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Neoliberal Biopolitics in Michel Noël's *Nipishish*: Market Logic and Indigenous Resistance

James Boucher

Fiction and reality unite in Michel Noël's 2004 young adult novel *Nipishish*, in which the protagonist comes of age while grappling with Canada's biopolitical strategies for the depoliticization of Indigenous peoples.¹ The main character endures the "Sixties Scoop," the placement of Native children in Euro-Canadian foster homes; witnesses firsthand political struggles regarding land management on the reserve and the folly of the Canadian Housing Program; and endures tribal exclusion based on his mixed-blood status. Marketed to adolescents "approximately 12–18," *Nipishish* is "set in the real (as opposed to imagined), contemporary world and address[es] problems, issues, and life circumstances."² Noël clearly wishes to expose the practices of the Canadian government as discriminatory, bringing difficult truths to light for his young readers. On personal and professional levels, the author is well positioned to accurately depict First Nations' struggles against the neoliberal practices of the Canadian settler state.³ Of Algonquin origin, Noël served as coordinator of Indian Affairs in the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications of Québec until 2003.⁴ As it recounts historical First Nations experiences in the second half of the twentieth century, *Nipishish* is a powerful tool for engaging both non-Indigenous and Indigenous youth with the politics of Indigenous-settler relations.

While not receiving the same acclaim as Sherman Alexie's renowned teen novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), *Nipishish* deals similarly with the complexities of (national) identity and cultural belonging/difference in a state that includes some and excludes others. Both texts insist on investigating possible expressions of self and identity through the inclusion of Indigenous cultures and (hi)stories

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in cultural forms that often ignore the Native entirely. Therefore, themes inherent to the genre of teen fiction enhance Noël's narrative of Native resistance.

By asking the reader to identify with the Indigenous hero, Noël creates a site of struggle such as that understood by Homi Bhabha. According to Bhabha's vision of hegemony, Euro-Canadian biopolitics instrumentalizes the alterity of First Nations peoples in its articulation of a particular brand of "modern" and "progressive" neoliberal governance. Michel Noël's text, however, opens up a space "in-between," allowing the reader to question the "identifications" inherent in the system (settler or Indigenous).⁵ It is through this challenge to the settler-colonial state's discourse that *Nipishish* constitutes an interesting object of analysis of settler-Indigenous conflict. Demonstrating how remarkably First Nations' perspectives and practices differ from the "progressive" ideologies of the Canadian government, Noël seeks to uncover the violence at the heart of settler land management, educational policies, and identity politics in order to counter the normative strictures of Canada's biopolitics and national narrative. Rather than naturalizing settler-colonial power through exclusion, *Nipishish* offers an alternative of "self and identity" through Indigenous inclusion and opens a polyvocal dialogue with young readers that reframes identity as relative.

Nipishish examines how biopolitical power and knowledge manifest at all levels in the lives of Algonquian First Nations peoples in southwestern Quebec, exploring how settler policy enmeshes both the group and the individual, from the macro- to the microscopic, from the diffuse to the capillary. Foucault teaches us that one aspect of the biopolitical system of power/knowledge lies in its extension to the capillary level, entering into the very bodies of the population.⁶ This is one of the defining characteristics of biopolitics. In this article, I link elements of the novel to historical realities that shape Native communities in the second half of the twentieth century, emphasizing the clash between settler biopolitics and First Nations' lifeways. In doing so, I recast Foucault's theoretical visions of biopolitics (and to a lesser extent, Agamben's) in the context of interactions between Euro-Canadians and Indigenous populations.

I begin my discussion with a fundamental issue that continues to fuel conflict between Indigenous peoples and settler states from contact to today: the contrast between the two groups' understandings of land and people's relation to the land. The communal lifeways espoused by many Indigenous peoples in relation to their shared, reciprocal relationship with the land and natural resources are in conflict with the extractive European conception of land as individual property, a paragon of the market truth that underwrites much of biopolitical strategy, policy, and ideology.

THE LAND, THE MARKET, AND LANGUAGE

Land is a central theme in *Nipishish*. Throughout the novel, the Anishinaabeg lament changes to their interactions with the land. Indeed, land and humanity's relation to it are often key elements in the literary representation of Indigenous peoples. In the cultural imaginaries of the West, Natives are more "in tune with nature" than Westerners, a stereotype that has passed through many iterations. From early on, the climate theory of racial development posited "closeness" to nature of Indigenous peoples as proof of

animalistic tendencies, a lack of civility, while in other contexts, Indigenous intimacy with the natural world is more favorably and nostalgically portrayed as antidotal to Western decadence and “progress.” Recently, as concerns about the nonhuman environment become more urgent, Indigenous attitudes about land have become increasingly reexamined and tensions can again emerge between actual Native outlooks regarding nature and Western ideas about Native philosophy. Lee Schwenger describes this tension as imposing a split obligation on Native American writers:

a Native American writer feels himself obligated on the one hand to resist and refute generalizations and stereotypes, yet who at the same time . . . feels obligated to identify what he feels to be a genuine Native American worldview or philosophy concerning the land that differs significantly from a non-Indian or European American worldview.⁷

In Noël’s young adult novel, however, the anxiety that stereotyping can elicit is less pointed: although his characters often do subvert traditional Western images of the Native, Noël’s narrator shows little concern for myths about First Nations peoples’ ecological perspectives. Instead, Noël speaks to living, breathing Canadian adolescent readers about living, breathing Aboriginals, focusing on political practices and realities and engaging with the political here and now in a way that does not directly attack tropes and mythic paradigms dear to settler societies. To draw clear distinctions between stereotypical elements and those closely related to cultural identity can be rather difficult for author, critic, and reader alike, making Noël’s approach a good example of how teen fiction’s focus on the real can carry political messages effectively. Additionally, this allows Noël to sidestep the inner conflict generated by educating others about the truths underlying stereotypes about Indigenous peoples’ closer connection to nature.

