Rachel Bryant

Cartographic Dissonance
Between Geographies in Douglas Glover's *Elle*

We cannot be saved, I think, unless we are willing to be changed.
—Douglas Glover, *Elle*

Each time early colonists and explorers set foot in what we now call northeastern North America, they entered into *Native space* or space which the Abenaki historian Lisa Brooks defines as "a network of relations and waterways containing many different groups of people as well as animal, plant, and rock beings that was sustained through the constant transformative 'being' of its inhabitants" (3). And when European newcomers encountered this interconnected, cooperative, and sustainable civilization in their relentless pursuit of wealth, power, and resources, they worked tirelessly, in the words of the early American studies scholar Drew Lopenzina, in their deeds and in their official record books, to "transform Native space into colonial space" (20)—or to reinscribe Indigenous lands with Western perspectives.

The work of imperial exploration and settlement in the northeast thus involved a systematic obfuscation of Native space. In postcolonial terms, it was a process of *worlding*, which Gayatri Spivak defines as the inscription "of a world upon supposedly uninscribed territory," and the dominant maps of the Americas, first sketched during those early stages of European expansion, are the conventional cultural products of a strategic "textualizing, a making into . . . an object to be understood" (153-54). Of course, those inscriptions, however privileged in historic and contemporary non-Indigenous imaginaries, have never been able to fully obscure the world beneath, and this is the world that seeps through the pages of Douglas Glover's *Elle*. By mapping the transformation of Elle's perspective in Native space, this novel draws attention to Canada's ongoing role in the legacy of imperial conquest. To make this case, the following essay sketches

out what are arguably the three main stages of this transformation: first, Elle participates in a phase of conventional "old world" mythologizing; second, the novel turns to the erosion and rupture of those mythologies in what Mary Louise Pratt influentially termed the contact zone; and finally transformation occurs through what I am calling a kind of *cartographic dissonance* which developed in the concluding sections of the text, where Elle is psychologically trapped somewhere in between imperial and Indigenous cultural geographies. Through this evolving trajectory, Glover challenges imperial history and emphasizes the shortcomings of imperial narratives. Moreover, as sixteenth-century contact emerges from Elle's narrative as a missed opportunity to cooperatively create a truly "new" world, the novel simultaneously draws attention to some of the specific ways in which Canadians continue to perpetuate this failure.

The first broad phase of Elle's narrative reflects a faithful deference to conventional colonial mythmaking—and mapmaking—strategies. As Lopenzina notes, "colonial paradigms were generally geared toward the containment of," rather than any kind of actual engagement with, "space and knowledge," and the contents of the colonial archive reflect this need to "[impose] monologic responses to one's encounter with the world" (21). Much has been written on the ways in which European imperial powers legitimized the assertion of their will on the world stage by delineating boundaries around what was publicly comprehensible, or by carefully controlling historical and popular narratives. This is essential context for the initial section of *Elle*, where Jacques Cartier guides the reader's entry into colonial space as the protagonist is "left for dead in the land God gave to Cain" (17). In his first official account of New France, the French explorer Cartier offered his initial impressions of Labrador, complaining,

> If the soil were as good as the harbours, it would be a blessing; but the land should not be called the New Land, being composed of stones and horrible rugged rocks; . . . In fine, I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain. There are people on this coast whose bodies are fairly well formed, but they are wild and savage folk. (9-10)

Such is an example of how French and English colonists and explorers, from Cartier to Plymouth colony's William Bradford, worked throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to control the flow of information between "new" and "old" worlds by interpreting their experiences typologically.[1] In *Travels*, Cartier not only translates his thoughts and experiences into a context that is culturally familiar to a broad European readership by using a

widely known Judeo-Christian story as a model, but he also paints a dramatic picture of a continent populated by wild, subhuman "savages"—fallen exiles of Western civilization who have been condemned by God to wander the earth locked in inescapable cycles of hardship and suffering. As Elle's experiences eventually confirm, this propagandist narrative construction, however legitimizing for the French public and crown, was about as useful to Europeans hoping to survive in sixteenth-century Labrador as Cartier's lexicon which, while Elle is among the Innu and the Inuit, can only be used to communicate with other Europeans.

