

**The Politics of Place on Lingít Aaní: Regulating Settler Space in Juneau, Alaska**

by

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B.A., Fort Lewis College, 2016

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES  
(Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
(Vancouver)

April 2019

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The Politics of Place on Lingít Aaní: Regulating Settler Space in Juneau, Alaska

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the degree of Master of Arts

in Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice

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## **Abstract**

This thesis looks at how settler-colonialism materializes through the conjoined city-making projects of image-making, tourism and homelessness regulation in Juneau, Alaska. Using the analytic method of haunting, I examine how these urban processes bring historical tactics of violence and erasure from the past into the present. By bringing literatures on settler-colonialism, place-making, and homelessness in conversation, I examine the urban boosterist imagining of Alaska as the Last Frontier as a practice of colonial violence and discuss how this imaginary produces conditions and practices of harm, particularly ones that target Tlingit people and place. I argue that this imaginary is positioned within a logic of elimination that seeks to undermine Indigenous ways of knowing and being on the land and seeks to further construct structures of settler hegemony in Juneau and elsewhere.

The purpose of this project is to understand the relationship between settler-colonialism and the settler imaginary of place-making in Southeast Alaska. By specifically tracing these ideas through processes of unsettling in the city through the regulation of homelessness and the project of tourism, I identify how these explicit materializations of settler-colonialism in Juneau, Alaska are tied up in “imagining”. This project is about how settler space-making through the settler-imaginary is a specific tool of settler-colonialism that continues to produce Juneau and dispossess Tlingit people.

## **Lay Summary**

The key goal of this research is to examine how theories of settler-colonialism enable us to understand how and in what ways the settler occupation of Alaska takes place through ongoing constructions of the City of Juneau as a settler space. By looking the production of the city for settlers, specifically through tourism and the regulation of homelessness, this work looks at how Indigenous people in Juneau, Alaska are removed in order to enact settler place making. I specifically trace settler-colonialism in Juneau by looking at the ways in which settlers create settler owned and controlled spaces in the city through the imagining of Alaska as empty, which is central to the unfulfilled project of erasing Indigenous presence. I also look at how this creation of settler-space occurs more materially through the regulation and policing of homelessness in order to protect capitalist interests in tourism economies.

## **Preface**

This thesis is the original and independent work of the author, D. Meachum.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CBJ – City and Borough of Juneau, Alaska

HMIS – Homeless Management Information System

ILRC – Indian Law Resource Center

ISP – Icy Strait Point

JCF – Juneau Community Foundation

JCHH – Juneau Coalition on Housing and Homelessness

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh whose unceded traditional, ancestral, and occupied territories this thesis was written on. With love, strength, and solidarity.

I would also like to especially acknowledge and thank my co-supervisors Dr. JP Catungal and Dr. Dory Nason for their invaluable feedback, support, and friendship.

Thank you to all my family, friends, and cohort, especially to Marika, Alice, Tessa, and Jade.

Further thanks to Dr. Denise Ferreira da Silva, Dr. Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, Wynn Archibald, and Carmen Radut.

Hay chxw q'a, Gunalchéesh.

## **Dedication**

*For Mom, Dad, and Hunter*

## Chapter One: Introduction

Team Ivory-Billed Woodpecker/Tlingit

You think you know it all.

You think your declarations of extinction make it so.

What of those living things that have always lived, breathed and bred?

They cannot be 'presto' extinct just because you say they are.

There is the largest woodpecker of the family; the Ivory-Bill,

    Long ago declared wiped from the face of the earth. It's only remnants

    Photographs, ornithologist sketches, paintings and a dusty, brittle, feathered hide.

What of him?

Rejoice if you want. The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker would as soon care but doesn't.

But, he does live and we're pretty sure that he didn't just appear re-evolved into himself.

There've been efforts to ignore and discount the Alaska Native people

    Including those of the Tlingit tribe

    To declare us, what?

Ignored to death? Does that make us gone? Extinct?

We, unlike the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, realize our plight

    And can go beyond the hardwiring of just reproduction.

It's true there are "Winter and Pond" photographs, anthropological sketches, paintings

    And dusty artifacts. But, we still honor our ancestors, conduct our ceremonies

    Using recently crafted pieces of mixed with the old

    And kill, store, prepare and eat food as we have always done.

Extinction is not a matter of degree; it is the end of the line. Kaput.

We Tlingit are not.

We live.

We do not count on you to rejoice for us.

We rejoice for ourselves.

*Freda M. Westman, Tlingit*

## 1.1 Research Context

Ships have historically brought violence to Native peoples and to Native lands. Seeking new land and wealth, ships have marked eras of terror, land theft, and death for Indigenous people; the arrival of Columbus to the Americas, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the colonization of Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Australia, and the Russians and Euro-Americans to Alaska. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it establishes a pattern of ships as literal vessels of colonial violence. The cruise ship industry is one contemporary manifestation of how settler-colonialism continues to inflict colonial violence on Alaska.

This thesis observes and traces how and in what ways settler-colonialism operates through tourism and the cruise industry to further settler productions of space, hegemony, and supremacy in Juneau, Alaska. By looking at the past and present ways in which colonial violence has shaped Alaska for settlers, including through practices like mapping and vanishing, I show how tourism via the cruise industry is rooted in the same logics of elimination and harm. Through this project I examine how Indigenous places are made into settler spaces through material practices of occupation and removal. I argue that settler-colonialism materializes through the ways in which settlers appropriate Native land through imagining Alaska as empty and Indigenous people as vanishing. In this thesis I investigate how this is accomplished materially through the recent construction of a statue of an idolized explorer, and the policing of (Indigenous) homelessness, each of which I argue are tools to further make and maintain Juneau and Alaska as a settler space. By closely examining how the city is produced for settlers and tourists through investing in symbolic imaginaries and material practices of vanishing Indigenous presences, I will trace the work of settler-colonialism in contemporary city making processes in Juneau, Alaska.

To tourists, Alaska calls to mind images of ice, vast wilderness, whales, and the tallest mountain in North America, Denali (Kollin 2). Alaska is officially nicknamed “The Last Frontier”, and the state motto is “North to the Future”. These sayings symbolize the settler imaginary of Alaska and its deep fantasies of land as empty for exploration and white settlement. This thesis will argue that the city of Juneau works within a logic of elimination that is deeply invested in these fantasies, which underwrite the project of removing Tlingit people physically and symbolically from our lands and of constituting and validating settler perceptions of ownership and agency in Juneau through tourism centered urban place making. I will present how historical tactics, tools, and ideas of violence, elimination, and erasure are deployed upon Indigenous peoples through the settler-capitalist project of tourism. This violence is displayed in various materializations through processes of settler space-making and prominently in the city of Juneau’s recent implementation of an anti-homeless ordinance.

To show how settler-colonialism, tourism, and city making are emmeshed in Juneau, I bring into conversation the scholarly literatures on analysis of settler-colonialism, urban geographies, place-making and homelessness. By linking this scholarship to this specific topic, I hope to show how the cruise industry in Southeast Alaska, in partnership with the city of Juneau, uses power rooted in settler-colonialism to remove Tlingit bodies from the land, mirroring hundreds of years of imperial legacies of elimination and occupation. By examining the ways in which the Native body and lands in so-called Juneau and Alaska are imagined, constructed, and removed by processes of domination, I will argue that tourism economies and the city directly perpetuate and enact settler violence against Indigenous peoples, lands, and ways of being.

## 1.2 Background

I first became interested in tourism via cruise ships and the impact on Indigenous communities while living in the village of Hoonah, Alaska during the summers of my childhood. Located about forty miles west of Juneau, Hoonah is a Tlingit fishing village of around 800 residents in the summer, a population that drops to around 600 year-round. Hoonah is also the location of a large-scale privately-owned and operated cruise ship port called Icy Strait Point (ISP). While my family and I lived there in the summers of 2006 to 2009, the cruise ships would anchor offshore and bring tourists onto shore using the lifeboats. During this time, the road between town and ISP was unpaved, and most of the employees were from Hoonah or other places in Southeast Alaska.

Things have changed dramatically in the ten years since. Geographically, the village infrastructure has transformed and is continuing to adapt in order to meet the needs and demands of the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit the village each summer. The road is now paved. ISP has bunkhouses to accommodate seasonal employees not from Hoonah or Southeast Alaska, but from across the “lower 48” and globally. Instead of bringing in tourists from the ships on lifeboats, there is now a dock that allows ships to directly tie up to get more people ashore. ISP very recently came to an agreement with the village of Hoonah to lease land to build a second dock, to accommodate mega ships and to have more than one ship tie up at a time. As of 2019, more than 75 ships dock annually in Hoonah between the months of May and September (City of Hoonah, “History of Hoonah”).

I loved my summers in Hoonah. We did not have cable or cellphones, so my sister and I would bring lots of books to read. We would ride our bikes in loops around town or go fishing off the beach. On sunny days, we liked to jump off the docks. We would visit my uncle and

cousin down at the harbor on their commercial fishing boat when they were in town dropping off their haul. We would go blueberry picking out on the old logging roads, look for bears, and walk down to the store to buy a soda just to have something to do. My family takes the ferry back to Hoonah every summer to berry pick and visit family, and I always look forward to doing all the things we did as kids. Hoonah will always be special and one of my very favorite places.

It is through spending the summers of my childhood in Hoonah, and going back every year, that I noticed how the village was changing due to the cruise ships. The material ways in which the village was and continues to be altered for tourism, for instance, through the building of infrastructure such as docks, shift Hoonah from being a small Tlingit village to being a settler tourist destination. This project looks at these same processes of transformation and appropriation of space, but in the larger location of Juneau. Inspired and informed by my love for Hoonah, this project discusses colonial violence specifically through the cruise industry in Juneau, but speaks more broadly to tourism, the cruise industry, and processes of settler space-making at large in Southeast Alaska, including in places like Hoonah.

Hoonah and Juneau are very similar, tourism wise, but Juneau is further along in the process of settling via tourism. Juneau is heavily invested in constructing Juneau for tourists and for settlers. Indeed, it seems that most everything the city does is to benefit the cruise industry, if not directly, then indirectly. For example, the city continues to build docks and more parking lots for tourist buses, evict homeless people from downtown spaces, create new parks and walkways and, indeed, engage in “downtown revitalization” more broadly.

One particular insidious example of the city’s actions is the homeless ordinance of 2017. As I note in greater detail below, the ordinance specifically targets homeless people by banning camping in downtown areas. This anti-camping ordinance is motivated by the need to disappear



poverty for the sake of the tourists walking downtown and visiting tourist shops. After all, poverty is understood as something that people do not want to see as part of their tourist fantasies of nature and wilderness in Alaska. The ordinance thus serves to further construct and assert Juneau as foremost a settler-place. The ordinance was written by the mayor in partnership with the Downtown Business Association as a way to regulate “unsavory” bodies downtown that they felt were a nuisance and thus were threats to the success of businesses that cater to tourists. The fact that Indigenous people constitute a significant portion of the targeted homeless population in Juneau only motivates their removal further.

### **1.3 Methodology**

This project is about how Indigenous places become settler spaces. I have chosen three main areas of inquiry to examine and explore the questions of this thesis: settler-colonialism, Indigenous versus settler geographies of space and place, and homelessness. I look at key literatures in these respective areas to understand how they are related and how they are working together to co-constitute each other and produce settler colonial conditions of harm and violence in Southeast Alaska. The purpose of this project is to understand or establish the relationship dynamic between settler-colonialism and the settler imaginary of place-making. This thesis draws on theoretical concepts and framings from these literatures to analyze the accomplishment of settler-colonialism in Juneau, Alaska through conjoined practices of imagining Alaska as a settler space, Juneau’s pursuit of tourism economy, and enacting displacement as a tool or set of tools of settler space-making.

