and sequestering of indigenous and racialized communities for the maintenance of white supremacy

and the ongoing project of modernity.

As discussed earlier, it is evident that prison reform will not rectify the colonial violence that indigenous communities face, because the state thrives on sanctioned-violence and uses the prison as a colonial tool. Therefore, we need decolonization and prison abolition to address the needs of racialized and marginalized communities. Andrea Smith explains that an anticolonial strategy would be to give space to those who are most marginalized, so that within anti-violence activism, there would be accountability to those who face precarity and powerlessness (Smith 153). Related, Comack and Balfour suggest that efforts for change need to be centered on challenging how the law is a Eurocentric tool that does not promote “blind justice.” They call for resistance to the discourse of getting “tough on crime” when it is those who are the most marginalized that become criminalized and penalized (177). Comack and Balfour write that rather than maintaining policies that “manage conditions of risk” we move toward policies that are inclusive and holistic: “Holding the state and law accountable for the provision of social welfare, education, health care, affordable day care and adequate housing may have far greater potential for creating safer communities” (Comack and Balfour 178). A holistic approach attends to how racial inequity is deeply enmeshed in the project of modernity and seeks to critique the over-representation of racialized incarcerated communities through a decolonial model. A holistic approach would, as Gilmore tells us, consider how our current political and economic systems are instead in racial violence and the maintenance of white supremacy. Therefore, we need a decolonial approach to address the ongoing genocide of indigenous people through not just addressing personal acts of violence (which tend to be individuated and delink the personal from the broader colonial and racial histories), but also addressing the ways that institutionalized white supremacy supports racial gender violence.

A holistic approach to anti-violence would also include discussion regarding how the law is implicated in perpetuating racialized violence. Drawing from Angela Davis, creating strategies for de-carceration need to focus on the disarticulation of crime and punishment to challenge the constructions of who is deemed criminal in relation to intersections of race, class, and gender (112). The work of prison abolitionists is an anti-racist endeavor, which challenges the agendas of politicians and corporations that seek to encourage economic “development” through the containment and regulation of racialized bodies. Davis discusses how imagining abolition would not mean another institution that would replace the prison, but rather structural changes that would address poverty, health care needs, and racism, and other marginalizing practices that render certain communities as vulnerable to criminalization (107). Prison abolition is inextricable to an anti-racist movement that challenges the logics of white supremacy and systems of social domination (Davis 111).

This chapter has worked through prison expansion in the Canadian context and outlined how contemporary carceral practices are invested in punishment, and the management of racialized, impoverished, and vulnerable communities. Political and economic agendas position prison expansion as economically *productive* (infrastructure development as economic stimulus), and yet at the same time, cost saving measures and budgetary cuts underline that the Canadian government does not see the importance of rehabilitating incarcerated populations. After examining the reports released by the OCI (2012-2014), it becomes abundantly clear that the reportage model (written recommendations as a model for fostering “change”) that documents violence and offenders’ grievances is a discursive practice that reifies colonial logics. The reportage system fails to disrupt colonial narratives that situate indigenous women’s marginalization and criminalization as “natural,” and therefore these reports are invested in these

colonial logics precisely because they envision, from the outset, that the prison is a natural and inevitable part of the Canadian landscape. I have also argued that the prison systemically removes indigenous women from their communities and that this is an ongoing gendered colonial practice enmeshed with indigenous dispossession, marginalization and genocide. Indigenous women are over-represented in federal prisons and yet the prison simultaneously conceals their dispossession. A decolonial framework interrogates the social structures that produce the conditions for indigenous women's incarceration and challenges their over-representation; it also, at the same time, discloses how the disappearance of indigenous women is rendered "natural" and "commonsense." Imagining prison abolition would not only mean the removal of prisons (or the replacement of prisons), but also imagining a different social order wherein the political and economic structures are not invested in racial violence and dispossession in an effort to secure and maintain white supremacy.

Chapter Four

Colonial Carceral Geographies and Resistances

This chapter examines geographies of incarceration as well as resistances to colonial carceral geographies. I consider how the space of the reserve, a colonial geography, informs how violence is *understood* and *managed*, while simultaneously holding in tension how the reserve is also a space of indigeneity that holds indigenous modes of being. Indigenous communities are over-policed and, simultaneously, under-protected. Indigenous communities are also continually made to be disappearing and, as I have noted in my earlier chapters, this kind of erasure is key to the project of modernity. I address how both the over-representation of indigenous women in federal prisons and also the high numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women represent gender, racialized and colonial, carceral violence. In the next section, I incorporate maps of Canadian federal prisons as a way to explore where prisons exist geographically. By situating the prison on the land I draw attention to how the project of modernity is enacted through geography. Federal prison expansion since the 1960s has been taking place rurally, outside of major Canadian cities. The rural locations of prisons as well as the expansion of existing prison infrastructure (new superjails), uncovers some of the political and economic agendas behind these spatial projects. Colonial carceral geographies (the plantation, the reserve, and the prison) continue to operate to sequester, hide, and dehumanize racialized and marginalized peoples. Although the colonial histories for black and indigenous communities are different, these racial histories overlap through and within the geography of the prison. Throughout this chapter, I seek to disrupt narratives that produce colonial carceral geographies as solely spaces of top-down racial oppression and absolute otherness. I argue, importantly, there are always narratives of

resistance, practices of relationality, and articulations for a different future within colonized spaces of racial violence. This chapter thus also illuminates how a politics of love, community activism, and relationality are vital decolonial practices that address state-sanctioned violence and subvert colonial narratives that thrive on exclusionary practices of racial subjugation.

I briefly want to reiterate my conceptualization of the prison as a site of modernity as a reminder of how the prison, a space of containment, is underwritten by histories of slavery and colonialism, and yet simultaneously hides these histories of racial violence. This conceptual lens demands decolonial thinking that actively subverts scripts of Canadian benevolence and necessitates an analysis that centralizes narratives of resistance. I draw from Katherine McKittrick's "On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place" (2011) which explains how the plantation was a blueprint for ongoing racial violence. The plantation was a historical geography, she argues, wherein black peoples were (and continue to be) exploited and black peoples were seen to be "placeless" (949). However, there have been and are always articulations of a "black sense of place" and "black geographies" which are narratives of resistance that emerge from spaces of coloniality and violence (McKittrick, "On plantations, prisons" 949).¹³ McKittrick writes that "[d]iverse spatial practices—wherein the structural workings of racism kept black cultures *in place* and tagged them as placeless, as these communities innovatively worked within, across, and outside commonsense cartographic and topographical texts—help form a black sense of place" (McKittrick, "On plantations, prisons" 949). I begin with this framework because I want to acknowledge a "black sense of place" as well as other sites of subversion and relationality, when writing about prison abolition and the ways in which the

¹³ In McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (2006), she clarifies her use of the term "Black Geographies" as, "'the terrain of political struggle itself,' or, *where* the imperative of a perspective of struggle takes place. Here, the locations of black history, selfhood, imagination, and resistance are not only attached to the production of space through their marginality, but also through the ways in which they bring into focus responses to geographic domination" (6).

ongoing colonial project in Canada requires the forgetting and denial of black and indigenous geographies. This is to say, that we must consider how processes of racialization underpin the production of space, how certain geographies are constituted as “lifeless,” and how marginalized and racialized bodies inhabit these spaces (McKittrick, “Plantation Futures” 7). The prison is a locus of spatial violence in relation to complex workings of racial scripts (McKittrick “On plantations, prisons” 956). Therefore, a discussion that attends to the connections between plantation histories and the recirculation of antiblack and colonial racial violence must employ a decolonial framework that begins with human life (McKittrick, “Plantation Futures” 3). I suggest that this conceptual framework can be teased out in relation to indigenous women’s carceral geographies. McKittrick’s analytical framework is radical because she clarifies the need for a “whole new system of knowledge” wherein the tenets of modernity (enacted through geography) that produce racialized communities as “less than human” need to be disrupted in academic scholarship and activism (McKittrick, “On plantations, prisons” 955). This framework importantly challenges liberal discourses of freedom that are invested in geographies of ownership, land exploitation, and ongoing racial death, as this kind of logic posits that owning, accumulating, having and demarcating “place,” on colonial terms, is liberatory. I am thankful for McKittrick’s scholarship because she employs various creative texts to showcase how decolonial longings are articulated through creative imaginings, and argues that conceptually scholars must situate these creative texts—which are generated from colonial spaces—as an analytical pathway that can disrupt the oppressive systems that continue to dictate our current political and social systems.

