Introduction

This chapter argues for increased and sustained analysis and action within anarchist movements of resistance with regard to decolonization and Indigenous struggles against colonization. As individuals and groups committed to anti-oppressive, anti-state and all around lib-

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1 Adam's talk was delivered at NAASN5 via a video net link-up, but the room wasn't mic'd back to him, which presented many communication difficulties in the follow-up question and answer/discussion period (our apologies.)
atory aims, anarchists necessarily must consider the de-colonizing and anti-racist dimensions of resistance. This is especially the case for anarchist movements within settler colonial “North America,” an entire continent founded on the displacement, dispossession and genocide of Indigenous peoples and one where anarchist movements are most often white settler dominated. As such, we must reconfigure our practice and theory to account for, and actively resist, colonialism, and the ways that it is linked with white supremacy to compound domination and oppression in societies that continue to be premised on the continuation of white-privileged settlers.

Contemporary anarchism, in the settler colonial North American states of Canada and the US, has long had a deep commitment to resist the state, capitalism, and more generally, all forms of oppression and domination, and is placed within the larger scope of Western dominated anarchism (Gordon 2008). The desire to resist all forms of oppression and domination is perhaps one of the hallmarks of anarchism. This often distinguishes anarchism from other radical political projects or political ideologies when coupled with a specific critique and rejection of the state, and allows for an anarchist critique of all aspects of society.

The commitment to a critique of all forms of oppression and domination, therefore, carries with it an enormous responsibility and level of commitment for anarchists. Fighting the state and capitalism is not enough. Anarchism must be against all forms of oppression and domina-
tion, and while anarchism generally rejects the view that there is some singular issue or oppression that must be focused on or which is primary (Milstein 2010, 39), it seems imperative to recognize that some forms may come to the fore at specific times and in specific contexts. This chapter argues, first and foremost, for increased recognition of the white supremacist and settler colonial context in which North American anarchism finds itself.

Despite the importance and need for the continued intersectionality of oppression within anarchism indicated above, there are some possible problems or drawbacks to the endless stating of being opposed to all forms of oppression and domination without more concerted action or analysis. One could think here of the anarchist failings in terms of taking on issues of race, racism, white supremacy (as noted by the late Joel Olson, 2009; Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin, 1994 and more recently by Chris Crass, 2013) and issues of colonization, colonial privilege and decolonization (as noted generally by Simpson, 2011; Lawrence and Dua 2005; and Smith 2005). As Richard Day (2005, 197-202) points out, there is a dangerous tendency within those white anarchists or other radicals on the left to think that, because of their politics, that they are somehow free of oppressive dynamics, while they in

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2 This perspective has come to the fore in more recent years, and has challenged historic class-centric forms of anarchism that continue to find traction in sectors of the anarchist movement (see in particular Schmidt and Van Der Walt, 2009 for a current representation of this perspective).
fact are intimately involved in maintaining such dynamics. Just because we are anarchists doesn’t mean that our politics are actually any more intersectional when it comes to practice. This point is underscored by more general failures and dynamics of white dominance in Left social movement organizing.

In the era after the “Battle of Seattle” in 1999, this critique came to the fore in an article entitled “Where Was the Color in Seattle? Looking for Reasons Why the Great Battle Was So White” by Elizabeth Betita Martinez (2000). Martinez discusses and probes why people of colour were largely unrepresented at the major protests in Seattle, in particular in reference to their voices being at the forefront or core of the movement. This is an especially salient point given that people of colour throughout the world are often both the hardest hit by global economic systems, but also are at the forefront of resistance and organizing. The exclusion of people of colour, and a host of limiting factors that disproportionately affect people of colour (difficulty finding childcare, inability to take off a week from work, financial limitations etc.), meant that resistance in this moment, and in movement-related spaces, was overwhelmingly white dominated. Anarchism, in recent forms, and those who define explicitly as anarchists, or write about anarchism, are still predominantly white in the context of Canada and the US. Anarchism continues to harbor a white-dominated culture, which no doubt continues to suffer from some of the processes and factors of exclusion that Martinez notes more gener-
ally, and needs to take the challenges of anti-racism and decolonization more seriously. Perhaps, in part, this is a reflection of the dangerous flattening of social conditions that a theoretical opposition to all forms of oppression and domination might have, where anarchists (among others) can easily oppose “everything” from afar, but fail to grasp the nuances, complexities and particularities of their sites of struggle. Perhaps it is just that anarchists, in this case especially white anarchists, fail to see these important contextual factors because they don’t have to engage them given their location as privileged subjects, and thus can choose to overlook them when they are not part of their daily lives and experiences.³

I begin by examining some of the anarchist failings in terms of looking at racism, white supremacy and colonization. I chart some of the gaps within anarchism that exists within the context of settler-colonial North America. Next, I problematize the critique of “all forms of oppression and domination” further with a view to taking stock of the settler colonial and white supremacist context that we find ourselves in in North America. This means specifying anarchist theory and practice within the particularities of our context. Finally, I make some initial comments about possible ways of moving forward towards an anti-racist and decolonizing anarchism via anarcha-Indigenism, with particular reference to relationships to land.