Because this project is about place and how Indigenous place is transformed to settler space, it is important for me to ground this research in the place where it is located, Lingít Aaní.

In this section I want to outline my methodological approach through qualitative research methods that looks to the past to understand the present. I will also outline my pedagogical approach that centers Tlingit understandings and conceptualizations of land and being as pedagogy or centeredness.

Through this project, I will identify how imagining of land as empty and Tlingit people as vanishing is a specific and specialized tool of settler space-making in Juneau, Alaska and the ways in which it works to produce a capitalist city that continues to dispossess Tlingit people of their land. I will use a method of haunting to understand how the past informs or produces the present. According to Coddington,

Haunting is an analytic that illuminates specific aspects of social life: aspects which appear to be not there, concealed yet important; aspects which seethe, acting on or meddling with present-day realities in a violent or disturbed manner; and finally, aspects that by seething, unsettle taken-for-granted realities. Haunting is not a value-neutral term: it highlights histories that cannot rest. (748)

Haunting is therefore a useful approach for studies of social and cultural geography, especially in areas such as Alaska or “the Last Frontier”, where there is no line that distinguishes postcolonial and colonial (774). This method or way of approaching this work understands that settler-colonialism is on-going, and that it operates through complex structures, not merely singular events (Wolfe 388; Tuck and Yang 5; Christensen, “They Want a Different Life” 425). I chose to work through this lens because it understands that colonial pasts are colonial presents. Haunting is a powerful tool for looking at how ideas, histories, and presents are constructed through repeated and embodied ordinary practices (Coddington 774). The connections between colonial histories and present-day practices of the state, city, and settlers are embodied in the everyday

(774). Understanding how “imagining” has been used in the past to construct or shape Alaska for settlers is helpful in identifying and tracing it in or to the present.

To show this relationship between settler-colonialism, imagining, and the project of city-making in Juneau, I examine literature on settler-colonialism, Tlingit and settler place-making, and homelessness in order to form a fuller understanding of them as interlinked issues and ideas. Then, expanding from this literature and making use of relevant official government documents as well as media coverage, I identify the specific ways in which they intersect and provide important discussions with each other. Gathering key themes and arguments in these texts, I then work to understand how these themes and conversations are reflected within Juneau-based examples of homelessness, tourism, and the settler-imaginary. In these respective chapters, I illustrate the specific ways in which I see these notions reflected in Juneau and the ways in which they highlight a history that cannot rest.

### **1.3.1 Lingít Aaní as Pedagogy**

Indigenous knowledge has been historically targeted by colonial violence and erasure in Alaska through theft and appropriation of land, and practices such as mapping, residential schools and legacies of systemic racism embedded in education and social systems. I want to make space within this thesis specifically to recognize that this project is about how Indigenous land and community-based knowledge is foundational to disrupting settler violence. This project is about place, and how Indigenous places and people have been removed and transformed by the settler-imaginary to produce settler-spaces. In this section, I want to locate myself within this research in order to understand how, throughout this project, I will be thinking from relationships

and knowledges based in land, which is central to refusing the violence of settler geographic practices.

My Tlingit name is Kaaxditeen. I am Eagle-Kaagwaantaan (Wolf) from the House on the Water and the Two Door House. Ancestrally, my family comes from Sitka, Alaska (Sheet'ka' Kwáan) but like my mother, aunts, and uncles, I grew up in and call Juneau (territory of the Aak'w Kwáan and T'aaku Kwáan) home. My favorite days in the summer are spent with my family picking blueberries, salmonberries, and thimbleberries. We have our favorite known spots where we pick with converted coffee cans as buckets. This is something that I have been doing every summer with my family since childhood. My mom and aunts make jam from the berries we pick, or my favorite, we freeze the berries to eat later with fruit cocktail and sliced bananas at our frequent "Indian food" dinners. This is when we gather as a family to eat our traditional foods: herring eggs, salmon, clams and seaweed, berries, and of course, fry bread and jam. Each family member has a role in the dinner and usually brings the same thing. We bring the berries. One of my aunts brings the salmon. Another aunt makes the dough for the fry bread--then we all stretch and fry the bread together. My mom, sister, and I usually stay at our aunt's house the latest, talking over tea. This is my family's Haa Kusteeyí, or a way in which gathering food brings us together as Tlingit people. This is just one example of the many ways in which sense of home and love for each other and for our culture are captured through cultural practices like berry picking. This is one way in which we embody our way of life and being as Tlingit people who rely on and love the land.

This project is fundamentally about the importance and centrality of land to Tlingit ways of life and being, and the ways in which the ability to exist on the land as Tlingit people is targeted by imaginative practices rooted in the elimination of the Native. I come to this project

from a land-based approach, which is enacted in the ways that I love Hoonah, or berry picking and sharing food with my family and the generational knowledge that are passed on in these practices and experiences of being Tlingit. In thinking about this thesis and the way in which I center land and ideas of Tlingit place, I have been informed in part by Indigenous feminists Haunani-Kay Trask, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and many others. But most importantly, I have grown in my thinking of these issues through conversations with my sister Hunter, and my mom. It is through engaging with these issues with my family that I have been able to build an approach that centers our connection to land as being, and to think from that geographical and emplaced position.

#### **1.4 Settler-Colonialism**

In this section I look at what settler-colonialism is, what it does, and how it manifests in the city. In order to understand how settler-colonialism is present in this study and enacted in specific Juneau-based examples of settler space-making and policing of homelessness, I employ a definition of settler-colonialism that identifies the ways in which it physically and symbolically materializes or is put to work to gain access to Indigenous lands. Defining settler-colonialism is important because it will show how and in what ways colonial structures of erasure and violence are employed through imagining Alaska as empty in order to create settler space in Southeast Alaska. There are many Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in this field whose work seeks to understand how settler-colonialism invades, controls, and structures settler-powered societies on top of stolen Indigenous lands.

Patrick Wolfe, a key scholar in settler-colonial studies, understands settler-colonialism through what he names a “logic of elimination”. A logic of elimination is where settlers seek to

completely dissolve and remove Native societies and ways of life by invading, dominating and replacing Indigenous ways of being and knowing on the land with new colonial systems and ideologies (Wolfe 388). A logic of elimination recognizes access to Indigenous territories as its “irreducible element” and the primary motive of elimination (Wolfe 388). When talking about the logic of elimination, many scholars point to his key argument that, within a logic of elimination, settlers come to stay, thus making invasion a structure and not an event (Wolfe 388). Thinking of settler-colonialism through the ways in which removal occurs is helpful in identifying how and in what ways this is structured dispossession.

Dene scholar Glen Coulthard describes settler-colonialism as a distinct form of colonialism characterized by a specific form of domination where discursive and non-discursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power have been structured in hierarchical ways to continue to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority (Coulthard 7). Coulthard stresses that settler-colonialism is characterized by its ability not only to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their ancestral lands, but also to undermine Indigenous sovereignty and humanity (4). This highly specialized form of domination is intended to maintain control and occupancy of Indigenous lands and bodies (7). He agrees with Wolfe that this domination and expropriation of land is always done with the goal of the total elimination of Indigenous peoples physically, culturally, politically, and legally (4).

Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang echo these articulations, as they too believe that “settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain” (Tuck and Yang 5). They believe that for settlers to make a place their home they must destroy and eliminate the Indigenous peoples who live there. Ultimately,

settlers believe that Indigenous peoples are in the way and through the destruction of Indigenous life through domination, law, and policy, land becomes property and a resource. In order for this structure to succeed Indigenous peoples must be erased and made into ghosts (6). They write,

Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation. This is why Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes that settler colonialism is a structure and not an event. In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. (6)

These understandings of settler-colonialism are crucial to this project because they identify the importance of structured land dispossession in the making of settler-space. Tuck and Yang believe that, through land theft and homemaking, settlers are making a new “home” in a homesteading worldview where the land and people are made for their benefit. Thus, through these worldviews, “settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies” undermining Indigenous land sovereignty and ways of life (Tuck and Yang 7). This can clearly be seen in the racialized ways in which the city of Juneau polices homelessness through the camping ordinance and the ways in which the city is engaged in building a tourist destination on top of the lands in which the houseless have been removed. Understanding how settler-colonialism is a specific structure of occupation that includes land theft, political, legal, and

social exclusion is critical in identifying how it is at work in Juneau through the settler imaginary and the cruise industry to ghost the bodies of Indigenous people.

As I will explore in detail through the following chapters, structures of settler-colonialism can be seen materially in this study through the ways that Indigenous people have been constructed as vanishing, which will be explored throughout this thesis, as part of a larger structure of dispossession to appropriate Tlingit land in Southeast Alaska. I also trace how settler-colonial violence rooted in elimination, is presented through the policing and displacement of Indigenous homelessness, the erasure of Indigenous place names and remapping of colonial geographies, and ultimately the construction of a settler-tourist city. Additionally, I trace settler-colonialism through the ways (like policing) that it specifically targets Indigenous women through violent masculinities built and informed through processes of domination to undermine Indigenous futures on the land.



## **Chapter Two: Space**

This chapter on space and place will look at the ways that Alaska is thought about and perceived in the settler imaginary as a settler owned, controlled, and dominated space. By employing the analytic lens of haunting, or looking at how the past informs the present, I will observe how the practice of imagining land as empty, and Indigenous people as vanishing has been brought into and used in the present to continue to dispossess Indigenous people of their land in Southeast Alaska. In order to do this, I examine and compare how Indigenous people use place naming to interact with the land, versus how mapping is used dichotomously in the settler-imaginary to construct settler space. I also explore how settler Alaskan identities are bound in these imaginaries and work to further ghost Indigenous people. Through looking at the literature in these areas, I can then trace the use of naming, mapping, and imagining in Juneau as a highly specialized process to take land.

### **2.1 Imagining Alaska**

In the introduction I established a theoretical understanding of settler-colonialism as inherently eliminatory and as premised on a primary desire to access lands for the purpose of building settler-society. In this section, I argue that settler-colonialism works to make Indigenous places settler spaces through material and symbolic practices such as mapping that have been historically used to remove or ghost Indigenous peoples from land and from a spatial imaginary or existence. I look at how and in what ways settler-colonialism transforms places to remove Indigenous presence and re-inscribe settler ideologies and fantasies on top of expropriated land in order to create and maintain settler space and hegemony. This is to identify colonial imagining

of land, elimination, and re-inscription that takes place in structures of dispossession and occupation in Juneau.

Many scholars have noted that settler-space is created through imagining Indigenous places as empty or Indigenous people as vanishing. This argument is clearly presented in “Vanishing the Haida: George Dawson's Ethnographic Vision and the Making of Settler Space on the Queen Charlotte Islands in the Late Nineteenth Century” by Jason Grek-Martin. In this text, Martin examines how settler imaginaries physically construct space by considering the ways that the Haida were “vanished in-place” on Haida Gwaii through mapping and constructions of settler-Native histories. The article focuses on how photographer and “explorer” George Dawson contributed to the making of settler-place through depicting the Haida people in British Columbia as vanishing, using ghostly portrayals in his photographs and the “mapping out” of the bodies and histories of the Haida in his ethnographic documentation in the late 1800’s. Dawson portrayed Indigenous people as “in an irreversible state of decline” to map Natives out of the landscape of British Columbia to supplant Haida life with colonial geographies (Grek-Martin 376). This imaginative geography envisioned settler space where the Haida were absent, creating imaginaries where land was empty (378-9).

