(In) Visible Histories: Colonialism, Space and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

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Abstract:

The recent opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) has resulted in ongoing debates about representation of particular identity-seeking groups both academically and in the public realm. This article draws attention to the importance of the museum itself being constructed upon Indigenous land as representative of an ongoing colonial project. This paper critically examines: how do official discourses of the CMHR frame historical and contemporary Indigenous-settler relationships within this space? What contradictions emerge between the framing of "human rights," narratives of peaceful settlement and the geographical location? The museum itself will be placed in the larger context of Canada's settler colonial present, troubling its supposed commitment to human rights domestically and abroad. Finally, a critical legal geography analysis will be given in order to highlight the spatial significance of the CMHR and mandate to make visible some histories while erasing others.

> The building stands at the historic forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, the site of Canada's first post-Confederation treaty with the First Nations. People—travelers, traders, activists and immigrants—have been meeting for thousands of years and the ground is rich in archeology. (Canadian Museum for Human Rights Website n.d.[b]: para. 3)

> All I see when I look at that monstrosity of a building is a headstone and a terrible waste of resources. A headstone to

> many nations of Indigenous peoples whose rich and varied cultural heritages are now concrete and steel. (Wong [Sagkeeng First Nation] 2014: para. 1)

Introduction

In Winnipeg, Manitoba on August 17 2014 the body of Tina Fontaine (Sagkeeng First Nation), a 15-year old girl was murdered and her body disposed of in Winnipeg's Red River. Tina's body was found in a plastic bag near the Alexander Docks approximately one kilometer away from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), which was scheduled to open nearly one month later.[60] A Globe and Mail photo captured this juxtaposition: displaying both the memorial left by community members where Tina's body was found as well as the CMHR and its "tower of hope" looming in the background. This photo visually represents the stark hypocrisy of a museum celebrating its geographical location as a significant site of human rights as well as a meeting place and trading post between Indigenous peoples and early settlers. Tina's body has since been removed and, for the time being, her memorial remains intact alongside the Red River. Inevitably, in time this memory will begin to fade as media interest desiccates; but the CMHR will remain, standing – literally – atop centuries of colonial invasion, settlement, and violent dispossession. The CMHR is meant to symbolize *just how far Canada has come as a nation* by allegedly representing "the evolution, celebration and future of human rights" in Canada and beyond (CMHR n.d.: About section).

In this paper, the authors have sought to make visible the physical and symbolic project of the CMHR, and its complicity in the ongoing settler colonial project in Canada. After establishing our methodological and theoretical underpinnings, we will examine three pertinent issues associated with CMHR. First, a brief history of The Forks, the area in which the CMHR is located, will be given in order to challenge official narratives that seek to narrowly represent

[60] Years earlier, the arms and legs of 16-year old Felicia Solomon (Norway House Cree Nation) were also found in the same location as Tina Fontaine. Felicia went missing in March of 2003 (Puxley December 16 2014).

the space as historically one of peaceful encounters and human rights. Second, the museum itself will be placed in its largely invisiblized context of Canada's settler colonial present, troubling its project of displaying histories of human rights domestically and abroad. Finally, a critical legal geography analysis will be given in order to highlight the significance both of The Forks and the CMHR as spaces that are deeply colonial yet appear in ways that are scrubbed clean of such historical baggage.

To begin, we wish to acknowledge our own positionality as settlers. We recognize that our ancestors have been afforded opportunities as well as our own at the sacrifice of Indigenous land and sovereignty. The intent of this paper is not to tell the Indigenous "story" of colonial contact at The Forks. The counter-history to the dominant Eurocentric story produced by early Europeans that continues to be told nationwide is crucial, however, it is not our place to do so. We do not seek to take the place of Indigenous scholars who seek to embark on sharing the historical narratives of their ancestors. Rather, we seek to open a space amongst settlers and Indigenous people of treaty 1 to territory to critically discuss and explore the relations, laws and narratives that allow settlers to believe this geographical space as "ours."