³ I wish to acknowledge some of the helpful comments from JJ McMurtry that brought this point to my attention.
Anarchism, “Strategic Centrality” and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy

Joel Olson (2009, 35), in his significant article “The Problem With Infoshops and Insurrection: US Anarchism, Movement Building and the Racial Order” states rather bluntly that “Anarchism has always had a hard time dealing with race,” echoing challenges to anarchism by people of colour like Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin (1994) or Ajamu Nangwaya (2011). Racism has often been construed as either something to be dealt with after ‘the’ revolution or something that is understood to be a byproduct of capitalism, and thus reducible to class. Both perspectives lead to the view that once capitalism is defeated racism will quietly die as well. Olson argues, however, that racism, as a key aspect of the operation of white supremacy, is one of the core logics that structures capitalism and class consciousness with the US. White supremacy is the “central means of maintaining capitalist hegemony” (Olson 2009, 36) and organizes other forms of oppression in the US context (39). White supremacy has a “strategic centrality” to the US context that other forms of oppression do not. In this sense, he argues, that anarchist critiques of hierarchy are unable to recognize that “various forms of hierarchy are themselves hierarchically organized” while substituting a “moral condemnation of all forms of oppression” for a “political and strategic analysis of how power functions in the US” (37). Olson’s argument here is not meant to be interpreted as suggesting that some forms of oppression are in fact more
of less oppressive than others. His suggestion flows from a place of being cognizant of the particularities of the context of resistance. In certain contexts, and with certain bodies, different forms of oppression may come to the fore and thus need to be more contextually considered.

Extending Olson’s critique further, we might understand both Canada and the US to exist within a strategically central context of white supremacy. Maia Ramnath (2011, 30), focusing on decolonization and anarchism with the Indian/South Asian context makes the argument that I think too applies to the context of settler colonial North America. She argues that racism has been intimately tied to processes of colonization and therefore that the “key to manifesting an anarchist anticolonialism … lies in the intersectionality of those dimensions.” A key connection must be made between anti-colonialism and anti-racism (256). Colonialism, connected to white supremacy as a particular pillar among others, again, is “strategically central” for this particular context. Following Andrea Smith (2007), white supremacy can be understood as being bolstered by three pillars of slavery/capitalism, creating racialized hierarchies; genocide/colonialism, rationalizing Indigenous dispossession and destruction; and Orientalism/war, for the purposes of spreading empire abroad. Each pillar, while somewhat unique is also intimately linked to the others, to the point that many are invited to gain privilege in one, while assisting in the oppression of others in another. While Smith’s argument is specifically directed to women of colour, to cultivate
solidarities across the divisions promoted by the pillars, I think her understanding of the three pillars needs to be extended, to the sorts of privileged, white anarchist subjects that I am primarily focused on in this chapter, in order to further contextualize the terrain of struggle that we find ourselves in.

While there are certainly contextual differences between the settler colonial states of Canada and the US, such as the extent to which slavery and racial hierarchies were constructed, the ways genocide was carried out or the way war is waged and on what scale, the categorical similarities are apparent for the purposes of my analysis here. Whether Canada mediates the continuation of racism and white hegemony through discourses of multiculturalism vs. a US legalist devaluation of black labour, doesn’t negate the fact that white supremacy is still the overwhelming framework that structures the context of the settler colonial states of North America (on Canadian colonialism see for ex. Barker, 2009).

Despite the various links between white supremacy and capitalism anarchists are quick to look at classical anarchist theory as a basis for their politics but also for examples of resistance. Olson (2009) suggests that anarchists have had little engagement with the abolitionist, civil rights and Black power movements within the U.S. and continue to repeat anarchist strategies of “infoshops and insurrection” while showing little interest in anti-racist community organizing. These strategies exist primarily outside the context of building mass movements of
people that would challenge capitalism and the state and bring forth a new society. They in fact, according to Olson (2009), turn away from movement building with the belief that spaces of autonomy or revolt will be created as examples that will spread spontaneously until a critical mass of such projects eclipse the power of the state. This occurs at the expense of movement building and taking stock of the realities of racism and white supremacy in these particular contexts. Ajamu Nangwaya (2011, 203), writing from the Canadian context, argues further suggesting that if “anarchism is going to make rapid progress in winning over increasing numbers of racialized people under its banner of emancipation it will have to prioritize movement-building and work shoulder-to-shoulder with the racialized oppressed.” This includes, in particular, the theoretical deference that anarchism has had to Indigenous struggles and the potentials to learn from historic and ongoing Indigenous movements for resistance.

Chris Crass (2013, 17) makes a similar argument. He argues that movements for “collective liberation” (drawing from bell hooks) need to recognize the need for intersectionality otherwise the work that they take up will continue to be plagued with all forms of oppression and domination. Crass (2013, 18) argues that “If systems of domination are interconnected, then systems of liberation are also interconnected.” This means, he argues, that there needs to be particular attention given to anti-racist and
feminist work within all movements, but also within anarchism in particular. This is especially the case when looking at the politics of privilege within a mostly white dominated anarchist movement. A turn to anti-racism need to be a conscious effort on the part of anarchists and anarchism (Crass 2013, 55), especially given that white supremacy does not always operate as a conscious set of acts or intentions but rather as a “framework of thought” (134) that “directs the flow of our thoughts” and doesn’t require overt forms of racism but only that “we go with the flow of dominant ideology” (131). Or as Ajamu Nangwaya (2011, 202) argues, this “default to whiteness is the hardwired option in the minds of many Whites in North America” and continues to limit the potentials for solidarity and movement-building with people of colour.

