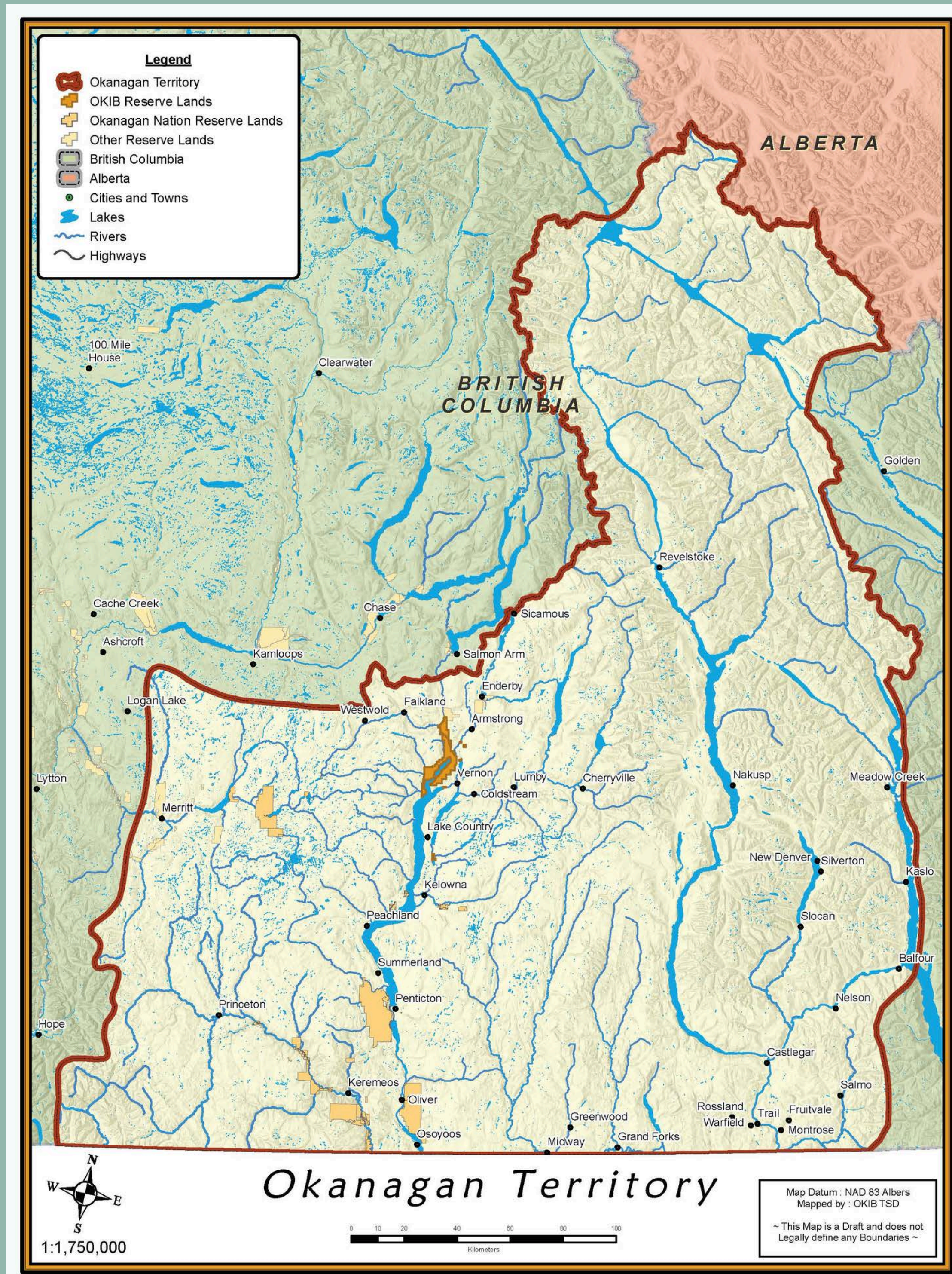


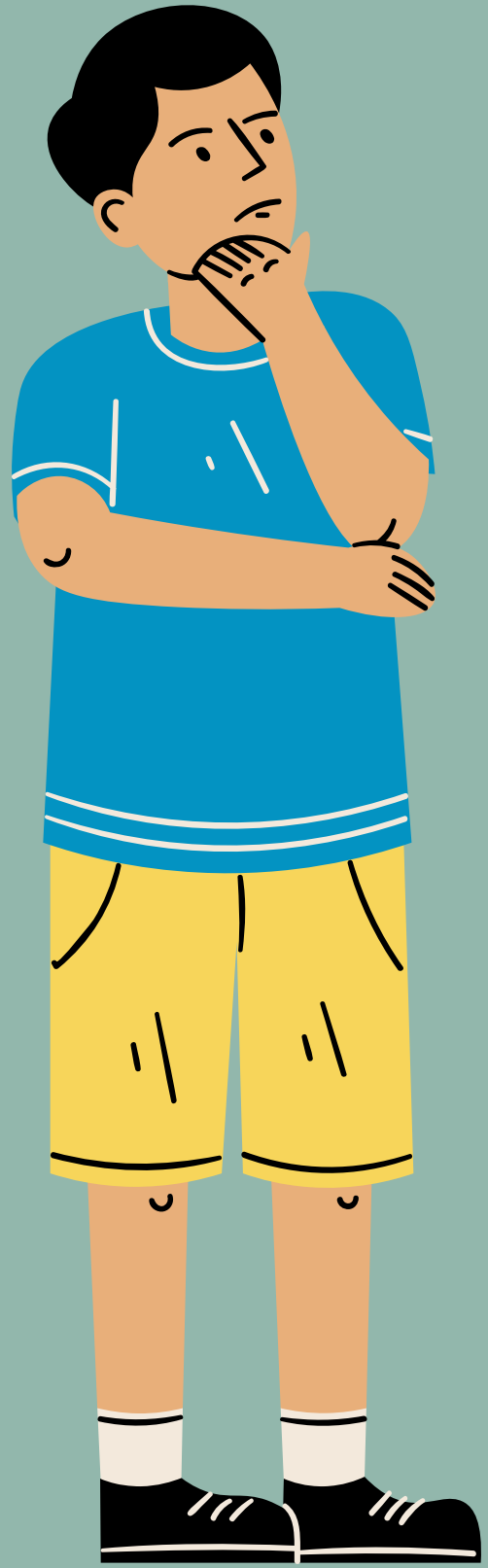
The Okanagan: A Settler Fantasy

Kaleb Conquergood



The Settler Fantasy

What is it?



The “settler fantasy” is not a material thing, it is an **imaginary**. It recognizes that the material world has been **intentionally misshapen and distorted** in order to sustain an imaginary. This imaginary is comprised of **Western notions of individualism and liberalism**, and the physical elements and customs of settler society corroborate this.

But I’m not imagining the world around me! Am I?