Cartier amassed words for his lexicon during his time among the Indigenous inhabitants of Hochelaga, near what is now Montreal, and according to the Abenaki ethnologist Frederick Wiseman, linguists now believe this language "to be more similar to Wendat," or Huron, "than Six Nations Iroquois," or Haudenosaunee. Wiseman goes on to note that "The Wendat, for their own sovereignty issues, resent being called Iroquoian" (62). Certainly the nature of this issue alone speaks to the impossibility of viewing the many nations of what is now Canada as a culturally, politically, or linguistically homogenous group; nonetheless, shortly after her unhappy arrival on the so-called Isle des Démons, Elle prepares herself for first contact by faithfully practicing the words handed down to her through Cartier's lexicon. She encourages her lover, Richard, to do the same, to "speak . . . in the savage tongue or not at all" (44), and when he fails to comply with this request, she condemns his foolish rigidity, disapprovingly noting that "He will act the way he has learned to act, even though it is impractical in the New World and will lead only to starvation or other forms of premature extinction" (45). Ironically, what Elle herself has learned from scribes like Cartier leaves her similarly susceptible to "premature extinction"—a fate that was met by many of Cartier's own men during his infamous second voyage, and a fate that is, within the novel, quickly shared by Richard and the nurse Bastienne. Elle's deference to the supposed authority of Cartier's text reflects how imperial paradigms preclude engagement with Indigenous systems of knowledge. By consistently dismissing the Native people as bereft of systems of law, spiritual beliefs, and cultural traditions, early colonial writers neatly classified all Native people as nondescript members of a uniform group. Within this easily mastered system of signification, Elle is led to conclude that the Native peoples of these vast lands share a common language—the "savage tongue"—for to consider linguistic differences among the Indigenous population would be to acknowledge possible variation at the level of culture and identity.

During this initial stage of her narrative, while claiming to recognize that she has "entered a place where the old definitions, words themselves, no longer apply" (37), Elle repeatedly and compulsively attempts to reduce her experiences to fit neatly within the boundaries of her deeply partisan world view. Early on, she reflects,

> We have a name for such a place as this—wilderness. It is a name for a thing without a name, for everything that is not us, not me. It is a place without God or correction, with no knowledge of philosophy, science, cookery or the arts, including the art of love—and those who dwell therein are known as savages. (38)

Here Glover is drawing on the historic Eurocentric perspective that views those who are not me as less than human and knowledge that is not mine as invalid. Certainly Elle's lingering adherence to this reductive ontology speaks to the resiliency of such cultural narratives, and to make this point, we might briefly consider Elle's initial experience of "contact"—her delirious discovery that a man has visited her camp. At this juncture, despite the fact that she has been "left for dead" in a harsh climatic environment, that her friends have now perished, and that she is dressed from head to foot in bags of feathers—her monstrous down coat prototype—Elle glimpses the footprints of a Native hunter, and her first impulse is to enslave him. "I own all this now," she babbles to the corpse of Bastienne, "he's one of my people. I shall claim my rights. We'll get him to build a better house. Peasants are always better at that than the nobility" (62). And as Elle confidently identifies herself as "the nobility" of this land in which she is so quickly and obviously deteriorating, readers are assured only of her profound inability to adapt in accordance with the demands of this place. To reiterate, Glover places his central character in an inherited narrative structure that cannot hold up to realities that function beyond the limitations of her knowledge. For as long as her imported tennis racket remains a useless tennis racket, as opposed to a much more practical snowshoe, she continues to wither away.

