### 1ac – civil disobedience

#### The US agricultural project is the ongoing reproduction of techno colonialism. Ever since initial encounters between Native people and colonizers, agriculture has been used to construct a civilizationist divide between Nativeness and Whiteness. This positions Nativeness as savagery and Whiteness as progress, filtered through the prism of feeding a hungry world. That results in the concealment of racial risk management and counter-revolutionary policing via appeals to supposedly neutral corporate economic interest.

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In his inaugural address on January 20, 1949, President Truman announced the first U.S. plan for international economic development, the Point 4 Program. Named because it was the fourth foreign policy objective in the United States’ “program for peace and freedom,” the Point 4 Program was “a bold new program” that Truman stated would make “the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.” This “bold new program” was indeed part and parcel of major shift in postwar foreign economic aid. The Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) was created on April 3, 1948 to administer foreign aid under the Marshall Plan in order to ameliorate the financial deficit and damaged infrastructure of the war-torn countries of Europe. Yet at this time, many development theorists believed that the cause of persistent hardship was not only war and conflict but the absence of individual initiative, adequate knowledge, and private enterprise. Thus, after 1948 and following this line of thought, the U.S. government moved toward a more comprehensive approach to foreign aid—one concerning agriculture, education, health, resource development, and other technical services. Simultaneously, there was a shift in the geographic scope of such aid. Although most large-scale economic aid went to Europe, other countries outside of Europe received foreign assistance just after World War II (e.g., in Africa, Morocco, Libya, Ethiopia, Tunisia and Somaliland; in South America, Colombia and Venezuela; in Asia, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, and Indochina. Coming directly out of the experiences of the Marshall Plan and a culmination of these trends, the Point 4 Program was part and parcel of the development of massive and expansive aid bureaucracies across the world.1 The program officially began with the Title IV of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1950 and the establishment of the Technical Cooperation Administration within the Department of State that same year.2 It stood apart from the Economic Cooperation Administration in that it administered foreign aid outside of Europe to the “underdeveloped areas” of the world and offered both capital investment and technical assistance.3 The reason behind this seemingly disinterested policy objective crystallized these trends and the beliefs and theories behind them. As Truman stated in his 1949 inaugural address, “More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant.” Thus, the benefits of U.S. “scientific advances and industrial progress” to be made available would encompass relations of agricultural production, education, health and sanitation, and resource development and other technical services. Additionally, these benefits would be made available through contracts with U.S. business, educational, and philanthropic organizations, and in conjunction with several new and existing national and international development-oriented organizations. For example, in 1950, there were 215 organizations around the world involved in the provision of such services, with foreign aid programs employing 630 Americans and more than 800 Europeans that year, and foreign grants amounting to almost $34 billion. With such vast political, economic, and organizational backing, in the years following its establishment in 1950, this keystone policy of 23 the United States’ seemingly disinterested agricultural and rural development agenda was operationalized in at least 35 countries across the Americas, Africa, and Asia—from Mexico, Cuba, and Haiti, to Peru, Venezuela, and Brazil, to Jordan, Iran and Pakistan. Behind the confidence with which Truman announced this “bold new program” was a certain anxiety from the U.S. Department of State, policymakers, and other protagonists of the U.S. agricultural and rural development agenda. Specifically, as U.S. state, corporate, and philanthropic actors posed international capital-intensive agricultural research, technology, and education transfer initiatives as the solution to the problem of hunger and poverty, there was a certain awareness of the stakes of such work. Signaling why it was called a “program for peace and freedom,” Truman stated that the reason such benefits of U.S. “scientific advances and industrial progress” needed to made available was because for the “half the people of the world [who] are living in conditions approaching misery . . . their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas.” Thus, Truman continues, “For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve suffering of these people. The United States is pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. The material resources which we can afford to use for assistance of other peoples are limited. But our imponderable resources in technical knowledge are constantly growing and are inexhaustible." To the people of the world living in near-misery and to the people of the world in close proximity to such misery—socially, economically, politically, and geographically— the United States’ disinterested efforts would not only relieve the suffering of poverty and hunger, but also relieve the anxiety of unrest that would necessarily follow from such poverty and hunger. The anxiety from the private and public protagonists of the U.S. agricultural and rural development agenda, and the Point 4 Program in particular, extended to the operation and perception of the program itself. This anxiety appeared in the form a number of statements and memorandums that circulated within the Technical Cooperation Administration and other agencies that came to administer and oversee the program—some publicly available at and some later declassified. For example, only three months after Truman’s inaugural address, the April 12, 1949 memorandum entitled, "Possible Questions and Suggested Answers Concerning the President’s Technical Assistance Proposal," recounted ways for Department of State officials to respond to domestic and international criticism of the program. Toward this end, the anxieties from private and public protagonists of the U.S. agricultural and rural development agenda, and the Point 4 Program in particular, extended to the operation and perception of the program within “Dependent Areas.” In other words, against the criticism of the Point 4 Program as “involving exploitation or imperialism,” the need to address such criticisms within explicitly colonial and imperial contexts was heightened. Highlighting this anxious need, for example, the July 27, 1949 Advisory Committee on Technical Assistance entitled, "Point Four Program in Relation to Dependent Areas," outlined how the program would operate in precisely such contexts. This archive of Point 4 Program suggests a number of telling dynamics. First, it suggests that the operation of the Point 4 Program was rife with anxiety of unrest and revolt. Yet it also suggests 24 that the Point 4 Program was designed and operated in such a way as to alleviate the pressures involved within explicitly colonial contexts—pressures involving both the vast differentials in power and wealth and the unrest following therefrom, and the recognition by exploited and impoverished peoples that such power differentials have been constitutive of U.S. state power and transnational capitalism in particular. In this way, the “phantasmagoric” U.S. empire that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue assumed itself to be benign and ethical, operating “with the purpose of bring order to the world,” was also an empire that was **aware of its own fallibility**, the risks of its own hubris, **and the need to stave off criticism** that named it as such. And in this way, the archive of the Point 4 Program also suggests that agricultural and rural development—the agricultural science, technology, and education transfer initiatives under the banner of the Point 4 Program and other such efforts—were considered a way to alleviate hunger and poverty, and assuage such concerns. On Cold War “Containment” and the Risk Management of Racial Capitalism The Point 4 Program, which crystallized the United States’ emergent international agricultural and rural development agenda, thus revealed much in terms of how U.S. imperialism might work in the twentieth century. During this period, commercial mono-cropping transformed rural landscapes as the U.S. model of capital- and energy-intensive agriculture was universalized, and accumulation by agri-food capitalists undercut the capacities of states across the Global South to regulate themselves. 4 Ultimately, through the agribusiness deployment of counterpart funds from the food aid program, the Green Revolution’s research, technology, and education transfer initiatives, and the transnational restructuring of agricultural sectors, Pax Americana **reconstituted states as guarantors of markets** and thus integral elements of U.S. empire. It did so all the while undermining peasant unrest and larger revolutionary action— counternationalisms that would have otherwise undermined such process of geopolitical power and capital accumulation. 5 The focus on hunger and poverty that grounded such attempts at containment and drove such transformations was not conceptually incidental to the Cold War. A 1951 document issued by the Rockefeller Foundation entitled The World Food Problem, Agriculture, and the Rockefeller Foundation, crystallized the themes of hunger, population, and insurgency: Hungry people are lured by promises, but they may be won by deeds. Communism makes attractive promises to underfed peoples. Democracy must not only promise as much but must deliver more.6 As Raj Patel argues, it is unsurprising that there should be an alignment between U.S. foreign policy and the Foundation’s world. They both share an ideological distaste for communism, the belief that “where hunger goes, Communism follows,” and an abiding faith in U.S. capitalism.7 Thus, U.S. policymakers and corporate and philanthropic actors promoted a specific social, cultural, and political worldview and set of prescriptions in their efforts to stabilize and expand capitalist markets.8 The Point 4 Program crystallized such shared views and prescriptions, and 25 highlighted that the program’s anti-hunger and anti-poverty objectives at their cores attempts at containment. The Point 4 Program was positioned as a central part of the United States’ postwar strategy of containment in more ways than one. First, it would serve the United States’ goal of lessening the risk of communist influence in impoverished areas with supposedly antiquated modes of agricultural production. Hunger and poverty that followed from such “traditional” methods would supposedly be alleviated by capital-intense techno-scientific modes of agricultural production oriented to the global market—for where there is no hunger, communism supposedly could not take root.9 Yet, as stated, the particular targets of such efforts were also understood in broader terms by U.S. state, corporate, and philanthropic actors—namely, emergent counternationalisms not limited to communist leanings but that would have still undermined U.S. geopolitical power and transnational capital. Second, the program was positioned as a central part of the U.S. strategy of containment in that it would also inure from critique the transnational restructuring of agricultural sectors as it helped stabilize and expand capitalist markets and strengthen U.S. geopolitical power. Namely, the program would stave off criticism from overlapping, internationalized anticolonial and civil rights movements at the time that could have easily regarded it as an imperial endeavor. Ultimately, through the seemingly disinterested provision of agricultural science, technology, education, and capital, the agents of the Point 4 Program saw the program as an effective means of undermining counternationalisms across a number of contexts—from independent nations to the United States’ “dependent areas”—while also accounting for counternationalisms across such contexts that may have involved explicit indictments of U.S. foreign policy and transnational capital. This chapter regards both elements of this mid-twentieth century strategy of containment as constitutive of one dynamic: the risk management of capitalism, which is to say **the risk management of racial capitalism**. As Jodi Melamed states, capital can only be capital when it is accumulating, and such accumulation requires “loss, disposability, and the unequal differentiation of human value.” Race and racism enshrine such needed inequalities—hence, racial capitalism, which is often associated with the “central features of white supremacist capitalist development,” including slavery, colonialism, genocide, incarceration regimes, migrant exploitation, and contemporary racial warfare.10 Toward this end, the risk management of racial capitalism thus involves not only the remaking of people and places as things “in the service of the accumulation of wealth and the exercise of geopolitical power.”11 In “the drawing of the line that constitutes discrete entities and distinguishes between the valued and the devalued,” as Melamed argues, the risk management of racial capitalism also involves making people and situations incommensurable to one another as a “disavowed condition of possibility for world-systems of profit and governance” (emphasis added).12 That is, **capital accumulation involves the elision of its racial and colonial conditions** of possibility. As an exercise in the risk management of capitalist markets and U.S. geopolitical power, the Point 4 Program need be recognized as involving the need for such elisions. That is, underwritten by the provision of food, technology, knowledge, and capital toward the protection of individual and national liberty, freedom, equality, progress (social and economic), the Point 4 Program-as- “containment” ultimately sought to permit expanded Anglo-American rule through new forms 26 of global governance, all while attempting to accommodate and inure from critique existing forms of racial and colonial dispossession. 13 This chapter ultimately elucidates how exactly the Point 4 Program and U.S. agricultural and rural development agenda, more broadly, built upon these central features of white supremacist capitalist development, while masking them as such. It holds on to the centrality of “containment” within the archive of the Point 4 Program—from Truman’s announcement of it to the manifold memorandums and briefs explicitly negotiating the colonial contexts within which the program would operate. It does so while recognizing that the “logic of containment” has long been central to these features of white supremacist capitalist development. It focuses on analogous innovations in subjection, administration, and governance with regard to existing forms of settlement in particular (i.e., the risk management of racial capitalism). Specifically, it traces how U.S. state, corporate, and philanthropic actors facilitated certain ways of posing and resolving questions around the need for the cultivation of a capital-intensive and technoscientific Native market agrarianism in the early-twentieth century. The first part of this chapter outlines the early-twentieth century crisis of the reservation as it was defined by such actors. It does so through close reading of key parts of the 1928 report, The Problem of Indian Administration, also known as the Meriam Report. The second part of this chapter attends to the means by which the development of a Native market agrarianism was to be achieved—the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which intended to improve reservation economies and grant self-government while also containing Native counternationalisms that risked undermining U.S. settler capitalism. The third part of this chapter traces how this strategy of risk management of U.S. settler capitalism migrated internationally during the mid-twentieth century by way of the U.S. agricultural and rural development agenda, broadly, and the Point 4 Program in particular. This chapter ultimately argues that the crisis of the reservation was a moment in which Indianness was reconfigured as a provisional catalyst toward greater incorporation and assimilation into market and colonial relations through innovations and advancements in agricultural production. The modes of subjection, administration, and governance developed therefrom then became central to the Point 4 Program’s attempt to effectuate the risk management of racial capitalism interna PART 1. Early-Twentieth Century Innovations in Indianness: The 1928 Meriam Report During the 1920s and 1930s, unprecedented social, political, economic, and environmental changes were taking place across the United States. On the heels of the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and drastic drop in commodity prices, and the mass farm foreclosures taking place, the national economic crisis swept a reform administration into power that appealed urban and rural voters. As Thomas Biolsi states, if a new economic policy was to save capitalist private enterprise and an agricultural economy in turmoil, a new image of the social responsibility of government for citizens was **to save the state from mass civil disobedience**.14 Biolsi recounts how the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) was within the purview of such reform efforts. John Collier was appointed commissioner of the OIA by Interior Secretary Harold Ickes—Collier was 27 an effective critic of the OIA and Ickes himself was a proponent of reforming federal Indian law and policy.15 Collier's reform ideas involved utilizing federal power to protect and rehabilitate Native communities. Along with Felix Cohen, a lawyer who was sympathetic to Collier’s ideas, Collier believed that the most effective method for accomplishing this goal was an ambitious federal initiative to end allotment, sponsor federally-sanctioned Native governments, and promote Native leaders.16 These ideas led to a legislative proposal drafted during at the end of 1933 by Collier, Cohen, and a team of lawyers in the Interior Department. Such extensive statutory and administrative reforms were ultimately put into place on June 18, 1934 under the Indian Reorganization Act (or the Wheeler-Howard Act), which also became known as the “Indian New Deal.”17 Yet, with regard to Native peoples across the United States, the national economic crisis and environmental catastrophe of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl was anticipated by what reform-minded policymakers, organization leaders, and community members considered another crisis: a persistent and deep-rooted social, political, economic, and environmental crisis of the reservation and “Indian administration” more broadly. In what was the sharpest departure from existing Indian law and policy to date, the 1928 Meriam Report, officially titled The Problem of Indian Administration, named this crisis and its stakes explicitly. Social responsibility of the U.S. government to Native peoples in particular involved improving reservation economies yet doing so **to stave off Native unrest which may have undermined U.S. settler capitalism**. Section A. “The Problem of Indian Administration” and the Crisis of the Reservation For reform-minded policymakers, organization leaders, and community members during the 1920s and 1930s, the problem of Indian administration was not Indian administration itself but certain developments within Indian administration that went back only a few decades— namely, the period of “Allotment and Assimilation” inaugurated by Dawes Act of 1887 (also known as the General Allotment Act of 1887). According to Phillip J. Deloria, a key premise behind the Allotment Act was that communal landholding—perpetuated by the fenced-in, segregated reservation—actively hindered Native peoples from developing as “yeoman farmers.” Thus, the disinterested “individualizing” of Native peoples could be more effectively enforced in terms of individual landholding.18 Reservations themselves were to be disaggregated and desegregated, turned into "checkerboarded” landholdings on a grid with an influx of white landowners.19 With this new arrangement, Deloria states, " a new class of white colonizers might live among Indian people, serving as role models and technical advisers in the development of a Native market agrarianism and a concomitant transition to citizenship within the imperial nation." As such, the Dawes Act represented a finer grain of seemingly disinterested colonial practice yet the impact was still devastating. Between 1887 and 1934, Native peoples’ landholdings dropped from 138 million acres to 48 million acres—a loss of some 90 million acres of land, nearly 60 percent of all Native peoples’ landholdings since Dawes Act was established. 28 This rapid transfer of Native peoples’ land was alarming to Progressive-era reformers—a concern with federal Indian law and policy that cohered with broader efforts to transform U.S. government agencies and introduce scientific methods within state and federal administration itself.20 Principal among the organizations to concern itself with the administration of Native peoples was the Institute for Government Research (IGR), which would later become the Brookings Institution. As per its mission statement, the IGR cooperated with public officials in the scientific study of government and aimed to “conduct scientific investigations into the theory and practice of government administration” and promote "efficiency and economy in operations and advancing the science of administration." Reformers at the time viewed the application of scientific methods of analysis to administration as an appropriate response to a certain subset of problems—problems of the organization, personnel, materials, business practices and procedures, and finance. To the problem “Indian administration,” the IGR brought these and other considerations. The formal process through which the Institute for Government Research was commissioned to study Indian administration began in 1923, when Secretary of the Interior, Hubert Work, appointed the National Advisory Committee (also called the Committee of One Hundred) to review federal policy toward Native peoples. Gathering in Washington in December 1923, the committee elected Arthur Parker as presiding officer and Fayette McKenzie as chairman of the resolutions committee. Their findings were published in 1924 as "The Indian Problem” and their recommendations ranged from curricula and physical facilities improvements in Native schools to better health services on the reservations, and called for the Department of the Interior to be more careful about issues fee simple patents to allotted.21 Given the desirability of having such a survey made by a supposedly "impartial group of specialists in the fields of health, education, agriculture, economics, family life, and law," and in response to a special request by the Board of Indian Commissioners, Secretary Work then asked the IGR to conduct a more comprehensive study of federal Indian law and policy.22 In 1926, Secretary Work chose Dr. Lewis Meriam, a social scientist with experience in the technical study of government operations and employed by IGR, to direct the study and assemble the team of specialist to carry it out. The team Meriam assembled included experts in health, education, economic matters, agriculture, law, and history.23 In scale, scope, and depth, the survey of the successes and failures of Indian administration was unlike any other. Data was collected by field work for approximately seven months and members of the investigating staff visited 95 different jurisdictions, including reservations, Indian agencies, hospitals, schools, and communities where Native peoples have migrated.24 The methods of the survey were broken down into a number of practices, each recounted in the report itself.25 After six months of field research, Meriam and his staff returned to Washington and spent several more months compiling their findings and drafting recommendations. Published in 1928 as The Problem of Indian Administration, more commonly called the Meriam Report, the 872-page study provided details of the conditions of experienced by Native peoples while weighing in on what next steps may be needed.26 Ultimately, the report argued that the central “problem of Indian administration” was that Native peoples endured extremely harsh conditions and were not properly “adjusted” to society due to failures 29 on the part of the federal government. For example, the survey team found Native peoples suffered from diseases more than the general population, and that the federal government had contributed to the poor health of the Native peoples by providing inadequate food allowances and offering no reasonable system to teach adults about public health. Further, they revealed that the Indian service lacked essential statistical information, as the researchers could not find accurate information about population size, birth or death rates, or incidence of diseases. The survey team also found that the Office of Indian Affairs lacked any effective educational program, and that the provisions for students that were available at boarding schools and other such institutions were grossly inadequate. Further, they found that the housing arrangements maintained by the federal government were also unsanitary. Perhaps most importantly, they observed that most Native peoples were extremely poor and could not earn enough money to alleviate their problems. They pointed to the devastating nature of Allotment and Assimilation policy and fraught faith in private land ownership and independent, self-reliant modes of agricultural production as among the core failures of the federal government.27 For a few reasons, the 1928 Meriam Report was unlike any other analysis of federal Indian law and policy that came before it. First, it represented a radical departure from existing beliefs that U.S. state, corporate, philanthropic, and other actors held toward Indian administration. Commissioned by the U.S. Department of the Interior, funded in part by the Rockefeller Foundation, and carried out by the Institute for Government Research, it was the first report of its kind to define the policies of Allotment and Assimilation as failures and the first of its kind to describe how so in extreme