“As a system of ideas, **liberalism focuses on the individual**, who has the capacity to reason, on a society which promotes individual autonomy and self-interest, and on a state which has a rational rule of law which regulates a public sphere of life, but which allows **individuals to pursue their economic self-interest.**” (Smith, 68)

As scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggests, liberalism promotes an individualist model of society, whereby the **individual comes first.**

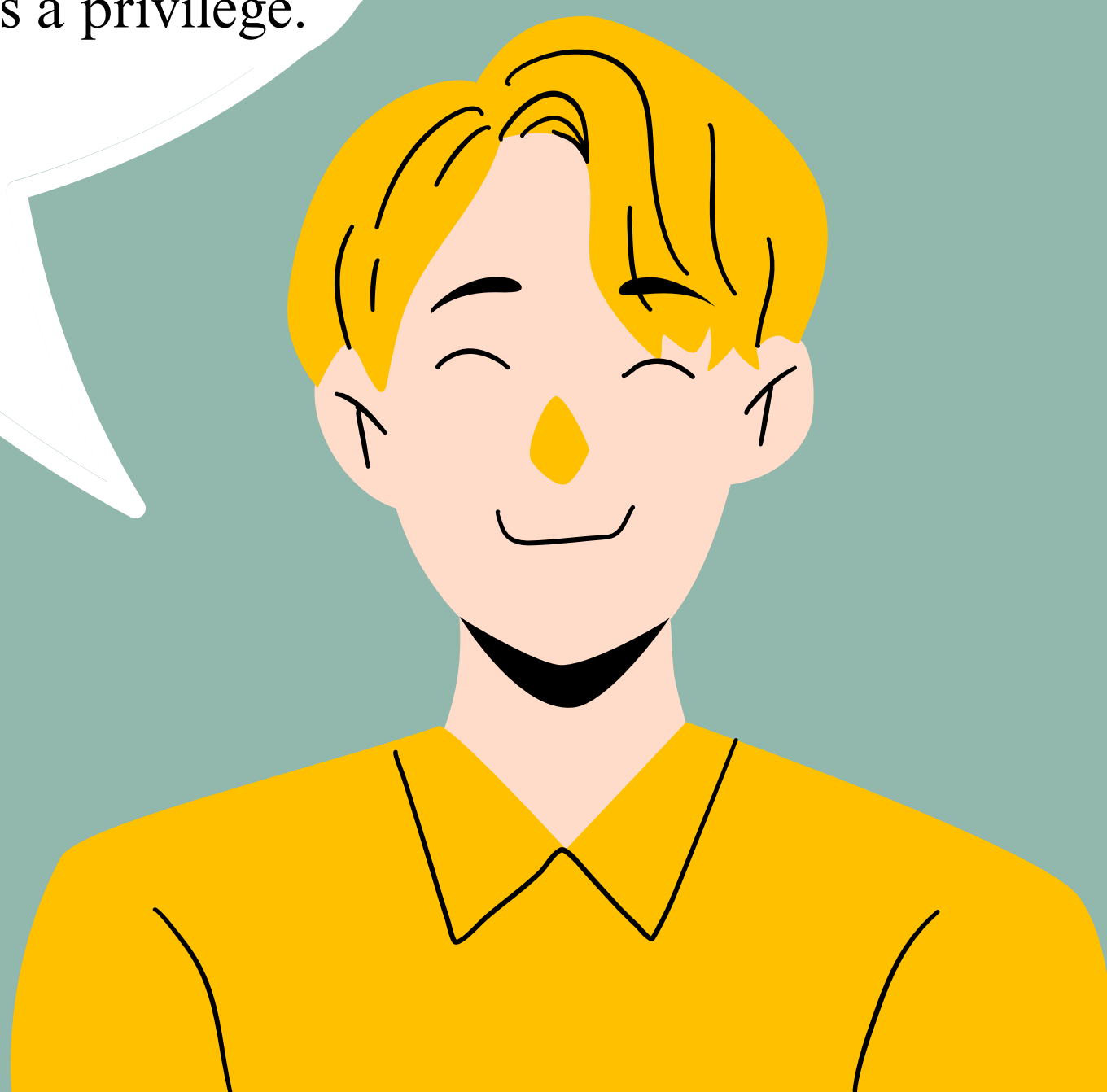
This pumpkin was so cheap! Oh, wow! And look at this park, it's so beautiful!

This notion is key to the settler fantasy. In essence, liberal colonial nations construct their societies both materially and socially with this in mind: **servicing the individual.** You can see how the simple commercial pleasure of an innocent purchase sustains said liberalist model.



When I say white settlers, I do this to acknowledge the way in which **whiteness allots a specific privilege: to participate in the fantasy.** Essentially, white settlers are disproportionately subject to the fantasy because of the absence of systemic barriers like racism. Since fantasy denotes an element of detachment from reality and external experiences, the fantasy can also be described as a privilege.

My goal, then, is to identify how (what is currently known as) Kelowna's tourist, agriculture, and recreation industries reinforce this liberalist model. Moreover, how this model curates a disillusioned reality for **white settlers.**



Our 'Stops' Include:

Tourism

Agriculture

Recreation



“Downtown Marina is the waterfront gateway to Kelowna! Offering temporary moorage in the heart of the city and rentals for **Okanagan Lake adventure**, the lake has just become **more accessible for tourists and residents alike**. With seating areas along the length of the public pier, and elegant and interesting architecture, this **iconic public amenity** will also be an inviting destination for pedestrians visiting the waterfront and Kelowna's downtown.”

- (“Tourism Kelowna,” 2023)

Pay attention to the way this excerpt uses “public” and “accessible” as a selling point for the Okanagan lake. While this commodifies the Okanagan, it also emphasizes the role of consumers, or tourists. The use of “public” and “accessible” allows people to create materialistic assumptions about their relationship to the lake. The, say, hydrological functions of this lake that serve an ecological purpose are replaced by an imaginary that the lake functions to serve our consumerist endeavors: be it boating or lakeside life and dining.

Tourism



On the left is a sculpture depicting **Chief Sw'kn'cut**, and below is the descriptive plaque beside the statue.

You can also find it in Kelowna's Downtown Marina, right next to its tourist centre -**because nothing says truth and reconciliation like a tourist attraction!** Interestingly, this seems to be the direction that most reconciliation 'efforts' are taking in Kelowna (more on that later). The positioning of this statue, I would argue, is a haphazardous approach to reconciliation. Although it is a public symbol of Indignity that should otherwise resist a colonial habitus or **challenge settler comfort**, its purpose would **appear to be purely aesthetic** to an unsuspecting pedestrian. The statue's positioning next to a tourist centre **does not present any sort of resistance to the settler colonial society around it, rather, it accommodates Indigenous presence in a settler dominant space.**

Allison Hargreaves and David Jefferess criticize reconciliation under a Canadian liberal framework as “the **'new' way** for Canada to **relate to** Indigenous people (208, as cited). Here, we can see that signifiers of reconciliation are produced in **an effort to accommodate for 'ulterior' realities** to that of the settler fantasy. Symbols of reconciliation collapse within a settler framework: Indigenous presence is not centralized in public or political space it is accommodated for. In this sense, this statue becomes a quiet reminder of Indigenous presence as though it is merely a reality of the past, which settler society can quickly acknowledge, and just as quickly move on from.





At a closer glance, the plaque identifies several issues of violence that the West Bank First Nations have undergone since settlers first made contact in the “Okanagan Mission Creek Area.” From **stolen land to the lasting legacy of residential schools**, one can see this statue and plaque speak to an **ongoing relationship of Indigenous oppression** at the hands of settler society.