Through his portrayal of the Haida as vanishing and dying out visually and literally, Dawson’s works function(ed) to remove and erase Haida presence in British Columbia. Through his imagining, Dawson created a world without the Haida that informed colonial land policy and settler conceptions of space and place-making (381). Dawson sought to represent the lands as wild and empty of Native peoples to aid in the land dispossession to come. These imaginative geographies continue to help colonial policies of dispossession, relocation, and assimilation to designate Haida land for settlers to this day (396). Grek-Martin explains:

Dawson's recurring ethnographic vision of the 'Vanishing Indian' made a significant contribution to the larger colonial project of making 'settler space' in BC. Indeed, Dawson's efforts to document what he perceived to be the province's declining native societies served to justify their virtual erasure from the imaginative colonial geographies of Euro-Canadian settlement and resource extraction which he depicted in his various scientific reports and maps. In essence, Dawson 'mapped natives out' (Brealey 1995) of his representations of BC's future resource landscapes by writing them back into a 'primitive' past that was deemed to be in the process of vanishing forever. (376)

This shows how practices of symbolic erasure and settler imaginative geographies have historically had real, concrete, and physical outcomes that harm Indigenous peoples and work to justify the taking of lands and removal of bodies. This literature on imagining, vanishing, and "mapping out" ties directly into logics of elimination. Portraying land as empty and Indigenous people as vanishing illustrates how settler-space is being produced, rationalized, and validated through the employment of geographical imaginations and practices of erasure. This is an example of Tuck and Yang's ideas of settler-homemaking in praxis. In subsequent sections I show how material policies like the anti-camping ordinance, and the city's downtown "revitalization" endeavors are policies born from similar imaginations that are working to construct Juneau for tourism and Juneau as a non-Indigenous settler-space.

In order to think about how Alaska is imagined as empty and the ways that these imaginations create settler spaces through "mapping out" or vanishing (via material practices like naming), I look at what specific imaginaries exist about Alaska and the ways in which they produce or construct Alaska for settlers. For the most part, according to scholars, Alaska is generally thought of in two ways: either as a wild, pristine, nature-place that should remain "untouched" or as a land with immense extractive and capitalist production potential, primarily

through oil and gas development and mining industries (Ganapathy 97; Kollin 2). Imaginations of Alaska as nature work to establish Indigenous people as absent from land. Imaginations in extraction produce Alaska as a place of opportunity and wealth, not for Indigenous people, but for settlers. Both are tied up in imagining settler Alaskan identities that produce land in Alaska for settlers.

These imaginations or fantasies of Alaska as nature or as wealth are ontologically opposed to Tlingit and other Alaska Native conceptualizations of land as life (Ganapathy 104). Compared to imaginations of Alaska as romanticized wilderness or a capitalist frontier, Tlingit senses of place and space are unfixed and connected to “embodied experiences on the land and water, oral traditions that emerge from these experiences, and rituals of emplacement” (98). Tlingit models of land place value and meaning in direct embodied cultural practices that connect people to the land, most noticeably through subsistence activities like hunting and berry picking (104). These grounded ways of being on the land are inherently anti-capitalist in that they focus not on the extraction of profit from the land, but on the maintenance of reciprocal relationships and obligations between Indigenous people and land (Coulthard 13). In contrast, settlers conceptualize the land differently and in opposition to Alaska Native values, placing value and meaning on land in terms of capacities for capitalist expansion via occupation and extraction (Ganapathy 98).

Mapping and naming geographic areas or locations have historically been used as a powerful tool to establish settler ownership over land (Ganapathy 99; Martin 376; Mawani 103). Practices of mapping Alaska have been central to the framing of land as empty and as significant potential sources of wealth, which has helped to construct settler space and uses of land for

extraction. Maps figure prominently in the production of capitalist settler spaces. Indeed, according to Sandhya Ganapathy:

Maps should be thought of as political tools that furthered certain strategic goals by depicting spaces in particular ways, rather than as simply records of spatial knowledge. Maps not only charted distant territories but also served as evidence of discovery, enabling European colonial powers to claim “ownership” through the Doctrine of Discovery. (99)

### **2.1.1 Imagining Alaska as Nature**

Along with the political use of mapping as a means of imagining Alaska as empty, the literary practice of nature writing has also constructed Alaska in ways that vanish Indigenous people through producing land as landscapes or nature devoid of Indigeneity. Understanding how nature writing constructs Alaska as wilderness without Indigenous people illustrates how tourism operates within this fantasy. Nature writing as a specific form of erasure is not innocent, but actively engaged in fabricating harmful narratives that Alaska awaits exploration and settlement.

Nature writing imagines Alaska as empty through the deep fantasies of Alaska as wilderness, glaciers, whales, polar bears, and experiences. This can be traced in Alaska’s official and persistent nickname as the Last Frontier—a nickname that evokes the fantasy that Alaska is an untouched nature oasis that can be explored for the first time. In her book *Nature’s State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier*, Susan Kollin examines this form of imagining as “the myth of Alaska”. This book is concerned with what has shaped Alaska as a nature and wilderness frontier and the narratives that are at work within and outside of the state that establish this imaginary. Kollin focuses on nature writers and texts like *Into the Wild* by Jon

Krakauer and writings by John Muir. Her analysis of these texts illustrates literary landscapes of Alaska constructed as a deeply fantasized and imagined empty space, one that can be experienced for the first time through settler exploration.

Imaginations of Alaska as wilderness devoid of Indigenous peoples perform their own form of symbolic elimination. Such an understanding is important in identifying how imagining is tied up in logics of elimination and is present within the imaginary of tourism that produces the city of Juneau. These articles about imagining and constructing settler-space establish how Alaska Native land-based pedagogies and knowledges are inherently different from and foundationally opposed to settler pedagogies of domination and extraction. Understanding these divergences not only helps us understand how settler-colonial imaginations of lands are part of a larger structure of dispossession but also allows us to see how removal of Indigenous people from land is an act of elimination that seeks to sever Indigenous land-being connections. Settler imaginaries create practices that erase Indigeneity and allow for settler-ideologies to be reinscribed into the land, making and creating settler-space. Imagining Alaska ultimately sets the stage for land dispossession and settler-economies to construct Alaska for settlers and for tourists completely disregarding and disappearing Indigenous peoples, values, and ways of life.

### **2.1.2 Imagining Settler Alaskan Identity**

To further examine how imagining is connected to larger structures of dispossession, I briefly look at how these imaginaries work to construct settler-space through Alaskan identity formation. This is important because it will illuminate how settler Alaskan identities are formed in ways that foundationally erase Indigenous presence and create settler space through violence

and domination of Indigenous lands and bodies. This imagining does not only take space physically, but also through the ways that settler Alaskan identities appropriate land through claim to belonging, erasing Indigenous Indigeneity.

Research on Alaskan identity suggests that settler identities are constructed through concepts of “frontier nostalgia”. Frontier nostalgia is defined as the process through which settlers produce meanings and attachments to lands based on settler-histories of domination and occupation (Hogan and Pursell 67). Frontier nostalgia invokes an imaginative fantasy of the past that then is recalled and played out in the present. Understanding that occupation and frontier settlement of Alaska is on-going recognizes that frontier nostalgia is not a feeling or action firmly placed in the past. Instead, the idea of Frontier lives on, in part through its invocation in settler imaginaries and identities based in exploration, tourism, nature, and extractive economies (64).

Michelle Hogan and Timothy Pursell argue that “real Alaskan” identities are coded as masculine, rural, and white; and marginalize that which is feminine, urban, and Native (63). This is demonstrated in the production of Alaskan identities through a nostalgic longing for the past. When Hogan and Pursell moved to Fairbanks as adults to be faculty at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, they became aware of a list that was often repeated to newcomers, that in order to become a “real Alaskan”, you must do three things: “1.) urinate in the Yukon river, 2.) Shoot a grizzly bear, and 3.) ‘fuck’ an Eskimo” (Hogan and Pursell 64). This rite of passage usefully illustrates how the formation of white settler-Alaskan identity is symbolically and physically tied up with violence and is founded in a nostalgia for histories and practices of dominance over land and Indigenous people, especially women in Alaska.

This imaginative construction of settler Alaskan identity through the appropriation of land and violence against and dominance over Indigeneity also plays out in settler colonial identity formation processes elsewhere. Houston Wood's work illustrates this in the context of Hawai'i. In *Displacing Natives: the Rhetorical Production of Hawai'i*, Houston Wood writes:

The practice of pretending innocence while securing hegemony, for example, informs common usage in the islands of the word "kama'aina". According to Pukui and Elbert's *Hawaiian Dictionary*, before Euroamericans arrived kama'aina referred to Kanaka Maoli [Native Hawaiian] who were born to a particular locale. Early explorers, missionaries, and settlers left this meaning unchanged, but later immigrants and Euroamericans born in the islands increasingly desired to possess land not only by deed and lease but also through the claim that Hawai'i was their "home." "Kama'aina" was thus transformed from a concept denoting Native-born into a term meaning "island-born," or even merely "well-acquainted with the islands." By adopting a Native word to describe themselves, Euroamericans obscured both their origins and the devastating effects their presence was having on the Native-born. (41)

Wood's analysis of the appropriation of "kama'aina" speaks to understanding how processes of settlement work through settler-identity making that simultaneously appropriates and erases Indigeneity (Barman 4). Claiming Alaskan identity obscures historical and on-going structures of colonial violence that place settlers in Alaska. Alaska's official nickname is the Last Frontier. This is a deeply problematic nostalgic imaginary that constructs Alaska for settler-consumption and as settler-owned and controlled space. It is a deeply invested-in fantasy and identity that works to designate land to settlers through the conquering of landscapes and the erasure of Alaska Natives. Identities based in ideas of the frontier are foundationally rooted in the invasion of the lands and bodies of Indigenous Alaskans.



## 2.2 Producing Settler Space

Settler-imaginaries of vanishing help construct symbolic and physical control of land through practices like naming. I now want to look more at how settler-space is created through processes of city-making. Many scholars are engaged in understanding how settler-colonialism operates within the city or produces the city through the organization and regulation of space. For this study, I am interested in unpacking how the organization and regulation of space works to remove Indigenous and racialized people in order to build spaces for settlers. In the following section, I look at how settler-colonialism operates within the city and how the city itself is constructed or produced through settler-colonialism. This analysis is important because it will help in tracing specific forms of land/body domination in the Juneau context through the ways the city has been built to continue to dispossess Indigenous people.

To continue to think about the goal of elimination in the contemporary city, I look to conversations happening about vanishing as a means to create settler space. Jean Barman's "Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity in Vancouver" is particularly helpful. Barman examines how, through processes of unsettling, Indigenous peoples are made to be invisible even with the hypervisibility of Indigenous imagery in Vancouver. By focusing on how reserve lands were disassembled, and Indigenous peoples were pushed out of Vancouver through forced and coerced strategies, Barman argues that this removal and unsettling enabled the city to be built in calculated ways that left traces of Indigeneity, like valuing nature and landscapes in Stanley Park, without the actual bodies of Indigenous peoples present. Barman argues that these sanitizations of Indigeneity pave the way for settlers to occupy Vancouver as an Indigenous place but brand it as their own (4). She writes:

Persons who were indigenous to the area, and considered it their home long before the arrival of outsiders, were first removed from the land they called their own and then saw even their memory deliberately lost from view. Erasure had two purposes. It was an end in itself in the unsettling process whereby, in 1913, residents of Vancouver's most desirable Indian reserve, visible from the city's centre, were persuaded to leave. Erasure also gave the means for the young city to assert that sense of rootedness that is at the heart of Indigeneity without it having to be indigenous to Vancouver. With the totem poles erected in Stanley Park in 1923 to mark the forced removal of the last of its indigenous residents, erasure functioned as a pathway to indigenous Indigeneity's replacement by a sanitized Indigeneity got from elsewhere. (4)

Barman recounts the history of removal in Vancouver to provide an analysis of the discursive use of power through occupation and removal as a means of securing the city for settlers. She identifies the ways through which the city continues to remove Indigenous bodies from the land and commodify, exploit, and appropriate Indigenous artwork and conceptions of nature in Stanley Park to facilitate the making of Vancouver as a settler-space with Indigenous "roots". This analysis is important to show that erasure happens in many different mediums, not only through bodily and material removal, but also through symbolic and cultural means, such as the appropriation of artwork, cultural practices or symbols in attempts to situate the city in sanitized Indigeneity but maintain its settler-status.