detail. At the same time, while economic and other problems were regularly reported in annual reports by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in previous years, no one single document has ever been produced that has indicted the U.S. government and DOI in particular for their failures, and that has had such a direct impact on the reform of federal Indian law and policy.28 The dire circumstances on reservations enunciated by the Great Depression and Dust Bowl added extra weight to the extensive data and analysis of the Meriam Report. Specifically, by the beginning of the 1930s, it was clear that any gains made by Native farmers in self-sufficiency during the 1920s, or by Native landowners in financial independence from the Office of Indian Affairs, had been crushed by the prevailing crop conditions and by the Great Depression.29 Framed by the Meriam Report, this moment of crisis prompted the transformation of Indian administration under the Wheeler-Howard Act (P.L. 383), also known as the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), in accordance with many of the report’s recommendations. Specifically, agricultural and rural development were the motor vehicle of the IRA’s dual goal of improving reservation economies and granting a degree of self-government. The opening of the IRA states this in no clearer terms: “An Act to conserve and develop Indian lands and resources; to extend to Indians the right to form business and other organizations; to establish a credit system for Indians; to grant certain rights of home rule to Indians; to provide for vocational education for Indians; and for other purposes . . . That hereafter no land of any Indian reservation, created or set apart by treaty or agreement with the Indians . . . shall be allotted in severalty to any Indian . . .”30 Grounded in this goal, tribes that voted to accept the IRA (or equivalent legislation addressing the special circumstances of tribal groups in Oklahoma and 30 Alaska) created democratic or representative forms of government with written constitutions and by-laws. Critically, as W. Roger Buffalohead recounts, once "organized," Native peoples could also develop economic charters and become eligible for credit through the Indian Reorganization Act Revolving Fund. The Act also allowed tribes to establish “business councils” with limited powers of home rule to enable them to develop reservation resources. Organized in such a way, and with such credit available, reservation communities were able to carry out key provisions of the IRA that included economic projects including agricultural development, land restoration, and conservation. In conjunction with credit made available through the IRA, Office of Indian Affairs’ “assistance” and “supervision” was essential to the success of projects undertaken. While the IRA provided for job training and vocational education and stipulated that Indians could gain employment in the BIA without recourse to civil service regulation. As Buffalohead recounts, such technical assistance, educational training, and employment in the Indian Service was made available through a special preference clause.31 This clause within the IRA facilitated the prioritizing of Native peoples within existing agricultural and rural technical assistance, outreach, and education efforts.32 The provision of agricultural and rural technical assistance and economic advancement were met with and aided by significant bureaucratic restructuring across various reservations. For example, in April 1936, an agreement between the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture established a Unified Navajo Program whose purpose was to "accomplish the economic rehabilitation of the Indians, to restore their depleted ranges and property [and] to develop their agriculture and other resources." Beginning in the years 1937, the administration of the Land Management Division became the responsibility of the Indian Service, and Soil Conservation Service personnel remaining in the program transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.33 These dynamics were not limited to agriculture and rangeland management. The IRA also mandated sustained-yield forestry planning on reservations. For example, though not immediately implemented, the idea of sustained yield became the basis for planned management on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Under the 1934 directive, forestry personnel were to conduct an inventory of forest resources, create a plan for managing them, and cooperate with the U.S. Forest Service in forestry matters.34 This chapter thus far has begun to build the case that the Indian Reorganization Act—and the Meriam Report that anticipated it—were key progenitors of the Point 4 Program, and the United States’ techno-scientific and capital intensive agricultural and rural development agenda, more broadly. It has done so while implying that this history is perhaps more significant or more relevant than the reports, initiatives, and programs associated with the standard history of such global processes. That is because this standard history generally frames the “Green Revolution” as an attempt at improved agricultural production—an achievement in science and technology and less so an innovation in governance. As such, this standard history begins in early 1941, when the Rockefeller Foundation sent a team to survey Mexican agriculture. The survey team was comprised of experts in three distinct fields: first, corn breeding, given its significance to Mexico; second, soil science; third, plant pathology. Yet scholars looking to complicate the standard history have begun to elucidate how the focus of such survey teams and their significance was not so myopic. As Tore Olsson argues, though the 31 impetus for the survey was primarily scientific, the three scientists ultimately hoped to aid in the development of a humanitarian program promoting Mexican peoples’ health through nutrition and improved economic conditions.35 The result of this study was the development of crop breeding and intensified fertilizer, pesticides, and irrigation measures under the banner of the Mexican government-backed Mexican Agricultural Program (MAP). 36 Stepping somewhat outside of this standard history of the “Green Revolution” scholars have also look to the ecological problems facing the agricultural economy of the U.S. South at the same time and even earlier in the century. For example, concerns, surrounded cattle tick fever, a tick-borne disease that if left untreated weakened and could kill cattle, and the boll weevil, a small beetle that feeds on cotton buds and flowers and that if left untreated threatened the Southern cotton economy with massive crop losses. At the time, such challenges invited similar innovations in agricultural production, thus offering scholars an additional account of the Green Revolution’s origins. Where such early-twentieth century endeavors depart from the Meriam Report (and later, the Indian Reorganization Act) is that these endeavors begin with the belief that from the technoscientific transformation of agricultural production in Mexico and the U.S. South carried with it the capacity to improve or revitalize the broader social, political, and economic circumstances within which they are imbricated. Conversely, the 1928 Meriam Report began first and foremost with broad recognition of the problem of Indian administration. Matters of agricultural production only followed from this base claim. The wide-ranging expertise of the survey team reflects this: The agricultural specialist, William J. Spillman (1863-1931), an agricultural economist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was one of the survey team’s many specialists across many fields.37 Edward Everett Dale, who served as the specialist in economic conditions, was head of the department of history of the University of Oklahoma and a former student of Frederick Jackson Turner’s (and a proponent of Turner’s “frontier thesis”). W. Carson Ryan, Jr., the professor at Swarthmore College who served as a specialist in education, would later be sworn in as Commissioner of Education for the Bureau of Indiana Affairs in August 1930. Thus, Native peoples’ poverty and hunger was principally regarded as an outcome of improper Indian administration, broadly defined, with the problems concerning the agricultural economies of reservations reflecting only a subset of issues within this broader problematization of Native peoples’ subjection, governance, and administration. Conversely, within the standard and even expanded histories of the Green Revolution scholars have traced to Mexico, the U.S. South, and elsewhere, the problems of existing forms of subjection, governance, and administration are approximated and ostensibly addressed principally through agri-environmental concerns and methods—adhering to the critique of the Green Revolution’s “myopic” focus on agricultural science and technology. The Green Revolution, however, was anything but a “myopic” techno-scientific endeavor, involve as it did the transnational restructuring of agricultural sectors, the undercutting of states’ capacities to regulate themselves, and the universalization of the U.S. model of capital and energy-intensive agriculture. This broader set of transformations was effectuated, in part, by the Point 4 Program. As stated, this program involved the creation of a transnational administrative and bureaucratic framework and set of prescriptions that set out to make 32 available the benefits of “scientific advances and industrial progress,” and to ensure that such benefits can be effectively attained.38 As the next section argues, what the Meriam Report helped effectuate was the reconfiguration of Indianness itself as an object of knowledge and governance. Specifically, the Meriam Report reconstituted Indianness—a provisional catalyst **toward greater incorporation and assimilation into market and colonial relations**—in ways that necessitated the same or similar agricultural innovations proffered within Mexico, the U.S. South, and elsewhere. Yet, beyond these examples, Indianness was also reconfigured in ways that invited an even greater set of transformations in governance and administration— transformations necessary for Native peoples to truly benefit from such modern agricultural innovations. Section B. On “General Economic Conditions,” Suffering, and the Risk Management of Indian Administration Slavery, famine, disease, displacement—these and other familiar icons of human suffering index a state of emergency and pose moral demands for quick political action. Yet many scholarly traditions that have rightly critiqued such representations of human suffering, which have been operationalized as a liberal strategy to re-entrench the racial, gendered, sexual, capitalist, and imperial orders from which such suffering emerges. 39 Amidst unprecedented social, political, economic, and environmental changes taking place across the United States during the 1920s and 1930, Native peoples’ difficulties regarding health, family life, education, income, and overall quality of life on and off the reservation were represented in such ways, and toward similar ends, as evidenced by the 1928 Meriam Report and the policy changes that followed. The opening pages of the report—within the first chapter, “General Summary of Findings and Recommendations,” and within the subsection, “Suffering and Discontent”— belabor the importance of such representations of suffering vis-à-vis Native peoples: Some people assert that the Indians prefer to live as they do; that they are happier in their idleness and irresponsibility. The question may be raised whether these persons do not mistake for happiness and content an almost oriental fatalism and resignation. The survey staff found altogether too much evidence of real suffering and discontent to subscribe to the belief that the Indians are reasonably satisfied with their condition. The amount of serious illness and poverty is too great to permit of real contentment. The Indian is like the white man in his affection for his children, and he feels keenly the sickness and the loss of his offspring.40 Meriam and the survey staff thus immediately describe what they believe is the source, form, and, experience of Native peoples’ longstanding suffering, as well as the swift political such suffering demands. Each orbited the reservation in particular, which after years of Allotment and Assimilation policy, and in the midst of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, was essentially “in crisis.” As an exercise in the risk management of U.S. settler capitalism, this crisis of the 33 reservation aided liberal strategies to re-entrench U.S. state power and capital accumulation, and the processes of racial and colonial dispossession on which they depend. The risk management of racial capitalism, more broadly, involves the remaking people and places as things in the service of the accumulation of wealth and the exercise of geopolitical power.41 Framed by this moment of crisis, what the Meriam Report arguably effectuated was the reconfiguration of Indianness itself as an object of knowledge and governance, and provisional catalyst toward greater incorporation and assimilation into market and colonial relations. Specifically, the Meriam Report reconstituted Indianness in ways that rendered it a call for techno-scientific and capital-intensive agricultural innovations as well as paired innovations in governance and administration. These innovations in governance and administration would supposedly ensure that the greatest possible benefits from such advancements in agricultural production could be attained. Yet the forms of self-government allowed under the Indian Reorganization Act were, as Phil Deloria states, designed to remove “the last safeguards for protecting Indian land, resources, and labor power from the new forces of the market." According to Deloria, “one of the main reasons for creating tribal councils was the need for central authorities to negotiate and approve business or governmental initiatives. Councils, according to the federal government (if not always the majorities their constituencies), had the political and legal power to negotiate and sign deals for resource extraction or further land cessions.”42 Thus, in response to the crisis of the reservation, the 1928 Meriam Report and 1934 Indian Reorganization Act remade Native peoples and place in ways that undermined Native counternationalisms—Native nationalisms that would have potentially undermined U.S. settler capitalism and that may have involved explicit indictments of U.S. state power and capital accumulation. In other words, the strategy of managing the crisis of the reservation laid out by the Meriam Report and put into place by the Indian Reorganization Act effectuated the “containment” of Native relations and knowledge within ideological and physical **"safety zones.**"43 Specifically, grounded in the belief that Native peoples’ relations and knowledge were of value yet simply out-of-step with the present realities of capitalist development, these flashpoints of reform asserted new approaches to the reservation and to legal-recognition— administrative and governmental frameworks that still subsumed Native sovereignty within the settler state’s domestic laws and discretion while sustaining U.S. settler authority and capital accumulation. In this way, against the crisis facing Native peoples on the reservation, the provision of techno-scientific and capital-intensive agricultural innovations and paired innovations in governance was an exercise in the risk management of settler capitalism. And in the response to this crisis of the reservation, Native peoples and places were remade as disavowed conditions of possibility for such systems of profit and governance—disavowed by way of their placement behind the banner of an improved, socially responsible, and wholly disinterested framework for the administration of Native peoples. The question remains, what new criteria did such ostensibly disinterested prescriptions follow from? Put another way, how was Indianness—as a provisional catalyst toward greater incorporation and assimilation into market and colonial relations—reconstituted toward the 34 containment of Native counternationalisms? The Meriam Report and Indian Reorganization Act were arguably central drivers of the rearticulation of Indianness as an economically impoverished, techno-scientifically-deficient, and improperly administered category of colonial difference (with such conditions all but guaranteeing unrest and revolt should they remain unaddressed). 44 At 116 pages, It is the Meriam Report’s second largest chapter (following “Health”), “General Economic Conditions,” that most comprehensively describes “the problem of Indian administration” as such. The chapter covers a number of topics, among them: statistics, histories, structures, and challenges of Native peoples’ property, income, and “utilization of tribal resources”; the individual allotment of land; agricultural production (including an emphasis on subsistence agriculture); and administrative frameworks for education, outreach, assistance.45 Moving across such topics, the chapter thus focuses upon issues relating to agricultural production and the effective, efficient, and profitable use of natural resources, and develops these as the criteria for intervention. This chapter also points to the site of intervention that follows from such gestures toward Indianness as an economically impoverished, techno-scientifically-deficient, and improperly administered category of colonial difference: the reservation. As stated in the chapter, “The economic resources of the reservation should be developed to the point where they are capable of supporting in comfort as many Indians as practicable before it is assumed that the permanent solution of the economic problem of these people is to remove them from the unmet problems of the reservation to work elsewhere as wage earners.”46 Thus, Indianness as a provisional catalyst was reconstituted in ways that pointed to the reservation in particular—Itself impoverishing, non-modern, and improperly administered—as the site of reform. In developing the criteria for intervention, the chapter in the Meriam Report regards the barriers to the best use of natural resources on the reservation as economic and administrative yet stemming first from environmental variability and precarity. Framing the chapter on “General Economic Conditions,” broadly, is the fact that “upon almost every reservation may be seen families living in poverty and yet possessed of potential resources, tribal, individual, or both, that if well utilized should yield a reasonable degree of comfort.”47 The chapter describes this gap as largely stemming from environmental challenges and concerns: “one of the chief reasons for this state of affairs is that much of the Indian's property consists of land that is often arid, semi-arid, or mountainous, valuable chiefly for grazing, unsalable except in very large tracts, and often capable of little development for other agricultural purposes.”48 Thus, the authors state, “to administer the affairs of a people so varied in character and so widely scattered as are the Indians is no easy task.”49 Broadly, this task would be one of “adjusting the Indians to their environment within a generation or two.” While this “environment” is framed first according to the diverse and challenging physical and biological features of the land on which Native peoples live, the authors’ understanding of Native peoples’ “environment” extends to their social, political, and economic circumstances—the modern terrain of U.S. capitalist development. Lewis Meriam and the survey staff define Allotment and Assimilation as a fraught strategy of Indian administration. Yet they argue that one of the primary reasons it was so destructive was because of the lack of adequate training required for successfully adjusting themselves to their 35 environment—both their physical and biological environment, and their social, political, and economic environment. The authors state: “Admirable as they were the objects of individual allotment the results have often been disappointing. Too much reliance was place on the sheer effect of individual land ownership and not enough was done to educate the Indians in the use of lands . . . The result has been to put many Indians in possession of allotments of land and of other property before they had advanced sufficiently to feel any real responsibility for the conservation and development of such property.”50 Throughout the chapter, the authors continue to assert this point but in even clearer terms and by way of an even stronger indictment of Indian administration: The absence of competent industrial or economic teachers and leaders explains in no small measure the comparative failure of several of the large policies of the past, notably, the whole plan of individual allotment of land, the issuance of fee patents, the removal of restrictions, and the declaration of competency which legally removes the Indian from guardianship and declares him ready to take his place as an independent member of the community.51 Ultimately, the authors argue that the effective, efficient, and profitable use of the reservation’s natural resources by Native peoples was hindered by the limited provision of adequate scientific and technological training and capital. Thus, with Native peoples displaced onto marginal lands for generations, yet deprived of the knowledge, tools, and capital required to profitably cultivate such land, the authors were clear in their view of the problem of Indian administration and why the reservation in particular was the site of reform. Indianness, as a provisional catalyst toward greater incorporation and assimilation into market and colonial relations, is thus progressively reoriented within the Meriam Report around gaps in the provision of scientific knowledge, in outreach and assistance, in technology, and in capital. And the reservation is pointed to as the site of reform. In developing the case for reform, Meriam and the survey team are clear in their belief that a number of industries can no longer function as a safety valve for challenging economic conditions on the reservation: They increase the number of persons who cannot be used effectively in the highly developed modern industrial system and must find what employment they can as sub-standard unskilled workers. In this country, with it great use of power and machinery, the possibility for the utilization of sub-standard labor is rapidly disappearing not alone in manufacturing enterprises but also in mining, lumbering, and agriculture. Thus, with off-reservation employment increasingly limited and their “sub-standard” skills increasingly obsolete, tension within reservations, and between reservations and the populations that border them, would only increase. Thus, the reservation is not simply salvageable nor are its issues, so defined, impossible to address. Rather, it need be salvaged and such gaps in the provision of scientific knowledge, in outreach and assistance, in technology, and in capital need be addressed. 36 Without adequate training and capital, without the safety valve of other industries, and with worsening economic conditions on the reservation, the authors believe that inaction vis-à-vis Indian administration and the reservation would pose a real risk. This supposed risk was one that prompted Meriam and the survey team to explicitly invoke the need for a strategy of containment: If the doctrine of the survival of the fittest is resorted to, and if these people are let alone and nothing is done for them, they do not quietly and promptly vanish from the face of the earth as unfit. It is here that the theory of the survival of the fittest breaks down at least in modern highly organized society. They become centers for the development and spread of infectious and contagious diseases. Their offspring tend to become progressively less fit physically and mentally for making their way in the world. They contribute out of proportion to their numbers to those who have ultimately to be cared for in penal, correctional, or charitable institutions.52 State intervention—from counter-violence to the “disinterested” provision of knowledge, technology, and capital—in the interest of financial asset owning classes itself produces and reconfigures the racial and colonial difference being invoked. As Nikhil Pal Singh argues, modern forms of racial and colonial difference, do not issue directly from private property or the lack thereof. Rather, they emerge “from the governance of property and its interests in relationship to those who have no property and thus no calculable interests, and who are therefore imagined to harbor a **potentially criminal** disregard for propertied order.”53 The invocation of “infectious and contagious diseases” when describing the risk of unaddressed poverty and hunger points to precisely this process with regard to Indianness in particular. That is, the rearticulation of Indianness as an economically impoverished, techno-scientificallydeficient, and improperly administered category of colonial difference and provisional catalyst follows from such concerns regarding Native peoples’ poverty and hunger. Meriam and the survey staff continue with their analogy of containment following from such considerations. As stated, without the provision of scientific knowledge, outreach and assistance, technology, and capital by the federal government, and overall improvement of the reservation, Native peoples are understood as having no knowable properties beyond their criminal propensity and open-ended threat potential.54 In this context, the provision of knowledge, technology, and capital itself becomes a type of state counter-violence in the interest of financial asset owning classes.55 In the same section on "A General Policy for Indian Affairs," describing the need to salvage the reservation, the authors expressed their **objection to "leaving sub-standard people alone."** They feared that in leaving their "real suffering and discontent" unaddressed, without cultivating the habit of self-reliance and social autonomy, they would "furnish fertile fields for the lower type of agitators who take advantage of discontent and ignorance to promote movements which are destructive rather than constructive."56 “Against the perceived threat of Native peoples’ poverty, U.S. state, corporate, and philanthropic institutions developed new modes of administration and the provision of new methods of agricultural production and natural resource management to secure their 37 investment in U.S. capital accumulation. As an exercise in the risk management of U.S. settler capitalism, the crisis faced by Native peoples bound to the reservation—so defined—thus began to find their solution.