Conflicts about land abound in Noël’s text. Both in his novel and historically, many of the most overtly biopolitical strategies of the Canadian government are grounded in the land policies they pursue regarding First Nations populations. Canada, insisting that all lands are Crown lands, has never admitted title of land to Indigenous groups. European claims are established via the *terra nullius* argument, which hinges on the *proper* use of land (read European presence) as a prerequisite for any claim to proprietorship.⁸ Therefore, European ideals of land use and European epistemological frameworks of land anchored early confrontations about land and ownership in norms that left little room for Indigenous viewpoints or practices. Natives are entitled to usufruct only, and even that depends solely on the Crown’s benevolence.⁹ Native “usufruct” is diminished through hunting and fishing regulations and through the Canadian Housing Program, which allows the settler state to acquire more and more access to Indigenous land and resources. In the end, attaining more territory is the “overriding imperative” of settler colonialism as a system.¹⁰

Foucault posits unequivocal parallels between the rise of biopolitics and the extension of market truth as an emerging hegemonic discursive apparatus and governmentality.¹¹ Other visions of truth are systematically excluded, including Indigenous viewpoints that often emphasize collective ownership/management of land and

natural resources rather than the private property model of the West. In Foucault's genealogical discussion of governmentalities culminating in the biopolitical turn, he underscores the importance of population as an object of governmentality that must not only subsist or *live*, but must transcend that baseline of existence, as seen from a profitability standpoint:

police must ensure that men live, and live in large numbers. . . . But at the same time it must also ensure that everything in their activity that may go beyond this pure and simple subsistence will in fact be produced, distributed, divided up, and put in circulation in such a way that the state really can draw its strength from it.¹²

Although Foucault references seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European governmentality, his articulation captures the logic of Native dispossession in settler states, including Canada. By rightly asserting that every activity that touches the lives of men and women becomes the object of the biopolitical imperative of *making live*, Foucault's analysis echoes and supports my vision of land as integral to the mechanisms of settler-colonial biopolitics. Because Indigenous lifeways do not *make* the land *live* for the benefit of the state, their territories must be "divided up" and "put into circulation" in a fashion that does create profit or "strength" for the Canadian settler-state. In the case of Indigenous peoples, current euphemisms of "human capital" are often neglected in favor of the exploitation of traditional natural resources such as lumber, mining, and tourism. Settler states *make* the land *live* and *let* Indigenous peoples and lifeways *die*.

At bottom, all things are exchangeable, including human lives and bodies, in late liberal capitalism. By disqualifying Native land epistemologies, by disrupting subsistence practices, and by *making* Indigenous territories *live* according to neoliberal market dogma, the Canadian government exposes the Anishinaabeg to the other side of the make/live binary: Canadian biopolitical practices of territorial dispossession aim to *let* First Nations peoples *die*. However, this *letting die* is euphemistically masked as charity, generosity, and "progress," as has often been the case in the difficult history of settler-Indigenous relations.

In a settler-colonial context, the critical objective of biopolitical land-management policy is to incorporate, rather than exclude, "Indigenous people and territories into the capitalist mode of production and to ensure that alternative 'socioeconomic visions' do not threaten the desired functioning of the market economy."¹³ The land grab that takes place in *Nipishish* is clearly an example of biopolitics: far from allowing market forces to invisibly determine the exchange value of Anishinaabeg lands (invaluable for them, because it cannot be bought or sold), the Canadian government simply appropriates the land in order to make that land available as a market commodity, and to "make" the land "live" according to biopolitical epistemologies. With the arbitrary creation of exchange value represented by the theft of Anishinaabe lands and their subsequent introduction into the market in direct opposition to the *laissez-faire* policies that purportedly drive global economics, the forced entrance of Anishinaabeg land into the market system is at once commensurate with and antithetical to biopolitics' rhetorical posturing regarding the market. Noël thus problematizes the portrayal of

biopolitical land management policies as the purely objective push and pull of abstract and impersonal market forces, exposing it as a *laissez-faire* illusion.

In an important scene, government agents accompanied by the local parish priest come to explain the new way in which the Anishinaabeg will inhabit their lands. Incarnating the Euro-Canadian paternalistic bent toward First Nations peoples, the agents of the settler state are there to force the Anishinaabeg to live according to settler norms. After initially joking amongst themselves about the futility of traveling such a long distance to the reserve to speak to the Anishinaabe in the first place, the lead agent says, “The Government of Canada is thinking of you. It wants to do everything it can to help you out of your misery. As proof, it has sent in surveyors—the men you have no doubt seen measuring the land in this area. These men are subdividing the land into lots.”¹⁴ Underpinning the acts of measurement, surveying, and allotment is the government’s desire to appropriate Indigenous lands for lease to logging interests. As part of the Housing Program, the members of the community are offered the opportunity to live in Euro-Canadian style homes built for them with a (one might be tempted to assume infinitesimal) portion of the proceeds from the vast tracts of land that will be logged out of the reserve.

The scene hinges on one of the most fundamental aspects of settler-Indigenous relations in Canadian history: linguistic difference. The linguistic difference is literal in this case, as the priest has difficulty translating the agent’s speech into the Native language: “The priest hesitates. He sputters away because he can’t find the words in our language for measure, subdivide and lot. To us, the land belongs to everyone. It has no boundaries. The land is home to the animals, birds and fish. Most of all, the land is our mother, made by the great creator to nourish us, heal us.”¹⁵ Noël illustrates the confrontation of lifeways in a simple, yet profound manner. How can the representatives of the settler state and the Indigenous person reach an understanding if they cannot understand each other linguistically? Historically, linguistic misunderstandings have been at the heart of much subsequent litigation between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples, with specific linguistic differences often being emblematic of epistemological differences more generally; this scene, demonstrating the conflation of semantic and epistemological dissonance, directly references many historical aspects of Euro-Canadian-First Nations politics. For example, the priest’s role as translator/mediator on behalf of the government’s interests was a central feature of many of the treaty negotiations of the latter nineteenth century.¹⁶ His presence is, therefore, anything but anodyne.