Crass (2013) too highlights the need for specific commitments to broad-based social movement organizing that takes seriously the leadership and experiences of people of colour. This movement cannot be afraid to build the capacity for leadership within the movement as well, something that anarchists are often hesitant to take up, on account of seeking to avoid the creation of any and all forms of hierarchy. He argues that for anti-racist and feminist movements to work for collective liberation there

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4 The feminist implications are obviously important. Anarchism has at times been little better than other movements at dealing with sexism, homophobia or trans*phobia. This needs to be part of an intersectional anarchism, however, discussing the particularities of such a need is beyond the scope of this chapter. I have explored some of the decolonizing implications related to anarcha-feminist and Indigenous feminist perspectives elsewhere, see Lewis (2012a).
needs to be mentors and those ready to engage with others on the complexities of histories of domination and contemporary realities of privilege. The lesson here is that anarchist movements that are interested in living up to their intersectional commitments need to look to Indigenous, anti-racist and people of colour struggles for leadership and be willing to engage with such movements and learn from them, rather than assuming to have the correct answers or ways of pushing resistance forward. This, I think requires that anarchism, at times, step back, and learn from such movements.

Although Olson and Crass, amongst others, both identify the need for anarchists to look to Black freedom struggles in the context of building movements against racism and white supremacy their work doesn’t go far enough. Anarchists must also turn to histories and contemporary examples of Indigenous resistance and develop a specific analysis of colonization and a commitment to decolonization and solidarity with Indigenous struggles alongside and connected to struggles against racism and white supremacy. Anarchists must look at the particularities of the context of colonization (in Canada, for example, see Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Barker 2009). Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua have made this argument forcefully in their important work “Decolonizing Anti-racism” (2005). The context of settler colonial states in North America means that colonialism, as it is as a key pillar of white supremacy discussed above, needs to be “strategically central” (Olson 2009) given histories of dis-
possession and connection of colonialism to settlement and the rise of capitalism and the state.

**Recuperating the Settler-Indigenous Binary**

Part of the disruption of settler colonialism needs to be in the form of settler identity and its relationship and relevance to anarchist settlers. Lawrence and Dua (2005) in “Decolonizing Antiracism” argue for an anti-colonial orientation within anti-racist theory in order to recognize the complicity of settler populations, and to some degree anti-racism, in the continued colonization of Indigenous peoples. Most clearly they argue that all those who are not Indigenous peoples must be understood as settlers, although the power differentials between white people and people of colour are an important backdrop to the complexity of settler identity. They argue that those working within an anti-racist context on the lands of Indigenous peoples need to take up an anti-colonial and decolonizing analysis. They state

> If they are truly progressive, antiracist theorists must begin to think about their personal stake in this struggle [against colonization by Indigenous peoples], and about where they are going to situate themselves (Lawrence and Dua 2005, 126).

They argue that anti-racist scholars, and all those committed to an anti-racist politics, which should include anar-

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5 This phrasing comes, in part, from the title of Wolfe’s (2013) article—“Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction.”
chists, have failed to take up an understanding of land as a contested space as result of colonization and being bound up with settler identity. They argue that to “acknowledge that we all share the same land base and yet to question the differential terms on which it is occupied is to become aware of the colonial project that is taking place around us” (Lawrence and Dua 2005, 126). Their call is ultimately one for non-Indigenous peoples to recognize their settler histories and the ways that settlers continue to be complicit in colonial processes. This challenge is one that must be taken up specifically within anarchism.

In terms of defining settlers in a more complex way, beyond just being non-Indigenous, Mar and Edmonds argue that:

In simplest terms, settler colonists went, and go, to new lands to appropriate them and to establish new and improved replicas of the societies they left. As a result Indigenous peoples have found an ever-decreasing space for themselves in settler colonies as changing demographics enabled ever more extensive dispossession. Settlers, in the end, tended not to assimilate into Indigenous societies, but rather emigrated to replace them (2010, 2).

This process continues in settler colonies with increased forms of migration and the theft of Indigenous lands for development and resource extraction projects. As Lawrence and Amadahy (2009) point out, there are certainly histories of slavery, forced migration, oppression
and domination that add a large degree of complexity to the definition of settler, most obviously with African-descended populations, but that even with such histories there has been an invitation to participate in the project and processes of colonization of Indigenous peoples, cultures and lands. As Smith argues, the pillar of genocide under white supremacy is what allows non-Indigenous peoples to get away with the assertion, however implicit, of a rightful claim to Indigenous lands, because Indigenous peoples are seen to have disappeared. This allows non-Indigenous inclusion in some of the privileges of colonization, at the expense of Indigenous peoples and their lands (Smith 2007, 68).

Some anarchists may argue that taking up the term settler adds another dimension of specified identity politics to anarchism, which is often interested in breaking down divisions based on identity seeking more general forms of collectivity. This is perhaps fair, to at least some degree, as anarchists are often against the divisions created by other sorts of constructed identity categories such as those based on citizenship. There may also be an argument, voiced by some anarchists, that reverting to a settler-Indigenous binary would only seek to overshadow the class hierarchies that more fundamentally organize hierarchy in a capitalist society. The problem with rejecting the term settler, in this case where we are situated in settler colonial societies, is in part a refusal to engage directly with such realities. It refuses, as Patrick Wolfe (2013, 263) argues, to acknowledge that the relationship between
settlers and Indigenous peoples

is a structural relationship rather than an effect of the
will’ that precedes those settlers who occupy Indigene-
ous lands now. As he argues further, although
wrapped up in their own dynamics of oppression and
domination that must be considered, those immigrants
who now live on Indigenous lands who ‘immigrated
against their will…does not alter the structural fact
that their presence…was part of the process of Native
dispossession (Wolfe 2013, 263).