Barman's identification of erasure's purposes to remove and erase the memory of the Indigenous people and to give the city "rootedness" in Indigeneity without actual Indigenous peoples speaks directly to the main arguments of this thesis. Similarly to Vancouver, through processes of erasure and unsettling, Juneau is constructing a city for tourism and for settlers that utilizes the deeply fantasized landscapes of Alaska as wilderness that is rooted in a "sanitized

Indigeneity”. At the same time, it engages in the simultaneous erasure of evidence of Indigenous homelessness, which has been produced by hundreds of years of systemic colonial violence. By removing, or effectively erasing the bodies of houseless Indigenous people, the city is engaged in producing a settler-home and an Alaska tourist destination that recognizes only settler versions of history and presents.

Similarly, in "Imperial Legacies (Post)Colonial Identities: Law, Space and the Making of Stanley Park, 1859-2001." Renisa Mawani traces the history, transformation, and unsettling of Stanley Park in Vancouver. Mawani looks at how the park has been constructed as a nature site and the pinnacle of Vancouver’s identity that both erases and evokes Aboriginality (Mawani 101). By tracing history through maps, law, and cultural commemorations, Mawani works through how and in what ways (in)visibility has structured settler landscapes and settler identities in Vancouver. Mawani looks at how maps order space and authority in ways that erase Indigenous people who lived in Stanley Park.

She argues that maps have been used discursively and materially to conceptualize and legitimize European colonialism (Mawani 103). Discussing Captain George Vancouver’s mapping of the area, she identifies how “the map he drew represented these lands as though they were ‘vacant’, devoid of any human presence and thus in need of domestication, development and European settlement” (Mawani 104). Mapping continues to be an important tool of the state to imagine Indigenous lands and spaces as settler ones (Mawani 104). These practices of “imagining” and producing settler lands through the physical and symbolic elimination of the Native through practices like mapping are key themes that will be visited and revisited throughout this paper.

These two respective texts show how Indigenous lands within the city, specifically Stanley Park in Vancouver, have been unsettled and resettled through processes of imagining lands as pure and empty through the erasure of Indigenous Indigeneity. Barman and Mawani clearly demonstrate how Vancouver is engaged in settler-placemaking and producing space for settler consumption through bodily removal and symbolic erasure. I would consider these articles foundational in understanding how settler-colonialism works through the settler imaginary to secure land. Both scholars speak to issues in urban geographies and social justice in the Vancouver context that also clearly extend to understanding how Juneau is engaged in similar structures of elimination and the making of Alaska as a settler and tourist place based in selective sanitized Indigeneity.

### **2.3 Tourism**

Literature concerning the role of imagining and constructing settler space in the production of tourism economies can be found notably in analyses of the contexts of Hawai'i, Mexico, and Honduras. In this section I briefly explore how tourism is part of a structure of imagining that works to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands and invest in settler imaginaries that produce the land for settler consumption. In global conversations, tourism is considered as a sort of “neo-colonialism”, a way through which colonialism materializes in the present as a practice of taking land (Boniface and Fowler 19).

In *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*, Haunani-Kay Trask argues that, “To most Americans...Hawai'i is *theirs*: to use, to take, and above all, to fantasize about long after the experience.” She further argues that,

Since the eighteenth-century arrival of Westerners in my Native land, Hawai'i has been much vaunted as a "paradise" of sunny beaches, lush, unspoiled valleys, erupting volcanoes, and happy Natives. Thanks to Hollywood movies and tourist propaganda, this paradisaal myth endures. To the West, and increasingly to Japan, Hawai'i represents a Pacific playground for escape or romance or recreation. It is a fantasy, a state of mind. (151)

Trask reaffirms that the settler-imaginary works to construct the land through fantasies of paradise to create settler-space and tourism economies, something both Hawai'i and Alaska have in common as deeply imagined nature/paradise utopias that both work to vanish and fetishize Indigenous peoples.

In "Tourists as Colonizers in Quintana Roo, Mexico", Denise Fay Brown focuses on how tourists themselves work to create settler space. Brown argues that, "although the individual tourist is a temporary visitor to the region, the demographic footprint of the tourist presence...must be understood as constant and sizable" (Brown 189; 190). She argues that the constant presence of tourists appropriates and reterritorializes Yucatec Maya land for settlers, as Indigenous Maya people's displacement is key to the making of economies of tourism on top of expropriated land. Brown argues that tourist presence transforms the landscape from Indigenous uses and presence, to settler spaces that benefit the state through the constant occupation of land through economies of tourism (Brown 186; 194). She further argues that "'Settler colonization' is a strategy of colonialism by which the imperialist state sends its own people to set up permanent residence in the target locality" (Brown 190). Because settlers come to stay, making invasion a structure and not an event, the ways that tourists reterritorialize land make them complicit in colonial violence.

Lastly, in “A Modern Paradise: Garifuna Land, Labor, and Displacement-in-Place” Sharlene Mollett argues that in Honduras, tourism racializes the Indigenous and Black Garifuna people in order to build tourism economies and rationalize the expropriation of their lands. She says,

Garifuna displacement is a product of the state's development imaginaries, which racialize the Garifuna as backward and consider their blackness redeemable only by their labor. As a result, the Garifuna occupy a precarious space as almost-citizens who are key to the making of the nation but without rights to its rendering...I choose to refer to Garifuna land loss, reproduced through a racialized development regime, as displacement-in-place to emphasize the fact that not only is displacement part of development but also "place" and its meanings, hierarchies, and discursive representations are bound up in these processes in place. (29-30)

This larger point is interesting in thinking about how Indigenous people are oftentimes integral to tourism economies through the use of their lands, labor, and settler exploitation and commodification of their culture. The racialization of the Tlingit as deviant and vanishing through symbolic rhetoric of imagining, and the ways that they are removed from the land through practices of policing, clearly shows how the city is actively engaged in producing an imaginative fantasy of Alaska that produces space for tourists and interacts with Indigeneity on their terms.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter brings together important insights from the scholarly literature in order to examine how place-making practices of imagining, mapping and tourism perform colonial

violence. Colonial practices such as mapping function to remove Indigenous presence and sovereignty and create imaginaries where Indigenous places such as Alaska become constituted as empty nature and wilderness. Tourism economies make use of and reproduce these imaginations of Alaska, which makes them productive of settler identities, and settler supremacy. Mawani and Barman's analyses of Stanley Park bring important considerations to this thesis, which think about how the city is secured for settlers through calculated strategies of unsettling and removal through eliminatory imaginaries.

Barman discusses how the city of Vancouver's forced removal of Indigenous people from Stanley Park has intentionally created a city rooted in Indigeneity through artwork and the value placed in nature, but without the bodies of Indigenous peoples present. Similarly, Mawani looks at how colonial naming and mapping has constructed Vancouver and Stanley Park as empty of Indigenous people in order to build a settler identity around ideas of nature. In both cases, a fake Indigeneity is created for commodification and exploitation. Similar processes can be traced in the making of Juneau as a tourist place, which itself is tied up in the imaginings of nature, commodification, and erasure.

As I will explore more in-depth later, Juneau is engaged in securing the city for tourists and settlers through the removal of the homeless from the visible downtown area. This is an investment in maintaining the imaginary of Alaska as nature and the erasure of colonial violence that contradicts the paradisaal myth of Alaska. Through "mapping out" Indigenous homelessness from the downtown core through an anti-camping ordinance, which designates who can exist in settler space and who cannot, the city of Juneau has invested in maintaining an imaginary and construction of Alaska and Juneau as an empty space available to settler-tourists. The ways that

place-making has been constructed partly through tourism economies “demonstrate[s] the importance of understanding that international tourism investment is not benign, but rests upon, reinforces, and cements hierarchical relationships of power” (Brown 192).



## Chapter Three: Producing Alaska

### 3.1 Tlingit Geographies of Place

In order to see how the imagining of Alaska through mapping is part of a structure of dispossession and erasure, it is important to understand the centrality of land to Tlingit people. Lingít Aaní, the overall territory of the Tlingit people, extends into most of what is now known as Southeast Alaska and into interior British Columbia. So-called Juneau, Alaska occupies portions of both the traditional and ancestral lands of the Aak'w Kwáan and T'aaku Kwáan (the specific territories of the Tlingit Aak'w and T'aaku people, or communities). Tlingit people have been living on Lingít Aaní since time immemorial, or as long as there has been memory. The land belongs to us, and we belong to the land (Worl in Thornton, *Our Grandparents Names* ix). We are deeply connected to this place because it is so inherently part of us, what we do, and who we are. This project seeks to understand how Tlingit identities and senses of being that are based in community, land, and water are targeted by the settler-project of city-making and tourism. In this section I look at what attaches Tlingit people to place to later understand how settler-colonialism works to undermine and remove these connections to and presences on the land in order to create settler spaces.

Through the ethnographic work of settler-scholar Thomas Thornton's book *Being and Place Among the Tlingit*, I discuss the ways that Tlingit people tie meaning and connectedness to land through subsistence practices and place-naming. Understanding the significance of subsistence practices is important to show how and in what ways land and Tlingit life are inseparable, particularly through emplaced practices of gathering food, and how explicit practices of settler space-making work to destroy these connections in order to build settler

space. By looking at how Tlingit people embed meaning in places through subsistence and naming, we can see how the colonial practice of mapping is a discursive tool used to eliminate Indigenous presence and create settler space.

Tlingit people are known as “people of the tide”. This nickname nicely encapsulates the material and spiritual connectedness between Tlingit life, land, and water. Relationships to land are fortified through the utmost importance and significance accorded to subsistence practices or *Haa Kusteeyí*, “our way of living”. *Haa Kusteeyí* is not quite a synonym for subsistence because it holds more meaning than subsistence’s colloquial understanding as survival (Thornton, *Being and Place* 118). *Haa Kusteeyí* encompasses the material practices of fishing, hunting, and berry picking; but it also carries within it the ability of these practices to create and sustain metaphysical relationships and connectedness to each other and the land.

Subsistence practices, or *Haa Kusteeyí*, happen at specific times of the year in specific areas, emplacing “our way of living”, significance, and meaning in geographic locations, turning space into meaningful and important places for Tlingit people (119). Berry picking, hunting, fishing, and smoking salmon are practices that connect Tlingit people to places and to life or being. These interactions with the land, and practices that bring us together as community, tie the metaphysical understanding of being Tlingit to geographies of place (119). Subsistence is one of the most important ways of defining and understanding Indigenous places and connections to land (18). These activities foundationally tie being Tlingit to land because they are how we gain sustenance, life, and being. As Tlingit elder Herman Kitka once said, “if we didn’t put up our foods, we wouldn’t have a culture” (119). Because “places are infused with meaning and value through the process of human experience” *Haa Kusteeyí* attaches meaning and value to places that constitute our life as Tlingit people (22).

Because food production historically and presently continues to be a fundamental aspect of Tlingit social life, it remains intimately bound up with notions of place (127). Reciprocal relationships to land and water have been at the core of Tlingit existence since time immemorial. Place names are an important way through which this relationship is conveyed. Place names embody Haa Kusteeeyí—our world view and our emplaced practices of being (Worl in Thornton, *Our Grandparents Names* ix). Names symbolize a deep spiritual relationship between Tlingit people and land and they also express the traditional knowledge of Tlingit territories and commitments to maintaining our way of life. Place names also hold within them oral histories, songs, and artwork, or at.óow (“owned things”, which can be material like artwork, or the stories of a clan) that are passed down through generations (ix).