In *Nipishish*, the written and spoken word is a site of imperial power *and* Native resistance. Canada is only able to effectuate biopolitically motivated land grabs via a specific instrumentalization of linguistic power. As Mary Louise Pratt explains:

Expanding empires, especially colonial ones, face linguistic predicaments that are not accidental or contingent but foundational and constitutive. By their very formation, empires are translanguistic force fields: the language of the imperializing power lands on spaces already territorialized by other languages, perhaps other imperial languages. Yet empires depend absolutely on communication. Bringing

an empire into being requires trying to control or manage this translinguistic force field and shape it around the imperial power's interests. Imperial powers must intervene on the linguistic landscapes they encounter and seek to redistribute linguistic capacities according to their needs.¹⁷

Pratt's analysis alludes more explicitly to the linguistic confrontations of earlier colonial time periods than the settler-colonial historical moment of *Nipishish*, yet competing epistemologies remain an important political and textual locus of settler-Indigenous conflict that continue to play out in the linguistic arena. While it remains implicit in Pratt's discussion, inherent in the linguistic strife is an epistemological clash that persists unresolved. In this portion of the novel, the epistemological struggle is situated in the realm of land use. Although from a primarily linguistic point of view the Indigenes are portrayed in this scene as having a less-developed lexicon that lacks the terms used by the agent, this semantic paucity is inherently ironic because Native unfamiliarity with these specific terms is intrinsically linked to their healthier, saner views of nature and land management.

Noël's stammering priest thus provides his readers with an example of the Canadian government's failure to manage what Pratt refers to as the "translinguistic force field." It is essential to recall that translinguistic and transepistemological force fields exist synchronically; these are spaces wherein colonial power and Native resistance often collide. As Pratt deftly adduces, the objective of imperial management techniques of the translinguistic and transepistemological force fields is "extraction." In the novel, the priest's inability to translate the familiar vocabulary of Western economics and land management does not affect the overall outcome of the Housing Program. The forests are logged. The Euro-style houses are built.

The extractive economics of land management as they relate to First Nations peoples are incommensurate with Native epistemologies of collective, reciprocal relationships with the environment. In Choctaw and Cherokee writer Louis Owens's conceptualization, Native visions of nature are in confrontation with Western epistemologies and represent "a way of looking at the world that is *new* to Western culture. It is a holistic, ecological perspective, one that places essential value upon the totality of existence, making humanity equal to all elements but superior to none and giving humankind crucial responsibility for the care of the world we inhabit."¹⁸ Unfortunately, despite a long history of contact and conflict, the newness of Native views of the natural world in comparison with extractive Western ideologies has not yet worn off. In Noël's novel, this "holistic" view of nature is linked to the movements and hunting practices of the Anishinaabeg, both of which are direct targets of the Housing Program and allotment. This strategy permits the government to remove the land from the community, placing it squarely within the epistemological, ecological, and economical framework of neoliberal capitalism, making both nature and Native "live" in accordance with settler norms.

In an examination of the political economy of such a move by the Canadian government, one could argue that the action of forcibly removing lands from First Nations peoples in order to arbitrarily force that land to enter the market, primarily

in the form of its natural resources, is more redolent of former types of governance, such as the interventionism identified in Foucault's genealogical exegesis on the *Raison d'état*, or mercantilism.¹⁹ This is a significant point because one of the central ideologies espoused by biopolitical regimes ostensibly would reject sweeping gestures that interfere with the hands-off functioning of pure market forces, such as the Canadian government's land grabs concurrent with the Housing Program. Yet nature is forced to play a role in the economics of Canada's biopolitics; it is in conjunction with settler disappropriation of Native territory that this transformation becomes possible. In the eyes of the Canadian government, of course, there is no contradiction here, because entrance of First Nations' lands into the market is, above all, profitable to the aforementioned government directly and Euro-Canadian industry secondarily, thereby adding to the "strength" of the state. Although all lands belong to the Crown in name, political, linguistic, and epistemological violence plays a critical part in the legal machinations that actually dispossess Indigenous Canadians of their lands and livelihoods. While the policies of the Canadian government valorize market truth above all else, Native societies place "essential value upon the totality of existence," a dichotomous pole in the dialectics of settler-Indigenous land practices that clearly underscores the sizable gap between them.

MAKING LIVE AND LETTING DIE

First Nations peoples who are robbed of their lands are also essentially forbidden from continuing their traditional lifeways. Positive change in settler-Indigenous relations can only occur by opening up politics to the disenfranchised in the specific domain of land management and inhabitation and by allowing for the practice of those lifeways. In a more ecologically sound sense, rather than in the narrow parameters of profitability, Native peoples may be able to make the land *live* in a way that truly adds strength to the world as a whole. In Foucault's biopolitical theories, two fundamental conceptualizations of the effects of biopolitics were the system's tendency to "make live" and "let die."²⁰ Although at first glance these strategies may appear as fundamentally opposed, they are actually synergistic. Prior to the implementation of the Housing Program, the lands the Anishinaabeg inhabit and the ways in which they inhabit those lands—movable settlements and housing structures—remain largely liminal to or even outside of those policies intended, according to Foucault, to *make live* and *let die*. From both juridical and epistemological perspectives, Indigenous peoples and their political relations with settler-colonial states do not fit perfectly into the established European models of biopolitics as articulated by Foucault. It has been one of the tasks of a *settler* biopolitical critique to precisely identify these divergences.

While his analysis relies on another biopolitical theorist, Giorgio Agamben, Mark Rifkin perspicaciously locates the complex interplay between the settler state's desires to include Native land in the market economy and to sever Indigenous peoples from the practices that sustain their connection to their land and identities. Agamben's concept of "exception" is used to great effect in Rifkin's argument, which goes some way toward defining the political specificity of Indigenous peoples in settler-colonial states.

