
Unsettling Hope: Contemporary Indigenous Politics, Settler-Colonialism, and Utopianism



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Critical investigation of the varied conceptualizations and historical effects of utopianism is an essential concern for utopian studies scholarship. Utopia has been theorized beyond a literary tradition initiated by Thomas More as "social dreaming" (Sargent) and "expressions of desire for a better way of being" (Levitas), to reference two of the more prominent contemporary formulations. These characterizations tend towards inclusivity and allow for an expansive notion of "the phenomenon of utopianism" to be recognized across human cultures. Indeed Sargent argues "...the history of the utopia reflects the whole range of human experience and desire" (Sargent, 2000: 8). This is in contrast to Krishan Kumar's contention that utopia is "not universal. [And that it] appears only in societies with classical and Christian heritages, that is, only in the West" (Kumar, 1987: 19). For Kumar, the "utopia proper" ought be differentiated as "the modern utopia that was invented in Europe in the sixteenth century" (Kumar, 1987: 19).

Clearly, the conceptualization of the phenomenon of utopianism as an 'intercultural' meta-category facilitates comparative study. Equally clear is the existence of social dreaming, expressions of desire for a better way of being, or "texts that describe a non-existent society as measurably better than the contemporary society" outside of the 'West' and prior to the publication of More's 1516 novel (Sargent, 2010: 67). However, this should not preclude critical engagement with the particularities associated with the "modern utopia" tradition, especially with respect to its ongoing role in the settler colonial reality of the United States and Canada.¹

Towards this, I maintain that scholarly engagement with utopia deserves an ‘unsettling.’ As such, I intend to argue for utopian studies’ engagement with emergent critical discourses of Indigenous peoples themselves, as well as non-Indigenous work concerned with the phenomenon of settler colonization.² These discourses represent vital considerations for the potential reevaluation of the phenomenon of utopianism as a useful contributor to the destabilization of distinctly *settler* colonial foundations. The specific and substantial effects that More’s *Utopia* and, more generally, the modern utopian tradition have had (and, importantly, continue to have) on settler colonial formations offer a clear and compelling basis for scholarly attention to such concerns.

Firstly, there is an etymological dilemma involved in the utilization of More’s neologism “utopia” which may be translated as ‘the no place’ or, more commonly, ‘the good place which is no place’ to describe the social dreaming or expressions of desire for a better way of being by the Indigenous peoples of what is now known as the United States and Canada. While I do not at all wish to subsume the significant differences that have and do exist among Native peoples, the particularity of *place* is, generally speaking, a fundamental epistemological and ontological referent. It is the specificity of ties to a particular place which, in many ways, defines indigeneity. For example, the late Lakota philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. wrote in *God is Red* that “American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind” (Deloria, 1992: 62).

Moreover, the power of non-Indigenous persons (settlers and otherwise) to shape discourse and language in ways that contribute to the ongoing displacement and subjugation of Indigenous peoples should not be understated.³ This is perhaps most (in)famously exemplified by the nonsensical application of the term ‘Indian’ to the original peoples of the so-called ‘New World.’ It follows that it is problematic to utilize a term signifying ‘no place’ to categorize the hopeful practices or traditions of Indigenous peoples.

But aside from the etymological difficulties, the significant contributions of More’s famous text to the ongoing settler colonization of what is now known as the United States and Canada, and the settler utopian tradition itself must be critically evaluated in light of the consequences for Indigenous peoples. Indeed, Jeffrey Knapp has argued that *Utopia* “contains perhaps the first Tudor attempt to elaborate a theory of colonization,” and, referencing the work of D.B. Quinn, has suggested More was “...the first Englishman to use the word *colonia* in a Roman [i.e.

imperialist] meaning” (Knapp, 1992: 21). Furthermore, there are recognized parallels between *Utopia* and contemporaneous published accounts of Amerigo Vespucci’s explorations (Logan / Adams, 2002: 10).

