

**CITY PLANNING FOR EXTINCTION:  
EUGENICS, ANTI-INDIGENEITY, AND THE HAUNTED CITY-ORGANISM IN  
NORTH VANCOUVER, 1903-1940**

by

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B.A., James Madison University, 2018

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

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES  
(History)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
(Vancouver)

August 2023

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City planning for extinction: eugenics, anti-Indigeneity, and the haunted city-organism in North Vancouver, 1903-1940

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submitted by Hannah Sullivan Facknitz in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

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## Abstract

This thesis argues that settler-colonial governments in early twentieth-century North Vancouver used public health measures and urban planning policies in conjunction as a means of not only dispossessing Skwxwú7mesh people of their land and their lives, but also of seeing such dispossession and death as inevitable. Through the careful study of archival materials, other primary sources, and secondary literature, I examine the intersecting effects of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia (colloquially known as the McKenna-McBride Commission, or MMC) and the City of Vancouver and North Vancouver's health policies regarding the highly infectious disease tuberculosis, which, like today, remains deadly for underserved populations. The MMC sought to contest Skwxwú7mesh title to reserve land on the North Shore, and as part of doing so, actively neglected healthcare provisions for Indigenous people living on reserve, and as an integral part of healthcare messaging, positioned Indigenous people as inherently vulnerable to disease. With an analysis rooted in critical disability studies, I argue that by letting an active planning for Indigenous extinction become a fundamental part of public health, education, urban, cultural, political, social, and economic planning in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada more broadly, we (settlers and our ancestors) allow(ed) assumptions of inevitable death pervade our individualistic, neoliberal society, which we continue to see reflected in our current crises around housing, land use and Indigenous sovereignty, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Lay Summary**

This thesis examines how ableism (the prejudice against disabled people) and anti-Indigeneity (prejudice against Indigenous people/s) are intertwined in the history of city planning. In the early twentieth century, city planners in North Vancouver attempted to justify the destruction of Mission Indian Reserve No. 1 by inflating the threat of tuberculosis infection from Indigenous inhabitants of the reserve to North Vancouver's white settler population. The city officials relied on eugenics, a pseudoscience that justifies genocidal eradication of all those deemed unhealthy, unfit, or abnormal, and provides a window into the eugenicist structure of settler colonialism overall. The thesis concludes with a brief meditation on the COVID-19 pandemic, the enduring threads of anti-Indigenous eugenics, and the way violence crafted to destroy one population becomes violence that destroys many, many more.

## **Preface**

This thesis was completed through the careful study of archival materials, other primary sources, and secondary literature. The transcripts of the McKenna-McBride Commission form the core archive of this thesis with supplementary materials drawn from the Museum of North Vancouver and their archives. No part of this thesis has been previously published, and the work was performed by the author.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Lay Summary .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Prelude: A Brief, Incomplete History of the Lower Mainland and the McKenna-McBride Commission .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Step 1: Rationalizing "The Body" &amp; Hiding Spectral Evidence.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Step 2: Apportioning Moral Blame .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Step 3: Creating the Tubercular Haunting .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Unfinished Future: Pthisis in Eslha7án, Bill C-7, &amp; Eugenic Settler Colonial Futurity .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>55</b>

## List of Abbreviations

BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour
CDS	Critical Disability Studies
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019, caused by SARS-CoV-2
DIA	Department of Indian Affairs
LTBI	latent tuberculosis infection
MAiD	Medical Assistance in Dying under Bill C-7
MMC	McKenna-McBride Commission (Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia)
MONOVA	Museum of North Vancouver
TBD	Tuberculosis Disease

## **Acknowledgements**

I have spent years thinking about writing this section of my thesis. I had larger dreams for what this would mean, but as the option to quit is one foreclosed to me, finishing “adequately” it must be. There is much I cannot and should not say here, but I wish for some record to remain, however vague, that this document was a matter of life or death for me, in layered, multi-faceted ways. Thus, the acknowledgements below name a cohort of people who tethered me to life by helping me complete this project.

First, I must thank my advisor, Dr. Paige Raibmon, and professors in the History Department including Drs. Coll Thrush, Laura Ishiguro, Tamara Myers, Tina Loo, Joy Dixon, John Roosa, David Morton, Michael Lanthier, and others. I would also like to thank Dr. Jacob Goldberg, Dr. Allen Sens of International Relations, Dr. Dory Nason of First Nations & Indigenous Studies, and Dr. Dallas Hunt of the English Department. Jason Wu deserves special recognition as the graduate program administrative coordinator for his sincere dedication and fastidiousness, and the department staff as a whole were consistently generous.

From my cohort, I would like to thank Georgia Twiss for being an outstanding peer, friend, and confidante. There were many other classmates whose brilliance affected how I was able to approach this project including Nicole Yakashiro, Mercedes Peters, Sarah Fox, Daniel Gamez, Ryan Crosschild, Lily Hart, and many others. I am also deeply grateful to my students from the two and a half years I laboured as a teaching assistant. They were everything.



At the Office of Regional & International Community Engagement, I owe Tamara Baldwin, Claire Okatch, Elaina Nguyen, Ieda Matavelli, and Isha Mathur for the opportunity to write *It's Not Gender as Usual* with them. For our raucous, wild dreams, I am grateful.

Unions were integral to protecting me during this time. My local CUPE leadership and the Vancouver Tenant's Union were especially integral to my well-being.

From my community, I am alive because of their intervention. To survive a global (ongoing) pandemic, descent into Madness, domestic violence, and academic ableism as a disabled, queer immigrant, I needed them. My degree and this thesis represent thousands of hours of disabled care work. I cannot understate the enormity of marginalized labour in this single document. A community of people poured their time, well-being, and care into me and this project in order to secure me refuge—both from this project and to secure the material refuge this degree represents for me as a disabled person. For their radical, impractical, devastatingly loving care, I thank my beloved coauthor Danielle E. Lorenz, Heather McCain of Creating Accessible Neighbourhoods, Dr. Jenna Reid and Kait Blake at Kickstart Disability Arts & Culture, Corin Parsons de Freitas, Rachel Cheang, John Loeppky, Dr. sarah madoka currie, Nicole Melzack, Iris Xie, Sarah Cavar, Mollie Holmberg, Dr. Jon Henner, Dr. Johnathan Flowers, Dr. Brenna C. Gray, Dr. Tara C. Dennehy, Dr. Ann Gagné, Dr. Travis Chi Wing Lau, Tonye Aganaba, A. Mylvaganam, Kelsey Moskal, Avery Shannon, Dr. Paul Bones, Dr. Ava Hubrig, Haley Branch, Jennifer Walsh Marr, Bailey Martens, Jesse Rice Evans, Dr. Nicole Lee Schroeder, Dr. Elaina G. Mamaril, Casandra Marie Greco, Kelsie Acton, Dr. Amy Gaeta, Dr. Margaret Price, Tinu Abayomi-Paul, Emmy Nordstrom Higdon, and Dr. Jess Rauchberg. I could devote pages to thanking all the above. I am

astounded, humbled, and remade by the legacy of love they poured into my life. There are thousands of crip ancestors who precede them. The love that saved my life is legion.

For Arley McNenley, who refused to let me die of heatstroke, I will miss you. Always.

There are two people from my local crip community I must thank individually for their obstinate refusal to let me die. To Amanda Reaume, my dear, wild, uncompromising friend, who intervened in the aftermath of one of the most terrifying relationships of my life—one that derailed this project and my life. As is the way so often with crip, femme, neurodivergent friendships, she put back together what a man broke and asked me to survive, even if only out of spite. I love you, Amanda, with every broken bit of myself.

And to Dr. Lucia Lorenzi, my tether in the raging storm where we both found ourselves adrift in the terror. For a season, I held your hope. And now, you have held mine, in all its excruciating pain. You have been my Toad, my Nott, my Big Bad Wolf, and the last tether to a long-vanished shoreline.

My partner, Eden Black, my parents, Susan and Mark, and my siblings, Alice and Paul are the throughline from then to now to next. I love you all. I wanted to do you proud. I think you are glad for what I managed instead: Alive.

I think here, I am expected to say in the end, it was all worth it. I will abstain.

## **Dedication**

I watch my kin die preventable deaths, sacrificed to an airborne virus so that others can eat in restaurants. This is for them.

And for Arley.

For the cardboard, the duct tape, and the wheelbarrow that saved my life one summer.

I miss you.

## **Prelude: A Brief, Incomplete History of the Lower Mainland and the McKenna-McBride Commission**

Three hundred and fifty generations ago, at a time when people and animals could speak to one another and mountain goats shed their coats to become human, the ancestors of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and other Coast Salish moved into what is now known as the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.<sup>1</sup> As the Cordilleran Ice Sheet receded, exposing the Burrard Inlet, the ancestors of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and related Coast Salish peoples established themselves on what settler society now calls the North Shore.<sup>2</sup> In 1792, when George Vancouver sailed into the Burrard Inlet, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh slhenlhánay (women) and kin held a seasonal hamlet at the meeting of Mosquito Creek and the inlet. There, they gathered berries in spring on the southern slopes of the North Shore Mountains and greeted Vancouver in the final days of the season.<sup>3</sup>

Some 346 generations after the Cordilleran receded, the provincial government of British Columbia, formed from settlers who followed George Vancouver onto Indigenous land, granted charter to the City of North Vancouver. In 1886, a single trail, the Lillooet Trail—named for the Líl'wat7úl or Lil'wat Nation whose territory overlapped with the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh—represented

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 6, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Carlson, *Historical Atlas*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Jacobs, ed., *Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Sníchim – Xwelíten Sníchem Sk̓exwts (Squamish-English Dictionary)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 353; Carlson, *Historical Atlas*, 25; Daniel Francis, *Where the Mountains Meet the Sea: An Illustrated History of the District of North Vancouver* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2016).

the entire mapped settler transportation network of the North Shore. The trail extended from the terminus of Lynn Creek and the mill town of Moodyville, through thickets of berry bushes and towering cedar trees that lined the canyon, to the headwaters of the creek nestled along the eastern slopes of Mt. Fromme.<sup>4 5</sup>

As settlers followed sailors into what became the colony of British Columbia, Governor James Douglas, the governor of the colony of British Columbia, established two priorities for colonial land policy in B.C. in the 1850s: Native title and the creation of large reserves. What followed under Joseph Trutch, B.C. Commissioner of Land and Works in 1865, however, was a significant reduction in reserve land and revocation of Indigenous fishing, hunting, and water rights.<sup>6</sup> British Columbia, to the imperial centre, was what historian Adele Perry called “the awkward and disappointing child of the fur trade and British imperial expansion.”<sup>7</sup> Trutch, and the BC Indian Reserve Commission that followed, corralled Indigenous people onto smaller and smaller reserves as extractive mining, timber, and speculative industries moved in to capitalize on the rich resources of B.C.<sup>8</sup> It was in this era that British Columbians cast Indigenous peoples (as sovereign groups and as classic liberal individuals—an incongruous category to Indigenous

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<sup>4</sup> Carlson, *Historical Atlas*, 96-7.

