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# Introduction: Settler Colonial Biopolitics and Indigenous Lifeways

*René Dietrich*

This special issue of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* offers a discussion of settler colonial biopolitics as it targets Indigenous life across a range of transnationally related, yet distinct, sites of colonial settlement. Moving across these sites, it examines how settler-colonial regimes at different locations and at different positions within an economically hierarchized globality employ forms of biopolitics in historically specific ways to their own ends. At the same time, this special issue explores Indigenous life in its manifold manifestations as a site of resurgence, decolonial resistance, and enduring continuity that exceeds any attempt at biopolitical control. The contributions to this special issue thus engage scholarly conversations in critical Indigenous and settler colonial studies that connect a biopolitical logic of racialization, regularization, and naturalization to a geopolitical logic of dispossession and removal as inherent to the eliminatory logics of settler colonialism.

In this introduction, the term *lifeways* is used to invoke a variable set of embodied practices, relational discourses, and forms of knowledge central to Indigenous forms of sociality; “lifeways” is meant to convey the plurality of Indigenous life in its social, cultural, political, and cosmological dimensions in individual, collective, and relational terms. Understood as manifest in various social, political, and communal realms, articulated in diverse varieties of cultural expression, and grounded in specific traditions and practices, Indigenous lifeways help to make up the manifold and multiple presences of Indigenous peoples within, alongside, and in opposition to ongoing settler-colonial formations.

I draw on the thinking of Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Scott Morgensen, and Mark Rifkin, who have most thoroughly theorized a biopolitical framework for the context of

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settler regimes. Additionally, the work of many scholars who address issues of biopolitics in their analysis of settler-colonial rule and enduring Indigenous struggles are central to the conversation this special issue wants to continue.<sup>1</sup> Based on this work, I frame the following contributions through understanding settler colonial biopolitics as a constitutive paradigm for settler structures that target Indigenous bodies in order to aim at and disrupt the possibilities of Indigenous political life. Biopolitical techniques of the settler state produce Indigenous peoples through attacks on their bodies, lives, and lifeways as racialized populations to be managed and absorbed, or as cultures to be “honored” and appropriated. In both varieties, these techniques depoliticize Indigenous peoples, excluding their sovereignty and self-determination struggles from the arena of “proper” politics. By the same token, colonial biopolitical techniques seek to naturalize settler governance by tying its political order to an assumed natural order and course of life. As a result, they perpetually construct Indigenous peoples, reduced to an assortment of bodies rather than a plurality of meaningful place-based, socio-political collectivities, as aberrations to the settler norm that can be arbitrarily and variably administered, neglected, pathologized, or discarded.

The contributions to this special issue concern the ways in which the devaluing of Indigenous polities as prehistorical “savages,” racialized populations, or apolitical “cultures” and the categorizing of Indigenous lives as ultimately disposable mutually rely upon and reinforce each other. Together, these paradigms constitute co-productive principles for the foundation of settler nation-states and continue to be embedded in their mechanisms, structures, logics, and policies. These essays explore Australia, El Salvador, the United States, and Canada as sites across the settler-colonial archipelago<sup>2</sup> in which both distinct histories and transnationally mutable logics of settler colonialism create comparable frameworks for investigating the multiplicities of Indigenous life exposed to, navigating, and pushing beyond biopolitical settler governance.

With this last point in mind, the contributions to this issue highlight the question to which degree Indigenous lifeways may illustrate Indigenous knowledges and politics of life that counter, resist, disrupt or in other ways engage dominant settler colonial biopolitics. In this manner, this special issue considers and explores the concept of “life” itself as a central category for political critique in settler-Indigenous relations, irreducible to any ahistorical state of existence regularly assigned to Indigenous peoples. The contributions draw on a variety of national contexts, trajectories of political histories, and forms of cultural expression to explore the complex and contested relations between settler colonial biopolitics and Indigenous lifeways. Taken together, they aim at contributing to sustained discussions about the politicization and decolonization of “life” within critical Indigenous and settler colonial studies via an explicitly comparative, relational, and transnational framework.