In another key moment, Elle attempts to orient herself within the landscape of Labrador by citing "the most up-to-date" theories and information from the "geographers, cosmographers, map-makers, astrologers, admirals, kings, court jesters and merchant adventurers of Europe." Feeling suddenly and entirely apart from the known world of France, she comforts herself with the idea that everyone in Europe officially agrees that "Canada is: (a) a thin strip of land running north-south and dividing the Atlantic Ocean from the Pacific Ocean; (b) an archipelago of large and small islands encompassing a labyrinth of channels leading more or less directly from the Atlantic to

the Pacific; and (c) a continent enclosing a vast inland sea" (46). Through her attempts to orient and thereby insulate herself within these prevailing notions of "Canada," Elle relies on a historically reductive cartographic tradition that imitates while simultaneously disregarding reality. In *Territorial Disputes*, Graham Huggan explores some of the ways in which "the convention of mimesis," throughout the long history of Canadian and Australian cartography, has

> served to promote and reinforce the stability of Western culture through its implicit justification of the dispossession and subjugation of "non-Western" peoples. . . . In this context, the imitative operations of mimesis can be interpreted as having stabilized (or having attempted to stabilize) a falsely essentialist conception of the world which negates or suppresses alternative views to its own: views that might endanger the privileged position of the Western perceiver. (150)

Of course, all maps are conceptualizations of space that are deeply informed by the cultural perspective(s) of the mapmaker(s). Thus, as Huggan rightly notes, the critical factor or distinguishing feature of this tradition has been the West's historic refusal to imagine its own conceptualizations and creations as anything other than direct reflections of an objective reality.

Scholars like Frederick Wiseman use traditional knowledge to present Indigenous visions of space that undermine imperial "realities" and geographic inscriptions. Wiseman's map of Wôbanakik, for example, portrays a portion of the ancestral homelands of the Wabanaki Confederacy of Indigenous nations, a territory that spans what is now most commonly known as New England and the Atlantic Provinces, along with large swaths of Quebec.[2] Most students of northeastern geography would be puzzled by Wiseman's map, which seems to depict the St. Lawrence River (or Ktsitegok) flowing from the southeast to the northwest rather than from the southwest to the northeast. However, this discrepancy is a reflection of an Abenaki epistemology; the Wabanaki are the People of the Dawn, and it thus makes sense that east, not north, could anchor the top of their maps. Wiseman's map of Wôbanakik thus functions as a striking visual metaphor for the disorientation that most non-Natives experience upon exposure to Indigenous perspectives, and this disorientation is a direct product of the degree to which North American settler societies have elected to privilege imperial conceptions space.

Disorienting visions like Wiseman's articulate and emanate from a space that can be very difficult to grasp, especially for non-Native audiences, because the geography of Wôbanakik, like other Indigenous geographies, has been

elided from the dominant Western consciousness.[3] This is useful context for the second broad phase of Glover's novel, where Indigenous geographies begin to permeate Elle's consciousness, increasingly undermining her efforts to insulate herself within the paradigms of colonial space. Initially, she anxiously resists the possibility of multiple realities or ways of making sense of the world, writing, "My world is turning itself upside down: Two Gods are as bad as two suns or two moons for a person's peace of mind. One God guarantees the words I speak are true; two makes them a joke; three gods (or more!)—it doesn't bear thinking about" (58). Nonetheless, her monologic responses to the world continue to fail and rupture as she enters more fully into what Pratt termed the *contact zone*, or "the space of imperial encounters . . . in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations" (9). For Elle, contact is a place where "everything means something but nothing is understood" (135), and this middle section of her narrative is filled with contradictions, mistranslations, and missed cues. As she struggles to make sense of what she sees and hears, or to maintain control over a narrative that is increasingly spiralling beyond her cognitive reach, she projects her own concerns and desires onto the Indigenous populations.