<sup>5</sup> This trail appears to still exist as Lillooet Road in North Vancouver, “Explore BC Map,” British Columbia Tourism, Accessed 20 September 2020, <https://www.hellobc.com/interactive-map/?tab=more>.

<sup>6</sup> Ruben Ware, *Our Homes Are Bleeding* (Victoria, BC: Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Land Claims Centre, 1975), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Perry, *Edge of Empire*, 11; Ware, *Our Homes*, 12.

ways of being) as a barrier to progress through their supposed improper use of land and supposed innate vulnerability to European diseases.

During Douglas's tenure, a spirit woman made her way through Syilx, Smelqmix, and Secwepemc territories, her word traveling throughout the southern portion of British Columbia. She warned of the coming devastation from colonialism where whites would steal and destroy the land. And so they did, and by Indigenous accounts, "ripped the spirit from the land."<sup>9</sup> Part of this violence was the creation of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, originally titled the Commission Respecting Indian Lands and Indian Affairs Generally in the Province of British Columbia. Commonly known as the McKenna-McBride Commission (hereafter abbreviated as MMC), the mandate of this joint federal and provincial royal commission was to settle the question of whose authority controlled Indigenous lands: the federal or the provincial. The commission's terms of references explicitly excluded Indigenous franchise and Native Title that James Douglas acknowledged in the 1850s and subsequent B.C. and Canadian leaders denied.<sup>10</sup> The MMC became a forum where the provincial and federal governments solicited the feedback of settler and Indigenous leaders to adjust and redefine the boundaries and control of reserves in British Columbia. What emerged is an enormous collection of transcripts, petitions, and other documents that record Indigenous narration of their lives under early twentieth century municipal encroachment, provincial harassment, and national Department of Indian Affairs surveillance.

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<sup>9</sup> Ware, *Our Homes*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> E. Brian Titley, "McKenna, James Andrew Joseph," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2003). [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mckenna\\_james\\_andrew\\_joseph\\_14e.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mckenna_james_andrew_joseph_14e.html).

The documents also transcribed the explicit ideologies of settler bureaucrats, including the prejudices at the centre of this essay: racially ableist presumptions about Indigenous bodies.

## Introduction

***“THE PRESENT IS AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO STUDY CAREFULLY THE NORTH***

***SHORE***

*It has an appeal to*

*The one seeking industrial opportunity.*

*The one who is retiring from active business.*

*The one who has growing children.*

*The one who loves sport and recreation.*

*The one who appreciates beauty.*

*The one who longs for renewed vigour.*

*The one who loves the sea, mountains, forests and streams.*

*The one who has a hobby for fruit growing.*

*The one who loves pure air and fragrance.*

*The one who would live long and happy.”<sup>11</sup>*

-Condensed Facts Concerning the City of

North Vancouver, B.C. and the North Shore Area, c. 1929

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<sup>11</sup> “Condensed Facts concerning the City of North Vancouver, B.C. and the North Shore Area,” c. 1929, 12, File 16, Box 1, Special Subjects Subseries no. 12, Museum and Archives of North Vancouver (MONOVA).



*“The physical strength of the people is the resource from which all others derive value. Extreme and unscrupulous regard for the lives and health of the population may be taken as the best criterion of the degree of real civilization and refinement to which a country has attained.”*<sup>12</sup>

-Sir Clifford Sifton quoted in *The Express*

17 June 1910

A matter of weeks before the McKenna-McBride Commissioners arrived on the North Shore to speak with North Vancouver and Skwxwú7mesh leaders, the City of Vancouver forcibly dissolved the Skwxwú7mesh Kitsilano reserve on the southwestern shoreline of False Creek and the Burrard Inlet. The Skwxwú7mesh wanted to wait for the MMC commissioners to arrive as scheduled to discuss the sale of the reserve, but in April of 1913, two months before the commissioners were scheduled to arrive, the City of Vancouver threatened the Skwxwú7mesh living there with forcible removal and police intervention.<sup>13</sup> *The Province* reported that the Skwxwú7mesh people forced from the reserve were jovial, amenable to the relocation and eager to begin “the great game on hand...to invest the windfall” from the sale of the land.<sup>14</sup> Later testimony before the McKenna-McBride Commission and reporting from *The Vancouver Sun*, however, revealed that two women wanted to speak before the MMC having never received their

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<sup>12</sup> “Public Health as a Natural Asset,” *The Express*, 17 June 1910.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Barman, “Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity in Vancouver,” *BC Studies* no. 155 (2007): 16.

<sup>14</sup> “Moving Today from the Kitsilano Reserve,” *The Province* (Vancouver, B.C.), April 9, 1913. I was able to locate this source because of Jean Barman’s “Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity in Vancouver.”

“windfall” as *The Province* called it.<sup>15</sup> There were at least five others from Kitsilano who wished to speak but commissioners did not allow or record their comments, according to the *Sun*.<sup>16</sup> For what local reporting called “an eyesore to the city and an easy resort for criminals” with as few as eleven<sup>17</sup> Indigenous people living on it, to have at least seven former residents of the “[mere]...tangle of brush and rotting logs” attempting to lodge complaints with the MMC, although they were denied the chance to speak, significantly undermines the assumption of complacency or excitement. The City of Vancouver forcibly cleared those who lived on the Kitsilano reserve under threat of police intervention and a significant number left unhappy and/or unpaid as they remained unheard and silenced.<sup>18</sup> Empowered by the 1911 purchase of the Songhee reserve by the nearby city of Victoria and an act from the same year that allowed the DIA to force the sale of a reserve if within the boundaries of a municipality of at least 10,000

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<sup>15</sup> "Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia" (also known as the McBride-McKenna Royal Commission), New Westminster Agency, 42-43. (hereafter cited as MMC)

<sup>16</sup> “Will Not Investigate Kitsilano Land Deal is Decision of Board,” *The Vancouver Sun*, 23 June 1913.

<sup>17</sup> This is likely a gross underestimation by *The Province*. The Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh and their kin in the Lower Mainland engaged in a seasonal rotation of labour working in canneries, on farms, and in shipping yards while also engaging in regional migrations based on fishing and harvesting of local food sources. These rotations meant that populations of reserves were typically significantly undercounted, including in the MMC, discussed later in this chapter. As folks moved on and off different reserves, official counts only allowed Indigenous people to belong to one reserve, meaning the more transient or mobile a person or group was, the less likely they were to be accurately counted.

<sup>18</sup> “Moving Today from the Kitsilano Reserve,” *The Province* (Vancouver, B.C.), April 9, 1913; “To Secure the Indian Reserve,” *The Province* (Vancouver, B.C.), June 4, 1902.

settlers, Vancouver stole Kitsilano.<sup>19</sup> The MMC would be complicit, too, in its silence, refusing to take up the matter even as the spectre of this violence hung over the proceedings on the North Shore of the Burrard Inlet.<sup>20</sup>

The justification of record for this police intervention that included the burning of homes and Indigenous structures left on the reserve land after the City of Vancouver forced the Skwxwú7mesh from it, was about healthy urban progress. According to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, “where a reserve is in the vicinity of a growing town...it becomes a source of nuisance and an impediment to progress.”<sup>21</sup> Settler colonialism, especially municipal colonialism as historian Jordan Stanger-Ross names it, is relentless in its pursuit of progress. A key tool for this pursuit was (is) the field of urban planning that came into its intellectual adulthood in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Central to the field was the metaphor of the city as a living body, an organism whose health (read: progress) required the fastidious, meticulous management of land, the city’s metaphorical flesh<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Barman, “Indigenous Indigeneity,” 5, 16; Canada. House of Commons Debates, 11th Parliament, 3rd Session: Vol. 4 (April 19, 1911), 7249.

<sup>20</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 42-43; “Will Not Investigate,” *The Vancouver Sun*.

<sup>21</sup> “House of Commons Debates,” 7249.

<sup>22</sup> Jordan Stanger-Ross, “Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928-1950s,” *Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 4 (2008): 573.

The focus of this essay is the ableist and uniquely settler colonial medicalization of the city-body in North Vancouver urban planning. Urban planning was and is an enormous endeavor that encompasses planning for a city's economic growth, commerce, architecture, sanitation, public health, artistic expression, and more. I use Critical Disability Studies' (CDS) theories of the medical model of disability to examine the rhetoric of pathologized disability within settler and municipal colonialism. The city-as-organism in early twentieth century urban planning informed much of the Lower Mainland municipalities' opinions about Indigenous reserves within or near their boundaries. The reserves and the sovereign Indigenous peoples living there came to represent *bodily threat* to the "future health" of the enfleshed, embodied city. At the same time, city planners, in their meticulous mapping of the "future" city, reflected the settler colonial assumption of inevitable Indigenous extinction. The assertion of Indigenous peoples' inherent biological inferiority and incompatibility with progress (often coded as 'health' in city planning parlance) justified their violent excision from the city-organism. It is an assertion that endures today, too, and reveals the often silent (yet confoundingly explicit) partner ideology of settler colonialism: Eugenics.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism," 553.

## Step 1: Rationalizing "The Body" & Hiding Spectral Evidence

Urban planning as a discipline emerged in response to growing industrialization of cities in Europe and the United States. While never fully adopted, North Vancouver commissioned an evaluation and tentative city plan in 1929 from Harland Bartholomew & Associates. The firm promised to “correct the evils resulting from neglect in the past” and construct a city-organism “free from...physical defects” that could progress into the promising settler future of the North Shore.<sup>24</sup> Critically, the evaluation implied that “physical defects” generally were incompatible with the ways settlers imagined the future. Disability and disease, in the settler imagination, were inherently unsurvivable by their nature, rather than conditions of the bodymind *made* unsurvivable by the conditions of the surrounding society. Harland Bartholomew, owner of Harland Bartholomew & Associates, whose Vancouver office compiled the plans and subsequent reports for much of the Vancouver metropolitan area’s municipalities, wore unapologetically what urban planning historian Joseph Heathcott calls a “mantle of rationality and objectivity.”<sup>25</sup> Bartholomew wrote, too, that “the city is an organism” with many multivalent parts unique in their functions, but a body that, as Heathcott paraphrases, “constituted a total, knowable, organic system—a corporate body, a whole.”<sup>26</sup> Urban planning, then, created a metaphor of a city-body

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<sup>24</sup> Preliminary Report for the Town Plan of the City and District of North Vancouver, 1929, 1929-4, City of North Vancouver - Transportation, Museum and Archives of North Vancouver.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Heathcott, “‘The Whole City Is Our Laboratory’: Harland Bartholomew and the Production of Urban Knowledge,” *Journal of Planning History* 4, no. 4 (2005): 324.

<sup>26</sup> Harland Bartholomew’s *Problems of St. Louis* preface, quoted in Heathcott, “The Whole City,” 29; *Ibid.*, 29.

that was rational, fixable, curable of the pervasive ills that threatened it, including the threatening proximity of Indigenous peoples as sovereign entities.