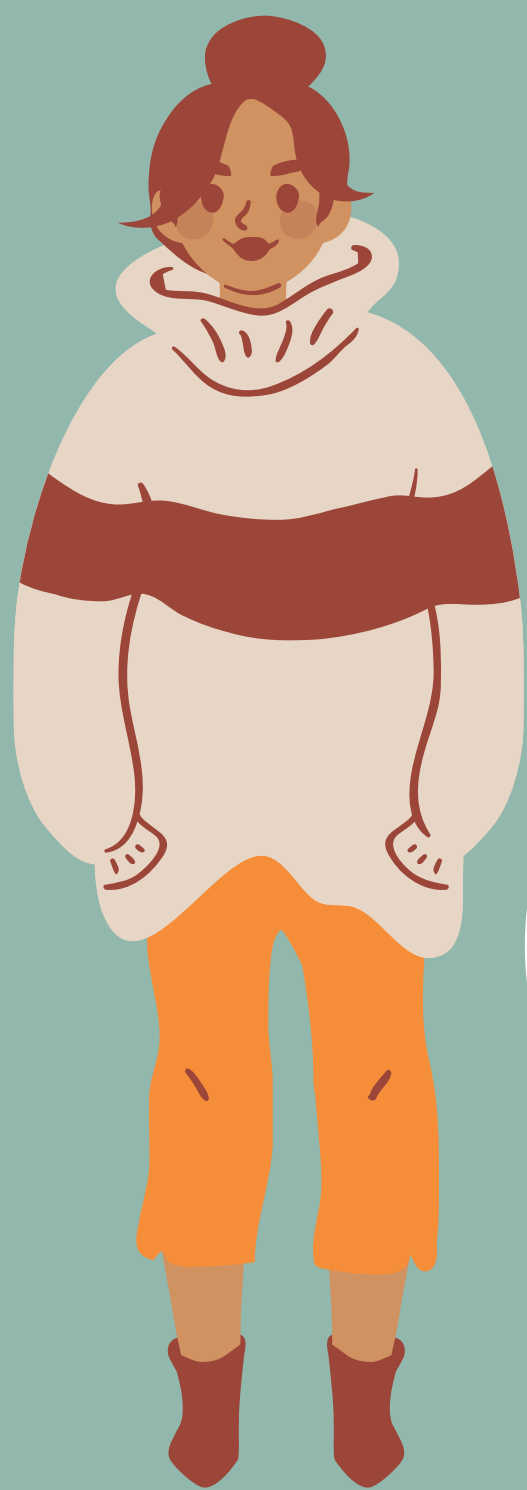


That said, I wish to call attention to **the paradox in the presence of this display**. While this affirms Indigenous revitalization through the memorialization of an honourable Chief, it is unfortunate that this display is **not ingrained culturally, but aesthetically** into settler society. Downtown continues to extensify the water it uses for recreational activities, call upon more tourists, and build more attractions, while West Bank First Nations communities are still suffering from infrastructural issues, like the recent water boiling advisories; so I ask you, **how exactly does this reflect the sentiment of reconciliation echoed in the display?**

Tourism

I do want to clarify that I do not intent to discredit the memorial sentiment of the aforementioned statue. Indeed, I want to identify the way that it is **used, dismissed, or enjoyed** by white settlers undermines what it stands for.

We can even cross-reference this memorial with other nearby monuments, like “The Simpson Walk.” This will show how white settlers are woven into history to invoke a sense of belonging, or right.



This plaque is located at the end of “The Simpson Walk” towards downtown. What is so interesting about it, though, is how it refers to Stanley Simpson as an “unassuming gentleman who made Kelowna a better plan for future generations.” Pay attention to the use of the phrase “future generations,” and consider what demographic this plaque is referring to. . .

This plaque immortalizes Simpson as someone who brought civilization to the Okanagan. And in a very different way than Chief Sk’wn’cut, we can see how Simpson’s presence matters in the present tense because of his role in crafting the settler fantasy. He is renowned for his “**vision**” and “**generosity**” by this plaque, which seem to invoke liberal ideas of modernity and progress being immutable virtues of society. Furthermore, rhetoric like this supports the idea that land is destined to be civilized or used, and **the current state of our world is somehow destiny**, which corroborates notions of white settler **belonging or right**. These ideas circulate in material ways downtown: consider what demographics you see downtown the most, and why they might be so *comfortable* there?

Tourism



Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang remind us to be critical of how easily settler history can be disguised as a universal, singularistic, and altruistic truth:

“The **adoption fantasy** is the mythical trump card desired by critical settlers who feel remorse about settler colonialism, one that absolves them from the inheritance of settler crimes and that bequeaths a new inheritance of Native-ness *and claims to land* (which is a reaffirmation of what the settler project has been all along).” (Tuck and Yang, 14)

This “adoption fantasy” described by Tuck and Yang affirms how settler society, history, and identity **are all socially produced** in order to sustain the settler fantasy. The plaque that claims Stanley Simpson’s ‘contributions’ were necessary to (what is now known as) Kelowna **affirms settler presence and nationalism, but fails to acknowledge how this land (and imagined identity) is not intrinsic to us**. In fact, this idea of nationalism adds a social dimension to the colonial project beyond a modernizing, industrializing, and extensifying ‘Kelowna’.

Consider how cultural celebrations like “Canada Day” on July 1st function to ingrain in ‘us’ (as settlers) a false sense of belonging or identity. **Frankly, celebrating Canada Day is a fervent disregard for, and act of blatant ignorance against, Canada’s genocidal relationship with Indigenous Peoples and Culture**. And yet, this celebration takes place every year in Downtown Kelowna, right next to Sw’kn’cut’s statue.





Welcome to our next
tourist stop, **Pandosy
Street and Father
Pandosy's Mission**

Realtor.ca, "2903 Pandosy Street Unit # 202," n.d., accessed December 6th, 2023.

<https://www.realtor.ca/realestate/24547090/2903-pandosy-street-unit-202-kelowna-lower-mission>



Pandosy St. is one of Kelowna's largest commercial centres. It was named after **Father Pandosy, who settlers credit with the "discovery" of Kelowna.** Memorializing Pandosy crafts a discursive and linear historical timeline: his "discovery" led to the decadent consumer experience that Pandosy Street is today. This is similar to Simpson's narrative in 'Kelowna's' history.

Tourism

Pandosy Street sustains several liberal and capitalist principles, which makes it a prime space for settler fantasy.

“South of downtown Kelowna sits Pandosy, a charming neighbourhood full of **local shops, eateries, parks and beaches, and nearby waterfront accommodations.**” (Tourism Kelowna)

“This Provincial Heritage Site preserves the original site of the *Mission de L’Immaculée Conception* that was created by the first European settlers to the area in 1859. The Mission became a large agricultural and ranching area that included a hub **where the local community and First Nations people often gathered**” (Tourism Kelowna)

These attractions all produce an idyllic world of consumerism for both tourists and settlers.

Let’s assess how this telling of history could be problematic, and how Pandosy’s initial Mission continues to sustain liberal and capitalist fantasies.

This brief of the Pandosy Mission uses vague language that misrepresents Indigenous and settler relations which **promotes a progressive, white, liberal imaginary of history**. This leaves a lot in the past in the minds of settlers. Hargreaves and Jefferess remind us “what lies beneath rocks in our gardens may be hidden or ignored **but it’s not gone**” (204). Yet, the consumer culture of Pandosy Street appears to encourage tourists and shoppers to distract themselves from the legacy of Father Pandosy that **they literally stand on**. Moreover, this directly defies the message of the Sw’kn’cut plaque mentioned earlier.



Tourism

Liberalism

Pandosy exclaims, “This warmth of God’s wealth and wisdom signify our homecoming, this will be the place **where we share in God’s wealth and wisdom, I am home.**” (Coble, 21)

This excerpt from Jordon Coble’s “Dancing Between Two Fires,” echoes motifs of liberalism that emphasize settler notions of land as a right. Similar to the way in which The Downtown Marina is considered a “public amenity,” Father Pandosy’s assertion that this place will be “where we share in God’s wealth and wisdom” invokes a similar notion of settler entitlement. Moreover, this concept of settler entitlement has seemingly informed a culture of settler permanency and belonging. This resembles Smith’s assertion that liberalism allows “individuals [namely, settlers] to pursue economic self-interest” (68), as though it is a right or something for granted. And this is the cultural form that Pandosy Street takes today: mindless, self-serving, consumerism.