Importantly, Elle's efforts in this regard are undermined by the substance of her encounters, and as is the case in many colonial-era accounts of contact such as the *Jesuit Relations*, the implications of these meetings often spin beyond the limits of Elle's immediate understanding—and thus, at times, beyond the limits of her written narrative. For example, shortly after the Inuk hunter Itslk arrives on the scene, and after he has quickly transformed her "tomb" into a home (81), Elle relates, "Itslk insists that all the savages live south of us, up the Great River. His people live to the north and call themselves the People, as if they were the only ones" (83). Here we are reminded, in the narrator's own words, "how ripe the world of translation is for . . . misrepresentation" (78), for all Indigenous nations refer to themselves as "the people" in their own languages. In the Inuttitut language, the word *Inuit* translates as "the people," just as *Wolastoqiyik* (Maliseet) means "the people," *Haudenosaunee* (Iroquois) means "the people," and *L'nu* (Mi'kmaq) means "the people." These names do not indicate the presence of a Western-style hierarchical system, and in fact, the names perform an important relational function as diverse populations identify themselves as the human components of spaces that also consist, as Brooks reminds us, of many non-human beings and inhabitants. Importantly, and in subtle ways, Elle's reproductions of Indigenous perspectives consistently

remind us that it she who holds the pen (with Glover behind her), and her translations generally do more to undermine Eurocentric views—the views of a people who, particularly in the contexts of imperial expansion, far too often act "as if they were the only ones."

Ambiguous and loaded moments frequently emerge in this novel to challenge Elle's abilities to comprehend even the most basic articulations of cultures that are foreign in relation to her own, and as her relationship with Itslk evolves, she increasingly projects onto him her own desires and anxieties. As she attempts to render her own experiences intelligible, she mimics the imperial cartographic impulse by using Itslk as a supposedly uninscribed canvas, plotting and mapping her own thoughts and insecurities against the established qualities and characteristics of his person. She assumes, for example, that he longs to "restart the universe exactly as it was" (87)—perhaps, we might wager, "as it was" sixty pages earlier in Elle's own narrative, at which point comforting European paradigms still seemed perfectly viable. Moreover, as Itslk works cheerfully to bring Elle back from the brink of death, patiently teaching her how to survive in a subarctic climate, Elle increasingly attributes to him the same inflexibility that she had only recently identified in herself and in her two friends. "He is as imprisoned in his world as Richard was in his," she somberly asserts,

> Though he has saved me, he cannot save himself from the swirl of words, inventions, ideas and commerce that will one day overwhelm him. At some point, he will face a choice: die in the torrent clutching his beliefs like a twig in the storm, or persist in a wan state beside the raw, surging, careless proliferation of the new. (87)

Of course, Itslk is elsewhere utterly unimpressed (as opposed to overwhelmed), by the monologic nature of European "words," a response that clearly emerges when he first lays hands on Elle's English bible: "What's this? He said. These are words, I said, pointing to the text. He put his ear to the pages and listened intently, looking disappointed. . . . I tried to read to him, but he took the book away. Let it speak for itself, he said" (85). In short, Elle's elegiac vision of Itslk, who is in fact a highly adaptable man who speaks Spanish, Basque, Portuguese, French, and any number of Indigenous languages, is not otherwise supported by the text. Time and again, Elle's flawed perceptions and faulty inferences draw the reader's attention to the limitations inherent in imperial modes of knowledge-making. In a discussion of transculturation in this novel, Rūta Šlapkauskaitė astutely notes that "Itslk's experience shows that cultural constructs are capable of accommodating otherness without complete assimilation, so long as they

seek understanding rather than appropriation and eventual subjugation" (11). For his part, Itslk treats contact as an opportunity to actively and productively incorporate new experiences and information into a growing body of useful knowledge. Thus, even as Elle's narrative bears witness to a birth of the trope of the "vanishing Native," it simultaneously works to undermine the legitimacy or basis of this trope in the world. Certainly the "vanishing Native" as portrayed in this text is simply another product of a fractured and deeply insecure imperial imagination.