Geography

The map below showcases indigenous reserves across Canadian lands:¹⁴

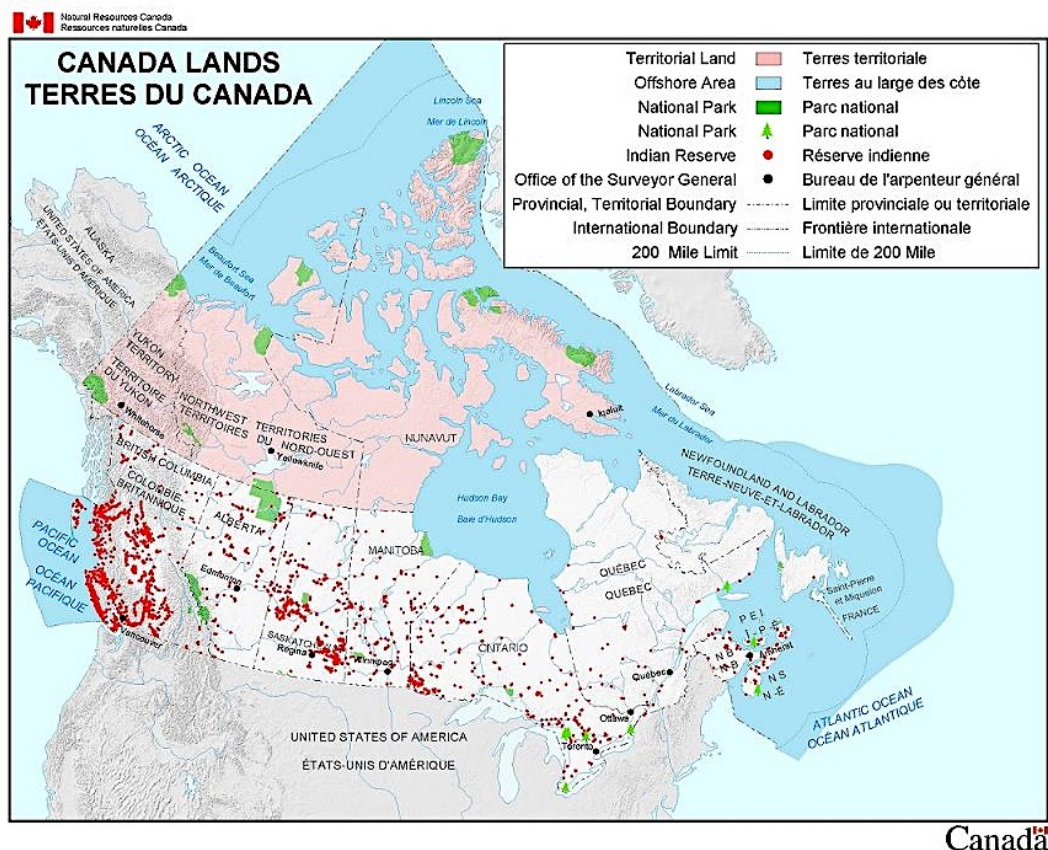


Figure 1. “Canada Lands” includes the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut; over 2600 Indian Reserves; Canada’s National and Historic Parks; and Canada’s offshore area. (Accessed 2015-10-03): Natural Resources Canada 2014-02-21.

I begin with this map that visually marks where reserves are in Canada in order to situate my discussion of geography. Specifically I want to note that these reserve cartographies spatially illuminate modernity. These reserve cartographies reflect, as well, violent colonial processes: they are geographies that explicitly make space for oppression. As noted in my earlier chapters, the reserve system was enacted as a form of racial management and genocide. Notably, reserves

¹⁴ The map “Canada Lands” was produced by Natural Resources Canada, Earth Sciences Sector, Surveyor General Branch. This map showcases where Aboriginal reserves are located across the Canadian landscape. This map helps inform my analysis of geography, because it illuminates how the production of space is underpinned by practices of management, sequestering, resistance, and negotiation. My discussion of this map is coupled with an analysis of maps clarifying where Canadian federal prisons are located, and I use these maps to elucidate how colonial carceral logics operate beyond spaces that are considered carceral.

are often removed from the Canadian public's purview—they are geographies, tracts of land, that were and are “set aside” and “set apart” from settler geographies. The map above thus shows a scattering of reserves that are, fundamentally, geographies of dispossession. The reserves mark a difficult history of racial violence that is cartographically enacted. Indeed, the boil-water advisories that are in place at reserves across the nation strikingly demonstrate how the geography of the reserve is tied up in contemporary carceral practices (“Drinking Water Advisories in First Nations Communities”). The above map, I am suggesting, illuminates how race and space are intimately connected.

Similarly, the prison maps (below) can be also used to demonstrate how processes of removal and sequestering are geographical acts. Throughout my discussion, I consider how the geographies of the prison and the reserve are entwined through colonial logics and processes. This is to say that the commonsense workings of racial violence can be understood in relation to a geographic analysis of modernity that clarifies how practices of subjugation are spatial.

Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* offers an important conceptual framework that outlines the interplay between geographies of domination (transatlantic slavery, the plantation, colonialism) and “black women's geographies” (“their knowledge, negotiations, and experiences”) to draw out an analysis that demonstrates how, “more humanly workable geographies can be and are imagined” (McKittrick xii).

McKittrick understands geography as space, place, and location (both physical and imaginative), and she makes clear how practices of subjugation, violence, processes of displacement and concealment are spatial acts. McKittrick writes that, “existing cartographic rules unjustly organize human hierarchies *in place* and reify uneven geographies in familiar, seemingly natural ways” (*Demonic Grounds* x emphasis in the original). This is to say, that the project of

modernity employs “traditional geography”—“white patriarchal, Eurocentric, heterosexual, classed vantage point”—as a tool that naturalizes boundaries and processes of concealment as stable and fixed, all of which are underpinned by processes of domination and conquest and the social production of space (McKittrick xiii-xiv). McKittrick’s framework employs human geography, creative texts, and black studies to examine the interplay between geographies of domination and black women’s geographies. This interplay allows her to “think about the place of black subjects in a diasporic context [in relation to] our present geographic organization” (McKittrick x). Her scholarship employs theorists, writers and poets to showcase that there is a complex relationship between black women and geography and the production of space—or more specifically the production of patriarchal colonial space—and that this is tied to practices of resistance, different ways of knowing, and subversive narratives that assert life (McKittrick xix).

I employ McKittrick’s analytical framework to consider how the geography of the reserve is underscored by colonial conquest and represents the spatially *lived* experiences that are engendered through racism, exploitation, and economic hardship. With this, I also highlight indigenous women’s negotiations and practices of resistance within the context of colonial geographies. I want to think about how geographies of domination, specifically prison geographies, are expressions of modernity and therefore conceal processes of displacement and dispossession while upholding white supremacy. Drawing from McKittrick’s conceptual framework I would like to hold in “interplay” dominant geographic processes of concealment and invisibilization—missing and murdered indigenous women are crucial here—in relation to the colonial construction of the reserve. At the same time, I consider the reserve as a space of indigeneity, indigenous modes of being, sacred knowledges, and life. Beginning with this “interplay” between colonial erasures and indigenous life, is important because it facilitates an

analysis that moves away from descriptively writing indigenous women as murdered, missing, and incarcerated and allows for an analysis that considers how the production of space is tied to processes of racialization that are underscored by histories of freedom and unfreedom (belonging underwritten by unbelonging). This interplay also makes evident how geography is socially produced alongside practices of resistance that challenge naturalized exclusionary processes. As McKittrick writes, this analysis attends to how “more humanly workable geographies can be and are imagined” (*Demonic Grounds* xii). In the next section, I provide a visual representation of where prisons are located geographically. I incorporate maps in order clarify, spatially, how prisons are often hidden from public purview (rurally located) just as they are, simultaneously, politically postulated as a *key* component in the maintenance of contemporary society. These maps foster various questions regarding the political and economic agendas behind prison expansion projects. These maps also facilitate a discussion that considers how abolition projects take place geographically.