Doing so, this special issue seeks to engage with and at the same time aims to push forward the appeal with which Scott Morgensen closes his pathbreaking essay “The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now”: “We must theorise settler colonialism as historical grounds for the globalization of biopower, *and* as an activity producing biopower in the present that requires denaturalising critique.”<sup>3</sup> This special issue strongly echoes Morgensen’s imperative to attend to the two-pronged nature of

settler colonial biopolitics in a global framework. Specifically, it hopes to open a space for conversation on how biopolitics has been both expanded and tested as a productive theoretical framework for Indigenous and settler colonial studies in ways that are deeply resonant with Morgensen's analysis of settler colonialism as "exemplary of biopower" in its formative, yet regularly naturalized, role for "regimes of global governance."<sup>4</sup>

In the remainder of the introduction, then, I want to open this space for the following contributions not so much by a survey of the current field of scholarship pertaining to these questions, but by turning to the two arguably most influential biopolitical thinkers, Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, as focus points to illuminate contexts beyond their theorization. Specifically, I want to ask how passages in their work pointing to the notion of life as a political category can be interrogated and reconsidered for an analysis of settler-colonial conditions under which Indigenous peoples continue to struggle towards a futurity of liberation from biopolitical settler orders.

## BIOPOLITICS AND SETTLER-COLONIAL NORMATIVITIES

A normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centered on life.

—Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1

As this statement from arguably the ur-text of biopolitical theory indicates, issues of the norm, of normalization, and of normativities are central to any discussion of biopolitics. However, I want to posit that in settler-colonial contexts, the question of what is normalized does not only concern forms and modes of life acting as normative within a given political system. For settler nation-states, the forces of "a normalizing society" as the "outcome of a technology of power centered on life" exceed evaluating and regulating the norm of "proper" living in order to produce populations whose modes of life serve dominant political and economic interests. Instead, with Kevin Bruyneel reminding us that "politics itself" is "one of the facets of existence that settler colonialism colonizes,"<sup>5</sup> we need to consider how settler governance biopolitically produces the political formation of the European nation-state itself as the norm and normative horizon of politics, allegedly tied to and affirmative of a natural order and course of life.

Biopolitics becomes then an instrument not just of incorporating life within calculations of power, but of codifying a specific political system embedded in a particular historical tradition of political philosophy (culminating in the model of Westphalian sovereignty), as not only one version among others of doing or conceiving of politics, but as the exclusive, naturalized, and invisibilized norm of politics. Unsurprisingly, this happens at the expense of, and with the purpose of discrediting, any other political formation which is then placed outside of, as Mark Rifkin has put it, "what will count as a viable political or legal form(ul)ation" within the settler state as the seemingly self-evident space of political organization.<sup>6</sup> This shift occurs by making the paradigm of the European-defined nation-state appear not as the "historical outcome of a power of technology centered on life itself," but as the outcome of the course and order of "life itself."<sup>7</sup>

Such an assumed normativity of the settler nation-state formation works to obscure the inherently political relations between the settler nation-state and Indigenous peoples

by casting any settler technique that diminishes or violates Indigenous normativities of social life and placemaking simply as self-evident modes of “modern” life and “cultivated” forms of land use. This production of self-evidence enables to the present day the disavowal—by nation-states such as Australia, El Salvador, Canada, and the United States—that they constitute settler-colonial formations in the first place. A number of scholars have established that when settler nation-states lay claim to Indigenous lands as their undivided national territory, the inherently violent geopolitics become translated into seemingly commonsensical forms of land ownership that eclipse any prior and ongoing claim by Indigenous peoples that, formulated in relational terms of belonging and place-making, exceed the proprietary terms of the settler state.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, the contributions to this issue investigate in distinct ways how settler colonial biopolitics closely aligns the institution of political normativities with the evaluation of what are to constitute civilized, progressive, modern, that is, “normal” modes of life, while relegating Indigenous lifeways to the status of mere aberrations to these norms. Indigenous ways of being and living signal not merely a political alternative, but also an alternative to what is universalized and normalized as the frame of politics.

