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ARTICLE

Arendt, Natality, and Indigenous Reproductive Justice

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Abstract

In their recent book, *Arendt, Natality and Biopolitics,* Rosalyn Diprose and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek reconstruct Hannah Arendt's concept of natality in order to diagnose and resist biopolitical threats to democratic plurality. Their analysis leads them to engage indigenous reproductive justice organizing; that engagement is the focus of my critique. I argue that their understanding of the biopolitical targeting of indigenous people needs further development. Diprose and Ziarek tend to read indigenous organizers as working toward inclusion in the democratic plurality of settler societies. While that is the aim of some indigenous organizations and actors, that is not the aim of many, including a theorist and activist they engage, Katsi Cook (Mohawk). I suggest that their engagement with indigenous reproductive justice organizing is shaped by the important, but unthematized role settler colonialism has in Arendt's work. I further argue that Cook provides crucial theoretical and practical challenges to the settler state and its role in feminist theoretical projects of critique.

In their recent book, *Arendt, natality and biopolitics: Toward democratic theory and reproductive justice,* Rosalyn Diprose and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek reconstruct Hannah Arendt's concept of natality in conversation with feminist theory in order to diagnose and resist biopolitical threats to human plurality. Here I focus on the last term of the subtitle: reproductive justice. Through engagement with reproductive justice (RJ) organizing by women of color, Diprose and Ziarek seek to expand the limited analysis Arendt has of the "inter-relation between fertility, biopolitics and different types of racism."[1] They then narrow their focus to indigenous reproductive justice organizing in what is now called the US to consider parallels with Arendt's philosophy of natality.[2] In the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision, their analysis is even more urgent.

The differential burden of *Dobbs* on different communities is built on and as a continuation of the long history of the racial heteropatriarchal development of the US settler state. Thus, the urgency of understanding the production of these differential burdens has become all the more critical at this time. This paper responds to that urgency with a critique of the way the authors position reproductive justice theory and practice as an expansion of Arendt's theory, as well as the way they frame parallels

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between Arendt's theory and indigenous RJ organizing. I suggest that this positioning and framing obfuscates crucial divergences between Arendt's theory and Diprose and Ziarek's reconstructive project, on the one hand, and the indigenous RJ organizers they reference, on the other. I use an ethics of incommensurability to aid in the work of identifying divergences that Diprose and Ziarek would need to contend with if their reconstructive project is to substantively engage the decolonial critiques developed by and practiced within indigenous RJ organizing. This paper cannot do justice to the full complexity of Diprose and Ziarek's project, nor the ever-expanding work of indigenous feminist activism and scholarship that builds alternatives to the settler colonial order through connecting reproductive justice to sovereignty, climate change, interpersonal and state violence, and so much else.[3] What I seek to do instead is raise the question that feminists have long been willing to ask and sometimes too willing to foreclose: what does justice mean when the oppression we struggle against is all but totalizing?

My critique is immanent in that it is driven by the importance of narrative for Arendt's account of natality. As Diprose and Ziarek make clear, in Arendt's philosophy of natality it matters for the future how we tell stories about the past.[4] If our stories matter politically in the way that Arendt suggests, then it matters that Arendt tells a story of the US Revolution that disavows the importance of slavery and settler colonialism.[5] I look closely at the story that Arendt tells of the US Revolution to suggest that before indigenous RJ organizing can be cited as examples of Arendtian revolutionary action, as Diprose and Ziarek do, the role of settler colonialism, as well as racism, in her account must be addressed. Further, I suggest that the stories told by indigenous RJ organizers offer much more for Diprose and Ziarek's biopolitical analysis than they acknowledge.

In drawing attention to these methodological, theoretical, and narrative dimensions of Diprose and Ziarek's analysis, I aim to support the impulse that led them to consider RJ, generally, and indigenous theory and activism, more specifically. In *Arendt, natality, and biopolitics,* they have provocatively and convincingly argued that "women's reproductivity is *the central target* of biopolitics."[6,7] To build on those strengths, my analysis urges greater attention to diagnosing the role of racism *and* settler colonialism, as distinct and intertwined dynamics, in biopolitical targeting, especially through engagement with the scholars and activists on and at the intersections of RJ and decolonization.[8] Without such analysis, Diprose and Ziarek efface the critical theorizing and activism of indigenous RJ, a point I elaborate through a brief engagement with the work of Mohawk theorist and activist Katsi Cook.[9]

My aim is to highlight, in this specific case and more generally within feminist philosophy, the need for a more thoroughgoing consideration of one of the central challenges theorized by Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill in decolonizing feminism: "to actively seek alliances in which differences are respected and issues of land and tribal belonging are not erased in order to create solidarity, but rather, relationships to settler colonialism are acknowledged as issues that are critical to social justice and political work that must be addressed."[10] They emphasize the need for settler scholars to "to become more familiar and more proactive in their critique of settler colonialism."[11] More proactive critique would have important consequences for Diprose and Ziarek's project, both as a reconstruction of Arendt's philosophy of natality and as an engagement with indigenous RJ organizing. More generally, I hope my work here motivates and strengthens practices of questioning within feminist philosophy about the impossibilities of justice under settler colonialism. It is further my hope that my

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use of an ethics of incommensurability opens up possibilities for more feminist solidarity.

1. Incommensurability

Throughout my critical engagement, I am guided by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's theorization of incommensurability. Tuck and Yang argue: "that the opportunities for solidarity lie in what is incommensurable rather than what is common across [efforts to reimagine human power relations]."[12] Tuck and Yang therefore theorize an ethics of incommensurability that: "recognizes what is distinct, what is sovereign for project (s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects. There are portions of these projects that simply cannot speak to one another, cannot be aligned or allied."[13] Their aim in pointing out what is irreconcilable between decolonization and other projects of liberation is to break the structure of colonization, "a break and not a compromise."[14] Perhaps most importantly for my project, Tuck and Yang argue that it is in understanding the gaps between projects—what they term the "inner angles"—that contingent collaborations can be formed.[15] I seek to use this ethics of respecting what cannot be reconciled to raise questions about Diprose and Ziarek's project in ways that I hope will be useful to other feminist projects seeking "new visions of what decolonization might look like for all peoples."[16] The aim of an incommensurable ethics is solidarity achieved not through assimilation, but respect for what cannot be aligned and allied.

My claim is not that an ethics of incommensurability is the only approach to feminist theorizing of decolonization and projects of liberation or solidarity. Rather, I suggest such an ethics offers crucial friction when the impulse of the feminist theoretical project is one of seeking connections, as in Diprose and Ziarek's project when they characterize RJ as an expansion of Arendt's theory and seek to highlight parallels between RJ and Arendt's theory. Put in more general terms, if the theoretical aim is one of bringing together, I think Tuck and Yang's ethics of incommensurability offers productive troubling of how that can be done. I offer here an example of the kinds of questions and provocations that an analysis attuned to incommensurabilities can raise and I do so with the aim of actively seeking solidarity with decolonial potential.

2. Settler colonialism, decolonization, and reproductive justice

To aid this incommensurable analysis, I clarify how I use the terms "settler colonialism," "decolonization," and "reproductive justice." I have two purposes in doing so. First, they are terms that are circulating a great deal in feminist theory with multiple meanings. My aim is to indicate my own understanding and to show as clearly as I can its lineage. Second, these terms circulate in Diprose and Ziarek's text specifically, but they remain undertheorized there. Incommensurability is harder to register if core terms remain largely implied.