Connections between Tlingit people and place are further exemplified in how place is represented as a central component in Tlingit introductions. It is impossible to introduce oneself in Tlingit without referencing spatial relationships to land as being (Thornton, *Being and Place* 19). Within an introduction, you identify your moiety (either eagle or raven), clan (specific subgroup under moiety, I am eagle-wolf), and Kwáan, your specific territory or place you ancestrally come from within Lingít Aaní. As demonstrated in *Haa Léelk’w Hás Aaní Saax’ú: Our Grandparents’ Names on the Land*, a book of Tlingit place-names, every Kwáan has oral histories that tell stories based in land and water that demonstrates the generational belonging of Tlingit people in Southeast Alaska. Place-names oftentimes reference emplaced practices of Haa Kusteeeyí, subsistence, or ways of life through directly referencing the traditional use of specific geographic locations within the name itself. For example, Juneau is built on Gold Creek, which the Tlingit call Dzantik’i Héeni, which translates to “Flounder at the Base of the Creek”, referencing subsistence knowledge of the area, of the creek, and of Juneau. Moreover, Tlingit

names represent Tlingit relationships and cultural significance and ownership of these areas. Tlingit people continue to use place names to assert ownership claims to geographical areas in a time of continued colonial occupation. Place names record our ongoing history, relationships to places, and the continuity of our culture in the present and future (Worl in Thornton, *Our Grandparents Names* ix).

### **3.2 History of Alaska Land Claims**

It would be helpful to present how settler-colonialism as a logic of elimination has worked in historical ways to remove Indigenous peoples from the land in Alaska and designate it for settlers. To do this, I look at an historical analysis of the Russian and the United States settlement, occupation, and ownership of Alaska, using *Possessing the Pacific: land, settlers, and indigenous people from Australia to Alaska* by Stuart Banner. In a chapter called “Alaska: Occupancy and Neglect”, Banner studies the colonial history of Alaska to trace the evolution of settler and Indigenous land claims. After colonial contact, Alaska was first a colony of Russia controlled by the Russian-American Company from 1799-1867, after which the territory was then sold to the United States (Banner 291). The Russians never intended Alaska to be a settler-colony; they only wished to extract what they could in terms of animal fur, not govern a distant population or create an extension of Russia itself (291). Because of this, they never formulated an explicit land policy, made any land grants to Russians living in Alaska, or entered into any treaties with Alaska Natives (292). Hence, when Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867, the United States government was not obligated in any way to protect or respect the land rights of Native peoples, because according to Russia there were not any that previously existed that needed to be upheld (293).

This created a precarious situation for the United States government that was unsure of how to treat Indigenous land claims. Forewarned by their disastrous history of signing treaties with Native peoples that were often broken and ended in costly wars, they left the issue untouched for many decades (299). The question of Indigenous property rights then became a procrastinated dilemma. The United States government could not grant formal land rights to settlers without first either purchasing the property rights of Alaska Natives (i.e., recognizing Indigenous claims to land) or officially declaring that Alaska Natives did not have any such rights (i.e., proclaiming terra nullius) (302). The United States government thinly recognized and “respected” Indigenous rights to the places that their homes were physically on in efforts to cultivate a decent relationship, even though they thought the Natives “uncivilized” and “ignorant” (295). The US government simultaneously acted in ways that did not respect this ownership by refusing to recognize outright any Indigenous title to land, as well as following places like British Columbia in considering a policy of terra nullius to forgo the land claims issues altogether. While it was the official stance of the US government to more or less leave the Natives alone, this was not the reality on the ground. Many settlers did not abide by this and oftentimes self-declared the land empty and granted themselves land title (309). As Banner explains,

If the rights of Alaska natives seemed strong on paper, however, they were often extremely weak in practice. Alaska governors reported to the Interior Department that whites typically took control of land without paying any attention to whether the land was already used by natives. The accounts of missionaries to Alaska, for example, routinely mentioned the building of houses and schools, without ever indicating that the property rights of the natives being proselytized posed any sort of obstacle to the acquisition of the necessary land. The books of advice written for prospective gold miners—a flourishing genre once gold was discovered in a

few different parts of Alaska around the turn of the century—never suggested that the rights of natives might prevent one from staking a claim. Canneries, timber camps, commercial fisheries—all were located on native land (309).

He goes on to say,

Indeed, the Interior Department's own promotional material encouraging emigration to Alaska did not mention the possibility that native land claims might constrain white settlement. One could travel around much of Alaska without finding anything inconsistent with a policy of terra nullius...by the turn of the century, in the parts of Alaska most attractive to whites, trespassing on native land was so common that terra nullius seems in practice to have been more the rule than the exception. (309-10)

In conclusion, the government did not formally adopt a policy of terra nullius, but it did adopt one by default by failing to grant or recognize Indigenous property rights and doing little to interfere with white settlement and resource extraction (312). The lack of formal property rights left the Indigenous peoples of Alaska intentionally open to the exploitations of white settlers and the United States government (314). The language of deviance used to describe or portray the Tlingit and other Alaska Native peoples only fueled the ways in which land claims were dealt with and justified actions of unofficial terra nullius.

Understanding a brief history of Alaska Native-Russia-United States land claims issues is important to understanding how land claims and Indigenous sovereignty are negotiated or dismissed by settlers in Alaska today. By refusing to recognize or even organize a way to deal with Indigenous land claims for decades after buying the territory from Russia, the United States effectively declared a form of terra nullius. Settler land claims were and still are held with much greater importance and urgency than Indigenous land claims, a legacy that still affects the discussions of how these issues are understood today. It is through this process of establishing

settler-land in Alaska that we can trace how the making of Juneau as a city that caters to tourists is tied up in longer histories of settler hegemony, elimination, and virtually a policy of terra nullius whereby settler-space is privileged over Indigenous place, belonging, or ultimately life.

### **3.3 Producing Juneau**

Juneau was “founded” in 1809 and officially named after gold prospector Joe Juneau, disregarding prior Tlingit presence in the area for hundreds, if not thousands, of years earlier. This act of naming symbolizes the city’s very foundation in extractive economies and settler-space making that has helped and continues to facilitate settler ownership and Indigenous erasure in Juneau today. Because Juneau was where people settled during the gold rush and continues to be central to the state’s economy, Juneau has been the capital city of Alaska since 1906 and currently has an approximate population of 35,000 people. Decades after the decline of Juneau’s gold mines in the early 1900’s, Juneau has invested in a different extractive economy: tourism via cruise ships.

Since the early 2000’s, the cruise industry has rapidly grown into a massive economy in Juneau and surrounding coastal communities in Southeast Alaska. In 2017 and 2018, Juneau saw the highest number of cruise ship passengers in its history, at 1.09 million and 1.17 million respectively (Resneck, “Industry Expects 1.17 M”). This number is projected to increase more in the summer of 2019, with an estimated 80,000 more passengers and the arrival of the world’s biggest “mega ships”. On the busiest summer days, Juneau can host up to seven cruise ships at a time, oftentimes hosting up to ten ships in a full day.

Tlingit people have lived in what is now known as Southeast Alaska since time immemorial. Yet, few Tlingit names appear on contemporary maps of Southeast Alaska, and

those that do are altered in ways that make their sounds easier to pronounce in English (Worl in Thornton, *Our Grandparents Names* x). During the beginning of the settlement of Alaska, Tlingit names were intentionally erased by settlers through mapping in order to dismantle Indigenous life and culture by undermining the language, culture, and environment of Tlingit people (x). After Alaska came into statehood in 1958, settlers required that Alaska Native names for communities and geographic landscapes must be “pronounced without considerable difficulty” (x). With Tlingit being one of the most complex languages in the world, and with most sounds not present in the English language, this state practice all but ensured that Tlingit names would not be recorded as the official names for places or sites within the state (x).

This regulation of Indigenous versus settler place-naming is further exemplified in contemporary Alaska through a state law that requires state boats be named after a glacier. Southeast Alaska has more than 200 glaciers, but less than ten are known by their Indigenous names (x). Consequently, vessels such as the ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway System, an essential form of transportation between villages and Juneau, are not oftentimes known by a Native name (x). This state policy guarantees that the glaciers many tourists come to Alaska to see are not officially recognized by an Indigenous name, reinforcing the imaginary that Alaska is a wild, pristine, nature oasis devoid of on-going Indigenous presence and life. This colonial practice of naming glaciers and boats in the state embodies the structural removal of Indigeneity and re-inscription of settler ideologies foundational in settler-colonialism and the production of settler spaces.

Alaska was settled in ways that subsequently emplaced in public discourse deeply fantasized imaginaries of Alaska as empty. This discursive settling of Alaska in the past continues to influence the making of Alaska in the present. Earlier, I laid out a brief history of



Alaska land title issues whereby the US government indirectly declared Alaska terra nullius, or empty, by not dealing with the issue of Alaska Native land claim/title in a timely manner. This inaction essentially reaffirmed settler hegemony and supremacy within the state, leading to massive movements of land theft and assimilation practices such as residential schools that carried out systemic destruction of Indigenous languages in order to transform Native Alaska to a settler frontier state.

A key tool of settler space-making that I examined above was the mapping and imagining of land as empty, which is key to structures of dispossession. As scholars like Ganapathy, Grek-Martin, Mawani, and others assert, the exploration of Indigenous territories by settlers subsequently resulted in land being mapped in ways that removed Indigenous bodies altogether or presented Indigenous peoples in the area as disappearing or vanishing. This particular fantasy of the “Vanishing Indian” is exemplified and employed by William Seward, President Andrew Johnson’s Secretary of State, who is credited with organizing the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. In 1869, Seward visited Sitka, a village south of Juneau, where he addressed the settler population and spoke of the Tlingit:

They must steadily decline in numbers, and unhappily this decline is accelerated by their borrowing ruinous vices from the white man...that a people so gifted by nature, so vigorous and energetic, and withal so docile and gentle in their intercourse with the white man, can neither be preserved as a distinct social community, nor incorporated into our society...the Indian tribes will do here as they seem to have done in Washington Territory and British Columbia...they will merely serve the turn until civilized white men come. (in Banner 295)

Seward’s words demonstrate a manner of “mapping out” of the Tlingit that reflect the state and settler desire to remove and eliminate Indigenous peoples from Southeast Alaska in

order to create settler dominated, owned, and controlled space. In believing and vocalizing that the Tlingit would “steadily decline in numbers” and “merely serve the turn until civilized white men come”, Seward created a fantasy that Tlingit people would disappear, either physically or symbolically, and establish the land of Alaska for settlers. The demonizing ways in which he references Indigenous people as “borrowing ruinous vices from the white man” (alcohol), or complicit in their own demise, works to establish Tlingit people as inferior, not deserving, or incapable people, completely justifying the invasion and occupation of land.

Fantasies of the “Vanishing Indian” have been brought into the present and continue to inform settler imaginaries of Alaska in many ways. This process of imagining as a tool of unsettling is visibly and materially represented through the ways in which William Seward is idolized as the original pioneer of the Last Frontier. In Alaska, he is honored every March with a State holiday, Seward’s Day. Private donors in partnership with the Juneau Community Foundation recently erected a statue in his honor in front of the Alaska Capitol Building in downtown Juneau in July 2017 (Figure 1). In thinking about the settler-imaginary of Alaska, Seward embodies the eliminatory desires of settler space-making. His holiday and statue represent the symbolic and physical continuation of harm and erasure at work in the project of city and state-making. This imaginary is illustrated in public discourses about the statue during its construction and unveiling.