## POLITICIZING LIFE, DECOLONIZING AGAMBEN

In his classic text of the biopolitical canon *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Giorgio Agamben (with reference to Karl Löwith), calls “the politicization of life” a “fundamental character of totalitarian states,” which is also indicative of the “curious contiguity between democracy and totalitarianism.”<sup>9</sup> For Agamben, the “politicization of life” addresses the paradigms by which, in totalitarian as well as in democratic states, “bare life” comes to figure as the “new political subject” ultimately enabling “the radical transformation of politics into the realm of bare life” which “legitimated and necessitated total domination.”<sup>10</sup> Within such an understanding of “the politicization of life,” politics can never be thought, as a number of Agamben’s critics have remarked, as anything other than the arena of sovereign power founded in the “state of exception,” the state which includes populations within the realm of sovereign power but excludes them from the status which would allow them to claim protection from the violence of the law. These populations are thus produced as “bare life”—the fact of mere biological existence divorced from any rights-bearing position—and suspended in a position of “inclusive exclusion.” For Agamben, the grounding of politics in the state of exception simultaneously makes production of bare life, or the politicization of life, the prime objective of politics.

In his influential 2009 essay “Indigenizing Agamben,” Mark Rifkin asked what it would mean to reconsider Agamben’s biopolitically conceived “state of exception” of “bare life” through the situation of Indigenous people—who are legally incorporated via a principle of inclusive exclusion on seemingly self-evident US nation-state territory—as a geopolitical “state of exception” characterized by “bare habitance.”<sup>11</sup> To add to these considerations of “indigenizing Agamben,” I would like to approach these passages from *Homo Sacer* from the perspective of decolonial thought and consider Agamben’s “politicization of life” differently. If we conceive of politics not as simply the arena of

sovereign power that seeks to exert force over people subjected to bare life via the state of “exception,” but also recognize that, in this political arena, different people and peoples contest and struggle over different versions of politics and concepts of political legitimacy, how, then, can the notion of “politicizing life” activate different registers of meaning? For instance, one might think of techniques of “blood quantum” within US contexts not so much as a means of “politicizing life” in the interest of settler-colonial rule, but more pointedly, as a depoliticizing of Indigenous systems of kinship and genealogy by reducing them to the registers of race and biological classification. Indeed, as J. Kēhaulani Kauanui concisely observes in reference to blood quantum use in Hawaiian contexts, “The blood quantum rule operates through a reductive logic in both cultural and legal contexts and undermines expansive identity claims based on genealogy” and constructs Kanaka Maoli identity instead as “measurable and dilutable.”<sup>12</sup>

The biologization of Indigenous life demonstrably works to undercut the political claims of Indigenous peoples. How much potential, then, might a converse concept of “the politicization of life” have as a means to resignify experiences, practices, epistemologies, and ontologies of Indigenous life and lifeways as irreducible to the biological, as well as distinct from the officially recognized *bios* of politically qualified life in the settler state? How can such a reframing of Agamben’s “politicization of life” work to assert the centrality of Indigenous lifeways in their multiple dimensions to the discourses of politics, sovereignty, self-determination, and resurgence, to which they, arguably, have always been integral? To reconfigure the “politicization of life” by prioritizing Indigenous lifeways could function as one means to disrupt the biopolitical logics of settler colonialism and to foreground the transformative potential this disruption holds for Indigenous life.

A rereading of the “politicization of life” points towards the possibilities Agamben’s work can offer for the development of decolonial thought. By this, I mean the employment and redirection of parts of his work and vocabulary so as to enable not only a critique of colonialism, but also to envision and project decolonization as a political horizon that, within Agamben’s work, remains beyond the possible. Decolonial thought remains an unarticulated negative in Agamben’s analysis of sovereign power and bare life. Maybe precisely for this reason, however, its excavation can loosen the normative bounds of what modes of collectivity and forms of life get to count, and can be analytically grasped, as political under settler governance. To reorient Agamben’s work toward the project of decolonization can thereby serve to reframe the possibility of politics in his thought, projecting it not only as a means to exercise sovereign power over a life politicized merely for that purpose, but allow the “politicization of life” the potential to transform power and to think sovereignty otherwise: as self-determination and a refusal to have one’s distinct forms and modes of life discounted from the realm of politics.