2.1. Settler colonialism

Following Patrick Wolfe, I understand settler colonialism to be an ongoing process that entails both destructive and constructive dynamics.[17] The destructive aspects include activities that have eliminated and continue to try to eliminate indigenous societies from their land bases. The constructive aspects include the historical and ongoing creation of a settler society on that land base. In Wolfe's elaboration of how the destructive

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dynamic enables the constructive, we see how forms of making people cease to be indigenous can, *at the same time,* be means of enfolding them into the settler order. He writes:

> The positive outcomes of the logic of elimination can include officially encouraged miscegenation, the breaking-down of native title into alienable individual freeholds, native citizenship, child abduction, religious conversion, resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools, and a whole range of cognate biocultural assimilations. All these strategies, including frontier homicide, are characteristic of settler colonialism.[18]

Wolfe points out ways that settler colonial targeting of indigenous people and peoples can eliminate an individual's relationship to their land and nation without necessarily killing the individual, although murder is a well-established settler colonial technique. Wolfe calls these assimilationist strategies settler colonialism's Faustian bargain, writing: "have our settler world, but lose your Indigenous soul."[19] Enacted throughout the last 500 years and at massive scale, these techniques of assimilation relentlessly, although incompletely, produce settler societies on indigenous land. As Wolfe famously puts the point: "invasion is a structure not an event."[20]

Central to this structure is what Wolfe calls "the organizing grammar of race" by which different peoples could be coerced into serving colonial ends.[21] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang analyze the "entangled triad structure of settler-native-slave."[22] Settler colonialism involves the conversion of indigenous land into property and the conversion of the bodies of people enslaved into property, developing and reproducing the grammar of race to naturalize these processes.[23] "In order for the settlers to make a place their home," Tuck and Yang observe, "they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there." Further, "settler colonialism involves the subjugation and forced labor of chattel slaves, whose bodies and lives become the property, and who are kept landless."[24] Various racialization schemes are innovated and developed to enable settler colonialism's conversion of land into property controlled by settlers to produce profit.[25] As I emphasize in my critique of Diprose and Ziarek, however, racialization and settler colonialism are not reducible to one another. Indeed, if we are not to naturalize racial categories, we must continually consider how the aim of territorial acquisition and labor exploitation motivated and motivates racialization.[26]

Of particular importance for work on natality and reproductive justice, Wolfe's analysis points to modes of reproductive control that have been used for settler colonial ends, including contradictory racialization schemes employed in the US such as blood quantum regulations and child abduction that target indigenous peoples and the "one drop rule" that targets those from Africa or with African ancestry. In line with Tuck and Yang's theorization of the triad, the first seeks to eliminate those with claims to the land and the latter seeks to increase the numbers of those who can be forced to work it, all in service of settler ends. Diprose and Ziarek call our attention to other means for targeting people of color for biopolitical control in the US, including sterilization abuse, siting toxic waste on indigenous lands, criminalizing pregnant people's substance use, long-term contraception abuses by government health agencies, and limiting abortion access.[27]

As I will show, however, because Diprose and Ziarek are focused on understanding these processes through Arendt's philosophy of natality, they do not make sustained connections between these methods of reproductive control and the construction of settler societies. Further, they do not carefully thematize the different ways that the

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grammar of race organizes biopolitical targeting. I suggest this is because of the role racism and settler colonialism has within Arendt's own philosophy. Diprose and Ziarek understand Arendt's philosophy as *limited* in relationship to racism and settler colonialism, whereas I contend that her philosophy is *shaped* by it. Limitation could be ameliorated by the kinds of expansion Diprose and Ziarek suggest, whereas shaping requires a more thoroughgoing reconstruction. Can Arendt's philosophy of natality help us consider the distinct and intertwined dynamics of settler colonialism and racialization? I do not seek to answer this question, but to show that it is one that a feminist project seeking to use Arendt's theorization must address if it wishes to produce decolonial critiques.

2.2. Decolonization

Following J. Kēhaulani Kauanui's demand that "any meaningful engagement with theories of settler colonialism—whether Wolfe's or others'—necessarily needs to tend to the question of indigeneity,"[28] I further suggest that Diprose and Ziarek's analysis needs to go beyond noting that indigenous reproductive activists organize in settler colonial contexts by grappling with demands for decolonization, which "is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity."[29] To understand decolonization, I follow Tuck and Yang, who argue: "Though the details are not fixed or agreed upon, in our view, decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, *all* the land, and not just symbolically."[30] This view of decolonization centers land, its repatriation/rematriation,[31] and recognition of different conceptions of relationships to land, as well as different ways of living those relationships. Rather than deciding what sovereignty is (or even if sovereignty is the proper goal of decolonization, "given its own ideological origins in colonial legal-religious discourses as well as the heterogeneity of its contemporary histories, meanings, and identities for indigenous people"[32]), Tuck and Yang center land and relations to land. They seek to prevent the invasion of metaphor into the concept, especially as such moves allow for measures short of land repatriation/rematriation to appear sufficient, hence the highly influential phrase with which they title their essay: "Decolonization is not a metaphor."[33]

Of particular importance to my project here is how settler states fit or, more accurately, do not fit into this understanding of decolonization and this speaks to the concept of futurity, which again remains open in their analysis. As Tuck and Yang clarify in their discussion of the distinctness of settler colonialism: "The horizons of the settler colonial nation-state are total and require a mode of total appropriation of Indigenous life and land."[34] And they note in later work: "Such a social order, and its violences, cannot be made just; cannot be made good."[35] Thus, central to the demand for the repatriation/rematriation of land is the understanding that settler colonial nation-states do not offer venues for decolonization, but rather make settler futurity through indigenous disappearance.[36] Tuck and Yang highlight the helpful notion of "settler harm reduction" to acknowledge the importance of building and seizing possibilities within the settler state to address the harm that indigenous people are currently experiencing.[37] But they are equally clear that settler harm reduction "is intended only as a stopgap" and that it "is not the same as decolonization and does not inherently offer any pathways that lead to decolonization."[38]

While Diprose and Ziarek critique states—their focus is particularly on liberal democracies[39]—for how they threaten human plurality using biopolitical means, their

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project does not acknowledge radical decolonial critique of settler states, the importance of decolonial critique within indigenous RJ organizing, or the questions decolonial critique raises for Arendt's philosophy of natality. They note, for instance, in the Australian context that state policy has attempted to stimulate white births while depressing Aboriginal births, focusing particularly on interventions in the Northern Territory.[40] Tellingly, they fault "the ongoing failure of governments to improve living conditions and restore dignity and a sense of worth to people in these remote communities."[41] The state is the agent that will redress its failures, restore dignity and worth. While many decolonial theorists and actors work with/in settler states, the complexities of that work are thematized throughout indigenous studies and activism and need to be addressed.[42] To return to Tuck and Yang's language of incommensurability, there are gaps between the viewpoints here which may be irresolvable, and must be accounted for, regardless. Critiques of the continued existence of settler states in decolonial theory are so important that they must be addressed, perhaps especially if the authors' view is that settler states are here to stay and must be negotiated.

2.3. Reproductive justice

One of the most influential framings of reproductive justice, outlined here by one of the co-creators of RJ, Loretta Ross, and historian Rickie Solinger, as "a contemporary framework for activism and for thinking about the experience of reproduction" is through three principles: "(1) the right *not* to have a child; (2) the right to *have* a child; and (3) the right to *parent* children in safe and healthy environments."[43] Born from critiques of mainstream reproductive rights activism, reproductive justice further uses a human rights framework to "claim that interference with the safety and dignity of fertile and reproducing persons is a blow against their humanity—that is, against their rights as human beings."[44] A diversity of approaches have flourished using this framework since its creation in 1994 by Black women, Ross among them, bringing decades of activist and theoretical experience to the failures of early 1990s health care reforms and the entrenched debate on abortion, including ones by indigenous activists and theorists.[45]

Diprose and Ziarek build their analysis of RJ on the collection *Undivided rights,* an important early text that attended to specific RJ organizations and offered early theorizations of the broader movement. Academic interest in reproductive justice has flourished since that important intervention, including texts focused on indigenous RJ organizing.[46] Part of my critique here is simply that Diprose and Ziarek had a wider literature available to develop a conversation with RJ theory and organizing, and I show how some of that work pushes their analysis. Their source text offered more difficulties for their theoretical discussion than they acknowledge. *Undivided rights* does not attempt to tell a comprehensive story of RJ, but rather tells many stories of the movement. Diprose and Ziarek's reading of the text is narrowly focused on the connection they want to make to Arendt's philosophy of natality, thereby missing the incommensurabilities that make that connection much more complex than their telling allows. Without attention to those incommensurabilities, what Diprose and Ziarek develop in relationship to indigenous RJ organizing is not a project of solidarity, but one that subtly assimilates that organizing to their own ends.