However, it is the novel’s narrator, Hythloday, who recounts that the island ‘no place’—Utopia—was originally called “Abraxa” and was not an island at all. But after King Utopus’ invasion was successful, he “... brought its rude, uncouth inhabitants to [...] a high level of culture and humanity.” Furthermore, he ordered his own soldiers, alongside the conquered original inhabitants, to separate the territory from the mainland by digging a channel 15 miles wide to allow the sea to encircle the newly formed island (More, 2002: 42). Later, Hythloday details the philosophical rationale for the Utopians’ expansionist colonial adventures, explaining that when the Utopian population grows too large,

they enroll citizens out of every city and plant a colony under their own laws [...] wherever the natives have plenty of unoccupied and uncultivated land. Those natives who want to live with the Utopians are adopted by them. When such a merger occurs the two peoples gradually and easily blend together, sharing the same way of life and customs, much to the advantage of both. For by their policies the Utopians make the land yield an abundance for all, though previously it had seemed too poor and barren even to support the natives. But those who refuse to live under their laws they drive out of the land they claim for themselves and against those who resist them, they wage war. They think it is perfectly justifiable to make war on people who leave their land idle and waste yet forbid the use and possession of it to others who by the law of nature, ought to be supported from it (*idem*, 54).

Thus, as Antonis Balasopoulous has noted, the trajectories of utopian expansionism are clear (Balasopoulous, 2004). For *Utopia* clearly articulates the settler colonial doctrines of *terra nullius* [no man’s land], *vacuum domicilium* [unoccupied home], and *inane ac vacuum* [idle and waste] which were used by European powers to establish legalistic grounds, via an appeal to the “law of nature” for expropriating the supposedly uninhabited land. According to Knapp, this justification was “repeated time and again in the American propaganda of Renaissance England” (Knapp, 1992: 21).

While the Utopians “acknowledge gratefully the kindnesses of Mother Nature” the soil of the fictional island of Utopia is reported to be less than ideal, requiring “improve[ment] by industry [...] hard work and technical knowledge” (More, 2002: 74-75). Virtue is realized, for the Utopians, in the maximization of human pleasure and welfare through reason so long as it does not hinder “... the welfare of [human] others or the common [human] good” (*idem*, 74). In other words, the realization of the original modern utopia *obliges* the instrumentalization of what Daniel Heath Justice describes as the “other-than-human” in the service of humanity alongside the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples. For in order that Utopians act in accord with the “law

of nature” the rationale holds that Abraxans (Natives) have left their land “idle and waste” and, therefore, the principle of “maximization of human pleasure” commands that lands be expropriated. The extension of (settler) sovereignty over a territory in the service of the maximization of ‘rational’ human interests is dependent upon an “ecological sovereignty,” which Mick Smith argues is foundational to a purportedly ‘progressive’ political modernity (Smith, 2011: xi). This notion of modernity determines who is “fully human,” in part, based upon a notion of human nature reliant upon a break from a “primitive” “natural state” by “hard work and the employment of that unique human faculty ‘reason’” (*idem*, 66-67).

Therefore, More’s *Utopia*—the namesake of utopian studies—was articulated in decidedly modernist terms; the Utopians and their ideas are unambiguously representative of a notion of progressive modernity counter posed with Indigenous inhabitants (Abraxans) who are consigned to a backward ‘primitive’ pre-modernity, partly based on their failure to rationally recognize the “law of nature” and proceed to instrumentalize the land on which they lived. The consequences of this rationale were, of course, devastating for the peoples of Turtle Island—the English translation of the term utilized by the Haudenosaunee for what is now known as the continent of North America,⁴: ... ‘Haudenosaunee’ being the self-identification for the peoples of what is commonly referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy. More’s *Utopia* must, therefore, be recognized as having been constituted by and, crucially, as simultaneously contributing to the production and perpetuation of modernist epistemologies and ontologies, which were and, importantly, continue to be acutely dystopian for Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, More’s *Utopia* must be acknowledged as an archetypical modern settler society marked by what Patrick Wolfe terms “a logic of elimination” (Wolfe, 2001: 387).