Inevitably, however, reconfiguring Agamben’s “politicization of life” from an Indigenous and settler colonial studies perspective entails not only a reconceptualization of politics and politicization within settler-colonial contexts, but also a decolonization of “life” as a concept and category. This is especially so since the sum of what Bruyneel calls “the facets of existence settler colonialism colonizes” is itself mediated through a register defined by normalized settler desires. While specific dominant

structures of social life defining the settler state are naturalized as conforming to the course of life itself, the same prism of settler-colonial normativities produces “life” for Indigenous peoples as an aggregation of racialized, seemingly biological qualities or as ahistorical, apolitical features of culture. In contrast, I want to argue for an understanding of “life” as a critical concept and political category that intervenes into biologizing and racializing logics of depoliticization, as well as into settler logics of normalization. An investigation of life and lifeways, as the following contributions offer, helps to make experiences and social practices available for more sustained analyses of the political relations between settler states and Indigenous peoples as they manifest globally across differentiated, yet transnationally related, sites of settlement.

## TRANSNATIONAL SETTLER LOGICS AND SITES OF RELATION

The articles making up this special issue thus investigate different sites and national contexts of settler-colonial biopolitical governance, which are necessarily shaped through their distinct histories and imaginaries of settler-Indigenous relations. They reveal how settler biopolitics take shape and target Indigenous peoples in particular ways, as well as illustrating how Indigenous life and lifeways constitute forms of resistance to these state techniques and enable possibilities of continuity and futurity. In what is now Australia, for example, Sheila Collingwood-Whittick’s article amply illustrates how, since the late nineteenth century, concerted state-led biopolitical measurements replaced overt operations of extinction in the ongoing pursuit of Indigenous elimination. She also connects techniques of this period, including Indigenous internment in reserves and cultural and biological absorption, to contemporary state phenomena of Indigenous youth incarceration, the disproportionate numbers of their deaths in custody, and increased child removal through welfare policies, thereby suggesting the continuity to the present day of a biopolitical agenda with the goal of Indigenous erasure. Her readings of Noongar author Kim Scott and Waanji novelist Alexis Wright show how their works document the debilitating consequences of Australian settler biopolitics for Indigenous peoples and also how Native writing enacts a form of resistance to these eliminatory techniques. These texts counter colonial erasure by exposing these techniques to be genocidal, offering alternative epistemological frameworks, and standing themselves as ongoing Indigenous presence.

While Collingwood-Whittick provides a survey of biopolitics in a well-known example of a settler state, Jorge Cuéllar’s contribution makes a case for the more contested idea of settler colonialism in Latin America. His essay sheds light on El Salvadoran settler bio- and necropolitics by examining a paradigmatic instance of colonial terror, La Matanza. This 1932 state-orchestrated massacre in response to an uprising of the peasant labor force against the authoritarian regime, Cuéllar calls “exemplary if we are to understand the settler-colonial mode that underpins contemporary Salvadoran state governance” (40). Less noted today is that Indigenous people rebelled as well. In a historically rich analysis, Cuéllar shows that the exemplary punishment of an Indigenous leader of the uprising, Feliciano Ama (Pipil), employed public torture



as a disciplinary measure that inscribed colonial terror on the Indigenous body itself. Furthermore, race laws legally perpetuated the colonial terror of La Matanza, which differentially targeted Indigenous people for elimination and Afro-descended populations for deracination, and thus Cuéllar strongly illustrates how anti-blackness works in tandem with Indigenous elimination to secure the settler-colonial project. Finally, the article makes clear that the absencing of Indigenous histories from the historical record is itself part of the settler-colonial project, for while memories of this colonial terror continue to shape Indigenous experience today, Indigenous histories of the events are largely exempt from public record and memory, and the settler-colonial character of the 1930s massacre and race laws remains largely unexamined.

Cuéllar's rendering of the Pipil leader's tortured body displayed to an Indigenous public as a tool for oppressing its struggles—while remaining largely unacknowledged in the official histories—finds an interesting contrast in Sarah Bonnie Humud's analysis of how Paiute activist Sarah Winnemucca used her physical presence as a tool for protesting the dominant images of Native peoples in front of settler audiences. At the same time, both essays show how settler colonial bio- and necropolitical regimes call for the spectacle of putting Indigenous bodies on display, even if, in these two cases, the spectacle has very different ends. Narratives of US settler nationalism rely on the invention of the "authentic Indian," as this construction exoticizes and depoliticizes Indigenous life, also in particularly gendered terms through the figure of the "Indian Princess." Closely reading and comparing Winnemucca's public performances and autobiography, Sara Bonnie Humud shows that Winnemucca's complex strategies of self-representation both participate in and undermine the construction of the "authentic Indian" as a biopolitical project of the US settler state. As Humud convincingly demonstrates, Winnemucca's performances and published autobiography negotiate the biopolitics of authenticity to expose the settler fantasies of Indigenous primitivism and advance her own politically resistant agenda for the Paiute people.