#### Agricultural colonialism is the neo-plantation complex – Blackness becomes fungible, raw material for the production of economic value while Indianness becomes the justification for endless policing and military violence. Inevitably produces the creation of marginal “safety zones”, free of Black and Native radicality, which preserve the supremacy of Whiteness.

Ayazi 2018

(Hossein – PhD Candidate in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management @ the University of California-Berkeley, “Race, Containment, and the Settler-Imperial Politics of the Green Revolution”, dissertation) // zh

PART 1. Green Revolution Plantations and Reservations Woods’ argument concerning the early-twentieth century emergence of the “neo-plantation complex”—which gutted the historic Southern Black land and labor reform agenda and laid the ground for the U.S. agricultural and rural development agenda globally—offers a way to conceptualize **the anti-Black and settler colonial genealogy of the Green Revolution** this dissertation aims to develop. Specifically, the plantation itself offers a starting point for elucidating this genealogy vis-à-vis former, and the reservation offers a starting point for 5 elucidating this genealogy vis-à-vis the latter. Each material, spatial, and discursive formation organizes and operates as a channel for, “Black fungibility” and “Indianness,” respectively, as key conditions of possibility for U.S. geopolitical power and transnational capital, and U.S. control of the significations of justice, democracy, law, and terror through which they operate. Section A. The Plantation in Transit In an effort to account for the processes, relations, and symbolic economies that Black bodies and representations of Black embodiment produce and sustain within New World geographies, scholars have gone considerable lengths to show that slavery connotes an ontological status for Blackness. 21 In other words, the constituent elements of slavery are not exploitation and alienation but accumulation and fungibility—the “raw material” for infinite forms of use. 22 As Tiffany Lethabo King states, Black bodies in their “fluttering, stretching, and changing states have operated as a symbol of unstable borders, processes, and the shifting power relations.”23 As symbols of unstable borders, processes, and shifting power relations, Black fungibility has been key to how peoples and places could be imagined as manipulable, fostering accumulation, and an open landscape of flux. The plantation landscape—both “actual and imagined”—and plantation logics organize such limitless possibility. 24 In other words, the plantation is a key spatial unit of Black captivity and fungibility. As Katherine McKittrick states, the plantation logic culminates in long-standing, uneven racial geographies. The social, political, economic implications of Black fungibility-cum-“plantocracy” are far reaching. In working through the socioeconomic logic of the plantocracies, George Beckford had put forth what has become known as his “plantation thesis” or his “plantation economy thesis.” According to McKittrick, Beckford’s thesis names a few dynamics concerning the global expansion and implications of the plantation economy: First, that the plantations of transatlantic slavery constituted a global economy. Second, that this plantation history generated U.S. and European metropolitan wealth while exacerbating dispossession among enslaved and indentured peoples. Third, it instituted an uneven and distinctly racialized economy that remained post-emancipation and post-independence movements in the Americas. Finally, Beckford’s thesis names the colonial logic of the plantation, which continues to define many aspects of post-slave life.25 As a key spatial unit of Black captivity and fungibility, and toward the production of longstanding, uneven racial geographies, scholars thus argue that the logic of the plantation is itself “migratory.” McKittrick states that, in agriculture, banking, and mining, in trade and tourism, and across other colonial and postcolonial spaces a plantation logic characteristic of (but not identical to) slavery emerges in the present both ideologically and materially. 26 Such transit regarding the plantation logics vis-à-vis agricultural development across colonial and postcolonial spaces is precisely how this dissertation conceptualizes the implications of Woods’ argument as it develops its U.S. slave and settler capital genealogy of the Green Revolution. As Woods states, the agricultural-social transformation conducted in the Delta was constructed in 6 four stages: "the capitalization of planters through the [1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act] crop reduction program and other subsidies during the early 1930s; the mass eviction of sharecroppers; the dominance of the tractor and wage labor regime by the early 1940s; and, by the mid-1950s, the introduction of the mechanical cotton picker, the elimination of hired labor, and the diversification of the regional economy, followed by the introduction of high yield cotton, new pesticides, and new herbicides."27 Toward the construction of this “neo-plantation complex,” which eliminated the remainder of plantation residents and “thoroughly destroyed and reordered” Southern Black community life, these transformations had the same genealogy as the Green Revolutions launched worldwide by U.S. firms and the federal government. 28 From this theoretical, historical, and analytical starting point, this dissertation further attends to how the plantation economy changed in the early-twentieth century, and how such changes extended globally from then on into the 1950s **toward the consolidation of postwar U.S. state power and transnational capitalism**. Section B. The Reservation in Transit The plantation offers a starting point for developing a genealogy of the Green Revolution that accounts for anti-Black forms of subjection, administration, and governance at the locus of U.S. agricultural and rural development beginning in the early-twentieth century. At the same time, the reservation and its logic of containment offers the same with regard to contemporaneous and interlinked settler colonial forms of subjection, administration, and governance concerning Native peoples. As with the anti-Black forms of subjection, administration, and governance, this dissertation understands the reservation and the logic of containment as material and discursive structures that organize and channel Indianness as an object of knowledge and governance. Popular understandings of what precisely constitutes “Indianness” have changed over time and across various contexts. 29 The “noble savage,” the “brutal savage,” the “ecological Indian,” and other representations of Native peoples and have been used to evoke fear, desire, and other feelings, and prescribe official and unofficial courses of action by the U.S. settler state and other actors. This collection of the terms of Indianness reflects the capacity of representations of Native peoples to move across time and place—each emerging and circulating in ways that facilitated and buttressed U.S. settler capitalism. At the same time, these terms also reflect the capacity of Indianness to produce and sustain settler spatial potential and facilitate settler selfactualization. That is, as Mark Rifkin argues, figurations of Indianness participate in a broader set of normalizations that cast the social, spatial, political, and economic infrastructure of the U.S. settler state as given.30 So too does Indianness participate in the broader normalization of the watchwords of modern liberalism and thus the global divisions and asymmetries on which the liberal tradition depends.31 As Jodi Byrd states, U.S. cultural and political preoccupations with indigeneity and the reproduction of Indianness serve to facilitate, justify, and maintain Anglo-American hegemonic mastery over the significations of justice, democracy, law and terror.”32 Altogether, therefore, and not entirely unlike Blackness as the “raw material for infinite forms of use,” Indianness operates as a symbol of unstable borders, processes, and shifting power relations, and as Gerald Vizenor argues, it substitutes for (rather than points to) engagements with Native peoples and “the tribal real.”33 Just as the plantation is a key material, spatial, and discursive formation that organizes, and operates as a channel for “Black fungibility,” so too is the migratory potential of Indianness governed by an analogous formation.34 Specifically, settler states maintain their authority not solely through what Patrick Wolfe has termed the “logic of elimination,” but also through what Lomawaima and McCarty label a corresponding “safety zone” or as Noelani Goodyear-Ka'opua names a “logic of containment.”35 These **"safety zones" contain Indigenous relations and knowledge within particular ideological and physical boundaries**. Pulling from K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, Goodyear-Ka'opua states that “such containment can manifest in a number of forms: geographically, particularly as reservations or small school spaces; politically, **such as legal-recognition frameworks** that seek to subsume sovereignty within the settler state’s domestic laws; and ideologically, including school curricula that allows minimal Indigenous history and culture and only does so **to maintain its marginality.**36 As a key spatial unit of the potential of Indianness for the U.S. settler state, and toward the production of long-standing, uneven racial geographies, the reservation and the logic of containment behind it are also “migratory,” like the plantation. In other words, the territorial, political, and economic ambitions of the U.S. settler state manifest through figurations of Indianness and organized by the socio-spatial unit of the reservation extend beyond the borders of the U.S. settler state itself, much like the plantocracies that operationalize Black fungibility toward the production of uneven racial geographies. As Byrd states, not only is Indianness the "contagion through which U.S. empire orders the place of peoples within its purview."37 The United States also routinely uses executive, legislative, juridical means to effectively make “Indian” those peoples and nations who stand in the way of U.S. empire and its economic interests. 38 Thus, alongside the plantation, the migratory “logic of containment” offers a way to develop a genealogy of the Green Revolution that accounts for settler colonial forms of subjection, administration, and governance at the locus of U.S. agricultural and rural development beginning in the early-twentieth century. Toward the development of such a genealogy, Philip Deloria’s work, like that of Clyde Woods’, offers a crucial starting point here. Contemporaneous with the transformation of the plantation economy of the U.S. South, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1933 allowed tribes to draft their own constitutions, and governing and policing structures, yet made the documents subject to approval by the Secretary of the Interior while maintaining the supervisory presence of Indian Office employees on reservations. The implications of this seemingly disinterested change were soon clear. Deloria states, “One of the main reasons for creating tribal councils was the need for central authorities to negotiate and approve business or governmental initiatives. Councils, according to the federal government, had the political and legal power to negotiate and sign deals for resource extraction or further land cessions.” The ultimately self-interested development of a Native market agrarianism would have far-reaching implications beyond the relation between tribal governments and the federal government alone. 8 Specifically, Deloria argues, the relation between tribal governments and the federal government developed under the Indian Reorganization Act prefigured how U.S. imperialism worked across the remainder of the twentieth century—an important transformation of the reservation that matched the transformation of the plantation in both timing and global significance. As Deloria argues in detail, early-twentieth century Indian administration and later articulations of U.S. empire shared much: nominally independent governments, largely dependent on the United States, overseen by imperial agents, with a divided populace subject to new forms of exploitation of land and resources. No longer domination, conquest, and dispossession, per se, but now semi-autonomy and limited empowerment under the banners of ‘self-determination’ and ‘freedom.’”39 From these theoretical, historical, and analytical starting points, this dissertation attends to how exactly both such transformations of the plantation and the reservation expanded globally from the 1920s to the 1950s toward the consolidation of postwar U.S. state power bearing the agency of transnational capitalism. Section C. The Plantation and Reservation in Transit By framing the transformations of the plantation and reservation as analogous and contemporaneous transformations that prefigured the Green Revolution, this dissertation invites an analysis of how slavery’s afterlife and U.S. settler colonialism together interface in mid-twentieth century formations of U.S. imperialism. In doing so it leaves room to build upon joint theorizations of both migratory logics. Tiffany Lethabo King’s scholarship in particular offers much by way of such joint theorizations. “Blackness as expansion and spatial possibility,” King states, “becomes a constituting feature of settler spatial imagination rather than just another human laborer exploited as a mere technology to produce space.”40 Conversely, King argues that “settler colonialism’s normalizing power enacts genocide against Native peoples (disappears Native people) but it also shapes and structures anti-Black racism. Settler colonialism’s use of the slave body to make settled space (the plantation) also produces Black bodies as property.”41 As such, King states, “settler colonial power . . . works through the institutions, everyday cultures and spatial practices of slavery create the plantation as a key spatial unit of Black captivity and Native disappearance.” Thus, understood jointly, the “settlement/plantation” as King describes it, is a transferable (i.e., “migratory”) form of disciplinary and spatial power that is used to make colonial and settler colonial space even without the presence of white settlers themselves. 42 While such joint theorization is useful, this dissertation recognizes that anti-Black and settler colonial forms of subjection, administration, and governance need not always maintain Black captivity and Native disappearance as their goal. Rather, these become, at times and across contexts, requisite outcomes of the risk management of racial capitalism. Further, this dissertation recognizes that these two dynamics are not always bound in clearly discernable ways, nor always in agreement. As such, this dissertation recognizes that the differently situated histories of Indigeneity, slavery, trade, and immigration give rise to linked, but not identical, genealogies of the mid-twentieth techno-scientific and capital-intensive U.S. agricultural and 9 rural development agenda. Rather, this dissertation recognizes that these make up a multifaced, flexible, and contradictory set of provisions. 43 Together, therefore, this dissertation forecloses neither treatment of the archive of the “Green Revolution”—that which might center settler colonialism and that which might center anti-Blackness—nor does it foreclose an analysis of where they overlap and where they diverge. Toward the development of this slave and settler genealogy of the Green Revolution, this dissertation centers on the elements of either dynamics—or both dynamics—enunciated within a particular time, setting, and social, political, and economic context.