3. Diprose and Ziarek's reconstruction

To show how that assimilation happens, I briefly reconstruct Diprose and Ziarek's project to indicate why they turn to RJ and connect it with Arendt's philosophy.

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They emphasize that, for us to be agents, it is necessary not only that we are welcomed by others, but also that our actions be witnessed and disclosed to others.[47] To begin something new requires not only that others see us as capable of beginning, but also that our "actions are also viewed as agentic, as beginning something new, as making a difference in the world."[48] Human agency on this account is "inter-relational and performative."[49] Their intervention into this well-established understanding of Arendt's account of agency focuses on the relationship between human birth and agentic action. Expanding beyond Arendt's theorization of birth, they offer a careful analysis of the event of human birth as two beginnings in one. One is the more obvious, although often not obviously political, appearance of the newborn. The other is the agency of the birthing person in beginning something new by gestating and giving birth. For anyone who has witnessed a birth, it is obvious that newborns do not just *appear*. Diprose and Ziarek draw our attention to the person whose actions make possible a newborn's appearance and insist on the political significance of those actions, as well as the reception by others of these actions in their unique distinctness.[50]

Diprose and Ziarek explain that to be born is political for two reasons. First, we are born into common worlds with practices of birthing shaped by "the operations of power, technology, medicine, law and economy."[51] Second, the newborn's birth is "the primary exposure or 'appearance' to others as a 'beginner' and as 'unique distinctness.'" [52] But the person who makes possible that newborn's appearance can only be agentic in Arendt's sense if the actions are witnessed and disclosed as unique. In other words, it is not enough that, in general, people with the capacity to gestate and give birth are seen as beginners of the new; the activities of reproduction must also be witnessed and disclosed as agentic.[53]

They claim that the capacity to give birth is a capacity to begin something new.[54] Further, biopolitical regulations not only set limits on or demand the exercise of this capacity, but also occlude its agentic nature.[55] Attempts to limit people's control over their reproductive capacity, through anti-abortion legislation, for instance, do this in two ways. First, pro-life arguments, in their reduction of human life to mere biological life, "destroy the notion of human birth as a unique event marking a new beginning."[56] Through elevation of conception as the marker of human beginning, such arguments fail to attend to the importance of the welcome by and disclosure to others that make new beginnings by new beginners possible. Such arguments ignore the inter-relationality of beginning. Second, such arguments reduce the activities of gestation and birth to inevitable processes. The activities of gestation and birthing are relegated to biological or historical determinist accounts that fail to consider "the *beginners who give birth to other beginners* of the new" as themselves inter-relational agents.[57]

Diprose and Ziarek further emphasize the importance of revolutionary struggle in Arendt's philosophy of natality. Against a tradition that often frames the founding of new polities in terms of violence and death, they argue Arendt gives us a political theory of founding based in natality: "Common worlds built from collective actions in which the principle and the beginning are coeval have no need for violence or external authority to maintain themselves because they remain contestable, open to diverse re-interpretations, augmentations and amendments."[58] What is founded through collective action can be maintained through it. Biopolitical controls, however, target the conditions for collective action, through attempts to control the agentic capacities of individuals and/or the conditions of inter-relational disclosure necessary for agency.

Diprose and Ziarek turn to RJ as an example of alliance building to fight the disavowal and erasure of the political agency of gestation and birthing.[59] On their account,

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RJ organizing offers examples of political action that resists biopolitical control and does so through highlighting the agentic nature of the first order of physical birth. While Arendt gives muted acknowledgment to the importance of first order birth, the authors argue that RJ organizing puts it front and center. Arendt still supplies the terms with which to understand this organizing, they argue, in her theorization of revolutionary action. Thus, central to their reading of indigenous RJ is the claim that it is revolutionary in Arendt's sense of the term.

Diprose and Ziarek explore the relationship between natality and narrative, offering a rich reconstruction of Arendt's thinking about the interdependence of political action and the stories we tell about it. Of particular importance here is the claim they make within this reconstruction that: "Counter-narratives and counter-histories, which challenge both the politics of narration, as well as the dominant values, jurisprudence, gendered and racialised identities, 'cultural tyranny' and boundaries of the political, become powerful political weapons of marginalised or dispossessed groups."[60] They argue that not only do we come to understand the importance of political action through the stories we tell of it or come to be able to tell new stories through political action, but we can also contest the meaning of historical events at the level of story. They cite a rich feminist tradition here, especially the work of Gloria Anzaldúa.[61] While they do not revisit RJ organizing in this chapter, I think there is good reason to do so. If, as they claim, narratives can challenge biopolitical practice, it matters how we tell stories about RJ. I suggest that the story Diprose and Ziarek tell under-appreciates the power and complexity of RJ organizing, too quickly subsuming that work to Arendtian categories and neglecting incommensurabilities. I think at least some of the reasons for this under-appreciation begin in Arendt's work, especially Arendt's narrative of the US Revolution to theorize revolutionary action, to which I now turn.

3.1. Revolution

Diprose and Ziarek argue that analyzing their source text on RJ, *Undivided rights,* in terms of Arendt's *On revolution* allows us to see RJ "in terms of revolutionary struggles for a just, non-toxic world without racism."[62] They seek such a juxtaposition to illuminate the revolutionary nature of indigenous organizing for reproductive justice. Simultaneously, they suggest that in juxtaposing these texts, we can better see the limits of "Arendt's account of the American and French Revolutions" in regard to "gender, the political relevance of slavery and settler colonialism in the American context."[63] In addition to showing how revolutionary indigenous organizing is, they also seek to address significant shortcomings in Arendt's theorization of revolution. I trouble both moves.

While Diprose and Ziarek's analysis of indigenous reproductive justice organizing clearly intends to show its importance through arguing it is revolutionary in Arendt's sense, the problems of settler colonialism in how Arendt develops her understanding in *On revolution* undermine their endeavor. Arendt separates the destructive and constructive processes of settler colonialism, giving only muted critique of the former and endorsing the latter. Indeed, Arendt's theory of revolution entwines with her theorization of democratic plurality in a way that endorses settler colonialism and ignores entirely the continued existence of indigenous polities that makes indigenous RJ organizing possible. While it may be that, through a focus on natality and a thorough reconsideration of Arendt's narrative of the US Revolution, it is possible to reconstruct Arendt's theory of revolution and democratic plurality to address the role that setter

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colonialism plays within it, such work remains to be done. To put Arendt's work in conversation with theorists and activists who are resisting settler colonialism in both its destructive and constructive aspects without such reconstruction, at best, mutes the importance of decolonization in indigenous theory and activism and cannot facilitate connections between RJ and Arendt's philosophy of natality. The incommensurabilities must be foregrounded and addressed theoretically.