The intent of this analysis is to de-construct the "official" version of the historical and contemporary use of the land where the CMHR is situated. The analysis includes a critical examination of official including brochures, press releases and website material. Numerous websites have been examined including The Forks, Parks Canada[61] and the CMHR websites as a means to critically analyze the "official" history of this space. The official discourses are examined within an anti-colonial framework that seeks to disrupt these narratives. This paper draws from insights traditionally found in geography, archeology, anthropology and law; however, ultimately this paper remains rooted within a sociological analysis of how

[61] Parks Canada is responsible for 90% of all federal Crown lands – 68% of these are managed through either formal or informal Aboriginal "advisory relationships." Parks Canada indicates that "commemorating Aboriginal themes" is a priority demonstrated by the Indigenous names tokenistically provided to some of their parks (Parks Canada n.d.[b]).

various discourses shape history through representation of Indigenous/settler relations in these contradictory spaces of absence-presence.

Unmapping Settler Colonialism: Representation, Visibility and Space

As a museum that is meant to both embody and display a history of human rights in Canada, the CMHR can be analyzed as primarily a space of representation. As such, the CMHR is distinctly in the business of (in)visibility. Thompson (2005) notes that visibility is traditionally a reciprocal process when between two living things. He argues that a "new visibility," however, has emerged alongside innovations in media and communication technologies (Thompson 2005: 32). Here Thompson (2005) notes that "with the development of communication media, visibility is freed from the spatial and temporal properties of the here and now," and therefore "one no longer must be present in the same spatial temporal setting in order to … witness [an] action or event" (35). While these innovations in new media are certainly noteworthy, we would argue that in a general sense this has always been the case in museums. The CMHR, and indeed any museum, is a project designed to re-present events and histories of distant times and places. This ability, whether "new" in the case of communication media or not in the case of museums, to re-present the past is necessarily a *political* process and therefore must be treated with a critical eye to what is and is not made visible. The power relations involved in producing a "field of visibility" has lead Brighenti (2007) to note that *visibility as such* ought to be seen as a sociological category in itself.

With this in mind, we seek to *unmap* the space in order to de-naturalize official narratives that frame both the CMHR's as both a material and symbolic location as representing human rights. As both a deconstructive and reconstructive technique of analysis, the process of unmapping complicates geographies by juxtaposing official narratives with the multiple other worldviews that often invisibly inhabit the same space (Phillips 1997). The process of "unmapping" undermines the common assumption of Canada's

innocent white settler history that perpetuates the ongoing myth that European settlers simply arrived and developed the land (Razack 2002a). A critical analysis of the CMHR must therefore challenge, and unmap, its settler colonial roots. To do so is "to contest [settlers'] primary claim to the land and to the nation," which "requires making visible Aboriginal nations whose land was stolen and whose communities remain imperiled" (Razack 2002a: 5).

As will be explored in more detail below, the CMHR is located in a place called The Forks, which is said to be one of the first meeting places of Indigenous nations and European settlers in the area. Traditionally used as a meeting place between Indigenous inhabitants, the land historically used by many proximate Indigenous nations was unilaterally given to Thomas Douglas in 1811 by the Hudson's Bay Company to create the Red River Colony. Through the colonizing process of settlement and Indigenous dispossession, The Forks has historically been occupied by Indigenous peoples, early European settlers, Métis[62], and later by various waves of state-encouraged immigration (The Forks n.d.[a]; [b]; [c]). It is this same narrative of seemingly peaceful co-existence that is promoted today at The Forks, which has become a developed tourist area now branded as "Winnipeg's meeting place" (The Forks n.d.). The CMHR, as the newest injection of Canadian nationalism into the area, is meant to stand as a testament to the multicultural tradition that is so fundamental to the ongoing project of Canadian nation-building; save for the fact that it stands upon land that has bore witness to centuries of violent "resettlement" of Indigenous nations; land that has been completely remade for the pleasure of tourists; land that continues to silently witness the colonial violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Bonita Lawrence, a Mi'kmaw scholar (2003) describes how colonization is integral to the Canadian nation building agenda:

[62] Emma LaRoque (2010) writes that there is a distinction between metis (halfbreed) and the Metis Nation. The Métis Nation refers to refers to those whose ancestors were originally White and Indian and went on to develop as a distinct people with a distinct culture while metis refers to first generation people whom identify as part Indian and part white (7)

> …In order to maintain Canadian's self image as a fundamentally "decent" people innocent of any wrong doing, the historical record of how the land was acquired – the forcible and relentless dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the theft of their territories and the implementation of legislation and policies designed to effect their total disappearance of peoples – must also be erased. It has therefore been crucial that the survivors of this process be silenced – that Native people be deliberately denied a voice within national discourses. (Lawrence 2003: 23)

To unmap this space is to unearth the colonial histories that have literally been buried under Canada's newest tribute to its alleged respect for human rights and to *unsettle* the narrative of Canada's peaceful ascension to statehood.