The rational, fixable body follows a model of disability theorized and explained in CDS as the medical model of disability. This model sees disability as a deficiency, casts disabled bodies in terms of lack and aberrance, and has justified at least two-hundred years of eugenic incarceration, removal, and neglect.<sup>27</sup> Disability under the medical model is a bodily experience whereby a body that is sick (perhaps with tuberculosis, say) or otherwise disabled (a “physically defective” city, perhaps) can be “cured” of its biological impairment, and the problem(s) the disabled “organism” experienced/s will disappear. Disability is a biological fact embedded within an individual body (e.g. the *mycobacterium tuberculosis*) rather than an embodied culture and politics or an identity around which human experiences coalesce.<sup>28</sup> In the disabled,<sup>29</sup> CDS scholar Alison Kafer explains, the medical model perceives the “deviant, pathological, and defective.”<sup>30</sup> Here, moral value becomes embedded in flesh in a process of medical-moral

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<sup>27</sup> Haegele and Hodge, 196; See also Liat Ben-Moshe, *Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

<sup>28</sup> Justin Anthony Haegele and Samuel Hodge, “Disability Discourse: Overview and Critiques of the Medical and Social Models,” *Quest* no. 2 (2016): 195.

<sup>29</sup> For the remainder, I will treat sickness, illness, and disability as broadly interchangeable unless under settler colonial classifications there is a meaningful distinction made between the two. By and large, however, the experience of illness and the deficiencies perceived by the (settler colonial) medical model were one and the same regarding Indigenous people(s).

<sup>30</sup> Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 5.

taxonomy that places value on one enfolded existence over another. This medical-moral classification then becomes a tool of settler colonialism whereby a microscopic organism (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) inhabiting Indigenous bodies is justification for removal from the city-organism. To be explicit: mentions of the body drawn out here are *political* and by virtue of being about the condition of a body in relation to normalcy best represented in “healthiness,” are always about disability. *And* by virtue of being about stolen Indigenous land, current Indigenous land, and the future of Indigenous people(s) on their land, are always about indigeneity.

Health, the normalcy or viability of both body and city, becomes a question of what is absent as much as what is present, like a lack of certain micro-organisms as much as the presence of socially contingent “ability”—a lack of an entire Indigenous culture, politics, economy, and nation as much as the presence of settlers. The medical model, adapted to settler colonial purposes, is the system of belief that undergirded removal efforts in North Vancouver and is an integral system of belief under which settler planners articulated their visions of the future city-organism. To metaphorically call the city flesh in the context of medical-moral taxonomy that imperiled non-normative bodies within the city-organism was to render the city *literally* as flesh. The city-as-being placed all flesh, human and non-human, into this taxonomy. Indigenous people, as non-normative and, most at stake in this project, infected with tuberculosis, were bodily threat to all other flesh of the city.

The opening letter of the 1929 *Plan for the City of Vancouver*, also authored by Harland Bartholomew & Associates, implies this threat in its derision of “arbitrary political boundaries

and jurisdictions” whose parsing of the city “become responsible for physical maladjustments.”<sup>31</sup> The 1929 plan mentions only explicitly the many municipal boundaries between settler cities on the Burrard Peninsula like those of Point Grey, South Vancouver, Burnaby, etc., but given the pervasive evidence of contemporary settler frustration with Indigenous reserves in British Columbia, it is likely this sentiment extended to Indigenous lands near or within cities. Within the plan, too, Vancouver Town Planning Commission chairman Arthur G. Smith referred to the Burrard Inlet’s many sites “where industries could flourish” especially on the North Shore where Indigenous reserves remained embroiled in settler efforts to appropriate them after the MMC failed to fully dissolve the four reserves.<sup>32</sup> Vancouver’s ability to lay “solid foundations for future prosperity” rested heavily on the growth of the seaport on the Inlet, but Arthur G. Smith argued, in closing his introduction to the *Plan for the City of Vancouver*:

Then, lastly, but by no means least, do we look forward to Vancouver as a bright and happy city...achieved largely by the aid given by the plan to the preservation of Kitsilano Reserve and of the bathing beaches and scenic waterfront and the construction of a system of parks and driveways which have always been desirable but which, in these

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<sup>31</sup> Harland Bartholomew in *A Plan for the City of Vancouver British Columbia including Point Grey & South Vancouver & a General Plan of the Region* (Vancouver, BC: Wrigley Printing Co. Ltd., Allied Printing Trades Union Label Council, 1929), 10.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur G. Smith in *A Plan for the City of Vancouver*, 25.



days of rapid communication, are essential in order to satisfy the recreational desires of *a healthy and vigorous community*.<sup>33</sup>

The theft of Kitsilano from the Skwxwú7mesh and their relations, then, was integral to the health and vigour of Vancouver as a city-organism, not just the individual people living within the city, a sentiment that the City of North Vancouver officials echoed publicly and repeatedly in the early twentieth century.

The medical model critically organizes/d all knowledge of the body and its functions (including the city-body) around colonial, racial, patriarchal structures of expertise, rationality and control. Thus, these expressions of power also structured the way Bartholomew and most of his North Vancouver contemporaries understood the city-organism, grounding their work in in the labour of pathology and diagnosis that could then justify the control that preceded the desired elimination of the diagnosed defects.

Bartholomew and city planners of his lineage like Horace L. Seymour, Bartholomew's proxy in Vancouver, were professionals tasked with fixing, often through tremendously violent means, disability in the city-body. These disabilities that needed cutting out, most often, were Black, Indigenous, people of colour, immigrant, and poor city inhabitants and the regions of the city they called home. Bartholomew is now infamous for how he used zoning to bypass a 1916 US

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 25. Emphasis added.

Supreme Court ruling to racially segregate a number of cities, concentrating heavy industries and high-density housing in existing Black neighbourhoods. Today, people living in those neighbourhoods in St. Louis, Missouri make less than half the income of those living in more favourably zoned portions of the same city.<sup>34</sup> Seymour, too, argued that urban planning needed to be concerned with “slum clearance” to reduce “waste” in the city-organism, and while he advocated for affordable housing later in his life, his argument included only labourers’ right to purchase homes, a move that rhetorically excluded Indigenous peoples in the settler imagination.<sup>35</sup> In the early twentieth century, Indigenous inhabitants were “dying out,” according to J. G. Bergeron, secretary of the MMC.<sup>36</sup> And while Bergeron’s claim “is not sustained by statistics” to quote *The Express*’ reporting on 1911 Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) statistics, the MMC’s secretary maintained that Indigenous people in British Columbia were “unproductive,” leaving valuable land fallow.<sup>37</sup> To settlers, Indigenous people did not contribute to the capitalist settler project and were thus unworthy of their valuable land. By pathologizing Indigenous people, too, as unable or unwilling to work by some defect of their person, as permanently “unhealthy,” settlers also condemned Indigenous people as morally vacant. This double bind came to imperil others, too, like non-Indigenous disabled or pathologically defective

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<sup>34</sup> Mark Benton, “‘Just the Way Things Are Around Here’: Racial Segregation, Critical Junctures, and Path Dependence in Saint Louis,” *Journal of Urban History* 44, no. 6 (2018): 1113, 1120-1121.

<sup>35</sup> Horace L. Seymour, “The National Housing Act, 1938,” *Public Affairs: A Maritime Quarterly for Discussion of Public Affairs* 2, no.3 (March 1939): 127.

<sup>36</sup> “Commission Here to Investigate Indian Affairs,” *Vancouver Daily World*, June 19, 1913.

<sup>37</sup> “The Indians of Canada,” *The Express* (North Vancouver, B.C.), November 17, 1911.

(e.g. queer, trans, immigrant, etc.) people who found themselves embroiled alongside Indigenous people in eugenic settler projects of urban planning and public health.

I am concerned not only with how settler colonialism made/makes Indigenous people sick (both rhetorically and literally), but also with how it loads moral value onto sickness and/or disability. In settler colonialism, Indigenous people are sick because they are morally deficient and morally deficient because they are sick. In the paradox of settler colonial violence, moral deficiency precedes and causes sickness *and* sickness precedes and causes moral deficiency all at once in the contagious threat of Indigenous bodies. In North Vancouver, they contracted tuberculosis because they lacked proper civilized habits and morals like settler constructions of cleanliness. At the same time, the tuberculosis itself, the sick, weak bodies of infected, ill, disabled Skwxwú7mesh and perceived susceptibility to disability, were proof of predestined bodily lessness that positioned Indigenous people as close to death and thus, incompatible with the progressive future. To exist in a disabled body, here a body infected with tuberculosis, in or adjacent to a settler society is to be morally inferior and on the brink of extinction. One does not just *become* sick because they are morally deficient (e.g. contracting tuberculosis from poor sanitary habits). Moral deficiency *is* a fundamental characteristic of being sick or disabled according to the power structures of settler colonialism. The Skwxwú7mesh, to settler colonial minds, were sick before they ever contracted tuberculosis.

In North Vancouver, *The Province* compared Indigenous people to “debris and offal” and an “ancient order that jostles the modern.”<sup>38</sup> As supposedly ancient beings, newspapers focused on the fragility and frailty of elders whose bodies, cultures, and political existences were “passing...before the onward sweep of progress.”<sup>39</sup> Indigenous people and peoples represented weakness and rank infection within the progressive city that required excision to keep the rest of the city-organism healthy. City Council officials and their associates used tuberculosis and poor sewage drainage to justify their desire to destroy the reserve in their city limits.<sup>40</sup>

The ableism embedded in the medical model, forged, in part, through the attempted destruction of Indigenous sovereignty and embodied people, haunts the settler colonial municipality through its urban planning. Medicalized, pathologized, deficiency-oriented ideas of the body have been of particular use to settler colonialism and its agents which is why I refuse the assumptions implicit in this model of disability. The medical model accepts health and disability as what Alison Kafer calls “a knowable fact of the body” rather than contingent categories.<sup>41</sup> Power and privilege construct any concept of “ideal health” at the expense of certain bodies (the deviant, pathological, and defective or, in this study, Indigenous bodies) that automatically places value upon certain, arbitrary, physical or biological characteristics that reflect a society’s values. In settler colonial societies, these values are white supremacist and anti-Indigenous. In a city-

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<sup>38</sup> Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism," 562; “Moving Today,” *The Province*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 8-16, 73-75.

<sup>41</sup> Kafer, *Feminist*, 4.

organism, medicalized ideals marginalize the parts of the city where the most vulnerable live, including slums which the Vancouver metropolitan area prized itself for lacking.<sup>42</sup> The authority over a disabled person's body (or city-body) was/is the scientist or medical practitioner (or urban planner) whose job became "correcting, normalizing, or eliminating the pathological individual" as Kafer explains.<sup>43</sup> Urban planners correct(ed) the pathological city. This violence was/is then obscured beneath claims of benevolence and charity, attitudes that also characterize the treatment of Indigenous peoples in past and present, including claims that removal might protect them from the influence of the city.<sup>44</sup>

Multiple North Vancouver and MMC officials, as well as local newspapers, claimed such benevolence, assuming the Skw̓wú7mesh who owned valuable land on the North Shore would be "happy and live under better conditions elsewhere."<sup>45</sup> The elsewhere, however, remained unnamed, presumably a metaphorical "away" where the social detritus and incomplete,

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<sup>42</sup> In CFJ Galloway's tourist account of British Columbia *Call of the West* (London: T.F. Unwin Limited, 1917), he recounted that "slums are unknown in Vancouver, and the city is determined that they shall always remain unknown. Let us hope that they will succeed!" (254).