A primary threat that Europeans posed to original inhabitants was their dangerous potential to disrupt larger networks of relations. Because colonists generally worked to contain rather than engage with Indigenous systems of space and knowledge, they almost universally failed to recognize that within the fully cooperative system of life in the Native northeast, as Brooks explains, "every part affected the whole. If one person went hungry, if certain individuals were excluded from the bounty of [the earth], the whole would face physical and/or psychological repercussions from this rupture in the network of relations" (5). When beings feel excluded or threatened, they are much more likely to behave unsustainably. This realization is the basis of Indigenous hospitality, and each nation of the northeast had, and continues to have, its own "way of thinking through their relationships to others, of forming and renewing relations through ceremonial councils, and of acknowledging their dependence on nonhuman inhabitants through rituals of thanksgiving" (Brooks 4). Unsurprisingly, early European scribes struggled to describe such traditions and rituals with any degree of cultural sensitivity in their records. For example, in one revealing passage from the early-seventeenth-century, the French missionary Joseph Le Caron expounded upon the "disposition" and "superstitions" of the Innu of Tadoussac, with whom he had spent the winters of 1618 and 1622, explaining that

> [t]hese poor blind creatures . . . profess a thousand other superstitions with which the devils entertain them. They believe that many kinds of animals have reasonable souls; they have an insane superstition against profaning certain bones of elk, beaver, and other beasts, or letting their dogs gnaw them. They preserve them carefully or throw them into a river. They pretend that the souls of these animals come to see how their bodies are treated, and go tell the living beasts and those that are dead; so that if they are ill-treated the beasts of the same kind will no longer allow themselves to be taken either in this world or the next. (219-20)

The disparaging tone of Le Caron's description reflects how difficult early European explorers and settlers found it to lend credence to any world view

other than their own. In the second phase of the novel, Elle is repeatedly confronted with Indigenous systems of honour and symbiotic reciprocity, and much like Le Caron, she is initially disturbed by what she sees. When, for example, she arrives in the old Innu woman's camp, she sees that "animal skulls dangle from tree branches," and she "[counts] half a dozen heads, their jaws tied shut with leather straps, bands of red paint splashed across their craniums" (119). Her description of this scene is likely inspired by one of Glover's source texts for the novel, Frank Speck's 1935 *Naskapi: The Savage Hunters of the Labrador Peninsula*, which contains images of bear and beaver skulls suspended from tree branches in an Innu encampment. As Speck notes, it is an offering that is meant to "satisfy the spirits of the animals" (75). And while this scene initially strikes Elle as a kind of nightmare vision—or as "strange" and certainly unsettling—such displays of honour are part of what allow the human inhabitants of Native space to renew their relations with the animals they rely on for sustenance. By precluding thoughtless, unsustainable, or parasitic behaviour towards nonhuman inhabitants, these ritual offerings and demonstrations function as an essential means of survival within the larger network. In this sense, the Innu bear ceremony that is witnessed and eventually participated in by Elle makes "the rebirth of bears possible, so that people could hunt more bears in the future" (Hämäläinen 57). This is the same general spirit in which Itslk offers seal remains to Sedna, the Inuit goddess of the sea, so that she will continue to feed his people.

In this context, we should consider the fascinating scene in which, shortly after his discovery of Elle, Itslk voices his sudden inability to hunt. Despite the fact that "the ice teems with sea cat and walrus, and caribou come down to the beaches to call him," his efforts are fruitless, and "when he walks out with his bow, nothing is there" (91). When Elle views the land through her "imperial eyes," it is empty, *terra nulla*, rather than teeming with life as Itslk sees it. Elle's inability to recognize the functioning system of relations that underlies all life impedes Itslk's ability to sustain himself. This scene subtly anticipates the effects that disruptive and predatory European visions and practices would eventually have on Indigenous populations, who would be increasingly cut off from their traditional lifeways by colonial violence and by the creation of allegedly "lawful" boundaries: the strategic and partisan inscriptions of lines across the North American map. Again, for as long as Europeans refused to recognize the demands and cultural practices of Native space—or to respect the terms of another functioning geography—they threatened to collapse the system of sustenance that was so crucial to

the physical and spiritual wellbeing of all. This threat is reiterated as Elle prepares to leave the island as Captain Finch, head of the whaling ship that rescues the narrator, slaughters a "huge deer-like creature" for his frivolous collection of "curiosities" (165), leaving the body of the beheaded animal to rot in the woods. Through this unsustainable behaviour, Finch clearly demonstrates that the only "being" he honours is himself.