Settler colonialism is a process rooted in the settlement and control of land. This inherently spatial character leads Patrick Wolfe (2006) to argue that "whatever settlers may say – and they generally have a lot to say – the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. *Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element*" (388 [emphasis added]). Colonial settlement of the territory that was to become Canada was not a process based on peaceful co-existence, however, but one that necessitated a violent re-placement of Indigenous populations. And so, in order for settlers to make for themselves a home, a state, and a history in this land, first "they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there" (Tuck and Yang 2012: 6). It is settler-colonial violence within this geographical space that removed Indigenous inhabitants through the signing of the treaties. Indigenous populations were simply removed from sight and expected to either vanish into the modern Canadian mosaic or remain *elsewhere* on remote reserves. Settler colonialism, then, is a process heavily invested in visibility: the process of settlement is coupled with a project that aims to "disappear" the native both physically and discursively from this land by creating what Nicholas Brown (2014) calls a perpetual vanishing landscape.

It might be argued that our claims above ignore the fact that there is a permanent section of the CMHR is devoted to Indigenous nations' experiences with colonization, and are therefore not "vanishing," as we argue. Efforts to "disappear" Indigenous claims to land and sovereignty, however, can take on more subtle forms than colonial genocide. Coulthard (2014) identifies how the colonial state uses *recognition* as a tool of assimilating and neutralizing more radical assertions of Indigenous nationhood. Indigeneity – defined as an oppositional, place-based existence lived through resistance to colonial dispossession and incommensurable with settler society (Alfred and Corntassel 2005) – is disappeared and ahistorically re-presented and recognized by the settler polity as nations that are "both *in* Canada and *of* Canada" (Cairns 2000: 204). Scott Morgensen (2011) similarly argues that while the settler project of Indigenous erasure may still take its conventional violent form; increasingly, it seeks not to *destroy* Indigenous ways of life, culture, and land but instead *produce* them as a method of "amalgamation" (56). What better place to do so than a museum, a state-controlled space of selective representation? Indigeneity is made into an artifact, a remnant of the past; graciously conserved by settler society for its own viewing pleasure. The CMHR thus serves to both *commend* the Canadian state for representing – albeit partially – its troubled past and *celebrate* it for giving the gift of human rights to "our" Indigenous populations.

The Forks, and its newest attraction, the CMHR, is therefore viewed (so to speak) here as primarily an exercise in a politicized process of representation: that is, in making (in)visible certain histories of the land. In order to critically unmap such histories, Canada's colonial present must be foregrounded. In doing so, a museum for human rights is put under a different light: it becomes implicated in histories of genocide, displacement, and Indigenous struggle. The Forks is seen no longer as a historic meeting place, but is today a tourist destination boasting an "authentic" experience Indigenous culture, whilst quietly eschewing the fact that Indigenous nations have had to survive centuries of dispossession in order to make way for it. Indigeneity is seen no longer a "thing" of the past, congealed in an object behind a pane of glass, but a living, breathing, resurgent way of life that continues to struggle for sovereignty to this day. To

unmap the colonial context of the CMHR is to offer the unsettling reminder that the settler colonial project remains an unfinished one (Tuck and Yang 2012).

Where Colonization and Indigenous Sovereignty Meet: Unmapping the Forks

The CMHR is the first national museum in Canada located outside of Ottawa. Located at a national historic site as designated by Parks Canada, The Forks is today one of Winnipeg's most popular tourist destinations. The Forks' website advertises the space as a contemporary meeting place, symbolized by the meeting of the Red and Assiniboine River and meant to reflect to the historic and contemporary use of the space (The Forks n.d.). For example, The Forks official website states "much like the early Aboriginals," "we" can continue to gather and meet in this new space (The Forks n.d.). The Forks website describes the post-contact meeting place as a site of peaceful fur trade amongst Indigenous people, European fur traders, Scottish settlers, railway workers and thousands of immigrants (The Forks n.d.).

