

## **EIGHT STAGES OF WHITE SETTLER-COLONIAL DENIAL**

1. **“They didn’t exist”** **(terra nullius)**  
Complete denial of Indigenous presence in a given area (country, province, etc). Includes denial of Indigeneity, e.g. “Indigenous Peoples are Settlers too”.
2. **“If they did, they weren’t here”** **(terra nullius)**  
Denial that Indigenous People inhabit/travel/harvest/exist in a specific area. Often based on euro-centric definitions of evidence of occupation.
3. **“If they were, they didn’t use the land”** **(doctrine of discovery)**  
Denial that Indigenous People have a connection with the Land. Often based on euro-centric worldviews of the land as something to be owned and extracted.
4. **“If they did, they didn’t deserve it”** **(great chain of being)**  
Denial that Indigenous People have rights to their Lands. Often based on euro-centric value judgements of “primitive vs. civilized”, “nomadic vs. sedentary”.
5. **“If they did, they lost it”** **(right of conquest)**  
Denial that Indigenous People retain their rights to their Lands. Often based on colonially imposed European systems of law / “might makes right” worldviews.
6. **“If they didn’t, it doesn’t matter anymore”** **(Westphalian sovereignty)**  
Denial that Indigenous Rights are still binding and take precedence. Often based on false claims of supremacy of colonial legal institutions and systems.
7. **“If it does, we need to move on”.** **(liberalism)**  
Denial that violations of Indigenous Rights requires redress. Often based on claims redress is “disruptive/unfair/reverse racism” & false calls for “equality”.
8. **“If we can’t, we are you”** **(self-indigenization)**  
Denial of separateness of Indigenous Peoples and Rights. Often based on attempts to reduce Indigenous Rights to Human Rights, claim Indigeneity, etc.