Canadian Federal Penitentiaries

Legend for Maps Below:

Pink: Women’s Federal Penitentiaries

Blue: Healing Centres (Minimum/medium-security facilities that use Aboriginal beliefs, traditions, values and beliefs to design services and programs for offenders)

Grey: Regional Mental Health Centres or Regional Treatment Centres

Red: Penitentiaries Built Pre-1960

Yellow: Penitentiaries Built Post-1960

The arrows: Clarify which federal institutions are co-located or operating in close proximity

These maps were generated using Google Maps software.

Canada



Figure 2. “Canada: Federal Penitentiaries”

Atlantic Canada and Eastern Quebec

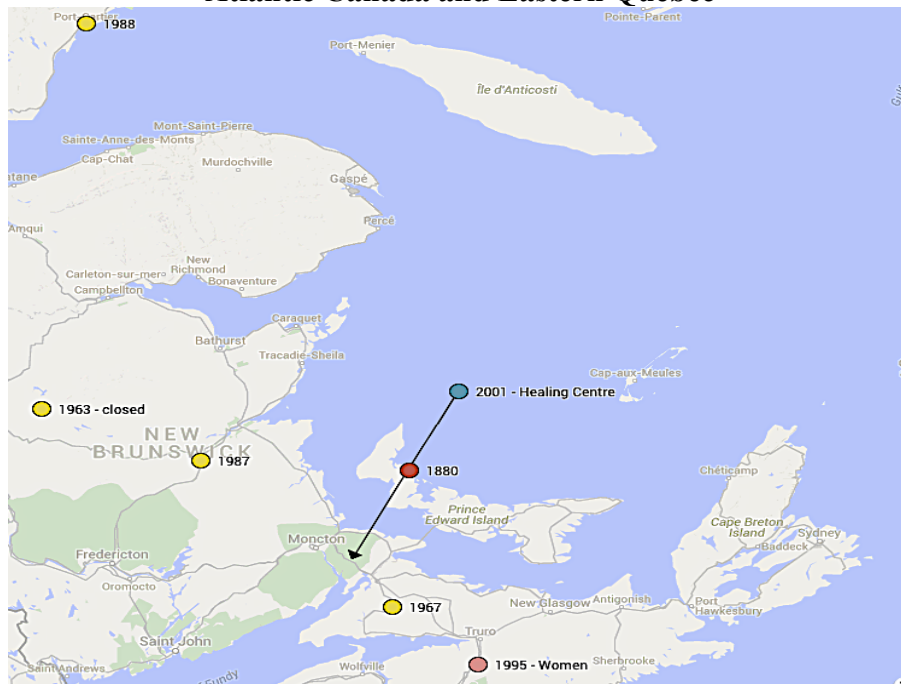


Figure 3. “Atlantic Canada and Eastern Quebec: Federal Penitentiaries” *Dorchester penitentiary (1880) and Shepody Healing Centre (2001) are co-located. Three other correctional facilities are operating outside of Atlantic Canada’s major cities.

Quebec

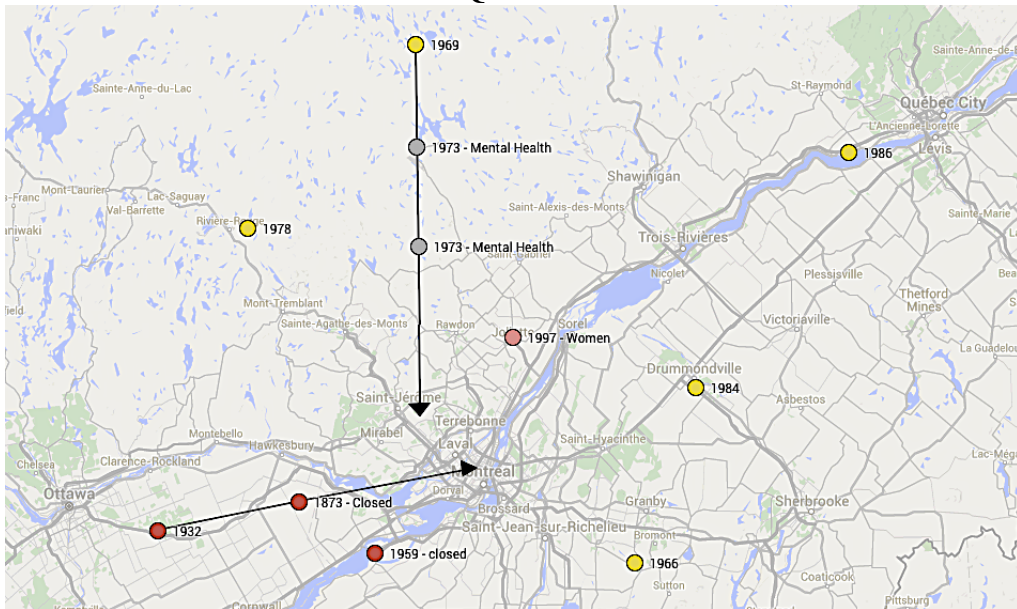


Figure 4. “Quebec, Canada: Federal Penitentiaries” *Regional Reception Centre (1973), Regional Mental Health Centre (1973), and Archambault Institution (1969) are co-located. The two first penitentiaries were built in the Montreal-Laval area, whereas nine prisons since 1960 have been built, all of them in more rural areas across the province.

Ontario

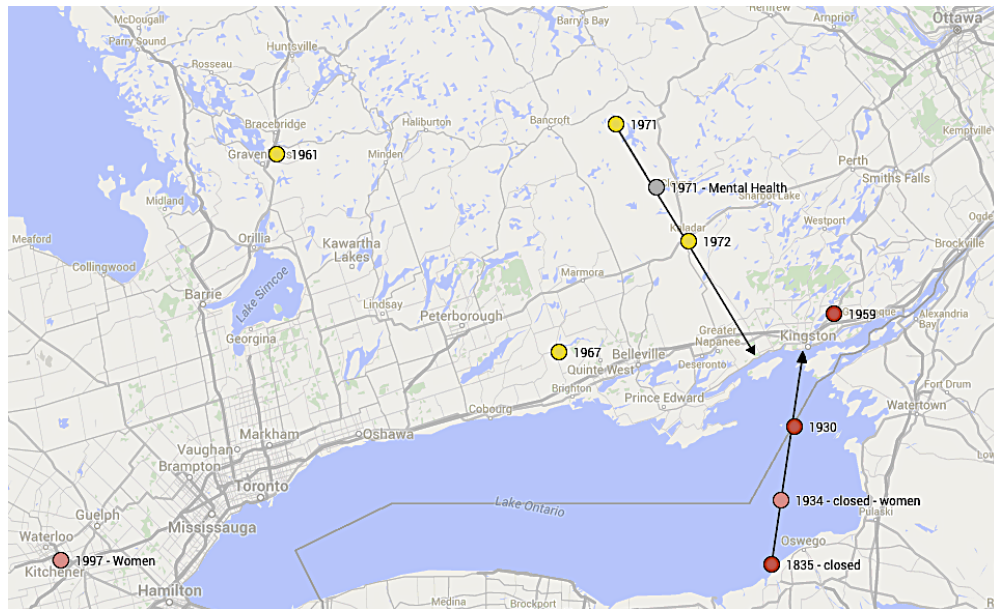


Figure 5. “Ontario, Canada: Federal Penitentiaries” *Millhaven Institution (1971), Regional Treatment Centre at Millhaven Institution (1971), and Bath Institution (1972) are co-located. In the earlier period Kingston Penitentiary and Collins Bay were built close to Kingston.