Capitalism

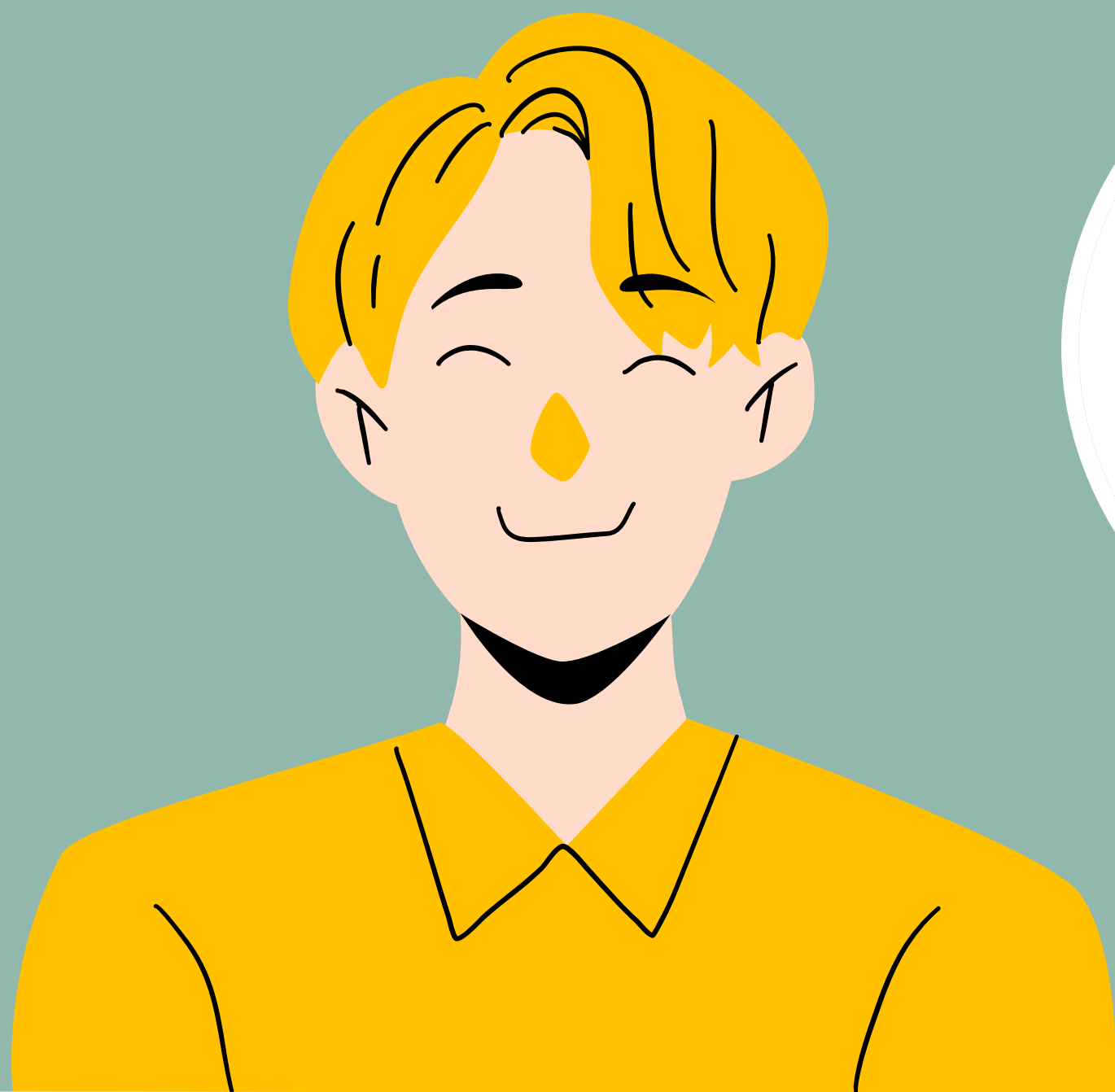
“As Father Pandosy stated of the Okanagan Valley in a letter, “It is a great valley situated on the bank of the great Lake Okanagan. All who know it praise it. **The cultivable land is immense**”” (fatherpandosy.com, “History”)

Here, we have Father Pandosy suggesting that the Okanagan is purely a bountiful resource. This idea merges seamlessly with the current state of the Okanagan, as settler society continues to deplete its natural resources. In the context of Pandosy Street, though, we can see how these ideas set the precedent for a culture of consumerism and, therefore, capitalism.

Our next destination will cover this in more detail...



1. Here are two quotes that seem to identify Pandosy’s intentions for the Okanagan and how they set the fantasy in motion.



This next section of our tour we'll be taking a look at **the Okanagan's agricultural industry**. We'll be looking mostly at the ecological implications of liberal, consumer culture in Kelowna, and how this **deepens the fantasy at the expense of environmental realities**.



On the left is a picture of “The KLO House,” which has been declared as a heritage site:

“The heritage value of the KLO house is primarily due to its association with the Kelowna Land and Orchard (KLO) Company, which was formed to **irrigate and subdivide** an expansive area south and east of the original Kelowna townsite. The building also has value for its association **with a number of important residents, some of which emphasize Kelowna's strong British connections.**”

- (Canada's Historic Places)

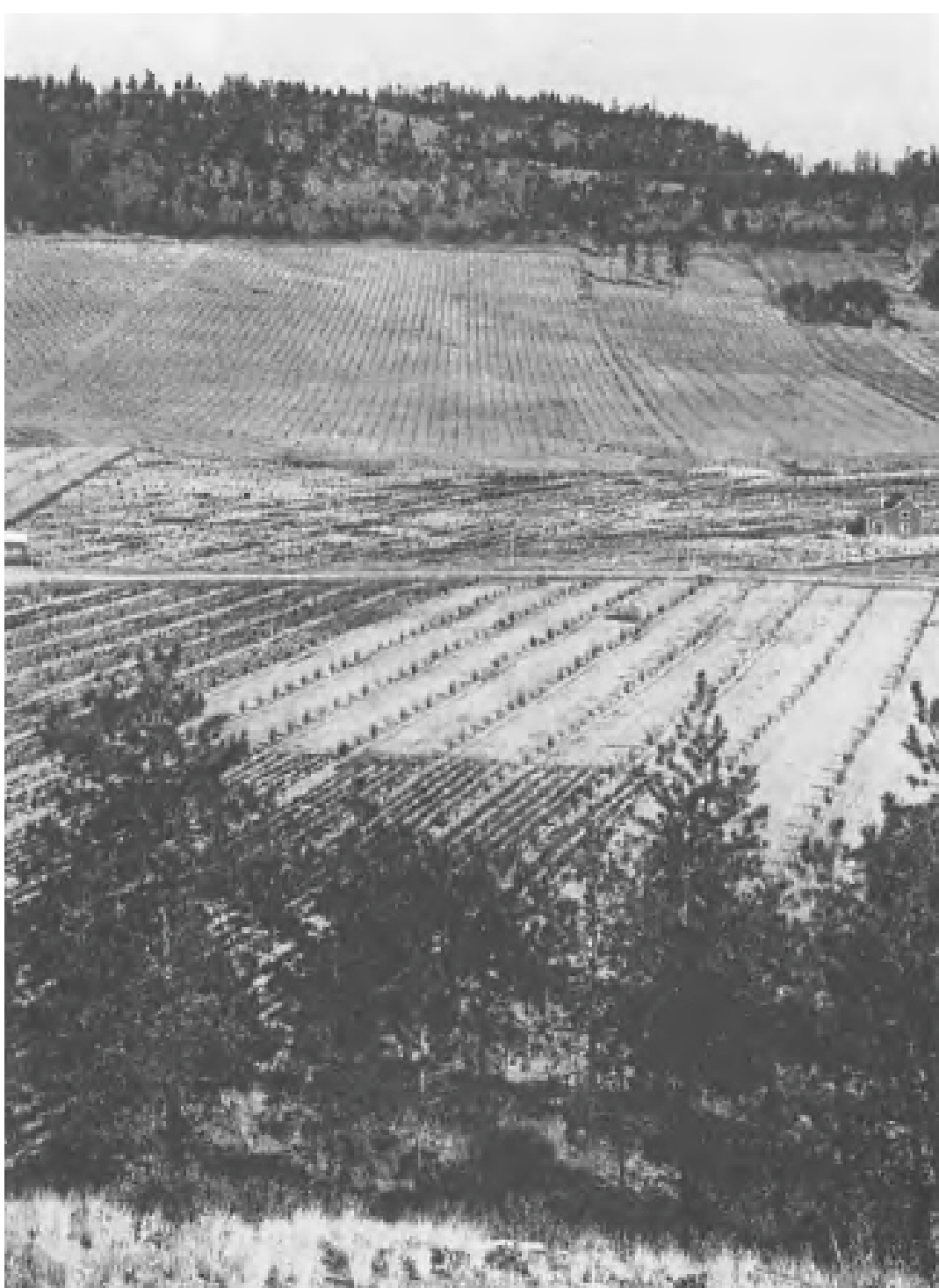
Kelowna Land and Orchard Company is also among one of the 20 listed Orchards on Kelowna Tourism. This particular company stands out for its involvement with early development of settler society in the Okanagan. Moreover, this excerpt acknowledges the colonial relationship between Kelowna and Britain, which proves these buildings to be material signifiers of a colonial-settler fantasy.