#### You should evaluate agricultural practice as a structure of governance – institutions, corporations, farmers, and advocates all contribute to the colonial project of settlement. The choice is clear: bureaucratic divestment of ethical responsibility or a clarion call for decolonial disobedience.

Laforge and McLachlan, 2018

(Julia M.L. – Department of Environment and Geography @ the University of Manitoba, and Stéphane M. – Department of Environment and Geography @ the University of Manitoba, “Environmentality on the Canadian Prairies: Settler-Farmer Subjectivities and Agri-Environmental Objects”, *Antipode* 50.2, shae)

Introduction The “common sense” assumptions about farming on the Canadian Prairies have been formed through interactions of soil, water, seeds, politics, histories, cultures, and the agency of farmers themselves. Federal governments, institutions, and corporations have all affected the attitudes, discourse, and behaviour of Canadian farmers since Confederation in 1876 as part of an ongoing colonial project to settle the land, assert sovereignty, and create an export-based agricultural economy (Braun 2002; Cunfer 2005; Daschuk 2013; Potyondi 1995; Russell 2012). As a result, farming practices and the Prairie landscapes have changed dramatically in the past 200 years since Euro-Canadian exploration and settlement; from native grassland disturbance to dismissal of prairie fire regimes and the extirpation of the bison, through the ravages of the Great Depression, followed by advancements in mechanization and industrialization, and eventually the rise of agribusiness and neoliberal agricultural policies (Cunfer 2005; Owram 1980; Potyondi 1995; Savage 2004). Empirical details of these changes have been well rehearsed by scholars of these landscapes (Owram 1980; Russell 2012; Waiser 2005), but the ways that policies, in this case analysed as technologies of environmentality, have changed discourses, attitudes, and behaviours of prairie Canadian settler-farmers are still poorly understood. This process required the shifting of identities and subjectivities, and has been fraught with conflict and resulted in ongoing land-use struggles, environmental destruction, and a recent decline of rural communities. This research explores the subtle transformation of “common sense” attitudes towards farming through environmentality in order to provide new insights into the histories and geographies of agriculture, land, and food systems on the Canadian Prairies, particularly since the Great Depression. The decisions that a farmer makes has dramatic effects on the landscape, from production decisions regarding which crops to grow and how to grow them, the drainage of wetlands, and the planting or removal of trees. These decisions have implications for the construction of railways and roads to move agricultural goods, the (de)construction of grain elevators, the location of grain-handling facilities, all of which have changed the landscape on the Canadian Prairies. Farmer decisions shape local environments, but they also produce wide-ranging externalities. Farmers’ bodies, behaviours, decisions, and management practices have the potential to change water flow and quality in downstream rivers (Wheater and Gober 2013), to reduce or increase soil erosion across the region (Amichev et al. 2015), and can even contribute to weather patterns downwind as broadleaf crops such as canola have been shown to change evapotranspiration patterns (Raddatz 1998). Farmers are not making such decisions in isolation; they are responding to economic, socio-cultural, political, and technical influences that come through talking to their neighbours, seed and fertilizer company consultants, university researchers, extension workers, and engagement with media. These decisions are also inaugurated in conjunction with state farming policies and produce emblematic and “correct” prairie landscapes, yet the vision for these landscapes can represent stark contrasts over time. Thus, through these on-farm decisions, farmers are effectively recreating the landscape in the image of state and capitalist interests. In this paper, we examine the shifting subjectivity (Gibson-Graham 2006; Harris 2009) of dominant discourses that define what it means to be a “good” farmer (Burton 2004; McGuire et al. 2013) on the Canadian Prairies and how soil, water, and seeds are framed as technologies of governance. We argue that the current “good” farmer subjectivity of industrial, productivist agriculture is part of a centuries-long process of environmentality in which the Canadian state has shaped identities of both settler-farmers and Indigenous people. This colonial project to create an export-based agriculture regime relied on the creation of two separate and distinct subjectivities and sets of relations with nature, which at the same time were contingent on and reproduced by each other. We explore how the history and the spatiality of the white settler-farmer men, and later their families, who worked to turn “unproductive” land into orderly fields, have been shaped by the process of governmentality and environmentality, following the work of Agrawal (2005) and others (see Braun 2000; Kosek 2006; Li 2007; Tsing 2005), who also use these frameworks to explore human–environment interactions. The process of environmentality creates environmental subjects who then act to create an image of the environment that is enabled by state actors and institutions in order to ensure productive access to environmental objects, such as water, soil, and crops like wheat and canola. This paper will examine how environmentality can explain historical and current patterns in Canadian Prairie farmer subjectivities. We begin by exploring the concept of environmentality and how it has been used to explore various environmental subject- and object-making processes. After exploring the pre-settlement context in Canada and how the making of a state vision of Indigenous subjectivities facilitated the establishment of and subsequent domination by settler-farmers and settler culture, we examine the environmental objects that governments sought to manage through the institution of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) (established in 1935 and ended in 2013 by the federal government). A second example focuses on the shifting materiality of the seeds used to grow the main crops on the Canadian Prairies, by looking at the role of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) (started by farmers in 1935 and endorsed by Parliament, its monopoly status was ended in 2012 by the federal government) as well as public and private crop breeding projects and policies. These case studies allow the exploration of how soil, water and seeds were all shaped by industry and state institutions into objects to be managed by farmers-subjects in Western Canada and how these objects in turn (re)created farmer subjectivities. These programs, policies, and institutions changed the way that farmers saw themselves, and also the way that they interacted with the environment. Yet, the influences of environmentality and governance are not all-encompassing and exploring the role of collective and individual resistances can yield important counter-narratives and subject positions that hint at how farmers’ agency and episodic influence can shift state policies, potentially reimagining the “common sense” that the state seeks to maintain (Li 2005). Environmentality on the Canadian Prairies Sometimes called eco-governmentality or green governmentality, the concept of environmentality emerged from Michel Foucault’s theories of governmentality and biopower (Agrawal 2005; Foucault 1991, 1994; Kosek 2006). Foucault’s writing on governance includes discussions of biopower, discipline, sovereignty, and the manipulation of social norms through both the directive use of power and the more subtle manipulation of conduct of individuals (Foucault 1991; Lemke 2001). As monarchies contended with the shift towards democratically elected officials, heads of state had to continue to justify their importance to citizens in order to maintain their sovereign power (Foucault 1991). This was partially accomplished by shifting the management of the economy from families to the state so that the state could manage the population using “surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods” (Foucault 1991:92). In this way, the state could involve itself in the everyday lives of citizens and claim to be acting for the common good. Once the population has accepted that governments should be responsible for the management of the economy, public health, natural resources, and so on, they become more willing to change their behaviours based on subtle shifts in social norms directed by governments and institutions (Foucault 1991, 1994). Environmentality explores how environmental subjects are created as part of the process of governance, and especially how government policies and actions work to change individual attitudes and behaviours as they emerge out of social and political relations (Agrawal 2005; Foucault 1990). The process relies on transforming citizens into environmental subjects and natural resources into environmental objects requiring management; these natural resources are then framed as a key part of the national economy and thus the responsibility of federal governments (Agrawal 2005; Kosek 2006; Peyton and Franks 2016). The technologies of environmentality shift discourses around acceptable behaviours through bureaucratic persuasion and policy-making, market-based interventions, regulatory restrictions such as inspections or enforcement, and, on rare occasions, disciplinary punishment such as imprisonment (Dressler 2014). This shifting subjectivity of local people has been examined primarily from the perspective of raw resources such as forestry products, including in India (Agrawal 2005), Indonesia (Li 2007; Tsing 2005) and New Mexico (Kosek 2006). Many authors have made important links to colonial histories that link Indigenous people to nature, producing the simultaneous management of both people and resources in the ongoing interest of colonizers (Braun 2000; Kosek 2006; Thorpe 2012). This research expands on this literature by exploring the underemphasized experiences of rural and farmer subjects, particularly in North America. We suggest that this conceptualization could provide transformational potential for contemporary environmental subjects to engage in resistance through self-cultivation and reimagine agricultural landscapes. Making Environmental Subjects on the Canadian Prairies This paper will follow Agrawal’s (2005) narrative of environmentality, and will consider how the state claimed sovereignty over the territory that is now Canada by first gathering data on environmental objects and organizing it using statistics, ensuring that the state became the holder of knowledge. We contend that this process began in the 1600s with exploration and trade and continues today with construction of infrastructure and implementation of bureaucracies. At first, discipline and force were used to deterritorialize Indigenous communities and transform their identities through subjugation. While settler-farmers were not necessarily directly engaged in the dispossession of Indigenous people, this process allowed farming identities to be developed in relationship to policies regarding immigrant recruitment and private property regimes, interactions with neighbours and family, experiences on the land, market forces, and embodied experiences. Then, beginning in the 1930s, environmentality was further reinforced through neoliberal governmentality using coercion to regulate farmer behaviours, a process that further entrenched a set of practices and identities that ensured long-term access to and control over agricultural resources (Fletcher 2010). This neoliberalization of subjectivities resulted in the deregulation of agricultural markets, the emphasis on free market ethics, and **increased corporate control of the food system** in the 1980s. In Canada, resistance to efforts to subjugate has taken many forms, including the efforts of communities working to build self-cultivated subjectivities grounded in community-based economies (Ballamingie and Walker 2013; Gibson-Graham 2006; Laforge et al. 2016). However, the influence of the state in manipulating hegemonic narratives has changed the ways settler-farmers ~~see~~ [know] themselves in their everyday relations with the environment, to the state, and to each other. Since the exploration and settlement of Canada took place through the economic and nationalist interests of the colonial powers of Britain and France, this process of normalizing and enforcing the role of the state had largely occurred among white settlers; however, Indigenous subjugation remained a necessary step in establishing sovereignty. Early efforts to create an Indigenous environmental subject relied on the twinned process of deterritorialization and the erasure of a culture of agriculture from many Indigenous histories. **This took many discursive forms** in Canada: the Frontier, Terra Nullius, the image of the Noble Savage, or the disappearing Indian of salvage ethnography (Braun 2002; Thorpe 2012). All of these artifices **allowed** European **settlers to build a vision of civilizing the empty wilderness, or displacing a people who were not using the land “correctly**” (Harris 2004; Owram 1980). The moral and legal influence of Locke and Hobbes were at the root of settler-colonial frameworks supporting private property as the basis of civilized societies and in maintaining that agriculture was the only suitable use of land (Epp 2008; Harris 2002). As part of a land ethic of “taming the wilderness” (Cronon 1995), thousands of acres of native Prairie grasslands were ploughed under, trees were cut down, and wetlands drained to create orderly and productive fields of wheat and oats, and eventually new commercial crops like canola. In this way, governments acted to secure their role and influence by situating national economic wellbeing as a phenomenon requiring the conservation of natural resources from exploitation and poor management ~~at the hands of~~ [by] local Indigenous communities (Carter 1992; Coulthard 2014; Herriot 2016; Kosek 2006). Both the so-called “Indian agents” and missionaries, as state and church agents, saw the transition to agriculture as a civilizing practice of cultural conversion (Massie 2014; Russell 2012; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015). However, the understanding of the Canadian Prairies as non-agricultural, underutilized land was artificially created as part of the colonial process (Carter 2016; Daschuk 2013; Lowman and Barker 2015). Farming and gardening were practiced by many First Nations and Métis peoples before Euro-Canadian settlement, as evidenced from samples containing maize and other domesticated plant pollens in the sedimentary deposits of lakes across northern North America dating back approximately 1000 years (Munoz et al. 2010). However, even the emphasis on “productivity” of land ignores the many cultural and spiritual Indigenous values of land (Herriot 2016). Oral traditions and personal diaries dating back to records from 1805 often describe Indigenous agriculture as similar to current permaculture practices where seeds were planted and left to grow with minimal intervention and later harvested. This work was done primarily by women and included a diversity of related cultural and spiritual ceremonies (Carter 2016; Morrison 2011). Evidence of these management practices has been documented, including the use of fire to suppress the spread of forests on the open prairie, thus encouraging bison populations and other animal species (Savage 2004) and the management of “wild” plant species such as blueberries and wild rice (Davidson-Hunt 2003). However, this agricultural history has been effectively erased from dominant historical narratives, which emphasize an arduous survival based on hunting and gathering (Carter 1992; Russell 2012). Hunting and gathering were more than important sources of food for Indigenous people, with bison hunting in particular providing important cultural and economic value (Daschuk 2013; Russell 2012). A variety of factors including disease, the systematic extirpation of bison, concerns over state sovereignty (particularly US interest in Canadian territory), and differences in worldviews contributed to the outcome of a series of treaties negotiated between 1871 and 1921 on the Canadian Prairies (Daschuk 2013; Russell 2012). Craft (2013) describes how these treaty negotiations were interpreted differently between Indigenous people and state negotiators due largely to starkly different worldviews and legal frameworks. For example, this difference during Treaty One negotiations saw the Anishinaabe conceptions of sharing land as part of building a kinship relationship while the Canadian state saw it as an economic exchange as part of a private property regime (Craft 2013). Treaties with First Nations leaders on the Canadian Prairies allowed the state to access large tracts of land in exchange for promises including monetary compensation, access to farming equipment and training, education, and health care among others (Daschuk 2013; Epp 2008; Russell 2012). These treaties resulted in the sequestering of First Nations on reserves that were often dominated by muskeg or rocky terrain, thus guaranteeing that land suitable for agriculture remained “empty” for selection by European immigrants (Daschuk 2013). Despite the low soil fertility of most of this reserve land, many Indigenous farming efforts resulted in high yields of wheat, further evidence of existing local agricultural knowledge (Carter 2016; Tang 2003). However, this success was effectively sabotaged by changes to government policies that shifted to a more disciplinary and forceful approach after the Métis led North West Resistance in 1885 (Russell 2012). State fears of Indigenous rebellions resulted in an increased role for “Indian agents” in limiting both the mobility and economic participation of First Nations citizens and represents disciplinary environmentality (Daschuk 2013; Russell 2012; Tang 2003). Finally, the criminalization of cultural practices such as sun dances and sweat lodges demonstrated the beginning of the cultural genocide that further subjugated Indigenous people (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015). Governmentality and environmentality have “a material as well as discursive dimension: relations of power are inscribed in physical space as well as social relations” (Kooy and Bakker 2008:377). Thus, “common sense” discourses result in physical infrastructure that further entrench systems of influence and control. For example, the power of Canada’s colonial governments was widely enforced through disciplinary institutions including Residential Schools, forced relocations of communities, and flooding for hydroelectric dams and other acts of cultural genocide, which continue to have ripple effects today (Alfred 1999; Coulthard 2014; Herriot 2016; Simpson 2004). At the same time, the concept of biopower changes discursive understandings, and emphasizes the use of state policies to enhance, monitor or otherwise control the health of the population, for example by enacting sanitation programs, selective sterilization, or even vaccination programs, with the end goal of fostering a more productive population (Fletcher 2010; Kooy and Bakker 2008). As a tactic of assimilation through population management, Indigenous women who married non-status men, those not deemed “Indian” and thus no longer the responsibility of the state, also lost their treaty status. Indian Affairs Deputy Minister Duncan Campbell Scott highlighted the reason for this assimilation-by-de-legitimization in 1902 when he stated that the purpose of the Indian Act “is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department” (quoted in Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015). The tracking of people as “populations” through censuses is an important component of biopower and governmentality, which at the same time serves to dehumanize and disempower citizens (Kosek 2006). For example, compelling parents to send their children to residential schools served to dehumanise, track, and assimilate Indigenous children from 1880 until 1996 as an example of disciplinary environmentality (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015). Finally, contemporary research on environmentality has “focused on how changes in governance of the environment produces (and is part of) knowledge categories and truths that ‘socially situated actors’ come to understand, internalise and act on in terms of their natural and social environment” (Dressler 2014:250). Settler colonialism in Canada resulted in the undermining of Indigenous knowledge (Settee 2013), food systems (Morrison 2011), and identities that were forcibly removed from both land and cultural traditions (Coulthard 2014). Concurrently to the reshaping of Indigenous subjectivities, the Canadian state was also shaping the subjectivities of settler-farmers in order to foster attitudes and behaviours that would ensure the long-term management of agricultural resources. Economic and nationalist interests of the Canadian state in establishing an agricultural territory to export wheat to the British Empire was so great that, despite declaring the region unfit for agriculture in 1857, the Canadian government encouraged the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway mainline through the prairie grassland starting in 1881 (Owram 1980; Waiser 2005). The process of managing the “conduct of conduct” of farmers is part of ongoing settler colonialism in Canada where **“the intended environmental subject is individualized, entrepreneurial** and, above all, **accepting of the inherent extractive potential of** Canadian **resources**” (Peyton and Franks 2016:455). Settler-farmers who were mostly European men, and later their families, have had their subjectivities moulded using the coercive influence of environmentality since their arrival in Canada in order to establish a politically stable population to contribute to the Canadian economy (Carter 2016; Danysk 1996). Controlling Canadian agriculture involves controlling the technology and infrastructure of agriculture, once again reflecting the material dimension of governmentality (Kooy and Bakker 2008). The process of developing an agricultural export system was carefully designed to include the establishment of a railway line to move people and grain. Limiting the movement of Indigenous people to reserves also made it easier to build railways to bring settlers westward (Tang 2003). From the late 1800s until 1914, millions of settlers arrived, drawn by the provisions of the Dominion Lands/Homestead Act of 1872 which allowed settlers to settle on 160 acres (a quarter section) of land for only $10, if they cleared the land and built a home within three years (Waiser 2005). Technologies including seed varieties, livestock breeds, and equipment were often brought over by settlers themselves, but were kept from Indigenous farmers who were forced into “peasant farming” practices with poor quality farm equipment that was maladapted to Prairie farming and which often never arrived on reserves (Carter 1992; Russell 2012; Tang 2003). The selection of what were considered “good” farmers from Europe—including Ukrainians, Germans, and British immigrants—and limiting the arrival of those who were seen as less desirable—including those from Spain, Italy, or Greece (Carter 2016; Waiser 2005)—is an example of the Canadian state’s use of biopower. Immigrants were (and continue to be) subject to racial hierarchies as government programs sought to establish a “suitable” and cooperative farming population facilitated by the “whitewashing” of the image of a “good” farmer on the Canadian Prairies (Carter 2016; Danysk 1996; Daschuk 2013; Massie 2014). Women were also not “good” farmers, since “farming has uniquely retained its masculine association” (Carter 2016:381) and were not even allowed to own farmland until after 1929. Neither these material nor discursive dimensions of environmentality prevented “good” farmers from experiencing the many hardships caused by the prolonged drought and economic depression of the 1930s. At the time, there were limited government support programs to help farmers address either the biophysical or economic realities of this period, and many farmers left agriculture and sometimes Canada entirely, while others migrated further north to homestead again in less drought-prone regions (Laforge and McLeman 2013). As a result of this environmental and economic catastrophe, state agricultural and social policies were developed to help support the settler-farmer population in Western Canada while protecting large tracts of land from American interests (Knuttila 2003; Skogstad 1987). While farmers had agency within the confines of state policies, it was typically in their best interest to follow the directions that the state provided. For example, accessing newly opened land through the Homestead Act meant that land was more affordable for settler-farmers, and in turn the state achieved a dispersed population to break the soil, set up the wheat economy, and assert its dominion over this territory (Waiser 2005). This persuasive and coercive environmentality reinforced obedient settler-farmer subjectivities as those who followed state formulated practices were rewarded with land and livelihoods. Since environmentality’s primary influence is on the definition of “common sense”, farmers can themselves contribute to, resist, or reify these approaches, which can in turn affect the agricultural policies in place. An individual’s ability to resist is influenced by their diverse embodied experiences, cultural traditions, and communities; these are also what determine whether or not subjugation to state environmentality will occur. For example, between 1910 and 1940, settler-farmers confronted state subjugation by developing wheat pools and farmers’ unions in order to harness their collective marketing and advocacy power during a period of agrarian and socialist reform on the Prairies (Atkinson and McCrorie 2003; Waiser 2005). Settler-farmer resistance took the form of farmer-led initiatives like the co-operative Grain Growers Company in 1905, Wheat Pools in 1924, and the National Farmers Union in 1969 (Atkinson and McCrorie 2003; Beingessner et al. 2011). These farmer-led institutions shaped the “symbolic and cultural production” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002:981) that helped farmers until the 1970s and 1980s, when the neoliberal political ideology in Canada resulted in a shift away from welfare state policies (Skogstad 1987). This political transition was marked by changes in farmer attitudes from cooperation and agrarianism to individualism and competitiveness (Atkinson and McCrorie 2003). Since the self-cultivation of subjectivities does not supersede the presence of governmentality in the lives of settler-farmers and Indigenous people, as the neoliberal model progressed, subjectivities on the Prairies were coerced once again into accepting free-market ideologies as the state attempted to break down community-based and civil rights era communitarian values of the 1960s (Atkinson and McCrorie 2003; Eaton 2013). Environmental subjects, whether they are Indigenous, forester, or farmer, have material interests in the world around them. In this sense, subjectivities are complicit in the shaping of environmental objects in a mutual process of (re)creation (Agrawal 2005). Bodies themselves are made as both subjects and objects through processes of biopower where human health and reproduction are governed by the state so that these bodies can be used to access resources (Kosek 2006). In other words, the production of environmental objects as resources (or not) has implications for both subjectivities and materialities (Bakker and Bridge 2006). The power of state institutions to manage access to and control over natural resources in the best interests of the state is an outcome of a “common sense” discourse and resulting subjectivity that asserts that governments are best suited to manage national economies and their natural resources. In Canada, natural resources have been discursively and materially central to the economy and nationhood since Confederation, making the federal government the “natural” body responsible for the management and wise use of these critical resources (Peyton and Franks 2016). These environmental objects have been shaped by settler-farmer subjects as well as the ongoing effects of neoliberal environmentality.