There is, therefore, a danger that lies in using suggestions
of settler dynamics occurring in the past, or no longer ap-
plying, or only applying to some non-Indigenous peoples,
that can continue processes of colonization, while ignor-
ing that settler colonization is not just an event that has
occurred previously, but a structure that continues to exist
and narrate relationships and the possibilities of resistance
in settler colonial contexts.⁶

Naming something, then, in this case the oppressive
reality of settler colonization and the privileges that set-
tlers continue to accrue by holding up such a system or
even passively buying into it (which would be part of the
complexity of the differences of settler realities with re-
gard to citizenship), performs its own sense of disruption
of the colonial norm and multicultural discourse that con-
tinues to cast all peoples as equal participants in the state.

⁶ On the topic of settler colonialism as a structure and not an event
see for example Wolfe (2013; 2006).
Much like denying the existence of white privilege and the importance of recognizing that those who are defined or seen as white receive such privileges and must therefore be accountable for them, and denying such privileges would be explicitly counter to the development of an anti-racist politics, so too should recognizing the reality of settler identity as linked to settler-colonial privilege be necessary for the development of a decolonizing politics. As Alfred and Corntassel (2005, 601) argue, settler colonialism is a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome or perspective on that power.

Naming settler colonialism, as connected to white supremacy, and the settler identities that grant us privilege, is one step forward to acknowledging that such privilege exists and then actually beginning to do the necessary work of imagining decolonization or “unsettling” in practice. It also serves as an acknowledgement of the Indigenous challenges, from those like Lawrence and Dua (2005) for example, to take the term settler seriously, as something that those with privilege need to, and must, engage with.

**Engaging Indigenous Theory and Practice**

Further, beyond just examining settler identity, the need for anarchist, and broader left social movement attention
to Indigenous struggle is apparent. Indigenous feminist Andrea Smith observes that, in terms of “left” social movements generally, there is a dismissal of Indigenous theory and politics due to a perception that it is endlessly caught up in identity politics or cultural considerations. She argues that Native women’s organizing, in particular, has been ignored on account of the perception that Indigenous peoples, and especially Indigenous women, “have nothing to contribute to social justice activism or theory in general…our struggles have no relationship to political economy” (Smith, 2008, xi). This has led, she concludes, to a general under-theorizing of Indigenous activism and resistance and little discussion of its possible contributions to social movement theory and practice more broadly.

Leanne Simpson (2011) argues similarly, suggesting that even if Western theory has been able to consider the particularities of colonialism and how it might operate, such work has been wholly inadequate in finding resonance with Indigenous peoples. She argues that

western-based social movement theory has failed to recognize the broader contextualizations of resistance within Indigenous thought, while also ignoring the contestation of colonialism as a starting point (Simpson, 2011, 31).

The recognition of colonialism as a starting point for oppression and domination in settler colonial contexts is a key point of analysis that has existed on the periphery of
anarchism. A reorientation needs to move towards detailing the complexities of colonialism, the specific efforts of Indigenous peoples to resist its contemporary manifestations and the possible forms that settler decolonization may begin to take. Colonialism, it must be noted, is the historical and ongoing process that structures relationships, power dynamics and social stratification in settler societies like “Canada” and the “US.” Colonialism is what, at the most basic level, defines the contexts in which we operate, based upon dispossession and violence for the benefit of settlers. As I have argued above, colonialism is therefore a core logic that underwrites all of the political work, the theory and practice, that we, as anarchists, might seek to implement towards creating cultures of resistance. Therefore, one step forward is for social movement theory as a whole, and anarchist theory in particular, to take Indigenous theory and practice seriously, while paying attention to its own location as a Western-dominated theoretical paradigm.

Andrea Smith (2008, xv), however, argues not for a simple inclusion of Indigenous theoretical perspectives into other disciplines, but rather for a recentring of Indigenous perspectives within other disciplines. This, she argues, requires identifying Indigenous theory and practice as examples that might benefit many others and their work. This is perhaps one step that anarchists might take by reading Indigenous theorists and considering the decolonizing potentials that might be taken up within anarchism. Indigenous theory and practice can disrupt the the-
oretical and practical assumptions or stalemates within anarchism, as well as shed light on the colonial elephant in the room that has been relatively neglected within anarchist contexts. It also challenges the complacent Eurocentrism that often pervades much anarchist thought and can prompt a reframing and analysis of the complexities of issues of nation, nationalism, self-determination, autonomy and spirituality that are often characterized by anarchists in relatively narrow terms.

Part of this work that Smith suggests might include for anarchists, first of all, actually recognizing Indigenous theory as existing, coming from specific communities, contexts and lands, and itself informing the context of struggle that anarchism finds itself within. Indigenous discussions of the importance of place and land (to which I turn to briefly below); links between capitalism, the state and colonization; between heteropatriarchy, the state and colonization; promotion of traditional governance structures and community relations that exist outside capitalist and statist relations; and a sustained history of militant resistance are but a few points of contact that anarchists would do well to examine. Part of this work within anarchism needs to be to affirm the importance of Indigenous theory itself, as a key contributor to intersectional movements and analysis and to engage with Indigenous theory on its own terms, rather than seeking, for example, to subsume it within anarchism itself, refusing the creeping tendency of appropriation of the wide spectrum of anti-state or “outside-the-state” politics under an anarchist
label (although as I discuss below anarcha-Indigenism does provide some possibilities for exchanges and points of connection). This work of engaging Indigenous theory and its theoretical contributions and disruptions has the potential to break open, in part, the boundaries of anarchism, to make its biases and failures of analysis plain and to disrupt the (re)framing of the anarchist canon along rigid class-centric lines (as has been done in the book *Black Flame*, 2009).