Figure 1: Statue of William Seward located in downtown Juneau, Alaska in front of the State Capitol Building. Photo taken by Hunter Meachum; Used with permission.

On the website of the Juneau Community Foundation, who did most of the leg-work in producing the statue, Seward is portrayed as follows:

Mr. Seward takes his hat off to the people of Alaska as he offers them the deed to the land that has been said by some to be the Earth's last gift to mankind. He offers his humility, yet is proud of what we Alaskans would consider perhaps his greatest act, an act of great vision. (JCF, "Seward Statue")

At the unveiling, a local news source interviewed a former Juneau assembly member who was on the Seward Statue Committee, who said,

It is part of a broader effort to build statues that draw attention to Alaska's history for the million-plus cruise ship tourists who pass through every year...He was a great man, what would Alaska look like if Seward hadn't done what he did? Would we all be speaking Russian? Who knows. (Baird, "Statue of Seward Unveiled").

Additionally, a historian interviewed said,

Seward was a visionary. His vision was of an American economic empire. He saw the Pacific as the opening of American economic expansion. He was able to transcend the politics of his time and imagine what it was going to be like in 50 or 60 years. (Baird, "Statue of Seward Unveiled")

These comments speak to the great work the settler-imaginary in Juneau and in Alaska has had, constructing and believing settler histories that produces Alaska for settler consumption and life. This is just one example of the "mapping out" and a telling and re-telling of stories that vanish Tlingit people and other Alaska Native peoples in order to gain access to their lands and to create settler owned and dominated spaces. The imagining of lands as terra nullius, and concrete practices of elimination like boarding schools, live on today in many ways, one of them being the existence and continued celebration of Seward's Day, much like the recognition of

Columbus Day. This symbolizes the foundational understanding and construction of a settler Alaska and the perceptions and practices of settler domination. I used the example of Seward to show that the imagining of Alaska as empty, or the Tlingit as vanishing, has been brought into the present and this imaginary is hard at work to continue to physically and symbolically construct and designate Alaska and Juneau as a settler-owned and controlled space.

Processes of memorialization are central to the continued production of settler spaces. This is because they establish settler histories of ownership and supremacy on stolen land. Settler ownership is facilitated by the telling and re-telling of stories that place settlers as the true and authentic owners of space. Statues, memorial landscapes, and commemorative holidays constantly tell these stories and reinforce narratives of ownership that materially work to ghost Indigenous people and establish settler hegemony and sovereignty.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The telling and re-telling of colonial histories of ownership through the Seward statue contributes to the nostalgic frontier imagining of Alaska's colonial history, which works to continue to establish settler control of land. These memorial landscapes, as acts of city-making, work to secure the erasure of Indigenous people by commemorating Seward as "a great man" and by narrating an imagination of Alaska as centrally about his role as founding settler. Moreover, these memorial landscapes become important sites geared towards tourist consumptions of official settler narratives of Alaska. Indeed, media coverage of the statue's unveiling make clear that the Seward statue was specifically erected to continue to tell stories of settler ownership and sovereignty to tourists. It is thus part of an effort by the city of Juneau to

build tourist landscapes that reinforces the colonial histories that are told in Alaska that then work to continue to establish settler space in the city.

Practices of land claims and settlement through naming have also worked to undermine Indigenous geographies of place in Southeast Alaska, further constructing settler space through the vanishing of Indigenous place-names and the inscription of settler heroes, such as Seward, onto Indigenous landscapes like glaciers. The state practice of naming vessels after glaciers, thus after explorers or notable settlers, is part of the city-making/state-making process of imagining that erases Indigenous presence and further contributes to how tourists and settlers interact with landscapes in Alaska that are cleansed of their Indigeneity. These imaginings of Alaska that undermine and vanish Indigenous presence through mapping, naming, and commemoration help facilitate practices of physical violence and removal by the city to maintain the images these fantasies, like Native-less nature, work to construct.

## Chapter Four: Homelessness/Unsettling Juneau

### 4.1 Introduction

After having discussed settler-colonialism and compared settler and Indigenous geographies of space/place, I turn to the complexity of what it means to be Indigenous and “homeless”, the framing lens through which I explore one specific manifestation of settler-colonialism in contemporary settler-space/place-making in Juneau, Alaska. As I have previously established through the work of other scholars, settler-colonialism takes space and place from Native people and in turn creates wholly different societies. Scholarly conversations about homelessness in Alaska and in similar contexts in the Canadian North address the importance of spatial relationships to land and place, and how Indigenous peoples experience homelessness differently due to their connectedness to land and the colonial histories of dispossession that oftentimes contribute heavily to their experiences of and pathway to the streets. Many definitions I came across identify homelessness as “not having a roof over your head”, not having a *place*. Understanding what it means to be Indigenous and without a home on your traditional homelands is not only about being without a place to sleep indoors, but also about how colonial histories and presents are at work to separate Indigenous bodies, cultural ties, kinship, and futures from land-based identities and senses of being (or Haa Kusteeyí, in the Juneau context).

In order to uncover what this looks like in Juneau, I look at what conversations are being had about Indigenous homelessness globally and locally and how they are related to settler space/place-making, Indigenous geographies, and continuing impacts of colonialism. To do this, I focus on the conversations happening in Alaska about so-called Indigenous homelessness, then

work through more theoretical scholarship on what it means to be homeless and Indigenous on occupied ancestral homelands. In this chapter, I analyze Indigenous home/houselessness in Juneau to trace and frame issues of settler-colonialism and settler space-making through issues: 1.) how homeless bodies are constructed and 2.) how settler space is purified through the regulation and policing of these spaces and people.

As Wolfe points out, the on-going invasion of settler-colonialism is a structure not an event (388). In this chapter on unsettling Juneau, I focus on “confronting Indigenous dispossession and settler colonialism as ongoing in the present” and clearly lay out a structure of dispossession that continues to remove Indigenous peoples from their lands in Juneau (Goldstein 42). I do this by exploring a few different ways the city has targeted the houseless in efforts to continue to unsettle and claim the land while also engaging a settler economy of tourism.

As I established in the previous chapter, settler space-making works within an eliminatory logic to remove Indigeneity (bodies and ideologies) and replace them with settler-ness. This chapter is about how settler space-making materializes within the structure of the city’s imagination and within a larger structure of dispossession through homelessness. This section looks at the specific ways in which the city works to ghost the bodies of Indigenous people in order to sustain access to land. I have identified two ways that this ghosting occurs in Juneau. One, through the symbolic ways that constructs deviance within understandings of homelessness. And two, through the physical removal of bodies through policing.

## **4.2 Understanding Homelessness Through Deviance**

It is important to begin with statistics on homelessness in Alaska, and in Juneau specifically, in order to understand the situation and to trace how the Native houseless body is



constructed as “other” through narratives of deviance. According to an April 2018 report by the City and Borough of Juneau, overall numbers of homelessness in Juneau increased from 215 in 2011 to 235 in 2018—the third largest homeless population in the state after Anchorage and Fairbanks (CBJ, “Point-in-Time Count”). Of the 235 reported homeless, 44 are completely unsheltered, 83 are in emergency shelters, and 108 are in transitional housing programs (CBJ, “Point-in-Time Count”). Despite being 15.3% of the total population, in 2017 Alaska Natives made up 43.2% of those experiencing homelessness in the entire state (HMIS, “The State of Homelessness in Alaska”). In Juneau, 49% of those who sought services due to homelessness in February 2019 self-identified as Alaska Native or American Indian (JCHH, “February 2019 Service Update”).

Alaska Natives make up a large and disproportionate population of those experiencing homelessness or homeless in the state, and an even larger overall percentage in Juneau. Homelessness, and Alaska Native homelessness specifically, is heavily demonized in Juneau, which is shaped by historical and on-going violence and racism. This disdain is cultivated, advanced, and observed in various ways, including through media representation of homelessness, which often perpetuates harmful narratives like the “chronic inebriate”, Juneau’s version of the “the drunk Indian” stereotype (JCHH, “Homeless Chronic Inebriate Survey”). This troubling imaginary is perpetuated through media articles and city reports about substance abuse, vandalism, and homelessness. The media often talks about issues of homelessness and alcoholism in Juneau while using photographs of Alaska Natives (Resneck, “Juneau’s Homeless”). The colloquial labeling of the homeless, or of Native people, as “chronic inebriates”, “unsavory”, or “Juneau’s serious homeless problem” is thinly veiled language that

works to further marginalize Indigenous houseless peoples symbolically and physically from settler space through language that marks them as deviant and “other”.

This can be seen further in how the city of Juneau often refers to homeless people in terms of what taking care of them costs the city (JCHH, “Homeless Chronic Inebriate Survey”). The Juneau Police Department estimates that they spend \$50,000 a year on homeless-related business, and for the Juneau Fire Department, this number is \$100,000 annually. Litter pick-up is estimated at \$5,000 a year, and damage to CBJ facilities \$7,000 a year. Downtown businesses have also estimated their expenses dealing with the “chronic inebriate homeless population”, saying that they spend thousands, and up to tens of thousands each year replacing windows and installing security technologies such as electric gates and cameras (JCHH, “Homeless Chronic Inebriate Survey”). This narrative of deviance through the “chronic inebriate” and the financial expenses of the city and businesses are what led to the drafting and passing of an anti-camping ordinance in April 2017, which is intended to protect the businesses and the city at large from “the homeless problem”. I explore this in the next section.

Policing through the ordinance both produces space and purifies space. Understanding how the removal of the homeless in Juneau is racialized domination, I discuss how and in what ways the Native houseless body is constructed within the state as deviant as a precursor to its policing. To do this, I look to the literature on alcoholism and Indigenous homelessness, as well as to local conversations happening in Juneau about homelessness that contribute to harmful constructions of Indigenous houseless people as “chronic inebriates”. I argue that this marking is tied up in eliminatory logics that produce and rationalize material settler practices of harm.

Current research on Indigenous homelessness in Alaska looks at the ways that Indigenous peoples become homeless in the state. This “pathways to homelessness” approach focuses

mostly on issues such as alcoholism, addiction, intergenerational trauma, and rural to urban migration as leading factors in high numbers of Native homelessness in urban places like Anchorage. In a report titled “Homelessness, Alcoholism, and Ethnic Discrimination among Alaska Natives” Robert Travis interviews seventy-six homeless Indigenous people in Anchorage in 1990 to understand how and in what ways alcoholism and racial discrimination have impacted their personal pathways to homelessness.