#### Refuse the liberal trap of hope within legal antitrust strategies which mislocate the danger of the market as privatized consolidation rather than propertization. Even the strongest regulations can’t solve corporate capture or the inevitable ecological collapse of industrial agriculture.

Dale and Kepkiewicz 2019

(Dale – PhD candidate in the Department of Geography and Planning @ the University of Toronto, and Lauren – PhD candidate in the Department of Geography and Planning @ the University of Toronto, “Keeping ‘Our’ Land: Property, Agriculture and Tensions Between Indigenous and Settler Visions of Food Sovereignty in Canada”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46.5, shae)

Although efforts to counter consolidation and shifts in ownership are part of a collective battle to increase farmland access for small-scale farmers, they often **fail to challenge private property ownership**. For example, according to a report on farmland access in British Columbia, 67 percent of respondents ranked private ownership as their ideal type of land arrangement (Dennis and Wittman 2014, 5; cf. Wittman, Dennis, and Pritchard 2017, 312). Preferred land arrangements for settlers in Canada are thus similar to those in the United States, where **the ‘Jeffersonian agrarian ideal of independent farmers owning their own land retains its potency’** (Ruhf 2013, 2; cf. Knobloch 1996). The embeddedness of this cultural phenomenon may speak to the agrarian romanticism that some authors have suggested links farmland preservation (through private ownership) and, following Aldo Leopold, a land ethic that informs environmental stewardship (Bunce 1998). Small-scale organic farmers ~~see~~ [know] **private property as a way to ensure their substantial investments in and relationships with the land are not lost,** and to ensure the maintenance of ecologically sustainable farming practices remain in place so that local communities can access organic food. But whose communities do these conversations about land reforms account for, and what is left out of these settler discussions about land access? With a focus on issues affecting settler access to land beginning in the mid-twentieth century, settler conversations often marginalize and sidestep settler appropriation and occupation of Indigenous lands. In contrast to these settler narratives, Indigenous struggles against settler land theft have been ongoing for 500 years. These struggles have been outlined in Indigenous food sovereignty frameworks, including methods used by the settler state to violently separate Indigenous peoples from their lands (Coté 2016; ICFSC 2011; Manson 2015; Morrison 2011). Historically, European colonists carried out this forceful separation through physical and cultural genocide, illegal land grants to European settlers, and treaty negotiations that were often conducted without regard for Indigenous law, governance and interpretations, and/or negotiated under duress. For instance, in Eastern Canada in the 1700s, settlers ‘indiscriminately took over Mi’kmaw lands’ even though the Mi’kmaw and British negotiated treaties that guaranteed Mi’kmaw freedom to access and use their lands (Madden 2009, 42). With the signing of the British North America Act in 1867, these treaties were further ignored when the British gave control over Indigenous lands to the Canadian federal government and its provinces (at the time including New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Québec) – control that it ‘was not legally entitled to and in direct contravention of its own law and policies vis-à-vis Mi’kma’ki territory’ (Madden 2009, 43). As the newly formed Government of Canada looked to expand westwards, it began negotiating treaties with the particular aim to dispossess Indigenous nations of their lands. In a context where the eradication of the bison contributed to widespread famine within Indigenous communities, the Canadian government withheld food rations in order to coerce Indigenous plains nations to agree to treaty terms and conditions (Daschuk 2013, 114). While early treaties between Indigenous nations and Europeans had tended to centre on trade and security, the Canadian government used treaties as a means of land acquisition (Vowel 2016). This carried on the British tradition of misinterpreting and misusing treaty; it also contradicted Indigenous understandings of treaty as evolving relationships in need of continual renewal (which did not include relinquishing Indigenous sovereignty and rights to land) (Vowel 2016). Once treaties were established, governmental policies worked to further appropriate land and extinguish Indigenous presence on land, with agriculture being a key method of dispossession and assimilation (Carter 1990). For example, in the Prairie Provinces in the late 1880s, governmental policies of severalty instituted a system of land ownership that subdivided reserve land into smaller parcels of private property, removing control from Indigenous tribal councils (Carter 1990; Vowel 2016). This policy was instituted as a way to break up Indigenous governance systems and allow settlers to purchase parcels of reserve land. While diverse Indigenous nations opposed colonial appropriation of lands, settler governments sought to undermine Indigenous governance through policies that promoted hunger, starvation and further land appropriation as well as other forms of physical and cultural violence, including residential schools. Governmental policies continue to restrict access to Indigenous lands, as has the construction of hydroelectric dams and mining operations that have flooded and contaminated waterways and hunting grounds. At the heart of these policies is the failure to recognize that both Crown land and private property are either unceded Indigenous territory (e.g. 80 percent of British Columbia is not covered by any treaty; Klein 2014, 371), or land that was historically ‘acquired’ through unscrupulous practices (Daschuk 2013) and treaties that the state has failed to honour or understand (as clearly demonstrated in the case of the Site C dam in British Columbia4). In these ways, land grabbing is not only a corporate and neoliberal project but also an ongoing colonial state project. The absence of conversations within settler food sovereignty narratives regarding ownership changes that occurred before settler farmers acquired land is significant, as the erasure of Indigenous presence within Canadian geographies is a key method of settler colonialism (see Lawrence and Dua 2005; Tuck and Yang 2012). Understanding this lacuna is vital as food sovereignty movements in Canada are still in their ‘initial stages’, as is much of the associated scholarship (Desmarais and Wittman 2014, 1169; cf. Kneen 2011). Although there is a growing body of literature on Canadian food sovereignty,5 we have more work to do to understand how food sovereignty in Canada is different from the movement elsewhere. For example, small-scale settler farmers have yet to substantially engage with the ways that they are positioned differently than Indigenous and racialized food providers both in Canada and in the Global South. This includes engaging with questions such as: What does it mean for settler farmers to call themselves ‘people of the land’ (Friedmann 2011, 186; cf. Massicotte 2010, 86) when their farmland is on appropriated territory? Although conversations about these tensions are beginning to occur in some settler spaces % (i.e. ICFSC 2011; Morrison 2008), for the most part settler Canadian food sovereignty & movements continue to focus on agricultural production as a right of small-scale and ' family farm producers, irrespective of their positionality within the Canadian colonial project. This focus persists despite Indigenous calls to complicate understandings of food sovereignty by moving beyond agriculture to engage with food provisioning practices \* such as hunting, fishing, and gathering (Morrison 2011), as well as food systems issues "+ beyond (although closely related to) capitalist dispossession. Through the People s Food "" Policy Project (PFPP 2011), Indigenous knowledge holders and activists have also " expanded understandings of food sovereignty by adding a seventh pillar food is "$ sacred to the original six outlined in the NyŽlŽni Declaration. 6 Taking up the challenge "% of shifting food sovereignty discourses in Canada will involve engaging at a conceptual "& level as well as with the reality that Indigenous struggles for land are occurring daily. "' These include Indigenous resistance to extractive industrial projects such as pipeline "( construction and mining activities (Klein 2014), and the ongoing assertion of Indigenous ") food provisioning practices despite settler resistance (Latulippe 2015; Simpson 2016). "\*#+ In sum, a thorough development of food sovereignty will mean that the episteme of ownership needs to be rethought (Trauger 2014, 1144), because, as we argue below, ## private property arrangements can exacerbate inequalities driven by settler colonial and #$ capitalist relations. Therefore, conversations about private property provide one theoretical space but certainly not the only space that can be used to tease out tensions around questions such as Land for what? (Mart’nez-Torres and Rosset, 2014, 985) and Land for whom? (Rosset, 2013). In turn, these questions lead us to think about how people come to land differently, particularly within settler colonial states such as Canada, #) as well as the ways that different relationships often form the basis for competing claims #\* to land. $+$"$# 3. Landownership and the unsustainability of capitalist agriculture $$$% As La V’a Campesina and its allies have contributed to the evolution of food sovereignty, $& the concept has become increasingly intertwined with agroecology . The network $' emphasizes that agroecology is centered on ecologically sustainable food production (i.e. $( engaging in productive agriculture while striving to maintain biodiversity and other $) aspects of natural ecosystems), but also that the concept encompasses much more (LVC $\* 2015). They argue that agroecology includes, for example, access to and control over the 11 commons (including seeds, land, water and knowledge) and transforming structures of " power to allow for direct, fair distribution chains (ibid.). Agroecology is thus shifting # from a primary focus on technical (scientific or farm-based) practices to a social $ movement that overlaps substantially with efforts to advance food sovereignty (Altieri % and Toledo 2011; MŽndez et al. 2016). &' The adoption of agroecology in a settler Canadian context brings up several tensions. ( First, North American definitions of agroecology often do not make the same links between environmental stewardship and private property ownership as do the politicized definitions described above. Second, agroecology as a central strategy of food "+ sovereignty may not be appropriate in Canada, where settler agriculture has been used as "" a key method to colonize Indigenous lands, and where agroecology does not necessarily "# prioritize or support Indigenous food systems centered around hunting, gathering, and "$ fishing. Third, while agroecology is at the very early stages of being discussed by "% farmers organizations and food sovereignty proponents in Canada, it has the potential to be interpreted along relatively productivist lines as opposed to Indigenous views of food "' systems as sacred. Without engaging with these tensions, agroecology may perpetuate "( traditional agrarian views of land stewardship including settler rights to produce food on ") Indigenous lands. "\*#+ The potential for agroecology to perpetuate colonial relations in a Canadian context is #" apparent in proposals for land reforms and alternative land access that have yet to ## question the sanctity of settler property ownership. As such, settler Canadian proposals #$ for alternative land arrangements are often compatible with Locke’s view, articulated in #% the seventeenth century, that alienable property rights are essential to improve land and resources. This argument suggests that if people profit directly from such improvements #' only then will they expend the labour necessary to realize them (Mansfield 2007; #( MacPherson 1978, chap. 2). From a political economy perspective, it is important to #) challenge such ideologies because (1) **landownership is central to capitalism**, and (2) capitalism **and** capitalist agriculture are **inherently unsustainable**. As we discuss below, $+ these two issues need to be brought into conversation with the realities of the settler $" colonial state in order to question settler food sovereignty narratives that center $# agroecology as the solution to issues of (settler farmer) access to land in Canada. $$$% In terms of the centrality of landownership to capitalism, Marx s observations about primitive accumulation and ground rent underline the direct connections between $' landownership and tendencies within capitalism that drive privatization, competition, and $( profit-seeking behaviour (Marx 1977; cf. Patnaik 2007). In addition to landownership being tied to the push for surplus value through the extraction of absolute ground rent, enclosing the commons and developing modern agriculture was crucial to the separation of workers from their means of production, and the disciplining of the labour %" force through wage relations (ibid.). Of course, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth %# centuries, landownership increasingly became a source of investment for capitalists, with %$ agricultural land being a particular target a trend that has only increased in recent years %% (Henderson 1998; GRAIN 2010). %& 12 " While much could be said about these connections, we stress that settler discussions of # food sovereignty and private landownership in Canada ought to consider the $ environmental and social problems generated by capitalism as an economic and % ecological system. Environmental problems (from climate change to biodiversity loss) & are not simply consequences of capitalist accumulation; **they are constitutive of it** (Moore ' 2011). **Capitalism does not have an ecological regime**, Jason Moore argues, **[it] is an ecological regime** (2011, 2; emphasis in original). This assertion makes sense when we ) consider the ecological relations inherent in the unavoidable quest for profit within \* capitalism. Accumulation for accumulation’s sake became a socially imposed necessity "+ under capitalism, as capitalists are compelled by competition driven by the private ownership of the means of production to repeatedly reinvest a portion of the surplus "# value they capture through production relations (Smith [1984] 2010). This is to say "$ nothing of the contradiction within capitalist relations in terms of the conditions of "% production that result from the fact that competition forces capitalists to externalize "& environmental costs, which in the long run drives up the costs of production due to "' ecosystem degradation (O Connor 1988). "(") As various scholars have observed, the ecological relations evident in capitalism extend "\* to capitalist agriculture. As Marx (1977, 638) wrote, **all progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil**. He was referring to the disruption of biological circuits, the creation of a metabolic rift caused by the intensive farming practices demanded by competitive production (Wittman #$ 2009). These practices depleted the soil of vital nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus #% and potassium, and problems only intensified when chemical fertilizers were introduced #& to farming (Weis 2017). Along with synthetic pesticides, the production and use of #' chemical fertilizers relies on fossil fuels, often requiring the long-distance transportation #( of inputs, and resulting in the chemical contamination of land and waterways as well as #) greenhouse gas emissions (Vermeulen et al. 2012). #\*$+ Simply put, capitalism s demand for profit and productivity led to agriculture s $" industrialization; reversing these trends is what agroecology aims to accomplish, through $# a range of production practices. Agroecological methods do not deplete key nutrients and $$ replace them through artificial means, but instead foster biological diversity, both in the $% soil and above it (see MŽndez et al. 2016). While La V’a Campesina s understanding of $& agroecology highlights the need for food sovereignty movements to challenge notions of $' private property, settler Canadian articulations have yet to employ the concept in this $( way. For example, if agroecology is taken up in accordance with settler perspectives on $) food sovereignty in Canada, its adoption is likely to perpetuate a focus on productivity, $\* profits, and agrarian private property ownership all of which will tend to run counter to %+ Indigenous views of land relations and food sovereignty and which fail to challenge %" settler claims to Indigenous lands. %#%$ To return to La V’a Campesina s discussions of agroecology then, political struggles that advance alternative notions of land access that address systemic inequities produced by %& 13 colonialism, race, class, and gender are needed, while at the same time these struggles " must face the reality that a just and ecological food system in a context such as Canada # cannot be centred on agrarian food provisioning. Thus, we argue that settler Canadian $ food sovereignty movements need to move towards La V’a Campesina s % conceptualization of agroecology as demanding the dismantling of private property & ownership, while simultaneously developing agroecology not as the central food ' provisioning system, but rather as a practice that supports non-agrarian and agrarian ( Indigenous food systems. )\*"+ 4. Indigenous (food) sovereignty and settler landownership """# As we work through the ways that private property ownership is often embedded in "$ settler food sovereignty discourses and practices relating to land in Canada, we turn to "% Indigenous conceptions of food sovereignty as well as theories of settler colonialism. We "& argue that these frameworks provide a different and vital critique about why it is "' necessary to unpack private landownership within a settler state such as Canada. These "( frameworks also help to theorize how to do so without reifying settler relations to land ") and Indigenous nations. Such an analysis is important if we wish to ensure that food "\* sovereignty movements work towards equitable food systems as well as strengthening #+ relationships between Indigenous and settler food activists, which are beginning to #" develop in some spaces within the food sovereignty movement in Canada (e.g. through ## the Indigenous Circle within Food Secure Canada, and between the Working Group on #$ Indigenous Food Sovereignty and the British Columbia Food Systems Network). #%#& Indigenous food sovereignty as well as Indigenous studies scholarship demand #' engagement with land in the context of ongoing Indigenous presence, resurgence, and #( struggles for land and sovereignty. This **engagement requires food sovereignty** #) movements center Indigenous responsibilities to and relationships with land, and #\* support Indigenous actions **to restore these relationships through the revitalization of** $+ Indigenous foods and **ecological knowledge systems** as they assert control over their own $" foods and practicesÓ (CotŽ 2016, 2). As Coulthard and Simpson (2016) argue, land provides a basis for Indigenous nations to revitalize their political orders and governance $$ structures without replicating the white supremacist nature of settler colonialism. In this $% context, Indigenous food sovereignty is intricately interlinked with Indigenous political, $& social, and cultural resurgence, which center on Indigenous relationships with land (Grey $' and Patel 2014). Furthermore, Indigenous food sovereignty goes beyond La V’a $( Campesina s calls to respect oneself and the earth, by highlighting the reciprocal $) relationship between Indigenous peoples and their lands; as Grey and Patel point out, $\* Òjust as people have a right to their land, the land has a right to its peopleÓ (2014, 5).