Before I move forward it is perhaps important to make a few further comments about the anarchist focus on resisting all forms of oppression and domination and the implications of this sort of politics. There is a very real danger of stating opposition to all forms of oppression being an easy way to put a radical politics forward that may or may not have much substance behind it. It is one thing to add colonialism to the ever-growing list of things anarchists oppose, but it is quite another to actually begin to enact an anti-colonial or decolonizing politics. George Ciccariello-Maher (2011, 21) argues that the “harder work –that of grasping how the capitalist system operates and how it can be brought down through strategic action –remains, despite our declarations of opposition.” This point can be extended to the settler colonial system, which is intimately tied to the continuance of both capit-

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7 I have attempted a process such as this with regard to thinking about bringing forth an anti-colonial and decolonizing research orientation within anarchist and broader social movement research. See Lewis (2012b).
alism and the state, and to the discussion of settler identity above. It is one thing to acknowledge privilege, but another to begin to act. It is one thing, he argues, to commit to anarchist principles in a theoretical way, but quite another to actually figure out how to implement them in practice. Part of this difficulty is sometimes related to the lack of contextualization that anarchists glaze over or reduce to a much more general politics. Citing the work of Joel Olson (2009), discussed above, Ciccariello-Maher reiterates the need for anarchists to see the fundamental ways in which the particularities of context and its “strategically central” components fundamentally structure relations and engagements with capitalism and the state.

The point then, is not to reject a resistance to all forms of oppression but to contextualize theory, strategy, tactics and action, and add colonization and white supremacy to this challenge, as these processes continue to affect and structure relationships in both the settler colonial US and Canada, and that colonization, racism and white supremacy continue to permeate contemporary society and radical movements as well. In the case of settler-colonial North America white supremacy, and the three pillars that uphold it, need to be understood as the core aspects that underwrite all forms of domination on this land. Settler colonization, in particular, structures the relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples and the specific relationship one has to white supremacy and land.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) I return to the importance of land later in this chapter.
Anarchism, therefore, must be diverse in its focal points and be willing to expand its critique beyond simply capitalism and the state, but also begin to think carefully about how to attain the ultimate end of a free society without oppression and domination. Anarchism must also be diverse in terms of recognizing that different contexts might require different emphasis or focus and that there are important particular considerations to be made in each case, but should not be rigidly defined from one specific context. This means, very clearly, that anarchism needs to begin to unpack its Euro-centric baggage that dates from classical theorists but continues right into the contemporary. Some possible concepts might include anarchist rejections of “nation” (no borders, no nations), religion, spirituality (no gods, no masters) as being inherently tied to state and hierarchical processes of domination, but which are only understood in a Eurocentric context. Or anarchist forms of economic analysis that understand societal divisions from the stand point of hegemonic conceptions of “working class.” Euro-centrism is one of the key processes that set the stage and justification for colonization.

One step in this process, as I suggested above, is to look to Indigenous theory, practice and resistance as a way to disrupt the Euro-centricity and whiteness of anarchism. This would mean, I think, reading and responding to the sorts of Indigenous criticism that I detailed briefly above, as well as Anarchist People of Colour (APOC) perspectives, that contribute to anarchism by
“foregrounding colonialism as a primary category of analysis as well as a primary structure of oppression” (Ramnath, 2011, 256), which echoes the work of Olson discussed above. It means taking Indigenous voices seriously and centering them in our work and our movements. This is especially true within environmental movements that continue to expand against resource extraction and destruction. Anarchism can continue to attempt to expand its own forms of anti-colonial and decolonizing theory, but without reference to Indigenous theoretical and movement-based interventions happening now, anarchism will continue to reside at the level of theory, abstracted from this context.

**Relationships to Land**

I have emphasized here, following the likes of Olson, among others, that anarchist opposition to racism, white supremacy and colonization needs to be tied to a specific context in order to be enacted. One of the larger contexts that requires specific attention, especially by anarchists, is the colonial context that we continue to live in and the large amounts of land that have been stolen from Indigenous nations. In this sense, without recognizing and reorienting our relationship to land, anarchism carries the danger of seeking to create alternatives or prefigurative experiments that reinscribe colonial dynamics (on this point see also Barker and Pickerill, 2012). This issue has come up most recently within the broader “Occupy” movements that have been challenged to “de-occupy” and
decolonize their relationships to land and Indigenous communities. The same challenge needs to be directed at anarchism as well. As Day (2010, 268) argues, as soon as anarchists begin to purchase and accumulate land on which to set up our own autonomous alternatives outside the state, as soon as we begin to create physical infrastructures of resistance, we begin to repeat the logics of colonialism. He summarizes that “it would appear that the resurgence of settler autonomy, our escape from the tyrannies we have foisted on ourselves, once again can only come on the backs of Indigenous peoples.”

Relationships to land are connections that settlers have lost when they left lands they were originally “Indigenous” too and took part in the colonial project—connections that settlers have continued to lose as a result of colonial domination that they participate in, hold up and accrue privilege from (see Barker, 2010). Glen Coulthard, citing Vine Deloria Jr., argues that the fundamental difference between settlers and Indigenous peoples comes from the philosophical emphasis that Indigenous peoples place on land. “American Indians,” Deloria argues, “hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind” (1992, 62). Land, most basically understood, is the foundation of Indigenous worldviews, spiritualities and nations. It is also the point of connection that is most important to reassert for the purposes of resurgence and

9 See for example Barker 2012; Kilibarda, 2012
resistance to colonization by Indigenous communities (see for ex. Alfred, 2005; Simpson, 2011). From an anarcho-Indigenist perspective, the reconnection to land, as the basis for all other forms of relating and as that which sustains communities, is important to ground our struggles in the intimate contexts of where we are. This is a foundational part of taking up the push for recognizing that white supremacy and its three pillars are at the ‘strategically central’ part of the context of resistance.