Eventually, when Elle is finally "rescued from the Land God Gave to Cain, delivered from savagery, redeemed, like the Israelites, from the wilderness" (159), she is struck by the impossibility of mutual understanding in a world where powerful people choose to interpret their experiences in such rigid and exclusory terms. As the whaling ship moves away from the coast, she surveys the abandoned Innu fishing village for a final time, this time noting, "the pole frames of the savage huts look like skeletons" (163). What was so recently experienced as a vibrant and highly structured community once more descends into a state of lifelessness when viewed through the eyes of an outsider. In some ways, this development in the text again raises the difficult question of whether one can ever understand or appreciate another culture from the outside; however, in the end, the trajectory of the novel suggests that Glover is more concerned with the underlying issue of how settler populations might better behave themselves when confronted with the realities of human difference. Certainly Elle is wrenched from her staunch Eurocentric position by her experiences in Native space. As her ship sails east across the ocean, she struggles to come to terms with her new position in the world. "Everything that once had meaning is forgotten," she writes; "I am a citizen of neither the New World or the Old" (165). What she has seen and experienced, and indeed what she has become as a result of those experiences, cannot be reincorporated into European society; she has herself become a "legend" (158), and as such, she physically returns to France while in many ways remaining outcast.

The final section of the novel finds Elle at home in France, gazing out at the world through "leaded windows" that crudely and simplistically "chop the outside world into squares" (171). Here, in the wake of her experiences in Native space, Elle feels the limitations of the imperial world view—the system of presumptions that strives to reduce, to neatly categorize, and to contain—and she wonders if interaction in the contact zone must always be characterized by asymmetrical power relations. She questions, for example, if Cartier "understands by how much he failed to grasp the moment of contact . . . how, when love was offered, he failed to reach out a lover's hand" (190).

At this point in the text, to borrow from Homi Bhabha, Elle can be seen to imagine the contact zone as a potential third space, a dimension where discourse can take place as a "negotiation (rather than a negation)" (33) and where "elements . . . are neither the One . . . nor the Other . . . but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both" (41). Such a space can only be generated if contact is based, from the perspective of both parties, on a mutual recognition of the inherent worth and validity of the other. And if this conception of cultural contact seems idealistic, given the historic contexts of the novel, the alternative is darkly envisioned as a "future" in which "the stage will shrink to a prison, we will see ourselves as inmates separated from everyone else by bars"—or by lines across the map—"and heroism and love will be impossible" (55). These are the effects of the leaded windows that parallel the thick lines inscribed across maps and imaginations.

As a result of her time spent on the island, Elle ultimately achieves what I have termed *cartographic dissonance*, which is an ability to hold two or more competing conceptualizations of a single geographic space in her imagination. This is what Elle refers to as the narrative progresses when she claims to be "of two minds" (135). On a fundamental level, this dissonance destabilizes pervasive assumptions about the dominant Western culture's privileged position in the collective cultural geography, for it requires the continuous recognition that mine is not the only world and that mine is not the only world view. As with cognitive dissonance, this knowledge (however incomplete) of "other" geographies manifests as grief. Elle's knowledge of two worlds—one violent and aloof, the other increasingly under attack—is the painful awareness of systemic dispossession and oppression, and even this limited knowledge makes her feel helpless and homeless. Importantly, however, this grief is also what compels her to love and protect a bear cub as if it were a member of her family. Such compassionate behavior could not be ascribed to the Elle of the first section of this novel. In addition, by the final phase of the novel, she is able to love and mourn Comes Winter, the young Haudenosaunee girl who suffers and dies under the authority of Cartier. In her grief over the fate of her friend, Elle writes, "[t]his is too sad for me . . . to be exiled and watch my loved ones die, then to return home and find the process repeated in reverse. It is as if the whole journey was meant to teach me to see this girl, to guess her torment and dream her dreams of rescue" (178). And of course, that *is* the whole point; what Elle has gained through her experiences in Native space is an emerging

ability to recognize and respond to the needs of beings who are different from herself, and with that ability comes important, if profoundly difficult, responsibilities.