Agriculture

The advent of KLO Company saw a push for Western expansionism and cultivation.



Edward Maurice Carruthers, was the first occupant of the **KLO House**, as well as the manager/director of the KLO company in the early 20th century (Canada's Historic Places, 2000). He oversaw the subdividing of the Okanagan's land, which was sold at competitive and appealing prices to prospective settlers at 100 to 200 Canadian dollars per acre (BCFGA). Most of the land was used for early agricultural projects of Kelowna, which meant that the land underwent many physiological changes in order to sustain the settlers' crops.



"Angus Gray's pruning team," Fintry, 1910.
Courtesy Vernon Museum and Archives.
<https://www.bcfga.com/235/A+New+Organization+for+New+Conditions>

Early fruit growers used toxic chemicals to null the effects of pests on crop yields that also had lasting effects on the local environment and its biodiversity. The B.C. Fruit Growers Association (BCFGA) provides a quote from Percy Mason, a worker on a nearby site in 1914, who describes the intense compound of "arsenate of lead lime & sulphur & stuff called black leaf" that was used to neutralize pests. Mason also recalls how the wind could make the chemical airborne, which would stain workers clothes and skin, and sting "if it got into [their] eyes" (BCFGA). The use of sulphur-based pesticides and fertilizers can cause the soil salinity to increase, too, which is known as salinization; interestingly enough, in the 1930s the "Canadian Prairies" actually experienced a wave of soil desertification and infertility (referred to as the "dust bowl") because of similar farming practices (Withgott et al., 195-196).

Agriculture

Although Kelowna's settler population memorializes these agricultural pioneers for laying the ground for the Okanagan's commercially successful orchard and wine Industry, these practices clearly rely on **colonial binaries and imaginaries**.



“In the fall of 1904 it was modestly stated that "Land sales around Kelowna, Vernon, Summerland, and other points have been good", but a year later the Vernon News could boast proudly that:

*The influx of settlers during the past year, **resulting from the subdivision of the big holdings**, and the adoption of energetic and up-to-date methods of advertising and pushing real estate, has been surprising, and has resulted in a **great increase in the total cultivated area of the valley.**”*

- (BCFGA)

Western Expansionism:

In order for these frontiers to be maintained, you need colonies or citizens. By marketing land to European immigrants, these colonizers are facilitating the assumption that land can be bought, and those who can afford it are entitled to it. This argument builds off of frontier mentality.

Frontier Mentality:

Nature is bad and hostile, needs to be conquered and optimized. When settlers convert the land into ‘farmland’ they are staking their dominance, and maintaining a ‘proper’ order between man and nature. This mentality was corroborated by the **the system of "pre-emption"**: during the end of 19th Century, settlers could "claim" land from the crown (Jefferess, edits). This system insinuated that if settlers could prove they had "improved" the land through certain means, like suiting it for Western agriculture or building homes, then it could be understood as general "improvements" to the land and its attributed value (Jefferess).



Now, it's time for the Okanagan's world famous wine industry!

tourismkelowna.ca, "St. Hubertus & Oak Bay Estate Winery," n.d., accessed December 12th, 2023.
<https://www.tourismkelowna.com/things-to-do/wineries/trails/lakeshore-win-route/>

Well, which winery did you want to go to?

Why choose? There's over 40 wineries in the Kelowna area, and we can take a tour of them, too!

Is it really possible for 'us' to ecologically sustain 40 wineries, though?



Agriculture



tourismkelowna.ca, "St. Hubertus & Oak Bay Estate Winery," n.d., accessed December 12th, 2023.
<https://www.tourismeowna.com/listing/st-hubertus-%26-oak-bay-estate-winery/160/>

In 2022, Kelowna's grape farmers and wine industry experienced the consequences of climate change:

"Our industry-wide research concluded that our worst fears were realized with a 54 per cent reduction in 2023 and 45 per cent of total planted **acreage suffering** long-term irreparable damage," said Miles Prodan, president and CEO of Wine Growers British Columbia.

- (Gerding, "Climate Change Devastating for Okanagan Grape Growers")

But this doesn't seem to be their only concern...

"The report found production losses of this magnitude will have a **severe impact on the economics of the industry**, affecting the **revenues of both vineyards and wineries, tax revenues collected by the government**, and the livelihoods of agricultural workers and other wine professional professionals with a projected job loss of 381 full-time jobs."

And they continue on a hopeful note:

"“However, these setbacks are temporary. We've always been fortunate to have enormous support for the wines of B.C. from local consumers and, with them behind us, **we know the industry will overcome these challenges.**”"

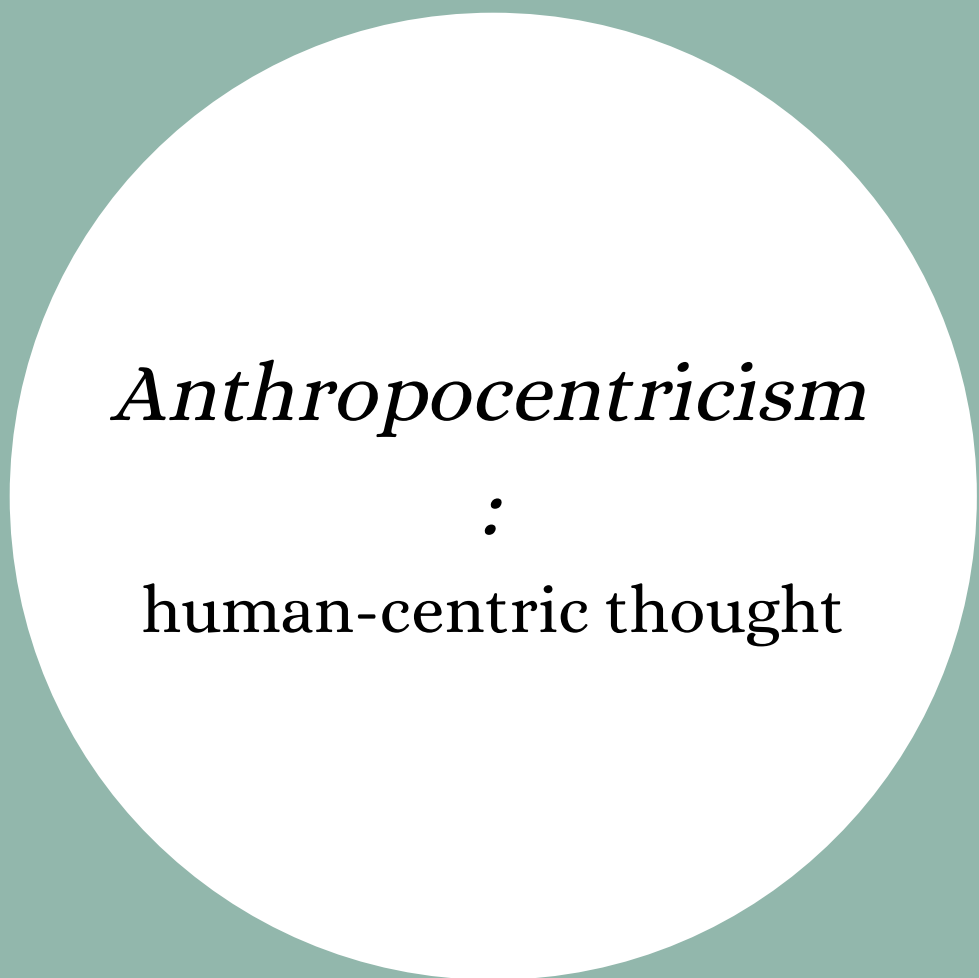
- (Gerding, "Climate Change Devastating for Okanagan Grape Growers)