Travis estimates that 86% of homeless Alaska Natives can be classified as chronic alcoholics or binge drinkers, and 54% of these individuals reported that they grew up in a family with alcohol abuse (249). Travis argues that the level of discrimination within mainstream white Alaskan society toward Alaska Natives, along with poverty and job insecurity, constitute the primary compounding factors to alcohol abuse among homeless Alaska Native people in Anchorage (249). In his study, two out of five participants identified experiencing discrimination as having had a significant role in their drinking habits and subsequent pathway to homelessness. Travis found that there are more problem drinkers among homeless Alaska Natives in Anchorage than in his previous studies in the Pacific Northwest. He argues that this may be why over 50% of homeless Alaska Natives in his study have been placed in jail or juvenile detention over the course of their lives for drinking related offenses (248). Travis explains further:

Thus, ethnic discrimination, whether on the individual or group level, is a serious social problem that homeless Alaska Natives have to contend with when they interact with the dominant white society in Alaska. Even if it can be proven conclusively that ethnic discrimination has very little effect on creating the conditions of chronic alcoholism or binge drinking, it still may be the case that once an Alaska Native becomes a problem drinker a failure mentality is set in place by the dominant society - that is, ethnic discrimination may fashion the social environment in such a way that certain Alaska Natives feel that they are

destined to fail and that once they fail, they literally prove the dominant mind-set correct and act out the stereotypes that dominant Alaskan society expects them to fulfill, down to the last drop of alcohol. (249)

Travis continues,

Nonetheless, ethnic discrimination is a double-edged sword that cuts through the hearts of many homeless Alaska Natives and seems to reinforce their low level of self-esteem, which dysfunctional role models, whether it be fathers and mothers or brothers and sisters, taught them in their family of origin. Later, after reaching adulthood, these Alaska Natives often migrate to urban centers in Alaska but find out in a variety of ways that they lack the job skills to compete adequately in a market economy. These urban migrants tend to wind up in homeless shelters, penniless, hungry, and cold, thinking that their outward appearance reflects their internal self; and so they push on, refusing to commit suicide, but killing themselves slowly nonetheless with alcohol. Many, however, seem to believe that mainstream society will not accept them as people with a future, only as drunks with a stained past. (252)

Through his research, Travis exemplifies how Indigenous homelessness in Alaska is thought about and constructed as a personal failing or moral inferiority of Indigenous people, instead of working to understand how it is oftentimes compounded or produced by the on-going *structural* effects of colonial violence (Christensen, “No Home in a Homeland” 139). Travis’ work thus embodies the problematic and racist narratives of deviance of Indigenous people generally, and specifically of Indigenous people experiencing houselessness in Alaska. The ways in which Indigenous homelessness is constructed as deviant, or as a moral failing and inferiority of Indigenous people, helps to understand how this construction marks the Indigenous body as requiring regulation and policing.

Travis contributes important ideas to understanding how discrimination, intergenerational trauma, assimilation practices like foster care, and substance abuse contribute to pathways to homelessness in Alaska. However, he does not understand or discuss how this is a mark of settler-colonialism. Racism, alcohol, and policing have historically been central to the subjugation of Alaska Natives and has contributed largely to narratives of deviance (Krause 108; U.S. Congressional Documents Library, “Alcohol and Law Enforcement in Alaska”). The racist ways in which Indigenous homelessness is presented through narratives of “chronic inebriation” points to the larger understandings of homelessness held by settlers throughout the state. It is important to understand how homelessness as an issue is represented problematically in scholarship in/on Alaska as well as how this informs and reinforces racist logics of moral inferiority and self-victimization in media representation and public opinion. Understanding how narratives of deviance become normalized helps to understand another aspect of the structure of elimination and removal from space symbolically through harmful rhetoric.

This specific stereotype, myth, or marking was eerily referenced earlier in William Seward’s desire to vanish the Tlingit when he said, “They must steadily decline in numbers, and unhappily this decline is accelerated by their borrowing ruinous vices from the white man” (Banner 295). The birth of the “chronic inebriate” stereotype or settler fantasy may not be directly born from this quote, but it does trace to these ideas of imagining Tlingit people as disappearing and as inferior. This imagining and construction of the houseless through the “chronic inebriate” or “drunk Indian” stereotype is a discursive tool of the city to legitimize harm and regulation of houseless people and further work to construct settler-space through “mapping out” and ghosting the Native body.

### 4.3 Producing Settler Space

In the last chapter, I laid out a structure of elimination through the imagining of land as empty and of Indigenous people as vanishing. I note that these imaginaries are useful in how the city of Juneau constructs settler spaces through place-making and the transformation of urban landscapes (e.g., via the production of memorial landscapes). In this section, I look at the policing of homelessness in Juneau as a means through which settler space is further made and maintained.

Scholar Jane Jacobs, in her book *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, argues that traces of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism linger within present day “post” colonial cities, including the very ways that cities are foundationally constructed (Jacobs 1). Jacobs argues that struggles for space in the city do not just occur in these spaces but are articulated and expressed through space and are fundamentally about spaces (1). Such struggles for space in the city occur physically in those spaces (e.g., the doorways of businesses in the Juneau context) but are also about maintaining control over the city or the state as a whole. Significantly, struggles for space are tied up in identity and home-making, which inherently makes them connected to race, class, and gender (2). Struggles for space are thus central to contests over difference and to the marginalization of certain groups and the privileging of others (2).

Jacobs notes that the imperial project of city-making makes use of material tools such as mapping, naming, and policing in order to realize goals of domination and settler-sovereignty (16). Understanding how mapping is not an “innocent science”, but part of the “territorial imperatives of a particular system” is important to understanding how settler imaginaries produce “known space” that in turn produces difference (19). By understanding how mapping produces difference and how the city is engaged in identity-making that requires the removal of

Indigenous bodies from these spaces, we can see how traces, ghosts, or re-materializations of past colonial policy are at work to establish Juneau as part of on-going structures of colonial dispossession. This highlights the motivation of the city to regulate settler spaces in Juneau through practices of domination, including through policing, in order to maintain control and ownership of known space, or settler space.

Colonial histories of ownership are constructed and reinforced through the telling and re-telling of stories (Blomley 114). These stories are told, and constantly re-told in various ways, in the past and present, to produce settler-space through narratives where Indigenous peoples are missing (114). In Alaska, these stories are told through Seward's Day and the Seward statue, for example, acts and practices of commemoration that continue to establish the land as *terra nullius* or "free for the taking" as they engage in the telling and re-telling the story of Seward as Alaska's founder (Blomley 113, 117). These fabrications then work to conceptualize land as settler-owned property rather than the Tlingit embodied and emplaced relationships to land that is Haa Kusteeyí. Conceptualizing land as property undermines Indigenous knowledges and ways of being by producing "known space" that can then be regulated to exclude and vanish Indigenous people. Settler-colonialism recognizes property and those within property, white settlers. The city of Juneau constructs and treats property as spatial-geographical locations rather than Haa Kusteeyí or recognizing Indigenous claims to Southeast Alaska, as evident in the project of city-making and the anti-homeless ordinance.

#### **4.4 Policing Homelessness in Juneau**

The last chapter looked at how the settler-imaginary of Alaska works to construct and build settler-space. This chapter concerns the processes by which settler spaces are maintained,

“purified”, and regulated through logics and practices of elimination. We must look no further than the ways that the houseless, oftentimes Indigenous, have been targeted by regulation and by the organization of public and private space in the city. Through this next section I examine how the city of Juneau has been directly engaged in creating policy and action specifically designed to remove the houseless from the city in order to continue to create and build a space for settlers. I argue that this removal is done within a logic of elimination to gain access to land to create settler dominated and owned space, as well as to benefit the city’s capitalist project of tourism.

In order to see how this violence is directly enacted, I examine the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) ordinance 2016-44 which amends an existing no-camping ordinance by adding a provision designed to prohibit camping on private property in a specifically defined geographic area in downtown Juneau where businesses, often seasonally run tourist traps, are located. According to the city, the purpose of this amendment is to “address the issue raised by business owners in the downtown area who are experiencing a noticeable increase of unauthorized people camping on their property, resulting in a significant increase in refuse, litter, waste and harm to private businesses” (CBJ, “Ordinance 2016-44”). The ordinance went into effect on April 15, 2017, after months of testimony and deliberation. It allows police to cite anyone sleeping on private property in the downtown “core” between the hours of midnight and 7 a.m. without a prior complaint of trespassing made by the business owner. Advocates for the ordinance cited concerns for the protection of private property, ownership, and business. Those opposed often cited concerns for the safety of the houseless who, once pushed out of the city, find it hard to find well-lit places to sleep.

The formation and enactment of this ordinance was motivated by a desire to explicitly target and remove a “homeless chronic inebriate population” after countless complaints were



made to the city by downtown business owners and the community (Resneck, “Juneau’s Homeless”). This effectively makes the police, a racialized structure of settler domination, a form of private security for the capitalist class even further empowered to uphold and enforce colonial legal principles that produce relations of domination and that enact removal, both of which are rooted in elimination (Freistadt 69). Given that many of the targeted visibly “homeless” people in Juneau are Indigenous, this paper considers how settler imaginaries of space and supremacy, enacted through tourism in Juneau, are tied up in logics of elimination that precede the domination and elimination of Indigenous bodies through material practices of policing and removal of the houseless through ordinance 2016-44.

As a town that relies heavily on a tourism economy, and foundationally a settler-city focused on material capitalist production, Juneau has always been quick to regulate visible poverty by means of spatial exclusion (Stuart 1909, 1915). This spatial exclusion has been demonstrated in the numerous ways that the city has regulated public space to remove those experiencing houselessness from public visibility. Practices of spatial exclusion are exemplified through various actions by the city, including removing benches from a public park situated in the downtown dock area and enacting laws or provisions that prohibit alcohol consumption in specific areas that are known as gathering spots for those experiencing houselessness in the city (Baxter, “Juneau Approves Lease”). Exclusion can also notably be seen through the city’s encouragement of the homeless to sleep in invisible places like the Thane Campground, a city-run non-recreational campground two miles out of town, located on an unlit road and purposed especially for those experiencing housing insecurity (Resneck, “Thane Campground Reopens”).

Ordinance 2016-44 works in similar ways to regulate visible poverty by legalizing the removal of the homeless from prime urban spaces. These prime spaces include spaces where the

city conducts its daily operations; tourist-g geared spaces; and spaces meant for recognized citizens. The removal of homeless people, enabled by the legal power of the ordinance, functions to displace these bodies to marginal spaces, away from prime spaces meant for settler subjects, including tourists. Marginal spaces are spaces to which those who are categorized as not belonging within the city due to their racialized homelessness status are relegated (Stuart 1916). As a settler-city, Juneau is invested in both the maintenance of prime spaces that bring in capital, such as the businesses that target the cruise economy, and the removal of those who do not, or cannot participate or contribute to this economy (Isaki 84). Bodily removal from these money-making prime spaces, like the doorways of downtown businesses, is then part of a structure of elimination motivated by access to land and the capitalist value placed in that land (Stuart 1909). This removal produces prime space as settler space.

This attempt at making “chronic inebriate”, homeless, and oftentimes Indigenous people ghosts is not only exemplified through the anti-camping ordinance and the rhetoric attached to it, but further through the city’s desire for the unsheltered to sleep in invisible spaces. The city regularly encourages the unhoused to camp out-of-sight at the seasonal Thane Campground on an unlit road during the non-winter months (Resneck, “Thane Campground Reopens”; “Juneau’s Homeless”). Pushing homeless people to the campground is a practice that works to maintain prime settler spaces invested in capital accumulation and the imaginative fantasy of Juneau and Alaska as an empty nature-state. The Thane Campground conveniently places homelessness out of the visible downtown core and thus from the spatial tourist-g geared imaginary of Juneau itself.

The material ways through which the spatial exclusion of the homeless from the city has been executed through the anti-camping ordinance connects to the imagining of Juneau and of Alaska as a settler place. The historical construction of settler-owned land within the state

created ideas of property and were accompanied by structures of policing that determine who is recognized or not recognized as a citizen within these constructions. Through this ordinance and other ways through which the city removes bodies from public visibility, we can see that the settler city is clearly driven by the desire for capital accumulation through a tourism economy. This project then requires that visible poverty be moved from prime space to a marginal space—like the Thane Campground. This tendency within capitalism to produce marginal space, I would argue, is also one that is bound in eliminatory logic that wishes to disappear those banished there.

