

CRES 10
Discussion 2 Notes

Elijah Hantman

Am I a settler?

I think that I am a settler, but it is something that makes me deeply uncomfortable. The area I live in is drenched with reminders of the history. Gold country, we went to Sutter's Mill as a kid, and I remember learning about all sorts of Indigenous tidbits in history class. As I got older I started learning about colonialism. First from hearing about oil companies bulldozing and using riot police on Native protests. I started learning about massacres and war crimes, not really on purpose, but more as an extension of my general political understanding.

My family is perhaps an example of minority excellence. My dad was a Jewish kid from a dysfunctional family, and my Mom is a first generation immigrant from the Phillipines. I don't really feel either of those identities in full honesty, but those ideas also led me to see my family, not in the context of settlers, in the context of whiteness, but in terms of surviving.

I find in my interests I am inextricably linked to colonialism. As a lover of computers, and infrastructure, space travel and all the scifi out there I can't help but find myself unable to entirely hate the practices of extraction. I don't want them to continue, and they are wrong. I think climate change and destructive mining and the like are unsustainable and violent. However I can't help but want to imagine a world that is sustainable and still has all those things, computers, and cool buildings, and so on.

I think that I am a settler in the same way anyone is when they play the game of living in a capitalist society. I have to work to survive, and my family moved to gain better opportunities. I live on land which was stolen, and live in an economy made of the products of violent conquest.

Sometimes I feel that I am burnt out on colonialism and imperialism, because to contemplate it every day is to impose a mental burden that nobody should have to. I am privileged enough to shrug off that burden sometimes, but I know Indigenous people and POC lack those privileges, and they are forced to not only confront those things, but are directly attacked by those things every day. Sometimes I feel my mind is not strong enough to hold everything in my head.

Responses

- Not a settler because am an immigrant. settlers are "natural"
- What is turkish? The state squashes differences between groups via beaucocracy and legislation
- The point of view that settler isn't something that you control, so much as you are forcibly part of a society which does colonialism. Slaves are settlers but not willing.
- Definitely a Settler, prior generational trauma doesn't absolve participation and entrenchment in colonialism. What can you do with this identity?
- OG settlers. Already happened, can't really fault yourself for things you didn't choose. Guilt isn't a necessary part of a settler identity.

Reading Review

- I think that he has an implicit definition of what matters to being a settler. I think given that implicit definition he is practically categorically correct.
- System is inescapable. He is quick to attempt to clarify what exactly he means by settler.
- He validates the conflict between being a settler and the desire to not be a settler.
- Easier to accept, the history is bad but you aren't a bad person for existing.
- Using indigenous terminology to define himself as a settler. Being a settler is an unfortunate identity, like having a Nazi in the family.
- It's not you are entirely complicit in. Agency in the identity is made explicit.

- Opposite, settlers can't redefine what it means to be a settler because its more valuable to analyze history from an indigenous perspective.