Moreover, the authors' decision to first show that indigenous organizing is revolutionary in Arendt's sense and then explore the limits of Arendt's theory of revolution is likely meant to signal a reciprocal theoretical exchange: Arendt can show us something about indigenous organizing and indigenous organizing can show us something about Arendt's theorization. This tack is questionable because of the incommensurable roles of settler colonialism in these projects. Arendt accepts, endorses, and builds upon settler colonialism, while indigenous theorists and activists have done a great deal of work to diagnose the problems of just such theoretical moves in their decolonial efforts.[64] Tuck and Yang's claim that decolonization is not a metaphor, for instance, is a response to "the invisibilized dynamics of settler colonialism."[65] Diprose and Ziarek's acknowledgment of limitations in Arendt's theorization of revolution is insufficient to the central, yet invisibilized role settler colonialism plays in it.

In a consequential passage in the second chapter of *On revolution* Arendt's seeks to convince her readers that the influence of the French Revolution on thinking about revolutions is mistaken, and it is the US Revolution that deserves greater attention. Arendt contrasts the boundless violence of the French Revolution to the principled solidarity building of the US Revolution. She observes that it was not that actors in the US Revolution were unfamiliar with the force of violence, but rather that their proximity to colonial violence had taught them of its unsuitability as a means of founding.[66] In that move, Arendt does not deny the destructive violence of settler colonialism, but instead denies its relationship to founding. Arendt is not ignorant of settler colonial violence, but nor is she interested in contending with it in her theorization.

This allusion to and dismissal of colonial violence continues when Arendt writes:

> The first paths through the "unstoried wilderness" of the continent had been opened then, as they were to be opened for a hundred more years, "in general by the most vicious elements", as though "the first steps [could not be] trod, … [the] first trees [not be] felled" without "shocking violations" and "sudden devastations".[67]

The language of "first paths" and "unstoried wilderness" implies that indigenous land was empty, awaiting settlement. As David Temin has argued, "Arendt reproduces a European imaginary of colonization as the settlement and 'improvement' of empty space (terra nullius)."[68] Such characterizations of emptiness are in tension with the idea that "shocking violations" and "sudden devastations" were involved. If this were wilderness without stories through which no paths had been made, then why would expansion onto this land entail violence? Even in acknowledging frontier violence, Arendt does not make clear who has been targeted, or where, and gives a temporal duration of 100 years unmoored from a timeline—neither who was targeted, nor when, is clear.[69] Her spatial segregation of the violence to unstoried wilderness further obscures the making of the settler colony through the taking of indigenous peoples' lands. The violations and devastations happened both long ago and far, far away from where we theorize now. Given Diprose and Ziarek's desire to reconstruct

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Arendt's philosophy of natality with attention to settler colonialism, Arendt's use of these moves needs attention.

We can see a further attempt by Arendt to separate violence from founding as the passage develops, this time through a sort of *mens rea* defense. Arendt writes:

> But although those who, for whatever reasons, rushed out of society into the wilderness acted as if all was permitted to them who had left the range of enforceable law, neither they themselves nor those who watched them, and not even those who admired them, ever thought that a new law and a new world could spring from such conduct.

Arendt here dismisses the idea that anyone who enacted such violence (or watched or admired it) could have thought they were founding something with it. For Diprose and Ziarek, however, engaged with indigenous organizers, the question is not about the mental states of settlers who used murder, intimidation, biological warfare, kidnapping, and much else to seize indigenous lands. Their analysis seeks to show the importance of Arendt's philosophy of natality for thinking through biopolitical targeting of human plurality, including those targeted as indigenous, in and as the means of creating settler societies. Therefore, they need to grapple with the interrelation of frontier violence and national founding that Arendt here denies.

The reason many of those who rushed into the "wilderness" did so was because they were landless Europeans seeking property.[70] Arendt is well aware of this development in Europe that was so consequential for North American colonization. She does not, however, recognize that when this expropriation in Europe drove these peasant classes to other continents, they became the engine of a different kind of expropriation.[71] About these related, but different forms of expropriation, Robert Nichols has argued that the conversion of land into property in Anglo-settler societies was "a unique historical process, one in which property is generated under conditions that require its divestment and alienation from those who appear, only retrospectively, as its original owners."[72] While is not surprising that Arendt fails to see this process, her inattention to colonial expropriation is consequential for her analysis, and thus equally consequential for Diprose and Ziarek's reconstruction.[73]

Indeed, we have reason to think that the movement of landless Europeans onto indigenous land was efficacious *because* they "left the range of enforceable law." Arendt may be right that there is no historical necessity to link political organization to crime and criminals, but historically the frontier rabble were a crucial means of making the United States. Their ranging did not separate the frontier rabble from the project of creating a new law and a new world, but made them vital agents of and for political organization.[74] Arendt's attempt to separate the historical violations and devastation of settler expansion from the political foundation of the US—spatially, temporally, mentally—cannot be borne out by attention to how the land became (and continues to become) that nation.

This consequential passage from *On revolution* that I have been analyzing ends with the following observation:

> However criminal and even beastly the deeds might have been that helped colonize the American continent, they remained acts of single men, and if they gave cause for generalization and reflection, these reflections were perhaps upon some beastly potentialities inherent in man's nature, but hardly upon the political behaviour of

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> organized groups, and certainly not upon a historical necessity that could progress only via crimes and criminals.[75]

Arendt again seeks to separate politics from such violence, as well as dismiss historical determinist accounts that would have political founding necessarily depend on violence. We see confirmation of Diprose and Ziarek's argument that Arendt's philosophy of natality contests political theories that maintain either human nature or the laws of history demand that political beginnings must be ones of violence. What they have not yet contended with is the theoretical impact of how Arendt narrated events directly salient to the concept of revolution they use and the indigenous theorists and activists they wish to engage.

3.2. Democratic plurality

To deepen this problem, we can turn to another aim of Arendt's account of the historical US Revolution, centered on a concept that is also key to Diprose and Ziarek's reconstructive work: clarifying democratic plurality. Arendt argues that the men of the US Revolution incorporated "the men living on the American frontier," as well as those who occupied earlier settled land, into the people of the United States, but "the word 'people' retained for [the Founding Fathers] the meaning of manyness, of the endless variety of a multitude whose majority resided in its very plurality."[76] In theorizing democratic plurality, Arendt includes settlers who violated the civil law she credits as so important to American founding, but not indigenous peoples or those who were enslaved or under its constant threat.[77] Arendt's maneuvers attenuate the importance of the violence she acknowledges. The polity is a white settler one and the settler's actions, if legal, were part of founding, if not, they were the work of individuals who could become members of the new polity's plurality, even if their actions would have to be called beastly.

At several moments, Diprose and Ziarek cite Kathryn Sophia Belle's critique of Arendt's account of revolution for its dismissals of slavery as relevant to understanding the political nature of the US Revolution, but they do not engage Belle's arguments or their import for the narrative Arendt constructs.[78] Belle's critiques are not just that Arendt's philosophy was limited, but that it was shaped by racism. As Belle states at the outset: "A fundamental flaw in Arendt's orientation toward and claims concerning the Negro question is that she sees the Negro question as a Negro problem rather than a white problem."[79] Belle extensively critiques *On revolution*, arguing that Arendt "neglects to take up the strong dialectical relationship between freedom and slavery in the United States."[80] While Arendt acknowledges that slavery is problematic for the story she is telling of the US Revolution, on Belle's analysis, Arendt does not see that Jefferson and others founded freedom not despite slavery, but in juxtaposition to it.[81] In the course of developing her argument, Belle writes: "The antithesis of slavery and freedom mirrored the antithesis between the political statuses of Black (and other nonwhite groups) and white people. The white image of freedom was defined in contrast to Black slavery, and the Black image of bondage was defined in contrast to white freedom."[82] One way to gloss this critique is that Belle is contesting Arendt's narrative of the US Revolution in order to show its theoretical and political effects for her theory of revolution. Belle has raised pressing theoretical concerns about how anti-Black racism and slavery shaped Arendt's theory of revolution. By evoking, but not engaging Belle's intervention, Diprose and Ziarek leave these challenges unaddressed and therefore neglect the important work of theorizing incommensurabilities.