Parks Canada describes The Forks as symbolic in the process of the formation of Manitoba as a Canadian province. The signing of Treaty no. 1 is used as an exemplar of the mutually beneficial relationship between Indigenous and settler populations. Parks Canada describes the signing of the treaties within colonial terms of "re-settlement" onto reserves, to allow for the "large influx of new settlers from Canada and abroad" (Parks Canada n.d.[a]: para. 4). Parks Canada implies an ingenuity and generosity of European settlers by pointing out that colonizers "replaced bison with cattle, and native prairie plants with grain and other crops" (Parks Canada n.d.[b]: para. 9). In addition, settlers introduced new forms of agriculture (Parks Canada n.d.[b]). These examples are framed as evidence that Europeans brought progress and modernity to the Indigenous inhabitants.

Throughout history, acts of resistance to colonization are identified as occurring within this geographical space, the most blatant example being the long history of Métis Resistance. Beginning in

1869 John Bruce and Louis Riel crossed the Assiniboine River at The Forks leading 200 Metis people to occupy what was then referred to as Upper Fort Garry. The Métis Resistance lasted between 1869-1870 and was a direct action to pressure the English government to guarantee Métis property rights.[63] Although, Louis Riel was later hung for his political actions resistance did not cease. It is surprising that the Riel Rebellion has been coopted and folded into the national narrative of human rights, as though the resistance was not profoundly anti-colonial in nature.

Between 1870 and 1886 Winnipeg grew from a small settlement into a principal metropolitical centre of Western Canada. Settlement continued to centre at The Forks and was heightened with the construction of the railway stationed in this space (Berkowski 1987).[64] From 1888 until 1988, The Forks was used primarily for the railway. Any remnants of Indigeneity in this space were removed; the Cree and Anishinaabe people that once utilized this land were (dis) placed onto reservations and unable to enter urban spaces without legal permission from an Indian Agent (Razack 2002b). Indigenous people were invisible in the urban landscape across the Prairies until the 1960s (Razack 2002b).

The decline in the use of the railway allowed the space to be re-purposed and developed into a park by Parks Canada and in 1974, the space was designated a National Historic Site of Canada (Parks Canada n.d.[b]). Significant efforts were made to restore the historical elements of Canadian history within the space. Most importantly, the space was fuelled by economic development resulting in the opening of gift shops and restaurants. In the early 1990s The Forks was built as a tourist attraction that remains a central tourist destination in Winnipeg. Current branding of The

[63] Riel's grave located at the St Boniface Cathedral Cemetery. It is visible from the "tower of hope" at the CMHR. According to the architects of the CMHR "The Tower of Hope" is described as a beacon for humanity, symbolic of changes in the physical state of water and form, it speaks to the life affirming hope for positive change for humanity. For more information about the architecture of the CMHR see Antoine Predock Architect at www.predock.com (accessed December 14, 2014).

[64] It is also important to acknowledge that The Forks is also one of the key sites in developing the railway in the Prairies. The railway is also historically symbolic of Canadian history as one that exploited the labour of racialized people for imperial benefit of European settlers.

Forks strategically "embraces" remnants of its early Indigenous history. However, Indigenous history and Indigenous people are framed as just that, *history*. The framing of Indiginiety as historical ensures visitors that this is a shared and multicultural space.

The most blatant example is "Oodena Celebration Circle" built in 1993 and was opened to the public on September 1997 (Manitoba Historical Association n.d.).[65] Oodena is a word translating to "centre of the city," however, some sites indicate it is a word belonging to the Cree, others state its Ojibwe while others indicate that it is both Cree and Ojibwe (The Forks, Oodena Celebration Circle n.d.[b]; [c]). However, there is no linkage to how the name was chosen or whether the word was simply coopted by developers. The Forks website indicates that in 1992 The Forks Renewal Company called for proposal to design a "spiritual heart" among the commercial and recreational developments (1). It was designed by a company HTFC Planning & Design who describe it as "a place to gather and celebrate our common heritage," and "though intended as a multi-cultural space, urban aboriginal groups have adopted it as a favourite place for ceremonies and celebrations year-round" (HFTC Planning & Design website n.d.).