Reconnecting to land also means a move away from the commodification of land and private property relationships predicated on the supremacy of hierarchical economic relationships mediated by the state. Reconnecting with place and landbases and renewing ethical obligations to living in relation to the land might form an initial step in the revitalization and resurgence of Indigenous communities, and as a further element of settler decolonization, as Coulthard (2010) notes. What this looks like in practice will be conditioned by the new forms of relations that settlers form with the landbases they are on and with the Indigenous communities who live there. “The true challenge for anarchists,” Barker and Pickerill (2012, 1719) argue, “is to find their own new way of looking at—and being in—place that compliments but does not replicate what Indigenous peoples are attempting to do. Replication of relations, as with appropriation of voice, is an unwelcome and unneeded imposition.” So settler anarchists need to consider their own relations to land, and what that might mean in their own particular context, while not
relying on Indigenous peoples to “fix” such lack of relations or disconnections for them. All of our relationships, and most especially those associated with land, need to be “unsettled” (Regan, 2010). As I have argued previously (Lewis, 2012b, 236) “[u]nderstanding our position as settlers requires us to take action and commit to a decolonizing and unsettling framework.” In short we need to consider, as (anarchist) settlers on stolen lands, how we might “[work] on all these levels in addition to (but not instead of) tackling capitalism and the state, without reducing the struggle to either the material or ideological/discursive plane” (Ramnath, 2011, 27). To fail to look directly at issues of land, as I have argued, does little more than revert to a continuation of processes of colonization.

This chapter has not had the space to detail some of the particular engagements and resonances between anarchist and Indigenous theory and practice, and this needs to be taken up in further work. I have aimed here to chart a course for the need to begin to examine anarchism’s decolonizing possibilities as connected to anti-racism. Anarchism needs to take seriously the challenges issued by Indigenous theorists and movements to move towards processes of decolonization, especially with regard to land and prefiguration of alternatives. It must be noted, however, that there is a particular need for openness to contributions and interventions from those who do not rigidly define as “anarchist.” While there are similarities between anarchism and Indigenous political theory and practice, as Alfred (2005, 45-46) notes, I have noticed an
appropriate wariness on the part of Indigenous peoples to just wholly adopt the anarchist label, or convert to reading and developing anarchist theory in particular, given that the foundation of Indigenous resistance and resurgence comes from within communities and traditions, and can’t be fashioned from a Western-dominated political theory. As Barker and Pickerill suggest,

anarchists must understand that to be truly decolonizing and effective allies to Indigenous peoples, they must step back from attempts to draw Indigenous peoples into movements or insert themselves into Indigenous struggles (1718).

While the potential for solidarities and affinities between anarchist and Indigenous movements might exist, there is a fundamental need for separation and autonomy.

As Ciccariello-Maher (2011, 39) argues, anarchists need to be aware of their own “anarchist imperialism” that privileges self-defined anarchist voices at the expense of all others. He discusses this concept in relation to anarchists from the global North seeking to stand in solidarity with anarchists in the global South rather uncritically. He suggests that there is a tendency for anarchists from the North to a priori look to other self-identified anarchists for their solidarity rather than taking stock of the local context and social movement dynamics. In the case of Venezuela, which Ciccariello-Maher focuses on, anarchists have latched onto a localized and typical anarchist critique of Hugo Chavez without attention to the import-
ance that the Bolivarian revolution has had on local peoples and movements. Rather they focus on anarchists for the reason that they are anarchists and fit their own political forms of definition, not because they perhaps actually have a good analysis of the particularities of struggle in that context. Anarchists, we might argue, have a tendency to “anarchize” those that they identify as having affinity with their projects. Maia Ramnath (2011, 6) notes a similar tendency within anarchism and suggests that

instead of always trying to construct a strongly an-archa-centric cosmology—conceptually appropriating movement and voices from elsewhere in the world as part of “our” tradition, and then measuring them against how much or little we think they resemble our notion of our own values—we could locate the Western anarchist tradition as one contextually specific manifestation a larger—indeed global—tradition.

Anarchists therefore need to engage with other movements on their own terms, but also not just uncritically seek out the most outwardly anarchist aspects to suit their own preferences for solidarity. When engaging with Indigenous theory and practice this would require that settler anarchists recognize that they will not and cannot develop an intimate understanding of Indigenous lifeways, knowledges and teachings. We are outsiders and are not embedded within these lived cultures that are tied closely to relations to land, place and living and non-living things. Everything that we read and engage will be filtered
through our own anarchist lens, which often has a Euro-centric glaze and at best we are likely to develop only a surface level understanding. This means, as well, that we need to be accountable to the ways that we centre and take leadership from Indigenous movements.