Agriculture

There is a multitude of colonial, capitalist, liberal frameworks at play here that all seem to focalize around one concept:

The imaginary that environmental degradation poses more of a threat to industry and the economy than anything is **capitalist** in nature.

The imaginary that crop devastation affects one's ability to pursue one's economic interest is **liberal** in nature. Land is positioned in opposition to liberal principles, because it disrupts the pursuit of economic self-interest.



Although this model of anthropocentric means to centre people in decision-making, we must also consider who fits inside of this imaginary. The peril caused by Kelowna's collapsing wine industry centres the desires of white settlers which is racist and **colonial** in nature.

Anthropocentrism creates an imagined divide between man and nature. Similar to the assumptions made by the frontier mentality, man's presence is necessary to maximize the potential of the land. In Kelowna's case, when they say "the industry will overcome these challenges" (Gerding), what they are really saying is that man will eventually reclaim nature as 'his' own.

Let's take a quick detour to see how the examples of environmental degradation which Kelowna's agricultural industry seemingly naturalizes compare to a different perspective on human-nature relations.

Agriculture

Stay with us, we are going to take a quick trip to the **Chipko** movement in India during the 70s. Vandana Shiva speaks to the specific impact of Chipko for herself and the world:

“In 1972, women living in a high-altitude village, Reni, blocked logging operations, giving rise to the Chipko (literally, “to cling”) movement... it was Chipko that made me realize, in fine detail, how biodiversity is at the heart of sustainable economies, and how **Nature provides the basic needs of the large majority of people around the world.**” (Shiva, 12-13)

Shiva’s emphasis is the significance of preserving biodiversity. Maintaining biodiversity, for Shiva, is a matter of maintaining ourselves, too. The sentiment of Chipko to defend nature by clinging to it with our bodies, is also an allegory to nature’s interconnectedness with humans: **if you are willing to put nature in harm’s way, you are willing to do the same to humanity.**



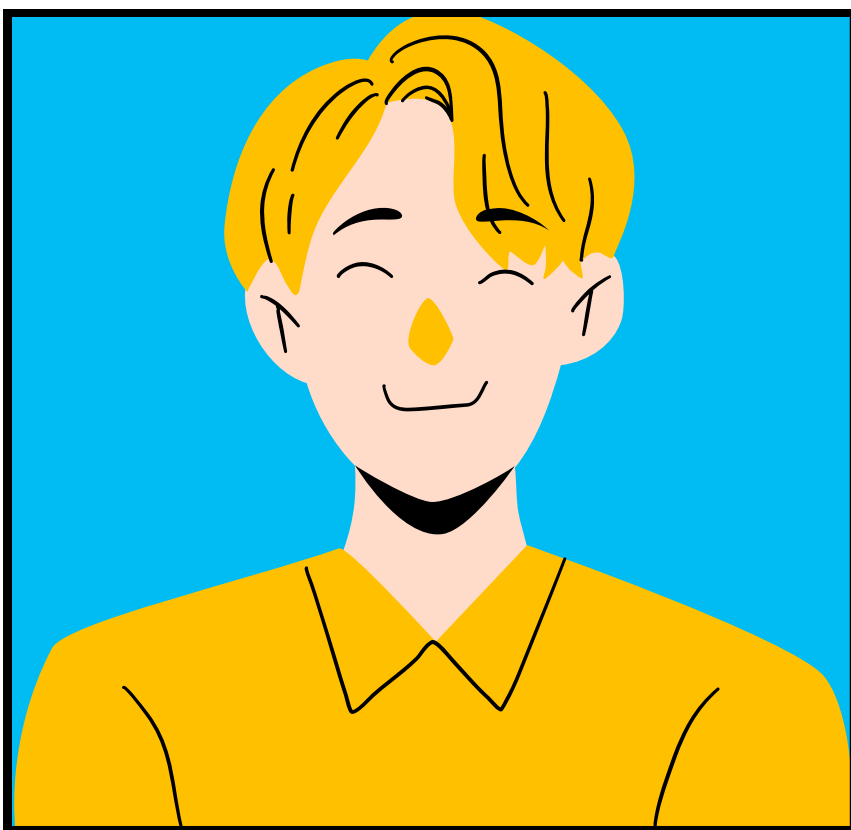
rightlivelihood.org, “The Chipko Movement,” 1973., accessed December 12th, 2023.
<https://livelihood.org/the-change-makers/find-a-laureate/the-chipko-movement/>

The philosophy behind the Chipko movement pokes a major hole in the settlers’ fantasy. While proving the many ways that Western monoculture is unsustainable (as we have seen in Kelowna’s wine and orchard industries), Shiva also explains the material ways that **Western agricultural practices are not only harming, but killing people.**

“In India, according to a debate in parliament, more than 200,000 farmers have committed suicide because of debt caused by high costs and unreliable seeds they bought from corporations. Suicides are concentrated in areas that have become dependent on commercial seeds... **These are the seeds of suicide and seeds of slavery.** There are no suicides where farmers use heritage seeds and their traditional varieties.” (Shiva, 16)

They are incomparable circumstances, yet the severe contrast between the aftermath of poor crop yields for farmers in India versus Canada provides another dimension to the settler fantasy, **the international division of labour.** The international division of labour allows Canadians to exist in consumerist bliss; although many of the products we buy from the grocery store come from elsewhere, **we are not made to think this way about our purchases.** Kelowna grape farmers can *whine* over dead grape vines because it directly affects the settlers’ sphere. Consider how phrases like “buy local” foreground the ways in which Western domestic labour and industry is visibilized and foreign labour is inferiorized. And yet, settlers can only imagine dystopia in terms of their economy’s collapse. Evidently, the settler fantasy lets white settlers dream of peril, while the world lives it.

Recreation



Welcome to the last segment of our tour, “Recreation!” Our first stop will be the “**Rotary Marsh Park**,” which actually isn’t too far off from our first destination, The Downtown Marina. The Rotary Marsh is looked after by -you guessed it- the Rotary Club, who have been conducting an ongoing preservation project for these wetlands. They encourage us to join this effort and remind us that “the success of these unique wetlands depends on each of us.” Just one problem, though...

Not everyone seems to agree with their methods for ecological preservation. In fact, this wetland has not been preserved at all, it’s been redesigned (more on that later). The fact that these wetlands are synthetic does not help the fact that there are sidewalks etched through it as well as benches and a boardwalk that serve no ecological purpose either. One critic, under the name “Cora” has actually written and published a blog titled “What not to do - a tour of urban wetlands in Kelowna,” regarding the ecological ineffectiveness of these artificial wetlands. So, let’s see how Cora’s blog reveals the superficiality of synthetic paradises of settler society that serve no purpose aside from ‘our’ own leisure.