This logic is articulated in the abovementioned passage from More’s *Utopia*: in short, the original inhabitants of Abraxa are to be assimilated as Utopians (“brought [...] to a high level of culture and humanity”), re-located, or simply eradicated (“But those who refuse to live under their laws they drive out of the land they claim for themselves and against those who resist them, they wage war.”). Wolfe writes, “Settler colonies were [are] premised on the elimination of native societies [...] colonizers come to stay—invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe, 1999: 2). As expressed by Lorenzo Veracini, this distinction is essential to the project of settlement as differentiated from other forms of colonialism:

... whereas settler colonialism constitutes a circumstances where the colonising effort is exercised from *within* the bounds of a settler colonising political entity, colonialism is driving by an expanding metropole

that remains permanently distinct from it ... as settlers, by definition, stay, in specific contradistinction, colonial sojourners—administrators, missionaries, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and adventurers—return (Veracini, 2010: 10).

The consequences include the ensuing naturalization of the Utopians' settler colonization and what Veracini calls a process of "settler indigenisation" (Veracini, 2011: 194). Here the foreign colonizers and the indigenous peoples switch places through a variety of one or more means of "transfer": the modern citizen-subject of the settler society is rendered natural and, in fact, *indigenous* to the modern nation-state and its territory while the original inhabitant, the 'Indian' or 'Aborigine' is de-naturalized, made foreign, and per Wolfe, marked for elimination.⁵ Additionally, *Utopia's* discussion of the management of what Veracini refers to as "exogenous Others"—an intentionally broad third category in a tripartite settler colonial order also involving settlers and Indigenous peoples—including foreigners, servants, and slaves (indentured and otherwise) exemplifies a distinctive form of settler sovereignty (Veracini, 2010: 17). In fact, the biopolitical administration detailed in *Utopia* ought be evaluated in light of contemporary examinations of biopolitics and settler colonial practices.⁶

Unfortunately, these processes can be observed as tropes routinely found in the utopian literary traditions of settler societies (Sargent, 2010b: 204). In fact, nearly all of the various expressions or "faces" of utopianism—from intentional communities to radicalized politics—which emerge from such settler societies ought be recognized as being predicated upon and, therefore, implicated in the ongoing naturalization of settler colonization. This resonates with Scott Morgensen's contention that "[s]ettler colonialism has conditioned not only Indigenous peoples and their lands and the settler societies that occupy them, but all political, economic, and cultural processes that those societies touch" (Morgensen, 2011: 53).

Clearly, recognition of settler colonialism's contribution to and naturalization within much of the modern utopian tradition is fundamental to utopian studies' engagement in an ongoing project of 'unsettling.' Furthermore, the editors of the journal *Settler Colonial Studies* opine in their definition of 'settler colonialism' that "[t]here is no such thing as neo-settler colonialism or post-settler colonialism because settler colonialism is a resilient formation that rarely ends" (Cavanagh and Veracini, 2010). Thus, it is apparent that use of the term 'post-colonial' is problematic for the utopianism of settler societies or the Indigenous peoples who continue to experience settler colonial realities. This is to say that, in such circumstances, there is a need for

a differentiated form of utopianism; “[s]ettler colonisation requires an imagination that is alternative from traditional accounts of decolonizing passages (Veracini, 2010: 114).

Undoubtedly, this ought to involve addressing Indigenous peoples’ expressions of desire for a better way of being. But Veracini exhorts us not to forsake focus on settlers and “on what they do, and how they think about what they do” in a wholesale deference to Indigenous experiences within settler societies, lest settlers remain naturalized as the “normative subject” to which Others are counter posed (*idem*, 15). In other words, it appears necessary to do both: to simultaneously critically examine ‘settler-ness’ and settler colonial phenomenon in addition to engaging with Indigenous discourses *on their own terms*. That is, we ought to heed Wolfe’s argument that “[c]laims to authority over indigenous discourse made from within the settler-colonial academy necessarily participate in the continuing usurpation of indigenous space (invasion is a structure not an event)” (Wolfe, 1999: 3).