In this respect, although neither he nor Foucault addresses settler politics directly, Agamben may be useful in teasing out the particular complexities of the settler-Indigenous political context.²¹ What Rifkin underlines in his analysis of Agamben is the centrality of the land question in the determination of personhood:

The effort to think biopolitics without geopolitics, bare life without bare habitance, results in the erasure of the politics of collectivity and occupancy: what entities will count as polities and thus be seen as deserving of autonomy, what modes of inhabitation and land tenure will be understood as legitimate, and who will get to make such determinations and on what basis? Focusing on the fracture between “the People” and “the people” imagines explicitly or implicitly either a reconciliation of the two (restoring a version of the “trinity” of state, land, and birth) or the proliferation of a boundaryless humanness unconstrained by territorially circumscribed polities. These options leave little room for thinking indigeneity, the existence of peoples forcibly made domestic whose self-understandings and aspirations cannot be understood in terms of the denial of (or disjunctions within) state citizenship.²²

Those groups whose land practices fall outside the purview of biopolitical profiteering—First Nations peoples—are in a “state of exception” that excludes their epistemologies from participating in distinguishing which segments of the state are privileged by being allowed to benefit from the status of “People.” Being “outside,” however, is a metaphor that does not fully account for how Native peoples are forced to remain “inside” with regard to Western legal structures. Scott Lauria Morgensen sees the settler/invasor judgment of Indigenous personhood as the entrance point of Indigenous people’s into the superstructures of Western law,²³ where they fall victim to that system’s “capacity . . . to simultaneously incorporate and eliminate, recognise and except racialised and primitive difference.”²⁴ Morgensen’s analysis, in conjunction with Rifkin’s, demonstrates how the biopolitics of settler colonialism transcend Foucauldian categories of “make live” and “let die,” performing both simultaneously in the “peculiar” case of Indigenous peoples.²⁵

The “exceptional” status of the Native has recurrently led to conflicts. The violence inherent in the biopolitical paradigm is often glossed over as synonymous with the vicissitudes of modern life in a purely Western frame of reference, thereby naturalizing what might otherwise appear more evidently as (political) violence. In contrast, *Nipishish* represents Euro-Canadian biopolitics intersecting with Native lifeways in multiple points of attack. In the novel, biopolitical practice is revealed as destructive to Anishinaabe identity and the continued existence of an autonomous people, not only in the epistemological and ontological senses, but crucially also in the realm of *economy*. Examining biopolitics in the specific context of settler-Indigenous relations is particularly useful because the consequences of biopolitics are brought more sharply into focus in contradistinction with the communitarian practices of Indigenous groups. Through an analysis of biopolitics in the specific context of settler-Indigenous relations, this political system is unmasked in a way that is less cogent in a merely Western context. The term *freedom* that is often associated with the liberal democratic

ideologies of neoliberal, biopolitical states is unveiled as an ironic euphemism that has more to do with the ability to purchase consumer products than political liberties.

To more closely examine the specific points of attack where Canadian biopolitical policies confront Anishinaabe epistemologies, I now turn to two key aspects of inhabiting the land in keeping with Indigenous ecological and economic praxis in the novel: traditional hunting subsistence and seasonal movements associated with mobile camps, which are severely limited by the creation of the reserve village. Restrictions on hunting, a ubiquitous bone of contention between First Nations and Euro-Canadian settler legal structures that attempt to restrict Indigenous access to natural resources, are prevalent in the text, centering on moose hunting and lack of access to traditional hunting grounds. Biopolitical strategies to “make live” and “let die” are both at work in the Canadian government’s attempts to limit First Nations’ access to game, or to curtail it completely. Breaking the generational chain of knowledge about animal behavior and geographical displacements is secondary to the biological consequences of this policy. After all, the cultural and economic autonomy of the Anishinaabeg is seriously threatened when they are no longer able to sustain the community from their own food-procurement practices. This stage of the process reveals one way in which Indigenous peoples are situated outside of the “make live” paradigm of the biopolitical system, Agamben’s “state of exception,” wherein populations’ health is required in order to assure maximum profit for those members of society who benefit fundamentally from the phenomenon of exchange wherever and whenever it occurs. When the Canadian settler state “makes live,” the priority resides with the land and its natural resources, not with First Nations peoples, except perhaps when conveniently enfolded into national narratives that again speak to legitimizing the state’s rightful ownership of Native land.

The government agents are there to remove lands from the realm of Anishinaabe economic practice (temporary residential and hunting areas) to insert those same lands into the market economy of Canada. Temporary inhabitation of territories has often been employed to dispossess Natives. However, the landmark Hualapai case, which legally legitimized Indigenous claims on land used temporarily, thereby setting a precedent in the US judicial system, has seen “many of its principles . . . adopted in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Malaysia.²⁶ According to Christian McMillen, since this decision, nonpermanent residence has at times been haltingly accepted within the context of a broader definition of Native title. While the outcome is not as positive for the Anishnaabeg in Noël’s novel, it is important to point out that cases like the Hualapai (such as the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en cases in Canada) are significant moments of Native agency and reterritorialization. Accounts that chronicle Indigenous lifeways and long-standing connections with the land support attempts to reinstate title juridically. Such claims have the power to defy and revise mainstream neoliberal and biopolitical narratives about land. Indigenous histories can be discounted and ignored, even for many generations, but they also have the capacity, through survivance and reiteration to effectuate real (political) change.²⁷

To return to the specific land issues addressed in *Nipishish*, the difference between Foucault’s continental examples and the Canadian settler-Indigenous context is

simple. Rather than “make live” across the population in order to maximize profit, the Canadian settler state has hedged its bets on the land as a more profitable commodity, thereby relegating the Anishinaabeg to the category of “let die.” Examples of typical biopolitical practices include governmental actions related to statistics and bureaucratic information, as well as educational policies aimed at the indoctrination of the Indigenous population. The government’s management of the Anishinaabe lands is less recognizable within Foucault’s original articulation of the parameters of biopolitics, but easily identifiable as belonging to an overall strategy to dispossess and culturally marginalize First Nations peoples, thereby eliminating their lifeways.

The biopolitics of the Canadian government vis-à-vis both Native lands and First Nations peoples are synergistic processes that aim toward the same neoliberal goals of homogenization across populations *and* landscapes, a dovetailed homogenization that sublimates market truth as *the* indicator of morality and political correctness, disavowing opposing viewpoints and epistemologies regardless of community origin. Mary Louise Pratt has conceptualized the separation of land and people in imperial strategies of colonization predominantly along linguistic lines. Her analysis is pertinent in the context of *Nipishish*, because control is exercised by the Canadian government in both domains, land and people, through bureaucracy, an institutionalization that relies heavily on the written word as a tool. She refers to the linguistic systematics of land management as *administration*, and a form of management that is more precisely concerned with Indigenous peoples as *subjectification*:

Administration refers to the organization and management of economic extraction through regulated practices, hierarchies of command, and judicial processes. *Subjectification* refers to the production of imperial subjects by organizing knowledge, identities, and desires through schooling and religious indoctrination.²⁸

By adopting the categories proposed by Pratt, one can more clearly identify how the synergistic processes of territorial dispossession, Native educational programs, and sexual policies collaborate in an overarching settler biopolitics. The practices of *administration* and *subjectification* aim not only to dispossess First Nations peoples of territorial means of subsistence, but also to sever communal solidarity and identity. Linguistic conflict, as illustrated by the scene analyzed above, wherein the agents of the Canadian government steal Native lands, is not only a site for the exercise of imperial designs and power, it is also a site of resistance, allowing for alternative, Indigenous epistemologies to vie in the spaces “in between.”