Another point that warrants brief mention is that while I am arguing here for renewed and specific anarchist attention to the strategic centrality of white supremacy and settler colonialism, the inverse cannot be argued for Indigenous theory and practice. What I mean to say, is that to really live up to its commitment to resist all forms of oppression and domination anarchism “needs” to pay attention to Indigenous and decolonizing theory, while to move towards decolonization and resurgence, Indigenous communities do not need anarchism. Settler interference within Indigenous communities, both historical and continued, is extensive and has done little more than re-inscribe dynamics of colonization. It seems foolhardy to suggest a continuation of this, no matter how well intentioned, in the name of spreading anarchism. While anarchism has much to learn, Indigenous communities do not need anarchist theory for their decolonization and resistance. They don’t need settlers at all. And while we might be called upon to create new relations or support projects of resurgence and decolonization, Indigenous communities do not need our theories—they have their own, emanating from traditions, cultural practices and their own Indigenous theorists, practitioners and organizers.
The danger of Eurocentric filtering is present here with my own project, and there is a danger that thinking about anarcha-Indigenism might move in directions that begin to demand anarchism in name and in our forms from Indigenous communities. There are certainly Indigenous peoples who self-define as anarchists and it is important to consider their work, but it is also crucial to look at those who may not be so explicitly defined but who, to use Day’s (2005) conception, share an affinity with this anarchist or anarcha-Indigenist project, but may not be familiar with the extensive history of anarchist movements, theorists etc. Following Ciccariello-Maher’s caution, Indigenous movements and theorists need to be engaged on their terms and not strictly within the frame of anarchism. The same is true for Black liberation struggles or other people of colour movements. The aim therefore must be to continually seek out exchanges and challenges of anarchism and seek to move towards and enact anti-colonial and decolonizing commitments. Decolonizing anarchism, as Ramnath (2011, 258) argues,

means making anarchism a force for decolonization, and simultaneously dismantling colonial assumptions within our own understanding and practice of anarchism. That requires us to see anarchism as one locally contextualized, historically specific manifestation of a larger antiauthoritarian tradition.
Conceiving Anarcha-Indigenism

One form of contextual anarchism might begin to emerge under the framework of anarcha-Indigenism. The context of this project exists primarily in the settler colonies of the US and Canada although there has been specific work to connect anarcha-Indigenism to the struggles of the Zapatistas in Mexico as well (see Khasnabish, 2011). Anarcha-Indigenism, in name, might be seen as an emerging and a continually developing theory and practice that has sought to foreground Indigenous critiques of colonialism, but also the state and capitalism. There are no doubt other exchanges that are happening, and have happened, especially at the level of social movements and in even more specific contexts, but anarcha-Indigenism allows for a concerted and explicit focus on colonialism and decolonization within the context of anarchism.

Generally, anarcha-Indigenism might be understood as a coming together of anarchist and Indigenous theory and practice, with also special attention given to the feminist elements within each. In this way anarcha-Indigenism foregrounds a critique of the intersections, overlaps and mutual dependencies that exist between the state, capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy and patriarchy. It seeks though, the much broader anarchist impulse of resisting all forms of oppression and domination (although it is important to note the drawbacks of such an approach, as I have noted above). Its foremost intervention though is the bringing of a decolonizing analysis to anarchism.
New Developments in Anarchist Studies

and a push towards locally and contextually rooted strategies for decolonization. This means, quite clearly and importantly that an analysis of settler privilege as linked to settler colonialism, the state and capitalism needs to be continually developed as part of an anarchist analysis. The project of anarcha-Indigenism suggests a problematizing of settler privilege and a push towards decolonization.

The first primary instance of conceiving of anarcha-Indigenism comes from Taiaiake Alfred’s 2005 book Wasase in which he conceives of his project of Indigenous cultural revitalization and militant warrior ethic in the following terms:

I might suggest, as a starting point, conceptualizing anarcho-indigenism. Why? And why this term? Conveyance of the indigenous warrior ethic will require its codification in some form—a creed and an ethical framework for thinking through challenges. To take root in people’s minds the new ethic will have to capture the spirit of a warrior in battle and bring it to politics. How might this spirit be described in contemporary terms related to political thought and movement? The two elements that come to my mind are indigenous, evoking cultural and spiritual rootedness in this land and the Onkwehonwe struggle for justice and freedom, and the political philosophy and movement that is fundamentally anti-institutional,

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10 Alfred (2005, 288) offers the following as a definition of Onkwehonwe in the Mohawk language: “‘the original people’... referring to the First Peoples of North America.”
radically democratic, and committed to taking action to force change: *anarchism* (Alfred, 2005, 45).

Alfred’s work described here brings together the core Indigenous and anarchist elements of anarcha-Indigenism, within a specific project of Indigenous resistance and revitalization, though I think his summary here points to the potential points of contact between anarchism and Indigenous theory and practice. He points to a focus on decentralization, direct democracy and several other commonalities that might link anarchist and Indigenous philosophies, namely:

A rejection of alliances with legalized systems of oppression, non-participation in the institutions that structure the colonial relationship and a belief in bringing about change through direct action, physical resistance, and confrontations with state power (Alfred, 2005, 46).

Alfred’s work, therefore, contains a profound anti-state impulse that is essential for working towards decentralization, autonomy and self-determination for Indigenous communities.