Recreation



“When you enter Rotary Marsh Park, at first glance you see some of the iconic inhabitants: ducks, turtles and cattails. It has all the components of a marsh wetland **but doesn’t quite thrive like a wetland should**” (Cora).

Cora seems to be pointing towards the visual queues that would signify a healthy, conventional wetland. This looks to be a running theme in the settler fantasy, false visuals.

“It was a restoration project lead by the Rotary Club of Kelowna in the mid 90’s. Prior to the restoration work done, **Brandt’s creek had deteriorated from an influx of industrial waste and agricultural run-off**. Over 70% of the creek has been channelized or ditched with a large portion of the creek moved underground in culverts and **covered by driveways**“ (Cora, as cited).

Recall the salinization of soil by the use of **sulphur-based pesticides** we discussed during our visit to KLO- perhaps these same agricultural practices are responsible for the degradation of Brandt’s Creek. “Run-off” is a term that describes excess water running into bodies of water because the soil cannot absorb the water, sometimes run-off can carry deposited pollutants in soils like **sulphates**. (Wighott et al., 338)

“In 1992 a plan was developed to restore the area with two objectives: to **create a settling pond for creek water** and **set up an educational facility to promote importance of wetlands**“ (Cora).

...

“It was apparent from our visit, with a trained eye in our company, that **this restoration project had failed to meet one of its objectives**. The water flowing from Brandt’s Creek was not entering the wetland. The fill must have been put in too high, or possibly filled in and raised the level of the marsh above that of the stream. While it’s hard to show with pictures, one can easily see in person that the water level of Brandt’s Creek is lower than the water level of the marsh pond- the exception being during a high freshet. For the rest of the year the water discharging from Brandt’s creek flows right past it. Upon further inspection you will see that **the water level is maintained instead by the lagoons**. This constructed water feature is sourced with lake water and was built around the condos to allow dock access for tenants’ boats. This lake water is vastly different from the water that is coming from the creek, most notably **it is almost void of nutrients**. This lack of nutrients has slowed the progress and stunted much of the growth of this wetland” (Cora).

Wetlands are natural filters for pollutants, they have the unique but important ability to synthesize contaminants into nutrients which cleans water that often flows into other waterways or aquifers (Wighott et al., 346). As Cora already pointed out, Rotary failed to meet their goal of creating an ecologically functional wetland. This doesn’t seem to bother anyone, though. Park-goers appear unfazed and Kelowna continues their commitment to the fantasy, inviting anyone who goes to the Rotary Marsh Park to check-out it’s local “Photo Stop,” which is “intended to inspire visitors and local residents ... to include #exploreKelowna ... in their posts” (Tourism Kelowna).

Recreation

Cora's blog emphasizes the visual structures of settler society. Like I mentioned in the introduction, **“the fantasy denotes an element of detachment from reality.”** The amount of trust settlers invest in what they see dilutes the multitudes of realities.



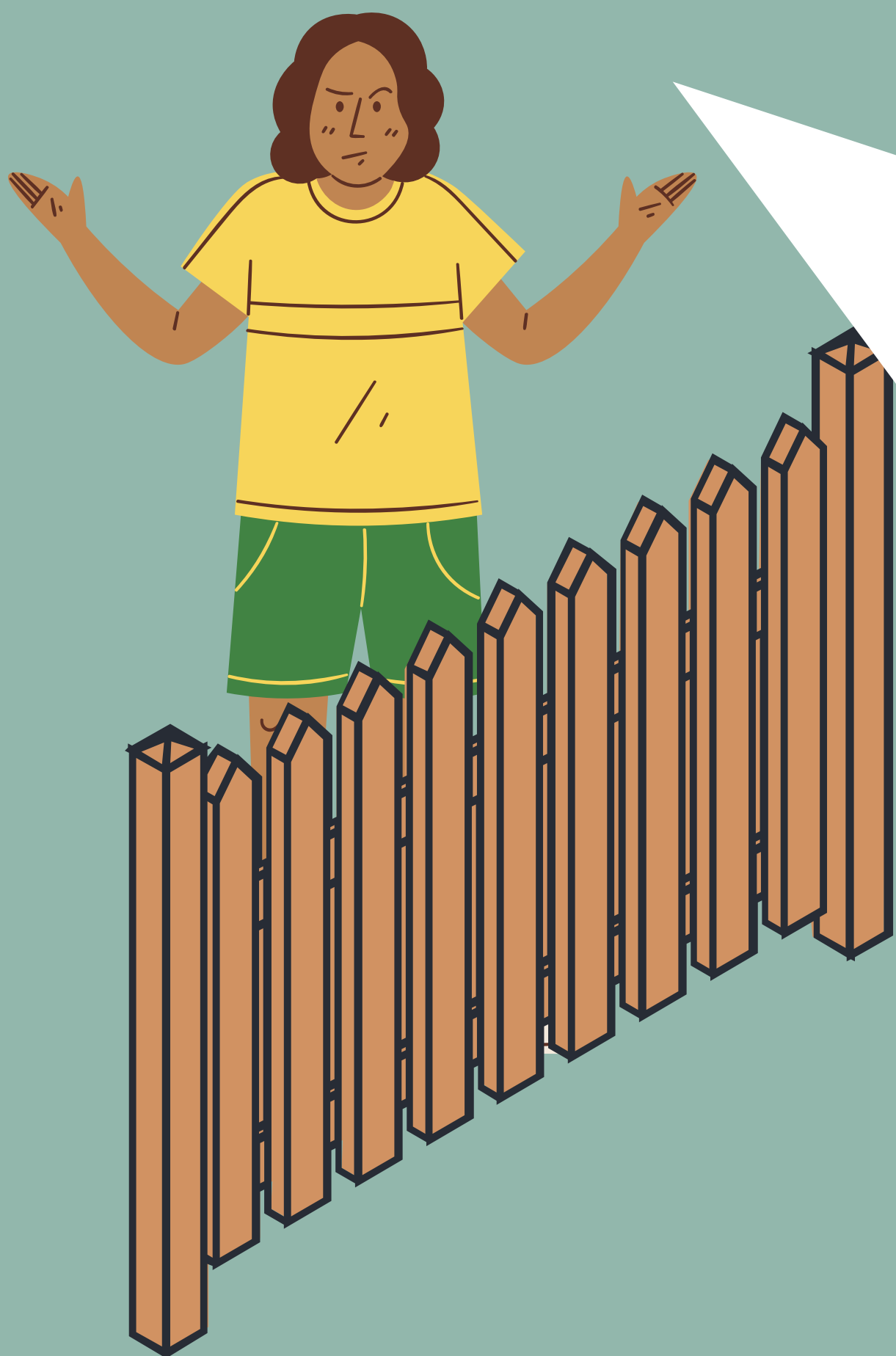
Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí defines this as “worldview,” which they attribute to the Western, English worlds fixation with seeing as the primary method to quantify somethings value; furthermore, this culture of visibility manifests in our language which **informs how we understand our relationships (2-3)**

Oyěwùmí's concept helps explain how mystified the settler experience actually is. Not only in the case of the Rotary Marsh Park, but also in the case of Kelowna's role in the international division of labour, or Canadian frameworks of reconciliation. All of these concepts have to do with relations, and **the relationality that settlers lack on account of their over-reliance on visuals** or the superficial.