Manitoba

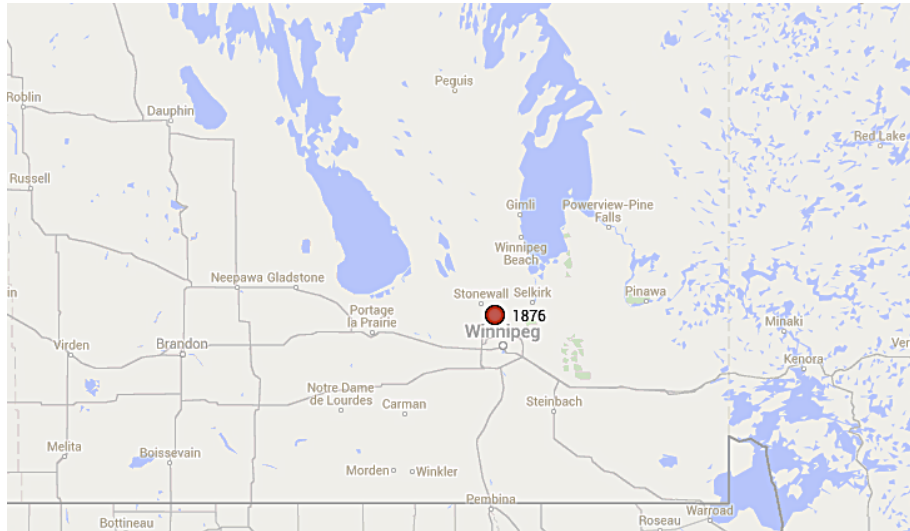


Figure 6. “Manitoba, Canada: Federal Penitentiaries” *Stony Mountain Institution, located North of Winnipeg, is a multi-level security prison that also has one healing unit for Aboriginal inmates. Stony Mountain Institution was recently expanded (96 more beds) and further expansion is underway.

Saskatchewan

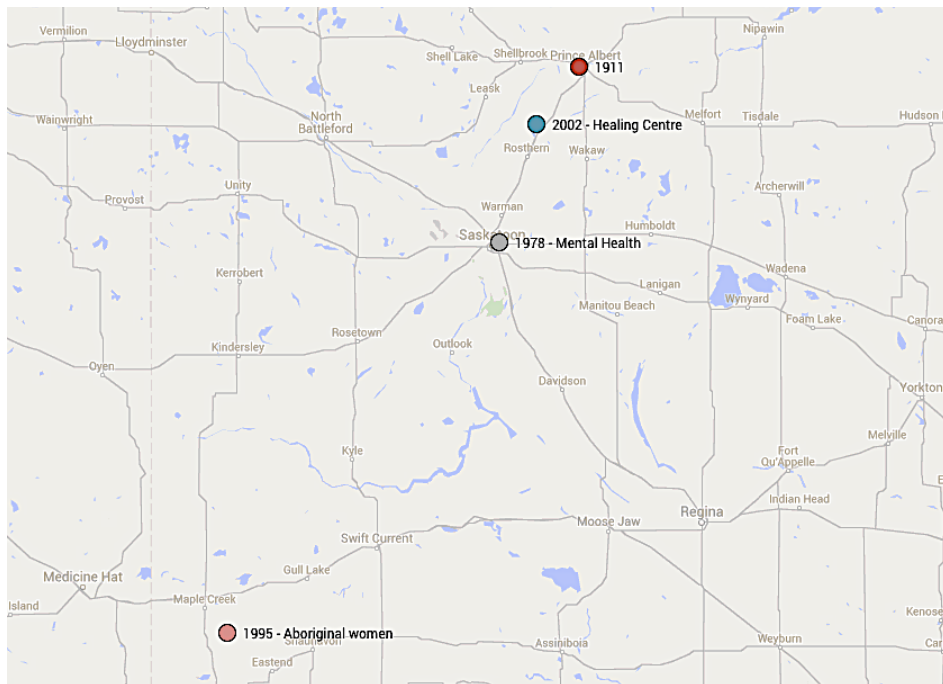


Figure 7. “Saskatchewan, Canada: Federal Penitentiaries” *Three correctional facilities are located outside of Saskatoon and the provincial capital Regina.



Figure 8. “Alberta, Canada: Federal Penitentiaries” *Three correctional facilities and a Healing Centre are rurally located, outside of Edmonton. The first penitentiary in Alberta, which was built right in the city of Edmonton, had a very short life before shutting down.

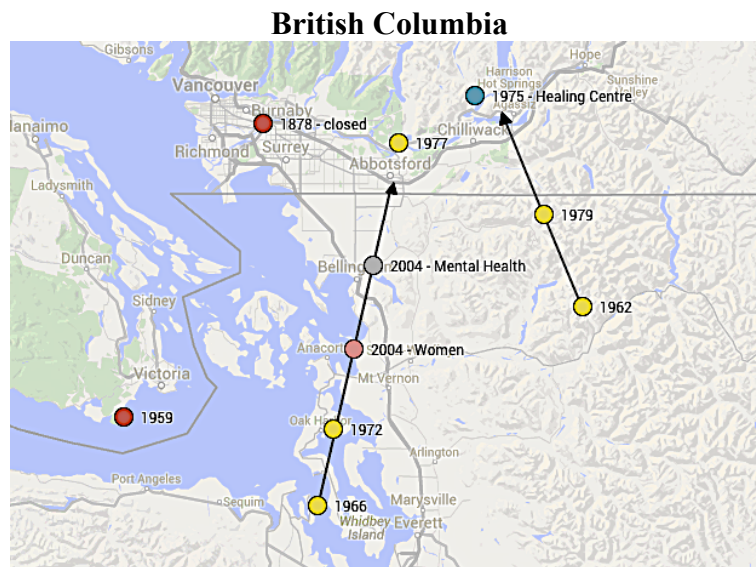


Figure 9. British Columbia: Federal Penitentiaries” *Pacific Institution/Regional Treatment Centre (1972/2004), Matsqui Institution (1966), and Fraser Valley Institution for Women (2004) are co-located (Abbotsford, BC). *Kent Institution (1979) and Mountain Institution (1962) are also co-located (Agassiz, BC). The earliest built prison (which is now shut down) was located quite close to Vancouver. Since 1960, eight penitentiaries have been built, all outside major urban centres (such as Vancouver or Victoria).

The eight maps above showcase the geographic work of the prison, which leads to questions regarding why and where prison expansion is happening. Canada's first penitentiary, the Provincial Penitentiary (Kingston Penitentiary) of the Province of Upper Canada opened in 1835 and was located just a few kilometers away from the city centre of Kingston, Ontario. During this period Kingston was one of Canada's major cities. As the maps illustrate, prison expansion post-1960s has been happening rurally, outside of city centers. Prison expansion is underwritten by political and economic agendas and is often the response to an array of social problems. Information regarding Canadian federal prison expansion projects is limited and CSC has not published information regarding *why* certain locations have been chosen for expansion projects and the Conservative Party's project of centralization through the building of superjails. Centralization projects are cost-saving initiatives wherein the costs of running prisons are supposed to be reduced through implementing new technologies and newer prison designs (Buitenhuis 57). We see this taking place through the expansion and retrofitting of existing correctional facilities, and also the upgrading of older infrastructure (John Howard Society 2006, 3).

Although I have already discussed various concerns surrounding prison conditions, I want to briefly acknowledge some concerns surrounding the use of super-jails. Super-jails are often characterized as a sterile "no frills" (tough living conditions including restricting recreational activities) environment, which results in limiting contact between staff and prisoners (John Howard Society 2006, iii). For example, Millhaven institution is a maximum-security super-jail located in Bath Ontario, and it shares property with Bath institution. Millhaven is structurally a "radial design where offenders' accommodations are direct observation living units" (Correctional Service Canada). The John Howard Society published their concerns

regarding the use of super-jails, and they question if it is possible to have a productive relationship between the staff and prisoners that fosters rehabilitation when the institution is architecturally designed for the “warehousing” of prisoners (2006, 15). The development of rurally located super-jails reflects a “tough on crime” stance because their punitive environments are not “constructive, correctional or rehabilitative by nature,” Their rural locations, as well, also make it difficult for the visitation of family, friends, lawyers and community agencies who need to connect with the inmates (John Howard Society 2006, 14). The John Howard Society does not condone the construction of super-jails and recommends that the Canadian government stop using them “not only by terminating any plans for further construction of similar institutions but also through moving towards closing beds/eliminating double-bunking in the existing superjails, and eventually, closing these institutions” (2006, 16).