If this novel gestures towards the need for a third space social consciousness, and especially if, as Stephen Henighan problematically argues, the novel reflects the birth of a distinctively "Canadian consciousness" in the so-called new world (152), then it is important to recognize the various elements of this text that prevent contemporary settler Canadians from congratulating themselves or from otherwise distancing themselves from the legacy of "European" and "American" colonial violence. Troublingly, the death of Comes Winter in the final section of this novel only reinforces Elle's deeply flawed belief that Natives will not physically or culturally survive colonialism. Certainly one could argue, given the ongoing and deeply damaging authority of this imperial narrative, that Glover should have done more to criticize Elle for this short-sightedness. As Renée Bergland notes, when we "[focus] exclusively on those who perished . . . we risk forgetting the fact that many survived" (2-3). Importantly, however, in the final section of this text, and even from her new, vaguely enlightened perspective, Elle remains profoundly unable to speak to the complexities and character of Native space. In this sense, her narrative reflects an urgent and continuous need for increased attention to Indigenous voices. In other words, in the final section of this novel, Glover is careful not to portray the decolonization of Elle's perspective as a completed feat. It is instead a difficult and ongoing process that requires a continuous willingness to learn, to listen, and to change. For example, in her admirable attempts to comfort Comes Winter, Elle constructs a "facsimile of a Canadian encampment" on Cartier's property in France, filling it with what is, from the cultural perspective of her friend, "alien [Innu] symbolism" (182). And when the pig's skulls and chicken heads that she hangs from tree branches only make Comes Winter feel "uncomfortable," it dawns on Elle that "nothing is exactly as it should be: Comes Winter belongs to Donnacona's tribe, which speaks the language of the lexicon and lives far from the lands inhabited by Itslk's family and the Bear-Hunting People. Her customs and usages are far different from what I myself learned" (182). Even at this late point in her narrative, then, Elle continues to be surprised and disturbed by evidence of a diverse and complex cultural geography that is still only beginning to seep through the cracks of her fractured imagination.

In a recent article dealing with strategies for forging respectful alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in contemporary times,

Adam Barker riffs on Paulette Regan's influential concept of "unsettling the settler within," arguing that

> we as Settlers must learn to accept that being unsettled is not something to be avoided, but rather to be embraced and explored. We become unsettled when we are confronted with the inconsistencies in colonial logic, and the paradoxes of colonial ideals. As such, unsettling moments provide for Settler people a signpost that they are bumping up against one of the weak points of imperial existence: the internal inconsistencies that only continue to function because we overlook and tacitly accept them. (323)

Non-Indigenous / settler Canadians even today need to embrace and explore such epistemological disorientation at home, for this country cannot be imagined within the limitations of that strategically constructed and carefully regulated world view that Western imperialisms have relied upon and that have persisted to enable powerful populations to insulate themselves against the demands, concerns, and functions of Indigenous geographies. In a recent study of the genocidal functions of colonial era cartography, the Maliseet scholar Andrea Bear Nicholas powerfully argues that for Indigenous nations, "the consequences" of settler imperialism in the northeast "[have] been two and a half centuries of lethal poverty and deprivation." For Bear Nicholas and others, the undeniable fact that northeastern Indigenous nations, like the Maliseet,

> remain dispossessed and mostly poor today is testament to the ongoing existence of settler imperialism and a legitimizing discourse as fundamentally racist as that used to justify the initial dispossession. As long as the story remains hidden or unaddressed, the future for Maliseets and indeed for other First Nations will remain as bleak as it has been for the last two and a half centuries. (49)

In a number of important ways, Glover's novel challenges Canadian settlers and their descendants—the contemporary beneficiaries of European imperial conquest—to consider that these lands have layers of history and many stories that must be heard. As the novel draws to a close, those readers are left with only a vague and incomplete sense of the complex worlds that have been repressed through the establishment of cultural and national mythologies and an unsettling question regarding our communal responsibilities to such worlds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was presented at the University of New Brunswick as part of the 2013-14 Atlantic Canada Studies Seminar Series—thanks to Elizabeth Mancke for her invitation

and support. Thanks, too, to John C. Ball and Jennifer Andrews for providing notes and feedback on early drafts. Finally, thanks to the anonymous readers of this journal for their thoughts and recommendations.