The settler fantasy is a privilege, and not everyone gets to exist in a realm without relations. Jeannette Armstrong reminds us that the natural world continues to suffer, and though settlers may choose not see it, some, such as herself, have to:

“At this time, the Okanagan is one of the most damaged areas and ecosystems in Canada because of its fragility. In our area many conservationists and environmentalists are very concerned about the species that are endangered and disappearing there. We live in an area where extirpations have been happening over the last one hundred years; **I've seen some of those extirpations myself.**” (Armstrong, 67)

Recreation



I think by this point you get the drill... The Kelowna Golf & Country Club: quite literally the rich white man's playground. Extensive fields of flat grass, completely devoid of any biodiversity. That rich hue of jade green grass is only achievable by using a massive portion of the Okanagan's water supply, too. Because who else needs it? Sectioned off by fences that keep the ball inbound, and unwanted others, out! Now let's top that off with decadent amenities and services offered by the club house to best serve any want. Paradise, right?

Recreation

The Kelowna Golf & Country Club adds material barriers to social divisions among classes. However, the course seems to romanticize these classist distinctions, as though this elitist lifestyle fundamental to the golf course and the people it was made for. For the settler fantasy to continue, those who have the power through land, resource, and wealth must maintain it. And by ascribing to it, non-rich and non-white settlers codify this power.

Contrary to non-Western, relational societies, settler society crafts power dynamics on difference. Categories like “white” promote feelings of sameness among white people, but difference among non-white people. *Remember Oyěwùmí’s concept of worldview (2).* This complements the notion of belonging I described at The Marina, whereas white settlers feel inclined to protect their sense of belonging is really a matter of **keeping the ruling class intact**.

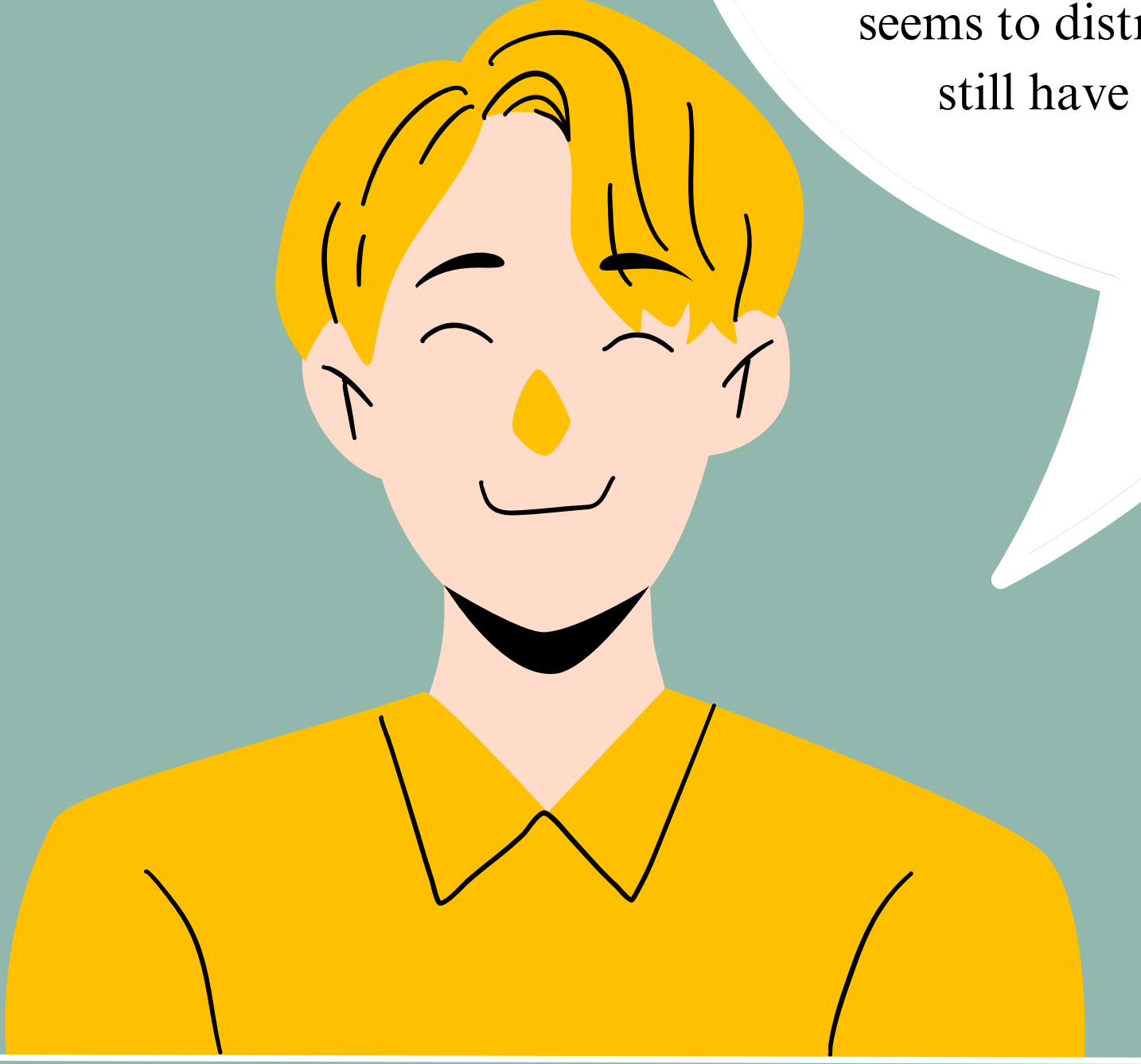


In essence, the fantasy, for white settlers is built on a false sense of belonging and a **false sense of unity among white settlers**. This golf course, if anything, represents a static power imbalance in the settler community. Consider how the golf course is comprised of an extensive stretch of now **privatized** land, and uses an indulgent and **disproportionate** amount of water the Okanagan’s water supply. One must exist within several categories to be racially, economically, and socially white. “In this case, white [refers] to an exceptionalized position with assumed rights to invulnerability and legal supremacy” (Tuck and Yang, 18). Neoliberal societies are merit-based and insinuate that we can ascend our class by **working harder**. Myths like the the model minority among racialized communities (18) and the phenomenon of hard workers syndrome for poor communities are some examples of the cultural influence of the meritocracy, which actually deepens social stratification within neocolonial/liberal society.

How can people still believe in this idyllic fantasy if it doesn’t benefit them, but indeed, harms them?

“... you can see there’s something **profoundly wrong with a hierarchical system, in which people sitting next to you or next door for you don’t have access to the same things you do**. That seems to me to be a profoundly basic communal principle: Everyone in a community needs to have the same access to the basics and the same access to the joys and pleasures of life.”
(Armstrong, 68-69)

Conclusion



And that concludes our tour. I want to thank you for touring the Okanagan's settler fantasy with me! Although I was particularly critical of white settlers, it is evident that the fantasy implicates us all. And, uncomfortably so, a lot of us benefit from it. Social inequality is an unnatural imposition of neoliberalism, and the fantasy seems to distract us from the reality of this. So, I still have one unanswered question, then:

How can people still believe in this idyllic fantasy if it doesn't benefit them, but indeed, harms them?

The answer has been right in front of us this whole time. The world only takes a different shape to all of us because we imagine it so differently, in isolation, and chiefly, **according to neocolonial and neoliberal narratives**. So, I encourage each of you reading this to **consider how the settler fantasy benefits you, and effectively, oppresses others**. It is this consistent motioning for challenging individualistic and singularistic thinking.

Identifying inconsistencies between our fantasy and the history/culture 'we' were raised with will be the most powerful and unifying way to pursue reconciliation and colonial resistance. So

I've learned.

I'll leave you with this:

The last thing that I want to share with you is something that makes a lot of sense to me and that is my father's words for insanity. For us it means that too many people are talking about different things rather than people talking about the same thing. There does seem to be insanity in the world because of what's missing inside in terms of our humanity with each other. When we start to take care of that, everything else will naturally follow.

-- Jeannette Armstrong, *An Okanagan Worldview of Society* p. 73

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