With her analysis of Winnemucca, Bonnie Humud casts new light on a well-known figure who has been controversial from the period of her activism through today. Juxtaposed to this, James Boucher's analysis of the novel *Nipishish* by Michel Noël (of Algonquin descent) brings into focus the potential of young adult literature to convey the situation and struggles of First Nation peoples in what today is known as Canada. As Boucher explains, in Canada the intersections of the private and public sector produce a neoliberal regime in which the biopolitics of the Indian Act are employed to incorporate First Nation peoples into structures of profit and marketability. Expanding on classical theories of biopolitics as a (neo)liberal form of governmentality, Boucher outlines how, in a specifically settler-colonial variety of neoliberalism, Indigenous bodies and lands, as well as their relation to each other, become subjected to the indifferent logics of exchange value and market-driven capital. At the same time, his analysis traces how Anishnaabeg lifeways that manifest kinship and relationality serve as strategies for the Indigenous community to upend colonial expectations and refuse categorization according to settler standards.

Responding to these four different locations of settler-colonial biopolitical formation, in her essay J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (Kanaka Maoli) shows how, as the four articles



demonstrate, various social, political, and cultural practices of Indigenous peoples disrupt settler biopolitical normativities and act as a form of decolonial resistance. Her commentary also discusses the complex colonial biopolitics that underlie the history of state nationalism and US incorporation in Hawai'i. Kauanui's response essay thus adds an analysis of the specific histories and contemporary challenges of another site of settler-colonial occupation to those offered by the other four articles. The connection across the Pacific which Kauanui evokes brings into view different geographies of transnational interdependencies between these distinct, yet related, sites of colonial settlement.

Rounding out this special issue is a conversation with author Deborah Miranda of the Ohlone/Costanoan Esselen Nation, followed by a selection of her poetry. Both in *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (2013), as well as in her numerous poetry collections, Miranda's work engages many questions to which this special issue is dedicated. This issue turns to Deborah Miranda's work and thinking because it exemplifies that an engaged cultural practice such as writing poetry is integral to how Indigenous lifeways disrupt settler colonial biopolitics and generate possibilities to Native peoplehood, self-determination, and resurgence. Miranda's work makes clear how the dehumanization of Californian Native peoples from the period of Spanish missionization to US settler invasion is connected to their elimination as federally recognized Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, in her account of personal and collective struggles against violence and erasure, the body becomes an index of intergenerational trauma as well as a site for experiencing and narrating different forms of belonging and intimacy with a decolonial potential inherent to them.<sup>13</sup> Poems discussed in the interview and included in the poetry selection are from *Raised by Humans* (2015), with three more recent poems included as well.

The movement of these four contributions and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui's response essay across multiple sites of settler colonization, in addition to the conversation with and the poetry by Deborah Miranda, help to render visible a network of relations among these sites that might best be characterized as distinct manifestations of a recurring set of transnational settler logics—as well as a crucial network of relations of anticolonial resistance that continually disrupts these logics and helps to sustain and generate other models of Indigenous-centered relationality.<sup>14</sup> While these transnational settler logics might move along different trajectories in accordance to specific local histories, in combination they invariably aspire to a naturalization of settlement and an erasure of Indigenous life as political collectivity, including violence against Indigenous individual bodies indicating such a collectivity.<sup>15</sup> Clearly opposing these settler objectives, this special issue foregrounds the critique, disruption, and possible dismantling of the biopolitical logics and normative fictions that constitute settler-colonial governance in its various national manifestations and transnational confluences. The contributions that follow do so specifically in that they highlight at various sites the endurance, resilience, and vitality of Indigenous lifeways; recall and reactivate histories and presences of decolonial resistance; and call attention to forms of cultural production as forces of resurgence for Indigenous political life.