In the context of utopian studies, here we might look to what Andrea Smith calls a strategy or politics of “re-articulation” (Smith, 2008: xvi). For Smith, this involves rejecting a “politics of inclusion that seeks to include a marginalized voice within a pre-established politics or discourse” in favor of a processual re-centering (*idem*, xiii). This would involve a moment whereby critical discourses of Indigenous peoples including, but not limited to, those which address settler colonialism, are positioned at the “center” of utopian studies. In doing so, utopian studies discourses would be subject to an estrangement that could and should allow for reflexive accountability. Just as Smith emphasizes, “we [must] constantly re-center the discussion to see if this illuminates our understanding [...] so that we can build a more liberating framework, not just for the communities we center in the analysis but for all peoples” (*idem*, xiv).⁷

Smith’s call for a project of “re-articulation” appears to have affinities with Ruth Levitas’s notion of utopia as method, which perhaps offers one basis for acting to ‘unsettle’ utopia from within utopian studies discourse. Levitas characterizes the utopian method—the imaginary reconstitution of society—as enduringly provisional, dialogical, reflexive, and animated by twin functions (Levitas, 2007: 47-66). In the first, we come to de-naturalize the status quo through a ‘cognitive estrangement.’ This estrangement allows us a critical perspective on ‘what is.’

However, it is a secondary function, for Levitas, the ‘what ought be’ proposition and its subjection to judgment, where we find the potential for a utopian method’s radical accountability. The simultaneous critiques of ‘what is’ and the utopian proposal of ‘what ought

be' result in a subsequent modification of the articulation of utopia. This conceptualization of utopia draws upon Blochian notions of an 'educated hope' which moves us from the escapist realm of the compensatory to an anticipatory hope activated in the service of realizing some notion of a better world—a concrete utopia (Levitas, 1997: 65-80).

Ernst Bloch conceived of a principle of hope whereby the 'warm' (passion) and 'cold' (reason) streams of human consciousness engage in a dialectic towards the achievement of a synthesis: utopia—the satisfaction of lack. For Bloch, the human experience of lack is a universal, inherent, and inescapable.

In Bloch's schema, there is the merely wishful and oftentimes escapist 'compensatory hope', which envisions, and may even realize, an 'abstract utopia.' To use an example from Bloch's *Principle of Hope*, compensatory hope inspires idle daydreams in which an abstract utopia is approached and, perhaps, apprehended, albeit only so long as the dreamer can maintain her or his reverie. As such, a compensatory hope poses no direct, immediate, and tangible threat to the status quo; it compensates for the dystopian material reality, ultimately allowing for the abstract utopia's recuperation.

Alternatively, an anticipatory hope is willful, activated, and, in keeping with Bloch's Marxism, grounded and activated in the service of a decidedly material 'concrete utopia.' Of course, the anticipatory/compensatory dichotomy is fluid and interrelated; Bloch's differentiation is convenient insofar as his Marxist affiliation obliges him to demonstrate the teleological implications of a dialectical, educative relationship the warm/passion and cold/reasons streams of consciousness, between compensatory and anticipatory hope. The dialectical interplay between reason and passion in pursuit of a concrete utopia is thought to result in 'educated hope,' drawing us ever closer to a specific, preordained goal: the Communist utopia of Marxian theory. Levitas's method, however, forgoes such teleology and, therefore, provides an opportunity for re-articulation of anticipatory hope.

Concerns over the legacy and language of 'utopia' notwithstanding, we may identify some of the trajectories within emergent critical discourses of Indigenous peoples which may deserve 'utopian' characterization insofar they involve the construction of what Smith calls "prolineal genealog[ies]" or "history[ies] of the future" (Smith, 2007: xxvii). Such discourses are often substantially concerned with interrupting the naturalization of a settler colonial reality, again, characterized by the "transfer" or "elimination" of Indigenous peoples.

Dale Turner, professor of Government and Native American Studies at Dartmouth University and a member of the Temagami First Nation of what is now Northern Ontario, has argued in *This is Not a Peace Pipe* for Indigenous peoples' more effective engagement with, crucially, the existing legal and political discourses of the state (Turner, 2008: 10). Turner is unequivocal that this a pragmatic strategy of survival, one he views as the best means for protecting the rights afforded to Indigenous peoples by the modern nation-state. Turner's strategic pragmatism also leads him to call for the further development of what he calls "word warriors," that is, Indigenous intellectuals charged with bringing indigenous voices into what he terms the 'dominant intellectual community' in order to bring about a recognition of the 'legitimacy' of Indigenous knowledges (*idem*, 7-11).