(In)Visible Histories: The Canadian Museum for Human Rights

The CMHR is representative of a broader change in the nature of museums occurring on a global scale (Orange and Carter 2012). Carter and Orange (2012) refer to these museums as issue based. Issue based museums are beginning to emerge as institutions that seek to facilitate dialogue on human rights, training and debate (Orange and Carter 2012). This new approach to museology seeks to raise awareness of various social issues and seeks to improve education of social justice amongst the general public. Historically,

[65] Oodena Celebration Circle is just one example. Another site of interest is the "Adventure Park" operated by Parks Canada. It is a playground for children influenced and inspired by The First Peoples, The Fur Trade, The Métis, The Settlers, The French Quarter and the Metropolis telling a historical narrative through play. To view the various representations of early settlement, please view the Parks Canada website http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/mb/forks/activ/papv-vhap.aspx.

museum collections served as a blatant demonstration of wealth and power of collectors or the state, while Carter and Orange (2012) argue that this has approach has shifted towards education and social activism, even sometimes against the oppression of the state actors funding the museum (Orange and Carter 2012b). The objective of the CMHR is to address issues central to human rights concerns broadly defined and seeks to promote social justice, cultural diversity and inclusive societies. The CMHR follows a larger movement within representation in museums globally seeking to displace historical approaches of museology, which often failed to recognize the inherent political nature of representation (Carter and Orange 2012a).

Discussions of building a new museum initially emerged in the late 1990s. Moses (2012) reviewed a number of press releases identifying the first idea of merging of a Holocaust museum and a human rights museum in 2000. In 2001, a proposal was submitted to former Prime Minister Chretien for a human rights museum that could be linked to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms within a private-public partnership-funding model (Moses 2012). The official purpose of the museum as cited in s.15.1 (1) of the Canadian *Museum's Act* states that the purpose of the CMHR:

> …to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue. (CMHR n.d.[c]: para. 1)

Stuart Murray (2013), the museum's former CEO wrote a brief introduction to the museum in *Canadian Issues* pointing to its distinct "Canadianness" in recognizing both the "successes" and "stumbles" that have come to define this country. However, the carefully constructed article erases violent realities of colonialism and the historical relations between settlers and Indigenous people are exclusively presented in palatable and optimistic ways. Furthermore, Murray (2013) minimizes Canada's violent history by stating that although historical narratives are important, upon surveying Canadians about what the museum should entail, "Canadians highlighted a frequently shared belief that a willingness

to confront, apologize for and learn from past failings was also a point of pride; a differentiator many felt was inherently Canadian" (22). Therefore, the purpose of the museum is not to focus on what Murray refers to as "stumbles" and "blemishes" of Canada's past but rather to focus on the future.[66] In fact, this tendency to simply "put the past in the past," apologize, and move on is exemplary of broader Canadian strategy of symbolically "settling" past wrongs while changing very little about the present or future consequences. This is demonstrated through the lack of meaningful acknowledgement of the land upon which the museum is situated by quite literally covering up one history with another narrative. The museum becomes a central part of a fabricated narrative that minimizes history, literally and figuratively crowding out Indigenous histories.

Prior to construction of the CMHR, two major archeological digs took place on the land slated for construction (CMHR n.d.[a]; [b]). According to the media, archeological findings from years ago were withheld until relatively recently (CBC 2011). There was most notable controversy surrounding various facets of the digs and the withholding of information from the archeological community itself. Dr. Leigh Syms, a retired Manitoba archeologist spoke out to the Manitoba Archeological Association and mainstream media regarding the disrespect for the site by CMHR management (CBC 2009).

Debate ensued between Syms and management of the CMHR in 2010 on the Manitoba Archeological Association website. Syms wrote an initial letter titled "Accelerated Destruction of First Nations Heritage Beneath the Canadian Museum of Human Rights" outlining his concerns in April 2010. Syms bluntly states, "In the 45 years that I have been involved in the rich heritage of the province, this is the worst case of legal destruction of the rich heritage that I have had the misfortune to witness." Angela Cassie, Director of Communications and Public Engagement responded to Syms letter (June 15, 2010). Cassie begins her letter again re-affirming the

[66] For a more in depth analyses of the early developments of the CMHR, refer to Moses (2012).

importance of The Forks as a place of shared meaning for numerous identity groups, with specific recognition to the local Indigenous community whom were consulted demonstrated by the presence of Elders who held a ceremony in spring of 2010. Of particular interest is that Cassie indicates that on the advice of Aboriginal Elders (who remain anonymous both by name and nation), "a medicine bag was deposited into each hole dug for pilings and caissons last summer and fall to show respect for Mother Earth and honour this special site" Furthermore, "our work with Aboriginal communities in Manitoba is ongoing and we are working to ensure their continued involvement throughout the construction and operation of the CMHR" (4). Furthermore, Cassie defends the preservation of the land and artifacts as following the guidelines and procedures required in heritage recovery projects.