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Given the importance of how political action is narrated within Arendt's philosophy of natality, the way Arendt tells the story of the constructive settler colonial project of US founding is relevant to Diprose and Ziarek's claim that RJ is revolutionary in the Arendtian sense. Their story about RJ builds on Arendt's story of revolution. Arendt denies a relationship between the revolutionary founding of the US and the genocidal violence of settler colonialism and slavery, let alone theorizing their interrelation. Further, Arendt takes pains to circumscribe the democratic plurality that emerges as a settler one. When Diprose and Ziarek claim that the indigenous RJ is revolutionary, they are invoking a concept that is not merely limited by racism and settler colonialism, but one that achieves its theoretical aims through, at a minimum, denying their importance. Diprose and Ziarek obscure the incommensurability of Arendt's theory with the critiques of racism and settler colonialism that are central to the work of RJ. By positioning RJ as ameliorative extensions of Arendt's theory, Diprose and Ziarek miss the opportunity to see the depth of the challenges raised by it. I turn now to consider theoretical reasons why these incommensurabilities go unaddressed.

4. Conflating racialization and colonization

Diprose and Ziarek tend to conflate racialization and colonization.[83] While the authors differentiate the concepts at moments, they do not maintain a clear analytic separation or interrelation.[84] Jodi Byrd has noted that such conflation is understandable, given that: "[r]acialization and colonization have worked simultaneously to other and abject entire peoples so they can be enslaved, excluded, removed, and killed in the name of progress and capitalism."[85] She has also warned, however, against the conflation of racialization and colonialism.[86] Byrd shows how this conflation allows the territorialization of indigenous lands by settler states to recede from analytic consideration by framing indigenous peoples as another ethnic minority within the nation. Settler states, then, become the naturalized place for the resolution of struggles for freedom, rather than being recognized as key coordinators for the forces that threaten and eliminate indigenous peoples. Byrd shows that we need the twin critiques of racialization and colonization. We already saw this kind of attention in Wolfe's analysis of settler colonialism and in Tuck and Yang's discussion of decolonization. Part of the impetus for Tuck and Yang to theorize an ethics of incommensurability is the complexity that arises from resisting the colonial triad, as well as its subsequent and ongoing developments. Settler colonialism operates in a variety of often contradictory ways across time and space that defines and targets different groups of people in different ways. An ethics of incommensurability keeps us attentive and responsive to these differences.

The conflation of racialization and colonization does not allow Diprose and Ziarek to robustly engage the role of racialization and racism in the settler colonial biopolitical project of founding and building settler societies. They write: "Racism and colonialism still pervade contemporary biopolitics of reproduction in liberal democracies so that the biopolitical imperative to 'make live' applies more to the reproductivity of the ('white') governing race and is offset by 'let die' being applied to the reproduction of subjugated races within a nation."[87] Attention to the interrelation of colonialism and racism, however, shows that sometimes settler governance works by making people live as citizens within a nation while making them die as indigenous through numerous means, including blood quanta requirements, termination of federal recognition of tribes or nations, boarding schools and other means of seizing children.[88]

But even this is not so simple, as Barbara Gurr delineates in her work to understand the experiences of Native American women who access reproductive health care

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through Indian Health Services (IHS), focusing particularly on the Pine Ridge Reservation. She notes: "while settlers seek to replace the Native as the 'natural' collective proprietors of the land, the original indigenous must remain present in the margins as the State's apparatuses work to produce the nation in part by marking who the nation is *not*."[89] Drawing on Foucault, Gurr further emphasizes that the removal and marginalization of transgressive bodies, even to the point of death, works in tandem with the production of docile bodies "that do not challenge the dominant paradigm but may serve to mark its borders. This docility is produced in part through dependence on the very apparatuses that regulate the transgressive body, such as reproductive health care as it is and provided and regulated by the State through IHS."[90] Through attention to the material practices of biopolitical control, Gurr not only constructs an account of how state regulation attempts to domesticate, marginalize, and eliminate, but also attends to what people so targeted do in response and anticipation.[91] Diprose and Ziarek allude to this interrelation in their analysis of indigenous RJ as revolutionary, but without attention to the specific work of these organizers, they tell a story that leaves the incommensurabilities within targeting, resistance, and survival obscured.

Diprose and Ziarek's main source text on reproductive justice, *Undivided rights,* is organized to highlight the *differences* in RJ organizing. In its foundational contribution to the history and theorization of reproductive justice struggles organized from within African American, Native American, Asian American, and Latina communities, Jael Silliman, Marlene Gerber Fried, Loretta Ross, and Elena R. Gutiérrez explore the work of eight reproductive justice organizations.[92] The authors undertake this work to understand each organization in its specificity.[93] While the book does not explicitly state a project of attending to the interrelationship of colonization and racism, its focus on understanding the material practices of RJ organizers means that the text gives a great deal of insight into these processes. Put differently, the text tells many stories of how people respond to the targeting of reproductive bodies and freedoms.[94]

Part of how *Undivided rights* contextualized key indigenous organizations, the Mother's Milk Project (MMP) and Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center (NAWHERC), is by surveying the history of Women of All Red Nations (WARN). *Undivided rights* explores the connection between decolonial critique and wariness of "the mainstream feminist movement" within WARN noting: "Some members did not want to become involved with the women's liberation movement because 'they would divide us among ourselves in such a way as to leave us colonized in the name of gender equality.'"[95] They quote founding member, Lorelei DeCora: "Decolonization is the agenda, the whole agenda, and until it is accomplished, it is the only agenda that counts for American Indians."[96] In her history of the transformation of reproductive practices on Crow Reservation contextualized within broader political changes and movements, Brianna Theobold notes that: "WARN and other Native women transformed the ongoing struggle for Native sovereignty and self-determination by insisting that women's reproductive health and autonomy be recognized as fundamental to these efforts."[97] These dynamics of movement building are crucial to the story of indigenous RJ.

Diprose and Ziarek recognize the importance of WARN.[98] That recognition is, however, ensconced in an argument about Arendt's philosophy: "Native American women's activism against involuntary sterilisation and for reproductive rights reclaims natality understood as the disclosure of inter-relational agency, human plurality and the world at the centre of political action, despite the failures of white feminism and white populations to witness their struggles as such."[99] Diprose and Ziarek confer

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meaning in terms of Arendt's philosophy of natality onto these activists' actions—telling a particular story—that they further frame as denied by adequate witness by white feminism and white populations. But WARN have told their own stories, at length.[100] What happens if we attend to them by engaging with what is incommensurable? I now turn to one of WARN's founders to exemplify some of the questions that become pressing for Diprose and Ziarek's project.

5. Katsi Cook

Katsi Cook seems to become a focus for Diprose and Ziarek because the work of this Mohawk midwife, activist, and theorist is a focus of *Undivided rights*. Cook helped to create the MMP to address community concerns about the safety of breastfeeding in Akwesasne given the proximity of toxin-producing factories for General Motors, Alcoa, Reynolds, and other companies, and their decades of dumping them in the waterways of Mohawk land.[101] Cook organized to resist not just the destructive, but also the constructive dynamics of settler colonialism through reclaiming and reaffirming Mohawk birthing practices as key to sovereignty for Mohawk people.[102] While my critique shows that the stories of indigenous RJ organizing in *Undivided rights* challenge Diprose and Ziarek's Arendtian project, as mentioned above, it is important to note the limitation of the archive they draw on. Beyond *Undivided rights*, Cook in particular has written and been interviewed extensively, both in popular venues, as well as in academic journals, and her work has been discussed in numerous studies.[103] I draw from other sources to develop a sketch of how Cook's theorization presents a set of challenges to Diprose and Ziarek's reconstruction. My aim in doing so is to show the necessity for engaging the incommensurabilities between Diprose and Ziarek's reconstructive feminist project and the work of indigenous theory and organizing for reproductive justice.