NARRATIVE AND INDIGENOUS AGENCY

Narrative and storytelling are key elements of Native community identity in *Nipishish*. One scene in particular directly contrasts Native epistemologies based on storytelling and oral tradition with the primarily written, statistics-driven institutional fabric of Euro-Canadian society. In the French edition of the book, the chapter wherein one finds this crucial passage is titled, “The Agent’s Speech and Poné’s Response” (the English translation does not include translations for chapter titles). The French

edition's signaling of Poné's response indicates more clearly the linguistic struggle inherent in the scene. Poné is an elder of the Anishinaabe community who stands and responds to the agent's plans of allotment and deforestation by recounting a tale about a sick, greedy, and destructive man (clearly a metaphor for the Euro-Canadians) and an ant that helps him to regain spiritual and ecological balance by bringing him down to the scale of her world and teaching him about respect and reciprocity in nature: "Little by little the man recovered. The ant told him how she had seen him from her house and hurried down to help him. 'In this life we are all equal,' she said, 'and we must help one another and share everything that the creator has given us so generously.'"²⁹

The author's insistence on the adjective "little" in parallel with the anthropomorphized ant speaks directly to the Euro-Canadians' paradigm of dominance and control wherein Indigenous people are cast as tiny and insignificant in comparison to the mighty white settler community and its political economy. However, the communitarianism of First Nations, which contrasts starkly with the hyperindividualism and atomization of Euro-Canadian society, is equally underscored by the metaphorical allusion to the collective existence of an ant colony. This is a sign of a different kind of "strength" than that validated in biopolitical ideologies. The "little" ant colony is a site of resistance and an ontological and epistemological affirmation of self *within* the world. This vision of the natural environment and man's role as cog in a greater wheel of land-based reciprocity and cooperation is what Coulthard refers to as "grounded normativity," which he defines as "the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time."³⁰

"Grounded" is polysemic, simultaneously signaling a concrete grounding in the land and an epistemological grounding in sustainable, healthy practices. "Healthy" can be physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. When the man in the story accepts the ant's truth about life and nature, he "recovers," as from a (mental) illness. The metaphor of the ant colony embodies the polyvalence of Coulthard's formulation by emphasizing both collective cooperation with a subsistence orientation (as opposed to an extractive one) and the ant colony model is at once constructed in and by the earth. Characterized as "radical sustainability," the vision of land and human inhabitance that Coulthard calls "grounded normativity" is also "antithetical to capitalist accumulation."³¹ In *Nipishish*, the volunteerism of Anishinaabe culture opposes the extractive profiteering represented by the Agent's speech.

After Poné finishes his tale, the conclusion of the scene speaks to the depoliticization of First Nations peoples within settler-Indigenous politics. While the attention of the reader is squarely focused on Poné's allegory about perspective and relationality, one discovers that the government agents have left, taking their papers with them.

They [the Anishinaabeg listeners] thought the man's story was full of good sense and decided that once again the real truths in life could be found in stories. Poné finishes and turns toward the altar, but the two officials from the ministry are

no longer there. They have gathered up their papers and slipped away. Only the missionary stands there, waiting for everything to be over.³²

This explicit comparison between the written and the oral, a centuries-old criterion for discrediting Indigenous civilizations as inferior, is portrayed by Noël as callous deafness and disrespect of Native epistemologies. The papers of the agents are linked metonymically and semantically to, not only the written word, but also the paper money that inspires their actions. Notwithstanding the dismissiveness of the agents and the missionary, narrative serves as a source of power, resistance, and identity in the Anishinaabe community and in Noël's text. In the Pueblan context, Leslie Marmon Silko has written much about story as a source of communal strength, defining narrative as the manifestation of "collective memory," capable of transmitting "an entire culture, a world view complete with proven strategies for survival."³³ Echoing Silko's observation in a Canadian Anishinaabe context, First Nations anthropologist Jaime Cidro utilizes her own unique perspective on narrative as resistance in her research to elucidate the identity-(re)constructing power of storytelling in Anishinaabe communities. She contends that storytelling maintains traditional knowledge and can be employed by mixed-blood and non-status individuals to (re)connect to Anishinaabe culture.³⁴ In keeping with both women's perceptions, Noël's novel foregrounds oral tradition, metaphor, and myth as counterpoint to purely biopolitical, market-based ideologies and logics.

Despite the fact that the valuable knowledge contained in Poné's story is disregarded by the ministry officials and the priest, it nevertheless constitutes an agentic action that resists Western epistemology and reinforces Native lifeways and philosophy. In the imperial linguistic conflict discussed by Pratt, Poné's response battles against Euro-Canadian hegemony. The performative gesture of Poné's story, even in the absence of the Canadian government's bureaucrats, is an act of resistance whose message *is* heard (read) by the predominantly Euro-Canadian adolescent audience targeted by Noël. It is in this way that the author opens up the "in-between" space, present in Bhabha's discussion, which allows for a "struggle of identifications." Noël's novel itself functions in much the same fashion as Poné's story. It (re)establishes Native viewpoints in the midst of discursive and political hegemonies. The novel as a form, and in particular teen fiction, is well positioned to interpellate Euro-Canadian youth to better understand their own settler-colonial histories and present moment from an Indigenous perspective. Throughout the novel, oral tradition, storytelling, and narrative continually serve as sources of strength for the Anishinaabe community on both the collective and individual levels. Storytelling and literature represent a possible space of joining for Canadian youth (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) to question the legitimacy of biopolitical models of existence. In this capacity, the text transcends the binary of the written and the oral, while critiquing certain instrumentalizations of written language in the specific context of land management in Canadian settler-Indigenous relations. In conjunction with the linguistic struggle wherein Euro-Canadian administration battles with First Nations oral tradition, more concrete and material modalities of Native resistance are equally present in *Nipishish*.