In the U.S. there has been research regarding how prison development has been used as a form of economic stimulus during economic downturns, especially in rural and poor communities (Gilmore 2007; Glasmeier and Farrigan 2007; Wacquant 2010; as well as many others). In Canada, it is less clear why certain locations have been chosen for prison expansion projects—there still needs to be more research in this area—although recently, scholars have been exploring the economic and political impacts of prison development on rural communities.¹⁵ Amy Buitenhuis’ (2013) MA project, “Public-Private Partnerships and Prison Expansion in Ontario: Shifts in Governance 1995 to 2012,” examines the contested role of public-private-partnerships (PPPs) surrounding prison development in Ontario. Her work clarifies the role of the private sector in prison construction projects. The state puts out a tender for prison development projects, and private companies are hired for the design of projects as

¹⁵ Greg McElligott’s forthcoming scholarship critically examines claims that situate prison development in rural areas as facilitating economic gains for Canadian prison towns.

well as the construction of the prisons (Buitenhuis 18). Buitenhuis writes that, “PPPs are part of a process that has depoliticized prison expansion in Ontario and embedded this expansion more deeply within global financial markets [and that] the place of the prison has been further secured as [an] important institution for governance” (80). This scholarship, therefore, outlines the need to question the financial agendas surrounding prison infrastructure development. The continued expansion of the correctional system is highly troubling because it solidifies the prison as a response to managing marginalized, racialized communities. Geographically, because the prisons are seemingly out of sight, practices of racial management can go unnoticed.

Justin Piche’s (2015) scholarship “Contesting Prison Expansion with a Public Criminology Campaign” similarly discusses the need to clearly disclose financial commitments that federal and provincial governments make to prison construction initiatives. Piche’s framework includes publically lobbying for financial transparency (i.e. playing the treasury card) asking the federal Conservative government to identify public spending in a time of austerity (2010-2011). Piche’s lobbying raised public awareness and perhaps fostered some critiques of the “tough on crime” stance (although the Safe Streets and Communities Act passed in March 2012—which expanded criminalization).¹⁶ Therefore, the prison works to hide many complicated and contested economic processes from public knowledge. Tough on crime agendas require further prison expansion and this is not economically productive. The financing of prison infrastructure expansion requires taxation and/or the incurrence of public debt—which diverts scarce public resources away from productive uses and into these less productive uses (prison construction and operation) (“Better Foundations” 2015, 20). In the end, the tough on crime

¹⁶ The Safe Streets and Communities Act (2012), “which included restrictions on eligibility for community-based sentences, mandatory minimum sentences related to marijuana production and distribution, and expanded criminalization” (Piche 160).

agenda accompanied with prison expansion is neither good for those most vulnerable to incarceration, nor is it good for the economy.

With this in mind, the prison can be viewed as a tool of colonial carceral logics that extracts people from their communities. Indeed, the ruralization and building of super-jails illuminates how the geographies of prison expansion are tied to a racial economy that hides criminalized people of colour. Prison expansion, in a sense, finances erasure and upholds colonial logics. As already noted, the over-representation of indigenous women in federal prisons showcases how the prison is a site of modernity that requires the sequestering and management of racialized peoples. The prison maps above pinpoint *fixed places of punishment* and elucidate how specific geographical spaces have been deemed appropriate to house, *and conceal*, those who are “criminal” and “unmanageable.” Similar to the map I began this chapter with; the reserve system illuminates spaces of indigeneity that are marked by experiences of violence. Importantly, these prison and reserve maps showcase *different* geographies and spaces. However, coupling these maps demonstrates how the production of space is underpinned by the logics of white supremacy and how practices of domination and erasure are made possible through geography. In other words, geography shapes how we know and understand race—or *where* race is (and how it might be hidden from view through ruralization, relocation, warehousing). These geographies can thus be understood as, in many ways, erasing punished indigenous women.

Canadian colonial cartographies deny a black and an indigenous sense of place, precisely because white supremacy sets the terms of belonging through the tenets of ownership (having land) and acquiring “freedom” on the backs of racialized communities. The reserve map and the prison map elucidate the refusal of an indigenous sense of place, because these spaces of removal require the relocation of indigenous peoples on colonial terms. Ideologies of white supremacy

move across space and therefore carceral logics are enacted in spaces that are not explicitly (or readily knowable as) carceral. Therefore, I return to McKittrick's (2006) argument that geography is alterable, she writes "What is at stake in the legacy of exploration, conquest, and stable vantage points if we insist that past and present geographies are connective sites of struggle, which have *always* called into question the very *appearance* of safely secure and unwavering locations?" (*Demonic Grounds* xviii). Drawing from McKittrick, I am arguing that the prison must be conceptualized as having porous borders, because this disrupts narratives that situate the prison as a space of absolute "otherness." I believe this conceptualization helps dismantle narratives that position the prison as a fixed and stable geography in the Canadian landscape. As already discussed, colonial carceral logics and practices of removal operate beyond the space of the prison and, therefore, the staggering numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women must also be acknowledged alongside a discussion of colonial carceral logics. In the next section, I draw from the "Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit" initiative to consider how storytelling is used as a way to articulate geography as alterable.

Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, the Sisters in Spirit Initiative, and Storytelling as Interruption

According to Canadian government statistics, indigenous women are five times to seven times more likely than other women to die as the result of violence. The Native Women's Association of Canada has documented more than 580 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada, most within the last three decades. Because of gaps in police and government reporting, the actual numbers may be much higher (Amnesty International "No More Stolen Sisters")

In Canada, there is little police work done regarding murdered and missing indigenous women, and this neglect can be associated with the fact that indigenous women face social

precarity and some of the women were/are homeless or sex-workers (Smith, *Conquest* 30).

Butler's (2009) framework of precarity can be used to understand how colonialism impacts how indigenous women are not understood as recognizable subjects and they are not valued or seen as grievable (xii). Butler writes: "Precarious life characterizes such lives who do not qualify as recognizable, readable, or grievable" (Butler xiii). Indigenous women's subjectivity, which emerges alongside colonial violence and their resistance to it, has been constructed as "violable" and "rapeable" and this impacts how the police and the law fail to protect these women. Butler continues: "Who will be criminalized on the basis of public appearance; who will fail to be protected by the law or, more specifically, the police, on the street, or on the job, or in the home" (Butler ii). The over-representation of indigenous women in prisons elucidates the urgency of dismantling colonial logics that situate indigenous women as susceptible to over-policing in jail, or on the other hand, at risk of violence and denied protection from the law and police.

The Sisters in Spirit initiative conducts primary research, interviews family members, does secondary source research on incidents that are *reported* to the police, or news coverage that documents the lives and experiences of murdered and missing indigenous women.

According to a report released by the RCMP, "Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview" (2014), "[p]olice-recorded incidents of Aboriginal female homicides and unresolved missing Aboriginal females in this review total 1,181—164 missing and 1,017 homicide victims" (3). Also, according to the RCMP's report (as of November 4, 2013) there were 225 unsolved cases for murdered and missing Aboriginal females, and "120 unsolved homicides between 1980 and 2012" ("Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operation Overview 2014, 3). The Sisters in Spirit initiative seeks to raise awareness and honour the lives of the women and girls who have experienced horrendous violence and also

remember those who are still missing. The initiative positions families and community members as stakeholders in the project and key in envisioning and creating a better future: “Sisters in Spirit research activities are designed to uncover root causes, circumstances and trends in order to promote policy change that will increase the personal safety and security of all Aboriginal women and girls in Canada” (“Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities” 2009, 4). Some of the questions that guided their research were focused around how the justice system has responded to the reports of murdered and missing indigenous women, and what issues and challenges the families experienced. The questions also focused on how change could be implemented to reduce and prevent this ongoing colonial violence. The Sisters in Spirit initiative understands that there is power in the commitment of “giving voice” to indigenous women, girls and the family members who have been silenced (“Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities” 2009, 80).

It is difficult to find the right language to employ when discussing the stories outlined within the pages of the Sisters in Spirit initiative, particularly because the language itself is enmeshed with the violence of conquest and domination. However, despite the violence and numerous accounts of police negligence and racism within these stories about pain and fear, there are also narratives of love and resistance. The documented stories include narratives about the lives of the missing and murdered indigenous women, including their familial relationships and who they were. These narratives often powerfully contrast police reports that present indigenous women through racist and colonial scripts. As I noted earlier through Comack and Balfour’s work, *The Power to Criminalize* (2004), gender binaries, specifically white understandings of masculinity and femininity, are enforced through the law. In analyzing how race is linked to violent crime, they show how problematic stereotypes are utilized within the

courtroom to criminalize racialized peoples and, specifically, indigenous communities. The reports released by the OCI similarly naturalize indigenous women as “criminal” because these reports do not address and disrupt colonial scripts that shape indigenous communities encounters with the law. Beatrice Sinclair’s story, as well as many other stories, written in the “Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities” (2009), powerfully subvert colonial scripts that present indigenous women as *violable*. Beatrice’s story is, I argue, a geographic story because it considers how experiences of racialization are *experienced* in the spatial, and also how demarcations of land and space are underpinned by racism, conquest, and economic exploitation. Beatrice’s story—as well as other stories discussed at length here—illuminates how the production of racialized space is intimately entwined to these indigenous women’s experiences of violence. Beatrice’s story is based on Sharon Bruyere’s personal experiences with her grandmother and this story is helpful in clarifying the paradoxes of colonial geographies. I cite this narrative at length in order to centralize the story itself—as a creative text complements and interrupts dominant geographies—and draws attention to the layers of knowledge shared. It is important to note that indigenous stories and experiences are not monolithic, but rather that Beatrice’s story as well the stories of other indigenous women are demonstrative of how the circulation of colonial scripts, colonial brutalities, processes of dispossession, and land exploitation are experienced differentially. I read Beatrice’s story, then, as uniquely demonstrating the paradoxical workings of colonial geographies. Put differently, her story speaks to sweeping practices of colonialism yet, at the same time, is a distinctive narrative.