Interestingly, Turner identifies Taiaiake Alfred as a 'word warrior' even though the two have substantial differences. Alfred is of the Kanewake [ga-na-WAH-gay], a community of Kanienkeha [gun-yah-geh-haw-ga], which, according to Alfred, is the "proper" name for what are conventionally known as the Mohawk people. Alfred is the current director of the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria. His work, particularly *Peace Power Righteousness* and *Wasáse*, might be said to exemplify an emergent and decidedly more strident form of Indigenous nationalism, which seeks to revitalize traditional indigenous cultural and political practices, and advocates radical disengagement with the nation-state. Rejecting what may be considered a modern-liberal 'rights and recognition' approach as inherently subjugating, Alfred advocates a form of strategic essentialism that views a recovery of the cultural foundations of Indigenous nations as necessary for a de-colonizing project. However, this does not, for Alfred, imply a return to an idealized, fossilized past. Rather, the recovering of cultural autonomy is understood as the basis of an envisioned autonomy-oriented nation-to-nation relationship among both the Onkwehonewe [oon-gway-hoon-way], the word from the Kanienkeha language for 'original peoples,' and the settler population.

In fact, Alfred has sought to contribute to the conceptualization of what has been called 'anarcha [or anarcho]-indigenism.' For Alfred, the affinities between some strains of anarchist thought and his own framework are located in the desire for a radically democratic and post-imperial future, as well as the shared "rejection of alliances with legalized systems of oppression, non-participation in the institutions that structure the colonial relationship and a belief in

bringing about change through direct action, physical resistance and confrontations with state power” (Alfred, 2009b: 46).

A corollary to the efforts of Indigenous critical theorists to re-articulate notions of ‘nation’ and ‘nationhood’ can be found in what Daniel Health Justice, a Cherokee professor of English and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Toronto, describes as ‘Indigenous literary nationalism.’ Justice writes

Indigenous literary nationalism is a philosophy that places Indigenous intellectual and cultural values at the center of analysis, rather than the margins [...] It's also an avowedly political movement, in that it asserts the active presence of Indigenous values in the study of the literatures of Indian Country, and it sees transformative possibility in studying nation-specific literatures through the critical lenses of their source cultures [...] Indigenous literary nationalism—and Indigenous nationhood itself—can generally be distinguished from nation-state nationalism in both its foundations and its aims. Thus, Indigenous literary nationalism is rooted in kinship responsibilities and values difference and diversity, while taking into account their historical and socio-political contexts, rather than being located in the assimilative patriotism and historical amnesia of the nation-state [...] It doesn't take fragmentation or cultural confusion as critical givens, it doesn't assume a monolithic center or a lack of internal diversity, nor does it presume that cultural change equals erasure of either cultural distinctiveness or internal coherence. A complicated diversity is a strength of tribal nations, not a deficiency (Justice, 2011b).

Justice's high fantasy trilogy, recently collected as *The Way of Thorn and Thunder* can itself be seen as a ‘nationalistic’ work of high fantasy that may also be appropriately considered an Indigenous critical dystopia. This sprawling work fictionalizes the colonial experience of Turtle Island/North America as the ‘Folk’—a collective term used to describe the various inhabitants of the ‘Eld Green’—are faced with the encroachment of the ‘Humans.’ The Humans, of course, come from without and appear to represent European colonizers while, interestingly, the Folk are a diverse group of humanoid and other-than-humanoid beings that blur the separation between humanoid, flora, and fauna, emphasizing intimate inter-relationship between Indigenous peoples and their native lands. While Justice's rich narrative is often incredibly bleak, it also speaks hopefully to issues of resistance and survival, as well as the possibilities of ally-ship and cultural exchange between the Folk and Humans.