THE HOUSING PROGRAM: ALLOTMENT AND SPATIAL PRACTICES OF RESISTANCE

In the novel, Indigenous peoples do not quietly accept the biopolitical measures to control their community lands, their movements, and their housing situation. One of the most conspicuous sites of resistance involves the new homes built for the Anishinaabeg as part of the Housing Program. The interior walls within the homes, serving in Western houses to separate the lives of the individuals living within separate rooms, are immediately broken down by the new Indigenous inhabitants. Atomization is a common side effect, or objective, of neoliberal and biopolitical strategies. Atomization of the human body and the human being as social animal are both key themes in *Nipishish*. It is significant that the first course of action taken by the new residents is to destroy those barriers, inherent in the individualistic, capitalist framework. In *Nipishish*, the social and economic violence of atomization becomes evident. The spatial politics of settler colonialism as related to the family home have been described by Mark Rifkin in *When Did Indians Become Straight?* In the author's discussion of allotment, a scheme whereby settler states carve up land and assign small plots to individuals or families in an attempt to further justify territorial dispossession, he pinpoints the objectives of allotment as:

an effort to shift the objects of native feeling—from clans and communities to nucleated families, from collective territory to private property, from the tribe to the nation-state—so as to create proper individuated citizens out of primitive masses . . . the imposition of this naturalized vision of kinship, residency, and personhood clearly operated as part of a systemic program of *detrribalization* . . . it was not portrayed as a means to that particular end. In other words, the allotment program tended to be articulated and legitimized in ways that portrayed the brutal and sustained assault on indigenous geopolitical formations, subsistence and trade systems, and knowledges as merely a side-effect of the benevolent effort to modernize Indians, to liberate them from the shackles of tradition.³⁵

In the quote from *Nipishish* above, the government agents tell the Anishinaabeg that they are there to provide assistance. This insincere concern is the discursive mantle which cloaks the territorial designs of settler-colonial strategies of dispossession. While some have concluded that little ideological space exists outside of capitalism, there are extant practices that directly resist its seemingly pervasive hegemony. Often depicted as regressive, Indigenous peoples' theoretical and practical economies are deemed primitive and, therefore, impractical. Looking backward to glean value from the long centuries of accumulated human knowledge is strictly antithetical to a positivist, progressivist vision. In a move that has been repeated ad infinitum since the period of first contacts between Europeans and the original inhabitants of the Americas, Europeans claim superiority based on a fictitious representation of progress (as mentioned above in the citation from Bhabha's *Location of Culture*, the alterity of the Native is instrumentalized by the West to *validate* a progressive standpoint). Kevin Bruyneel asserts that, "These narratives place temporal boundaries between an

'advancing' people and a 'static' people, locating the latter out of time, in what I call *colonial time*, where they are unable to be modern, autonomous agents."³⁶ Bruyneel's conception of colonial time's temporalizing effects on Indigenous groups dovetails with Bhabha's insistence on the hegemonic ideology of the state's tendency to refuse a "modern image of the future" to colonized peoples.³⁷ Both signal the preclusion of future advancement for Native peoples in the discursive and political logics of settler colonial biopolitics. To return to how these elements materialize in the novel *Nipishish*, Noël's characters refuse the narratives of "exception" and "colonial time" as inadequate for defining Indigenous epistemologies and identities.

As the Housing Program's allotment scheme progresses, the members of the Anishinaabe community are assigned individual homes that are in keeping with Western normativities of inhabitation. Noël's Indigenous characters iconoclastically dismantle this symbol of Western patriarchal bliss, the family home, to better suit their own conceptions of space and identity. In addition to the Anishinaabe remodeling of the home space by the removal of the inner walls, many of the interior fixtures and structures are also demolished and the parts repurposed. Rather than respecting the Euro-Canadian concept of atomized spaces, the Anishinaabeg men open up the space to create a communal area and the women set about arranging mattresses for everyone to sleep in the space together. In this way, the Anishinaabeg incorporate the house into their own epistemological frameworks, subverting the original intentions of the government's planners.³⁸

In the Western context, there is little that would suggest that the spatial arrangement of the typical family home might reinforce an overall biopolitical strategy. Yet, atomization is key to social individuation, a cornerstone in capitalist ideology that insists on *making everyone live* in accordance with a normativity that can disintegrate collective efforts that might otherwise reduce consumption, environmental destruction, and profits. Mishuana Goeman asserts that "spatial violence" has been employed in multiple arenas of Native life to attempt to disconnect First Nations peoples from the land and their own understandings of space and human relation to it.³⁹ Domestication, understood largely as pertaining to Native women in Goeman's analysis, but applicable to the entire Anishinaabe community in Noël's novel, is a foundational ideology of the heteropatriarchal underpinnings of settler state nation-building.⁴⁰ In examining the actions of the characters in *Nipishish*, the biopoliticized nature of the family home comes into focus as a site of indoctrination and discipline (intended in Foucault's multifaceted use of the term). The Anishinaabeg's physical deconstruction of the home allows for the epistemological deconstruction and decolonization of the signifying power of "the home" in Western theory, practice, and text.

THE WAR ON INDIGENOUS IDENTITY: INFORMATION, MARRIAGE, AND EDUCATION

Nipishish foregrounds how Canadian government policies intervene in First Nations' lives on varying levels, from the macro-level of information technologies and educational structures to the micro-level of personal sexual relationships and marriage.

In this section, I examine techniques employed by the Canadian government (both historically and in the fictional world of the text) that aim at the subjectification of the Anishinaabeg. Again, Pratt defines subjectification as “the production of imperial subjects by organizing knowledge, identities, and desires through schooling and religious indoctrination.”⁴¹ The process of subjectification is linked to biopolitical practice. Both are concerned primarily with maximizing profits through precise interventions. While exposing the ugly realities of biopolitics as played out in settler-Indigenous relations in Canada, Noël correspondingly evokes Native resistance to those structures.