Granny Beatrice’s Teachings: Beatrice Sinclair’s Story:

Beatrice Harriet Passage Sinclair was from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. She was born in Peguis First Nation around 1909. She was the oldest of 18 siblings. At 65 years of age, Beatrice was found raped and beaten to death under a bridge in

Winnipeg. Her body was laid to rest on the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation.

Beatrice is remembered as a beloved grandmother and a strong Cree woman. She had at least three homes on the Brokenhead reserve where she was the primary caregiver to many of her grandchildren. Her granddaughter, Sharon Bruyere, has fond memories of the enormous role her Granny played in her childhood.

One of Sharon's most cherished childhood memories is a testament to Beatrice's loving and warm-hearted character. Sharon remembers sleepovers at Beatrice's house in Brokenhead where there was no electricity or running water. The grandchildren would sleep with Granny Beatrice in her big, old steel frame bed with heavy blankets piled atop them tightly. Come morning, Beatrice would get up, put her slippers on and tell all of the grandchildren to stay in bed until the kitchen was warm. Before long they would smell breakfast cooking and Beatrice would call out, "Come to the kitchen, stay warm!"

Sharon's biological mother was an alcoholic and she considers her Granny Beatrice the closest thing she had to a mother. Beatrice taught Sharon valuable work skills while always ensuring that Sharon and her other grandchildren balanced work and play. One year the grandchildren wanted to celebrate Halloween but they had no costumes and to make matters worse a huge snowstorm had just hit the reserve. Beatrice was determined that her grandchildren should have fun on this occasion so she dressed them up in old clothes, used her makeup to paint their faces and carted them down the road on a sled to collect candy and apples. Beatrice went to these lengths to make her grandchildren feel good.

As a head of the family, Beatrice passed down the teachings she had gathered throughout her life to her grandchildren. Whether teaching through her actions or espousing certain values, Beatrice made sure that her grandchildren were well-raised. Beatrice would always offer coffee or tea to anyone who came into her home and would feed them whenever she could. Her guests would sit by the stove to keep warm. In addition to these manners, Beatrice taught Sharon to be respectful and to love children. Beatrice taught her grandchildren how to use leaves and herbs for medicinal purposes, passing on Cree traditional knowledge. Sharon and her cousin Sharon Ward still carry these teachings and values given to them by Beatrice.

Sharon was only 10 years old when Granny Beatrice died in 1974. At this age, Sharon had not experienced death and did not understand what relatives meant when they told her that her grandmother "died." It was not until the day of the funeral, the day they took Beatrice's body to the church, that Sharon began to understand death. She cried, "I'll never see my Granny anymore. There will be no one to comfort me, keep me warm, make me duck soup, make me moccasins, tell me that she loved me. She was the only one that said that she loved me. My Gram was very, very important."

Alcoholism was present in Beatrice's family, a fact that could be related to many family members' attendance at residential school. Sharon recalls not being able to

properly mourn her grandmother on the day of the funeral because of the drinking that took place. With Beatrice no longer alive to shelter her grandchildren from alcoholism in the family, Sharon's life started to spiral downwards. Nevertheless, the values Beatrice had instilled in Sharon gave her the strength and ability to take care of her siblings.

Beatrice's niece, Sarah Ward, was the last person to see her alive. The night she disappeared, Sarah saw Beatrice walking on Main Street in Winnipeg with a man she later found out was a retired police officer. Beatrice never went anywhere without telling people her whereabouts and when she did not return to her niece's house the next day, Sarah tried to file a missing persons report with the Winnipeg Police Service. The police asserted that Beatrice could not be considered a missing person until she had been gone for one week and refused to accept the report.

The night before Beatrice's body was found, she came to her great-niece Sharon Ward. Sharon woke up in the middle of the night and saw Beatrice standing there; it was her spirit. Beatrice was telling Sharon that she was going home, to which Sharon replied, "See you in Brokenhead." Beatrice said, "I'm not going to Brokenhead. I'm going home." Sharon knew that Beatrice was gone.

Beatrice's body was found that evening, May 14, 1974, by three children who were friends of the family. Her niece Sarah was told by police that Beatrice must have gotten dizzy and fallen over the Marion Street bridge. They contended that her clothes were torn off when the river current beat her body against rocks. Her clothing was never found.

It was not until Sharon reached adulthood that she learned the truth about Beatrice's death. She was researching facts about missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Manitoba when she came across her grandmother's name. As she read the report, Sharon recalls, "It was like my mind left my body. I had to sit there and try and try and control the tears."

Sharon was shocked to discover that much of the information stated in the police report ran contrary to what she and other family members knew about Beatrice's death. Sharon and her cousin Roselyn Tait were told that their Granny was beaten to death under a bridge and were surprised to read that her cause of death was listed as asphyxiation. Although Beatrice had sustained injuries inflicted by a person, including being unclothed and dragged and dumped under a bridge, according to the report those injuries "were not serious enough to cause death."

The most shocking part of the report, however, was that Beatrice was found with an abnormally high blood alcohol level of .288. In all of the time that she spent with her grandmother, Sharon has no recollection of Beatrice ever being drunk. Sharon does not remember Beatrice having a drink or going to a party. Beatrice was always with her grandchildren.

Beatrice's grandchildren do not feel that her memory is being honoured the way it

should. There are no pictures to tell the story of the beautiful and strong grandmother from the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. Reports suggest that Beatrice was living in Winnipeg when in reality she had homes in Brokenhead and at the time of her death was only in Winnipeg to visit her sister Pearl Olson (Sarah Ward's mother). Above all, the hardest thing for Sharon and her cousins to deal with is not knowing what happened to their grandmother. It has been over 30 years since her death and Beatrice's grandchildren have come to terms with the possibility that this murder likely never will be solved. But that does not stop them from looking for answers to ease their minds and, most importantly, to give their grandmother the acknowledgement and respect that she deserves.

Beatrice taught her grandchildren to respect the people who come through your door; they are there to visit you, so you must give them that time. Beatrice was not given the same respect in death as she offered those around her in life. Beatrice and her teachings live on in the form of her grandchildren, their children and generations to come that will always have a piece of Granny Beatrice ("Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities" 2009, 21-24).

Sharon Bruyere's account of Beatrice Sinclair's life and the type of grandmother she was subverts colonial narratives that position Beatrice as invisible, violable, and disappearing. It is necessary to contextualize Beatrice's experiences in relation to a geographical analysis that outlines how practices of subjugation and racial violence are spatial acts. Within the narrative are some geographic details that can be elaborated on, specifically about where Beatrice is from and also where her murder happened. She was from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation (BON) that is an Anishinaabe (Saulteaux/Ojibwa) First Nation, located Northeast of Winnipeg (surrounded by the rural municipality of St. Clements). Beatrice's body was found at the south end of St. Mary's Rd. Floodway Bridge in the rural municipality of St. Vital (CBC: Missing and Murdered Persons). This horrific violence raises questions about the space where the violence occurred. Her body was found dumped and left under a bridge in a rural area.