The representation of historical and contemporary relationships between settlers and the local Indigenous community is inherently embedded within power relationships and is strategically re-framed as characterized by a reciprocal relationship between two consenting parties. The construction of this narrative of reciprocity is inherently racialized; it is enforced through space and legitimized by the law. Despite the apparent objectives, the CMHR and the tourist development of The Forks remain contemporary colonizing forces through the illusion that this geographical location is somehow "shared land" and their collective projects of unequivocally representing a specific settler history while downplaying the centuries of Indigenous struggle, resistance and systematic removal of Indigenous bodies in this space. This can be demonstrated by the failure of the CMHR to take seriously the concerns regarding the preservation of the Indigenous history and instead literally built a museum atop of historical artifacts with only symbolic consultation with the local Indigenous community. Rather, this land has been taken as if it naturally belongs to settlers and displays one historical narrative: one supposedly representing of human rights and a distinct "Canadianness" literally lies atop of hundreds of years of Indigenous history. Such actions are justified and legitimized through property law that assumes and takes for granted that settlers found and developed the land and still have the authority to do so.

Intersections of Spatiality, Legality and Visibility

Viewed from a legal geography perspective, settler colonization is an exercise in the ownership and control of territory, and therefore the re-making of pre-existing (Indigenous) geographies. Colonialism shatters prior relationships to the land and displaces Indigenous populations to "make space" for European settlement. This is explained by Tsawwassen First Nation Chief Kim Baird, who states that as the "tools of land title and other rights of newcomers were *mapped over* our territories – effectively erasing our presence and marginalizing us on the fringes of our territory" (quoted in Blomley 2014a: 1291 [emphasis added]). Even in processes of treaty-making – which the CMHR cites as exemplary of Canadian "human rights" – is argued to be yet another, less overtly violent, means to grow expand the sovereign territory of the settler nation. Indeed, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, "land cessation treaties extinguished Aboriginal title to vast areas of central and western Canada" (Egan 2013: 33). Under a critical light, then, the treaties allowed for the removal of the Indigenous communities that had utilized the land at The Forks as a meeting place and displaced them onto reservations to allow for the development of the national railway that runs through area (Berkowksi 1987). Thus, property is much more than a legal concept; but is a social, relational, and performative institution that is central to the dispossession of Indigenous people in settler colonial contexts.

Where our essay began, with the Tina's memorial in the shadow of the CMHR, cannot be divorced from the centuries of colonization that produced the conditions necessary for such a stark juxtaposition of Indigenous genocide and human rights. The Forks was transformed from a meeting place to a colony in 1811, which represented a profound shift in the space itself that is not represented at The Forks today: "a vibrant downtown Winnipeg public space where people gather for celebrations, recreation and, *much like the early Aboriginals, to meet one another*" (The Forks n.d. [emphasis added]). It is a great achievement for the narrative of settler colonization to be able to equate life on the land prior colonization as "much like" life *off* the land after.

Ownership and control of the lands that were to become Canada was what *grounded* colonial hierarchies of class, race, and gender. The creation of the Red River colony at the Forks, like other settlements, did not allow the land to remain a "meeting space" (as Parks Canada claims), nor did it allow for the customary uses of the land continue. Rather, "colonies entailed settlers, and settlers required land, which could only be got by dispossessing native people. A relationship based on trade was replaced by one based on land" (Harris 2004: 169). Indigenous geographies were made invisible and the land was re-placed with colonial hierarchies became entrenched within the land to allow for a nation-building project to unfold. Today, this is witnessed in the CMHR's vague commitment to "preserve and promote *our* heritage at home and abroad"[67] and "contribut[e] to the collective memory and *sense of identity* of all Canadians" (CMHR n.d.).