Indeed the politics of ally-ship and solidarity between Native and non-Native peoples are of real importance to social movements concerned with transcending settler colonialism. Alfred who advocates for a notion of Indigenous “resurgence,” argues that such a mobilization is contingent, in part, upon “the cooperation and support of allies in the Settler society” (Alfred, 2009b: 64). What's more the relatively small population of Indigenous peoples now living within the borders of the United States and Canada necessitates, for Andrea Smith, the strategies of re-articulation including the formation of “unlikely alliances” (Smith, 2008: 200). This notion of re-

articulation as a means to explore the possibilities of strategic alliances “... is central to Native organizing; Native organizers frequently reframe and recenter issues so that non-Natives will understand that they impact not only Native peoples but all communities” (*idem*, 3).

The ongoing [as of this writing] ‘Occupy Wall Street’ or ‘Occupy Together’ movement, which might otherwise be viewed in utopian terms, provides a prominent example of Smith’s notion of re-articulation as well as support for her claim that “... just as we must not presume that we cannot work with unlikely allies, we must not presume that we should always work with people who are perceived to be our likely allies” (*idem*, 200).

Occupy Wall Street has prompted criticism from Indigenous persons who point out the colonial histories of Manhattan and Wall Street, arguing that they have, in fact, been occupied since 1625 when the Dutch East India Company established a colony on the land the indigenous Lenape called “Manna-Hatta.”⁸ In a notable development, occupations in Albuquerque, Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, Oakland, and Seattle, among others, have taken some steps to articulate a settler colonial analysis, including passing general assembly resolutions of solidarity with Indigenous peoples and pledging an intention to decolonize their respective Occupy movements.⁹ In Albuquerque, New Mexico, a general assembly decided to change their name to “Unoccupy Albuquerque” in direct response to the expressions of hurt and frustration made by Native Americans at their encampment (UnOccupy Albuquerque, 2011).

It may be argued that the longer-term capacities of the Occupy Wall Street or Occupy Together movement—in whatever form or forms it is to evolve—to enjoy the support of Indigenous activists is substantially dependent upon an ability to both actualize critical self-reflexivity and commit to accountability to anti-colonial critique. This is to not to say that the concerns of Indigenous peoples and settler colonialism are to assume a permanently “centered” importance. However, they must not be neglected as part of an intersectional critical analysis of the interlocking and historical nature of the experience of oppression—including, but not limited to, those which are age, ability, class, gender, nationality race, religion, and sexuality-based. As Jessica Yee, a “self-described ‘multiracial Indigenous hip-hop feminist reproductive justice freedom fighter!’” wrote in a widely-discussed blog post,

We don’t need more occupation – we need decolonization and it’s everyone’s responsibility to participate in that because COLONIALISM AFFECTS EVERYONE. EVERYONE! Colonialism also leads to capitalism, globalization, and industrialization. How can we truly end capitalism without ending colonialism? (Yee, 2011)

Conclusion

Utopian scholars from Bloch to Sargent to Levitas have sought to expand the conceptual horizons of 'utopia' beyond a niche literary tradition. It follows that differing conceptualization of utopia enable varying analyses of utopia's historical role has been the subject of a debate with significant consequences for utopian studies scholarship. This sustained, critical and constructive, de-stabilization of the concept and historical effects of utopia is a healthy endeavor, one that may facilitate the relevance of utopia and utopian studies for a rapidly globalizing world.

As a case in point, Jacqueline Dutton, addressing the problematic of 'Non-Western' utopian traditions in her contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* suggests

... the concept of utopia may no longer be broad enough to encompass the full scope of social dreamings. 'Intercultural imaginaries of the ideal' may be a more appropriate and neutral term for [the] study of several different traditions of speculative and idealistic thought grounded in the projection of a better society (Dutton, 2010: 224).

This questioning of the appropriateness of 'utopia' as a universal category appears worthy of consideration, especially in light of the consequences of utopia for the Indigenous peoples of what is now understood as the United States and Canada. Moreover, activists, artists, and scholars have sought to differentiate settler colonialism from other forms of colonialism, which undermines the appropriateness of using the term "post-colonial" to describe circumstances in which a decidedly settler colonial formation endures. Without a doubt, More's *Utopia*, much of the ensuing modern utopian literature tradition, and the utopianism of settler societies are substantial contributors to the naturalization of settler colonialism.