Working with Sherene Razack's article, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George" I want to argue that positivist demarcations of land and space are underpinned by racism, conquest, economic exploitation, and domination. Razack

examines the brutal murder of Pamela George, an indigenous women from Saulteaux (Ojibway) nation. She discusses how Pamela George was understood to be in a space of prostitution and indigeneity and that *because of her geographic location*, George was inhabiting a space where violence *naturally* occurs. Razack writes, “[i]n racialized space, violence may occur with impunity. Bodies from respectable spaces may also violate with impunity, particularly if the violence takes places in the racialized space of prostitution” (Razack 143). Canadian lands were taken through theft and the colonial violence against indigenous peoples. Now, as noted above, reserves are spatialized geographical divisions that can be seen as *containing* marginalized indigenous people. Indigenous women are portrayed as the *squaw* (immoral and dirty), and this (re)circulation of colonial logics frames indigenous women as inherently *violable* and confirms the entwining workings of patriarchal domination, white supremacy, and colonial geographies (Razack 127-128).

Sharon’s narrative regarding Beatrice’s life demonstrates the paradoxes of colonial geographies. Sharon’s account illuminates how both of their experiences, as indigenous women, are marked by colonialism. This story explains how the space of the reserve is a space of indigeneity and indigenous modes of being, and also a space haunted by the legacies of the residential school system and ongoing colonial violences. Sharon recalls that her grandmother’s home was a happy place and she recounts fond memories of her grandmother passing down Cree traditions. A geographical analysis of Beatrice’s story shows how colonial logics as well as colonial spaces marked her as precarious. Her murder happened in a space removed from public purview (under a bridge) and her status as an indigenous woman denies her protection: it took a minimum of one week for her to be considered a missing person. Her unresolved case and the details of her murder document her as “disposable” and “invisible.” Pamela George and Beatrice

Sinclair's cases, as well as those of many other indigenous women, showcase how racialized hierarchies of humanness are understood in relation to racialized space, and thus informs who is entitled to justice. Racialized spaces are marked by the race of the inhabitants and also intimately connected to the "economic and social condition of political space" (Ford 93). This is to say, that the space where the violence occurred marks carceral practices that inform how the law/legal proceeding interpellate the violence.

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, although racialized spaces are underwritten by colonial violence there are also decolonial narratives within these spaces: Sharon Bruyere's account of Beatrice Sinclair's life articulates a "better story" that honours her legacy (Georgis 10). Therefore, it is very important to consider the paradoxes of colonial geographies in order to consider how colonial practices of indigenous invisibilization are always accompanied by narratives of resistance that challenge dehumanizing logics and violences. In my conclusion, I explore how storytelling and practices of human relationality subvert colonial scripts, and offer the space to narrate articulations for a better future.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Storytelling: A Radical Framework for Decolonization

Sharing stories is deeply rooted in indigenous culture. Patricia Monture-Angus writes, “[o]ur stories tell our family, national, and tribal histories” (122). The stories outlined in the “Voices of our Sisters in Spirit” report are powerful humanizing narratives that challenge violent colonial scripts that situate indigenous people as less than human. Following the work of critical race scholars, (Monture-Angus 2009; McKittrick 2006; Georgis 2013; King 2013) I have come to understand the necessity of employing “unorthodox” epistemological frameworks as a way to imagine and write about decolonial practices. I am particularly interested in how storytelling can create a space to engage with the embodied experiences of pain and joy. Dina Georgis’ scholarship, *The Better Story: Queer Affects from the Middle East* (2013), considers how practices of recounting a story can create the space to survive difficult experiences. Georgis writes that storytelling illuminates “the principle of how people collectively share a story to survive better” (13). Georgis argues that the practice of storytelling clarifies narratives of survival, experiential knowledges, which are haunted by silences and affective feelings that are yet to be narrativized (Georgis 11). Georgis argues that,

In story, we enter the space of the other’s wounds and become ethically implicated in an encounter with suffering. What we make of this encounter is associated with how well we are able to think about collective histories (and the implicated communities) in relation to their queer affect, which is the work of interpretation. (12).

This framework honours the intimate nature of storytelling; in sharing stories, we become connected to each other’s experiences of pain and survival. This framework situates storytelling as a practice of human relationality wherein we must consider what is *not* being said in order to

bring forth a space to narrate a better and more ethical story.

Tiffany King's PhD dissertation, "In the Clearing: Black Female Bodies, Space and Settler Colonial Landscapes" (2013), discusses her involvement with the critical resistance activist group, INCITE in Toronto. King's research involves remembrance, specifically recalling her work with INCITE. In the dissertation she re-inhabits and remembers personal experiences; she then writes out these memories as theory within her scholarship (King, "In the Clearing" 179). King writes, "As I revisit this work, I pay attention to the ways that Black women's bodies, my own included, claim a space of flux, refusal and un-belonging in order to re-imagine their relationship to one another, the land, settler colonial nation-states and decolonial politics" ("In the Clearing" 179-180). Her framework of remembering and re-living her experiences opens up the space to think about how a "better story" can be articulated through the re-examination of her own experiences. King's dissertation is particularly important to my own research because she considers the connections between practices of survival and decolonization for black women and indigenous women as inseparable from each other ("In the Clearing" 178). Her fifth chapter is titled, "In Order to Free the Land, You Must Abolish the Prison." In this portion of her research she illustrates how black and indigenous women have been (and continue to be) positioned as in "flux" because of violent histories that remove their citizenship and safety (King, "In the Clearing" 191). King asserts that an abolitionist framework must recognize that indigenous genocide and black social death are intimately connected ("In the Clearing" 178). Therefore, her framework uses storytelling as a way to articulate decolonial longings, "[t]hese stories are ones of desire and hopefulness that co-exist alongside a necessary politics of refusal" (King, "In the Clearing" 191). Similar to Georgis' "better story" King's work highlights how the practice of storytelling can be understood as a radical decolonial project—particularly because this

framework does not centralize experiences of pain, but rather, underscores how personal narratives can be situated as a theoretical framework to critique broader systems of colonial violence.

As discussed throughout this thesis, Gilmore's *Golden Gulag* (2007) scholarship has been particularly helpful in guiding my examination of the PIC and abolitionist frameworks. Gilmore's scholarship showcases how anti-racist/anti-prison activism invested in human relationality offers the space to subvert colonial scripts that situate violence/death/sequestering/management as a *commonsense* and normalized trajectory for black and indigenous peoples. Gilmore's scholarship examines the activism of Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (Mothers ROC), in which she discusses the various difficulties surrounding community activism (across gender, race, and class) focused on the shared goal of reclaiming children lost to mass incarceration. Mothers ROC showcases that practices of human relationality subvert colonial scripts of racialized death, while actively acknowledging that these women's experiences are marked by pain and a crisis of normalized racial mortality. Mothers ROC, "Not a service organization, the group helped mothers learn how each part of the [carceral] system works, and, as we shall see, to grasp the way in which crisis can be viewed as an opportunity rather than a constraint" (Gilmore 183). The experiences of Mothers ROC demonstrate how the simple act of talking/storytelling and collective mothering, fostered a space for interracial political alliances, and decolonial activism. The activism of Mothers ROC focused on spreading awareness about increasing prison expansion and the "Three Strikes" policy in the California context. Gilmore's discussion of Mothers ROCs activism illuminates the ways that working through experiences of crisis, violence, and pain, when understood alongside practices of human relationality, offers a new and radical analytical framework that does not reinscribe

exclusionary practices in an effort to claim “emancipation” (McKittrick 959). This is to say, that Mothers ROCs framework begins with dismantling the various colonial and carceral mechanisms that underwrite the prison. Mothers ROCs activism takes place in their communities, which are racialized spaces characterized by policing and *naturalized* experiences of violence (such as high-rates of racialized youth being incarcerated). Through activism and spreading awareness with their local communities the members of Mothers ROC created abolition geographies—the women refused to allow the normalized mechanisms of incarceration go uninterrupted. Storytelling is a radical decolonial framework because it is not a top-down model of reform. This is to say, that storytelling and practices of human relationality push up against reform models of structural change by investing in practical activities that insist on a model of sharing.