The importance of trade, however, is not to be confused with the importance of commerce, which remains at the heart of how the space is produced today. As the lands surrounding The Forks were reoriented away from customary use, settler capitalist modes of producing the space replaced prior histories of use. Indigenous lands were understood to be far more valuable than Indigenous labour, leading the former to be developed under the settler validation of improvement and leading the latter to be largely excluded from such a process. Today, the only "place" for Indigeneity in the highly developed tourist area is arguably the place of an object to be displayed and "experienced" by tourists. In a similar, and paradoxical, vein, histories of human rights are made visible in The Forks through the CMHR *as a direct result of Indigenous dispossession and continued colonial occupation of the land.* Razack points to such continued structures of Canada's colonial present, who argues,

> Despite three decades of significant urbanization [and development], the spatial configuration of the nineteenth century and the social hierarchies it both engenders and sustains

[67] The "us" implied in this quote is likely to be defined by the CMHR as "all Canadians," which is an effective way to cast Indigenous nations as simply Canadian citizens and not sovereign nations with underlying title to these lands.

> remain firmly embedded in the white Canadian psyche and in social and economic institutions. (Razack 2002b: 133)

Therefore, the moment that The Forks and the surrounding area became formally colonized, it gradually ceased to be a "meeting place" and became a space produced for and by settlers.

Finally, if "the experienced materiality of colonialism is grounded … in dispossessions and repossessions of land" (Harris 2004: 167), then the Western property regime undoubtedly plays a significant role in settler colonization. Indeed, Blomley (2014a; 2014b), Harris (2004), and many others argue that Western law is a primary tool of settlement and dispossession, providing the disciplinary apparatus to enforce such a stratified regime of territorial occupation. Violence is an integral aspect of the creation of property (Blomley 2003), exemplified in the forced expulsion of Indigenous presence from the land that the CMHR is built upon. Indeed, Razack (2002b) argues that "colonizers at first claim the land of the colonized as their own through a process of eviction…" (129). Today, it seems as though Indigenous communities had to be expelled from their lands, forced onto reserves, and marginalized from the construction of the settler in order to "make space" for human rights. The irony here speaks for itself. The CMHR can only justify its commitment to human rights if its foundation upon Indigenous dispossession is erased from view; if the colonial violence visited upon missing and murder women and girls is made invisible; and a resurgent, sovereign Indigeneity is disappeared into the national narrative of the multicultural Canadian state.

Conclusion

Through "unmapping," it becomes clear that the site of the CMHR is not merely a "meeting place" for Indigenous people and settlers alike, nor is it a place emblematic of human rights. The CMHR is situated upon stolen land obtained through histories of Indigenous dispossession. Rather than folding such histories into the national narrative of peaceful co-existence and human rights, this essay attempted to *unmap* such colonial geographies that render invisible the violent practices integral to Canada's ascension to nationhood.

The CMHR is a building meant to "visualize justice" in its location as both a historic "meeting place" and a place that has seen many conflicts for "human rights" such as the Riel Resistance, The Manitoba Schools Question, The Persons Case and the Winnipeg General Strike (CMHR n.d.: Architecture). Analyses of space must pay attention to what is visible, but equal attention must also be paid to what has been invisibilized. The multiple Indigenous histories woven into the land that lay buried beneath the CMHR is built are effectively invisiblized behind the sites and attractions of the Forks. For example, the ongoing national crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women is hidden in the shadow of the CMHR's "Tower of Hope." The numbered treaties signed by many of the ancestors of these young women and girls occurred in this very space but the consequences of colonialism are absent. Settler colonialism is an exercise in the management of visibility through its control of space and the bodies within it. This fact is not limited to spaces explicitly devoted to representation however: a museum for human rights is simply presents an especially literal metaphor for this reality.

The issues we have raised above cannot so easily be solved by a greater inclusion of Indigenous history into the narrative of the CMHR or the attractions of The Forks. Such tokenistic inclusion is, in fact, a practice committed to the reproduction of our colonial present and deployed by the settler state (and its web of institutions) to neutralize threats to its legitimacy. Indeed, our project has not been to challenge specifically *what* is represented at the CMHR and The Forks; there can be little justice found in solely representation. This essay aimed to problematize the spaces themselves as unequivocally colonial in nature and as spaces heavily invested in the visibility of justice and disappearing past injustice. We suggest that the sentiments expressed in the opening quote by Kim Lee-Wong ought to be taken very seriously. The CMHR is as much a celebration of human rights as it is "a headstone and a terrible waste of resources."

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