<sup>43</sup> Haegele and Hodge, "Disability Discourse," 194; "Disability Models," National Black Disability Coalition, <https://www.blackdisability.org/content/disability-models>; Kafer, *Feminist*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> See Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarsinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018), 41 for a discussion of the "solidarity not charity" model of mutual aid and respect that resists the model of "charity and gratitude" that characterizes the individual/medical model; MMC, New Westminster Agency, 16.

<sup>45</sup> A.H. Stone in "Desires Reserves for Harbour Board," *The Province*, June 15, 1913.

precarious settler colonial business Indigenous people(s) represented would no longer bother fragile settler societies. North Vancouver Reeve W. H. May, too, claimed he wanted the Skwxwú7mesh to be able to “start afresh”—how and where still unnamed as he advocated the sale of *all* Skwxwú7mesh land in British Columbia—so that the four reserves on the North Shore would no longer “h[o]ld down” the City of North Vancouver.<sup>46</sup>

As Nishnaabeg scholar Nicole Ineese-Nash argues, however, the institutionally legible concept of disability that relies on liberal-individual and medical notions of normative bodies “exists as a mechanism of colonialism” and does not echo “Indigenous perspectives of difference.”<sup>47</sup>

Today’s means of articulating disabled difference, especially medicalized disability, do not follow Indigenous ways of being that predate, arose alongside, and continue to emerge amidst and beyond colonialism.<sup>48</sup> Colonialism uses (neo)liberal, eugenic, medicalized definitions of the

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<sup>46</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Nicole Ineese-Nash, “Disability as a Colonial Construct: The Missing Discourse of Culture in Conceptualizations of Disabled Indigenous Children,” *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* 9, no. 3 (2020): 28.

<sup>48</sup> This includes much of the corpus of CDS literature that relies on white scholarship. There is emerging, however, an actively anti-racist, anti/decolonial canon that has the potential to radically change the field. Scholars like Jen Deerinwater and Sami Schalk are transforming the discipline. So, too, are Disability Justice activists, whose core founders are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) and explicitly anti/decolonial in their actions and writing. See: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2018) and *The Future Is Disabled: Prophecies, Love Notes, and Mourning Songs* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2022); Mia Mingus, *Leaving Evidence* (Blog, Wordpress), <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com>; Mia Birdsong, *How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community* (New York: Hatchette Books, 2020); Alice

non-normative body in order to enforce its dispossessive, genocidal goals. Indigenous people have long refused these goals, both in early 20th century British Columbia and today under the present threat of COVID-19 and ongoing settler colonial violence.

Indigenous understandings of the body do/did not cast the body in the classical liberal, medical model. This model in Canada (and other settler colonies) attempted/s to cast Indigenous bodies into “true individuals” where the body and mind belonged to an individual alone.<sup>49</sup> Health and well-being become a matter of individual responsibility.<sup>50</sup> As Indigenous scholars have noted, an Indigenous body is a constellated body. Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Haudenosaunee historian Susan Hill demonstrate how to speak of an Indigenous “body” is to also speak of a constellation of community, non-human life, and the land in a way that cannot be

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Wong *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 2022) and *Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century* (ed) (New York: Vintage Books, 2020); Shayda Kafai, *Crip Kinship: The Disability Justice & Art Activism of Sins Invalid* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2021); J. Logan Smilges, *Queer Silence: On Disability and Rhetorical Absence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022); Zena Sharman, *The Care We Dream Of: Liberatory & Transformative Approaches to LGBTQ+ Health* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2021); and Patti Berne with Sins Invalid found at [sinsinvalid.org](http://sinsinvalid.org).

<sup>49</sup> Maureen K. Lux, *Separate Beds: A History of Indian Hospitals in Canada, 1920s-1980s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 7.

<sup>50</sup> Facknitz and Lorenz, "Reflections on Disability."

parsed.<sup>51</sup> I also choose not to use the CDS term “bodymind” either.<sup>52</sup> The Indigenous body exists beyond the body/mind dialectic of liberal individualism or even the imbricated bodymind of CDS. It is a body beyond en fleshed existence, and the destruction of its constellation (of non-humans, land, and community) is *bodily harm* to Indigenous peoples. This is why Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination are integral to the creation of *Indigenous* (not settler) ideas of health.

Important, too, is that settler colonialism did/does not set out to (only) destroy Indigenous people as individuals. Rendering Indigenous people as solitary humans was/is part of the explicit violence of settler colonial paternalism. Casting them within the pathologizing medical model of disability where sickness, debility, and difference are individualized and whose treatment or rehabilitation render a disabled/sick Indigenous person as singular is part of settler colonial violence. Nicole Ineese-Nash refers to this as “assimilation through rehabilitation” and was central to the hygienic values residential schools taught students.<sup>53</sup> In order to sustain settler colonialism and its structures and institutions, settlers *must* formulate ways to destroy Indigenous people as *peoples*, that is, distinct, sovereign, self-determining nations, communities, and

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<sup>51</sup> Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arp Books, 2012), 31, 40-41; Susan M. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017), 5.

<sup>52</sup> See Margaret Price, “The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain,” *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (2015): 270 (from Schalk).

<sup>53</sup> Ineese-Nash, “Disability,” 29.



cultures.<sup>54</sup> Medicalized understandings of disability have, since the theft and consolidation of expertise in white, nondisabled, cisheterosexual, colonial male bodies and minds, sought to undermine community cohesion and connection across identities, including disabled, Black, Asian, poor, queer, and Indigenous communities—all of whom have been victims in the formation of the Canadian nation-state and the province of British Columbia.<sup>55</sup> For Indigenous people and peoples as sovereign entities, settler theft of land and benevolent medical(izing) institutions like tuberculosis hospitals and residential schools, have formed the core of the genocide ongoing in North America.<sup>56</sup>

Violence against Indigenous people as *peoples*, as sovereign political entities who held title and rights to land, space, and life (physical and political) in British Columbia, also formed a key disabling violence of settler colonialism that enforced precarity that affected the bodily well-being of the collective and individual. The collective and individual cannot be truly separated from one another as they are in Eurocentric discourse, including that around disability. CDS scholar Margaret Price writes about the inseparable nature of body and mind coining the term “bodymind” to move toward an imbricated understanding of the two despite the last several

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<sup>54</sup> Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 23-24.

<sup>55</sup> Jay Dolmage, *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 19, 27; See also Ada Hubrig, “Care Work, Queercrip Labor Politics, and Queer Generosities,” *QED: A Journal of GLBTQ Worldmaking* 8, no. 5 (Fall 2021); 213-221.

<sup>56</sup> Lux, *Separate Beds*, 11.

centuries of medical scholarship that treats them as separate.<sup>57</sup> I would not dare coin a term here, especially as a European settler, but the attempt at understanding made in the term “bodymind” is useful for understanding the kind of imbrication, interwovenness, and embeddedness of individual, community/nation, and land for Indigenous peoples.<sup>58</sup> As the anthropologist Patrick Wolfe wrote, “land is life,” thus contests for land are contests for life, and so it was in North Vancouver.<sup>59</sup> To settler-planners, the metaphorical “life” of the city was at stake in their attempted theft of Skwxwú7mesh reserve lands. For the Skwxwú7mesh, it was not metaphorical lives/life at stake. It was quite literal.

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<sup>57</sup> Margaret Price, “Bodymind,” 270.

<sup>58</sup> I have rendered this imperfectly. I am a settler and can only observe and learn second hand what this looks like and means in the world. I have done my best to respect the teachings of Indigenous people(s) whose mentorship and writing have formed core parts of my education while trying to gently pull those threads into a tapestry I am woven into--disability and its many formations.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006); 387.

## Step 2: Apportioning Moral Blame

The contest for land in North Vancouver that played out before the MMC in 1913 was explicitly and implicitly about who had a right (or who morally deserved) to exist in certain spaces in certain kinds of bodies, especially sick Indigenous bodies. It was also about the distinct settler colonial tension the sovereign land of the Skwxwú7mesh created for the legitimacy of the City of North Vancouver's colonial project. The 38 acre reserve, situated along the Burrard Inlet waterfront was surrounded on all sides by the City of North Vancouver's municipal authority, including bordering lots owned by the locally prominent J. P. Fell and H. Heywood Lonsdale and the North Vancouver Land Improvement Company.<sup>60</sup> In 1913, the City Council and Board of Trade wanted to purchase at least 2.5 acres of Mission IR No. 1 to build a road, but ideally, Mayor George S. Hanes<sup>61</sup> argued, "it is our [North Vancouver's] hope that from the point of view of health that this Reserve will be eliminated from the Centre of the City."<sup>62</sup> Throughout this meeting, the city's reeve and mayors argued that the reserve "block[ed] the proper development of the city" and "held down" the ability of the city to be "capable of its opportunities."<sup>63</sup> Mayor Hanes' brand of urbanity, what Jordan Stanger-Ross refers to as "municipal colonialism," was entangled in the pathologized city-as-organism whose health had

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<sup>60</sup> Plan of North Vancouver (Maps), November 26, 1912, 175, City of North Vancouver Engineer's Office, Museum and Archives of North Vancouver.

<sup>61</sup> McKenna-McBride transcripts often lack the full name of titled individuals. I have done my best to locate their full names, but I have not always succeeded.

<sup>62</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 9.

<sup>63</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 10, 12.

to be safeguarded.<sup>64</sup> This meant that the Skwxwú7mesh inhabiting the reserve *as a sovereign people* posed a “bodily” threat to the city-organism by their proximity to the small, precarious settlement of the City of North Vancouver, incorporated just seven years before this interview with the MMC. Financed primarily through speculative real estate and on the brink of an economic downturn that would last through the Great Depression, North Vancouver was in a desperate competition for economic relevance against Vancouver.<sup>65</sup> In order to make their case, however, city officials and their accomplices in the MMC implicated both individual and communal Skwxwú7mesh behavior and “healthiness” to justify their disdain.

In 1907, newspaper editor George Bartley described the City of North Vancouver as a “prodigy of progress” that was “possessed and inflamed by the spirit of advancement.”<sup>66</sup> By 1913, that “possessed and inflamed spirit” focused its ire on the four reserves on the North Shore the Department of Indian Affairs identified as belonging to the Skwxwú7mesh. G. H. Bridgman, president of North Vancouver Board of Trade, told the MMC that having the reserve within the boundaries of the city would be “difficult to progress.” He elaborated, “It is a hardship that they have got to be treated like children, and it must be realized that we cannot prosper when we have such land in our midst.”<sup>67</sup> Settler complaints of Indigenous behavior were pervasive and

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<sup>64</sup> Stanger-Ross, “Municipal Colonialism,” 541-551.