#### Seed sovereignty comes first – it’s the only way to combat propertized agricultural relation which reduces all land and life to pure, commodified material. This is the key internal link to all new modes of social relations.

**Escobar 16**

Laura. 2016. The Political Ontology Of Seeds: Seed Sovereignty Struggles In An Indigenous Resguardo In Colombia. Conclusion: pgs. 340-345) [https://doi.org/10.17615/4k8s-t747 //](https://doi.org/10.17615/4k8s-t747%20//) zh

5. Community Seed Economies: Rethinking Commons and Markets Chapter 6 explored why and how recovering creole seeds have become fundamental to the defense and reinvention of collective indigenous selves in Riosucio, particularly seed savers associated with the grassroots organization Asproinca, and the indigenous governments or cabildos. Creole seeds embody the historical agri-food worlds –memories, practices, knowledges– of Emberá-Chamí people in this region. To be sure, the defense and conservation of creole seeds is another kind of ‘engaged universal,’ or place-based conjugations of the agroecological paradigm with ‘traditional’ farming and food practices, and some aspects of Fedecafé’s model of coffee production. In this chapter, I analyzed three seed sovereignty initiatives to explain how creole seeds and anti-GM activism have become part of indigenous struggles for identity and autonomy. First, the seed savers’ networks that conserve, exchange, and breed creole seeds at different scales from on-farm to the national –and even international– through seed fairs. Second, the 2009 declaration of the Ca amomo and Lomaprieta resguardo as one of the few “Transgenic-Free Territories” in Colombia. This declaration forbade the cultivation and consumption of GM seeds and foods, particularly in public and private food security and agricultural development programs; expressed the commitment to defend traditional seeds, ancestral knowledges and territory; and mandated that local food sovereignty programs were based on the use of creole seeds from local seed savers or obtained through exchange with other seed saving networks. 341 Third, the Community Seed House in this same resguardo which temporarily stores and reproduce creole seeds and organically-grown commercial seeds to supply cabildos food sovereignty programs and conserve agrobiodiversity in the resguardos. I argued that these three initiatives evidenced not only a community seed economy (Gibson-Graham), but also the diversity of seed-human worlds that include seed barter, giftgiving, and fair prices; inter-epistemic dialogue between ‘traditional knowledges’, agroecology, and critical western science; or alternative seed certification systems that reflect the manifold values of seeds from ritualistic, to medicinal, to agronomical and dispute the primacy of industrial scientific breeding of ‘improved seeds,’ which seed savers refers to as semillas desmejoradas or “degraded seeds.” Finally, in this chapter I analyzed how these seed sovereignty initiatives in Riosucio have prompted conflicts with the government and corporations which enforce seed certification and intellectual property rights on seeds, as well as promote GM crops. These seed conflicts in Riosucio originated in the implementation of Ica’s Resolution 970 that requires the exclusive use of certified seed and prohibits on-farm seed saving, as mandated by the US-Colombia FTA, that erodes seed commons. Furthermore, **these seeds conflicts are at the base of broader issues, namely indigenous rights to self-government and the defense of their own agricultural practices**. Seed conflicts are then part of larger conflicts over autonomy and ‘modelos propios’ or placebased ways of inhabiting the territory that defy the developmentalist governmentality of the agrobiotechnology apparatus. In this sense, seed sovereignty is an integral part of food sovereignty and self-government. I end this section by clarifying that not all farmers in Riosucio are radically against GM, hybrid and other industrial improved seed. Many of these farmers have, in different degrees, 342 adopted the Green Revolution paradigm which is difficult to challenge and subvert; other are in a too vulnerable position to reject GM and other ‘improved’ kinds of seeds, be them in the form of food aid, agricultural and food security programs, or as a condition for obtaining credit. As I and Elizabeth Fitting (2016) wrote: “With the current coffee-crisis and the strengthening of indigenous politics, farmers in Riosucio are diversifying their production and increasing the cultivation of creole varieties, but this may not be as fast and steady as seed-savers networks and indigenous leaders hope for. Furthermore, seed sovereignty, the conservation of creole crops, agroecology, and anti-GM activism are increasingly important but not fully among the main issues currently on the political agenda of Colombian agrarian organizations as land reform, the peace process, and opposition to mega-mining and FTAs continue to be more salient issues. This may prove challenging for on-going and future alliances between seed savers networks and other agrarian movements in the country”. 6. Seed Relational Ontologies By looking at Seed Systems in Riosucio, in Chapter 6, I bring a bio-centric perspective to identity-making processes. A possibility opens for conceiving what Holland calls figured worlds that become embodied in –and through– non-human beings, such as seeds, who are both agents and socio-natural ‘artifacts’ that shape indigeneity in Riosucio. Seeds-human worlds in Riosucio are based on a sense of multispecies care and coevolution that supports practices of reciprocity, autonomy and diversity. Seeds may represent domination and exploitation for peasants and indigenous people when enclosed by powerful outside market actors, such as biotechnology corporations, and genetically modified. However, creole seeds may also constitute a figured world with humans; a living being who is material, symbolic and spiritually significant to definitions of personhood in the Colombian Andes. There are plenty of processes by which Asproinca farmers and seeds become together in their territory: the cyclical expenditure and renovation of energy or fuerza through cultivating and consuming seeds; the ritual bondages associated to agricultural cycles where seeds figure 343 prominently; the transmission of identities and knowledges in seed conservation; or the ways seed walk the territory alongside farmers as they are exchanged. One important caveat. The meaning of ‘creole’ seeds and its association with indigenous identities and struggles is historically and contextually dependent in Riosucio. The clearest example is coffee. Coffee has been both a vehicle of coloniality and resistance. Coffee is native to Africa, was then brought as a plantation crop to the Americas during European colonization and arrived in Riosucio in the hands of a later colonization by antioque o settlers. However, shade-grown coffee varieties became traditional since the 1960s with Fedecafé’s implementation of the Green Revolution model that included sun-grown varieties. 7. The Epistemological and Ontological Dimensions of Seed Conflicts In a nutshell, in this dissertation I argued that seed conflicts in Colombia are ontological and epistemological conflicts to define what seeds are, and whose knowledge and labor counts in seed development at several, interconnected dimensions: First conflicts over whether seeds are, on the one hand, commodities **that can be privately owned and monopolized using the figure of ‘invention’** under the modern corporate ontology or, on the other, closely related beings that constitute a commons, under a more relational ontology. I showed how seed savers in Riosucio challenge this corporate seed ontology by arguing that creole varieties are not resources to be ‘discovered’, ‘invented’, and commodified by corporations and western-based science, and that UPOV91-based laws are unconstitutional. Second, a dispute over which knowledge systems and labour define what a good seed is. For the industry, it is seeds ‘improved’ using western techno-science for capital accumulation. Hence, corporations define GM seeds as good seeds because they are homogeneous, hold commodity value in global markets, are engineered for efficient pest control, and have high 344 productivity and input-dependency. Seed savers in Riosucio challenge the superiority of industry seeds by calling them ‘degraded seeds’ and refusing to use ICA’s certification systems. In contrast, they consider creole seeds ‘good’ seeds, because they are connected to their indigenous worlds and struggles, they are free and circulate in farmers’ hands, are heterogeneous and adapted to the different agricultural systems of small-scale farmers, and contribute to seed and food sovereignty and autonomy. 8. Future Seed Journeys On a final note, I believe my dissertation opens up discussion on how **seed conflicts contribute to theorizations on non-human agency**. In my opinion, seeds are endowed with agency, not because of consciousness or subjectivity, but due to their capacity to act on others somewhat independently of those others’ –including humans’– will, meanings, designs or control. In contrast, for most Asproinca and NFS seed savers, seeds are conscious, sacred beings; their vital force or elemental emerges from a supranatural, spiritual being or substance –be it Mother Nature, the Creator, God, etc.– that is present in all living creatures. From my perspective, such vitality and agency may be thought as intrinsic to living beings in the terms proposed by systems theory; as a “propensity of living systems and organisms for selforganization and self-generation” (Capra, 2002). The agency of genes, toxins, and other proto-agents, as Bennet (2010) calls them, is clearly seen in that they exceed the control of human-led genetic manipulation by causing unforeseen effects when violently inserted into foreign genomes and organisms. Bt toxins present in GM crops travels beyond the confines of GM organisms through water, soil, wind, and metabolic networks to end up in new organisms and life networks such as breastfeeding babies, bees, cattle or monarch butterflies and producing unknown effects. Transgenes producing 345 unknown –and unaccounted for– variant proteins that may be toxic or allergenic for host organisms, including humans. **Extending agency to non-human beings is important for two reasons**. **First** because **it calls into question the objectification of nature** –inanimate objects- **that leads to** instrumentalization, **exploitation and suffering of non-human beings, such as seeds**. **Second**, and interrelated, **because considering non-humans as actants contributes to dismantle human ‘uniqueness’** and superiority **that has grounded our fantasy of control and prevented us from feeling empathy** for -and recognizing our interconnectedness and co-dependence on- other earth-beings and systems. These issues are open for further research as they are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

#### Vote aff to endorse civil disobedience against seed colonization – we advocate the illegal establishment of international seed-community networks to freely save, share, and exchange seeds.

White 2018

(Rowen – member of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne whose activism focuses on seed and indigenous sovereignty, “Fertile Resistance and Reconciliation”, April 13, <https://sierraseeds.org/fertile-resistance-and-reconciliation/>, shae)