Alfred’s work has been picked up by a number of settler anarchists as well. The work of Richard Day (2008) and Jacqueline Lasky (2011), in particular have sought to expand work on anarcha-Indigenism, with a particular view to bringing in Indigenous and anarchist feminisms as core and essential components. Day (2003) draws from the work of Indigenous writers Marie Smallface Marule,
Patricia Monture-Angus and Taiaiake Alfred, in conjunction with anarchist theorists, to suggest a convergence of values to organize outside the state—towards non-coercive direct democratic forms of decision making and organization and away from entrenched forms of hierarchy. Here Day argues that there are similarities, or more properly-termed, affinities, between some aspects of Indigenous political theory and anarchism (see also Day, 2005). In addition to the authors suggested above, we might add, for example, Indigenous theorists such as Andrea Smith (2005), Leanne Simpson (2011) and Glen Coulthard (2010, 2001) who have argued for resistance to and outside the state; or suggest to see also those whose work appeared in a recent issue of Affinities: A Radical Journal of Theory, Culture and Action devoted to the particular topic of anarcha-Indigenism. The work of these writers presents a number of places from which to draw to continue developing what this thing anarcha-Indigenism might be and how its comprehensive critique might be strengthened and promote new forms of resistance.

Richard Day (2008, 3) provides the following summaries of anarcha-Indigenism as “a meeting place, a site of possibilities, a potential for mutual aid in common projects within, outside, and against the dominant order. It is not an ideology or a party,” he continues, “but an emergent and ever-changing network of autonomous subjects, organizations, and institutions”: a meeting point of “anarchisms, indigenisms and feminisms,” not some form of rigid, limited or homogenous set of political possibilities,
but something broadly defined, dynamic and evolving (Day, 2008, 3). An intersectional analysis is foundational to anarcha-Indigenism and cannot be overstated and so it warrants quoting Day at length:

> an anarcha-indigenist perspective is based on an interlocking analysis of oppression, which includes every site that has been raised as an antagonism, and privileges none over the others, in terms of their importance, intensity, or the order in which they are addressed in any work involving social change. [...] Since as all beings are interrelated and dependent upon the earth, we must also work to minimize the human domination of nature and ensure that our practices are ecologically sustainable in the short, medium, and long terms, both locally and globally. This work needs to be carried out within and against the dominant order, and within our own communities. It needs to operate both at a structural level, and at the level of daily practice (Day, 2008, 19).

The work of anarcha-Indigenism, therefore, requires a commitment to root out injustice, oppression and domination at all of the levels, whether within bodies and minds, in the dynamics of the political groups that we engage in resistance with, in the broader cultures of resistance that we seek to cultivate or in the larger structures and institutions that we struggle against. It is a relational possibility of resistance that is contextualized to the particularities of place. “It is,” as Jacqueline Lasky (2011, 7) argues, “relational...plural, multiple, contingent, transient, indeterminate and thoroughly unfixed.” This multiple nature of an-
archa-Indigenism invites multiple perspectives to strengthen this commitment to resistance to all forms of oppression and domination. This is one possible way forward that begins to foreground colonialism as a core logic of power and domination within the US/Canada context, but also within the wider context of settler colonial states.

Anarcha-Indigenism engages in the kind of project that Olson and others suggested above, where no form of oppression is construed to be morally worse or condemnable than any other but the particularities of the settler colonial and white supremacist realities of “North America” require a specific focus on these forms of oppression and domination as foundational and what condition other forms. They are also the forms that need much more concerted attention on the part of anarchists. Olson, Crass, Martinez, Smith and Simpson, among countless others, have all noted a general lack of analysis of white supremacy or colonization within social movements and anarchist movements. Anarcha-Indigenism, by taking up Indigenous critiques of colonialism and seeking out points of contact between anarchism and Indigenous resistance is perhaps one way forward. Certainly a greater anti-racist impulse needs to be developed within anarcha-Indigenism as well to reflect the close ties between colonization, white supremacy and racism within understandings such as Smith’s three pillars.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has been mostly theoretical in outlook, and therefore we must begin to turn, as well, to examining the
possibilities for an anti-racist and decolonizing anarchism in practice. We might look to solidarity with Black liberation, APOC, migrant justice and Indigenous struggles, but also must look inwardly at rooting the privileges that we continue to accrue from these systems of oppression and domination. I have argued that anarchism, as a primarily white settler dominated movement in Canada and the US, needs to begin to take much more seriously the white supremacist and settler colonial context within which it seeks to enact resistance to all forms of oppression and domination. The first step is to view the three pillars of white supremacy, of which colonization is one piece, as the strategically central elements that fundamentally structure the particular context that we, as settlers find ourselves in. This fundamental grounding, as well as naming as important the binary of settler and Indigenous, is essential for anarchists to take up; otherwise we run the risk of continuing processes of colonization, and refuse to assess our complicity in these systems of oppression. Relationships to land, which settlers have lost, are the kinds of relations that anarchists need to carefully consider, especially if we are seeking to construct autonomous alternatives to the state and capital, without doing so at the expense of Indigenous peoples. Finally, I have suggested that anarcha-Indigenism, in bringing together both anarchist and Indigenous theory and practice, might serve as one way forward to begin to think about creating new forms of relationships to both land and Indigenous peoples. At its most basic, this chapter has argued for a
committed anarchist turn to understanding and engaging with the realities of settler colonization, as it structures our context of struggle and resistance. The imperative for anarchists to think about decolonization comes, in part, from the commitment to resist all forms of oppression and domination that anarchists claim; from the challenges issued by Indigenous communities; and from our situation on lands that are narrated by processes of Indigenous dispossession for the benefit of settlers. As Maia Ramnath (2011, 256) argues:

If we recognize colonialism as an interconnected global power system in which we’re all differently located, then we’re all engaged in a multifronted battle to dismantle and replace that system.

This is the way forward for anarchism, to locate ourselves within the particularities of the context of white supremacy and colonization, and begin to conceive of ways to resist and decolonize.

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[▲ARTwork: ‘¡Mesoamerica Resiste!’ detail, Beehive Design Collective, see p.357]