A decisive element of the main character’s identity (quest) in the novel centers on his name. The protagonist of the novel has two names: Nipishish (his Anishinaabe name) and Pierre Larivière (his French name). This duality highlights how Canadian biopolitical practice attempts to sever young people from their Indigenous communities and identities, reiterating the linguistic bent of imperial struggle as framed by Pratt. The example of dual naming underscores the biological aspect of biopolitics, which becomes tangled up with bodies and their primary functions. Being born (naming), reproducing, and dying are all objects of biopower. Nipishish’s father is First Nations and his mother is Euro-Canadian. This is a crucial aspect of the novel’s plot and provides Noël with the opportunity to critique Canadian policies vis-à-vis First Nations peoples in particular ways. One of the essential conditions of possibility of the emergence of biopolitics in Western political economy is the knowledge apparatus that accompanies this particular brand of governmentality. It is the power/knowledge nexus that is at the heart of what makes biopolitics function so successfully. In the Canadian context, as in other settler states, the knowledge of the state, or statistics, was pioneered and fine-tuned in the administration and subjectification of Indigenous lands and populations.

Information collecting and gathering is a central aspect of the biopolitical strategies of control and market integration within Canada’s First Nations policies. A cornerstone of the plot of Noël’s novel is the murder of the protagonist’s father by the Mounted Police and the subsequent cover-up of the killing. The physical violence of the murder itself is paralleled by a bureaucratic violence that serves to silence the crime by hiding and restricting access to written records of the events. Using one of its most redoubtable tools, information, the Canadian government severs Nipishish from his community, more specifically his biological connection with his father. Noël’s Anishinaabe character Nipishish is excluded from fully participating socially, economically, and informationally in a society which kills his father and threatens the survival of his entire community. In addition to this sequestering from his familial heritage, a legal severing occurs due to Nipishish’s mixed-blood status.

This separate status references the special categorization of some First Nations individuals within (or, more specifically, outside of) the Canadian body politic as a whole. As part of the Indian Act, originally passed in 1876 but revised on numerous occasions since, Nipishish loses his status as a member of the band. Due to his ambiguous classification, he is assigned a temporary band number, which accents the uncertainty of his (legal) identity. This complicates matters personally for Nipishish when he becomes romantically involved with the young woman Pinamen. As I

mentioned above, biopolitics is characterized by an extension into the very bodies of the population. In this case, sexual reproduction and the future of the Anishinaabeg are put in jeopardy by the Indian Act, which attempts to erode the demographic viability of First Nations communities by assimilatory accounting. Nipishish cannot live as a full Anishinaabe because of his separate status. He cannot marry another member of his community. His future wife would lose her First Nations status, as would any offspring resulting from the marriage. The Anishinaabeg cannot articulate a discourse that presents a “modern image of the future,” to return to Homi Bhabha’s expression, because pathways to a viable future for the community are obstructed by the Canadian government’s distinct policies concerning First Nations. In both the examples under discussion (restricting access to the Native in the domains of information and reproduction), key features of identity are degraded in Indigenous communities by governing biological links. This precise relationship to the biological marks these governmental practices as biopolitical.

Another biopolitical strategy of the Canadian government in *Nipishish* are the educational measures taken by the province of Quebec regarding its Indigenous populations. Residential schools, often religious in nature, as is Saint Marc’s in the text, represent one of the most inveighed aspects of Canadian educational policies. The last federal residential school would not be shut down until 1996.⁴² However, Noël’s novel inhabits the liminal space surrounding the 1951 revision of the Indian Act that constitutes an about-face with regards to the residential schools that were typical in the preceding period. After 1951, the government seeks to integrate First Nations children into the public school system. Nipishish suffers through periods of involvement with both the residential school system and the Canadian public school system. Both the boarding school and public school serve as sites of indoctrination and cultural programming that aim to separate Anishinaabeg children from their culture, an example of *subjectification* according to Pratt’s terminology. This practice echoes techniques utilized much earlier by the Jesuits and Ursulines in New France. This disconnection from traditional communal lifeways and epistemologies is expressed by Nipishish after running away from the public school back to his community: “I could hardly believe that just a few hours earlier I had left the school, completely out of it, not knowing which way was up. I was convinced I was a good for nothing without a history, a Métis, neither Indian nor White.”⁴³

This passage parallels the testimony of many victims of the Canadian government’s educational policies. For example, one First Nations youth says the following with regards to the aftereffects of the residential school system: “There he is, hanging in the middle of the two cultures and he is not a white man and he is not an Indian. They washed away practically everything an Indian needed to help himself, to think the way a human person should in order to survive.”⁴⁴ By first sequestering Indigenous children and then forcing them to integrate into the public education system, as a part of the biopolitical goal to “make live,” they weaken young peoples’ sense of belonging to their Native community. This insertion into the economic and epistemological world of the market and its *truth*, where, lamentably, “Indians at all levels of education earn about two-thirds that of non-Indians,” is destructive to the continuance of Native lifeways.⁴⁵

Nipishish's story also illustrates another settler policy that came to be known as the "Sixties Scoop." Actually beginning in the 1950s and continuing into the 1970s, the Sixties Scoop is the practice of sending First Nations children to live with Euro-Canadian (and sometimes Euro-American) families, passing government checks on to the foster parents as remuneration. While Nipishish gets along relatively well with his foster family for a time, the situation ends with him in jail after he discovers that his foster mother has been clandestinely stealing his pay from a job at the local bowling alley. In Noël's depiction of the Sixties Scoop, the exploitative nature of the settler-Indigenous relation is emphasized once again. Noël's descriptions of sexual and educational policies reiterate the overarching goal of settler colonial biopolitics to erode links between First Nations young people and their communities. Nipishish does not identify with these forms of bureaucratic biopower, however. He subverts the settler states' attempts to hide the reality of his father's murder and obtains valuable information that leads to a court case in the text's dénouement. He runs away from his foster family and returns to his life on the reserve with the Anishinaabeg, thereby refusing to accept the definitions of truth and family provided to him by the Sixties Scoop's assimilatory politics.