After over a month of the ordinance's enforcement, those who were sleeping in doorways moved to sleep on public property in downtown's Marine Park mainly for safety concerns (Resneck, "Juneau's Homeless"). Those who were "camping" in doorways downtown slept there because it is well lit, and they felt safer there compared to other options, like the city-run Thane Campground (Resneck, "Juneau's Homeless"). Voicing her concern about safety, one houseless Alaska Native woman identified uneven gendered experiences of homelessness as one important reason for such a move, noting, "You hear a lot of stories. For example, if I walked out there myself—I'm told there's guys out that way, that camp, that would hurt you and rape you" (Resneck, "Juneau's Homeless"). During the drafting of and voting process for the ordinance, the city assembly heard many accounts from social service advocates and the houseless themselves that stated these exact concerns for safety, particularly for women, many of whom are survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence. This ordinance works to remove houseless, oftentimes Indigenous, bodies from the downtown core to a location that is two miles out of town where they are physically and symbolically unseen. The relegation of the houseless to Thane Campground works to disregard the needs of those who cannot physically make it out to the camp, or of those who can, especially women who feel unsafe there.

Policing homelessness is a very well researched area of study. Scholarship on this topic oftentimes considers how the institution of the police execute the power and will of the state, upholding its control and authority over people and geographic spaces (Fanon 38; Freistadt 67; Razack 133). Scholars have also argued that policing the Native constitutes a practice of racial and colonial domination. For example, Fanon argues:

In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression...the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. (Fanon 38)

The anti-camping ordinance regulates settler space and is enforced by an institution centered in racial domination that foundationally embodies and expresses the will of settlers to vanish those who do not fit the aesthetic and capitalist values of the city.

Within an eliminatory logic, the ordinance or other practices of policing homelessness decide who can exist within the city and who cannot, who is seen or not seen, and thus who matters and who does not. The production of the “chronic inebriate”, of the homeless, and of the anti-camping ordinance is then another way that the city has very insidiously “mapped out” Indigenous people from settler spaces. This is a structure of dispossession that is clearly working in physical and symbolic ways to make and keep Juneau a settler space that fits the imagining of Alaska as empty and for pioneers, whether those pioneers are white settlers who live in Alaska currently, or those involved in the cruise industry.

The spatial exclusion of the homeless and the city’s clear investment in creating spaces for tourists are physically embodied by this image of a trash can below. Figure 2 shows a trash

can is wrapped in plastic so the homeless cannot use it during winter months when there are no cruise ships in port. This trash can represents the symbolic and physical exclusion of the houseless from the city, rendering them unable to make use of even mundane infrastructures. This shows how the city is not constructed for the houseless but for tourists and for settlers.



Figure 2: A trash is can wrapped in plastic on the cruise ship docks in downtown Juneau, back dropped by a panel of Tlingit artwork. Photo taken by Hunter Meachum; Used with permission.

#### **4.5 Gendered Impacts of Home/Houselessness**

In research on homelessness, it is widely known that those who are unhoused experience more violence than those who are (Murray 337). Women oftentimes experience this violence,

and specifically sexual violence at much higher rates (Murray 346). Of 215 reported homeless in Juneau in 2017, 30 were seeking housing services as survivors of domestic violence (CBJ, “Point-in-Time Count Results”). While it is unknown how many of these women were Indigenous, it is well known that Alaska Native women experience the highest rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in the country (ILRC, “Ending Violence”). In thinking about how settler-Alaskan masculinity and identities are constructed in the settler-imaginary to specifically dominate the land and the bodies of Indigenous women, the disregard of the safety of unhoused women, who are often Indigenous, can be traced to a logic of elimination. This is because the settler imaginary and construction of Alaska has been structured in ways that explicitly harm and perpetuate violence against Indigenous women, which is clearly present in the example of the anti-camping ordinance and the Thane Campground.

Research on gender and homelessness focuses primarily on domestic and sexual violence as pathways to homelessness as well as the ways that women seek safety while sleeping on the streets. By examining how women navigate homelessness, I want to understand more deeply why and how Indigenous houseless women experience being on the streets in precarious ways in Juneau and how the anti-camping ordinance especially harms them. Because gender-based violence is oftentimes how women become homeless, they often subsequently make safety a priority (Reeve 170). One way women do this is by prioritizing safe places to sleep. Men are often thought of when thinking about visible homelessness and sleeping in parks and doorways (169). However, research suggests women make themselves invisible to disguise their homeless status and often try to blend into everyday activities while sleeping in order to remain in public and be safe (168).

During my research on homelessness in Juneau, I came across a significant amount of commentary and discussions on the specific ways in which women experience homelessness in different and more dangerous ways than men (Resneck, “Juneau’s Homeless”; CBJ “Ordinance 2016-44”). Many of the concerns during the drafting and testimonial process of the anti-camping ordinance were about the safety of women who cannot make it into shelters due to regulations around sobriety and capacity restrictions. On many occasions houseless women cited safety concerns for why they choose to sleep in the lit doorways of downtown businesses in favor of unlit camps where violence against women is prevalent and well known (CBJ, “Ordinance 2016-44”; Resneck, “Juneau’s Homeless”). Scholars of homelessness and gender argue that women sleep differently because of inherent patriarchal ways in which women are made vulnerable and susceptible to violence and the heightened vulnerability of being unhoused (Reeve 168).

In the Space chapter, I looked at how settler Alaskan identities individually, and largely as a State, are formed and produced within harmful masculinities that are founded in violence against the feminine—the earth, water, and bodies of Indigenous women (Hogan and Pursell 69). This felt significant to include because the bodies of Indigenous women are subjected to violence in structures and processes of space-making through the imagining and material harm that Alaska is founded in. This is clear in the case of Juneau where the gendered experiences of houselessness is further a consequence of the larger settler eliminatory imaginary that does not value the safety of women and certainly not Indigenous women.

#### **4.6 Houseless Not Homeless**

Colloquial understandings of homelessness did not and could not exist prior to colonial settlement (Christensen, “No Home in a Homeland” 161). Homelessness is widely constructed as

the state of living without a roof or permanency and ignores some Indigenous ways of being on the land that traditionally involve movement and complex relationships to land. Modern understandings of homelessness have been constructed through colonial mapping of land as fixed ownable property, an understanding that undermines thousands of years of Indigenous interactions and models of being on the land as “bundles of relationships” and not necessarily property (Christensen, “No Home in a Homeland” 179; Blomley 6).

Previous chapters established how settler-states subjugate the bodies of Indigenous peoples in ways that seek to gain permanent access to their territories. This thesis focused on the ways in which this happens through construction of settler space through the imagining of land as empty and as property, and protection of settler spaces in the city through deviance and the forced removal. In the last chapter, I looked at the inherent differences between Tlingit people’s views, understandings, and experiences of place in comparison to settlers’. In this next section I want to think about what it means to be Tlingit or Indigenous and house/homeless on Lingít Aaní in so-called Juneau.

Indigenous people who are labeled “homeless” by the state are not homeless, but houseless. Indigenous Tlingit geographies and understandings of place in Juneau and Lingít Aaní largely are foundationally tied to place and to land. As previously articulated, these deep connections are represented in many ways, but most perceptively through practices of place-naming and subsistence, or Haa Kusteeyí. Colonial definitions of homelessness, including those of the City and Borough of Juneau, disregard the deep metaphysical, spiritual, and practical connectedness Tlingit people have to/with the land. By defining homelessness as “being without a home”, the city ignores the ways in which Indigenous people find home in other ways. The ways in which the city marks those with housing insecurity as “homeless” or as “chronic



inebriates” then does not necessarily mean without shelter; but is coded to mean without support, without love, without recognition. The anti-camping regulation reifies settler domination by purifying settler space for recognized white settlers, commerce, and tourism, all ideas of space and ownership that ignore Indigeneity and uphold settler hegemony.

The anti-camping ordinance works to ghost Tlingit people by physically and symbolically pushing Tlingit people from “the land”— or the city, and from space. Producing narratives of homelessness, and policing homelessness in Juneau is a complex structure of settler dispossession that seeks to remove Indigenous people from land, but also from Indigenous ideas of home and belonging. However, because for Tlingit people home is Lingít Aaní, and not only a house, an apartment, or a roof, Tlingit people will always be home, and will always have a home. Juneau stands on Tlingit land, a place embedded with Haa Kusteeyí, our ways of life and being, where home can always be found.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Imagining Alaska without Tlingit people, producing settler space in Juneau, and Ordinance 2016-44 are each pieces of a structure of elimination in Juneau. The anti-camping ordinance is not only about removing and eliminating unwanted Indigenous bodies from public visibility for the benefit of the capitalist city. It is also fundamentally connected to the elimination of the Native and the settling of Juneau. Indigenous homelessness has been connected to the legacies of historical and on-going colonial violence and legacies of land dispossession. The largest, most represented demographic of homelessness in the state, and in Juneau, are Alaska Native people. Indigenous pathways to homelessness research suggest

colonial structures of assimilation and elimination are key factors in placing people on the streets. Because of the state's history of imagining Alaska without Indigenous peoples, and specifically without Tlingit people whose traditional territories Juneau stands on, it is clear that the anti-camping ordinance is a materialization of colonial land dispossession in the historical present.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

*“In the period of decolonization, the colonized masses mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up” (Fanon 47).*

In Southeast Alaska, settler-colonialism is not in the past. By its very definition, settler-colonialism is on-going and in the present, not so subtly working through the structures that create and maintain the present-day conditions and experiences of life in settler-spaces. By looking at literatures on settler-colonialism, Indigenous and Tlingit geographies, settler space-making, tourism and homelessness, I have outlined a specific materialization of settler-colonialism. Through this project, I have described how settler-colonialism exists through the process of city-making in Juneau, Alaska, particularly through the tourism industry and the regulation and policing of settler space. I have connected how the city has been constructed within a logic of elimination through the ways settler space is produced through imaginative colonial geographies of Alaska.

Understanding how homelessness is produced within a larger structure of Indigenous dispossession is important to informing the ways that we think about issues concerning removal and settler space making as on-going in Juneau. By looking at how settler-colonialism works through imagining Alaska and removing Indigenous bodies, we can see how producing homelessness through deviance and policing bodies are both connected to logics of elimination to produce Juneau for settlers. Through this identification we can disrupt how we collectively think about homelessness and the ways that it constructs the Indigenous body as deviant.

This work and this project located in Southeast Alaska on the traditional and ancestral territories of the Tlingit people has been a refusal of colonial violence. Throughout this project, I have been thinking about settler-colonialism from an emplaced position on and with Lingít Aaní. This placement has been a refusal of this specific materialization of domination and displacement, accomplished in part through the ways that space is produced to vanish and ghost the bodies of Tlingit and Alaska Native people. This is a refusal of settler domination that relies on the imagining and constructing of Alaska for settler consumption. This is a refusal of the ghosting of and violence against the houseless. This is, finally, a refusal against the settler-project of tourism and the cruise industry in its entirety.

In thinking about how colonial violence has historically been brought to Native lands by ships, I want to conclude with a short story of resistance. While researching for this thesis, I came across a book with a photo of my grandmother with a group of women called the Yanwaa Sháa in the 1980s. This is a group of Kaagwaantaan women who took the uniform of the United States Navy after the clan was not compensated for the death of a member in the 1800s. In Tlingit tradition, the clan, and in this case the women of the Kaagwaantaan, took the Navy crest and regalia as a partial payment (Dauenhauer 588). At ceremonial payoff parties, or Koo.éex, the Yanwaa Sháa to this day continue to wear various parts or renditions of U.S. Navy uniforms including the signature white sailor hat. The leader of the Yanwaa Sháa is called the “commodore” or the “admiral” and wears a full Naval officer’s uniform. The Yanwaa Sháa physically and symbolically represent and embody the resilience and strength of Tlingit women in the face of on-going colonial violence. These women are fierce. They have refused settler-colonialism for generations. They share their knowledge, awareness, and strength through refusal. They remind us that we have been resisting the occupation of Lingít Aaní since contact

and we will continue to refuse settler domination in all forms, including ones that this thesis has explored.

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