Diprose and Ziarek focus on Cook's theorization of women's bodies as the first environment, writing: "unlike Arendt's neglect of women's bodies and reproductive labour in her theory of natality, Cook stresses the worldly character of women's bodies, which, as the first environment, is a *precondition* of acting in the world and for the preservation of the world."[104] They draw attention to the need to theoretically amend Arendt's neglect of the importance of reproductive labor for politics. As we see in this quotation, Diprose and Ziarek are particularly interested in Cook's theorization of the first environment as a means to highlight the preconditional nature of women's bodies for acting in and preserving the world.

Upon further engagement with Cook's writing, however, it does not seem that she is theorizing the first environment as a *precondition* for acting in and preserving the world. Cook's explanation points, I think, to a different interrelation between birth and politics explicitly tied to a Mohawk tradition that has long endured and resisted the forces of settler colonialism. Cook writes:

> In the Mohawk language, one word for midwife is iewirokwas. This word describes that "she's pulling the baby out of the Earth," out of the water, or a dark wet place. It is full of ecological context. We know from our traditional teachings that the waters of the earth and the waters of our bodies are the same water. … The waters of our bloodstream and the waters of the earth are all the same water.[105]

Writing of the moon, who she consistently refers to as Grandmother, Cook states: "Her constant ebb and flow teaches us that all Creation is related, made of one breath, one

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water, one earth."[106] And further: "She is the source of women's privilege and authority over matters of production and reproduction."[107] As I read her work, Cook does not see the Earth as preconditional to world building, but, perhaps we could say, integral to world building: the waters are all the same. Here is a point of incommensurability that deserves analysis.

Indeed, if we move beyond the concept of the first environment to consider Cook's theorization more broadly, an analysis of the incommensurability between her theorization and that of Diprose and Ziarek becomes all the clearer. In a (quite amazing) record of the events of a conference titled "Ethical Issues in Human Reproduction Technology: Analysis by Women," held in June 1979, at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, Cook offered "A Native American Response" on a panel titled "Social Control of Birth."[108] There, Cook uses the concept of a circle to explain the perspective from which she is approaching the topics of the meeting. She states: "Native American people are a different kind of scientist. We're the kinds of scientists who work in a circle; we don't have linear ways. So before I can speak to you about childbirth, I need to give you a sense of that circle, the woman within it, what control is, what all those concepts are."[109] Contrasting her approach from within Native American science, she notes the linearity of the Western scientific method and that this method leads to a kind of blindness that her people prophesized well before the colonial invasion began and that they knew they would have to survive.[110]

Cook makes clear that the critique she is offering comes from a perspective that is at odds with the dominant understandings of the conference, including the feminist analyses developed there.[111] While Cook notes that the way the conference foregrounds gender oppression makes sense from within Western perspectives, she is bringing her critique from "our world, as Native American women."[112] She explicitly claims to be speaking as a representative of WARN, not as an individual.[113] Thus, while acknowledging that Native American communities are deeply shaped by Western ways of life, she is also claiming and explaining that her critical perspective is generated from within a world that is not subsumed by or totalized by those ways.[114] Cook is further clear that she comes from a "we" that is not simply a part of the democratic plurality of the US or eager to be incorporated into it.[115] She argues:

> Our reproductive power is sacred to us, and it is that spiritual power that connects us to the earth and to the moon—whom we refer to as our mother and our grandmother. It's not a romantic notion. It's scientific. It's as simple as this we have a natural world and an unnatural world. We have a definition of a woman within the Creation, and of a woman within this Creation that the white man brought here. The effects of the damages and devastation that Western technology has brought to native nations throughout the world are reflected in the women, because we are the people.[116]

The description here resonates with the description about the Earth and Moon, underscoring again that this is a scientific approach. She rejects the world built by the destructive forces of Western technology. At several moments she notes the usefulness of some Western technologies, but her point is to reject stories in which those technologies justify the genocidal force of colonialism and the erasure of indigenous worlds.[117]

While I have chosen to focus on the analysis Cook gave 40 years ago because of its direct critique of feminism in relation to reproduction, her more recent work continues to develop an understanding of reproduction that is incommensurable with Diprose

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and Ziarek's theorization. Even how Cook theorizes stories needs fuller consideration to understand how it is and is not commensurate with Arendt's philosophy of natality. Cook states of the Mohawk creation story:

> Ours is a different creation story than one would find in other Indigenous ecologies around Mother Earth, because creation stories are, in fact, ecosystemic. They belong to a specific place on the Earth from which traditions emerge. That's the actual meaning of the word indigenous: arising from a specific place on the Earth. The knowledge, the stories, the performance through ceremony, all of these bundled concepts, form the cosmovision that arises out of the territory that one inhabits. The cosmovision of a specific people in a specific place is embedded in their creation story.[118]

This ecosystemic understanding of stories, as well as women as the first environment, suggests a different understanding of politics than Arendt's philosophy of natality or Diprose and Ziarek's reconstruction of it. When Cook claims that Mohawk midwives learned their practice from maize, it would be easy from the point of view of Arendtian democratic plurality to reduce such a claim to a metaphorical flourish.[119] Cook's theorization of the circle, the role of stories and their relationship to the Earth, and the relationship of the Earth, the Moon, and waters to reproduction, however, suggest that such a reduction misses an incommensurable perspective. The common world Cook theorizes here is with the maize. Such an understanding of world is incommensurable with Arendt's emphasis on *human* plurality.

Diprose and Ziarek argue that the theorization of reproductive justice in *Undivided rights* offers a "political notion of reproductive justice" that "not only resonates with Arendt's idea that natality is a central ideal of political thought, directly connected with acting in concert, but in fact expands it, by linking women's reproductive agency with political freedom and being in the world."[120] That claim fits uneasily with Cook's work to reject incorporation into the settler colonial world of political freedom and being central to Diprose and Ziarek's analysis, as well as her extensive theorization of a distinct worldview. Diprose and Ziarek theorize that the use of these regulations "threatens to erase women's reproductive agency and, in doing so, undermine democratic plurality."[121] I am suggesting that for Cook and many other indigenous activists and theorists, the democratic plurality as theorized by Arendt could be understood as a constructive force of settler colonialism that threatens indigenous worlds.[122]

Diprose and Ziarek note threats to Native worlds generated by settler states' attempts to control reproduction. Yet, in characterizing this relationship, they write: "This genocidal framework of the biopolitical regulation of reproduction collapses the traditional political distinctions between private and public, the biological and the political, *bios* and *zoe*, nature and culture, and confirms Foucault's point that biopower operates such that the distinction between 'make live' and 'let die' is made along racial lines."[123] While this may be an important point about racialization, the traditional political distinctions they argue are being collapsed through these biopolitical regulations are from within their own and Arendt's tradition.[124] Many indigenous scholars and activists have learned, adopted, and/or been shaped by this tradition. But that does not make it *the tradition*, even when one's overall goal is a reconstruction of Arendt's philosophy of natality.[125] Other traditions speak within Diprose and Ziarek's text, and they are not easily assimilated into Arendt's philosophy of natality or into settler societies. My claim is that one way to hear these differences and theorize

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them is a framework of incommensurability, to seek the inner angles that cannot be collapsed in the work of solidarity building. Cook, for instance, theorizes the circle and ecosystemic storytelling to communicate a perspective and worldview that cannot be assimilated to the traditional political distinctions Diprose and Ziarek invoke.