<sup>65</sup> Warren Summer, *The Ambitious City: A History of the City of North Vancouver*, (Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing, 2007), 7.

<sup>66</sup> George Bartley, quoted in Summer, *The Ambitious City*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 13.

regularly reported, including statistics on arrests for consumption or possession of alcohol under the Indian Act<sup>68</sup>, stories of reserves harbouring criminals<sup>69</sup>, and a 1910 claim by the City of North Vancouver's Surveyor Dawson that the Skwxwú7mesh had obscured his surveyor posts on Bewick Avenue that formed the western border of Mission IR No. 1.<sup>70</sup> Beyond this perceived nuisance behaviour, however, North Vancouver officials leaned heavily on the claim that Indigenous Skwxwú7mesh residents on the North Shore, especially in the village of Eslha7án on Mission IR No. 1 were a public health menace to the City.

To that effect, Police Chief Arthur Davies, whose role in North Vancouver was deeply entangled with the municipal health authority, told Commissioner James McKenna that “an awful lot” of the Skwxwú7mesh living in Eslha7án, the cultural, political, and economic epicenter of twentieth century Skwxwú7mesh life on the North Shore, were “afflicted with tuberculosis.”<sup>71</sup> The lack of sanitation and the presence of tuberculosis on the reserve evoked the contaminating possibilities of having entrenched Indigenous presence in the burgeoning city of North Vancouver. By 1935, when infectious disease accounted for 12 percent of all deaths in British Columbia, these diseases, including tuberculosis, were responsible for 38.5 percent of Indigenous deaths in the

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<sup>68</sup> Notice, *The Express* (North Vancouver, B.C.), September 4, 1908; “City Council,” *The Express* (North Vancouver, B.C.), January 8, 1909.

<sup>69</sup> “To Secure the Indian Reserve,” *The Province*.

<sup>70</sup> “City Council Meeting,” *The Express* (North Vancouver, B.C.), April 29, 1910.

<sup>71</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 16.

province. Of this 38.5 percent, 31 percent was directly attributable to tuberculosis.<sup>72</sup> More than 80 percent of those who died were under thirty and represented each, as Lee Maracle describes, “a missing piece of the circle which could not be replaced.”<sup>73</sup>

Tuberculosis, caused by the *mycobacterium tuberculosis*, is a disease that relapses and remits. There are two forms the illness can take: latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) and tuberculosis disease (TBD). The former is non-contagious and asymptomatic and can remain so throughout an individual’s life, but instability or stress on the body can cause LTBI to become a full infection of TBD.<sup>74</sup> Serious infection often only occurs in the final stages of the disease and can travel to various organ systems in the body when tubercles (pockets of contained bacterium) leak out into the body. The body can often contain tuberculosis in these small tubercule capsules, especially during stable times, but malnutrition and stress weaken the immune system and can precipitate a cascade effect where tuberculosis again leaks into the body, intensifying symptoms and contagion. Depending upon the circumstances, people infected with tuberculosis could live long, stable lives, or they could succumb to the symptoms of the illness rapidly, then dying a protracted, excruciating death depending on the resources available to them.<sup>75</sup> Even by the

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<sup>72</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Lee Maracle, quoted in Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, “Latent TB Infection and TB Disease,” Center for Disease Control, last updated 11 March 2016, <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/tbinfectiondisease.htm>.

<sup>75</sup> See J. N. Hays, *The Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 155-178.

standards of the time, doctors and public health officials knew the infection was preventable and treatment in the early stages was “successful to a marked degree,” as *The Express* reported in 1910. These treatments, however, relied on “private and philanthropic” efforts, cordoning them off to the most vulnerable in settler societies.<sup>76</sup>

The meeting in 1913 between the McKenna-McBride Commission and the North Vancouver municipal authorities is an early example of what Maureen K. Lux refers to as the “increasingly shrill medical and bureaucratic discourse about the threat of rampant ‘Indian Tuberculosis.’”<sup>77</sup> This “Aboriginal contagion” emerged from the supposed “inadequate response of Aboriginal bodies” in concert with the “deleterious impact of settlement and civilisation.”<sup>78</sup> Paternalistic public health discourse rendered Indigenous peoples as disease vectors. Indigenous Canadians in the first half of the twentieth century were a “menace to their neighbours and a danger to the nation” because they and their communities were “unrepentantly backward and roundly infected.”<sup>79</sup> The bodily devastation of Indigenous peoples, however, was a “natural” thing to settlers whose power derived in part from this biological determinism. According to historian Mary-Ellen Kelm, even the benevolence-minded commentators who, in the first half century of the public health movement, advocated for massive sociocultural, political, and economic intervention to save a “dying race” were simultaneously invested in the biological inferiority of

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<sup>76</sup> “Public Health as a Natural Asset,” *The Express*, 17 June 1910, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Lux, *Separate Beds*, 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 407, 409.

Indigenous peoples.<sup>80</sup> Included in these benevolence-minded authorities were Police Chief Davies and W.H. May, the reeve of North Vancouver. Davies, who thought the city “would be benefited from having [the Skwxwú7mesh] removed” agreed with Commissioner N. W. White that the Skwxwú7mesh “possibly...would too.”<sup>81</sup> W. H. May thought the Skwxwú7mesh might “start afresh” away from city lands where they might “avail themselves,” as Mayor McNeish put it, of the “ample opportunity now to better their conditions.”<sup>82</sup> Implicit here is the assumption that Indigenous people were lazy and to blame for their illnesses, especially because of unsanitary habits.

Missing from Davies, May, Hanes, and McNeish’s testimony, however, was that the City of North Vancouver in a previous agreement with the Crown, DIA, and Skwxwú7mesh promised in exchange for right of way for 3rd Street to “supply the Indians in perpetuity [perpetuity] with an ample supply of water for their village.” Peter Byrne, DIA agent for the New Westminster Agency, reported this to the MMC in January of 1916. That agreement, according to Byrne, had not been “carried out satisfactorily by the City” and was directly implicated in the “poor” sanitation of the Reserve.<sup>83</sup> According to reporting in *The Province*, a 1910 outbreak of waterborne illness ravaged the reserve for several months. The newspaper was dubious of the

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<sup>80</sup> Mary-ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), xvi.

<sup>81</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 16.

<sup>82</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 12, 11.

<sup>83</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 454.



Skwxwú7mesh's assertion that the illness was directly related to the contaminated water, but the reports of “colic spasms and kindred troubles” support the Skwxwú7mesh claim. The illness(es) afflicted a number of residents, including “the venerable priest [and] the little children,” targeting the most vulnerable among them.<sup>84</sup> North Vancouver municipal authority failed to meet their promise to provide clean water, aided and abetted by the DIA’s slow negotiations with the city, and used the lack of adequate clean, running water on the Reserve to condemn the Skwxwú7mesh and their kin as morally reprehensible for their uncleanliness.<sup>85</sup> By the time of Byrne’s testimony, the Skwxwú7mesh had been embroiled in a water crisis for at least six years, not to mention the nutritional collapse from years of poor salmon runs and destroyed foraging grounds. Increasingly prevented from accessing traditional food by interventionist government policies and drinking contaminated water despite having sold land to procure it, settlers still blamed the Skwxwú7mesh for their illnesses and sanitation.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “Sickness Among the Indians,” September 2, 1910; “Illness on Reservation,” October 13, 1910; “North Vancouver Briefs,” November 19, 1910. All from *The Province*.

<sup>85</sup> “Sickness Among Indians,” *The Province*.

<sup>86</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 18; “Commissioner Babcock Sounds Warning Note,” *Vancouver Daily World*, 11 October 11, 1907.

### Step 3: Creating the Tubercular Haunting

The Skwxwú7mesh did not, according to Mayor McNeish, “live in the same way as white people do,” a sentiment that undergirded discussions about their desirability, sanitary habits, and supposed predisposition to infectious disease.<sup>87</sup> The data, however, as Mary-Ellen Kelm has compiled and analyzed it, suggests otherwise. At this time, Indigenous “bodies were still strong” with enduring connections to traditional, ancestral, spiritual, political practices that allowed them to “generally [live] strong, healthy lives.”<sup>88</sup> Incessant newspaper reporting on tuberculosis in Indigenous populations, often out of Washington, D.C. about Indigenous groups thousands of miles from British Columbia, meant settlers stereotyped Indigenous people as “naturally or inevitably diseased.”<sup>89</sup> The Skwxwú7mesh were intentionally weakened by North Vancouver’s failure to provide clean water, however, and settlers took the opportunity to entangle moral and biological inferiority in a distinctly settler-eugenic formation.<sup>90</sup> In North Vancouver, contact with or proximity to Indigenous peoples became “dangerous” to white settler communities because of the haunting possibilities of tubercular contamination, and, in North Vancouver, a justification

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<sup>87</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 11.

<sup>88</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 16, 18.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. There is evidence of redundant reporting at this time in British Columbia on Indigenous illnesses (especially tuberculosis) in most of its major newspapers, including *The Express* (January 8, 1909 April 29, 1910, November 17, 1911), *The Province* (December 4, 1908, September 2, 1910, October 13, 1910, November 19, 1910, and monthly Civic Health Reports), *Vancouver Daily World* (March 27, 1914, April 22, 1922), and *The Victoria Daily Times* (September 29, 1908, 22 March 22, 1909, March 23, 1915, January 22, 1920).

<sup>90</sup> Ineese-Nash, "Disability," 30.

for the attempted destruction of Esłha7án. The reserve, to settler planners, was a tubercular lesion to the city's lung.

The prevention of tuberculosis in North Vancouver, however, explicitly involved Police Chief Arthur Davies. This becomes clear when examining bylaws, perhaps surprisingly, on the keeping of animals in first the District of North Vancouver, and, later, the City founded within the District of the same name in 1907. The Pound Bylaw of 1903 and the Animal Regulations By-Law of 1914/1920 gave the Chief of Police broad powers over the animals that resided in the District (pre-1907) and the City (post-1907). These were primarily powers of surveillance to prevent the spread of animal-borne disease, including tuberculosis. While the 1903 bylaw was primarily concerned with controlling animal movement across property, it did empower a police constable to destroy (kill) any animal they caught roaming. This was presumably for the public safety, including to prevent the spread of diseases like rabies, but also waterborne illnesses that might occur in water contaminated with stray animal feces. The maximum fine for violating this law was \$25 and two months in jail.<sup>91</sup>

The Animal Regulations By-Law, however, further reveals how North Vancouver's police were implicated in the control of tubercular spread. According to the 1914 and 1920 versions of the law, the Chief of Police could demand the inspection of any animal for disease by the Medical Health Officer, including cows possibly infected with tuberculosis. While the Medical Health

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<sup>91</sup> The Pound Bylaw of 1903, April 23, 1903, File 5, F34-SF7-S1, Bylaws - 01, District of North Vancouver Fonds 3407 - City Clerks Office.