Also, the relationship between the modern utopia, settler colonialism, and notions of ecological principles is highly suspect. Here again, the 'good place which is no place' etymology is awkward; far from signifying notions of interrelationships or balance, it enables the idea of an environmental blank slate. This idea of erasure buttresses a conception of human domination, exploitation, and 'rationalization' of the other-than-human as a mode of 'progress' towards the realization of a modernist and, arguably, anti-ecological utopia.

There is an opportunity, however, for a re-articulation of utopia as a means of accountability to settler colonial critique and the efforts of Indigenous peoples and their allies to reconstitute an unsettled society. This represents both a new area of focus for utopian studies scholars as well as a challenge to the imagination: the envisioning and actualization of an unsettled society.

Questions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous solidarity as well as ideas of decolonization are, in reality, extremely complex. For example, debates are ongoing with regard to the efficacy of the term ‘settler’ as it potentially neglects the specificities of ‘non-Indigenous’ identities and experiences, including but certainly not limited to, those pertaining to racialization, gender, and class. Furthermore, Joanne Barker—a member of the Lenni-Lenape or Delaware Tribe and professor of American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University—has questioned the value of utilizing the term ‘settler colonialism’ and the development of a distinctive settler colonial studies. The etymology of ‘settler,’ for Barker, suggests the idea of ‘making consistent with,’ which she rejects due to her perception that settler colonial studies necessarily anticipates a reconciliation within the current modern nation-state formation (Barker, 2011).

Ultimately, I have sought to demonstrate that these matters merit the attention of utopian scholars. As it stands, utopia appears, at best, a controversial notion with respect to Indigenous peoples. By way of a concluding example, the late John Mohawk refers to *Utopian Legacies* as the title of his history of conquest and oppression resulting from modernity’s pursuit of the ideal (Mohawk, 2000). It follows that accountability to the concerns of Indigenous peoples themselves will, on a variety of levels, certainly unsettle studies of utopia. But the process of unsettling—and it will necessarily be an ongoing process—will educate and enrich utopian studies as a project concerned with contributing to the realization of a better world.

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Notes

¹ This is not to suggest that the only contemporary settler colonial situations exist in the United States and Canada. To the contrary, additional settler colonial contexts may be understood to exist in Australia, Israel, and New Zealand, among others. However, due to this article's focus on the role of More's *Utopia* and its contributions to the settler colonization of the New World, I have narrowed what might well be a justifiably wider claim.

² Regarding terminology, in this article I have chosen to refer to the original inhabitants of what is now known as the United States and Canada as "Indigenous" or "Native" peoples, as these terms are utilized in place of "Native American" in deference to Indigenous critics who reject that label and its evocation of a citizenship and identity conferred by a settler state.

³ See, for example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

⁴ Additionally, Mick Smith convincingly argues that the 'rational' instrumentalization of what he terms the "more-than-human" ought be recognized for the anti-ecological harm it has caused.

⁵ For a detailed schematic of the various mechanisms utilized in the service of settler and Indigenous transfer see pp. 33-52 in Veracini's *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*.

⁶ See Scott Morgensen. "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now."

⁷ It is beyond the scope of this paper, but an addendum to Smith's statement might include reference to ecological concerns as well.

⁸ See, for example, "An Open Letter to Occupy Wall Street Activists" <http://mzzainalstraten.blogspot.com/2011/09/open-letter-to-occupy-wall-street.html>, "Indians Counter Occupy Wall Street with Decolonize Wall Street" <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/10/indians-counter-occupy-wall-street-movement-with-decolonize-wall-street/>, and "Manna-hatta" <http://tequilasovereign.blogspot.com/2011/10/manna-hatta.html>

⁹ See, for example, "Occupy Boston Ratifies Memorandum of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples" <http://occupyboston.com/2011/10/09/occupy-boston-ratifies-memorandum-of-solidarity-with-indigenous-peoples/> and "Occupy Denver stands in solidarity with AIM to 'Decolonize Denver'" <http://occupydenver.org/occupy-denver-stands-in-solidarity-with-aim-to-decolonize-denver/> and "Indigenous Groups at Occupy Wall Street Mark Columbus Day as Day of Mourning" http://www.democracynow.org/se0/2011/10/11/indigenous_groups_at_occupy_wall_street