Diprose and Ziarek's project is a reconstruction of Arendt's philosophy of natality, and so it is understandable that her work is centered there. However, her reliance on and support of settler colonialism presents challenges to their project that become most obvious when they engage with indigenous RJ. I urge greater attention to the way settler colonialism's constructive dynamics are destructive of the polities made indigenous through colonization.[126] My analysis is driven by the way that indigenous activists and theorists attend to not only the obviously destructive, but also the constructive dynamics of settler colonialism that seeks to eradicate their worlds and communities. Indigenous theorists, activists, and organizers tell these stories in a variety of ways, in numerous venues, and feminist theorists working from other traditions must contend with the incommensurabilities that arise in engagement with them.

6. Incommensurable solidarity

Diprose and Ziarek are right to look to indigenous scholars and activists to understand how plurality is threatened by biopolitical regulation of reproduction. They are also right to seek insights from those scholars and activists about how those threats can be resisted. Their reconstructive project, however, has circumvented incommensurabilities between those organizers and Arendt.[127] While my critique has focused on *Arendt, natality and biopolitics*, most of the issues I have identified are not unique to this work. Vanessa Watts' (Mohawk, Anishinaabe) analysis of how indigenous peoples' stories are used in Western theoretical projects speaks to these larger dynamics. Watts argues: "our stories are often distilled to simply that—words, principles, morals to imagine the world and imagine ourselves in the world. In reading stories this way, non-indigenous peoples also keep control over what agency is and how it is dispersed in the hands of humans."[128] My analysis shows attempts to control agency can continue, even when scholars see the need for decolonial critique. Tuck and Yang's ethics of incommensurability is not the only way forward, but in the long history of erasure and disavowal of indigenous world-building, it offers a powerful method for making connections, reminding us that how we make connections is as important as how we mark our differences.

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Notes

1 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 211.

2 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 212.

3 The brief engagement with Katsi Cook's work is where the limitations are perhaps clearest. For further reading: Hoover 2017; Native Youth Sexual Health Network, https://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com; Carmen and Waghiyi 2012; Barker 2017.

4 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 337–49.

5 Bruyneel 2021.

6 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 185. I agree with Robyn Ferrell's 2019 review that "this excellent monograph presents a striking new reading of Hannah Arendt's concept of natality, arguing that through the concept, a

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prescient Arendt provides a convincing account of biopolitics ahead of successors Foucault, Nancy, and Agamben."

7 Ferrell 2019, 1.

8 For a good overview of the origins and development of RJ, see Ross and Solinger 2017. For a history focused on the active resistance of indigenous peoples to colonization in relationship to the history of the United States, see Dunbar-Ortiz 2015.

9 RJ and decolonial struggle are each complex, diverse, and porously bounded movements and theoretical projects. Even grappling with the narrower range of organizing and theorization constituted by their overlap is well beyond the scope of this paper. I will suggest specific projects, theoretical and activist, that are most directly relevant for *Arendt, Natality, and Biopolitics.*

10 Arvin et al. 2013, 19.

11 Arvin et al. 2013, 19.

12 Tuck and Yang 2012, 28.

13 Tuck and Yang 2012, 28.

14 Tuck and Yang 2012, 31.

15 Tuck and Yang 2018, 2.

16 Arvin et al. 2013, 9, and 12–13.

17 Wolfe 2006, 388. Wolfe calls these aspects of settler colonialism negative and positive aspects.

18 Wolfe 2006, 388.

19 Wolfe 2006, 397.

20 Wolfe 2006, 388. Wolfe puts the point this way: "To say otherwise—that race created colonialism—would be to subscribe to colonialism's own justification."

21 Wolfe 2006, 387.

22 Tuck and Yang 2012, 1.

23 Tuck and Yang 2012, 6.

24 Tuck and Yang 2012, 6.

25 For detailed analyses of these dynamics, see especially: Lowe 2015 and Saldaña-Portillo 2016.

26 Wolfe 2016, 101.

27 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 214–15.

28 Kauanui 2016.

29 Tuck and Yang 2012, 35.

30 Tuck and Yang 2012, 7.

31 Tuck and Yang 2018, 9. Revisiting this definition they write: "Decolonization is the rematriation of Indigenous land and life" (9). While they do not gloss the term "rematriation," the change is notable, given the increasing circulation of the term as evidenced in Indigenous led and centering projects such as Eastern Woodlands Rematriation (https://rematriate.org) or *Rematriation Magazine* (https://rematriation.com).

32 Barker 2005, 1.

33 Tuck and Yang 2012, 3.

34 Tuck and Yang 2012, 5.

35 Tuck and Yang 2018, 10. Their framing in this passage is critical of nation-states, and thus perhaps extends beyond the settler nation-states they list.

36 Tuck and Yang 2012, 3. As Kimberly Robertson has argued about projects that engage settler state processes to reduce harm to indigenous people: "We must remain vigilant in assessing the risks that accompany the potential benefits of working in partnership with the very settler state that demands our subordination and elimination" (Robertson 2016, 19).

37 Tuck and Yang 2012, 22–23.

38 Tuck and Yang 2012, 22–23.

39 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 1.

40 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 213.

41 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 214.

42 Sarah Keenan, for instance, details Aboriginal resistance to the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act of 2007, noting that such resistance has worked both within the legal framework of Australia and "by creating places that are elsewhere to the settler colonial state" (2014, 180).

43 Ross and Solinger 2017, 9.

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44 Ross and Solinger 2017, 64, 10.
45 Ross and Solinger 2017, 64.
46 While a complete overview of the literature is not possible here, I recommend the following overview as it also considers best practices for academic research that focuses on RJ (and was published before Diprose and Ziarek's project): Luna and Luker 2013, 327–52.
47 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 203. For a study of these forces in relationship to the Indian Health Services, the settler state, and indigenous agency, see Theobold 2019.
48 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 203.
49 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 202.
50 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 209.
51 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 176.
52 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 177.
53 As they summarize: "Our claim is that the way government regulation and biopolitical regularisation of women's reproductivity efface women's agency is by not regarding the capacity to give birth (potentially or actually) as a 'capacity of beginning something anew' and that this disavowal undermines the way the first order of physical birth supports the inter-relational disclosure of natality in more publicly political arenas" Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 203.
54 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 203.
55 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 203.
56 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 190.
57 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 207.
58 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 92.
59 They explain: "The overarching argument of the chapter is that these coalitions enable the public 'appearance' of women's inter-relational agency with regard to the first order of birth, and this 'appearance' is a prerequisite to achieving the general equality of unique distinctness and 'freedom' that Arendt sought through her action-based notion of politics," Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 25–26.
60 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 343.
61 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 343.
62 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 216.
63 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 216.
64 The analysis that has most forcefully shaped my own understanding is Byrd's extended discussion of Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, Kaplan, and others in Byrd 2011, 7–21. There she observes: "Much of the scholarship on U.S. imperialism and its possible postcoloniality sees it as enough to challenge the wilderness as anything but vacant; to list the annihilation of indigenous nations, cultures, and languages in a chain of -isms; and then still to relegate American Indians to the site of the already-doneness that begins to linger as unwelcome guest to the future" (20).
65 Tuck and Yang 2012, 2.
66 Arendt 2006, 92.
67 Arendt 2006, 92.
68 Temin 2019, 11.
69 Temin's description is apt: "In essence, Arendt temporally segregates the erasure of Indigenous peoples to a momentary event rather than an ongoing challenge of justice, freedom, or legitimacy" (2019, 16).
70 Wolfe 2006, 392.
71 Federici 2014.
72 Nichols 2018, 5.
73 Nichols notes that: "almost all major works of social and political thought to deal with expropriation, dispossession, and land appropriation" have not analyzed the colonial context of these processes (2018, 22). There is not space here to fully engage this theorization of what Nichols calls the *recursive logic* of property in the colonial context, but I point to this dynamic of expropriation that is quite distinct from, while entwined with, the process in Europe because I think it is an important consideration in understanding the entanglements of biopolitical regulation and settler colonialism, historical and contemporary.
74 Wolfe 2006, 392. See also Hixson 2013; Williams 1992.
75 Arendt 2006, 93.
76 Arendt 2006, 93.