Officer was responsible for verifying the presence of disease in these animals, the Chief of Police was responsible for enforcing the law that forbade the ownership of sick animals. The fine for breaking this law was \$100 and up to two months in jail and the owner of the sick animal could be held liable for damages. The bylaw also gave the Chief of Police the authority to enter any stable or premises in the City to inspect animals for disease.<sup>92</sup>

The provisions of this law and the 1903 pound bylaw are muddled at the boundary of Mission IR No. 1. Andrew Paull, who lived in Eslha7án and served as translator for the MMC meetings with the Skwxwú7mesh, however, reported during the MMC visit to Mission Reserve that North Vancouver had impounded the Skwxwú7mesh's cows so often as to prevent Skwxwú7mesh ownership of cows entirely in 1913.<sup>93</sup> Without records of the individual impoundings, it is impossible to know the police's record for confiscating the cows, likely the cows wandered across the boundary between Mission and the City which, under the 1903 bylaw, gave the police the right to "destroy" or capture them for a \$1 fee per animal on top of a \$25 fine to the owner.<sup>94</sup> Cows, however, were a major disease vector for tuberculosis, and contemporary animal management laws of North Vancouver were explicitly concerned with preventing all kinds of

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<sup>92</sup> Animal Regulations By-Law 1914/1920, 1920, File 6, F34-SF7-S1, Bylaws - 01, District of North Vancouver Fonds 3407 - City Clerks Office.

<sup>93</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 32.

<sup>94</sup> The Pound Bylaw of 1903.

animal-human transmission of diseases.<sup>95</sup> This meant, too, that the prevention of tuberculosis and other infectious disease on the North Shore was punitive and carceral from the beginning.

As Mary-Ellen Kelm points out, while infectious diseases were rising among Indigenous groups, it was the appearance of being more infected (rather than actually being more infected) that mattered. These groups *appeared* more infected, and thus more morally repugnant and dangerously infectious, because of the drastic increase in surveillance. While being surveilled for their infectious possibilities, Indigenous people in British Columbia fell outside the Vital Statistics Act of 1913, the structuring law for the collection of births, marriages, and deaths--especially causes of death.<sup>96</sup> The Chief of Police and the rest of North Vancouver's municipal officials had to rely on DIA statistics, measured using different statistical tools, to then compare to British Columbia's vital statistics. Many of these statistics, too, appeared in newspapers as proof of Indigenous demise, despite the infamous Bryce Report of 1907 directly implicating residential schools (a settler invention) as the insidious root of much of the tubercular infections in Indigenous populations at the time.<sup>97</sup> Interventionist surveillance, Kelm argues, is what made

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<sup>95</sup> Animal Regulations By-Law 1914/1920, 1920, File 6, F34-SF7-S1, Bylaws - 01, District of North Vancouver Fonds 3407 - City Clerks Office.

<sup>96</sup> Vital Statistics Act of 1913, 17 February 1913, File 514, T-3956 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, RG 10, Archives Canada.

<sup>97</sup> "Tuberculosis is Killing Off Indians," *The Province* (Vancouver, B.C.), December 4, 1908; "Tuberculosis Steadily Wiping Out Aborigines," *Vancouver Daily World*, March 27, 1914; "Sickness Statistics in Indian Schools," *The Victoria Daily Times*, September 29, 1908; "Tuberculosis is Killing Off Indians," *The Victoria Daily Times*, 22 March 1909, p. 2 (Identical to piece in *The Province*, 4 December 1908); "Tuberculosis Among Indians of Canada,"

Indigenous populations vulnerable, as well as the intentional and negligent actions of settlers to weaken Indigenous access to their lands and lifeways.<sup>98</sup> They were not biologically (read: inevitably) doomed to die of tuberculosis or any other European disease. Settlers *manufactured* vulnerability to what was, even then, a survivable infection before attempting to punish Indigenous people like the Skwxwú7mesh for that vulnerability's resulting sickness and disability.

That June of 1913 when the MMC met with the City Council, the population of the Coast Salish (of which the Skwxwú7mesh are a part) was still trending downward, making their disappearance from the land still appear inevitable to settlers.<sup>99</sup> The meeting predated by only a few years the medicarceral system that emerged in 1920s British Columbia that continued to surveil and incarcerate Indigenous peoples via racialized and racist public health data and segregated sanatoria to treat tuberculosis infections. As early as 1908, however, the DIA and its medical bureaucracy sent Dr. Peter Bryce of the Bryce Report (of particular significance to the section following) to British Columbia to explore the possibility of building a “sanatorium for Indians” modeled after those already built in the northwest Prairies.<sup>100</sup> Benevolence-minded as

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March 23, 1915; Peter H. Bryce, *Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1907), 17.

<sup>98</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 15.

<sup>99</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, 5.

<sup>100</sup> “Sanatorium for Indians,” *Vancouver Daily World*, February 28, 1908.

these spaces were, the settler state was already deeply invested in carceral solutions for “Indian Tuberculosis.”<sup>101</sup>

The Police Chief’s testimony on the health of the Skw̓w̓w̓7mesh is one example of the entangled carceral and medical apparatuses of the settler state and the co-occurring focus on punitive control in order to enforce settler goals (including maintaining the “public health”). The New Westminster Agency also hired a constable sometime in 1914-1915 with an annual salary of \$900 annually, equivalent to three-quarters the salary of a full-time medical officer in the same agency, indicating the parallel priorities of the DIA in the agency.<sup>102</sup> As Indigenous populations recovered in British Columbia in the rest of the 1910s and subsequent decades, settlers addressed the need for containment and isolation in the increasingly punitive sanatorium and residential school to protect the colonial project.<sup>103</sup> At the time of the 1913 meeting, however, no sanatoria existed in British Columbia for Indigenous people, and the City Council seemed content to see the reserve simply dissolved and the Skw̓w̓w̓7mesh removed from the city to distant reserves where they might “start afresh,” as Reeve W. H. May benevolently claimed.<sup>104</sup> These reserve(s)

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<sup>101</sup> Lux, *Separate Beds*, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Dominion of Canada Annual Report of The Department of Indian Affairs for The Year Ended March 31, 1915, George V. Sessional Paper no. 27. (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1916), 353.

<sup>103</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies* 5; Lux, *Separate Beds*, 11.

<sup>104</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 12.

were outside municipal boundaries, far away from the city they risked contaminating or, conversely, being contaminated by.<sup>105</sup>

The following day, the local physician Dr. Newcombe testified to the MMC that the reserve was a “menace to the health of the city” because of “the tuberculosis and unsanitary condition of the place” and argued the rate of tuberculosis infection was high, the principal infection on the reserve.<sup>106</sup> He was unable to state exactly how high. The immediate vicinity of Eslha7án, by Dr. Newcombe’s estimation, was about to lead to a “very large increase in tuberculosis...if this town [North Vancouver] continue[d] to grow the way it ha[d].”<sup>107</sup> To Newcombe, it was “only reasonable to suppose” that tuberculosis in North Vancouver spread “from the Indians to the whites” and not vice versa.<sup>108</sup> Likely, it was the opposite, and tuberculosis-infected settlers introduced the disease to Indigenous communities across British Columbia. According to Department of Indian Affairs records, Dr. Newcombe only attended to one Skwxwú7mesh individual, an F. Baker, in the year preceding the meeting with the MMC, so his knowledge of Skwxwú7mesh health and living conditions was likely limited. Newcombe was not a contracted medical officer for the New Westminister Agency, and the \$40.00 he billed in 1912 for attending

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<sup>105</sup> Jean Barman, “Indigenous Indigeneity,” 17.

<sup>106</sup> MMC: New Westminister Agency, 17-18.

<sup>107</sup> MMC: New Westminister Agency, 18.

<sup>108</sup> MMC: New Westminister Agency, 18.



F. Baker was one and a half times the total expenditure of the Skwxwú7mesh on “supplies for the sick and destitute” for the same year (a total of \$27.60).<sup>109</sup>

Claims about the healthiness of the reserve and its residents were always political, something the Skwxwú7mesh knew. What is disgusting, ugly, and infectious--what Gracen Brilmyer clusters under the rhetoric and experience of sickness--is politically formed as much as it is social or scientific.<sup>110</sup> Eight years after Dr. Newcombe claimed false expertise on reserve conditions, Dr. R. V. McCarley appears to have made unsupported accusations about unsanitary and unhealthy conditions in Eslha7án in 1921. Andrew Paull fired back in *The Vancouver Daily World*, “an election must be pending, for it is only prior to an election we read so much about us [the people of Eslha7án and Mission Reserve] hindering the prosperity of the North Shore.”<sup>111</sup> McCarley served as the City’s health officer, but Paull told the *World* that Eslha7án residents felt safer with the DIA physician as McCarley was an “element...that occasionally fill[ed] the jails in the city” and thus not invited to the Reserve. To counter McCarley’s accusations of poor sanitation, overcrowding, and tuberculosis, the *World* paraphrased Andrew Paull: “The reserve has produced athletes in all branches of sport, among them a lacrosse team that North Vancouver, with all its population, has never been able to beat.”<sup>112</sup> Even in 1913, the reserve featured in the local mayoral election where S. D. Schultz advocated, as part of his bid against Mayor George S.

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<sup>109</sup> *Dominion Of Canada Annual Report 1912*, 1317.

<sup>110</sup> Brilmyer, "Towards Sickness," 29.

<sup>111</sup> “Says Election Must Be Pending,” *Vancouver Daily World*, January 6, 1921.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

Hanes, for purchasing the reserve “for industrial purchases.”<sup>113</sup> Hanes would win, but as his claims before the MMC show, he, too, felt the reserve impaired urban progress on the North Shore.<sup>114</sup>

Indian Agent Peter Byrne agreed with Andrew Paull, however. In 1916, when Byrne met with the Commissioners at the tail end of the MMC, he told them that despite the Commissioners’ assumption that the “surroundings on the Mission Reserve [were] unhealthy,” the official statistics on deaths “[do] not justify any such statement.”<sup>115</sup> He even argued that much of the funds the Skw̓wú7mesh stood to gain from their sale of Howe Sound land to Pacific Great Eastern Railway would be squandered, saying, “I don’t think the Indians will do very much toward helping themselves.”<sup>116</sup> As an historian and scholar generously educated by Indigenous professors in Critical Indigenous Studies, I defer to Andrew Paull. Tuberculosis, infectious disease, and sanitation were political in these records, not an accurate reflection of how the Skw̓wú7mesh experienced disease in early twentieth century British Columbia.

None of this is to say that tuberculosis did not threaten Indigenous communities in British Columbia. The disease was a catastrophic infection for many Indigenous groups across Canada, including British Columbia.

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<sup>113</sup> “Purchase of Indian Reserve Advocated,” *Vancouver Daily World*, January 4, 1913.

<sup>114</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 9.

<sup>115</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 525.

<sup>116</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 461.