Theorizing Love

War Party
Lyrics: “Feelin’ Reserved”
[Verse 4: Cynthia Smallboy]

Sweet grace how music lets my mind take flight
Rez life, my life
Living a wake sleepless nights
Be my eyes: colour blind
Catch a glimpse of Baby's sight
Realize there's more to see than all this rock around me
Grant this girl a beat and let my soul run free
Admist the plague of war, there ain't no other way I rather be
One love for my people U.N.I.T.E
Instead of feelin' reserved, my reserve feel me

War Party’s lyrics underscore the importance of situating the reserve as a colonial geography that holds in it spaces of indigenous life. This “interplay” between the reserve and experiential knowledge (“Rez life,” “the reserve feel me,” and so on), disrupts narratives that

situate racialized cartographies as spaces of absolute otherness. What emerges are subversive narratives and articulations for a decolonial future within colonized spaces. Throughout this thesis, I have discussed the limitations of seeking reform from state institutions I have specifically argued prison reforms will never be able to rectify the over-representation of racialized communities, because the prison is a site of modernity that, in fact, is invested in replicating a colonial system. This system requires the ongoing sequestering and management of black and indigenous communities. I have also highlighted the need for transparency from the Canadian government regarding the political and financial commitments to continued prison expansion projects—which directs public resources away from productive public spending. My thesis has also examined how colonial carceral logics operate in relation to the prison and beyond the space of the prison. The high numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women not only represents ongoing horrific colonial violences, these disappearances and deaths are indicative of the ways in which policing reifies reserve, plantation, and prison geographies (even when these sites are not explicitly invoked). The work of McKittrick (2011), Gilmore (2007), King (2013), and Georgis (2013), noted above, has helped me think about how co-operative efforts of human relationality, storytelling and story sharing, are vital for collective transformation. I couple this politics of storytelling with bell hooks scholarship to consider how the political act of loving is also a key component in practices of human relationality.

Bell hooks theorizes love as a location of transformational change. Her analysis clarifies the need to challenge practices invested in individualization and asks that we reimagine conceptions of community. She clarifies that love is an intention and an act (*All About Love* 5). She argues that love is powerful and transformative, and that a love ethic provides a lens to critique ongoing processes of inequality, including racial capitalism, and environmental

degradation (*All About Love* 75). Her theoretical framework points to the ways in which ongoing colonial struggles are connected, and how we must honour practices of communalism. Hooks writes that a “love ethic presupposes that everyone has the right to be free, to live fully and well. To bring a love ethic to every dimension of our lives, our society would need to embrace change” (*All About Love* 87). Hooks writes, a love ethic “shows a gratitude for life” and she ties this to honouring our environment, and “affirming our connection to the world community” (*All About Love* 125).

The stories mentioned above (Sharon’s narrative of Beatrice, the Mothers ROC activism) can be understood as examples of hooks’ love ethic, because these narratives highlight community activism that is invested in transformational change. Hooks’ framework can be considered alongside Andrea Smith’s (2010) discussion surrounding the need to mobilize around the logics of white supremacy. The scholars (Gilmore 2007; King 2013; McKittrick 2006) referenced in this project, as well as my own reading of Beatrice’s story and War Party, have shown that decolonial narratives and activism are continually present within colonized spaces. The song lyrics for “Feelin’ Reserved” clearly demonstrate how indigenous experiences are enmeshed in colonialism, but also how the reserve offers the space to articulate indigenous love and honour indigenous life. Similarly, Leanne Simpson’s (2015) scholarship clarifies how decolonial practices of love are intimately connected to our environment and our communities. This is to say, that, decolonization is an all encompassing project wherein the logics of white supremacy need to be dismantled and we see these practices happening through practices of human relationality, community activism, a love ethic, and honouring our environment.

Idle No More and a Call for Wide Ranging Abolition Practices

My final thoughts return to Tiffany King’s assertion that “in order to free the land, you must abolish the prison” as this framework emphasizes how decolonization projects need to address the complicated tenets and practices of modernity (“In the Clearing” 176). The logics of white supremacy—practices of racial subjugation, dispossession, racial capitalism, and land exploitation—need to be dismantled and this is central to the project of decolonization and prison abolition. Current forms of sovereignty that are invested in the project of nationhood are insufficient in being able to address the grievances of indigenous communities—many struggles for liberation will not end the recirculation of colonial racial scripts and violences. I thus turn to Patricia Monture-Angus’ conceptualization of sovereignty, “[i]n Indigenous epistemologies, sovereignty means access to well-being for all our citizens. It means being assured of safety (and we cannot ever be sure we are safe)” (“Women’s Words” 122). Colonial carceral logics operate both inside and outside of the prison to render indigenous communities, especially women, vulnerable to experiences of violence. We see this, most blatantly, through the horrific numbers of murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada. A tension I have considered throughout this thesis is recognizing the limitations of state mechanisms in addressing the ongoing sequestering and management of racialized peoples. I argue that prison reforms cannot rectify the over-representation of racialized incarcerated peoples, because the prison is a site of modernity—underwritten by transatlantic slavery, indentured labour, and indigenous genocide—that requires the containment of black and indigenous communities in different ways. This framework, then, emphasizes the need for abolition narratives—including storytelling and story sharing—that seek to dismantle the logics of white supremacy. I briefly conclude by discussing Idle No More as an exemplary model that is not explicitly tied to the prison, yet at the same time, is an all-encompassing movement toward prison abolition in the Canadian context.

Idle No More is a multifaceted movement that centres on reclaiming indigenous sovereignty through mobilizing against ongoing colonial violences; it is part of a long history of indigenous public acts of resistance. Idle No More was sparked in November of 2012 after the introduction of omnibus bill C-45. Bill C-45 legislation introduced extensive changes to the “Indian Act, the *Fisheries Act*, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, and the *Navigable Water Act* (amongst many others)” (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 21). Indigenous communities were not consulted about Bill C-45; the legislation removed specific protections for the environment, and proposed improper the “leasing” of Aboriginal territories (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 21). “Teach-ins” were organized by Sylvia McAdams, Jess Gordon, Nina Wilson and Sheelah Mclean after the legislation was introduced (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 21). Through employing social media, and with the help of grassroots indigenous activists, a continent-wide movement was sparked. Public displays of resistance included the use of road and rail blockages, round dances in public spaces and on the land, sharing sessions, as well as other modes of resistance (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 22).

The unique characteristics of Idle No More were the extensive scope and the decentralized nature of the movement—all of which were maintained as it grew. Part of its many focuses included lobbying for a national inquiry regarding murdered and missing indigenous women, as well as urging the Canadian government to honour land and resource treaties (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 23). The activism of “Idle No More” coincides with challenging the over-representation of indigenous women in prison through recognizing the needs of indigenous communities that impact their interactions with the law, which include “lack of resources and unequal funding for services such as education and housing” (“Idle No More” The Manifesto). As discussed throughout this thesis, “unorthodox” frameworks of decolonization have been very

helpful to my project, because they unsettle narratives of justice that are complacent in the logics of white supremacy. Therefore, the Idle No More movement can be conceptualized as a narration of prison abolition, because the movement is invested in indigenous sovereignty that seeks to engender the safety and well-being of communities. “Idle No More is, in the most rudimentary terms, a culmination of the historical and contemporary legacies emerging from colonization and violence throughout North America and the world” (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 22). Prison abolition, therefore, also needs to be conceptualized as an all-encompassing movement, in order for it to coincide with projects that seek to dismantle colonial carceral logics and white supremacy.

This thesis has examined how the over-representation of racialized incarcerated communities, particularly indigenous women, is underpinned by modernity. I have clarified how the Correctional Investigator’s reportage narratives of prison reform are unable to address the over-representation of indigenous women because these reports do not disrupt colonial scripts from the outset. This project has drawn connections between the PIC in the U.S. and carceral practices in Canada, to consider how the prison has been and continues to be postulated as a necessity in managing problematic, racialized and marginalized peoples. In times of economic downturn, the prison has been positioned as a site that can stimulating economic growth—and yet, the cost of building and maintaining prisons incurs public debt and directs resources away from productive public spending. A critical analysis of maps and newer prison infrastructure developments (super-jails) clarifies how the prison is a site of management that “warehouses” prisoners and, at the same time, ruralizes and ostensibly hides, racial violence.

The most important part of this research project, draws from critical race scholars (McKittrick 2011; Gilmore 2007; King 2013; Georgis 2013) to consider how there are always

narratives of a better future, decolonial longings that emerge from colonized spaces. The scholars mentioned above, outline how practices of co-operative human relationality subvert *naturalized* scripts of racialized death, sequestering and management. Communal practices of human relationality create the space to share stories—experiential narratives, sadness, joy—and through narration we become implicated in each other’s experiences (Georgis 12). A “better story”, then, is a narrative yet to be told (Georgis 11). It is within these spaces that radical decolonial practices emerge.

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