Lastly, he defies settler biopolitics' attempts to circumscribe his choice of whom to love and how. At the novel's conclusion, Pinamen and Nipishish create a "modern image of the future" in the form of a new member of the next generation of Anishinaabe. While from a literary standpoint some of these plotlines may resemble a heteronormative Hollywood happy ending, they equally locate sites of resistance and paths of change presented by the author to the next generation of Canadians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. *Nipishish* by Michel Noël functions as a site of resistance as a written form of the storytelling so important to community and identity to the Anishinaabeg and other First Nations peoples.

CONCLUSION

With *Nipishish*, Michel Noël takes the once-maligned genre of teen fiction and gives it purchase as a realist, historical account of Native agency and resistance in the face of the biopolitical machinations of the Canadian settler state. With the potential to reach Indigenous and non-Indigenous adolescents, the author proffers a pithy political message that forces young people to grapple with the past, present, and future possibilities for settler-Indigenous relations in Canada.

In this article, I have examined several examples of political practice in the context of the Canadian government and the Anishinaabe community, historically and as portrayed in Michel Noël's novel *Nipishish*. I have pinpointed specific conflicts between the manifestations of neoliberal biopolitics and First Nations lifeways. Focusing on epistemological differences regarding land, I signaled the opposition between the communal approach of First Nations peoples ("grounded normativity") and the individualistic private-property model of the Euro-Canadians as an analytic keystone. With the support of Mary Louise Pratt's theorizing of the difference between settler-colonial administration and subjectification, I highlighted the affront of Canadian

administrative measures vis-à-vis Anishinaabe oral tradition as a form of resistance. Illustrating the reach of biopower into the bodies and lives of Noël's characters, government tribal counting policies and blood quantum were shown as destructive to Native community (building). And yet, despite the Indian Act's objective to wither First Nations communities, the Anishinaabeg continue to resist and to live according to their own unique visions. At the end of the novel, the protagonist becomes chief of the band and is portrayed in the end as a messianic figure who continues the struggle initiated by his father and other ancestors. Through cooperation, agency, and political action, the Anishinaabeg refuse the Euro-Canadians' biopolitically inflected truth, resisting the Canadian government's attempts at depoliticization and deterritorialization. I conclude with a speech given by Nipishish at the end of the novel that expresses this refusal:

We Indians can no longer continue to close our eyes to such injustices. It is for the memory of my father and to carry on his mission that I am undertaking this action. I am also doing it for myself, for Pinamen, for the children we will have. This is about the survival of my people.⁴⁶

Here, Nipishish flouts the exclusionary clauses of the Indian Act. His story reinforces generational connectivity and the continuance of Native lifeways. His narrative points towards a "modern image of the future" that cannot be defined or circumscribed by the myopia of biopolitics.

NOTES

1. Michel Noël, *Nipishish* (Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 2004). A 2004 edition translated into English is titled *Good for Nothing*, trans. Shelley Tanaka (Toronto: Groundwood Books) and is a compilation of three of Noël's earlier published works: *Journal d'un bon à rien*, *Le cœur sur la braise*, and *Hiver indien*. I will use this version throughout the article, with the exception of the quote mentioned in endnote 34, because that part of the original French text is not included in Tanaka's translation.

2. American Library Association, "The Value of Young Adult Literature," 2008. The Young Adult Library Services Association of the United States characterizes teen fiction as "developmental" in nature, exploring themes that "recognize that young adults are beings in evolution, in search of self and identity"; <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines/whitepapers/yalit>.

3. The publisher HMH describes the work as the author's "sober and forceful synthesis of his own lived experience"; see Noël, *Nipishish*.

4. Maurizio Gatti, *Littérature Amérindienne du Québec: Ecrits de Langue Française* (Montréal: Bibliothèque Québécoise, 2009), 145.

5. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Classics, 1994) np, Ch. 1.

6. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995), 198.

7. Lee Schweninger, *Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008), np, Introduction.

8. Glen Sean Coulthard notes that, "Because Indigenous societies were considered so low on the natural scale of social and cultural evolution, settler authorities felt justified in claiming North America legally vacant, or *terra nullius*, and sovereignty was acquired by the mere act of settlement

itself." Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), np, ch. 3.

9. Olive Dickason and David T. McNab, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 326.

10. Patrick Wolfe, "After the Frontier: Separation and Absorption in US Indian Policy," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648800>.

11. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 352–53.

12. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 326.

13. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, np, ch. 2.

14. Michel Noël, *Good for Nothing* (Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2012), np, ch. 3.

15. Ibid.

16. Dickason and McNab, *Canada's First Nations*, 244.

17. Mary Louise Pratt, "Language and the Afterlives of Empire," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 130, no. 2 (2015): 351, <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.2.348>.

18. Schweninger, *Listening to the Land*, np, Introduction (emphasis added).

19. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 4–5.

20. Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, (New York: Picador, 1997), 241.

21. Scott Lauria Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 55, 69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648801>.

22. Mark Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben," *Cultural Critique* 73 (Fall 2009): 94, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cul.0.0049>.

23. Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism," 61.

24. Ibid., 66.

25. Mark Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben," 89.

26. Christian McMillen, *Making Indian Law: The Hualapai Land Case and the Birth of Ethno-history* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), xviii.

27. Ibid, 181.

28. Pratt, "Language and the Afterlives of Empire," 352–53.

29. Noël, *Good for Nothing*, np, ch. 3.

30. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, np, Introduction.

31. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, np, Conclusion.

32. Noël, *Good for Nothing*, ch. 3.

33. Leslie Marmon Silko, "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination," *The Ecocriticism Reader*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 268.

34. Jaime Cidro, "Nanabush Storytelling as Data Analysis and Knowledge Transmissions," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 32, no. 2 (2012): 159.

35. Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 181–82.

36. Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 2.

37. Bhabha, *Location*, ch. 1.

38. Noël, *Nipishish*, 59–60.

39. Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 37.
40. *Ibid.*, 59.
41. Pratt, "Language and the Afterlives of Empire," 352–53.
42. Dickason and McNab, *Canada's First Nations*, 312.
43. Noël, *Nipishish*, 163 (my translation; this section is not included in the English translation of the novel).
44. Dickason and McNab, *Canada's First Nations*, 312.
45. *Ibid.*, 313.
46. Noël, *Good for Nothing*, ch. 12.