Indigenous people in British Columbia did not die of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases because they were “genetically ill-equipped” and thus biologically inferior to their European colonizers. That is a myth--one that endures in the popularity of Alfred W. Crosby’s “virgin soil epidemics” hypothesis that argues Indigenous people were genetically vulnerable to European infections rather than *made* vulnerable by colonization, as Indigenous people report.<sup>117</sup> They faced the devastating consequences of these infections in twentieth century British Columbia (and elsewhere across time and space) because of government decisions that curtailed or ruptured Indigenous sovereignty and access to their land and ways of life.<sup>118</sup>

Statistics and paternalistic public health manufactured the always-already epidemic of Indigenous ill-health, pathologizing nation, community, and individual as infectious and, thus, dangerous to settlers. Health under the medical model, invested in the rational individualized body, becomes a position of superiority and power. The “naturalness of health,” however, according to Indigenous histories, is a form of colonization and does not reflect Indigenous values of wellbeing.<sup>119</sup> Historian Maureen K. Lux shows the treatments that became available in the 1920s to Indigenous people in British Columbia, too, were invested in creating “healthy, self-

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<sup>117</sup> Nick Estes, “The Empire of All Maladies: Colonial Contagions and Indigenous Resistance,” *The Baffler*, no. 52 (2020), <https://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-empire-of-all-maladies-estes>.

<sup>118</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, xvi.

<sup>119</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, xvi-xvii; See also Ineese-Nash, "Disability," 30.

governing citizens” where the carceral sanatoria offered morally upright citizenship as the cure for tuberculosis, transforming people into their “hygienic self.”<sup>120</sup>

Tuberculosis is and was at the time an imminently survivable condition whose survivability was largely related to *access*—access to medicine, doctors, treatments—but the contemporary treatments the “expert and objective medical authority” of western medicine and its settler practitioners offered were fundamentally at odds with Indigenous knowledge of their own wellbeing.<sup>121</sup> Western medicine formulated within the medical model locates *all* expertise of experiences of illness in objective, rational practitioners, leaving no authority in the patient. In British Columbia, Indigenous communities formulated their wellness around “community support and collective rites...where the value of goods was realized in their redistribution” that created communal access to resources to cultivate bodily surety.<sup>122</sup> Colonialism, especially settler colonialism and its agents, worked to destroy those supports and sustaining connections, manufacturing malnutrition, communal fracturing, and unsafe living conditions as a means to destroy Indigenous presence in what they saw as settler space and future. When Indigenous people did not disappear as first seemed “inevitable,” settlers then punished Indigenous people for their illnesses and disabilities that emerged from that violence, not only curtailing access to appropriate care, but creating powerfully paternalistic “care” that further entrenched

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<sup>120</sup> Lux, *Separate Beds*, 11; Alison Bashford in *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

vulnerability. Colonialism punishes Indigenous people for “lacking” immunity even though colonialism manufactures the tremendously violent conditions that create susceptibility.

## **Unfinished Future: Pthisis in Eslha7án, Bill C-7, & Eugenic Settler Colonial Futurity**

*“We recognize the dignity of life from its beginnings to natural death, and efforts to suggest to our people that MAiD is an appropriate end to life is a form of neo-colonialism. Extraordinary efforts have been made in suicide prevention in our communities, and the expansion of MAiD sends a contradictory message to our peoples that some individuals should receive suicide prevention, while others suicide assistance.”*

-Tyler White, Siksika, Corporate Executive Officer of Siksika Health Services  
Statement to the House of Commons on Bill C-7, 25 November 2020<sup>123</sup>

*“The apocalypse is here and disabled bodies are already being discussed as expendable. It only took a month. Less.”*

-Elsa R. Sjunneson, “My Life Has Quality,” *Disability Visibility*, 27 April 2020

In British Columbia, questions of settler progress and futurity have always been tied up with discussions of Indigenous land. In early twentieth-century North Vancouver, city councillors sought to remove a “contaminating” Indigenous reserve from their city limits. The

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<sup>123</sup> Tyler White, “Statement From Tyler White,” *Dignity Denied*, December 7, 2020,

<https://dignitydenied.ca/2020/12/07/statement-from-tyler-white/>.

Skwxwú7mesh reserve, situated in the centre of the City of North Vancouver's coveted waterfront, was prime real estate in a city whose economy revolved around access to Burrard Inlet. The discussion around whether and why to dissolve the reserve rested upon deep-rooted and prejudicial settler assumptions about whose bodies could ever be good or deserving, invoking the spectre of illness's contaminating possibilities to justify existing and emerging hierarchies of bodily goodness.<sup>124</sup> The presence of tuberculosis on the reserve justified those settler assumptions predicated on the inevitable disappearance of Indigenous peoples from British Columbia. In North Vancouver, as in other settler colonial municipalities, ableism and healthism were integral to settler control and dispossession of Indigenous peoples, entangling body and land in the imbricated violences of able-bodied supremacy and settler colonialism. Put briefly, settler colonialism *disabled* Indigenous bodies via dispossession to *enable* settler bodies.<sup>125</sup>

North Vancouver might have thought itself haunted by the Mission, Capilano, Seymour Creek, and Inlailawatash reserves, but, in reality, the city was and is haunted, as Danika Medak-

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<sup>124</sup> Baloy, "Spectacles," 212-213; See also Lorenzo Veracini, "Suburbia, Settler Colonialism and the World Turned Inside Out," *Housing, Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (2011): 339-357 and J.J. Ghaddar, "The Spectre in the Archive: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Archival Memory," *Archivaria* 82 (2016): 3-26.

<sup>125</sup> I borrow this phrasing from geographer and theorist A. Corin Parsons de Freitas, "The counterpart of access arithmetic is access alchemy. Disabled people exist in a world built to enable others at our expense. This makes us pretty darn creative. We also have a sophisticated understanding of interreliance and reciprocity. This makes us great collaborators.", 27 April 2020, 2:08 PM PST, [https://twitter.com/the\\_tweedy/status/1254880011888156672](https://twitter.com/the_tweedy/status/1254880011888156672).

Saltzman describes, by “the great violence of empire.”<sup>126</sup> The City and District of North Vancouver were and are not haunted by Skwxwú7mesh ghosts rising from the graveyard situated in Eslha7án or other lingering spectres of dead Indigenous people like some Stephen King novel.<sup>127</sup> As Medak-Saltzman argues, such a metaphor from postcolonial theory would be to further entrench the falsehood of Indigenous vanishing and thus, reinscribe and assist the settler colonial destruction of Indigeneity. Settler colonial societies, including North Vancouver, then, “are haunted by the need to keep these unpalatable truths [the truth of settler colonial violence] and their human consequences hidden.”<sup>128</sup> The way these violent truths remain obscured, becomes a super-heated forge that helps to craft modes of oppression that spill over and beyond the bounds of the targeted Indigenous people and peoples. The eugenic ableism of settler colonialism turns back on itself, a parasitic growth that devours more and more of the settler society as it also targets Indigenous people. Ableism and the supremacy of certain deserving bodies is not *solely* forged in settler colonial violence against Indigenous people(s), but the ableist violence against Indigenous people(s) forges many of the structuring ideals of this brand of supremacy. The ideals then structure pervasive, hegemonic, totalizing rhetorics that undergird the enduring institutions that *all* of us interact with in settler colonialism. Municipal colonialists

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<sup>126</sup> Danika Medak-Saltzman, “Empire's Haunted Logics: Comparative Colonialisms and the Challenges of Incorporating Indigeneity,” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2015): 16.

<sup>127</sup> This cemetery figured prominently in Skwxwú7mesh life on the North Shore and appears to have been the primary burial ground for the affiliated bands along the Burrard Inlet. See *The Express*, April 29 1910 and MMC, New Westminster Agency, 27.

<sup>128</sup> Medak-Saltzman, “Empire’s Haunted Logics,” 17.



thought that in purging Indigeneity from the Lower Mainland, they would ensure the future health and prosperity of the City. This process also occurs in anti-Black, anti-fat, anti-queer, and other violence against non-normative bodies across time and space where ableism is also formed.<sup>129</sup> The violence does not remain neatly contained, however, to Indigenous people(s). It mutates, warps, and grows to invade all parts of the colony across time and space, compounding the violence against its original targets, Indigenous people(s) and spreading new mutations of that oppression to other targets in the settler colony.

Indigenous people(s), however, endure both in body and as sovereign nations or communities. They are not ghosts, never vanished, but erased. Their “revenant spectrality”--as Natalie J. K. Baloy describes, where “Indigeneity can seem to disappear and return”--helps us to understand the histories of the Vancouver metropolitan area where the many diverse Indigenous groups who live here appear in the beginning, vanishing in the middle era of urban progress and development, to reemerge in the multicultural present that erases ongoing violence.<sup>130</sup> This is no

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<sup>129</sup> See Sami Schalk and Jina B. Kim, “Integrating Race, Transforming Feminist Disability Studies,” *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 46, no. 1 (2020): 31-55 and Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 369-378 and Jay Dolmage, *Disabled Upon Arrival: Eugenics, Immigration, and the Construction of Race and Disability* (Columbus, OH: University of Ohio Press, 2018) and Cat Pausé, “Fatness and Healthcare: Fat Studies and Fat Activism Perspectives and Intervention,” *The Polyphony*, 15 November 2021, Accessed 15 November 2021, <https://thepolyphony.org/2021/11/15/fatness-and-healthcare-fat-studies-and-fat-activism-perspectives-and-intervention/>.

<sup>130</sup> Baloy, "Spectacles," 213.

natural disappearance but the intentional erasure and enforced absence of Indigeneity, whose presence in these historical moments would force us to ask difficult questions about settler colonial violence. Baloy, building from scholar Sherene Razack, argues that “ghosts take up space and exploring haunting is a form of unmapping.” To unmap settler colonial histories, especially those of urban planning and public health as I do here, is to embark on a project that refuses to take the enormous gaps in settler colonial planning, sometimes the literal blank spaces of Indigenous reserves on urban maps, for granted.<sup>131</sup> Urban planners and public health officials did not plan for a future with Indigenous people and actively planned to eradicate disability from the city-organism (often by forcibly removing Indigenous people). I question what lies behind distinctly Canadian articulations of benevolence, health, and public good whose banality we take for granted. In the shared history of early twentieth century North Vancouver and twenty-first century COVID-19, those claims to public welfare and benevolence hide tremendous violence. We need to know what lives beneath, what spectres haunt the enduring colony of Canada. To acknowledge these ghosts, to borrow Baloy’s phrasing, is to render visible the enormous anti-Indigenous ableism that characterized the formative years of British Columbia’s urban spaces and public health apparatuses

The access that mattered to North Vancouver municipal authorities was settler access, especially to roads and recreational spaces. In his tour of British Columbia, C. F. J. Galloway wrote of North Vancouver as “the place of pilgrimage” for settler leisure, “vying with Stanley Park for the

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<sup>131</sup> Baloy, "Spectacles," 209.