I have been seeing people sharing the news that there has been another devastating merger between corporate global giants who seek further consolidation in the industrial food system as it relates to the global seed commons. “The Justice Department will allow two notorious agrichemical corporations, Bayer and Monsanto, to merge, according to reports published earlier this week. Despite strong voices of opposition from grassroots advocates across the country and investigations by state Attorneys General, the over $60 billion merger was approved after Bayer agreed to sell off select sectors to another competitor, BASF. The merger will make Bayer the largest seed and pesticide company in the world. While lining the pockets of C-suite executives, farmers will be hurt by decreased competition and greater costs, which will ultimately affect consumer prices for food. Although the Justice Department secured agreements on divestment, there were no deals made on how the new company will operate. In a number of sectors, including vegetable seeds, and GE row crops like alfalfa, canola, corn, soybean, and wheat, the new company, which many have dubbed “Baysanto,” will have an overwhelming majority of worldwide market share. Not only will this reduce the availability of traditional and non-GE seed varieties, it will permit the new company to increase costs to farmers, giving them few and likely no alternatives in many cases. These problems are compounding themselves, as the Bayer-Monsanto merger is only the latest in a series of mega-mergers that have upended the agrichemical industry. Dow and DuPont merged in 2017, with plans to separate the new conglomerate into three different companies, one being a nearly $20 billion pure-play agriculture corporation that integrates the companies’ seed and pesticide sectors. In 2016, the Chinese state-owned pesticide company ChemChina merged with Swiss chemical giant Syngenta, a deal valued at roughly $43 billion. The “big six” often referenced by health and consumer advocates – Bayer, Monsanto, Dow, DuPont, Syngenta, and BASF – has now shrunk to four. According to a poll taken earlier this year, 93% of farmers are concerned about the Bayer-Monsanto merger, with specific issues related to the new company’s ability to control farmer data, push products on farmers, and increase chemical dependency on farms.” -Beyond Pesticides, April 12, 2018 “Whatever happens to the seed affects the web of Life. When seed is living and regenerative and diverse, it feeds pollinators, the soil organisms, and the animals including humans. When seed is non-renewable, bred for chemicals or genetically engineered with toxic or Roundup Ready genes, diversity disappears…biodiversity and cultural diversity go hand-in-hand. When culture is eroded, biodiversity is eroded. When control over seed becomes big business, diversity disappears ever faster. Diversity is a product of care, connection and cultural pride. The mango breeders wanted to give us the best taste, the best quality. The tribals and peasants who gave us rice diversity wanted to develop a rice for lactating mothers, a rice for babies, a rice for old people. They wanted to have rices that survive droughts and floods and cyclones, so they evolved climate resilient rices. In the Himalaya, different rices are needed for different altitudes and different slopes. The intimacy and care that go with belonging to a place and a community allows diversity to flourish. Conserving and growing diversity comes as naturally as breathing….We are what we eat. When we are careless with food we are careless with ourselves. Will we wake up only when the last peasant and the last seed disappears? Or will we turn to the sacred duty of protecting our Sacred Seeds.” -Vandana Shiva, Sacred Seed As an indigenous woman who has been blessed by the resilient perspective as a descendant of ancestors who survived unspeakable terrors and loss of land and life, I always seek the positive solutions-oriented approach to any problem. I have not chosen the path of ignorance, however intense the world may seem in these times we find ourselves in, I have to keep myself abreast of what is happening on the global food and seed trade because once you know what is happening, you can’t turn a blind eye. I have been contemplating quietly on my response to this merger to share with you all. I wanted to wait until I could settle some of the feelings I had so I could speak and share from a place of center. Honestly, some days I am filled with rage, which I work diligently at composting into rich soil to nourish the resistance efforts to renew our sacred agreements with our seeds. Some days I am overcome with a grief so palpable that it is nearly paralyzing; that we have allowed the sacred and reverent relationships to collectively atrophy in our food systems to the point that most people have nearly forgotten their agreements. This wellspring of grief and tears has watered over the last couple of decades a rich and diverse garden of ancestral and heritage seeds that help me find my way through the weight of sadness that all the relationships our ancestors cultivated are hard to find, leaving chasms and lacunas of memory that we somehow know in our hearts is missing. They have been the most unconventional teachers, these humble seeds, reminding me that all that seems lost truly isn’t just laying dormant until the time is right for them to return to the earth From the Bureau of Linguistic Reality, I found this gem of a word which helped me frame this thought. Quieseed Definition: A seed that due to social trauma stays consciously dormant not out of oppression, but rather due to a deep intuition which senses not to seed until it finds itself in a fertile, fecund environment. Usage: Swati was hesitant to invite her college friends to her parents’ home for dinner, as it was custom for Swati’s grandmother to tell deeply personal family stories and histories. Grandmother’s wisdom was like a quieseed, and Swati knew she would be cautious to reveal pieces of the story with strangers in the room. Origin: Ash Arder, Detroit, Michigan + Heidi Quante, California, November 2017. Quiescent (Latin) meaning ‘being still’, from the Latin verb quies ‘quiet’ meaning marked by inactivity or repose. Seed (Old English sǣd, of Germanic origin Saat) meaning a flowering plant’s unit of reproduction, capable of developing into another plant. A propagative plant structure (such as a spore or small dry fruit). It was once said, “They tried to bury us but they didn’t know we were seeds.” All the generations of people who came before us, who in their own ways prayed for the sprouting of our deeply connected lifeways again. I return with my beautiful children in hand to the traditional earth-based traditions of our people, the first in many generations in my bloodlines to follow the sacred ceremonial calendar, renewing time-honored relationships with all around us; eating our traditional foods and caring for their seeds. Those ancestors prayed for us, in many ways….in diverse tongues and in small humble everyday ceremonies of patting babies to sleep, stirring the cooking pot and sitting in the shade of an oak tree to make a basket; rowing such baskets across the mighty rivers to market..in the songs that honored the births and the deaths, the planting and the harvests…these prayers of our ancestors, in their own special ways, sowed seeds of resilience and vitality that they knew would take a few generations of laying dormant in the dark soil of our hearts, carried down through our blood memory in the rivers of our mothers sweet womb water that is held in our spines, our veins, our marrow. Seven generations or more, these seeds of prayers were tucked into the safety of the soil of our underground mycelia of cultural and ancestral memory. Tucked deep into the earth that is our own bodies, connected through tributaries of rivers of bloodlines… These seeds are finally sprouting, in their own time..the seeds enduring the scarification and weathering of decades of struggles and challenges, and also the spirit fire of our mothers and grandmothers tenacity for ensuring that our lifeways stay alive amidst the confusion. What they endured so that we could be here alive today, tending these shiny faced green sprouts of life, that they so diligently tucked into the safety of dark soils, hidden from hungry and greedy hands until generations later they could emerge with renewed vigor and vibrancy. It was such scarification that has given the prayers the courage to sprout into our lives. We are their wildest dreams sprouting and coming to life. They tried to bury us… This global corporate merger is a reflection of the nature of the larger industrial food complex. As Vandana Shiva so eloquently reminded us above that the reality of corporate seed takeover is a symptom of a much larger cultural syndrome. It is a symptom of what happens when we abdicate our relationship to our seeds to others. Don’t get me wrong, many of us, indigenous and farming people from around the globe didn’t just complacently give up our rights to care and steward our ancestral seeds…no it has been a violent transition, people robbed of their rights by large corporate campaigns to disconnect people from their seeds, or manipulated into thinking that progressive change to new hybrid varieties will ease the workload or increase the yield. The colonization inherent in this cancer of the global industrial food takeover is a staggering force which to this day continues to disrupt and sever time-honored relationships to seeds and ancestral lands. Some have forgotten the joy and deep nourishment of these time-honored relationships as families left the land for the cities in search of an illusion of a life where things would be easier, leaving caches of seeds behind which yearn for human hands and seedsongs, instead of the cold hum of a seed vault freezer or a dusty pantry farmhouse shelf. This is a syndrome of a larger cultural amnesia, where the original agreements we all have in our blood and bones have been so calcified that most people forget the simple treasure that nearly every bite of food we eat ( however processed and packaged) comes to us because of the generosity of a seed. We all have a role to play in dismantling this. Into imagining a new world where seeds are honored for the very life-giving force they offer us everyday..where the reciprocal relationship we have with them is honored and not forgotten. We are all bound into this beautiful agreement with our plant relatives. Every. Single. One. Of. Us. I stand humbly in awe alongside some of the most passionate and visionary humans on the planet, the seed people. Collectively we are imagining and dreaming a new way forward. We stand on the shoulders of so many countless generations who kept seeds and culture alive amidst incredible adversities..who dared to dream a vision and action plan of a new world we know is possible. Creating beautiful and diverse resilient expressions of cultivating seed literacy and reweaving reverent seed culture. This circle of humans standing up to care for our Seeds is growing. We stand in solidarity with a growing resistance to the global seed takeover; The Seed Satyagraha is a circle that is diverse as the seeds that we are carrying down from our ancestors; we are farmers, seedkeepers, singers, artists, writers, activists, midwives, teachers, mothers and fathers, lawyers, advocates, public speakers, clanmothers, faithkeepers, chefs and cooks, community organizers and leaders. All of these people are islands of coherance that anchor me and inspire me to continue to work diligently in the seed freedom movement. “When a system is far from equilibrium, small islands of coherence in a sea of chaos have the capacity to lift the entire system to a higher order.”—Ilya Prigogine. I don’t know who I would be in this world without these hopeful humans, my teachers, mentors and friends, who are sowing seeds of resistance and reconciliation that will help nourish us deeply as we tend the intergenerational garden of a new food system that is rooted in care, love, relationship and diverse culture. This is part of the rematriation of love and care in our food system. “Rematriation; This term describes an instance where land, air, water, animals, plants, ideas and ways of doing things and living are purposefully returned to their original natural context–their mother, the great Female Holy Wild. Like the repatriation of prisoners after years of war or millennia of unwilling slavery in service to an unconscious civilization, exploited and depleted for their wild vitality, any attempt to ‘rematriate’ them back to the Holy in Nature is the beginning of cultural sanity and healing” ( Martin Prechtel, The Unlikely Peace of Cuchamaquic) May we continue to make this learning experience an embodied prayer for such emergent change. Which includes facing up to the grief-filled uncomfortable parts of the world we find ourselves inhabiting right now. And not being paralyzed in our grief and anger, but transforming the spectrum of these emotions into embodied action; being courageous to take embodied action to the dream and creative imagination of the healing just food system we all know is possible. We all have our unique roles, we all have to carry some weight. And remembering that this work is intergenerational, and will continue to grow from the seeds of hope that we plant in our daily action and work towards this emerging vision. Can we promise to not forget that Bayer invested in the Holocaust? Can we promise to not forget our brothers and sisters in India and other places who are so desperate in the face of the fallout of the Green Revolution tactics that they are taking their own lives? Can we promise not to forget these shadowy sides of the larger industrial food system that were literally birthed from ammunitions of war? What is the balm for this intensity of this reckoning? How do we find our way back to a sane and culturally intact food system that honors the seeds and food plants and all of the grand family of relations around us that so generously feed us every day? We cannot continue to forget the seeds, or forgo our relationships that are an inherent part of a holistic and healthy and just food system. There is a way to compost these past failures. What does the resistance look like? It is a fertile resistance, roots in human relationships, in love and care, in being willing to de-center ourselves and offer leadership to indigenous and culturally intact people who have a clear remembrance of what a holistic food system looks and tastes like. What is your unique contribution to this Seed Satyagraha, to this fertile and growing movement to carry seeds and stories back into our lives again? Lately, my spirits have been buoyed by the immensity of a book called “Emergent Strategy” by adrienne maree brown. I encourage all of you to go and pick yourself up a copy. She is brilliant and her perspective helps soften the tension of what we all feel when we look at the global landscape and political environment we currently reside in. She says: “ We see the future cast over this devastating present moment.”…. “I am certainly not the first or only person who forgot how to imagine. I’m not sure when I forgot, but it had something to do with the numbing effect of constant media, with its hyper-branding and tip-of-the-iceberg bad news. And working too much, not having time to read or to let my mind wander, feeling I was too important to rely on magic. My work has primarily been as a facilitator. I help others envision, plan, and create viable futures for humanity. I call my work “organizational healing” as opposed to “strategic planning.” It takes faith, time and creativity to do this sort of change work. So this forgetfulness was a minor tragedy. I live in the post-apocalyptic shape-shifting city known as Detroit. Most of my work supports communities around the country that are directly impacted by the changing climate and our racialized economic system. It can feel like we are constantly being further disenfranchised. As a facilitator, I often witness groups with a severely limited capacity to imagine. Where we need to be generating viable futures, instead we often displace imagination with longing or nostalgia. As I get older, the future becomes less clear and more frightening—the planet is in danger and I am a citizen of the country most responsible for environmental, economic, and military distress worldwide. I too sometimes feel a yearning for a past moment in movement history. And yet even in moments of great revolution, there were hierarchies in place that would disempower people who looked, sounded or loved like me. I’ve found myself on the edge of hopelessness in my movement work, slowly devastated by the ways we treat each other when we can’t see a way forward. Fortunately, I’m not the first or only person who has been invited back into the spellbinding realm of expansive thinking, visionary speculation, and emergent strategy…Walidah Imarisha coined the term “visionary fiction” to describe fiction that seeks to create a just future while making use of speculative writing genres. She and I have been holding collective sci-fi/speculative writing workshops as a political activity, and we’re editing a community-funded anthology of original work called Octavia’s Brood… I’ve also been holding sessions to examine Butler’s work through the lens of emergent strategy—one that rejects linear victory-oriented planning and embraces adaptive, interdependent, intentional leadership that creates possibility and is stronger for being decentralized. One of our Detroit elders, Grace Lee Boggs, has taught us that we must “transform ourselves to transform the world.” -Adrienna Maree Brown, Yes Magazine Can we overcome and transform the western cultural syndrome of proprietary seed matrix and the syndrome of restriction of seed rights and the syndrome of exploitation being at the very heart of our global seed commons? Yes we can. There is so much to be done to continue to nourish this movement. One of the most hopeful and potent forms of activism in these times is to plant and seed and save it for future generations. This news of Monsanto and Bayer merging doesn’t surprise me, as we know the mindset of those who wish to control the world. Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State once said: “Control oil and you control nations, control food and you control the people.” What can we do in these times? How can we weave ourselves into this fertile and nourishing imagining of a new world sprouting from the compost pile of these scraps of this transitioning industrial food system? Join the Seed Satyagraha, which is the CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE TO END SEED-SLAVERY. You don’t have to be a farmer or a seedkeeper. There are many ways we can increase seed literacy in our lives that will help heal this syndrome. “We do not recognise any laws, created by corporate interests, that interfere in our duty to save and share good seed so that the generations to come are as fortunate as we have been in receiving these gifts of diversity and nourishment. We will not obey, or recognise any law that criminalises our time-tested seeds. This is our Seed Satyagraha: We have reverence for seeds we have received from nature and centuries of farmers’ breeding. We do not recognise seed to be a corporate invention, therefore, we do not recognise patents on seed and life. We will support our local seed libraries as sources of fertile and open source seed. We do not recognise any laws, created by corporate interests, that interfere in our duty to save and share good seed so that the generations to come are as fortunate as we have been in receiving these gifts of diversity and nourishment. We will not obey, or recognise any law that criminalises our time-tested seeds. This is our Seed Satyagraha From good seed comes good food. We do not recognise tasteless, nutritionally-empty, toxic commodities as food. For us food is, as it has always been, natural, organic, nourishing, healthy and safe, We refuse to accept an agriculture system based on poisons as safe. We refuse to let another bee die. We do not recognise the unscientific fallacy of “Substantial Equivalence” of Genetically Modified food with non GMO food. **We refuse to accept Industrial Agriculture as a solution** to the climate crisis because we know it is one of the causes. We also know that Organic Farming and living soils hold the key to solving the Climate Crisis. We will grow organic food everywhere-on our farms, our gardens, our balconies, our terraces. We will eat organic, in our kitchens, our cafeterias, our schools and offices. Our Gardens will be sites of Satyagraha.”

#### Seed saving produces a biopoetic metaphysical prism that produces communal relations with life and economics. Consistently challenging proprietary relations to land and knowledge is key to solve competitive market ontologies.

**Escobar 16**

Laura G. 2016. The Political Ontology Of Seeds: Seed Sovereignty Struggles In An Indigenous Resguardo In Colombia. Chapter 5 (p. 205-209) [https://doi.org/10.17615/4k8s-t747 //](https://doi.org/10.17615/4k8s-t747%20//) zh