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77 Robert Nichols' description of settler states seems apt for the problem Arendt confronts here: "Anglo settler states have historically faced a complicated gesture of simultaneously avowing and disavowing the rule of law, that is, of squaring their reliance on extralegal violence as constitutive of their founding and continued expansion with their self-image as distinctly free societies governed by the rule of law" (2018, 38).
78 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 216, 308.
79 Belle 2014, 1.
80 Belle 2014, 64.
81 Belle 2014, 64.
82 Belle 2014 64.
83 Consider how they develop their observation that pro-choice framings of struggles for reproductive self-determination are dominated by elite white actors. Diprose and Ziarek observe: "The connection between biopolitics of birth, racism and nationalism is not obvious, at least not to women of privilege, but it is deeply entrenched in Australia and the US and complex enough to thwart the pro-choice agenda of (white) liberal feminism." Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 211.
84 For instance, writing: "The inter-relation between fertility, biopolitics and different types of racism has … been ignored by Arendt herself and her critics, despite the fact that Arendt in a different historical context underscores the disastrous politics of racism, imperialism and colonialism as key preconditions of totalitarianism." When, however, they summarize their analytic project, nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism drop out: "Consequently, in this section, we move beyond the limitation of Arendt's thinking on race and turn to feminist and women-of-colour theorising the racist politics of reproduction" (Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 211). Nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism are subsumed by race, racism, and theorizing by women of color.
85 Byrd 2011, xxiii.
86 Byrd writes:

> When the remediation of the colonization of American Indians is framed through discourses of racialization that can be redressed by further inclusion into the nation-state, there is a significant failure to grapple with the fact that such discourses further reinscribe the original colonial injury. … Under this paradigm, American Indian national assertions of sovereignty, self-determination, and land rights disappear into U.S. territoriality as indigenous identity becomes a racial identity and citizens of colonized indigenous nations become internal ethnic minorities within the colonizing nation-state. (2011, xxiii-xxiv)

87 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 183.
88 For early analysis of these practices and their links to indigenous sovereignty, see Women of All Red Nations 1979, esp. 33-36.
89 Gurr 2015, 28.
90 Gurr 2015, 28.
91 Gurr observes: "Whereas the State has historically used women's reproductive bodies as a means of population and community control in its quest to build an exclusive national collectivity, reproductive justice relies on women's reproductive bodies to address the diverse health needs of whole communities. Though for vastly different reasons, women's reproductive bodies and freedoms remain the center of both agendas" (2015, 32).
92 *Undivided rights* offers: "a transformation from viewing women of color primarily as *objects* of reproductive control to focusing on their *agency* in determining their reproductive lives" (Silliman et al. 2004, ix).
93 While all the organizations operate in a context of white supremacist settler heteropatriarchy, their work is not the same, in no small part because of the different ways the communities that built them are targeted for control and destruction within that order. So, although the authors use the potentially homogenizing term "women of color," the book's overall effect puts salutary pressure on such a term through attending closely to the history and efforts of RJ organizations. Acknowledging the important debate about use of the term, the editors chose to use "women of color" as an umbrella term because "it has become a viable organizing principle in the United States for women who are most disadvantaged by white supremacy," Silliman et al. 2004, 10.
94 Early in the chapter that introduces the Mother's Milk Project (MMP) and (NAWHERC), the authors write: "The colonizers killed Native American women and children as part of a strategy to conquer, subdue, and destroy Indian nations and take control of their lands" (Silliman et al. 2004, 111). Throughout their analyses, Silliman et al. maintain this understanding of indigenous women's organizing under attack by settler colonial policy and programs. That is, the authors underscore how indigenous women organize

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for RJ in a context that devalues and destroys them as indigenous in order to take further control of their land. The introductory chapter's title, "Native American women resist genocide and organize for reproductive rights," announces the editors' understanding of the specificity of this work. Indigenous people organizing for reproductive rights is resistance to genocide.

95 Silliman et al. 2004, 117.

96 Silliman et al. 2004, 117. The quotation within this quotation comes from Jaimes and Hailey 1992, 331–44.

97 Theobold 2019, 3.

98 They note that WARN is: "one of the first international Native Women's organizations." Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 218.

99 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 218.

100 For an early example see: Women of All Red Nations 1979. For an analysis that attends to the importance and complexity of sovereignty in conversation with *Undivided rights*, see Lumsden 2016.

101 Silliman et al. 2004, 138. *Undivided rights* describes the development of Cook's thinking about the relationship between reproductive health and indigenous political organizing: "[Katsi Cook] became convinced that Native American activists had to go beyond taking the federal government to task for the abuses it perpetrated. In Katsi's view, for real change to occur, Native women needed to take responsibility for the birthing process. Community-controlled health care was essential if Native women were going to reassert political control over their lives." One way to tell a story of this work is that Cook organized to resist not just the destructive, but also the constructive dynamics of settler colonialism through reclaiming and reaffirming Mohawk birthing practices as key to sovereignty for Mohawk people (Silliman et al. 2004, 134).

102 Goodman 2018.

103 Cook 2012; Cook 2004, 60; Goodman 2018; Cook 2002, 75. Those studies most important for my understanding here are: Gurr 2015; Theobold 2019 Hoover 2017.

104 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 220, emphasis added.

105 Cook 2002.

106 Cook 2012.

107 Cook 2012.

108 Cook 1980, 251–58. This record offers an amazing snapshot of feminist theorizing and praxis—indeed, the depth of detail captured in this text is explicitly tied to the feminist commitments of the organizers and participants.

109 Cook 1980, 251.

110 Cook 1980, 251.

111 Cook notes, for instance: "This conference is filled with factual information of how women are oppressed. My impression is that feminism blames much of that oppression on the men" (1980, 252) and notes: "I know that for you women to see a Native American woman is rare—it's not common in your everyday experience" (1980, 251).

112 Cook 1980, 251.

113 Cook 1980, 252.

114 "We are the microcosm, in Indian communities, of everything that's bad in the American way of life. That's why, when we come to you, it's really hard for us to talk—because it's your very way of life that's oppressive" (Cook 1980, 252).

115 As Cook says: "we have a real kinship to the Spirits on this land. We've got thousands of years of information about what life is here, on this great Turtle Island that you know as your United States" (Cook 1980, 258).

116 Cook 1980, 253.

117 Holmes et al. 1980, 129.

118 Goodman 2018.

119 Goodman 2018.

120 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 222.

121 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 222.

122 Cook acknowledges the diversity of indigenous perspectives, tying this diversity to land and ecosystems stating: "We understand that people who come from a different place on Earth will have a different consciousness about the purpose of being human" (Goodman 2018).

123 Diprose and Ziarek 2018, 217.

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124 Kevin Bruyneel has argued, "The invocation of dualisms such as [civilized-savage, progressive-backward, inside-outside, and independent-dependent] has vexed the politics of indigenous people in North America for centuries, because they legitimate the colonial rule of the liberal democratic settler-state by imposing Western ways of knowing as the standards by which indigenous people's claims are understood and judged" (2007, 8).
125 As Nichols diagnoses "in their search for alternative normative horizons, many contemporary critical theorists continue to look backward to antiquity rather than sideways to non-Western forms of life" (2019, 157).
126 As Kevin Bruyneel (2007) has written: "the words *Indian* and *American Indian*, like *Native American*, *aboriginal*, and *indigenous*, emerge as a product of co-constitutive relationship with terms such as *colonizers*, *settler*, and *American*" (ix).
127 Tuck and Yang 2012.
128 Watts 2013, 26.

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