distinction of being the greatest show-place in all the surroundings of Vancouver.”<sup>132</sup> Erased, however, are Indigenous people whose population are not included in the roughly 20,000 people living on the North Shore in this 1929 pamphlet.<sup>133</sup> Indigenous reserves, too, appear as only blank spaces on maps, blueprints, and other plans of the City and the rest of the North Shore.<sup>134</sup> Settlers appeared to not plan for Indigenous presence, even with evidence of pervasive settler frustration in the records of officials railing against the reserves’ “absurd” impediment to the city, located as they were on valuable waterfront acreage and land “best adapted to commercial, railway and industrial purposes.” The Skwxwú7mesh and their kin on the North Shore, for being supposedly invisible, inconsequential, and inevitably dying off, figured heavily in settler discourse, even as planning documents erased them, planning for their demise. Surely, Mayor George S. Hanes wrote the Commission, “we are doing them no injury” attempting to drastically underpay for their land when “Indian reserves within the confines of a white population is

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<sup>132</sup> “Condensed Facts,” 12.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> British Columbia Forest Service, “Forest Cover Series, North Shore,” 1940, Map 12, F34-SF2-S3, Maps & Drawings – Planning and Development Division 03, District of North Vancouver Planning Fonds 3402, MONOVA; F.J. Calkins and F.M. Sharp, “Map of the District of North Vancouver,” 1912, Map 5, F34-SF2-S3, Maps & Drawings – Planning and Development Division 03, District of North Vancouver Planning Fonds 3402, MONOVA; G.H. Dawson, “City of North Vancouver and Vicinity,” 1912, Map, File 45, Box 2, North Vancouver Land Improvement Company Fonds 18, MONOVA; G. H. Dawson, “City of North Vancouver,” 1907, Map, File 36, Box 1, North Vancouver Land Improvement Company Fonds 18, MONOVA.

always detrimental both to the Indians and the whites.”<sup>135</sup> Hanes and his colleagues needed to build roads to ensure their progress and access to the verdant green recreational spaces that promised to bring North Vancouver out of its contemporary economic crisis brought on by land speculation and poor city management.<sup>136</sup>

Roads and railroads now form the main acreage that has since been excised from Mission Reserve today. Third street and right of way for the Canadian National Railway cut through the reserve and are the primary changes from the plans made in the 1900s and 1910s. The delay in water access for the Skwxwú7mesh in the 1910s, promised as part of their deal to grant 3rd Street right of way, sickened their children, who were also the most common victims of motor vehicle accidents at the time.<sup>137</sup> The records from the City Council’s meeting with the MMC indicate they were looking for at least two right of way grants for two streets totalling some five acres.<sup>138</sup> Historian of childhood Tamara Gene Myers writes of how streets for automobiles created a cultural and physical crisis in North America where in the 1920s alone, automobile accidents took 200,000 lives in the US. The pattern in Canada was similar, where “by the 1910s,

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<sup>135</sup> Copy of Letter Sent by a Joint Meeting of the City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver, and the District of West Vancouver, to the Hon. the Provincial Secretary, Victoria, Undated, File 520C, T-3958 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, RG 10, Archives Canada.

<sup>136</sup> Summer, 7.

<sup>137</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 454; “Sickness Among Indians,” *The Province*.

<sup>138</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 8.

the streets became a space to be feared as accidents and injuries mounted.”<sup>139</sup> By 1929, some 8,000 cars and 25,000 people passed through 3rd street every day on their way from the Second Narrows Bridge through North Vancouver on their way to Whitecliffe and the ferry terminal at Horseshoe Bay.<sup>140</sup> This is yet another way settler municipal colonialism crafted vulnerability and disability/debility for the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and their kin in Eslha7án.<sup>141</sup>

Urban planning, public health, and settler panic over the contaminating possibilities of Indigenous reserves crafted by uniquely settler formations of able-bodied supremacy are questions about the future. When the publicity pamphlet cited in the introduction’s epigraph invites “the one who loves the sea, mountains, forests and streams” to the North Shore, they are

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<sup>139</sup> Tamara Gene Myers, *Youth Squad: Policing Children in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 137.

<sup>140</sup> “Condensed Facts,” 12.

<sup>141</sup> A powerful irony here, however, is that the census taking that was part of the MMC tried desperately to fix individuals in place, locating them within the boundaries of a single reserve or band, but Indigenous ways of life in British Columbia were still strong. Migration, movement, inter-communal and familial ties all remained central to life in BC and the North Shore. Commissioners were often frustrated by the censuses presented to them that might represent families with “claims” to multiple reserve lands. An exchange I found particularly prescient was when Andrew Paull presented the reserve’s census to James McKenna at a meeting with the Mission Band at Eslha7án that represented families with multiple homes or claims to Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh land, Chairman White interrupted to exclaim “Well that won’t do at all!” When pressed to give a final count, Andrew Paull said he did not have the authority as an individual to amend the census, given the count required assent from the community. Even as settlers pushed to advance their individual mobility, the statistical surveillance of Indigenous people(s) looked to fix Indigenous bodies and cultures in time and space. (MMC, New Westminster Agency, 31).

beckoning to the future settler “one” and not the Indigenous “one” whose ancestors and peoples have cared for these lands since time immemorial.<sup>142</sup> The “arterial” and “skeleton”-structure roads represented in the city-organism ferried North Vancouver settlers to recreation spaces that would foster rational citizens, “prevent[ing] future disorder” by teaching “respect for discipline and authority” as Robert A. J. McDonald wrote on recreation in Stanley Park.<sup>143</sup> The future of the city-organism was one where rationality governed the body, both the city-body and the individual body and the healthiness of one’s body became inextricably linked to one’s moral fibre. The historical formation of this linkage lies, at least in part, in the settler conception of Indigenous sickness where Indigenous people were always-already sick, made rhetorically inevitably infected by their incompatibility with the future march of progressive civilization. By being biologically unfit, Indigenous people were also morally unfit to survive into settler futurity.

This formation of moral integrity and bodily fortitude being inextricably entangled holds tremendous significance today in the warped settler future of British Columbia crafted in the early twentieth century. By letting an active planning for Indigenous extinction become a fundamental part of public health, education, urban, cultural, political, social, and economic planning we (settlers and our ancestors) allow(ed) assumptions of inevitable death pervade our individualistic, neoliberal society. And now we have arrived at the COVID-19 pandemic where

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<sup>142</sup> “Condensed Facts,” 12.

<sup>143</sup> “Preliminary Report”; Robert A.J. McDonald, “‘Holy Retreat’ or ‘Practical Breathing Spot’?: Class Perceptions of Vancouver’s Stanley Park, 1910-1913,” *Canadian Historical Review* 65, no. 2 (1984): 141, 148.

we have, once again, witnessed/are witnessing the consequences of this kind of settler colonial ableism. Settlers and their beneficiaries remain haunted by our decisions to deny the right to life and sovereignty to Indigenous people(s). Now we deny it to others, too.

This includes the medical-political landscape of British Columbia and Canada one hundred years after the “shrill” settler panic over tuberculosis in Esłha7án served as convenient justification for attempted theft.<sup>144</sup> The ouroboros of settler colonialism births its violence against Indigenous people before enlarging that devouring maw to consume more and more of itself, including disabled non-Indigenous people.

COVID-19 represents another apocalypse—a circumstance Indigenous people have survived time and again as colonial diseases like smallpox, measles, cholera, and tuberculosis, spread by the violence of settlers, conquistadores, and agents of empire, ravaged North America. It is also an apocalypse that assumes death is inevitable, not an engineered consequence of structural oppression. These apocalypses and the ways Indigenous and disabled people have spoken back to them are profoundly entangled.<sup>145</sup> Appearing alongside settler attempts to destroy Indigenous sovereignty within and through the MMC, are Indigenous voices speaking back to the settler

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<sup>144</sup> Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., H. Clifford Lane, M.D., and Robert R. Redfield, M.D., “Covid-19 — Navigating the Uncharted,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 382 (March 2020): 1268-1269, (Originally published online 28 February 2020) <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejme2002387>.

<sup>145</sup> Emily J. Hutcheon and Bonnie Lashewicz, “Tracing and troubling continuities between ableism and colonialism in Canada,” *Disability & Society* 35, no. 5 (2020): 695-714.

colonial apparatus and the settlers wielding it. Today, one-third of Indigenous people in Canada are disabled, and in the midst of a mass-disabling pandemic, parliament expanded access to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) rather than access to care.<sup>146</sup> Articulating ableist settler colonial violence across time remains an urgent project.

In 1913, Chief Mathias Joseph represented the Skwxwkwú7mesh desire to “improve” their land and the lack of support from the government to engage in the progress that same government demanded of Indigenous people if they were to prove their right to live on land the settler state claimed.<sup>147</sup> Chief Joseph eloquently recounted, “When a man is in prison he looking always for a way out, When he is sick he is always looking for a way to get well. That is what the members of Capilano Band are doing, trying to see a way to a new and better life.”<sup>148</sup> In Chief Joseph’s words is a profound recognition that there are better futures than the ones carceral capitalism or settler colonialism could ever possibly offer, especially to disabled and/or Indigenous people. Just as CDS scholar Alison Kafer describes a future sanitized of disability, Madness, or sickness as an “ableist failure of imagination,” settler futurity relies on the vanishing of Indigeneity into a “revenant spectrality,” to borrow from Natalie J. K. Baloy, or in its entirety. This involves/d the

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<sup>146</sup> Megan Linton, “Disability, Death & the Fight for Justice: Disability Justice in Canada amidst a time of pandemic,” *Disability Visibility*, June 8, 2021. <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2021/06/08/disability-death-the-fight-for-justice/>

<sup>147</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 35.

<sup>148</sup> MMC, New Westminster Agency, 35.



corporal and metaphorical destruction of Indigenous peoples, their cultures, their bodies, and their lands.<sup>149</sup>

Settlers are startled, then, when we look in the mirror and see the spectre of what it cost others to create our modern-day (stolen) wealth and how, now, that spectre has come to devour us, too. I did not create this ghost, no, but I am responsible as a settler and beneficiary for its existence. I am thankful, though, that when I thought my whiteness could rescue me from ableism, I stumbled across other examples, other work, other ways of surviving this world than one as destructive as choosing the ouroboros of settler whiteness. I remain protected by my whiteness, but the spectre in the mirror reminds me that ableism will remain a feature, an intentional mode of violence that imperils us all, so long as white supremacy and settler colonialism stand.

Settler futurity is both eugenicist and genocidal, destroying disabled Indigenous life especially, and is its own failure of imagination—a failure that Indigenous people, like disabled people, do and did not claim. We (those of us poised for elimination in the settler ouroboros) have, across time, articulated the true source of violence against us, and in that truth-telling, demonstrated our profound ability to imagine beyond the systemic oppression pointed against us. Our deaths were and are never inevitable. They are *designed* under the paradigms of oppression that curtail others' ability to imagine a future with us. But we remain, and we imagine.

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<sup>149</sup> Kafer, *Feminist*, 3; Natalie J. K. Baloy, "Spectacles and Spectres: Settler Colonial Spaces in Vancouver," *Settler Colonial Studies* 6, no. 3 (2016): 209.

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