2.1. Taking Back Economic Thinking: Buen vivir, Commons, and Community Economies In western modernity, the economy has been conceptualized as a separate realm of human society that functions autonomously, according to market laws, and has ontological and 206 epistemological primacy or what Gibson-Graham (2006) call ‘capitalocentric’ thinking. Many thinkers, even within western tradition, have challenged this vision of the economy. Polanyi (2001), to give an example, points out that the autonomous self-regulated market is not a natural, ahistorical, universal phenomenon but was the result of quite specific and violent state policies and expansion of capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century. From cultural studies, Lawrence Grossberg (2010) has argued for the importance to “bring the cultural turn to bear on economics”. Cultural economics constitutes an effort to critique economic reductionism and essentialism and bring to the fore the complexity and multiplicity of economies that overflows a singular and homogenous notion of capitalism or the propositions that the economy is an autonomous sphere from the rest of the social body and imbued with internal logics and limitless capacity to explain and determine every other social realm. Grossberg calls for rethinking what is defined as economic spheres, such as production and labor, and the lines dividing the economic from the non-economic given that these boundaries are always porous, temporary, broken, multiplied. For Grossberg, doing a different – conjectural- kind of economics involves recognizing that the economy is not only overdetermined (in Althusser’s terms), but also multiple, relational, and discursive. Thus, capitalism is always heterogeneous, hybridized and multiple and that works through difference and struggles in everyday life (Grossberg, 2010: 146-9). In Latin America, studies on decoloniality and solidarity economy are challenging capitalist economics and putting forward alternative approaches about community and non-state communal logics of social life and alternative economics based on a critical reading of the history of colonialism and neocolonialism as well as the cosmovisions and knowledges of peasants, indigenous and afro-descendant people (Escobar, 2007; Mignolo, 2002). 207 A key concept to critique western notions of development and theorize other forms of economy is the buen vivir or "good life"112 . Buen vivir is framed in indigenous worldviews, especially Andean, which defines wellbeing as convivir or living with others, including nature, on the base of solidarity and care. The buen vivir resonates with the notion of ‘sociobiocentrism” coined by Ecuadorian economist Alberto Acosta to critique the anthropocentrism that characterizes capitalism. Socio-biocentrism implies an economic model that ensures "the integrity of natural processes, flows of energy and materials from the biosphere and the planet's biodiversity while improving the conditions of life for all people "(Acosta, 2010: 19). Buen vivir also entails the foundation of a counter-hegemonic political project that critically examines the political structures of modernity, especially the nation-state and representative democracy. Alternative politics are based on popular and indigenous traditions of direct democracy **that call for the devolution of power from** centralized bureaucratic **institutions** –be political parties or the state– **into people's organizations** and the general social body. Uruguayan journalist Raúl Zibechi (2010) has recently proposed the notion of "dispersing power" to describe the construction of 'popular anti-state powers' in Bolivia that are based on communal forms of democracy. These forms of direct democracy operate under the same logic of the Zapatista communities where there is a rotation of leadership positions and leaders must "lead by obeying". Arturo Escobar, based on ethnographic research with Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific region, analyze resistance to the transformations of the Pacific region by imperial globality that underlie ontological and epistemological differences. These ontological conflicts are expressed in two levels: local and diverse economies, partially based on self-subsistence activities, vs. a monetized and market-oriented economy; and local models of nature (i.e. diverse agroforestal ecosystems) vs. capitalist model of nature (i.e. Plantation model) (Escobar, 2008: 32). Feminist geographers by the name pen J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006) investigate placebased economies to bring to light the diversity of economic rationalities and practices that inform subsistence activities around the world. Drawing from fieldwork in the Philippines, Australia and the US, Gibson-Graham characterize community economies as those by which groups of people devise mechanisms to resocialize economic relations, based on ethical considerations and democratic decision-making. The aim is to make economic decisions on prices of goods, wages, reinvestments or the redistribution of surplus in ways that benefit and care for the communities and the environment. In other words, that wealth stays locally rather than being accrued by distant, unaccountable corporations and global financial markets. To this end, the community economy requires an awareness of a) what it means to ‘live well’ for people in the here and now b) how the social surplus is produced, appropriated, distributed and consumed; d) how a commons is produced and sustained in order to achieve such wellbeing (88) Studies on alternative economics then include three main projects: an epistemic challenge to western rationalism and individualism; a new kind of politics; and alternative relationships among humans and with nature. These projects entail 1) the construction of alternative economic languages and knowledge practices; 2) the ethical transformation of subjects (including of ourselves) or new ‘ways of being in the world’ that allows individuals and human groups to recognize and honor our interconnectedness and develop a new sensitivity towards alternative 209 economic practices that are present in the ‘here and now’; and 3) a renewed attention to place, seen in the emphasis on ‘community’ and the ‘local’ as strategies to re-embed the economy in more sustainable socio-natural relationships (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Escobar, 2008). The study of seed-human assemblages (Bennet, 2010: 21) or their networked socio-natural worlds provide rich insights to these emerging ways of rethinking the economy. 2.2. Seeds Genealogies and Inter-Species Community-Making Seeds constitute a fruitful site to challenge deep-seated assumptions of the economy as disembodied, autonomous, and rational(ist) markets and individuals. Seeds contributes to undertake ‘reframing’ or “imagining the economy differently” in ways that connect –rather than confronts– us to one another and to ‘nature’ (Gibson-Graham, 2006). This task of re-embedding economic practices in socio-natural relations can be done by tracing genealogies of seeds –and bringing forth their connections with humans, nature and localities- in similar ways to tracing the origins of the food we consume. According to anthropologist Guntra Aistara (2011), biotechnology companies have reduced seed genealogy to the seed itself, fetishizing it, taking into account only the labor and inventiveness of western scientists, transnational companies and capitalist farmers, and erasing all previous labor and social exchanges from farmers as ‘raw material’. This ‘corporate seed genealogy’ –based on the application of western techno-science, labor, and capital- is at the base of biotechnology companies’ claim to IPRs on seeds as their ‘inventions’ (see chapter 2) In contrast, seed savers consider seeds a commons because they trace a ‘multi-species seed genealogy’ that honors the labor and knowledges not only of their ancestors and past generations of farmers, but also of non-human beings, such as pollinizers and soil organisms, and the fertilizing and growing powers of the sun, the rain, or the winds. 210 In this context, it becomes crucial to visibilize the ways in which seeds contribute to inter-species community-making and ground alternative economies on different conceptions of value, labor, and relations to nature. 2.2.1. Value Anthropologists have studied how seed practices account for diverse understandings of value and economic behavior that do not fully conform to the rational choice model. For instance, anthropologists Stephen Gudeman and Alberto Rivera (1999) argue that peasants in the Department of Boyacá, Colombia, have a different conception of value that is closer to the Physiocrats than to the theories of classical liberalism. In classical liberalism, nature is not the source of value; rather humans create value in their capacity to labor or to transform and transcend nature in order to create civilization and progress. In contrast, for peasants in Boyacá, value is intrinsic to nature: the earth is not a resource, but the repository of ‘strength’ which humans garner and spend through raising and consuming crops. Thus, farmers and herdsmen do not make crops or livestock, but rather contribute to set up certain conditions of development within which plants and animals develop. In other words, by saving and planting seeds, humans are not creating value through labor, but nurturing the earth and helping her to “give” her products, as a ‘midwife’ assists a birth (Gudeman and Rivera, 1999: 24-5). Anthropological studies also analyze seeds’ double condition: on one hand, they are a ‘means of production’ when peasants save seeds for the next planting season; on the other, they are a consumption and ritual good when sold as grain or reserved for self-consumption. This decision is not just a rational choice based on cost-benefit analysis towards profit making or a consideration on productivity, but is embedded in cultural expectations and power relationships. For instance, Bezner (2010) shows how disputes in farmer households in Malawi about how to use groundnuts is gendered: men often want to sell or save groundnuts while women want to 211 consume them, specially feed them to young children to improve nutrition. On the other hand, Malawi women give maize and groundnut seeds to their daughters-in-law upon marriage and instruct them on how to select and store seed for future harvest thus guaranteeing knowledge transfer and the reproduction of a new household (Bezner, 2010). These two examples illustrate how seeds question the division between production and reproduction and highlight the important role of women’s care of the family for the reproduction of labor (and really of human life) that goes unacknowledged in mainstream political economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Peasants ‘choose’ to save, breed, share, buy and sell seeds for different reasons and seeds are considered valuable in different domains beyond ‘economic growth’, efficiency, productivity, and other modernist standards (Wittman, 2010: 92). Defining yield increase of one crop, as the ultimate goal of agriculture and seed development is reductionist. This is so because it only takes into account the production of exchange-value or food exclusively to sell as a commodity in the market. Instead farmers value seeds for many different traits such as fodder quality, performance on intercrops, storage quality, taste or cooking properties, for symbolic/religious reasons, among others (Altieri, 2001: 24; Nazarea, 2005: 9) Farmers may continue to save and plant heirloom seeds for self-consumption crops because they want to have control over the quality of the food they consume (González, 2001); for preparing traditional recipes (González, 2001; Monsalve, 2006; Camacho, 2011); for the pleasure and curiosity of experimenting with new seed varieties (Nazarea, 2005; González, 2001; Shiva, 2001); or for guaranteeing food security when the market fails (González, 2001). Expertise in seed saving and exchanging can also provide nonmonetary gains such as pride, satisfaction, social status and prestige, aesthetic pleasure, and sense of autonomy and creativity (González, 2001). 212 During my fieldwork in Riosucio, Asproinca and cabildo-supported seed savers shared with me their multiple motivations to save and conserve creole seeds113. In interviews and informal conservations, seed savers considered creole seed conservation a ‘traditional’ practice learnt from parents and grandparents who grew diversified crops under the model of coffee forest. Older resguardo farmers, such as Antonio, appreciate creole seeds because they “knew the seeds through their grandparents. They feel happy to see the seeds that their grandparents planted because [that way] they remember them” (2013). Other indigenous farmers may start conserving creole seeds out of curiosity and satisfaction as don Mauricio (2013a) recalled: “I had never seen corn in so many different colors. Now I try to get new seeds; this is why I seldom leave my land. I have fun with seeds: choosing, classifying and taking care of them in the farm.” There is also a concern for producing and consuming diverse food. Mercedes stressed food variety as a motivation to become a seed saver: “it is about food variety rather than having just one thing. I know today is squash soup, tomorrow a sancocho; another day cachas [beans].” Likewise, José María (2014) linked on-farm seed conservation and saving with a concern on eating healthy: “We don’t buy the seed. We have a thin bean seed that Guillermo brought us and we grow it for food and to save the seed. From that first seed we got new seed and we kept saving it. At Asproinca seed fairs, I got bugue os [beans]. The bean from the market is contaminated with chemicals; instead the ones from our garden are healthy”. Creole seeds are also important to recreate the spiritual and aesthetic worlds as Mercedes (2013) pointed out to me: “In rituals and ceremonies, seeds have their own mystery, their own power. Seeds are always present in rituals: there we connect; we purify and clean ourselves; we eliminate the bad energies. Seeds are used for protection. In dressing (atuendos) we 113 Asproinca is a local grassroots agroecological association I worked with in Riosucio. Although Asproinca is independent from the cabildos, some of its seed savers are also supported by the cabildos. 213 have always used seeds. Before using plastic beads (chaquiras) and other synthetic stuff, there were seeds, bones, animals’ teeth” 2.2.2. Labor In connection to value, seeds lead us to rethink labor. In western economic thinking (both liberalism and Marxism) there is no inherent value in nature; value is “innate to humans in their capacity to labor or to transform nature” in their process towards civilization. As anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011) explains, value is linked to the ability to transcend, dominate and improve nature through science and labor (77). Ingold goes on to explain that what defines agriculture, as a higher level in human civilization compared to hunter-gathering, is the ability to breed new varieties of plants rather than collecting food –which implies no transformation of nature through labor and thus no human progress-. This view contrast with small-scale farmers who see agriculture not as ‘making’ but as ‘raising’ crops. In other words, agriculture is an interspecies process of growth that involve human and non-human labor (78-9). The development of biotechnology and the extension of intellectual property rights to plants take the conception that value creation is unique to (certain) humans to its ultimate consequences. In order to claim IPRs, biotechnology companies ~~invisibilize~~ [erase] the breeding labor done by small-scale farmers and nature since the development of agriculture. For instance, the role of insects as pollinizers or the fact that genes are not invented in laboratories, just isolated and recombined (Van Dooren, 2008; Aistara, 2011). Conversely, expanding the concept of labor to non-human beings opens up the ontological question of whether or not non-human beings can also produce value. Grossberg suggests that value should be seen as an expression of life, as the power or creation and cooperation, not necessarily restricted to human labor (Grossberg, 2010). 214 2.2.3. Inter-Species Relationships Rethinking our relationship with non-human beings through food and agriculture, implies the ethical challenge to question our anthropocentrism and assume responsibility and codependence with non-human beings. As Marx noted, industrial agriculture implies a ‘metabolic rift’ where the co-dependency between nature and human beings in growing food is broken due to the modern capitalist assumption that civilization and development depends upon men controlling, exploiting, and privately appropriating nature similarly to other men’s and women’s lives and labor (Marx, 1990). Hanna Wittman (2009) suggests an alternative ecological rationality –which she calls agrarian citizenship– that emphasizes mutual rights and obligations between humans and nature in agricultural practice. Likewise, the Ecuadorian constitution has granted rights to nature so that economic development needs to be reconsidered from conceiving nature as just a collection of resources to be exploited/industrialized for human benefit (Gudynas, 2010). Therefore, agricultural practice would have to guarantee not just the reproduction of human life, but also of non-human beings by respecting the integrity and resilience of ecosystems, natural cycles and seeds’ reproductive capacity and promoting agrodiverse agricultural landscapes rather than the uniformity of industrial monocropping. 2.2.4. Commons Drawing from Marcel Mauss (1967), Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), Marshal Sahlins (1972) and other literature in economic anthropology, studies on the commons argue that human societies have historically recognized that our biological and socio-cultural reproduction depends upon the flow of resources as ‘gifts’ and the ‘debts’ they create when given and received which must be acknowledged and reciprocated (Nonini, 2007: 69-70; Bollier, 2002: 32-34). They emphasize the importance of stewardship and common-access to resources that are linked to shared identities and history, place-based economies, and social relationships and institutions 215 grounded on reciprocity and solidarity as well as coercive means of social control (Bollier, 2002; Nonini, 2007; Colloredo-Mansfeld and Antrosio, 2009). The commons underlie the interdependence among humans and between them and nonhuman beings and embody what people regard as sacred and indispensable for life and for signaling membership in a community, or what Stephen Gudeman has called the sacra (2001: 30). At the same time, commons may fail because of “overexploitation of resources and incursion by newcomers” (Colloredo-Mansfeld and Antrosio, 2009: 135). Social exclusion due to discrimination, stigma, and community membership can also delimit who is entitled to benefit from the commons. For instance, Rachel Bezner (2010) documented that in Malawian peasant communities, tenants are not part of seed exchange because community members do not recognize any obligation to reciprocate with them given that they are seen as temporary residents. Nonetheless, these tenants are among the poorest since they have been dispossessed and expelled from their lands due to neoliberal reforms and land scarcity. AIDS affected families are usually left out too due to social stigma linked to their illness (144). Likewise, some farmers can be excluded within their communities because of their reluctance to share and save their own seeds. In addition, seed commons may discourage seed genetic diversity if the communities do not have access to broader networks of exchange to be able to obtain new varieties and expand their pool of germplasm, or if seed knowledges and practices have been lost or diminished (i.e. ‘traditional’ knowledges on seed saving are hold mainly by elders but lost in new generations) (ACB, 2012). The commons are envisioned as people’s struggle to keep shared resources outside the sphere of the market (Bollier, 2002; Gudeman, 2001). However, recent studies have argued that the commons can also provide the basis for the creation or revitalization of alternative markets 216 based on ‘cultural commons’ or cultural assets, such as indigenous handicraft and clothing designs that are shared among local artisans at the Otavalo market in Ecuador (ColloredoMansfeld and Antrosio, 2009). More standard narratives on commons defines them as the governance or management of resources by stakeholders. For instance, Dietz, Ostrom and Stern (2003) argue that designing effective institutional arrangements for managing commons is difficult due to uncertainty, environmental constrains and conflicting human values and interests (1907). According to the authors, challenges to commons’ governance and maintenance are most acute when resources are highly valuable in the global markets; governance is required from the local to the global; power differentials are substantial among users or between them and outsiders; resources cannot be easily monitored; and there are no dense social networks that can induce rule compliance, devise conflict-solving mechanisms, promote trust among users, and are flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions through time such as new technologies and population increase that threaten the sustainability of commons (Dietz, Ostrom and Stern, 2003: 1908). Even if valuable, this management and conflict-resolution approaches obscure the radical potential of commons for social transformation. As DeAngelis (2012) argues, commons are a site of struggle against capitalist enclosures and the commodification of life (xii) Thus the commons are not just an issue of proper management of common resources to avoid their depletion, but also antagonistic to capital commodification and alienation (Caffentzis, 2004: 22). In his latest contribution, Bollier (2014) emphasizes commons’ powers to disrupt the status quo by pointing out that “to honor the commons can risk unpleasant encounters with the power of the Market/State monopoly” (5) Throughout the book, he conceptualizes commons as a highly versatile, autonomous, and truly democratic form of resource management by a 217 community for collective well-being. For instance, one of his definitions reads: “A selforganized system by which communities manage resources (both depletable and replenishable) with minimal or no reliance on the Market or State” (175). This managerial and anthropocentric approach to commons contrasts with other moments in the book where Bollier displays what can be considered a ‘relational’ and inter-epistemic approach to commons. First, he asserts that the commons speak of a radically different mode of human existence (ontology) and human knowledge (epistemology). Quoting biologist Andrea Weber’s concept of biopoetics, Bollier writes that the commons is an “existential condition of life in all its forms, from cellular matter to human beings that dissolves the supposed opposition between nature and society/culture” (147). **Biopoetics** constitutes a different metaphysical prism that does not conceive life in terms of an individual and competitive struggle aimed at maximizing self-interest in a ‘free’ market and according to a Newtonian view of the universe dominated by abstract forces and laws. Rather biopoetics sees life as a “system of cooperative agents constantly striving to build meaningful relationships and exchange gifts. Competition still exists, of course, but it is interwoven with deep, stabilizing forms of cooperation” (148) For Bollier, the commons is a paradigm akin to this project of ‘Enlivenment’ –rather than Enlightenment– to “reintegrate ourselves with nature and each other”; the practice of the commons here “reveals itself as nothing less than the practice of life”. Second, Bollier argues that the commons are about “honoring the new and diverse types of knowledges that are collectively constructed by commoners themselves”; place-based, context-relevant, practical, and ecologically valuable knowledges rather than “abstract, selfserving, bureaucratic or economic” expert-knowledges that too often and undeservingly prevail (154) 218 Third, he defines commons as a new vision of development grounded in alternative worldviews, such as buen vivir, that question “the rational instrumentalism and economic mentality of market capitalism” (158-9): “In this sense, the commons is not just about managing resources; it’s an ethical and inner sensibility” (159) I bring together Bollier’s insights and seed savers’ relational approaches to seed in order to arrive at a conceptualization of seed commons that goes beyond Bollier’s own definition of commons as “a resource + a community + a set of social protocols” (15) **Describing seeds as merely a ‘resource’ contrast with** resguardo farmers’ ~~visions~~ **[perspectives] of seeds as sacred and as related beings** –as sacra; it also plays into capital’s rational instrumentalism and nature/human divide that underlies the commodification of seeds. A definition of (seed) commons that more thoroughly integrates ‘biopoetics’ and place-based knowledges may be ‘an interspecies assemblage + a set of practices + a cosmovision / way of worlding.’ In other words, the models by which a community, composed of both human (i.e., farmers) and non-human (i.e., seeds), live and subsist together according to their distinctive socio-natural practices, knowledges, and ethics.