NOTES

1 In his writings on the plight of the first Plymouth Plantation colonists, Bradford relied on the Old Testament story of Moses and the Israelites, who fled lives of slavery in Egypt to search for the so-called promised land: "Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men—and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes" (62).

2 The Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Abenaki are the constituent nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

3 This elision is commonly dealt with in contemporary Wabanaki literatures, such as the work of the Abenaki poet Cheryl Savageau, who, in her 1995 collection *Dirt Road Home*, imagines the northeast as "one land" that remains fundamentally undivided beneath the partisan inscriptions of a dominant settler population.

WORKS CITED

Barker, Adam. "From Adversaries to Allies: Forging Respectful Alliances between Indigenous and Settler Peoples." *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous – Non-Indigenous Relationships*. Ed. Lynne Davis. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2010. 316-33. Print.

Bergland, Renée L. *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. Hanover: UP of New England, 2000. Print.

Bhabha, Homi. "The Commitment to Theory." *The Location of Culture.* New York: Routledge, 1994. 28-56. Print.

Bradford, William. *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*. New York: Knopf, 1952. Print.

Brooks, Lisa. *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008. Print.

Cartier, Jacques. *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*. Ed. Ramsay Cook. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1993. Print.

Glover, Douglas. *Elle*. Fredericton: Goose Lane, 2003. Print.

Hämäläinen, Riku. "Bear Ceremonialism and Its Ecological Aspects among Subarctic and Plains Indians." *Reconfigurations of Native North America: An Anthology of New Perspectives*. Ed. John R. Wunder and Kurt E. Kinbacher. Lubbock: Texas Tech UP, 2009. 54-70. Print.

Henighan, Stephen. "'I Blame Printed Books': Reading Douglas Glover's *Elle* through *Don Quixote*." *The Art of Desire: The Fiction of Douglas Glover*. Ed. Bruce Stone. Ottawa: Oberon, 2004. 141-57. Print.

Huggan, Graham. *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994. Print.

Le Caron, Joseph. "Fragments of the Memoirs of Father Joseph Le Caron." *First Establishment of the Faith in New France: Volume I.* By Christian Le Clercq. Trans. John Gilmary Shea. New York: John G. Shea, 1881. 214-23. Print.

Lopenzina, Drew. *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking Up the Pen in the Colonial Period*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2012. Print.

Nicholas, Andrea Bear. "Settler Imperialism and the Dispossession of the Maliseet, 1758-1765." *Shaping an Agenda for Atlantic Canada*. Ed. John G. Reid and Donald J. Savoie. Halifax: Fernwood, 2011. 21-57. Print.
Parkman, Francis. *Pioneers of France in the New World. Parkman: France and England in North America Volume I*. New York: Library of America, 1983. Print.
Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
Savageau, Cheryl. *Dirt Road Home*. Willimantic: Curbstone, 1995. Print.
Šlapkauskaitė, Rūta. "Bears, Bodies and Boundaries in Douglas Glover's *Elle: A Novel*." *Transnational Literature* 4.1 (2011). Web. 6 Jan. 2011.
Speck, Frank G. *Naskapi: The Savage Hunters of the Labrador Peninsula*. 1935. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1977. Print.
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Criticism, Feminism, and the Institution." *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, and Academics*. Ed. Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1990. 153-71. Print.
Wiseman, Frederick Matthew. "Exploring Wôbanakik, the Abenaki Homeland." Map. *Doing History*. Flow of History, Southeast Vermont Community Learning Collaborative, n.d. Web. 28 June 2014.
—. *The Voice of the Dawn: An Autohistory of the Abenaki Nation*. Hanover: UP of New England, 2001. Print.