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## NOTES

1. Aileen Moreton-Robinson's essay "Toward a New Research Agenda? Foucault, Whiteness, and Indigenous Sovereignty," *Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 4 (2006): 383–95, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783306069995>, is among the first to ask for the consequences an address of Indigenous sovereignty holds for biopolitical discourse. Taking this question further, Scott Lauria Morgensen's "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1 (2011): 52–76, 53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648801>, and Mark Rifkin's "Indigenizing Agamben: Rethinking Sovereignty in Light of the 'Peculiar' Status of Native Peoples," *Cultural Critique* 73 (2009): 88–124, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cul.0.0049>, arguably remain among the most sustained attempts to consider Foucauldian and Agambenian biopolitical thought for the situations of Indigenous peoples within settler-colonial contexts (specifically for the US in Rifkin's case).

Additionally, a substantial number of works within Indigenous studies of recent years have, sometimes implicitly, interrogated settler colonial biopolitics through varying thematic foci. Among those, for a biopolitical focus on sexuality and gender, see Scott Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty: Land, Sex, and the Colonial Politics of State Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018). For a focus on racialization, biologization, and culturalization, see J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); and Kim Tallbear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

For the ongoing, regularly gendered violence against Native lives, bodies, and lands, see Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Sherene Razack, *Dying from Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); and Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015). For the intersection of race and (putative post-)colonialism within the workings of empire, see Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), and *Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael R. Griffiths (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2016). For a critique of the biopolitics of liberal settler recognition, see Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), and Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

Press, 2014). For the intersecting biopolitical logics of racial and settler-colonial capitalism, most recently, see the special issue “Economies of Dispossession: Indigeneity, Race, Capitalism,” ed. Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy, *Social Text* 36, no. 2 (2018).

2. I am borrowing the term “archipelago” to refer to the group of states founded on, and to the present day constituted by, Indigenous dispossession and non-Native settlement, as it is used in the introduction by Michael R. Griffiths and Bruno Cornellier to the special issue “Globalizing Unsettlement,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 6, no. 4 (2016): 306–315, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2015.1090522>, esp. at 307: “the archipelago of first world nation states with settler colonial histories that has come to be associated with the thwarting of excessive power for the purposes of dispossession and the reduction of vulnerable bodies, peoples, and populations.”

3. Morgensen, “Biopolitics,” 73.

4. Morgensen, “Biopolitics,” 52, 53.

5. Kevin Bruyneel, “Codename Geronimo: Settler Memory and the Production of American Statism,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 6, no. 4 (2016): 349–64, 360, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2015.1090528>.

6. Rifkin, “Indigenizing Agamben,” 91.

7. Elsewhere, I have outlined in more detail how a biopolitical conception of politics as a project of hierarchization rooted in European political philosophy underpins the settler colonial nation-state in its biopolitical logics while appearing as the normative horizon of politics itself. René Dietrich, “The Biopolitical Logics of Settler Colonialism and Disruptive Relationality,” *Cultural Studies—Critical Methodologies* 17, no. 1 (2016): 67–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708616638696>.

8. See Robert Nichols, “Theft is Property! The Recursive Logic of Dispossession,” *Political Theory* 46, no. 1 (2017): 3–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591717701709>; Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

9. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford University Press, 1998 [1995]), 121.

10. *Ibid.*, 123, 120.

11. Rifkin, “Indigenizing Agamben,” 94.

12. Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 3.

13. I have argued this in greater detail in “Embodied Memories: Settler Colonial Biopolitics and Multiple Genealogies in Deborah Miranda’s *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*,” in *Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael R. Griffiths (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 137–52.

14. For work that highlights settler colonialism (and unsettlement) as a transnational project see Lorenzo Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015); Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso, 2016); the special issue “Experiences, Actors, Spaces: Dimensions of Settler Colonialism in Transnational Perspective,” ed. Eva Bischoff, *Settler Colonial Studies* 7, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2015.1090650>; *Provincializing the United States: Colonialism, Decolonization, and (Post)Colonial Governance in Transnational Perspective*, ed. Norbert Finzsch, Ursula Lehmkuhl, and Eva Bischof (Heidelberg, Germany: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014); “Globalizing Unsettlement,” ed. Griffiths and Cornellier, *Settler Colonial Studies* 6, no. 4 (2016).

15. Audra Simpson speaks to this connection in the first paragraph of her essay, “The State is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty,” *Theory and Event* 19, no. 4 (2016): n.p., writing that “Canada requires the death and so called “disappearance” of Indigenous women in order to secure its sovereignty. . . . this sovereign death drive then requires that we think about the ways in which we imagine not only nations and states but what counts as governance itself.”